

FACT SHEET – Preparing Manuscripts

You have a book and wish to submit it to a publisher. These are general guidelines for submitting a manuscript to a publisher. Please note that all publishers have different guidelines and each should be read before submitting.

1. Finished Manuscript or Concept?

A finished manuscript needs no amendment, no character development, story additions, no editing, proofreading and is ready for layout by the designer. If your manuscript is not finished, then it is important to present it as a 'Concept' – this should include a synopsis with sample section of the book. The same rules apply about needing no spell-checking, re-wording or character development for your sample section. If illustrations are a part of the book, then do include a sample too.

It is important to understand your book, define its category and sub-category: Fiction | Thriller

Make sure you have proof read your final copy. Read it to ensure that all sentences flow. Have others read your work too. Listen to feedback and where necessary make amendments.

2. Layout

It is not essential to present the book as it would look in its published form. It should be presented tidily on double-spaced, A4 numbered pages with wide margins and in a common font – Times New Roman, and of a point size that can be easily read, 10-12 pts. Minimise the use of **bold**, *italics* and changes to font size or type. It looks messy.

3. Let your words speak for themselves

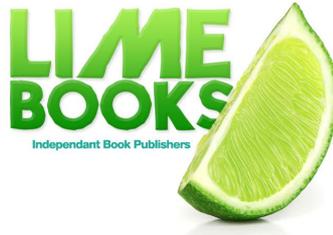
Yes it is ok to include an introductory letter about the book and why you wrote it, but remember that those who buy your book will probably only have the cover to read before starting their journey. Allow the words in your manuscript to sell themselves.

4. Word count

An A4 page of text is approximately 400 words. A short book or novella is around 35,000-50,000 words. Most 300 page paperbacks are 70,000-80,000 words. If you are writing a deep and intelligent book, you may be exceeding the 100,000. Knowing your total word count is useful. A publisher can use that information to estimate the number of pages and therefore size and cost of printing your book. Anything to do with cost will impact upon a publisher's decision to publish your book.

5. Use of grammar

Try to set your text to the correct conventions. A writer who does not use indents, or who does not know how to apply quotation marks in their manuscript will present an impossible task for the publisher. Publishers do not have time to re-write your book for you. So if you do not know the conventions for speech marks, commas, semi-colons, dots, dashes, where to italicise, how to represent pauses, etc. I suggest you pay someone to edit your book for you, or learn them.



6. Avoid things that distract from your words

No handwritten manuscripts. Do not use coloured paper, watermarks or plaster each page with obtrusive 'Copyright' symbols or statements. You will have your manuscript on your computer and that is enough to protect your copyright.

7. You get one chance to make a first impression

Read the Submission Guidelines for each publisher and stick to them. Ignoring them might cost you a book deal. Publishers want authors who can produce publishable copy without the need for expensive editing. Yes they want authors who can create magic on the page, but they also need authors who can spell, follow instructions and produce to guidelines and timescales. However, the heart of a book is the story or concept and for those with no time or expertise, a professional editor can help. Most famous people with books, who are not writers, pay for an editor to provide their work with an overall polish.

8. What to say about yourself

For some books the author is all important. How and why you wrote the book is important too. But not as important as how you intend to promote it. Most books are granted 6 months on the shelf. Unless they sell during those months they are likely to be taken down and destroyed [yes - pulped]. Even if they sell out, it is unlikely that the bookshop will re-order, as there are so many new books launching.

The publisher will not promote your book. Unless you are rich and famous and then they might do. Otherwise, you will need to offer the publisher a plan. If the distributor can persuade the bookshop to take your book, you will need to make readers magically appear in their bookshop, wanting your book. The importance of this will vary from book to book.

It is worth emphasising that the *author – public* and *author – publisher* relationship are both important. Both will bear upon the decision to pursue your manuscript.

***Lime Books** prefers authors to present their manuscript or concept with an accompanying letter explaining why they wrote the book and how they intend to market it. A separate author bio, written in third person, is also necessary. An author headshot is also good, but optional.

9. Hard copy or email?

Lime Books prefers submissions by email first. If what has been emailed passes the first assessment a hard copy maybe requested. Some publishers will only consider hard copy, some want two of everything and will not return them. They even make the statement that they 'destroy' all submitted manuscripts that are not accepted. Most do not return submissions.

***Lime Books** welcomes your submission. Please send manuscript or concept plus introductory letter, bio and author photo to the Publisher.

I hope this has been of some help.

Robert Salisbury
Publisher