



## Getting Your First Book Published

By Donna McGill

**Publishers, agents, intellectual property rights, distribution efforts—these are all aspects of getting a book published. Publisher jobs include proofreaders, agents, editors, and artists. The entire project consists of a tried-and-true combined effort from start to finish. If you are considering submitting a query letter or manuscript, the first consideration should be what the publisher will and will not accept. Some refuse to consider reviewing a manuscript until a query letter is submitted and the author has in turn been invited to provide a manuscript. Others prefer the writer submit a query letter with the first three chapters or perhaps the first one hundred pages. There are still others who will not consider unsolicited works from an author without the representation of an agent.**

There is nothing more disheartening than to submit a manuscript, only to have it returned, unread, with a short and less-than-polite note stating guidelines were not followed and your work has been returned unread. Your best option should be to first find an agent to represent you and your work, especially if this is your first book. Often, an agent can save you a lot of time and heartache because he or she knows what to anticipate in the unpredictable literary world. An agent can provide guidance and can prevent a first-time author from making major mistakes. Not only that, but it's reassuring knowing there's someone going to bat for you as you navigate these new waters. There are a few statistics you should be aware of. The odds of a first book being published are quite slim. It's just the nature of the business. Still, those who handle the rejections, and numerous ones at that, and can move forward anyway are the very ones you see on the bestsellers lists. Ask any acclaimed writer and he will tell you there are dues to be paid and high ones at that. Still, whether it is Harper Lee's only novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or any of Stephen King's numerous books, every published author will tell you it was very much worth the sacrifice. Remember that rejection does not equate with failure. Never before has the phrase, "only the strong survive" rang so true as in the field of book writing and publishing.

Few industries have benefitted more from the electronic era than those who have secured proofreader jobs. A proofreader ensures there are no grammatical or spelling errors and ensures the document flows in its storytelling efforts. For example, if a story begins from a third person perspective, a proofreader will verify it continues being told from the third person role. It is imperative that a proofreader has a solid understanding of the English language and has excellent grammatical skills. A good proofreader can often determine

which field he or she prefers to work in, including financial, legal, and advertising fields. There are proofreading symbols that have stood the test of time and are still widely used by those in this industry. It stands to reason the more experience one has, the more he can make as a proofreader. Not only that, but many have the option of working from home if they choose and their working hours are flexible, provided deadlines are met. Those who choose to work for larger companies have extended benefits such as health insurance and paid vacation time. Still, successful freelancers often prefer to pay their own insurance premiums as a tradeoff for the freedom afforded when working from home. Those with little or no experience can take a training course through several credible sources, including the Society of Editors and Proofreaders, for a fee.

Print production jobs offer a fast-paced, daily challenge due to deadlines and coordination efforts of writers, graphic artists, and other contributors to periodicals, both in print and electronic format. These positions are part of a larger team, all with the goal of meeting their deadlines. Attention to detail and a strong fortitude are required to be successful in this field. Still, the satisfaction after having another successful on-time delivery is what many say is the most exciting aspect of this position. There will be time constraints as well as a budget you must worth within. Many publications count on circulation (hardcopy publications such as daily newspapers) as well as monies received from advertisers. Further, you will most likely find yourself on call during a vast majority of your off time and must be willing to accommodate fast schedule changes.

The varying aspects of journalism as a whole are numerous; because of this, many in this field are able to determine if they travel, if they work from home, and many other factors.



**Publishing Career Feature**

Regardless of the many changes these fields undergo, courtesy of technological advances, there will always be

a need for print production personnel, proofreaders, and journalists.

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