

Getting Published: Magazine Writing

Want to break into freelance magazine writing but don't know where to start? Following these guidelines will help get you on your way to getting published!

- 1.) Once you have found the magazine/s that you would like to submit your article to, it is important to get a feel for what kind of publication it is. Examine the other articles in the magazine for the types of topics, article length and titles that the publication accepts. Browse through several back issues to try to get a good idea of the audience: what kind of person reads this magazine? Knowing this will help you submit your idea to the editor and also when you start writing your article.
- 2.) The next step is to solicit the magazine's "writer's guidelines." This is a document from the magazine describing who its audience is, editorial policies, submission requirements, kill fees, etc. Sometimes this information is available online. If it isn't, write a short business letter to the magazine's managing editor stating that you are a freelance writer interested in submitting work to their magazine and you would appreciate a copy of their "writer's guidelines." Make sure that you include a SASE (Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope) along with your letter.
- 3.) Read through the guidelines carefully. Using them as your guide, construct a well-thought out plan for your article. Once you have your idea outlined, the next step is to submit a query letter to the editor of your targeted magazine to see if he or she is interested. A query letter describes your idea for an upcoming article. It should describe your topic idea in detail, how long you envision it being, where in the magazine you think it might fit best (travel, food, parenting section, etc.) Include your qualifications to write this piece. Basically you are selling your idea and your writing abilities to the magazine. After reading your query, the editorial staff will then decide if they want to hire you to write the article, or just drop your idea altogether. Again, include a SASE in with your query letter. And make sure that your article idea hasn't been published in their magazine already!
- 4.) Should the editor pick up your idea, you should hear back within 4-6 weeks. He or she should contact you with the specifications regarding length, deadline, copyrights, payment, etc. Start writing! But... there is always the possibility that your idea could be rejected. Don't give up! Chalk it up to valuable experience, and try again, perhaps pitching your same idea to another magazine. Recycling is common in this industry!
- 5.) After you've written your article and it is as good as possible, send it in to your editor. This is the big decision; this is when the editor decides to publish or toss your article. If your piece is turned down at this stage, the editor will typically offer you a kill fee. A kill fee is monetary compensation for your time and effort, but without publication. If this happens, try another magazine. If your piece is accepted, bravo! Look forward to seeing your name in print, both in the magazine and on your paycheck!

The Community Writing Center has several books designed to help you get published! They include a list of helpful hints, publication guidelines, and other tools to get you going! Just ask to sign up for an appointment with a writing coach, or stop by to check out our library.

Library Square Plaza—210 East 400 South. Salt Lake City, UT 84111

(801) 957-4992—www.slcc.edu/cwc

