

FREE DOWNLOAD FROM AUTHORWINGS

Query Letter Template and Submission Tracker

Everything you need to pitch literary agents and publishers: a fill-in query letter, an annotated example, a synopsis guide, a proposal outline for nonfiction, and trackers for every agent and every query.

10 pages · Fiction and nonfiction · Checked September 2026

What's inside

1 Query letter template

Fill in each part, one page

2 Annotated example

A sample query with every part labeled

3 Before-you-send checklist

12 checks on every query

4 Synopsis guide

A one-page plan for your summary

5 Nonfiction proposal outline

The sections agents expect

6 Agent research list

Rank agents by fit

7 Submission tracker

Log every query and reply

8 When an agent offers

Questions to ask, and red flags

How to use it: draft your query in Part 1, compare it with the example in Part 2, and run the checklist in Part 3 before every batch. The full guide at authorwings.com/how-to-get-a-book-published explains each step.

1

PART 1

Query letter template

Keep the whole letter to one page, about 250 to 350 words. Write each part in the box, then paste them together in this order.

Greeting Dear [agent's name], spelled exactly as on their agency page	
1. Personal opening Why this agent: a book they represent, an interview, or their wish list	
2. The hook Fiction: your main character, what they want, what stands in the way, what's at stake. Nonfiction: the problem your book solves and why now	
3. The details Title, genre, word count, and one or two recent comparable books (comps)	
4. Your bio A few lines on you, and any credentials that matter for this book	
5. Thank-you and sign-off Thank them, mention what you've pasted below per their guidelines, and sign with your name and contact details	

Word count of your query: _____ Target: 250 to 350

Annotated example

A sample query for an invented mystery. Notice how short each part is, and how the hook does most of the work.

Personal opening	Dear Jordan Lee, I'm querying you because you represent quiet, character-driven mysteries set in small coastal towns, and your interview on building suspense through setting stayed with me.
The hook	When lighthouse keeper's daughter Nell Ashby finds her late father's logbook in a stranger's coat, the last entry is dated the night he drowned, and it isn't in his handwriting. With the island cut off for the winter, Nell has until the spring ferry to learn who wrote it, and why someone in town wants the log back.
The details	THE LANTERN LOG is a complete 82,000-word mystery that will appeal to readers of atmospheric small-town suspense.
Your bio	I grew up on the coast of Maine, where I teach high school English. This is my first novel.
Sign-off	As your guidelines request, the first ten pages are pasted below. Thank you for your time and consideration. [Your name], with your email and phone number

Why it works: the opening shows research, the hook has a character, a goal, an obstacle and a deadline, the details fit on one line, and the bio is short and relevant.

3

PART 3

Before-you-send checklist

Run this before every batch of queries.

☐	The manuscript is finished and revised (fiction and memoir)
☐	The query is one page, about 250 to 350 words
☐	The agent's name is spelled correctly
☐	The personal opening is specific to this agent
☐	The hook names the character, goal, obstacle and stakes
☐	Title, genre and word count are in the details
☐	Comps are recent books, not all-time bestsellers
☐	The bio is short and relevant to this book
☐	I'm sending exactly what the guidelines ask for Pages, chapters, synopsis or proposal, and in the format they want
☐	The agent is open to queries right now
☐	The agent is legitimate Earns only a commission and charges no reading fees
☐	The query is logged in my submission tracker

A synopsis is a one- or two-page summary of the whole story, including the ending, in present tense. Plan it here, then write it as plain paragraphs.

Opening Who the main character is and their world, before the story starts	
The inciting event What happens that sets the story moving	
Rising action The main turns: two or three key events, and how the stakes grow	
The crisis The darkest moment, when all seems lost	
The climax How the main conflict is resolved	
The ending How the story ends, including any twist. Never hold it back	

Tip: name only the characters the plot needs, usually three to five, and put each name in capitals the first time it appears.

Most nonfiction sells on a proposal before the book is written. Tick each section as you draft it.

☐	Overview The book's big idea, the promise to readers, and why now
☐	About the author Your credentials, and your platform: the audience you can already reach
☐	Target readers Who the book is for, and how many of them there are
☐	Comparable books Three to five recent books like yours, and how yours is different
☐	Marketing plan What you'll do to reach readers: talks, email list, media, partnerships
☐	Chapter outline A paragraph or two on each chapter
☐	Sample chapters One or two polished chapters, often the introduction and one more
☐	Length and timing Estimated word count and when you'll deliver the manuscript

6

PART 6

Agent research list

List 20 to 40 agents who represent your genre, then rank them by fit. Query the best fits in small batches.

Agent	Agency	Genres they want	Open?	Fit (1 to 5)

Submission tracker

Log every query the day you send it. Most responses take from two weeks to six months.

Agent	Date sent	What I sent	Reply	Reply date	Next step

Reply key: N = no, P = request for a partial, F = request for the full manuscript, O = offer, blank = no reply yet

8

PART 8

When an agent offers

Congratulations. Before you say yes, ask questions, and let the other agents who have your pages know.

Ask this	A good answer sounds like
How would you pitch my book to editors?	A clear plan, in their own words
Which editors or publishers would you send it to?	Specific names or imprints
Do you expect revisions before submission?	An honest answer about how much
What's your commission?	Usually 15% for US sales, more only when a co-agent is used
How do you communicate, and how often?	A pattern that suits you
What happens if the book doesn't sell?	A plan for your next book
Can I talk to one of your clients?	Yes

Walk away if...

×	An agent charges a reading or evaluation fee
×	A "publisher" offers a traditional deal but asks you to pay
×	Someone contacts you out of the blue offering to republish your book for a fee
×	You're pressured to sign or pay right away
×	A contract takes your rights for life with no way to get them back

GET YOUR MANUSCRIPT READY

Whichever route you choose, a strong manuscript is what gets a book noticed.

AuthorWings editors help you get it ready. If you decide to self-publish, we handle the rest, with every account in your name and 100% of your rights kept.

- **Editorial assessment:** From \$180, credited if you book a full edit within 60 days
- **Book editing:** Proofread from \$140, line, copy and proofread at \$0.05 per word (\$1,000 minimum)
- **Self-publishing packages:** From \$529, or from \$2,499 with editing

authorwings.com/book-editing · hello@authorwings.com