

TRYING TO GET PUBLISHED?

Read the article. Some sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-H the one which fits each gap. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

If you are wondering where to send your story, our expert Margaret Stubbs is here with the advice you need.



Readers of this magazine often write in saying "I have written this story/book. Can you please tell me who to send it to?" One of the first things they need to know is that they should be researching their markets and finding out about publishers as well as practicing their writing skills. Turning words into a saleable commodity takes a good deal of knowledge about the "writing game".

Whatever kind of writing you do, you need to develop a knowledge of the markets you are aiming at. (1) Use your local library and go round the local bookshops and newsagents. Reading widely will always give you the best guide to what kinds of writing publishers are actually accepting at any given time.

As time goes on, this knowledge must be updated as new publications are constantly appearing - editors change jobs, and magazines change direction. (2) Publishers are always hungry for new blood; as writers we have to make sure we give them what they want.

To begin with you may be looking around, not quite sure what you want to write. Let us say you feel that you might like to write short love stories. The very first thing you must do is find out which magazines use love stories, a rather limited market these days, and get hold of as many recent copies as you can. (3) These readers will expect different things from their magazine, and the editor is only interested in catering to their needs.

A However, if you fancy yourself as a writer of thrillers then you will need to read books by thriller writers.

B Then familiarize yourself with the kind of stories they are buying, taking special note of who the readers are.

C That almost never happens.

D If not, try joining a local writers' group which will help you to gain ideas and confidence from mixing with other aspiring writers.

Writers often send me their stories saying, "This has been rejected three times - please tell me if I am wasting my time... do I stand a chance at all?" (4) But it is unlikely that the work is of publishable standard; so I have to try to give an honest opinion, but always with a positive viewpoint.

The problem is that most new writers are too eager to send their work out, usually long before they are ready to enter the market. If you have only written one story or one article, it is not at all likely to be published. (5) When you read about so-called "overnight success", you usually find that the person has been in the publishing trade or journalism for some years before their current success.

When you do finally send off some of your work for the first time, immediately get on with more work while you await a reply; write ten more stories, twenty even. Each one will be better than the last, and you will begin to think of yourself as a writer, and both your fluency and your confidence will grow. (6) Also I would advise not showing your work to anyone else, certainly in the early stages.

Don't forget that every successful writer will have had many rejections before succeeding. Do everything you can to advance your career as a writer. See whether there's a creative writing course near you. (7) Think of yourself as a writer and get that writing practice in - every day if possible.

E There are several ways of doing this, but the best one is simply by reading everything relevant you can lay your hands on.

F Don't tear any of them up - improve them instead.

G New titles are coming and going all the time.

H As a former teacher, I would never actively discourage anyone.