



Week 2 Exercises

Industry Perspectives

Investigating Your Future Publisher Activity

Investigate one agent or publisher you might make contact with. Each will have their own profile of the type of books they take on and specifications for how they want material submitted, so this is a very practical exercise in getting acquainted with the submission process.

You can find out about most publishers online through their websites, or via such websites as The Australian Writer's Marketplace (AWM). To work out which ones might be good possibilities for your work, check out the relevant genre or subject area in your local bookstore, or in AWM.

WHAT TO DO:

When you have made your choice of one ideal agent or publisher, investigate the following details, collate them and share what you have learned on the **Publisher Investigation Forum**.

Include the following details:

- Name of the agent or publisher
- A note about the market they reach or the genres they publish/agent
- Are they currently accepting unsolicited manuscripts?
- A summary of their submission guidelines – what to include, format etc.

EXAMPLE:

- *Random House Australia*
- *Major trade publisher, extensive list of thrillers (Lee Childs, Kathy Reichs, Dan Brown, James Patterson)*
- *Accepting manuscripts – see website*
- *Hard copy only, include covering letter, synopsis, sample manuscript, stamped SAE*



Write A Query Letter Activity

This is where we get very specific in our pitching, as it can really hone your thinking to address a living, breathing human being!

WHAT TO DO:

- Write a query letter specifically to the agent or publisher you are interested in approaching. (Make sure you put in their name and address so that your tutor knows about your intended audience.)
- Email your letter to your tutor at: submissions@awmonline.com.au. Please make your subject heading the following: “Pitching To Publishers – [INSERT YOUR NAME HERE]”. If your email is not properly labelled your submission may not receive feedback in time.
- Any submissions sent *after* this week may not be read by the tutor.
- Your tutor will give you some feedback on your letter, emphasising the strengths of what you have written.

EXAMPLE:

[This sample letter was supplied by publisher and former literary agent Sophie Hamley; her notes are in square brackets.]

Dear Agent/Publisher,

Please find enclosed a synopsis and three chapters of my [insert genre if relevant] novel, Imperfections, which is approximately 80 000 words in length.

Imperfections is the story of Louisa, an orphan from Outback Australia at the turn of the century, from her humble beginnings to her rise to become one of the richest and most powerful madams in Sydney. [Ideally this should be a pitch more than a description. You can take up to two paragraphs for this.]

The target audience for this novel is most likely to be women in the age range of 30 and up who enjoy the work of authors such as Kate Grenville and Thomas Kenneally [or relevant writer].

I am a Brisbane-based writer of literary fiction [or whichever genre you write in]. My previous publishing credits include short stories in Island Magazine, Meanjin and Overland Journal – a full list of my publications is attached. I am a graduate of the Queensland University of Technology Masters in Creative Writing Program.

I undertook the writing of this book after discovering some family secrets in old letters my grandmother had hidden away in her glory chest. The character of Louisa is based on my grandmother's mother – while she was not actually a brothel madam, there are certainly some dubious gaps in her history and I found myself thinking 'What if?' [Only include such a paragraph if there's a real story there – or fold this into the description/pitch, above – this kind of information isn't as important as the pitch]

Please be advised that I am sending this submission to other agents/publishers. I do not require the manuscript to be returned [increasingly this won't apply as agents/publishers accept electronic submissions].

Many thanks for considering my work, and I look forward to hearing from you in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

A Writer



Help

If you do not understand these activities or what is required of you, then post a question into the **Q&A Forum Thread**. The Site Administrator or one of your fellow course mates will offer you some advice. If you find you require further help contact the Queensland Writers Centre via email on support@awmonline.com.au or call during business hours, Monday to Friday, AEST, on (07) 3842 9952

Week 2 Exercise Checklist

- **Publisher Investigation Activity:** Investigate one agent or publisher you want to make contact with and post the information you discover on the the **Publisher Investigation Forum**.
- **Write A Query Letter Activity:** Write a query letter for the agent or publisher you investigated and email it to your tutor for feedback at: submissions@awmonline.com.au Please make your subject heading the following: “Pitching To Publishers – [INSERT YOUR NAME HERE]”. If your email is not properly labelled your submission may not receive feedback in time.