

Submitting and Publishing Tips

1. Finish the book. At least the entire first draft.
2. Sign up for a writing organization such as the Willamette Writers or the Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. These organizations provide classes, workshops, conferences, feedback on your work, training on everything from writing to submitting to marketing, and opportunities to meet with editors and agents. Dues are required and very reasonable.
3. Join a critique group. Critique groups are people who meet on a regular basis to do writing exercises and provide one another with feedback on both short and long-term projects. They are available online if you cannot find one in the local area. I recommend asking your local librarians or other authors in your area.
4. Purchase a Writers Market book, read through the introduction, and research query letters, cover letters, and pitches. You can do this on the internet or purchase a book about the writing submission process.
5. Write up a practice query letter and a practice pitch. There are writing forums and discussion boards online if you want to receive feedback.
6. Attend a writing conference. There is A LOT to learn about the submission process. A single conference can provide you with the tools and knowledge to help you navigate that process without wasting your time on wrong turns. These can be quite expensive, but I highly recommend attending at least one major conference in your area. It can save you months of research and heartache from rejection letters and provides a vast array of tools, advice, and inspiration, all in three days.
7. Based on what you have learned: Revise. Revise. Revise.
8. Have your critique group and/or other very reliable and somewhat removed people proof your manuscript and provide feedback.
9. Attend a second conference, and this time submit the beginning of your manuscript for critique. If possible, sign up to pitch. Attend any workshops taught by editors or agents you are interested in submitting to. Read their bios in the conference handbook first.
10. Revise. Revise. Revise.
11. Look through Writers Market and compose a top ten list of publishers and a top ten list of agents to submit to.
12. Research the specific submission guidelines for 3-4 publishers and 1 agent, write up targeted query and/or cover letters, and mail your manuscript. If you can find the name of a specific agent within the company that edits your genre, it is usually best to send your query to a specific person and let them know why you chose them to submit to.
13. Start your next book.
14. When a rejection comes in, read it, file it, research a new company or agent, and send out another copy.
15. If you are overwhelmed with rejections providing no feedback, sign up for a class, a conference, or a critique group if you aren't already attending one.
16. Return to step 7 and try again, or file it away for a while, work on your next book, and return to step 7 when you are ready.

