

The Authors Publish Guide to Children's and Young Adult Publishing



Second
Edition



Emily Harstone

The Authors Publish Guide to
Children's
and
Young Adult
Publishing

Second Edition

Emily Harstone

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Introduction

Writing for children and young adults is very different than writing for adults. Audience expectations are different. Picture books, for example, have completely different sub-genres than adult books. Whereas adult books have genres like science fiction and fantasy, picture books have sub-genres like fairy tale, alphabet, and bedtime books.

There is a whole body of knowledge that the authors of children's and young adult books need to apply that is separate from that used by writers who write books for adults. I have decided to write a book focused on children's and young adult publishing in order to detail specifics required to publish in that sector. I've covered adult publishing in [*The Authors Publish Guide to Manuscript Submission*](#) -- if you only write adult fiction or non-fiction that book would be a much better fit for you

It is important to state that this book won't cover writing and editing a children's book, as that is a separate skill set. In my experience, the best way to gain knowledge in those areas is to join a class or workshop that focuses on children's book writing.

This book is focused on publishing a book you have already written, revised and edited. Please know that revision and editing are

essential steps you must complete before starting the submission process. Publishers do not take un-edited work seriously.

The Authors Publish Guide to Children's and Young Adult Publishing will cover the basics of how to submit a manuscript, as well the details you should know before submitting children's and young adult (YA) books.

There are so many misconceptions about children's book publishing! One of the most common is that an author should submit a picture book with illustrations already included, when that is in fact the opposite of what most publishers want – unless, of course, you are an author/illustrator. I hope to dispel any misconceptions in this book.

The Authors Publish Guide to Children's and Young Adult Publishing also includes information on 70 manuscript publishers that consider direct submissions of children's and YA books. Following that section is a chapter on literary journals and magazines that are open to writing aimed at younger readers, and then a chapter on additional resources for authors.

This book should give you all the information necessary to submit a manuscript and find a publisher, as well as help you understand the

children's publishing market as a whole. However, this book won't help you write that manuscript.

Some of the information in the Children's Book section and the YA section is redundant. I am assuming that most authors will not read this book from cover to cover, instead they will selectively read the sections that are relevant to them. Because of that there is, for example, a manuscript formatting section in each of the sections.

New in this second edition of the book is a chapter on finding an agent for your work, as well as a list of agents that represents children's or young adult books.

As always, your feedback and suggestions are appreciated. You can contact me at support@authorspublish.com.

– Emily Harstone

How to Submit Your Manuscript

If you are not sure if your work is ready to submit, [this article](#) can really be helpful. It covers the three steps you need to follow in order to make sure that your manuscript is ready to be sent out to agents or publishers.

Once you are sure that your manuscript is ready, you can start the submission process. But realize that you still might have to make changes in order for it to be accepted by a publisher or an agent.

For a long time, submitting seemed strange and mysterious to me. It seemed too overwhelming to actually do. In fact, for the most part submitting is relatively easy.

Most publishers want the same two things -- a query letter and a synopsis (although a synopsis is not needed with picture books). They also expect an excerpt of your book, generally the first two chapters. Most publishers want the entire manuscript for picture books.

There are specific requirements that differ from publisher to publisher and from agency to agency. However, it is good to have a basic query letter and synopsis that you modify to meet the needs of the given agent or publisher. Just make sure you send the correct version to the right person; it really annoys a publisher to receive

submissions with another publisher's name on it. The same goes for agents.

You should spend a lot of time and consideration crafting the query letter. This is the first impression you will make on agents and publishers. [This article](#) is very helpful to read before starting your query letter.

It is also important to note that if you are submitting a cover letter for a children's book or a YA novel, you should include any relevant experience you have that pertains to the audience of the book. For example, it is important to include the fact that you are a kindergarten teacher if you are submitting a book aimed at kindergartners. If you have volunteered with youth for a decade, include that relevant information in a submission. If you wrote a non-fiction picture book about plants for example, and you are a botanist, that would be relevant information to include.

Many publishers expect information about your author platform or marketing plan. Don't know where to start in terms of an author platform? [Building an Author Platform](#) by Chantelle Atkins is a great place to start.

If you are writing a book targeted to young children, it is normal for the primary people interacting with you on your website to be adults. If you are writing a YA book, you want to appeal more to a younger audience (middle school on up). Parents and educators are

more likely to pick out kids' books, but most teenagers won't let adults have too much of a say in what they read.

If you meet a publisher or an agent directly at a conference, most will accept a pitch in person, followed by an email query. A pitch can also be handy to include in your query cover letter. Don't know what a pitch is? [This article](#) talks about what a pitch is, and more importantly, how to make a good one. [This article](#) goes into even more detail. I always include my pitch in my cover letter.

Not all publishers and agents require a synopsis, but many do. Synopses are vital for all chapter books, from middle grade readers to YA. Not all publishers want them, but most do. Most publishers want a complete synopsis of the plot that fits on one page. By complete synopsis, I mean that they want spoilers. They also generally want information about character development. [This article](#) focuses on how to craft a synopsis.

It should go without saying, but edit and polish the query letter and synopsis before submitting. If you can afford an editor-for-hire, have them review the query letter, the synopsis, and also the first twenty pages (of chapter books and novels). Twice. Or more. The first twenty pages of chapter books are all that most agents and many publishers will initially see, so make sure they are compelling and error free.

You should also make sure that your manuscript is correctly formatted. [This article](#) focuses on that.

Author M.J. Moores interviewed a literary agent, an editor, and a published author to uncover the top reasons most manuscripts are rejected. Her article, [The Top Three Reasons Most Manuscripts get Rejected](#) should be read before you begin the submission process.

Once you have completed a query letter and a synopsis that you are happy with, start to research places to which you are going to submit your book. You should decide early on if you want to submit directly to publishers, or if you want to submit to agents.

If you are focusing on finding an agent, you should read the article, “[The Safest Way to Search For an Agent,](#)” before proceeding. [This article](#) on how to find, research, and evaluate literary agents is also very helpful. One of the best free reputable search engines for agents is [Agent Query](#), where you can start looking for an agent.

When looking for an agent, you should focus on agents who primarily work with children’s or YA publishing. Submitting your children’s or YA manuscript to an agent who focuses only on adult publishing is doing both the agent and your manuscript a disservice. Children’s and YA publishing is a specialized market and you want to work with an agent who really understands it.

It is also important to note, particularly when it comes to children's publishing, it is normal to find a publisher and then an agent. The well-known children's author Eileen Spinelli says: "Send them to as many editors as possible and don't give up. You might want to get an agent after your first book is published. The main thing is don't become discouraged."

Even major publishers, including some of the big five, accept un-agented submissions when it comes to children's books.

The prolific and renowned author/illustrator Tomie DePaola advises unpublished authors to send query letters without including the manuscript. The idea being if you can't sum up the plot and appeal of the book in one paragraph it is doubtful that a publisher would be interested in it.

If you are looking at submitting a manuscript directly to a publisher, a whole chapter that covers publishers accepting direct submissions comes later in the book. We always check watchdog sites like [Writers Beware](#) before reviewing a publisher.

Remember, there is no such thing as a legitimate traditional publisher that charges its writers. Your publisher should pay you, not the other way around. When examining a publisher's website, [this article will help you know what to keep an eye out for](#).

Some publishers can respond to submissions within weeks, others within years, so keep that in mind. If you have not heard from a publisher in six months, you should email them to ask about the status of the manuscript. That is, unless they explicitly state on their website that they will either take longer than the six months or, will not reply to the submission unless they are interested.

Once you find agents or publishers that you feel would be a good fit, you should check and double-check their submission guidelines.

[This article](#) is a great reminder of how and why following the guidelines is so important.

Most publishers accept electronic submissions through email or a submission manager, but a few still require submissions through the post. Either way, the publisher's submission guidelines should walk you through the steps. The same goes for agents.

It is important to refrain from submitting to an agent or publisher if they say they are closed to unsolicited submissions. Your manuscript will not be read and in all likelihood you will annoy the person or persons who receive it, which could hurt your chances with them in the future.

Children's Book Publishing

Children's book publishing is a catchall phrase that covers a wide variety of age groups and sub-genres aimed at each age group. Below I break down the different categories of publishing, give examples of successful books in each category, and detail what most publishers are looking for in terms of each category. I'm also going to cover things that are important in terms of picture books and chapter books.

I went back and forth on where to put it, but the section on "tween" books is here and not in the chapter focused on YA literature.

Board Books and Early Concept Books

These books are aimed at babies and young children ages zero to four. Board books are composed of hard, thick pages. Some authors specialize in them, particularly Sandra Boynton, whose classics include [*The Going to Bed Book*](#) and [*Barnyard Dance*](#).

If a board book has a plot it is a very minimal one. They are usually narrated in third person and there are generally less than ten pages a book. Often picture books that do well are reprinted as board books later on, and these board books tend to have a lot more words and be aimed generally at older readers. The advice in this section is

focused on books that are first and primarily printed in the board format.

Sometimes board books are focused on concepts such as colors, or lessons such as going to the potty. A large number of board books are about going to bed and the alphabet or counting. Language in these books is very simple.

Board books usually have less than 100 words total. Some early picture books have board book editions, such as [*Madeline*](#) by Ludwig Bemelmans and [*Corduroy*](#) by Don Freeman. These books are much longer than a hundred words in length, but that is because they are picture books first and foremost, just converted to the board book format.

Early Concept Books are generally identical to board books in terms of content, but the presentation is different. Instead of being printed on thick board, they are books with normal paper pages (although sometimes the paper is on the thicker side to create flaps). These books are aimed at the same age group as board books generally are. Examples include [*Dear Zoo*](#) by Rod Campbell, as well as [*Easter! Easter!*](#) by Leslie Patricelli. It is important to note that, if a book is popular in paperback and aimed at the very young, it will almost always get a board book version.

It is also important to note that even when it comes to board books, trends matter. A few years ago it became very trendy to create board book versions of classics, such as [*Pride & Prejudice A Counting Primer*](#) by Jennifer Adams, and many more.

Early Picture Books

Early Picture Books are aimed at kids ages three to six. Most publishers currently prefer to publish books in the 300 to 800 word range, but they can be up to 1,000 words (although these are a tougher sell). Most books sold are in the 300 to 500 word range. The idea behind the limited word count is that the author relies on the illustrator for most of the description. Any description left in the text is usually important to the rhythm and cadence of the story.

Mostly, these books have a central protagonist who is either of kindergarten age, or an animal. The protagonist, and not any adults in the story, must solve the central story problem. Many books aimed at this age range do not really have adults in them; the focus is either on children or animals.

The language in picture books is geared towards being read out loud. Themes can cover everything from family, to loss (usually in terms of favorite toys – keeping things light), to controlling emotions, to siblings (particularly the addition of new ones).

Famous read aloud picture books include, [*Where the Wild Things Are*](#), by Maurice Sendak, [*Love You Forever*](#) by Robert Munsch, and [*The Giving Tree*](#) by Shel Silverstein.

Picture Storybooks

These books are aimed at children ages five to eight. It is a more limited demographic and overlaps with the early reader demographic. Picture storybooks are much trickier to sell to publishers. They are generally between 500 to 1000 words in length, but anything that is 750 words or longer is a harder sell, so that point is important to keep in mind. Most picture books stay within the either 32 or 48 page format, the allowance going to longer works of nonfiction.

Popular picture books for older readers include, [*The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*](#) by Jon Scieszka, [*Harry the Dirty Dog*](#) by Gene Zion, and [*The Goblin and the Empty Chair*](#) by Mem Fox.

The language is still intended for an adult to read out loud, and can be a little more complex. Themes in books like these can also be more complex and handle harder issues like poverty, divorce, etc..

Overall Picture Book Advice

If you are not an author/illustrator, send your picture book manuscript as written story only, without pictures. Most publishers have contracts with illustrators or in-house illustrators that they will pair you with if they accept the work. This is one of the reasons you should really go with a publisher you trust, and one with a good visual sense.

If you are an illustrator, most publishers are open to illustrator submissions. Most independent publishers do not accept submissions by author/illustrator, and if you are an author/illustrator I highly encourage you to try and find an agent.

Some authors overcompensate for the lack of illustrations by adding detailed descriptions of what pictures they want to be paired with the text they've already written. This is unprofessional, as publishers do not want too much information. Based on the text, it should be relatively clear what the picture will end up being. But if need be, the author can include minimal illustrator notes to describe

important action on the page that might not be obvious with words only.

Because the publisher is ultimately the one in control of the illustrations, I really encourage picture book writers to have looked at in-person, and preferably purchased, at least one book from every publisher they are submitting to. The library can really help with that if your budget is limited, but it is much easier to know what you are getting into if you are not basing your opinion on the front cover of a book you are seeing only online.

If you have completed professional illustrations for your book already, there are a few publishers that consider books with illustrations and you can submit to those. But your odds of getting your manuscript accepted are higher if you try to find an agent first. Most of the successful author/illustrators I know found an agent and then a publisher.

In general, the biggest mistake that I see from authors who are writing children's books is that they aren't spending much time reading them! Even though I'm not writing picture books, as the parent of a small child I spend an hour every day reading picture books.

For authors, I think it is very important to be aware of the classic picture books that have defined earlier generations, books like [*Good Dog Carl*](#) by Alexandra Day, [*Jumanji*](#) by Chris Van Allsburg, [*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*](#) by Eric Carle, [*Dogger*](#) by Shirly Hughes, and [*Cloudy With A Chance of Meatballs*](#) by Judi Barrett.

It is also important to get a feel for what is currently popular and defining children's book publishing. By reading contemporary children's books, I have been surprised by the focus on protagonist originality and quirks. Books like [*This is Sadie*](#) by Sara O'Leary, and [*Iggly Peck, Architect*](#) by Andrea Beaty are clear examples of this. But there is a wide variety in contemporary classics. Herve Tullt's [*Press Here*](#) has no characters at all. Jon Klassen's [*I Want My Hat Back*](#) is largely humor based.

Go to your local bookstore and look at what books they're promoting in the children's section. Try to find a knowledgeable bookseller to tell you which books are selling well. Focus in on those that were just published in the last year or so. And, read the awards lists for acclaimed titles.

Take note of who is publishing what. If the publisher that is currently focused on publishing work that is similar to what you are working on only accepts agented submissions, you should focus on finding an agent, perhaps even one that has already placed books

with that publisher. Make sure to mention the successful books that your book has common ties to when submitting to publishers or agents. It will make it clear that you have done your due diligence.

Some of the readers will already know all this, and have already put in effort in this regard. If you have, focus on reading the books that are aimed at the same age group as your book. There is no such thing as being too well read when it comes to picture books, and the relative brevity of them makes it possible to read a lot even with limited free time.

This might not be something publishers take into consideration, but as a parent I only buy books for my child that aren't too repetitive, because I know I will be reading the book possibly hundreds of times over. Some repetition is important and good for kids' reading confidence, but too much can turn parents off.

Rhyming is a harder sell these days, particularly to publishers. It is certainly harder to publish rhyming books, but that doesn't mean that a book with excellent rhymes will not do well. [*The Gruffalo*](#) by Julia Donaldson is a good example of a successful contemporary book that rhymes. In general, it is good to avoid rhyming, or to only include a few half rhymes unless you are an expert poet.

Also I cannot emphasize enough the importance of word choice. The vocabulary you use really has to be appropriate to the audience that your work is aimed at. *The Children's Writer's Word Book* by Alijandra Molginer is but one example of a resource you could use for leveling your word choices. If you read very many board books aimed at the very young you will realize it isn't just the words themselves that matter, but the sound of the words. Lots of onomatopoeias appeal to the very young; words like moo and choo-choo hold a lot of appeal.

If you're not sure the vocabulary of your book is appropriate, it can also be good to find some kids to test it out on. Make sure the length is appropriate enough to keep their attention, too.

Earlier I talked about how many words publishers are looking for, depending on the category. One has to take these limits seriously. You could write a great book, but it will not be considered for publication if it does not meet length requirements. There are of course longer picture books out there, but most of these were either written and published a long time ago, or were written by already established authors, or are in the nonfiction space.

The good news is that if your book is too long, you have an opportunity to perfect your craft by revising and editing it down to the appropriate length.

Also, it is good to know that many children's books now don't have a moral. Forcing one is not going to make yours more appealing to publishers. If there is one, that is fine, but it is in no way a requirement and many publishers don't like it.

I also encourage picture book authors to review the additional resources section of this book and join the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators or the Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators & Performers. Both of these organizations do a great job of providing accurate industry information.

Formatting Advice for Picture Book Manuscripts

Formatting a picture book in many ways is similar to formatting any other manuscript. You should always use 12pt Times New Roman font. The type should be black. Do not mess around with colors or font. It might seem cute at the time, but it is not a good idea and your manuscript will not be taken as seriously, or in some situations not be considered at all.

Your contact information should always be on the top left of the first page. This includes your name, your address, your phone number and your email address. You can include a link to a website if you have one.

The word count should be in the upper right. If you are submitting a print manuscript □ add a couple □ □ □ inches between the information and your title. The title should be centered. Most authors make the title bold or make the font slightly bigger. Your name (or pen name) should be centered below the title, but it should be size 12 font and not bold.

Picture books do not require cover pages and so the actual manuscript should start below the title and author text, with maybe two or three inches of space between them. The manuscript itself should be double-spaced.

There should be no lines between paragraphs. Each paragraph should be indented .5 inches (Word standard setting). Paragraphs should be left aligned (standard) and the margins should be 1 inch (standard). Only one space should exist between sentences.

Make sure to have a header on all the following pages. The header must include the author's last name and the title on the upper left. Page numbers are mentioned on the right.

Make sure to follow any additional guidelines outlined by the publisher.

Do not include a copyright. Copyrighting work dates it (among other things) and it also marks the author as an amateur. Copyrighting is not a necessary step to take with a manuscript. Just include the text of the story. Avoid unnecessary illustration notes, or page break notes, or anything else. Those are up to the discretion of the publisher, should they choose to publish the book.

Early Readers

Most early reader books are written in house and are targeted to 5 to 7 year olds. It is hard to find a publisher open to general submissions or an agent that handles them, although there are exceptions. Sometimes authors meeting publishers at conferences get drafted to write these books.

The word length of these books varies from 200 to 3,500 words. It all depends on what level of reader the book is aimed at.

The protagonist is usually the age or a year older than the intended reader. Sometimes the protagonist is an animal. The best example of the protagonist being an animal is in the books of Arnold Lobel including, *Owl at Home* and *Frog and Toad*. Other popular early reader book series include *Henry and Mudge* by Cynthia Rylant and *Amelia Bedelia* by Peggy Parish.

Early readers are still illustrated (although not always on every page), so it is important to keep that in mind. These books are designed for the child to read aloud on their own, but are often still read aloud by parents.

Third person is still the most common mode of storytelling. The stories generally have a clear plot arc starting with a hook, followed by rising action, a climax, and then a satisfying conclusion. These stories focus on action and dialogue. There is very little description.

Vocabulary is tightly controlled by the publisher. Themes are lighter in these works and the focus is on educating the reader.

Chapter Books

There are two levels of introduction when it comes to chapter books. One focuses on six to seven year olds and these books are between 5,000 and 20,000 words. The other is aimed at eight to ten year olds and these books are between 20,000 and 50,000 words.

The protagonist of these books tends to be a year older than the intended reader. The protagonist is not complicated and tends to be un-flawed.

These stories start out with a hook but the rising action tends to be more complicated and involves twists before the climax occurs. The story pace is slower in the older chapter books, but not much. The focus is on plot and dialogue and language is simple and straightforward. There are some descriptions in this level of books.

These books often have themes relevant to the first few years of school; things like fitting in and friendship are focused on in these books.

Early chapter books almost always have some illustrative element to them. They don't tend to have full color illustrations (though some do), or illustrations on every page, but illustrations are interspaced throughout the book.

[*The Magic Tree House series*](#) by Mary Pope Osborne is a classic example of an early reader aimed at six to seven year olds. [*Ivy + Bean*](#) by Annie Barrows is a good example of a series aimed at eight to ten year olds.

Middle Grade

These books are aimed at eight to thirteen year olds and are generally between 30,000 to 55,000 words in length. If the book is in the fantasy genre it tends to be longer. Books in this category tend

to cover a whole range of subjects and topics. Some can deal with complex issues, and many do not.

There are some middle grade books with two protagonists aimed at this age group, but most still have one. The protagonists are usually a year or two older than the intended reader. The books are almost always written in past tense, with a few exceptions.

In books for middle grade readers the plot is longer, more developed, and more complex. All of the components of a story are play a role here. Sub-plots play an important role and secondary characters become more developed.

In middle grade books, the main character tends to have more complex motivations than at the chapter book level. Main characters can make mistakes, as long as they redeem themselves along the way.

Language must be clean of profanity but it can be more complex, particularly if your book is aimed at twelve to thirteen year olds.

Harry Potter is a middle grade series; or rather it starts out that way, as the later books veer solidly into YA territory. *Beyond the Bright Sea* by Lauren Wolf, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry and *My Side of the*

[Mountain](#) by Jean Craighead George are all excellent examples of middle grade books.

Tween Novels

This is a new and difficult category for brick and mortar bookstores, as most have a clear children's section and a clear young adult section, and tween novels are neither, so they have to choose which section to put these book into (sometimes on a case by case basis). Because of that, novels in this category can be harder to sell to publishers.

Interesting is the fact that if you Google search tween books you get a lot of books I would consider middle grade readers (such as [A Wrinkle in Time](#) by Madeline L'Engle and [The Boxcar Children](#) by Gertrude Chandler Warner), or YA titles (such as the [Hunger Games](#) by Suzanne Collins), so I think "tween" as a category is something readers struggle with as well.

Tween novels are aimed at children between the ages of ten and fourteen. Most are between 40,000 to 55,000 words, but tween fantasy or mystery novels can be longer.

The characters in these novels tend to be two to five years older than the intended audience. Having one protagonist is most common, but having two is not unheard of. Third person narration is how most

stories for tweens are told, but first person narration is becoming more and more popular. Tween protagonists tend to be complex and flawed. Secondary characters can be very important in tween books, and they can have their own plot arcs.

Any theme can be covered in novels aimed at this age range, but subjects such as sexual abuse and rape are rarely the main plot focus and must be handled very carefully if introduced. But subjects are getting edgier, recently a number of books have had suicide as a major theme.

Wonder by R.J. Palacio and *Memoirs of a Bookbat* by Kathryn Lasky are good examples of tween books.

General Chapter Book Advice

It is so important to know and understand your audience with these age groups. The best way to do that is to read popular contemporary books in the category that you are writing for. It is also important to know what the classic books are in the age range you're writing for.

It can be very helpful to talk to a librarian about which older books are most consistently checked out from the library. Also, teachers can be excellent resources for these age groups. They know which books engage their students and which ones do not.

Read widely in the age range your book is targeted at. If your book is in a sub-genre, say fantasy, make sure you read the seminal books in that sub-genre, for example, [The Earthsea Cycle](#) by Ursula K. Le Guin and [A Wrinkle in Time](#) by Madeline L'Engle.

With picture books, the age of the kids makes it kind of tricky to figure out why they like a particular one so much. I recently asked my four year old why [Chrysanthemum](#) by Kevin Henkes was her favorite book, and she said it was because she liked hearing the world Chrysanthemum. Older children can certainly give better storyline feedback.

The readers of chapter books can offer much more insightful feedback about why they like the things they like. So try to find some readers that are in the age range your book is aimed at. You can learn a lot from them about what books they like, and they can also ideally read your book manuscript and offer relevant feedback.

It can also be important, depending on the content of your book and your background as an author, to get a sensitivity reader. Sensitivity readers are individuals who review advance manuscripts of upcoming books, and they check for issues of representation, bias, insensitive language and cultural inaccuracies. They make suggestions for possible changes to authors. A sensitivity reader reviews a manuscript for internalized bias and negatively charged language.

Many review companies such as Kirkus employ sensitivity readers, but authors now often pay readers to review the content of their books before they submit. Sensitivity readers are important for chapter books and YA books, particularly if you are interacting with charged issues that you yourself do not face. For example, if an author without a learning disability writes a book about having one, a sensitivity reader would be very helpful in promoting accurate representation.

Your sensitivity reader need not be a professional, and can even be a friend, but it is important that they come from the correct background for the story. For example, if you write a book about refugees yet you are not one, getting the perspective of a refugee would be vital for the authenticity of your book.

Formatting Advice

Formatting a manuscript aimed at early readers, middle grade readers, and tween readers is almost entirely the same. You should always use 12pt Times New Roman font. The type should be black. Do not mess around with colors or font. It might seem cute at the time, but it is not a good idea and your manuscript will not be taken as seriously, or in some situations not be considered at all.

Your contact information should always be on the top left of the first page. This includes your name, your address, your phone number and your email address. You can include a link to a website if you have one.

The word count should be in the upper right. If you are submitting a print manuscript, add a couple of inches between the information and your title. The title should be centered. Most authors make the title bold or make the font slightly bigger. Your name (or pen name) should be centered below the title, but it should be size 12 font and not bold.

Books aimed at early readers do not require cover pages and so the actual manuscript should start below the title and author name, with maybe two or three inches of extra space. Chapter books of all lengths should have cover pages.

The manuscript itself should be double-spaced. There should be no lines between paragraphs. Each paragraph should be indented .5 inches (words standard setting). Paragraphs should be left aligned (standard) and the margins should be 1 inch (standard). Only one space should exist between sentences.

Make sure to have a header on all the following pages. The header must include the author's last name and the title on the upper left. Page numbers are mentioned on the right.

Make sure to follow any additional guidelines outlined by the publisher.

Do not include a copyright. Copyrighting work dates it (among other things) and it also marks the author as an amateur. Copyrighting is not a necessarily step to take with a manuscript.

Young Adult Publishing

YA is an interesting genre because unlike other categories of children's books, many adults read it, so there is a bit of a disconnect between the intended audience and the actual audience.

Publishers speculate that up to 80% of YA books are bought by adults over the age of eighteen. Keep in mind that at least some of those adults are buying them for teens. YA books are officially aimed at thirteen to eighteen year olds. The characters in these books are usually fifteen to eighteen years old.

One of the critical errors some new authors make when writing YA is to make a parent a main character, and even sometimes a POV character. I have never read a traditionally published YA book where an adult was a POV character.

Most publishers internally distinguish between older and younger YA, but when a reader is at a bookstore or browsing online, older and younger is mixed in together. For either older or younger YA, the author platform is more important than it is in children's book publishing because you will be directly interacting with teenagers.

Trends are very important in YA publishing. It is pretty easy to get a feeling for what is currently popular by talking to a teenage reader

or by visiting a bookstore, or by going on Goodreads and looking up the most popular YA book for the current year. But figuring out what will be popular or what publishers are thinking of getting into is a little trickier.

In my experience, if there is one book that really stands out in terms of success, but there are few other contemporary books in this same area, publishers will seek to fill the gap, and fast. *Twilight* was like that, and so were *The Hunger Games*, and both unleashed hundreds of imitations/versions.

The Horn Book Magazine (which we talk more about in the additional resources section) also regularly publishes helpful articles about trends in publishing.

It is very important to get a feel for what is good literature when it comes to YA, not just in terms of contemporary books, but in terms of classics; books like [*The Outsiders*](#) by S.E. Hinton and [*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*](#) by Stephen Chbosky. Reading books that recently did very well but are not current bestsellers can also be important. [*The Hunger Games*](#) by Suzanne Collins, [*The Fault in our Stars*](#) by John Green, and [*Eleanor & Park*](#) by Rainbow Rowell are all good examples of that phenomenon.

The great thing about YA books is that you don't have to personally know teens to hear their feedback. Unlike younger kids, teenagers are more likely to discuss books and review them online. It is great to specifically seek out teen opinions that way.

It can be crucial, depending on the content of your book and your background as an author, to get a sensitivity reader. Sensitivity readers are individuals who review advance manuscripts of upcoming books and they check for issues of representation, bias, insensitive language and cultural inaccuracies. They make suggestions for possible changes to authors. A sensitivity reader reviews a manuscript for internalized bias and negatively charged language.

Many review companies such as Kirkus employ sensitivity readers, but authors now often pay readers to review the content of their books before they submit them. Sensitivity readers are important for chapter books and YA books, particularly if you are interacting with charged issues that you yourself do not face. For example, if an author without a learning disability writes a book about having one, a sensitivity reader would be very helpful in promoting accurate representation.

Your sensitivity reader need not be a professional, and can even be a friend, but it is important that they come from the correct

background for the story. For example, if you write a book about refugees yet you are not one, getting the perspective of a refugee would be vital for the authenticity of your book. You also need to know that they are willing to give you an honest opinion.

It is important to treat your sensitivity reader with respect, so even if they are a friend or acquaintance, you should pay them for their time.

Younger YA

Younger YA is generally shorter than YA aimed at older readers, although there are exceptions, but most books are between 50,000 to 70,000 words. Genre books like fantasy can certainly be longer. Romance novels tend to be on the shorter side of the word range.

Younger YA is aimed at readers between the ages of 13 to 16. The protagonist of these books is generally between fifteen and seventeen. In some situations they can be 18, but that is rare.

The plot format is the same as in an adult novel; there is a complete story arc multiple sub-plots are expected. Characters are complex at this point and must also go through a complete arc. For teens, the

character arc often involves lots of angst and drama and first love and/or coming of age themes play an important role.

In Younger YA, character flaws are often specific to teens or are presented in a way that is specific to teens. Protagonists are angst filled, moody, and melodramatic. These characters are often self-involved and self absorbed, but still engaging.

Almost anything can happen in these novels, and with most publishers no subject is off limits. Although, if sex or violence appears in Younger YA, it is most often not overly graphic. Language should be mostly free of profanities or limited to mild ones. It is also increasingly important to avoid any language that is culturally offensive and problematic (a word like retard would be a prime example).

The main difference between adult and YA novels these days is the age of the protagonists and the fact that YA tends to be primarily plot oriented. Even literary YA has fewer descriptive passages than adult and more of a focus on pacing.

Older YA

Books that are categorized as Older YA are always over 50,000 words in length. The “longer the better” seems to be the general approach.

The target audience of these books is fifteen to eighteen year olds. The main protagonist of these books is not in college yet, but they often have a sibling or a friend who is. The plot arcs are full and developed the same way they are in younger YA.

The character arc differs in Older YA and there is less teen angst and wallowing. The characters have generally already had their “coming of age moments,” so their arcs are not quite as developed, and character changes are generally less dramatic. Proceeding along, the themes in Older YA tend to be lighter and not so dark and grim. Older readers tend to be over much angst and so the characters have to be, too.

In Older YA violence can be more fully described but sex still isn’t. Language can be a bit grittier and there can be some profanity but it should be used sparingly and deliberately.

Formatting Advice

When formatting a YA manuscript you should always use 12pt Times New Roman font. The type should be black. Do not mess

around with colors or font. It might seem cute at the time, but it is not a good idea and your manuscript will not be taken as seriously, or in some situations not be considered at all.

Your contact information should always be on the top left of the first page. This includes your name, your address, your phone number and your email address. You can include a link to a website if you have one.

The word count should be in the upper right. If you're submitting a print manuscript, add a couple of inches between the information and your title. The title should be centered. Most authors make the title bold or make the font slightly bigger. Your name (or pen name) should be centered below the title, but it should be size 12 font and not bold. This information makes up the cover page. The rest of the manuscript continues on the next page.

The manuscript itself should be double-spaced. There should be no lines between paragraphs. Each paragraph should be indented .5 inches (Word standard setting). Paragraphs should be left aligned (standard) and the margins should be 1 inch (standard, with only one space between sentences).

Make sure to have a header on all the following pages. The header must include the author's last name and the title on the upper left. Page numbers are mentioned on the right.

Make sure to follow any additional guidelines outlined by the publisher.

Do not include a copyright. Copyrighting work dates it (among other things) and it also marks the author as an amateur. Copyrighting is not a necessary step to take with a manuscript.

Evaluating Manuscript Publishers

It is hard to find good publishers, and it involves a lot of research just to find a legitimate publisher that accepts work if you do not have an agent. However, there are great options out there, particularly for genre writers.

The first thing you should do when considering submitting to a specific publisher is to do research.

I recommend using [the index of agents, publishers, and others](#) at Absolute Writes. A lot of speculation occurs in the forum, so take unverified information with a grain of salt. But there is lots of good legitimate information. Although not all of it is up to date. Absolute Writes is my primary research source when considering which publisher to review.

The site [Writer Beware](#), also contains a lot of information. They have a lot of detailed information as well as [this helpful list](#). Although they cover a lot fewer publishers than the Absolute Writes Water Cooler forum.

This may seem obvious to most, but no legitimate traditional* press will ever charge you money. If they charge you money, they are a vanity or assisted publishing company -- there is no way around that

A good way to spot a vanity publisher is to look for the word "packages." It is not that all self-publishing should be avoided, but you should know what you are getting into. Even in the world of assisted publishing there are reputable publishers and disreputable ones.

Another thing to look for includes publishers that are forward about how much they pay their authors in terms of royalties. If they are hiding this the amount of royalties, the pay could be minimal.

Writers Beware, and Absolute Writes sometimes don't list publishers or their listings are not up to date. If you don't know very much about the company or feel as if your information is out of date, Google the company name. It sounds so simple, but I have been shocked by what I have found by doing this. Sometimes you will find lawsuits or big newspaper articles about what a company has done that was never reported on any of the literary watchdog sites.

I am not telling you all of this to scare you, but to help you protect your writing. You should be confident when submitting that your work will go to the right publisher. Research helps reinforce that confidence.

[I have also written this article that focuses specifically on evaluating a companies website based on the information that is there.](#) If you come across a publisher where you can't find much about them

online you can still get a better perspective on if you should submit to them or not.

*Some established non-profit poetry presses charge reading fees, but have no other fees attached. Other respected literary presses have also started charging reading fees. We have a list of some of these charging publishers [here](#).

Manuscript Publishers

This chapter contains information about manuscript publishers that consider un-agented submissions of books for children and young adults. Some of these publishers focus exclusively on children, while others only publish YA. But most of the publishers publish a wide variety of books aimed at a range of age groups, including adults.

This chapter is organized alphabetically. I tried sorting it into categories but nothing really worked. So, make sure that the publishers you are submitting to are open to the kind of book you are submitting. Please don't submit a picture book to a YA publisher.

Some of these publishers are currently closed to submissions, but all of them are open to unsolicited submissions during specific periods of time.

Always make sure to follow individual publisher's submission guidelines. Check the publisher's submission section on their website before submitting. If a publisher states that they are not open to submissions, don't submit. If the publisher says they don't accept your genre of book, don't submit (you would be surprised by how often this happens).

We only review publishers that are open to writers regardless of nationality or current location. All of these publishers are open to international submissions.

All of the publishers in this chapter are traditional publishers. That means they should never charge you anything. Please send us an email at support@authorspublish.com if any publishers on this list try to charge you for services in any way.

ABDO PUBLISHING

ABDO is an established and leading publisher of educational books for children. Currently, they are looking for fiction manuscripts for a four title series, that contain educational content, and they should be focused on children between the ages of four and twelve. You can get a good idea of what they publish by visiting their website and scanning through their catalog.

What they are looking for shifts over time so please verify that this is still what they are looking for before proceeding.

In order for your work to be considered for publication, send in a detailed outline of the manuscript and potential series, as well as an introduction and two chapters. These two chapters don't need to be the first two; they should be the two chapters that you consider to be the best.

If you are an illustrator, you should submit three to five pieces that reflect your style and range. These can be hard copies or JPG images. Your work will not be returned to you, unless you include a self-addressed and stamped envelope. Always make sure that everything you submit is a copy and not an original.

Make sure to include a cover letter that includes your particular skills and qualifications. You should also include your publishing history if you have any.

One of the few drawbacks of ABDO is that they do not respond to all submissions. If they reject your work, they will not necessarily tell you unless you query about the submission status. Do not query before six months has passed.

Submissions can be made via email or by post. Make sure when emailing to address your submission to the correct editor. To read all the details visit their website [here](#).

Aethon Books

Aethon Books is a print and eBook publisher that focuses on Science Fiction and Fantasy. They are open to all sub-genres within these genres including Hard Sci-fi, Epic Fantasy, Space Opera, Military SF, Alt/History, and Time Travel. This includes books for young adults, although they haven't published many yet.

One of their focuses is on the audio book market and getting good voice actors to record their stories. This is a good sign, as the audio market is rapidly growing and there are a lot of opportunities within it currently.

They print on demand, and even though they have a distributor, it's Ingram, so you aren't as likely find them in brick and mortar stores on the shelf, but it is possible to order their books.

Their covers are well designed and appealing within the context of genre. You can get a feel for what they have previously published [here](#), but they very clearly favor series. To learn more about the publishing team behind Aethon you can go [here](#).

They are only interested in publishing novel length work. They say they offer some of the highest royalty rates in the business but they don't say what their royalty rates are. They do not offer advances but they seem to have good clear marketing strategies, which is always a plus.

When you submit to them they want the first 50 pages of your manuscript, which is an unusual number. The manuscripts they publish start at 60,000 words in length although 80,000 plus is preferable.

To learn more or submit go [here](#).

Albert Whitman & Company

Albert Whitman & Company has been around since 1919. I grew up reading the best-known series that they have published, *The Boxcar Children*. Over the past few years they have started to focus on publishing a larger number of books each year. Their goal is to be publishing 150 new books a year by 2020.

The company publishes middle grade fiction, picture books, and young adult novels. They consider proposals and unsolicited manuscripts in all of these categories. In picture books, they publish fiction and non-fiction.

Albert Whitman & Company handles their own distribution and sales to the trade (booksellers), school, and library markets. They are now focusing more on the trade aspect and have a new Young Adult Book imprint that has, to date, done well.

All submissions should be made via email. Under certain circumstances, however, they will review materials sent through the postal mail. These materials include self-published books and unusual formats that cannot be sent electronically. But you must query them through email first.

If you have not heard from Albert Whitman & Company in six months, assume that your work is rejected. If they are interested in

seeing more of your manuscript they will respond within those six months.

Follow their submission guidelines carefully. They have specific guidelines for each of the categories they publish. To read them in full visit their web page [here](#).

If you want to learn even more about them, there is an interesting article on the [American Booksellers Association Website](#). Some of the information in this review was gleaned from that article.

Allen & Unwin Book Publishers

Allen & Unwin is a large, independent Australian Press that is open to submissions on a wide range of topics. They have won a number of Australian publisher awards. They accept manuscripts based on pitches, and have a system known as the "Friday Pitch," which ensures that at least one editor reviews each unsolicited pitch.

Allen & Unwin has great distribution in Australia and has published a large number of best-selling books on a wide range of topics. One of their areas of focus is Australian memoirs (although clearly that category is only open to Australian authors). They also run a prestigious literary contest that focuses on launching Australian authors, and they have a nonfiction division focused on New Zealand (which only accepts submissions from that country). Outside of these focused areas they seem open to pitches from authors of other nationalities.

All pitches must be made through their electronic submission system. One of the things I like about their guidelines is that in each of the categories they mention an example of a book (or books) that has done well after being accepted through this system. Some of the areas where they are currently open to submissions include their children's and young adult division (which publishes about 80 books a year), as well as literary and commercial fiction (although not in all genres) and nonfiction for adults.

To learn more, please go to their submission guideline page [here](#).

All of the pages have detailed information and you should read the guidelines carefully before submitting.

Andersen Press

Andersen Press is a British book publishing company that specializes in children's books. They also have an American branch. The company was founded in 1976 by Klaus Flugge, and was named after Hans Christian Andersen. Random House has a holding in the company and has a strong association with Andersen.

Andersen Press is open to unsolicited manuscript submissions from authors of picture books and queries from authors of chapter books. They publish picture books that are approximately 500 words in length (maximum 1000), juvenile fiction for which the text would be approximately 3-5000 words, and older fiction up to 75,000 words.

They have good distribution and excellent cover art.

All submissions must be made to their London offices through the mail. They try to respond to all submissions within three weeks.

I will say that there was one negative report on the website Glassdoor about working with the US branch of Andersen Press, as an editor. But that was the only bit of negative information I was able to turn up in my digging.

To learn more visit their submission guidelines [here](#). As always, review their submission guidelines carefully before submitting.

Andrews McMeel Publishing

Andrews McMeel Publishing is a large publishing house that publishes up to 300 books a year. They are one of the largest publishers that will read proposals by authors that have not been previously published and do not have an agent.

They are a leading publisher of general nonfiction trade books, gift books and humor books. Andrews McMeel Publishing's core publication categories are: cookbooks, comics & humor, and puzzles & games. They are open to some other categories as well; looking through their web catalog is the best way to get a feel for what kinds of books they publish.

In recent years, one of the areas they have had a great deal of success in is poetry books. They have published some bestsellers including, *Milk & Honey* by Rupi Kaur.

They only accept submissions that are mailed in. The book proposal you submit must include a cover letter that describes the work as a whole. Make sure to include who your target audience is, and also explain why Andrews McMeel Publishing is a good fit for your work.

You must also include an outline of your entire work and an estimate of the length of your prospective manuscript. In addition,

include one or two sample chapters, a brief bio, and your schedule to complete the manuscript.

Make sure your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address are on the manuscript, and any art that you include has your name on the back of it. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Andrews McMeel can take up to a year to respond to manuscripts, but their usual response time is less than that. If you are interested in learning more or submitting your proposal, please visit their website [here](#).

Arbordale Publishing

“Our mission is to get children excited about science and math through fun-to-read picture book stories. We are primarily looking for fiction manuscripts with non-fiction facts woven into the story, although we will also consider some non-fiction stories. In every manuscript we look for a "cuddle factor" that will make parents and children want to read it together.”

This children's publisher focuses on science and math books that parents and children read together, meaning they offer family-focused rather than school-focused learning.

All of the books have a 2-6 page non-fiction section in the back that reinforces the educational components of the book. The author does not have to create this section, but they do have to provide facts that will be incorporated into the space.

All manuscripts must be less than a thousand words in length and meet the following criteria:

- Fun to read – mostly fiction with non-fiction facts woven into the story. We are NOT looking for pure "text-book" non-fiction
- National or regional in scope
- Must relate to science and math subjects taught at the elementary school level. Any manuscripts with a social

studies connection (culture, history, geography) must also contain a math or science component.

- Must be marketable through a niche market such as zoo, aquarium, or museum gift shop

They are also open to bilingual texts in Spanish and English. They have a lot of other very specific requirements. Make sure to look over their submission page carefully before submitting. This is a really niche publisher that does have a marketing plan.

All submissions must be made via email. It is a good idea to browse [their catalog](#) to get a better feel for the books they publish.

To learn more read their complete submission guidelines [here](#).

Artisan

Artisan focuses on publishing heavily visual nonfiction books. The visuals themselves vary between photography, illustration, or graphic design, but the idea is that these books effectively communicate ideas and lessons because of their strong visual components. Most of the books, including Artisan's first bestseller, *The French Laundry Cookbook* by Thomas Keller, include all three components. They are best known for their cookbooks, which continue to be bestsellers by famous chefs and food critics. But they also publish books about a wide variety of other topics including design, clothing, storytelling, current interest and kids' crafts.

Reviewing their [catalog here](#) will give you a good picture of the wide range of books they publish. I encourage you to browse through at least three pages before deciding to submit; their range is that broad and surprising.

Artisan is an imprint of Workman Publishing, and unlike many of the other imprints, was founded in 1994 by the company itself. They try to respond to all proposals within three months. They stress that the more information you can give them about your project, the better. Unlike the other imprints of Workman, they only accept submissions via post. Please do not email them submissions, as they will not be read. Submissions made by post should be printed copies, never original work. They are based in New York City. I do

believe they offer advances, although nothing is explicitly stated on the website about that.

To read their full submission guidelines [go here](#).

Arsenal Pulp Press

Arsenal Pulp Press is a Canadian small press based out of Vancouver. They have won the Jim Douglas Publisher of the Year Award (from the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia), and they have been a finalist for Small Press Publisher of the Year (awarded by the Canadian Booksellers Association) five times. They have good distribution in Canada and on the West Coast. I've seen a number of their books in stores in the Pacific Northwest. They also regularly host and promote events for their authors, and that is a good sign as well.

They have 400 titles currently in print. The books they publish cover a wide range of topics and genres. They publish literary fiction and nonfiction, and the topics they cover range from gender studies to cook books. They also publish graphic novels.

Below are the topics they are currently considering submissions in:

- Cultural studies
- Political/sociological studies
- Regional nonfiction, in particular for British Columbia
- Cookbooks
- Craft books
- LGBTQ fiction and nonfiction, including young adult and children's
- Visual art
- Multicultural fiction and nonfiction
- Literary fiction and nonfiction (no genre fiction, such as mysteries, thrillers, or romance)
- Graphic novels
- Youth culture and young adult literature
- Books for children, especially those that emphasize diversity
- Health

Please only submit books that are in the above listed categories. If your not sure your work fits, it probably does not, but browsing their [catalog](#) might help give you a better feel for what they actually publish.

They have very specific submission guidelines, that you have to follow in order to submit. They have separate submission guidelines for Canadians and non-Canadians. You can read their guidelines [here](#). Please follow all of their guidelines.

They only allow postal submissions. Simultaneous submissions are considered as long as you alert them of that. They take about six months to respond to most submissions.

Ashland Creek Press

Ashland Creek Press is a boutique press dedicated to publishing books with a worldview. The fiction and non-fiction they publish is about the environment, animal protection, ecology, and wildlife. Books they have published have received critical acclaim from a number of magazines including *Publishers Weekly*, *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, and *Kirkus Reviews*.

They are open to many genres (including young adult, mystery, literary fiction) as long as the stories focus on the environment, animal protection, ecology, or wildlife, or some combination of those themes. They want to publish engaging and well written stories about these themes. They do not publish children's books or books of poetry.

Ashland Creek Press is an established publisher with experienced editors, a great website, and wonderful covers. If your writing includes the themes they publish, they could provide a very good home for your book.

For all submissions make sure that you include in a single document a 1-2 page synopsis of the manuscript (including word count), and the first 50 pages, as well as an author bio that includes credits, awards, and experience. If you have been publishing your work in

literary journals that will help your bio. Include a valid email address, mailing address, and phone number in the document.

They consider works that were previously self-published as long as you retain all rights to the publication. They ask that you include details about its previous publication.

Ashland Creek Press tries to respond to all submissions within 1-3 months. Do not query before 3 months have passed.

They charge money for contest submissions, but their open reading period has historically been fee free.

To visit their main website click [here](#). To learn more about what they have published visit their catalog [here](#). To learn about their submission guidelines or to submit visit their Submittable page [here](#).

August House

August House was established in 1978, originally it focused on publishing poetry but in the 80's their focus switched to folklore and after that to storytelling. They no longer publish poetry, instead they focus on publishing children's books, although many of these are influenced by folklore. They currently publish children's folktales, picture books, early-grade chapter books, and storytelling resource materials.

They were originally based in Little Rock, Arkansas, but in 2004 they were purchased and the headquarters were moved to Atlanta, Georgia. They also have a now online imprint called [Story Cove](#) that focuses on global folk tales that work for classroom teaching. Their picture book imprint is called LittleFolk.

They have published a number of well known authors and illustrators. I highly encourage you to explore their back catalog to get a better feel for what they have previously published. I think that will give you a much better feel for what they are interested.

One of the things I found strange is that the submission form is on the bottom of every page of the website. However because the website is so busy, and full of so many books and other pieces of information, it can be hard to find, as usually the submission form is on a separate page. The other thing that is strange is that when you

click on the submission guidelines button on the form you are redirected to the About Us page, which does not have any submission guidelines but contains a link to the [submission guidelines page](#).

It is very confusing because on the submission guidelines page they says they can only accept submissions via mail, so please do not use the form. Please review [the submission guidelines](#) thoroughly before submitting.

You can visit their website [here](#).

Bancroft Press

Bancroft Press is a small press that publishes a wide variety of work, both nonfiction and fiction. They publish memoirs and legal dramas and everything in between. They usually publish between 3-5 books a year, so while they are open to a wide range of work they actually publish very little.

Their website is geared towards readers, not writers, and the general quality of the covers is good (not great). They say they are open to children's books and young adult books, but they have not published very many of either. I would lean towards submitting to a publisher that specializes in these categories.

They have been around for 23 years. They even mention how unusual that is to pull off without a niche on their about page [here](#).

They try to respond to all submissions within six months. They only accept submissions via email or an electronic submissions manager. They ask that all authors submit full manuscripts.

Bancroft Press has got in trouble in the past which [you can read about here](#), but it is in the very distant past.

You can learn more or submit [here](#).

Bedazzled Ink

They are a small press that focuses on publishing women and women identifying authors. The books they publish on female protagonists and the female perspective.

Their mission statement is as follows "Bedazzled Ink is dedicated to literary fiction, nonfiction, and children's books that celebrate the unique and under-represented voices of women and books about women that appeal to all readers."

Romantic relationships can be included in the book, but they can never be the primary focus of the plot.

The children's books they publish are largely middle grade readers.

The non-fiction they are interested in includes biographies, historical, the arts, the sciences, nature and nature guides, feminism, cooking, gardening, travel and travel guides, ecology, politics, how-to, and sports.

The covers of the books they publish leave much to be desired, but the content of the books i've read excerpts of, are good. Writers that have signed with them describe the contract as "Author Friendly".

It is good to get a feel for what they've published in the past by visiting their catalog [here](#).

They have distribution, though it appears limited, and I've never seen any of their books in stores.

The editors have more experience as readers and writers than publishers but they've now been around as a publisher since 2014, and before that there was a literary journal that the part of the editorial team ran for a decade.

To submit send a query letter along with a synopsis to the email address listed on their website.

To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

BelleBooks/BelleBridge

BelleBooks was founded in 1999 by a number of writers of Southern fiction. They focused on publishing works of Southern fiction before creating the now substantial imprint, BelleBridge, which is open to a wide variety of genres including cozy mysteries, women's fiction, romance, fiction, nonfiction, science fiction, horror, fantasy, young adult, mystery, suspense, and thrillers.

They are currently seeking manuscripts in some but not all of the genres they publish. They primarily publish hardcover books, but they have started to publish e-book versions simultaneously.

BelleBridge books have won major awards, been Kindle bestsellers, and been optioned to become TV shows. They have published a number of already established writers, and they have launched a number of previously unpublished authors into successful careers.

Over the years, they have developed a good reputation as a small publisher with a devoted and thoughtful staff. The books they publish receive publicity, and they make sure that each book has blurbs from other authors on the back, as well as a synopsis of the plot. Many authors appear to publish a whole series of books with them, which is a very good sign.

Because they are respected and they do a good job, publication slots can fill up quickly. They can only publish so many books of a certain genre each year. They try to respond to most submissions within three months, but it generally takes more like six months.

When you submit, you do so directly to the editor of your genre. Only mystery (non-cozy), suspense, and thrillers, are currently open to submissions at the time this review was published, but it is good to keep an eye on their site, because that often changes. When you submit work, you do so using your full manuscript attached to an email query letter.

There is a lot of information about their preferences, approach to publicity, covers, and a number of other things, on their website. I highly encourage you to spend some time reading the guidelines before submitting work.

You can read their submission guidelines and additional information [here](#). To visit their website as a whole and to browse their past publication catalog, go to this [page](#).

Black & White Publishing

Black & White Publishing was founded in 1995 and is now one of the largest Scottish publishers. They currently have over 200 books in print. They are based in Scotland, but they are open to publishing work by authors of any nationality or geographical location. They are an established publisher, among the many books they have published is the “Scots” edition of the first Harry Potter Book.

They have good distributors, and they are starting to break into the e-book publishing world. They publish general nonfiction, biography, sports, and humor, as well as selected fiction, crime novels, young adult, and children’s books.

They are currently accepting both solicited and unsolicited manuscripts that are fiction, nonfiction, and young adult. They have published a number of established authors of various nationalities. Their covers are generally well designed and appealing.

They prefer receiving submissions by email but are open to submissions by post. Attach to your email (that contains a query letter) a detailed synopsis outlining the whole manuscript and the first three chapters or first thirty pages of your manuscript. Attachments should all be Word documents. The words NEW SUBMISSION should be in the subject field.

They try to respond to all queries within three months. If you have not heard from them by that time, you must assume that your work has been rejected.

To learn more about Black & White Publishing, visit their website [here](#). To learn more about submitting work, visit their submission guidelines [here](#).

Blue Moon

Blue Moon is a boutique Canadian Publisher. They focus on publishing Literary Fiction and Women's Fiction, as well as Young Adult and Middle Grade works. The stories they publish span various genres including contemporary, historical, mystery, science fiction, and fantasy.

Blue Moon also doesn't really have distribution. They work with Ingram, which means that their work can be ordered by bookstores, but it isn't in stock at bookstores, unless it's placed through consignment. That said, some of their books have sold well on Amazon.

They have been around for at least five years, but it is hard to find out that much about them, except that they are open to international submissions, the founding editor has self-published a few of her works with Blue Moon under a pen name, and they are based in Toronto.

Authors also seem happy with the editing and publication process. The covers vary in quality, but most of them are good, and none of them are horrible.

Blue Moon is the sort of small press that relies a lot on author self-promotion, but it helps them create a better end product.

They ask all authors to submit two sample chapters and a proposal.

To learn more or to submit go [here](#). There's also a F.A.Q. section that is helpful [here](#).

Charlesbridge Publishing

Charlesbridge publishes high quality books for children and young adults with the goal of creating lifelong readers and lifelong learners. In 2010 Charlesbridge acquired Imagine Publishing which expanded what they were able to offer. They now have extensive audio offerings. They also publish adult nonfiction, cookbooks, and puzzle books.

Charlesbridge is still best known for their children's books which are widely available at bookstores and libraries. They have published a number of beloved and well reviewed children's books. In order to submit a children's book to them you must submit it via the post. They are only interested in complete manuscript submissions. Illustrators are also encouraged to submit, separately.

Please review their catalog online to see what kind of children's books they have previously published before proceeding.

Charlesbridge is just now starting to publish young adult fiction. They accept email or postal submissions of young adult fiction. They are only interested in complete manuscripts.

Imagine, their adult imprint publishes 8-10 new titles per year, primarily in the areas of history, women's studies, gender studies, multicultural studies, politics, nature and the environment, as well as

cooking, health, and wellness. All non fiction submissions should be made via email

In all categories they only respond to submissions that interest them. So do not include a self addressed and stamped envelope. However they expect all submissions to be exclusive submissions for three months. You should state “Exclusive Submission” on all correspondence. However after three months has passed, feel free to submit elsewhere.

To learn more visit their website [here](#).

Chronicle Books

Chronicle is an established and respected publisher of cookbooks, gift books, anthologies, children's books, and various other books, most containing a strong visual element. They are based out of San Francisco. Their books receive a lot of positive attention and acclaim. This year one of the Children's books they published, [*Flora and the Flamingo*](#), written and illustrated by Molly Idle, was a 2014 *Caldecott* honor winner. Many of the top cookbooks in the past five years have been published by them, including [*Plenty*](#) by Yotam Ottolenghi and the *Tartine* Cookbook. If you look through your own bookshelf, there are high odds that you own at least one book published by Chronicle.

Chronicle is one of the most established independent publishers and it is unusual that they consider unsolicited manuscript submissions without an agent. There is a slight catch of course, they do not actually respond to these proposals unless they are interested in accepting the book as a whole. So don't expect a rejection letter, although know that if they have not responded within three months they are most likely not interested in your book.

Perhaps this is for the best, because a number of years ago Chronicle Books got into trouble for referring people whose proposals were rejected to an assisted publishing company. An assisted publishing company charges people to publish their work and Chronicle is a

traditional publisher, it pays their authors. Part of an added complication to this whole situation was that Chronicle appeared to have been receiving money from the assisted publishers for this referral. The only reason that we are only reviewing and recommending Chronicle as a potential publisher because of the fact that this practice no longer takes place and has not for years.

Before submitting to them, browse through their catalog online or go to a local bookstore and find a couple of their books to peruse. This is a good way to see if your work might fit well with their catalog.

Make sure to review their submission guidelines carefully before submitting your work. They have separate guidelines for children's books, so make sure you are reviewing the correct guidelines for your manuscript. They accept manuscripts aimed at adults submitted electronically or through the mail.

They only consider manuscripts aimed at children if they are submitted via post. They consider simultaneous submissions as long as you alert them to the fact that you are submitting it elsewhere.

If you are considering submitting to them, please read their [submission guidelines](#) in order to learn more.

Clean Reads

Astrea Press officially launched in 2010 and published its first e-book in early 2011. It was founded because the owner, Stephanie Taylor saw a gap in the e-book market when it came to *wholesome* mainstream romance novels. Astrea does not publish anything erotic. To this end, in the last year they seem to have re-branded as Clean Reads.

They were primarily a romance publisher when they first started out but their focus seems to have shifted in the last year or so, and they are now open to all fiction genres, although they still publish a lot of romance.

Clean Reads gives their authors a fair contract. Authors receive 50% of the royalties from sales on the Astrea website and 40% of sales from third-party websites (they also sell their books through Amazon and Barnes and Noble).

They are also open to making print editions of books that are longer than 50,000 words. They allow their authors to work one-on-one with their cover artist in order to create a cover that properly represents the book. After all, they say you can't judge a book by its cover, but a lot of people buy them based on the cover anyway.

Their authors are also represented by an agency for foreign and audio rights. Astrea always encourages direct communication between the author and the other people working on the book, including copy editors and agents. All books will be thoroughly edited before publication, but that editing will happen with the authors knowledge, consent, and contributions. They also make sure that authors can buy copies at a discounted price, although they don't go into specifics on their website.

They accept all genres of fiction. They also publish books for young adults, so they are open to those works as well. They do not publish work that is less than 15,000 words or more than 100,000.

Their website is currently under construction so there is not much information on it, but they are active on Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat in the meantime so that is a good start.

They only accept unagented submissions through emailed submissions. You can learn more about Clean Reads by visiting their website [here](#).

Clean Teen Publishing

Clean Teen Publishing is a small publisher started a number of years ago. They publish print and electronic versions of books. All of the books they publish are aimed at teens. Their selling point, and the reason they are named what they are, is that all books come with a really clear rating system, that they refer to as content disclosure. This is an unusual concept, and while I can see how it would appeal to parents, I am not sure how attractive it would be to most teenagers.

This is the way the rating system works. They have three levels of rating, the first is YA E which is appropriate for everyone, including advanced readers, ages 12 and under. The second is YA which is appropriate for young adults age 13 and over. The third is YA M which means the book is written for a mature young adult audience. The system for how each books get rated is really clear, and there are image indicators on all the covers of why the book got the rating it did (for example a miniature gun indicates violence, which on a YA E book could mean a punch and on a YA M book could mean death). To learn more about the system read the full guidelines [here](#).

The publisher has good distribution in bookstores and libraries and seems to have established a good, although often series dependent strategy for selling eBooks on Amazon. Their books have received a fair amount of attention from reviewers of all kinds. Their covers are

generally good. Their website is also orientated towards readers, not writers, always a good sign.

To learn more about how their submission process works, [go here](#).

Dancing with Bear

Dancing with Bear is a print and e-book publisher that publishes exclusively Christian manuscripts. They publish books for adults but they also have a children's line. They are currently open to submissions in all categories and are eager to receive quality work.

Dancing with Bear is run by an author. They know what it is like to publish in this market and the best royalties they can while still making a profit. They pay their authors 50% royalties. Most traditional publishers pay their authors between 10% and 20% percent of the royalties.

Dancing with Bear also provides editing, cover art, ISBN, and promotional services and absorb the cost of those services. It is important to have a publisher that supports you and provides additional editing and promotional services.

They are primarily a print publisher but are starting to offer certain titles as e-books. They accept YA and children's books as well.

Dancing With Bear has strict guidelines and is only interested in Christian books that feature traditional evangelical values, so keep that in mind before submitting and make sure to read their full guidelines that include all the details of what they won't publish, but they are rather extreme. For example they do not publish anything

that involves homosexual or bisexual characters, which this reviewer considers discriminatory.

They accept all submissions online, just make sure that your manuscript is attached as a .doc, .docx, or rtf file. they also want single line spacing., standard 12 pt Trebuchet MS font and a 1 inch margins (left, right, top and bottom) with a 0.5" indent for the first line of each paragraph only.

All submissions should be thoroughly proof read. They do not want any headers or footers, and they do not want a double space after punctuation.

They also expect a query letter that includes biographical information. They are open to publishing first time authors. They try to respond to all submissions within the first four months. If you have not heard back from them by that time please send them an email query.

In conclusion if you write for a conservative Christian audience, Dancing with Bear is a great publisher for you, they really support and pay their authors. Learn more at their [website](#).

Dawn Publications

Dawn Publications is a boutique print press focused on publishing books connecting children and nature. They usually just publish six books a year. Their niche focus really seems to pay off; their books have gone on to win a wide variety of awards. Dawn was founded in 1979. The [Our Mission Page](#), although a little tricky to find without a direct link, is well worth the read.

Their books have a clear goal, which is explained below.

Dawn’s “nature awareness” titles—almost always picture books—are intended to encourage an appreciation for nature and a respectful participation in it. We want to inspire children as well as educate them. An inspired child is a motivated child.

They accept submissions from authors and illustrators and have separate guidelines for both.

They describe most of what they publish as creative non-fiction, and go into details about the kind they are seeking, below.

Dawn specializes in “creative non-fiction.” We suggest you read a short article on the subject, [How to Use Creative Nonfiction Picture Books in Support of Common Core and Science](#). Dawn generally does not publish “straight” non-fiction without some other feature that will capture a child’s attention. There may be a story such as

Eliza and the Dragonfly or *Molly's Organic Farm* that presents the opportunity to talk about nature. There may be a song as in *Over in the Ocean*. Or there may be cumulative verse as in *Under One Rock*. Or there may be an adventure such as may be found in nature every day, as in *The Mouse and the Meadow*.

For writers submitting stories, it is important to remember that the work be suitable to supplement a school curriculum in some way. Most of what they publish are illustrated children's books, but they do publish the occasional non-illustrated book aimed at middle grade readers.

They accept submissions by email and mail. To read their full guidelines, [go here](#). Make sure to review them thoroughly and examine their past publication catalogue before submitting work to them for consideration.

duopress

duopress is a publisher of innovative non-fiction books and gift books. They publish a large variety of non-traditionally formatted books for children, including board books that fold out, flash cards, and sticker books. They also publish more traditional books for children, including local books (such as *Portland Baby*). Most of what they publish is aimed at the very young (two and under).

The books they publish for adults tend to lean towards the non-fiction side of things, although they do generally have a humorous underpinning such as *"Never Cook Bacon Naked" and Other Words of Wisdom for the Home Cook*.

It is a good idea to review [their catalog](#) to get a good feel for what they have previously published.

They are an imprint of Workman Press and they have excellent distribution.

You can submit via email or mail. You must submit a cover letter that outlines the materials included in the package as well as a proposal with an outline, introduction, art list, and sample text as well as sample illustrations or photographs (no originals). They also want a market analysis of the potential readership for your book.

They also want an author bio and relevant conditionals. To learn more about submitting, go [here](#).

Eifrig

Eifrig Publishing is a small independent publishing company that focuses on publishing print children's books. They also publish family psychology books, some nonfiction for adults, and books on education. They publish some e-books. Their motto is "good for our kids, good for our environment, and good for our communities."

Their website is easy to navigate, but they don't mention much about distributors, contracts, or anything along those lines. However, they are focused on selling books, over recruiting new authors, which is a good sign.

The *About* page states that the company was founded in 1996, but it also states that they published their first manuscript in 2006. I do not know if this is a typo or not. I also do not like the fact that the owner of the company has self-published a number of her own books under the company's name.

The covers of the books themselves vary in quality, although the children's books appear to be thoughtfully illustrated.

They have very specific book proposal guidelines that focus a lot on marketing and expect a fair amount of market research. However, they are open to proposals even if the manuscript is incomplete, which is unusual.

You can read their complete submission guidelines [here](#). You can browse their website [here](#).

Entangled Teen

Entangled Teen is the YA imprint of the romance publisher [Entangled Publishing](#). Entangled Publishing is a newer company but they have had a lot of success in the genre of romance and they have sold a lot of books. They primarily operate on a digital first model, which usually means print runs only happen if/when the digital book has been successful.

They do publish a lot of work every month, which is a little intimidating, because one does not want their book to be lost in the shuffle. But the books generally have great covers and Entangled Publishing says that they make individual marketing plans for all their books.

Entangled Teens has three separate imprints. The first called Entangled Teen is looking for romance novels, or novels with strong romantic elements that are between 70k and 120k words in length. The works they publish include contemporary romance, science fiction, paranormal, fantasy, historical, and romantic suspense and thrillers. You can learn more about what they are specifically seeking [here](#).

Teen Crave is looking for shorter work, between 45K and 65K in length in the paranormal/scifi/fantasy genre. The main characters of

these work must be between 16 and 18 years in age. You can learn more about their specific submission guidelines [here](#).

Teen Crush is seeking work between 40K and 60K that is contemporary romance. They publish trope based stories featuring main characters between the ages of 16-18. You can learn more [here](#).

All of the teen imprints are open to f/m, f/f, and m/m, pairings. In all the catagories they helpfully list authors they love as well as tv relationships that they love. So it is rather easy to get a feeling for what they are looking for. All submissions are accepted online. You can learn more about overall submissions [here](#).

Familius

Familius is a newer publisher, established in the last few years, but the head editor is established and has a good track record of working at other publishing companies.

They were also recently acquired by the established publisher Workman that already has a number of other imprints in this market. Workman has excellent distribution.

Familius publishes ebooks, apps, audiobooks, videos, and more.

The books they publish cover a wide range of topics and are for varied audiences. They publish non-fiction for adults, often aimed at healthy eating, and family values. They also publish fiction and non-fiction for children of all ages, including young adults.

You can get a good feeling for the range of work they publish by viewing their catalog [here](#).

The books they publish tend to focus on families, although the books they publish acknowledge and reflect the fact that no two families are the same, and different families have different components.

Their [submission guidelines](#) are detailed and it is important to follow them exactly. They accept online and postal submissions, but they only respond if interested.

You can learn more or submit by going [here](#).

Filles Vertes Publishing

Filles Vertes Publishing was founded in 2016. It is a new publisher with only a few books under their belt and a few forthcoming books as well. They have print and electronic versions of all their books. They accept submissions of middle grade readers, young adult books, adult fiction, and adult fiction in all genres, which is a broad spectrum to publish. They have previously published a historical thriller/mystery, a memoir about life at sea, and a mystery book set in the Pacific Northwest.

Because they are such a new publisher, one should always proceed with caution. Most new publishers fail within the first five years. They have a large staff for such a small publisher, and I was glad to see that they did have someone exclusively focused on marketing. Although none of their staff are particularly experienced.

Over the last year wait times for responses have increased substantially. Most submitters now wait between 6-9 months.

Filles Vertes also had a number of things going for them. They have a well designed website and excellent covers. The books that they have published so far appear to have sold well and to have generally positive reviews. They also have an active Facebook page and Twitter account. They participate in a number of Twitter-based pitch fests, and not just #PitMad ([which you can learn more about here](#)).

To query them they ask that you just send your query letter and the first chapter of your book. This is true for all categories except informative non-fiction, which has separate guidelines. To read their full submission guidelines, go [here](#).

Flashlight Press

Flashlight Press focuses on publishing illustrated children's books. Their books are a lot of fun to read and very well illustrated. They receive a lot of good reviews and are pretty widely available, even outside of the United States. If you are considering submitting to them and are unfamiliar with their books, look for one to read at your local library.

Flashlight Press has won a number of awards for the books they publish, and many of the individual books have received awards. The awards Flashlight Press and individual books have won include: ABC Best of Books Catalog, Comstock Read Aloud Book Award, NY State Charlotte Award, and many others. Flashlight Press has been publishing books since 2006, and all of their back catalog remains in print.

Flashlight Press only publishes two to four books a year. They do not require you to have an agent or previous publishing experience. The editor tries to respond to queries as quickly as possible. The books they publish are targeted at four-to eight-year-olds. The book should be between 500 and 1,000 words in length. It should have a universal theme and deal with a family or social situation.

To submit work to them, you must first email a query letter to the editor; it must not have any attachments, and all the information should be in the body of the email. If they want to see your full manuscript, they will reply within a month.

If your manuscript is requested, they will respond with an acceptance or rejection letter within four months of receiving your manuscript. Unless you are an artist, they do not want to see any artwork with your submission. If you are an artist, there is an additional set of guidelines to follow. To learn more visit their website [here](#).

Flux

Flux is an imprint of North Star Editions that publishes exclusively young adult fiction. Their motto is "Where Young Adult is a Point of View, not a Reading Level". Most of the books they publish focus on the older end of the young adult market. They publish edgier, darker stuff, than other young adult publishers. They publish all sub genres of young adult from realistic life stories to sci fi. They are established, have good distribution, and have published many books that have sold well.

Submitting to them is easy and done via email.

To have Flux consider your book for publication, please provide the following two items:

- A query letter (in the body of the e-mail) including:
 - A brief 1-2 paragraph plot synopsis
 - A short bio mentioning your previous publications and writing credentials
 - 3-5 comparative books published within the last 5 years with an explanation of how your book both ties into a trend in the Young Adult genre and offers something unique
 - Your e-mail address and phone number

- The first three chapters of your book in an attached Word document

By reviewing [their recent releases](#) it is easy to figure out what kind of work they publish.

To learn more or to submit, visit their website [here](#).

Free Spirit Publishing

Free Spirit Publishing is an established publisher with good distribution. They publish primarily non-fiction, mostly curriculum based, where they have a number of niche focuses.

They do publish fiction but only in the form of board books (aimed at infants to 4-year-olds) and picture books (for ages 4 to 8) that focus on social skills and getting along, early learning, character education, self-esteem, and other topics related to positive early childhood development.

They are also open to non-fiction board and picture books with the same subject matters.

Their areas of focus in non-fiction include the following topics: Gifted & special education, bullying prevention & conflict resolution, character education, leadership & service learning, educational games, posters, & jars, counseling & social-emotional learning. More information about what specifically they are looking for is available on their [submission guidelines page](#).

If you are interested in submitting you must first submit a proposal.

It is important to note that they do not write rejections. If you do not hear from them after six months or so, consider your proposal rejected. They always contact authors whose work they are

interested in. This is a particularly frustrating considering the fact that they do not accept electronic submissions. All submissions must be made through the post.

If you are submitting a proposal it must include the following:

- A cover letter briefly outlining your project, the intended audience (including age ranges), and your relevant expertise
- A current résumé
- A market analysis with a comprehensive list of similar titles and a detailed explanation of how your project differs from available products
- A detailed chapter-by-chapter outline
- At least two sample chapters (if a full manuscript is available, you may send it) **Note:** *For early childhood submissions, the entire text is required for evaluation. Bracketed art suggestions are appreciated, though illustration samples should not be sent unless professionally competent.*
- A description of your personal promotion plan for the proposed book (including both in-person and social media outreach)

To learn more about Free Spirit and see the books they have previously published, visit their [website](#).

GemmaMedia

GemmaMedia is an independent publisher that has managed to get a fair amount of distribution. GemmaMedia focuses on niche markets. They publish "cultural memoir for young people and adults, literary fiction from beloved Irish authors, and current affairs publishing with diversity at the heart of the story".

They are not interested in books outside of these genres.

GemmaMedia has been around for 10 years now. They appear to operate on a very traditional contract based system, however how much they would offer a writer in terms of royalties is unknown.

The covers are well done and many of the books are burbled by established writers and academics which is a very good sign. Most books they publish appear to be between 150-250 pages in length. They seem to publish around 8 or so books a year, which means that they only accept a very limited amount of manuscripts.

They do not accept full manuscript submissions. When you submit to them include the working title of the manuscript as well as an alternative title, a one paragraph synopsis of your work, the estimated length of your book, a sample chapter, a brief biography, and a table of contents with a maximum of two sentences describing each chapter. Also include a potential completion time, information

about the intended audience and competing or related books, as well any marketing opportunities you might have in relation to the book.

They accept submissions of query letters through email only, they are not interested in submissions by post. They try to respond to most queries within a month, and if you have not heard back from them in two months, you should email them again to inquire about the submission of your status.

To learn more or to submit visit their website [here](#). Because of the specificity of their niche markets it is very helpful to browse the books listed in their shop before submitting.

Gibbs Smith

Gibbs Smith is an established publisher with good distribution and a focus on cook books, interior design and architecture books, and board books for children. They have published a number of bestsellers, including a board book version of *Pride & Prejudice*. Gibbs Smith is primarily a non-fiction publisher which is just now entering the fiction market for adults and middle readers.

For small children they publish activity books, picture books, and board books. They have already had a fair amount of success in this genre.

They accept all submissions via email, and do not accept any mailed submissions. They have different email addresses for different categories of submissions and have specific requirements for each one, so please read carefully about the category you are considering submitting to. Some categories require full manuscripts, others partial.

They do not respond to submissions they are not interested in. If you have not heard from them in 12 weeks, it is safe to assume they are not interested in your manuscript.

To learn more, please visit their submission guidelines [here](#).

Hohm Press

A small print publisher based out of Arizona, Hohm has been around for many years. They are a respected press that has published a number of well known authors. They publish a wide variety of genres, including poetry, non-fiction, and children's books. They generally focus on eastern religion and spirituality. They are not interested in fiction or short story collections.

Their website is very basic. It is not very easy to navigate and it is hard to find out information about the press itself on the website. I also noticed a couple of minor, confusing errors. The majority of sales they make are elsewhere on the web or in brick and mortar bookstores, so it makes sense that not that much effort is put into their website.

The covers of their books are largely well designed and appealing.

You must query first. They are not interested in unsolicited manuscripts, only queries. When you query them include a query letter and a small representative sample from the book. It should not be more than 20 pages in length.

It is important to note that while they publish children's books they are about nursing and breastfeeding and they are aimed at children and parents, so this is not the best place to submit most children book manuscripts to.

To learn more visit their submission guidelines [here](#). Before you submit your query, I highly recommend that you review their catalog.

Histria Books

Histria Books was founded in 1997 as an academic press, it has since become an independent one. It is now based out of Palm Beach and Las Vegas.

They publish general interest books, fiction and literature, and children's books, as well as scholarly books in broad range of categories. Starting June 1st they have an excellent international distributor, Casemates.

They have five imprints with the following focuses:

- **Vita Histria** – an imprint dedicated to academic books on a wide range of subjects;
- **Gaudium** – an imprint dedicated to books on contemporary lifestyle, culture, sports, and politics, as well as biography and autobiography;
- **Center for Romanian Studies** – an imprint dedicated to books on the history and culture of Romania;
- **Addison & Highsmith** – an imprint dedicated to works of adult fiction, including historical fiction, science fiction, detective novels, and other categories of fiction.
- **Histria Kids** – an imprint dedicated to books for children and young adults.

It is important to note that they are just starting to publish fiction. This means they have an unproven track record in that area. To learn more about what they have previously published you can see their back catalog [here](#).

They have specific submission guidelines that you must follow to submit. They all still seem geared towards nonfiction submissions.

To learn more or submit go [here](#).

Holiday House

Holiday House is an established and reputable children's book publishers. Holiday House has been around for over 75 years. They publish picture books as well as books aimed at children grades 1-3, grades 4-6, and grades 7 and up. They are based out of New York City. They have published many well known books and authors, including Kenneth Grahame. The books that they have published have won numerous respected awards and honors.

They specialize in quality hardcovers, from picture books to young adult, both fiction and nonfiction.

Because they receive so many submissions they cannot respond to all of them personally. Although if they are interested in your manuscript, they will respond within four months of receiving it. If you have not heard from them in four months, consider your manuscript rejected.

Submit your entire manuscript, even if you are submitting a novel. They only accept submissions through the mail. They do not accept registered or certified mail and there is no need to include a self addressed and stamped envelope.

If you are submitting a picture book, there is no need to submit illustrations, but if you are an artist that has them, include copies, never originals.

To learn more or to submit, visit their website [here](#).

Hotkey Books

Hotkey Books is an imprint of Bonnier Publishing, which is part of the much larger international Bonnier a large media group.

Hotkey Books is based in the UK. They publish books for kids and teens between the ages of eight and eighteen. The cover art for these books is exceptional. They also have a great, easy-to-use website. They even have a map to encourage people to visit them if they are in the UK. I think that their catalog is the best part, and very unique. I encourage you to check it out, in part because it will give you a better idea of what they are looking for.

Their staff list is very impressive; most of the people working there have a great deal of experience. The managing editor previously worked for a number of big name publishers including Penguin and Bloomsbury.

Hotkey Books has some established and respected authors on their list already, including Garth Nix. Hotkey Books has already published a lot of books in a wide variety of genres.

They are open to unsolicited submissions. Submitting work is very easy to do. Just email them a synopsis and the full edited manuscript of your book (as an attachment). They do not respond to every submission, only the ones they are interested in pursuing. So, if you

have not heard back from them after six months or so, it is safe to assume they are not interested in your novel.

To learn more or to submit, visit their website [here](#).

Immedium

Immedium was founded in 2004 and is led by experienced professionals, who have written critically acclaimed books, marketed print and digital media, and sold #1 nationwide best-sellers. *Aquanauts*, a series of books they published, was turned into a successful TV show for children.

Immedium is interested in three types of books, according to their website, and is specific about the kind of stories they want (and do not want):

1. Children's Picture Books:

The general format is 32-pages with color illustrations for ages 4-8 or 6-10.

2. Asian-American:

Contemporary viewpoints on our evolving national identity, and changes that have universal resonance.

3. Arts and Culture:

Cutting-edge commentary on the intersection of popular culture, social trends, and our modern lifestyle.

We seek writers, illustrators, and artists who have provocative tales to tell and the talent to convey them. A publisher's responsibility is to marry words with pictures to create a unique message. So please

do not submit proposals that duplicate our existing books. Also do not submit children's picture books which you consider to be complete with "finished art", since we want the flexibility to help improve and refine your concept.

There were two things on their website that made me a little worried. The first is that they had a Kickstarter campaign for one of their forthcoming books. What I mean by this is that they use Kickstarter, a crowd funding website to raise money to help publish their book. In exchange the individuals who help fund the book get rewards depending on how much they contribute. The reward details are outlined on the Kickstarter website but in the case of fundraising for books, the prizes often include copies of the book. So in a round about way it can be a lot like pre-sales. Bestselling books and established publishers (like McSweeney's) have started to make using Kickstarter more common in publishing. However it is still rather unusual for an established publisher to go this route.

The other is this sentence on their website: "Therefore our standard book contracts include royalties, though some projects may require work for hire compensation".

But that said their books looked wonderful and I recognized a number of their titles. They seem to do a good job promoting their books and understanding marketing.

They ask that all submissions include a cover letter, a proposal, and a resume, as well as a sample of your story or illustration.

To learn more, please visit their website [here](#).

John Blake Books

John Blake Books has been publishing bestselling books since 1991. They focus on non-fiction, particularly on on mass-market autobiographies/memoirs. They also have a music imprint, a children's Dinosaur imprint and an imprint dedicated to history, art, humor and gift books.

They are a British publisher and an imprint of Bonnier that is open to direct submissions via email.

Currently their website is under construction, which is a little frustrating. With a smaller, less established publisher this would be a concern. It is not with an established imprint of this size.

All submissions are accepted via email. Include a cover letter, synopsis and no more than three sample chapters. It's important to note that they only respond to submissions that they are interested in. If you have not heard from them in two months, assume rejection.

To learn more (although not much at the moment), or to submit, go [here](#).

JollyFish Press

JollyFish Press was started in 2012. They are based out of Provo, Utah. Jollyfish has a major distributor and a large staff for a relatively new press. Their authors have won numerous awards. They initially published a wide range of genres for adults, children, and young adults.

However in the past year or so they have started to focus only on middle-grade and young adult books. They especially want books showcasing strong voices, unique stories, and diverse characters. The reason they stopped publishing adult books appears to be that North Star Editions bought them out around a year ago.

Their covers are well designed and appealing. It is easy to get a better idea of what they publish by browsing their [titles](#). Their website is well organized and easy to navigate. It is oriented more towards selling books than recruiting authors.

In February 2018 we added a strong note of caution with this review, because Authors had been reporting unfair practices on [Twitter here](#) (you can learn more [here](#)).

Since then we have heard no reports of unethical or bad behavior.

Now that a significant period of time has passed, we think it's still

worth knowing about the incident, but the issue seems to be resolved.

You can learn more about the press and their staff, on the [about us](#) page. The information included in the acquisitions editors bios are particularly helpful to help you know more about what they are interested in specifically.

To query them about a manuscript please send one a one page query letter, a one page synopsis that includes spoilers, and the first three chapters. Your manuscript must already be complete.

To learn more or to submit, visit their website [here](#).

Kane Miller

Kane Miller is an award winning publisher of educational children's books. Their most famous book to date is the children's classic *Everyone Poops*. They have good distribution, their books are widely available at libraries, and they generally do an excellent job.

[Their website](#) is easy to navigate and there is a lot of content there so I really encourage you to look through it before submitting to them.

They are open to unsolicited submissions and try to respond within 8 to 10 weeks. They ask that you do not query about the status of your submission.

They are currently focused on expanding their picture book list and are interested in stories with engaging characters. They specify that they are especially interested in those with particularly American subjects. They also consider board books, activity books, gift books, and series fiction. They are not interested in holiday themed books or any book that has been previously self published.

They only accept submissions via email. They do not open any attachments so include all the requested information in the body of the email. They are also open to art submissions.

To read their full submission guidelines [go here](#).

Lakewater Press

Lakewater Press is a newer eBook and print on demand (POD) publisher. They were founded in early 2015. They publish a wide variety of fiction. They appear to be open to all genres of fiction including young adult, new adult (18-30), and romance.

It is important to keep in mind that at this point they have only published 4 books although they have a number planned for release later this year.

They have a small but hard to navigate website. Links that seem clickable don't work. I personally do not like their covers. Most of the website seems to be illustrated by the same person.

Lakewater Press has a small editorial team, whose previous experience is mostly from the writing side of the table. One of their editors appears to also be published by the press. The rest do not seem to be.

In the [about us](#) section of the website they break down which editors are open to submissions and which ones are not. They also go into editors personal preferences which can be very helpful.

Put your name and which editor you believe to be the best fit, in your subject line. Submit a cover letter and the first chapter in the body of an email to contact@lakewaterpress.com.

Read their full submission guidelines [here](#).

LEE & LOW BOOK's

LEE & LOW BOOK's motto is "About Everyone. For Everyone". They focus on publishing multicultural children's books. They are the largest multicultural book publisher in the United States. The books they publish largely have an educational element and they offer books for readers starting at the age of 4 and going all the way up to age 18. They are an independent publisher that has published hundreds of books and been around for twenty five years. In 2014 they were named ["Indie Publisher of the Year"](#).

LEE & LOW have clear perimeters in terms of what they are looking. As they state on their site:

Our story began with a simple mission: to publish contemporary diverse stories that *all* children could enjoy. We decided to steer clear of folktales since they tended to be about people who lived a long time ago. In contrast, we wanted our books to emphasize the richness of today's cultures. We also avoided talking animal stories since there was nothing new we could bring to this genre. And **we pledged to make a special effort to work with unpublished authors and illustrators of color.**

In their submission guidelines they also talk in more specific terms about what they are looking for.

Our goal is to meet the need for books that address children of color by providing books that all children can enjoy and which promote a greater understanding of one another. We publish multicultural literature that is relevant to young readers.

Our focus is on **fiction and nonfiction** featuring children/people of color, for readers ages 5 to 12. Of special interest are realistic fiction, historical fiction, and nonfiction with a distinct voice or unique approach. We **do not** publish folklore and animal stories.

LEE & LOW BOOKS is dedicated to publishing culturally authentic literature. We make a special effort to work with writers and artists of color and to encourage new voices. We consider unsolicited manuscripts and art samples from writers and artists at all levels of experience.

They only accept submissions by email. To learn more visit their submission guidelines [here](#).

Maverick Children's Books

Maverick Children's Books is a UK based publisher of children's books. Their books generally have wonderful covers and illustrations, and are quirky. They publish a variety of books for children but only appear to be open to submissions in the picture book category. You can learn more about the team behind Maverick [here](#).

I do not know how good their distribution is, in the UK or outside of it.

They are open to unsolicited submissions and have [a video of tips for submitting](#) to them that they strongly suggest that you watch.

Books submitted to them can be no more than 650 words in length, and can be considerably less. No minimum count is mentioned. The manuscript must be submitted through email as a PDF, RTF or a Word document.

They want submissions that are not illustrated. In the subject heading of your email include your name and the name of the book. Multiple submissions are allowed (which is surprisingly rare). They just ask that you put it all in the same email. Also make sure to include a cover letter and your name in the email.

They have a six-month turnaround time, and encourage you to fill out an inquiry form after six months have passed.

To learn more about submitting them, visit their website [here](#).

MB Publishing

MB Publishing is a small press based out of Bethesda, Maryland. They focus on publishing children's books and Judiaca (things pertaining to Jewish life and customs) also largely aimed at children. MB Publishing was founded over 5 years ago by Margie Blumberg as more or less a self-publishing operation. She still continues to publish her own work through MB Publishing. There is an old interview about the details of that [here](#).

I hesitated to review MB Publishing because of that, however, they have published a number of other authors over the years and their books all appear to be professional-looking. The quality of the books appears much better than most presses that started out as (and continue to be) self-publishing projects, at least in part.

The website is well-organized and easy to use. It is easy to buy books through the website and the focus is on readers, not authors. A number of the books have been positively reviewed in newspapers and by professional book reviewers, and a few have won minor awards.

They have published largely picture books but are open to submissions of novellas, novels, and non-fiction (all aimed at children, presumably).

If you are submitting a picture book, submit the complete manuscript. If submitting a larger work, just send in the first two chapters. They accept submissions by email and post but different response protocols are in place for each, which they make clear on their website.

You can learn more by reading their complete submission guidelines [here](#).

Mighty Media Press

Mighty Media Press publishes children's books, mostly picture books but also those aimed at middle grade readers. Their books have beautiful illustrations.

Mighty Media Presses [website](#) is not like most book publishers. It does not focus on promoting a catalog or trying to recruit new authors, in fact it took me a little bit to figure out that they were a book publisher at all, although their logo looked rather familiar to me from the start.

When I did find their [catalog](#) it quickly became clear that I had seen many of the books they have published before, not just in bookstores, but in Target and other big box stores. They have very thorough distribution and their *Monster & Me* series of picture books by Paul Czajak, illustrated by Disney storyboard artist Wendy Grieb, are all bestsellers.

Mighty Media Press started out under another name, and has a less than perfect history and you can read a little bit about that [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#). But they seem to be doing a good job now.

They receive thousands of submissions each year and publish about six annually, so it is very few authors whose work they actually accept. It is also important to note that they regularly close to submissions when they have too big a backlog to read, but seem to

re-open to submissions regularly and you will be alerted of this if you add your email to the list on their submission page.

To learn more and to submit, go to their guidelines [here](#).

Nobrow Press and Flying Eye

Nobrow Press is a respected publisher of graphic novels and Flying Eye is their children's book imprint. Flying Eye publishes both fiction and nonfiction picture books. Nobrow Press and Flying Eye are both different from what we normally review because they are looking for either an author/illustrator or an already formed author/illustrator pair with a book to pitch. They do seem to make exceptions, but for the most part they are not interested in matching illustrators with authors.

Nobrow Press and Flying Eye are both known for their wonderful covers, attention to detail, and great illustrations. Reviewing their [catalog](#) should give you a good idea of what they are interested in publishing.

For picture books, they require a brief synopsis of the story. They accept submissions for picture books between 24 pages and 32 pages in length. Children's non-fiction books can be up to 90 pages. They require that you send the complete first draft of your text. If you are an illustrator/author or part of an illustrator and author duo, you should include two finished double page spreads.

For graphic novels, they require a full synopsis of the story. If you are illustrator/author or an illustrator and author duo, please send a minimum of 10 finished pages of the book.

All submissions must be made through email.

Read their submission guidelines [here](#).

Nosy Crow

Nosy Crow is a UK-based publisher of children's books and apps aimed at children. They accept international submissions from all over, but everyone outside of the UK must submit via email (which is their preferred method of submission). They have wide distribution within the UK. The books they published are aimed at children up to the age of 14, although the bulk of what they publish is for children under the age of 12. The young adult books that they do publish are not issue-based, and should not involve drugs, sex, or violence. Most of the apps they publish are aimed at kids between the ages of 2-7.

Nosy Crow has mostly excellent covers and strong branding.

If you submit to them, it is important to note that they do not acknowledge receipt of submission. They try (but often fail) to respond to all submissions within 6 months. If you have not heard from them in six months, you should assume that your book was rejected.

They are willing to consider previously self-published work, as long as you have a track record of success.

For picture books please include the entire text, for longer books just include a short synopsis plus the first chapter. Make sure you include a cover letter for all submissions.

To read their full submission guidelines, go [here](#). To get a better feel for what they have previously published, go [here](#).

Paulist Press

Paulist Press is an established press that has been around for 150 years. It is founded and run by the Paulist Fathers, a society of missionary priests founded for and by Americans in 1858. Paulist Press publishes Christian books in a wide variety of sub-genres, they have excellent distribution and sales within that market. They primarily publish print books but they also publish electronically as well. They do not publish fiction except for children's fiction.

To get a good idea of what they publish it can be helpful to review their [bestsellers list](#) or browse their [new releases](#).

They have four separate submission guidelines for the four primary categories of books that they publish: Academic Books, Children's Books, Popular Books, Professional or Clergy Books. They publish four types of Children's books: Picture books, Activity books, Chapter books, and Prayer books.

When they refer to popular books they mean ones aimed at a lay (not clergy) audience.

All of the guidelines are very specific and you should read the ones for your category closely and make sure that your proposal matches their requirements. Submissions for all categories should be made through the same email address. Electronic submissions are preferred but submissions are still accepted through the mail.

Proposals for all categories can be made before the manuscript is complete.

To learn more about their submission guidelines visit their website [here](#).

The Parliament House

The Parliament House is a small eBook and print press started in 2016. They specialize in fantasy, including paranormal, contemporary, and urban. Their website is well designed and the covers are well designed and market appropriate. They seem active on social media and more focused on recruiting readers than writers.

The fantasy novels they tend to list as favorites are aimed at young adults, although they themselves do not say that they are a young adult publisher.

There are a few warning signs, besides being new, the staff behind The Parliament House Press has no real past publishing experience. Also they have published a number of their own books through the press. They also really place emphasis on the author promoting their work. But they do say they design a specific and detailed marketing plan for each book they publish.

I wasn't sure about this line from their website "(your book) should have already gone through rounds of beta reading, editing, sweat, and tears. We will not accept the half-baked." What worries me about this is the implication that the publishing house will not provide additional editing. I do think all submissions to publishers should be edited and polished to be taken seriously, but that doesn't

mean that the press itself should not further edit the work. They do not make it clear that they will do that.

They ask that all work be between 50,000 and 140,000 words in length.

They notably accept previously self published books, which is rare. They ask that authors send a query letter along with the first three chapters.

To learn more, go to their submission guidelines [here](#).

Peachtree Publishers

Peachtree Publishers is a well respected independent publisher with good distribution. They are based out of Atlanta Georgia and they specialize in publishing children's books, young adult books, self help titles for parents and educators and guides to the American south. They also publish books on gardening and cookbooks, but usually only with a southern focus.

They are a general trade publisher which means that they publish books that are sold in book stores and found in libraries and schools. They do not publish professional or scholarly books or textbooks, even though their books are used in classroom settings. It is good to review their catalog to get a better idea about what they have previously published.

They accept unsolicited submissions and have clear submission guidelines, but do be warned that it takes up to a year for them to respond to most submissions.

They are currently accepting submissions in the following two categories.

- Children's fiction and nonfiction picture books, chapter books, middle readers, young adult books
- Education, parenting, self-help, and health books of interest to the general trade

Peachtree only reads query letters if there is a manuscript or sample chapters attached. You must submit a full manuscript for a picture book. For all other books you can send a full manuscript or the table of contents plus three sample chapters.

All submissions must be made through the mail. Their complete submission guidelines can be found [here](#).

To learn more you can visit their website [here](#).

Pelican Publishing Company

Pelican Publishing Company is a publisher based out of New Orleans. They have been around for the a long time and they published William Faulkner's first trade paperback book. They have a back list of over 2,500 titles. They publish between forty to seventy new titles yearly. They focus on publishing art/architecture books, cooking/cookbooks, motivational, popular history (especially Louisiana/regional), children's books (illustrated and otherwise), and social commentary. They also add that "We will consider almost any well-written work by an author who understands promotion."

They were purchased by Arcadia Publishing in 2019 but there have been no notable changes since that purchase, at this point.

Their website is outdated and visually overwhelming, but otherwise easy to navigate. I like that they clearly promote regular readings from their authors (on the left hand side of the page). I did think that many of the covers were also lacking visually, and looked dated. I think part of this comes from them being primarily a regional publisher, focused on the south.

I also think that before submitting you should read their [glassdoor reviews](#), which are not the most positive, but do have helpful, concrete, information.

Browsing through their catalog does help you get a feel for what they publish, and what they say sells. You can access their catalog [here](#).

I do think that you lived in the southern united states going with this publisher would be more beneficial to you than if you lived somewhere. That is where their customer and knowledge base seems to be. Although they are open to submissions regardless of authors nationality and current location.

They have very detailed submission guidelines that you should review thoroughly before submitting. They have separate guidelines for children's picture books, but all other books have the same guidelines.

To learn more read their submission guidelines [here](#).

Penny Candy Books

Penny Candy Books is a publishing company focused on children's picture books that was founded in 2015 by two poets who met in graduate school. It is a newer company but they seem off to a good start with interviews in various [established publications](#) and by publishing eight books, most to positive reviews by places like Kirkus. Their plan from here on out is to publish 5-8 books a year.

Their mission statement is as follows "Penny Candy's mission is to publish children's literature that reflects the diverse realities of the world we live in, both at home and abroad. This means seeking out books by and about people and subjects that speak to a broad range of human experience."

On their submission page they go into further detail "In the spirit of penny candy, Penny Candy Books offers affordable, eye-catching children's books that promote the value of diversity—in authors, characters & stories, and readers. We believe children's literature *must* reflect the diverse realities of the world we live in. We're interested in complex stories that raise questions rather than simplistic stories with easy answers. Kids are too smart for the latter. "

Their website is beautiful, easy to navigate, and visually appealing. It is easy to buy books on the site, which is always a good sign. I

have not been able to find out anything about their print distribution, which is the only potential warning sign I saw.

They accept all submissions through the submission manager Submittable. Their submission guidelines are clear but [brief](#). I really encourage anyone who is thinking of submitting to browse their [back catalog](#) to get a better feel for what they publish.

Persea Books

Persea Books is an independent book publisher based out of New York that was established in the 1970s. Since then, they have gained a reputation for publishing thoughtful books in a variety of literary genres.

They have an extensive catalog and a fairly good distribution network. You can often find their books in bookstores, libraries, schools, and universities. They are not interested in popular fiction, children's books, textbooks, self-help books, genre work, social science, or psychology books.

They are open to receiving fiction and nonfiction submissions via the post or email from authors directly. This includes queries regarding novels, novellas, short story collections, biographies, essays, literary criticisms, literature in translations, memoirs, neglected works that merit rediscovery, and anthologies that would interest the general reader of literary books, as well as anthologies that could be assigned in secondary and university classrooms.

At this time, they are particularly encouraging submissions to their growing young-adult list in nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. These books are aimed at the educational market as well as literary readers.

As of March 1, 2016, due to high volume, they no longer respond to email queries unless they are interested.

Queries must include a cover letter, author background and publication history, as well as a synopsis of the proposed work, and a sample chapter. You can simultaneously submit to Persea, but please indicate it in your submission to them. They try to respond to proposals within eight weeks and, if your manuscript is requested, they try to respond to that within twelve weeks, although it sometimes takes them longer.

You should make sure to study their backlist before submitting, to get a better understanding of what they are specifically looking for.

Submissions of poetry queries should be made only via email, and they are generally interested only in poets with a publication history in terms of either literary journals or previously published books or chapbooks. Submit no more than twelve pages for their consideration. They will only contact poets if they are interested in seeing more of the work.

To learn more about Persea or to submit, visit their submission guidelines [here](#).

Piccadilly Press

Piccadilly Press is an imprint of Bonnier Books UK, one of the biggest publishers in the UK. They focus on publishing work for kids between the ages of 8-12. Most of their imprints are not open to unsolicited submissions, but Piccadilly is.

They focus on publishing middle grade readers primarily. The books they publish cover a wide variety of genres and include series'.

They focus on publishing fun, family orientated fiction. You can get a good feel for what they publish by browsing their [catalog](#). They publish a lot of books each year, they have excellent distribution in the UK, and they generally have wonderful covers. Their website is easy to navigate but there are a few formatting errors.

They aren't much for submission guidelines. They only ask that you submit the entire manuscript along with a full synopsis (no word counts given) to the email address [listed here](#). They prefer Word and PDF files. Make sure to include all of your contact information.

The email address they list is the same one for the few other imprints where they have open and general inquiries. **Make "submissions to Piccadilly Press" the subject of your email.**

They note that they only respond to submissions they are interested in, although they read all submissions. I would give them three

months to respond and then consider your work rejected. They allow simultaneous submissions, which is good.

To learn more go [here](#).

Princeton Architectural Press

Princeton Architectural Press is a small press that focuses on publishing books on architecture, design, photography, landscape, and visual culture. They also publish beautiful stationary and children's books. They are based in New York. In 2009 they were bought by McEvoy Group. They are now a sister company to Chronicle Books.

They have excellent distribution through Chronicle Books. The books they publish are available in libraries and in bookstores. Their work is always exceptionally designed and it really stands out. My daughter is a big fan of their children's books and we own a number of them.

They are open to direct submissions of nonfiction in the following categories: architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, graphic design, visual culture, photography, craft, and gardening. Books can be aimed at a professional or general audience. They have clear proposal outlines posted on their website.

Princeton Architectural Press publishes under twelve children's books a year. They publish fiction and general nonfiction picture books aimed at children ages three to eight. Unlike most small presses it is important to note that they only consider submissions

that include both text and illustrations. Do not submit without illustrations.

They also publish stationary and gifts.

To learn more or to submit, [go here](#).

Polis Books

Polis Books is an independent publisher of fiction and nonfiction, founded in 2013. Their focus is on publishing new voices. They are a technologically driven company. They publish print and digital books.

Polis Books was founded by Jason Pinter. Mr. Pinter had over a decade of experience in editorial, marketing and publicity for a variety of publishers including Random House, St. Martin's Press, and The Mysterious Press.

Polis Books offers a small advance to every author they publish. They negotiate royalties on a book by book basis. They have good distribution and I have seen their books in brick and mortar bookstores.

In terms of fiction they are currently accepting mystery (including cozies, thrillers, procedural, and suspense books), science fiction, women's fiction, contemporary literature, horror, romance, and erotica. They also publish YA.

In terms of nonfiction they are open to submissions of humor/essays, memoir/biography, sports, and pop culture.

They are not interested in submissions outside of these categories. They ask that authors submit the first three chapters of their work

along with a query letter. If you have not heard from them after 12 weeks, it is safe to assume rejection. They only email authors if they are interested in reading more. This is unfortunate, but becoming more of a standard practice across the publishing industry.

The query letter and the chapters should be word attachments and not placed in the body of the submission email. All submissions must be made via email.

You can read their full submission guidelines [here](#). You can learn more about the company as a whole [here](#).

The Quarto Publishing Group

The Quarto Publishing Group which is an international publishing house known for its illustrated books. They publish most of their work through a number of niche imprints each with their own focus. All of their US imprints are distributed by Hachette.

Their imprints are all nonfiction. They publish a lot of cookbooks and gift books. They also have imprints covering almost any nonfiction topic you can think of from children's nonfiction to parenting to vehicles to architecture.

This is what their website has to say about all their imprints:

Each of our imprints has its own editorial focus and fits into one of the categories below. To ensure that your book proposal winds up in the right hands, please take a moment to review each category to determine where your book best fits. Submitting to the category will send your idea to multiple imprints. If your book idea fits into our focus areas we will contact you for more details. Please bear in mind that we receive a large number of unsolicited manuscripts, so our response time may vary and we ask for your patience.

Their submission guidelines are very specific so please review them carefully before submitting. You can read the full guidelines [here](#).

Once you have carefully reviewed their guidelines you should start composing (or editing) your book proposal.

Reviewing the catalog of the imprint you are planning to submit to is always a good idea.

Quirk Books

This Philadelphia based press publishes just 25 books a year in a whole range of genres, from children's books to nonfiction to science fiction. Unlike most publishers that tackle a large range of topics, Quirk books has a clear marketing plan and to a certain degree their books have a cohesive feel, because they all are quirky.

They have published a wide variety of best sellers and they have excellent distribution. Some of their bestsellers include *The Last Policeman*, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children*, and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. You probably recognize more of the books they have published, you might even own a few.

Their covers are excellent. Their website is well organized. Even better, from a potential submitters perspective, their submission guidelines are clear. They also make it very obvious which editor you should submit to, based on your topic. For example below is one of the editor's profiles.

Blair Thornburgh (Editor) is interested in high-concept fiction and non-fiction for teens and adults with a humorous, geeky, and/or feminist bent. In YA fiction, she's seeking manuscripts with a strong, preferably comedic voice and a fresh premise (no dystopias, please). In adult fiction, she's looking for next-gen chick lit, genre fiction that's light and accessible to mainstream readers, and

anything with a playful high concept. In non-fiction, she's looking for projects involving women and feminism, geeky stuff and pop culture, or anything that will appeal to quote-unquote millennials. She is actively seeking authors from diverse backgrounds. Definitely query her if you have:

1. High-concept YA with a strong voice—think geeky Meg Cabot
2. Fiction (adult or YA) that incorporates lots of voices or stylistic devices (à la *Dear Committee Members* or *Where'd You Go, Bernadette*)
3. A love story with an unusual narrative form, like Rainbow Rowell's *Attachments*, Jennifer E. Smith's *The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight*, or Daniel Handler's *Why We Broke Up*
4. Genre fiction that's self-aware, like *Galaxy Quest* or *Cabin in the Woods* in book form
5. Any novel that plays with narrative form, especially involving the internet—a "TTYL" for the next generation

All of the editors have their email address posted at the bottom of their profile. They used to be quick in terms of response times. However, for the last year or so they appear to have only responded to queries they are interested in learning more about. So if you do not hear from them, keep that in mind. Only query one editor at a

time. They ask that you do not follow up if you do not hear from them.

To learn more, visit their submission guidelines [here](#).

Red Deer Press

Red Deer Press is a small press based out of Canada. They focus on publishing children's books. They publish books for a whole range of ages starting with picture books and culminating with young adult books. Their books have good covers, are generally well reviewed, and have good distribution.

Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd. is the parent press of Red Deer Press. Back in 2011 they got into trouble for issues stemming from a problematic contract with a Red Deer author. You can read details of this situation [here](#).

Since that time there have been no updates that I can find and no additional negative information. I assume that the situation was corrected and the contract was amended, but I think that any contract should be closely examined, and you should keep that in mind when approaching this publisher particularly. But it is also good to remember that this situation happened seven years ago at this point, and the individuals involved may no longer even be with the company.

They accept submissions through mail and email only. They ask that all authors only submit one manuscript at a time. Picture books must be submitted without original art. Picture books should be submitted in their entirety. For fiction they ask that you submit a query letter or

three sample chapters (which is unusual, most presses want both of these things). For non-fiction submissions, submit a query letter or sample chapters with outline.

To learn more go [here](#).

Ripple Grove Press

Ripple Grove Press is a newer family-run children's book publisher based out of Portland. They focus on publishing original, beautifully illustrated children's books. Their website is clear and transparent. It lists their distributor and their literary agent for other publishers interested in translating their work.

The website is easy to navigate and focuses on selling books. The books themselves are beautifully illustrated and appealing. The books they publish are aimed at 2-8 year olds.

They have a clear idea of what they are not interested in reading: "Lullaby stories or stories about how much I love you; or my younger brother annoys me; or there's a new baby or puppy in the house; or there's a monster under my bed; or I want to turn my sister into a monster; or you're the star in my heaven. We are not interested in your summer vacation or something sweet you did with your nana."

Reviewing their [catalog](#) should give you a good idea of what they are interested in publishing. They only publish between 3-4 books a year, so they are highly selective.

Before submitting I highly encourage you to check out their section [of essays](#). The one on top has particularly helpful advice.

All submissions must be made via email and all manuscripts must be copied and pasted into the body of the email. Attached manuscripts will not be opened. Please review their full submission guidelines carefully. Only illustrators with a story should attach their manuscript as a PDF document.

To learn more or to submit, go to their submission guidelines [here](#).

Shadow Mountain

Shadow Mountain is an imprint of [Deseret Books](#). Both publishers have their roots in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but Deseret Books focuses more on producing faith-based content. Shadow Mountain publishes primarily fiction and they have published a number of New York Times bestselling books. Because the company is run by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, books have to be approved by in-house censors in order to be published. They are very firm about publishing "clean books only". However the authors need not be members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Only the Ensign Peak imprint of Shadow Mountain focuses on books that are religious in nature. Even the Ensign Peak books are intended for a general, nondenominational audience.

While they publish general fiction and nonfiction books for all ages, a lot of what they sell is aimed at middle grade readers, or could be categorized as clean romance.

They are not interested in considering books in the following genres: business and finance, family histories/personal journals, religion, or poetry.

They have a [special section](#) of the site devoted to their New York Times Bestselling books and it is easy to see that the majority of

them are middle grade fantasy books. They have good distribution, a good website, and good covers.

Shadow Mountain uses Submittable to manage their submissions.

All submissions must be made through them. They try to respond to all submissions between 12 and 16 weeks.

Submitters must query first and then only submit a full manuscript on request. Learn more [here](#).

Skypony

Skypony Publishing is a division of Skyhorse Publishing. Skypony focuses on publishing works for children, they are also open to publishing young-adult work as long as it intersects with other areas of interest for the publisher such as ecology, farm living, wilderness living, recycling, and other *green* topics.

They are currently open to submissions of picture books, books aimed at early readers, young-adult novels with a *green* focus, midgrade novels, and informational books for children and young adults. They also consider books with special needs themes such as food allergies and ADHD. They prefer to publish single titles but are open to considering series proposals.

Some of the titles of their most recent books include: *Alpha Goddess*, *The Little Raindrop*, *Jonah and The Whale*, and *Dixie Wants an Allergy*. They have also published a number of craft how-to books and one sequel. Clearly, they publish a larger range of books than just eco-friendly or educational books. *Alpha Goddess*, for example, is a science-fiction influenced young-adult book.

Skypony only considers work submitted electronically via email. They expect all work to be attached either as a Word file or, if it contains images, as a jpg file.

When you submit work, include a query letter that contains relevant information about yourself, including your publishing history, any institutional associations you have, your occupation, and a website link if relevant. If the book is informational, you should include your qualifications.

They do not specifically request a pitch or plot synopsis, but your query letter will look more professional with them. Also, they do not mention anything about simultaneous submissions, so you should be fine submitting your work elsewhere at the same time as long as you notify them if your work is accepted elsewhere. To learn more or submit work, please visit their website [here](#).

Sleeping Bear Press

Sleeping Bear Press is a well regarded publisher of board books, picture books, middle grade readers, and young adult fiction. They offer advances to some authors. They have good regional distribution in the Midwest and ok distribution in North America. Their books have won a wide variety of awards, all of them are listed [here](#).

Their website is easy to use and focused on selling books. They do offer teachers' guides for many of their books, which is a good sign. Also you can read all of the editorial reviews of their books [here](#), which is a wonderful and can give you a good idea about the details of what they publish. Their catalog is also very helpful. It is organized by age group and you can see it [here](#).

I thought it was worth noting that while they published a lot of board books, picture books and middle grade readers, their [young adult fiction selection](#) was rather sparse, having less than a dozen books in it (not counting blank diaries). Perhaps it is a newer area of publication for them, or just not their focus.

They are open to submissions on a rolling basis, which means they can open and close to submissions without notice. Please check back at their website regularly if they are closed, they appear to be open the majority of the time.

All submissions must be made through post or email. They only contact submitters if they are interested in the book they submitted. They do not respond to queries regarding manuscripts. They also don't give estimated response times, but a good rule of thumb is if you have not heard from a publisher in six months (and they don't post response times), assume they are not interested. Learn more [here](#).

Sterling Publishing

Sterling Publishing is owned by Barnes and Noble. They put it for sale a couple of years ago, but then after a period of time pulled it from the market. During this whole period Sterling has continued to publish books. They also have a large crafting imprint named Lark. Sterling has been publishing books for over 60 years.

Their website is currently under construction and focuses on authors, not on selling books, but given the fact that they have very good distribution that might not be as much of a priority for them.

The books they publish for adults cover current events, diet and health, parenting, pop culture, reference, history, art, artists, and music. They have a number of imprints with specific focuses on topics such as cooking. They do not publish fiction for adults

They also publish books for children and toddlers. This includes works of fiction and non-fiction.

Sterling only accepts submissions via the post. They try to respond to all submissions they receive. For children's books they expect full manuscripts. For adult books they want a proposal and a first sample chapter.

When you submit, be sure to include your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address. They will not return any materials

submitted unless you specifically request that materials be returned and include, along with your submission, a self-addressed stamped envelope. Under no circumstance should you submit originals or the only copy. They cannot guarantee that they will return unsolicited material.

All submissions should be clearly addressed to the correct editor (for example the Parenting Editor).

To learn more visit their submission guidelines [here](#). You have to scroll down to the submission guidelines which download as a PDF.

Tell-Tale Publishing

Tell-Tale Publishing is a small press founded in 2009. They seem to focus primarily on eBooks but also they have print options (largely print on demand). They publish six imprints which include Dahlia (Romance, and various romance subgenres), Stargazer (fantasy, steampunk), Nightshade (horror), Casablanca (mystery), Thistle (middle school, YA, New Adult), and Deja Vu (reprints for all genres).

All of the genres have separate, detailed submission guidelines, so review those before submitting. Many also spell out their expectations in terms of genre and subgenre.

They have an active Facebook page with a fair number of followers and their website seems geared towards readers. That said, I find their website to be poorly designed and the font colors they have chosen to use on particular pages ([about us](#) for example), beyond confusing. I don't find the website or the writing on it to be professional or appealing.

Their covers are mixed, leaning towards not very good, but they are mostly in genres I don't read, like romance and horror. So I am not really the covers target audience.

On their website there is evidence that they don't believe in the Oxford comma, and I found that off-putting. Although they say they

believe in them in their style guide, much of their website does not reflect that.

There is not much about them on Absolute Write, particularly recently, but there was mention of an initial contract being unfriendly to authors, but open to negotiation. You can read more [here](#).

They do however have a style guide on their submission page, and submissions are made online through an easy to use form.

To learn more about their submission guidelines, [go here](#).

Text Publishing

Text Publishing is an Australian press that has published a wide variety of best sellers. They have won the small publisher of the year award three times. You can get a feel for what they publish [here](#). One of their biggest hits in recent years is the internationally bestselling novel *The Rosie Project*, by Graeme Simsion (the first in a series of Rosie novels).

They are open to a wide variety of submissions but they do not consider poetry or plays. They don't publish picture books or early readers. They do publish middle grade readers and books aimed at young adults.

Text Publishing has excellent distribution in Australia. Their covers are wonderful and their website is well organized and intuitive to use.

They are open to direct submissions and try to respond to all submissions within three months, although according to the notice at the top of their submission guidelines they are taking longer to respond at the moment. All submissions must be made through the post.

All they want to be mailed to them initially is a one page synopsis of the novel and the first three chapters. Work should be 1.5 or double

spaced and preferably double sided. The manuscript must contain full contact details.

To learn more, go [here](#).

Tilbury House

Tilbury House is a press based out of Maine that publishes children's and adults nonfiction books. Their focus since the early 90s has been primarily on children's books with a message about the environment, social justice, nature, or cultural diversity. They are often published along with teacher's guides. Most of their books are aimed at children between the ages of seven to twelve. They are not interested in regional children's books.

They have published some very successful children's books, including *Talking Walls*, *Sheila Says We're Weird*, and *Playing War*. Each book has a focused message involving a social issue.

Tilbury House still publishes books aimed at adults, primarily regional nonfiction about Maine or the Northeast. They tend to publish books that you could easily find in local regional museums.

They accept submissions via post (their mailing address is on their website) and via email (but they do not open attachments). When you submit work, make sure to include a query letter, and/or a partial manuscript and an outline. For children's books, they prefer to see a complete manuscript. If you are submitting a complete manuscript, it is probably best to send it in the mail, as they do not open attachments.

Work sent through the mail must be accompanied by a self-addressed and stamped envelope if you want a reply. If you are making simultaneous submissions to other publishers, state that information in your query letter. It takes over a month for them to respond to most queries, so take that into consideration.

It seems like they have a very clear marketing plan for most books, which is a good thing. This is one reason why they are only interested in such a narrow range of publications. Tilbury House was recently bought by new owners, but they seem to be committed to continuing the vision of the previous owners and very little has changed. If you are interested in learning more or submitting work, please visit their website [here](#).

Tradewind Books

Tradewind Books is a small publisher of books for children and young adults located in British Columbia, Canada. They publish beautifully illustrated books, chapter books, books for middle grade readers, and for young adults. They publish primarily fiction but also some poetry. They are not interested in nonfiction. It is important to note that they cannot accept novels by non-Canadian authors unless they are chapter books that require illustrations. They can accept submissions for picture books. If you are not Canadian, only submit books that require illustrations. All other books will not be considered.

The books they publish have been awarded and shortlisted for numerous prestigious awards. The company has been around since 1997.

They have good distribution in Canada and you can see the details about their distribution in other countries (including the US, the UK, Australia and New Zealand) [here](#). I often see their books in my local library. Their books are well designed and appealing as well as diverse. To learn more about the specifics of what they publish, please browse their catalog [here](#).

All submissions must be made through the mail. To learn more, go to their submission guidelines [here](#). They have specific instructions

for each age group and category, so please read and follow their instructions.

Triangle Square

Triangle Square is an imprint of Seven Stories Press that focuses on publishing young-adult novels and children's books. Seven Stories Press is an independent publisher that is well respected and has been around for twenty years. Their books are distributed by Random House. You can read our full review of Seven Stories Press, [here](#).

Triangle Square focuses on publishing high-quality writing that is educational. They recently published Pulitzer Prize winner Jared Diamond's first science book for children, *The Third Chimpanzee for Young People*. But they also published an illustrated book called *The Mummy Makers of Ancient Egypt* by Tamara Bowers, and a novel called *Misdirected* by Ali Berman that focuses on such issues as bullying and homophobia.

Their books all have an educational aspect, even if they are fictional. Triangle Square, like Seven Stories Press, has a focus on education and social justice, their audience is just younger.

It is a good idea to look through the books they have previously published so that you know what they are looking for. You could also buy a book, or check out a few of them from your local library.

Their submission policy is the same as Seven Stories Press. All submissions must be made by mail. Just send a cover letter and two

sample chapters (no more), along with a self-addressed and stamped envelope or postcard so that they can respond.

Their address is Seven Stories Press, 140 Watts Street, New York, NY, 1013.

To get a better feeling for what they publish, please visit their website [here](#).

Turner Books

Turner publishes books in a wide range of categories and formats—fiction and non-fiction. They publish mainly in print but have electronic options as well. They are a major independent publishing house that has a number of imprints.

The following is a list of their imprints from their websites, which may be helpful in determining if they are the right publisher for you.

- Turner
- Wiley: Turner publishes under the Wiley name, with permission, for over 1,000 acquired titles
- Hunter House: Health, Wellness & Sexuality Titles
- Ancestry: Genealogy (acquired the assets of the book division of Ancestry.com)
- Fieldstone Alliance: Business Books for Non-profits (acquired assets of Fieldstone Alliance)
- Basic Health Publications: Titles on Health and Wellness
- Iroquois Press: Fiction and Literature imprint
- Ramsey & Todd: Children's books
- Specific Titles formerly published by Cumberland House Press

They have published a number of well known authors and bestselling books. They have good distribution. Their website is easy to navigate and well designed.

All submissions must be made through email. They are open to agented or unagented submissions. They will contact you if they are interested, otherwise do not expect to hear from them. They are rather blunt about that. Unfortunately they do not have any information around average turn around time, but they allow simultaneous submissions.

To learn more about them I really encourage you to browse their [catalog](#). To learn their submissions email address (and not much else) visit their website [here](#).

Versify

Versify, a new imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Books for Young Readers, is accepting submissions via email. Versify was started by the Newberry Award winning author Kwame Alexander, [who you can learn more about here](#). The goal of Versify is to publish risky, unconventional books for children. They are looking for novels, non-fiction, picture books, and graphic novels. They also are probably the only imprint of Houghton Mifflin that has a [Tumblr](#).

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt has no other imprints currently open to unsolicited submissions.

It is important to stress that they publish a very specific kind of writing. Kwame Alexander's book [The Crossover](#), a book of prose and poetry, which he struggled to get published, was the inspiration for the imprint. It is worth reading before submitting. Versify itself has yet to publish a book. It is the first publisher that we have reviewed that hasn't had a publication history, but because it is an imprint of Houghton Mifflin, one of the big five, we do think it is well worth reviewing. Their first book will be published in 2019.

This is the official press release on [Versify](#).

They do not respond to submissions unless they are interested in publishing your work. So if you have not heard from them in 12 weeks, it is safe to assume rejection.

To learn more, go to their submission guidelines [here](#).

Watershed Books

Watershed is an imprint of [Pelican Book Group](#). Watershed publishes Christian fiction aimed at readers between the ages of 14 and 19. They want the books to appeal to older readers as well.

It is a good idea to browse [their catalog](#) to see what they have previously published. This will also give you a good idea of the quality of covers which appears to vary widely. I did find some errors on the website, but all appeared to be minor. I liked that the website focused on readers not writers.

The books they consider publishing belong in the following categories

- Action-adventure
- Mystery, (amateur sleuth or other)
- Romance
- Sci-fi / Fantasy / Supernatural
- Suspense, crime drama, police procedural
- Teen angst / coming-of-age
- Westerns

The focus the narrative must be conflict that is experienced by the main characters. There can be more than one protagonist. The overarching story does not have to be spiritual at the start but through the progression of the plot, faith becomes a requirement.

They ask that the manuscripts submitted to them not be "overly preachy". Supernatural themes are allowed but must be limited to Christian Elements. The Example they give is "Angels would be acceptable; a talking witch's familiar would not."

They really want the stories to be character driven. Their detailed submission guidelines can be read [here](#). You can submit to them [here](#), but only after reviewing the submission guidelines.

They do not consider work that is previously published, self or otherwise. They only accept electronic submissions.

Workman

Workman Publishing is a large independent publishing company that now includes a number of separate imprints (most started out as their own companies and were purchased by Workman). The imprints include large established companies like Algonquin Books (which is no longer open to un-agented submissions). The original Workman imprint is open to un-agented submissions. They focus on publishing exclusively nonfiction books for children and adults, as well as calendars. They do not accept unsolicited picture book submissions.

To get a good idea about what the Workman imprint publishes, visit their page [here](#). They have good distribution and I recognized a number of their covers from the display case at my local bookstore which is always a good sign. Some of the famous books they have published in the past (they have been around a long time) include The "What to Expect" series (best known for the Book *What to Expect When you are Expecting*).

They prefer to receive all submissions via email. Any hard copy submissions must be of copies. They do not want original work and will not return original work. Please specify if your book is for the Children's department.

They have clear submission guidelines and the entire proposal should not be longer than 30 pages, this includes the first chapter. Read their submission guidelines carefully, because it is important to follow them.

They do respond to all submissions, but it generally takes them around 5 months. Please do not query them before that.

To learn more go to their submission page [here](#). The submission guidelines for the Workman Imprint are up first on the page.

Researching Literary Agents

Researching agents can be a time-consuming process, but I would never submit to an agent without first doing significant research.

To me, research is the most important step of the submission process. It is vital because there is no point going through all the work of writing your manuscript and submitting just to end up with an agent that does not properly represent you or your manuscript.

An agent that could be a good fit for another author, or even another one of your manuscripts, might not be the right agent for this particular project. And just like any other industry, there are bad agents out there that could misrepresent you in any number of ways. [Writer Beware](#) (a volunteer organization that works on behalf of writers) has a terrific section on [dishonest agents](#).

It is important to note that many agents do not work alone, and most of the more successful agents, although not all, are part of, or head, a larger agency.

When submitting to an agency, you often submit to individual agents that work there. Sometimes the agency is very established, but the agents within that agency that are open to unsolicited submissions are the newer ones. All these are important factors to consider when the time comes to submit.

I would say that over half of the agents I research, in the genre I write in, I dismiss after researching them. Or, I put them in a document on my computer with notes about what I liked and didn't like about them, to review for potential submission at a later date. In other words, I would consider submitting to them, but only after a significant number of rejections from more established agents.

How to Find Potential Agents

The first step of researching agents is always the same. It involves finding agents that are worth looking into further. I usually start with a genre search on [Query Tracker](#). This is the way many authors find the agents that end up representing them. This search engine has plenty of filters, so it is easy to look for agents that focus on your genre of writing.

Although you should always verify by other means that they actually do focus on that genre before submitting. You also need to verify that they are a legitimate agency elsewhere.

Another method, and the one with which I personally have found the best leads, is to read books in the same genre that you write in, and when you find a book or an author you like, figure out who their agent is. Often the agent is specifically thanked in the Acknowledgements section of the book, but if they are not, Googling the name of the author and the word 'agent' will often find good results as well.

I also use [Absolute Write Water Cooler Forum](#) to find agents. Usually, I look just by browsing the Agents and Publishers forum. I always keep my eye out for the longer threads spanning multiple pages; that is generally a good sign with agents (less so with publishers).

Another way to find agents is through attending literary conferences. Agents often attend literary conferences where there are usually various ways to communicate with them or pitch to them during the conference. If you are attending a conference specifically to seek agents, research the agents beforehand to see if you would actually want to work with them (and they with you, as most agents focus on a specific genre). Also, approach with caution any sessions where they are charging you an additional fee to pitch.

How to Research an Agent Outside of their Website

You can also learn a lot about the agent or agency just by browsing their website, but I always research the agent outside their website first. Visiting the website first can color your perspective too much.

I already mentioned the [Absolute Write Water Cooler Forum](#) above as a potential way to find agents, though I primarily use it to vet agents. The forums are active and get a lot of use. If an author has a good or bad experience with an agent, they often will share it. Other people in the industry also chime in. Victoria Strauss, the co-founder of Writer Beware, is active there.

Because it is a forum, and everyone can post, you sometimes have to take entries with a grain of salt. But there is a lot of good information to be had there. If an agent or agency isn't discussed there, it is usually because they are new, small, or not very active, and that itself can be a clear sign, although there are exceptions.

Doing a Google search of the agency or agent is also good. A write-up in [Publishers Weekly](#) can be a good thing, but they also write a lot of "puff pieces" about agents and publishing houses, so I try not to take them too seriously. [Wikipedia](#), as most people already know, is not generally a trustworthy source in this area either. It can be helpful if the agent is mentioned on author websites, or the agency is maligned on [Glassdoor](#), which is not a good sign.

It is very important to make sure the agency isn't on the [Writer Beware Thumbs Down Agencies](#) List. At this point I almost have the list memorized.

How to Evaluate an Agent's Website

A lot can be learned from the agent's website itself. An established and reputable agent will have the names of at least some of the authors and books they have represented on their website. It is important that these books and names are currently relevant. For example, if they only mention representing one or two authors that were successful 20 years ago but have not published in a decade, they are to be avoided, generally.

But the clearest, best indicator of a legitimate agency that could place your book with a good publisher, in my experience, is their track record: The authors that they work with and the books they represent.

It is very important that an agent be active in the genre that you hope to publish in. If they are not, they likely do not understand how that genre works, and often don't have the relevant connections that will help your book be considered by the right publishers. If they say they accept your genre but have not represented any books in that genre, I would approach with caution.

It is a good sign if an agent is a member of the Association of Authors Representatives (AAR). That in and of itself is not a stamp of approval though, it is just an indicator that they are probably competent. It's important to remember that not all good agents are AAR members, and I wouldn't eliminate an agent just because they are not a member.

New agents can be good, although they are more of a risk because they don't have a track record. However, you should only consider submitting to a new agent if they have industry experience ([more on that here](#)). They should make it very clear what experience they have on their website.

An agent should never charge an upfront fee. That is a clear indicator that they are not a legitimate agent. The same goes for

agents who offer editing services for a fee. A combination editor/agent website is usually a clear warning sign, although those lines are starting to blur.

A number of successful agents now run publishing companies and/or have editing services. If that is the case, ideally, these different businesses will remain separate. For example, an author taken on by the agent will not be offered a contract by that agent's publishing company or be encouraged to use that agent's paid editorial services. Sometimes this multi-business approach is clear on the agent's site itself, other times [Absolute Write Water Cooler Forum](#) is where it is mentioned. If it is talked about on the forum, it is usually clear if the agency manages to run multiple businesses in a legitimate way or not. Always look for fees and signs of multiple businesses or redirection on the website.

Researching agents might seem overwhelming at first, but the good news is the more you do it, the easier it becomes. Spending a lot of time researching agents helps, but so does spending time increasing your base of knowledge by reading [Writer Beware](#). One picks up warning signs much quicker as one's base of knowledge expands.

Because it is important to keep track of the research one does, not to mention the submissions one makes, I have two files on my computer devoted to agents and publishers. One includes notes about the agents and publishers I am considering submitting to, as

well as a list of agencies and publishers I do not want to consider in the future. The other file tracks my submissions to agents and publishers. It indicates the responses I have received and how long it took to receive them. If I received a request for a full manuscript before receiving a rejection, I make sure to indicate that. These two files help the submission process immensely.

Literary Agents: A Starter Guide

In the previous chapter, I focused on how to find legitimate literary agencies.

This chapter features a few legitimate literary agencies serve as examples of what to look for.

All of these literary agencies have been vetted using the parameters outlined in the previous chapters.

Most of these are “reach” agencies, which means they don’t accept very much of the work submitted to them.

I’m not suggesting you submit to these agents. I’ve never read your work and I have no idea if it will be a good fit for them are not. However, I want you to be able to see what a legitimate agent looks like and how they represent what they are looking for. This is just a jumping off point for your own research. Treat it as such.

Not all of these agents are currently open to direct submissions, although the majority are. This list is in no particular order.

All of the agencies listed here have been researched and vetted using the methods outlined in the previous chapter.

Please keep in mind that if an agent does not represent your kind of fiction you should not submit it to them, even if they are legitimate. It is a waste of both you and the agent's time.

Often, if a literary agent knows your manuscript not the right fit for them but they think that it might work for another agent at the same agency, they share within the agency. If they don't think it's a good fit for the agency as a whole, they reject it. Never submit to more than one agent at the same agency, unless they expressly ask you to do so.

If every agent in the agency represents children's and YA fiction, the names of individual agents are not mentioned. If only a few agents do, their names are mentioned, as well as their focus.

There are well known agents and agencies that are not here. This list is not intended to be comprehensive. It is just a starting point. The list is in no particular order.

[BookEnds Jr.](#), is a division of BookEnds Literary agency represents fiction and nonfiction for the young adult, middle grade and picture book markets. In fiction they are seeking work in the following genres: contemporary, romance, science fiction and fantasy, historical fiction, graphic novels, horror, thrillers, and mystery. In nonfiction they are seeking narrative nonfiction and memoirs.

[The Garnett Company](#) is a respected and established literary agency that focuses largely on literary fiction and non-fiction. Sarah Burnes, one of their agents, who in the past worked as an editor at Houghton Mifflin, Knopf, and Little, Brown, represents children's fiction.

[Pippin Properties](#) is one of the premier children's and young adult literary agencies. They also represent adult fiction but it is the exception not the rule. They particularly focus on representing authors of middle grade fiction. Currently, two of their three agents are open to submissions.

[The Chudney Agency](#) is another small agency that focuses on representing books for children and teens, with a few exceptions. They represent a large number of authors, and author/illustrators.

[TridaUS](#) is a small literary agency that represents a wide range of genres, but all the agents represent either YA or children's fiction, if not both. The vast majority of the authors they represent are YA or children's.

[At Foundry Art + Media](#), an established literary agency mostly representing adult fiction and non-fiction authors, [Jess Regal](#) also represents children's and young adult fiction, including coming-of-age stories. [Peter Steinberg](#) represents young adult fiction. [Adriann Ranta Zurhellen](#) represents children's fiction, particularly focusing

on “smart, fresh, genre-bending works for children”. Tanusri Prasanna represents picture books, middle grade and young adult fiction. She goes into detail of what she is seeking [here](#).

[Andrea Brown Lit](#) is an established literary agency that focuses on representing children’s book authors. They are interested in picture books, early readers, chapter books, and middle grade books, as well as YA fiction, graphic novels, and non-fiction.

[Writer’s House](#) is an established literary agency and their agents represent some of the most established and successful YA authors, and a number of successful children’s book authors as well. Most of their agents seem to represent Children’s and YA fiction, although, because of how their website is organized, it’s hard to find information on all of the agents. Here are three I have chosen to highlight, but I encourage you to do additional research. [Stephen Barr](#) represents Middle Grade and YA. [Jodie Reamer](#) represents children’s and YA, and she’s the agent of both Stephanie Meyer’s and John Green. [Susan Ginsberg](#) represents YA.

Literary Journals and Magazines Aimed at Younger Readers

Most children's book authors and young adult authors struggle with creating a trove of published works – an asset when trying to find an agent or publisher for their work. The following lists publishers that are all looking for work aimed at children and teens.

So, not only can you create a history of publication, you can do so in the area you specialize in. Many famous writers got their start in journals like *Cicada* and *Cricket*.

The list is in no particular order. Keep in mind that not all of these publishers may be currently open to submissions. None of these publishers charge reading fees. We never review a publisher that does.

Sparkle

A Christian magazine aimed at girls in 1st through 3rd grade. They pay varying amounts depending on the genre. You can read their submission [guidelines here](#).

Ember

A literary journal that publishes creative nonfiction, fiction, and poetry aimed at children and teens. They publish writing by adults as well as children. Learn more [here](#).

The Caterpillar

This relatively new but greatly respected literary journal for kids between the ages of 8 and 11 accepts submissions of poetry and fiction. Learn more [here](#).

BALLOONS Literary Journal

An online journal that publishes poetry, fiction and art that is primarily aimed at young readers aged around 10 to 16. Read our full review [here](#).

Cricket Media's Literary Journals

Their flagship publication, Cricket – billed as “The New Yorker for Kids” – publishes poetry and fiction aimed at 9 to 14 year olds. Read our full review [here](#). They also have three other magazines called Babybug (for children 6 months to 3 years), Ladybug (3 to 6 years), and Spider (6 to 9 years). You can see their submission guidelines [here](#).

Cricket Media's Nonfiction Magazines

Cricket media publishes a wide variety of nonfiction magazines for children as well. This includes Click (science and discovery for ages 3 to 7), Ask (science and discovery for ages 7 to 10), Muse (science and discovery for ages 10 and up), Cobblestone (American history for ages 9 to 14), Dig (world history and archaeology for ages 9 to 14), and Faces (world cultures and geography for ages 9 to 14). You can see their submission guidelines [here](#) (scroll down). Please note

that some require querying first and not all are open to unsolicited submissions.

Guardian Angel Kids

A paying market that publishes articles, poems, activities, and short stories. Their extensive guidelines are online [here](#). Their magazine is free so it is easy to get a good feel for what they publish.

Tunnel

An e-zine whose primary audience is teen readers. They accept submissions from anyone of any age as long as the intended audience of the writing is young adults. Learn more at their website [here](#).

Boys' Life

The magazine published by the Boy Scouts is only interested in unsolicited submissions that are nonfiction, but they do pay very well (generally \$1/word). The intended readers are boys 6 to 17. Their guidelines are detailed and you can download them [here](#).

Highlights' Publications

Highlights publications include Highlights Magazine, Hello, and High Five. All publications are interested in stories, poems, crafts, and recipes, but each has a different audience in mind, in terms of

age. The magazines' audiences range starts at 1 and goes to 12. See their guidelines [here](#).

Other Resources

Below are a number of resources that focus on children's book writing. Some are free, but others are not. The children's book publishing industry has a lot of resources and membership organizations geared towards writers and illustrators. These resources and organizations can really help new authors get published and more established authors market their books.

It is also important to look into local resources that may be of help. Often libraries and independent bookstores have groups and workshops for children's and YA writers. There also might be a local chapter of one of the larger writer organizations, such as SCBWI and CANSCAIP.

Local or regional conferences that might really benefit you also exist (many hosted by local chapters of the organizations mentioned above). Additionally, some universities hold excellent children's book conferences. Ask around at your library, bookstore, and local schools.

The Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators & Performers (CANSCAIP)

CANSCAIP is only open to Canadians. So if you are not a Canadian you can skim past this section. If you are Canadian, this is a wonderful organization and well worth being a part of. CANSCAIP is a member-supported not-for-profit organization for Canadian children's authors, illustrators, and performers. In order to be a member you must be traditionally published, but without a publication history you can be a friend of CANSCAIP, which offers many of the same benefits.

CANSCAIP member fees are 85 dollars a year, and friends' fees are 45 dollars a year. CANSCAIP has a monthly newsletter that is very informative, mentorship opportunities, regular meetings, and various educational and networking opportunities. They also host a yearly conference in Toronto that is excellent.

Learn more [here](#).

Children's Book Council

This organization's membership is only open to publishers, not writers, but they publish a lot of free information that is pertinent to children's book writers and illustrators. Time spent on their site often pays off.

Learn more [here](#).

Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market 2019: The Most Trusted Guide to Getting Published

This yearly guide is in its 30th edition and it just switched editors. The reviews regarding it are not yet out and there were a number of valid criticisms leveled at the last edition, but I don't know if they are pertinent to the 30th edition.. This book focuses on listing markets that are open to agented and un-agented submissions.

You can read more about it [here](#).

The Highlights Foundation

Best known for publishing Highlights magazine, the foundation focuses on hosting workshops for authors. Their workshops are helpful and valuable, and scholarships are available. However, it still might not be possible or practical to attend such an event, in which case you can access helpful information published on their [blog](#). To visit their website as a whole go [here](#).

The Horn Book Magazine

The Horn Book Magazine was first published in 1924. Highly regarded, it is a bimonthly periodical about literature for children

and young adults. The articles they publish focus on issues and trends in children's literature, as well as essays by artists and authors, and reviews of new books and paperback reprints for children and young adults. Lots of valuable information can be learned by reading *The Horn Book*. Some bookstores carry it, but it is much cheaper to subscribe to the publication. Learn more [here](#).

Kirkus Review

Kirkus Review publishes a magazine that reviews books pre-release via their digital and print editions. They review both adult and children's books (including YA). They also do other things, including charging authors for reviews – a practice I have mixed feelings about. But the reviews they publish are thorough and teach you a lot about what is appealing about a book, and about how publishing currently works. They have sensitivity readers/reviewers whenever pertinent. Learn more [here](#).

Publishers Weekly

Publishers Weekly publishes a lot of relevant publishing industry news and you can get a good feel for what kind of books publishers are currently interested in by following their website or by subscribing. They have a whole section of the website focusing on

children's literature, but they also have news relevant to YA publishing there. Learn more [here](#).

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI)

SCBWI is a non-profit organization that is based in the United States, but it is global and open to international members. They provide education and support for children's book writers and illustrators as well as educators, librarians, and performers. You do not have to have any publication history in order to be a member.

SCBWI charges members 95 dollars for their first year, and 80 dollars per year for every year after that. They do offer a significant student discount. SCBWI is a large organization with 82 regional chapters (to include international); they host national and regional events and have lots of networking and educational opportunities. They also have an informative and respected forum, and they offer a number of awards and grants. Learn more [here](#).

Vermont College of Fine Arts (VCFA)

I went back and forth on including this resource as it is much more specific than the others. VCFA is far from the only university to offer an MFA in writing for Children and Young Adults but it is by far the most prestigious. It was also the first of its kind. The writers

that teach there are very well known and established. Many students that studied there have gone on to have successful careers. The low-residency MFA program functions this way: a student works with one advisor long distance for the semester (there are four and thus, four advisors) and participates in two, ten-day residencies each year in Vermont. You can learn more [here](#).

Glossary of Terms

Advance: An advance is a signing bonus that is paid to the author before the book is published. It is paid against future royalty earnings. So, for every dollar you receive in an advance, you have to earn a dollar from book sales before you receive any additional royalty payments. Most independent publishers do not offer advances.

Anthology: A published collection of poems or other pieces writing, usually on a theme.

The Big Five: Previously known as "The Big Six," this term refers to: Penguin Random House, Macmillan, HarperCollins, Hachette and Simon & Schuster—the five largest publishers in North America. All of these publishers have multiple imprints. All of these publishers and most of their imprints require agents.

First Publication Rights: This term is most commonly used in the context of literary journals and magazines. Most publications will not publish work that has previously appeared in a different literary journal, print or online. Because of this most publishers require First Rights. These can also be called First North American Serial Rights or First Serial Rights. No matter what they are called, it usually means that you are giving a publication exclusive rights to publish

your poem first. After they publish the work the rights revert to you, sometimes right away, sometimes after six months. Many publishers of poetry and short story manuscripts want your work to have been previously published in literary journals.

Genre: A category of artistic composition, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter. Genre can refer to poetry, prose or non-fiction in terms of form. Or it can be a subject matter classification referring to science fiction, mysteries, or various other established types of stories. If a literary journal or publisher says they are not interested in genre work they are using it as a subject matter classification.

Imprints: An imprint of a publisher is a trade name under which a work is published. Many larger publishers use imprints in order to market specific books. For example, science fiction books and mystery books can be published by the same publisher, but under different imprints of that publishing house.

Independent Publishers: A publisher that is not an imprint of The Big Five or a large media corporation. Independent Publishers can be small startups, or large established presses like Chronicle Books. Most do not require agents in order to submit.

Literary Agent: A literary agent is someone who represents writers and their written works to publishers and assists in the sale and deal negotiation of the same. Many publishers require authors to submit their work through a literary agent.

Literary Journal: A magazine that publishes primarily poetry, fiction, and/or creative nonfiction. Also, commonly referred to as journals or reviews.

Manuscript: An unpublished book length work of fiction, non-fiction, or poetry.

Reader: Used mostly in the context of larger journals and contests, publishers generally have volunteer readers; individuals who read a large chunk of the work submitted and who decide what part of that work they are going to pass on to the editors.

Reprints: Work that has been previously published elsewhere. This includes self-published work. Some publishers are particularly interested in publishing reprints as long as all the rights belong to the author. The majority of publishers only consider reprints of work that have been previously traditionally published.

Royalties: Royalties at their most basic refer to the amount of money an author earns off each copy of their book that is sold.

SASE (Self Addressed and Stamped Envelope): If you submit to a publisher, a contest, or a literary journal via the mail, then most publishers require that you include a SASE (Self Addressed and Stamped Envelope). This is so they can respond to your work with a rejection or acceptance letter.

Self-Publishing: When you publish your own work either directly, or on a platform like the Kindle, or when you use a vanity press.

Sensitivity Readers: Sensitivity readers are individuals who review advance manuscripts of upcoming books, checking for issues of representation, bias, insensitive language and cultural inaccuracies. They make suggestions for possible changes to authors. A sensitivity reader reviews a manuscript for internalized bias and negatively charged language.

Many review companies such as Kirkus employ sensitivity readers, but authors now often pay readers to review the content of their books before they submit them. Sensitivity readers are important for chapter books and YA books, particularly if you are interacting with charged issues that you yourself do not face. For example, if an author without a learning disability wrote a book about having one, a sensitivity reader would be very helpful to promote accurate representation.

Solicited Submissions: Submissions from authors that the publishers directly request. Most literary journals publish a mix of solicited and unsolicited submissions. Editors can solicit the work of friends, or of famous or emerging writers.

Submission Manager: An online program that handles submissions electronically. The most common one is Submittable. Both literary journals and manuscript publishers use submission managers.

Traditional Publisher: A publisher who never charges you any fees, and who pays the author for their rights.

Unsolicited Submissions: The bulk of submissions to most journals and publishers are unsolicited. They are the submissions sent through submission managers, post, or emails to publishers and literary journals. If a manuscript publisher says they do not accept unsolicited submissions, then you cannot submit to them unless someone at the publishing house has explicitly asked to see your work, or you have an agent who can submit your work for you.

Vanity Publisher/ Press: Also known as assisted publishing. Any publisher that charges you in order to publish your work is a vanity publisher.

Author Bio

Emily Harstone is the author of many popular books, including [*The Authors Publish Guide to Manuscript Submissions*](#), [*The 2019 Guide to Manuscript Publishers*](#), and [*Submit, Publish, Repeat*](#),

She occasionally teaches [a course on manuscript publishing](#), as well as a course on [publishing in literary journals](#).