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The trade of authorship is a violent and indestructible obsession.'
- George Sand

1. Getting Published and Improving as a Writer

How to present and submit your work correctly –

It's an in-built assumption that you have bought this pack (or looked it up on the internet) because you are a writer who wants to develop your skills and perhaps get published. Congratulations, you are allowing yourself to develop creatively and regardless of any financial success that may come your way this is a reward in itself for there is nothing better than creating things with words.

Writing is like anything, the harder you work the more you will get out of it. The following two maxims represent the true cornerstones of the writing life.

1: Writers write

Far too many people dream of being writers but never bother sitting down and actually writing for the long hours it requires to create anything worthwhile. It may seem silly and obvious to state this but as writing is a mental activity too many people get lost in thought rather than getting the words down on paper. The first thing you must do is commit to actually writing, at the very least, a few hundred words a day. It is only when you do this that your 'writing muscles' will start to get into fit and active shape.

2: Good writing is re-writing

It is very rare that you will ever sit down and write a story or poem in its perfect finished form. Nothing is ever as good as you think it is or as bad as you might fear. To produce good work and learn what good work is you're going to have to write many thousands of words. Find books and stories that you like and dissect them, comma by comma until you see how they work. Re-draft your own material five or six times then leave it in a drawer for a couple of months and then go back to it and redraft it again another five or six times. By redrafting you will discover that things will change, that characters will grow and find their true voice. Slowly and over time everything about your work will get better.

Once you have taken on board the two maxims and have begun to produce material that you are happy with, it's time to start trying to get published. You might have written a brilliant book but if you don't set it out correctly and if you don't submit it to the right agent or publisher you won't get anywhere.

Presentation

- ✍ Your work must be typed.
- ✍ Spelling, punctuation and grammar must be perfect. Be consistent in your choice of variant spellings, capitalisation, sub-headings, directions, footnotes etc.
- ✍ Use double spacing, a full empty line of empty space between every line of text, and allow generous margins. This is preferred practise since it allows an editor to make notes easily on your text.
- ✍ Number each page and include a front sheet with the title, your name and address and the extent, the number of words in the document. Most good word processors have a word count function.
- ✍ Contact the agent or publisher and ask them about their submission requirements. If you have written a book, it is common practise to just send the first couple of chapters and a synopsis.
- ✍ To see how you should lay-out your radio and television scripts you should get hold of a copy of the BBC's *Writers Guidelines*. You can print them from the Internet or we have a copy for reference

in Arts, Languages and Literature at Birmingham Central Library in the store at ApQ808.225. Ask a member of staff at the Information Services enquiry desk on floor 4

- ✍ There are many ways to layout plays and film scripts and several books are listed in chapter seven that will help you.
- ✍ There is also a good example on the Internet at www.oscars.org/nicholl/format_a.txt

Submitting your work

- ✍ Choose the right publisher or agent; they specialise and will not look at material they are not interested in.
- ✍ Approach them in the way they prefer. They may only accept work submitted by an agent, a certain magazine may require only an outline of your article. Phone them or look at their Websites for details.
- ✍ Never send the only copy of your work. Always send a reply envelope.
- ✍ Keep the covering letter professional, that is short and to the point. Do not try to write the 'memorable' letter; editors get thousands of submissions and are only interested in the work.
- ✍ Once you start submitting work, record when and where you sent your various pieces. This will not only stop you pestering editors with the same work but help you to build up valuable information about responses and response times.
- ✍ If an editor or agent is not interested they will not go into details; it is not worth their time.
- ✍ If an editor does show interest, even if they don't actually end up buying the work, you should be pleased; it means your writing is getting better.

For a good list of agents, publishers, magazines and other markets, look in **The Writers' Handbook**, **The Writers' And Artists Yearbook** , and **The Small Press Guide** which are all available to read on request from the Information Services enquiry desk on floor 4. There are also many Internet pages with information on markets for you work and links to some magazines and publishers submission guidelines pages. Check our list of Internet sites for writers to find some of the best sites currently available.

2. Writing for Radio, Film & Stage

There are many different script formats and it can seem like a very complex and time consuming task to get your script set out in a way that editors and producers will accept let alone endeavour to read. It may seem obvious to state this but the main difference in writing scripts for performance media is that they are heavy on dialogue.

- ✍ The background, exposition and descriptive work should all be kept to a minimum and your characters should live and breathe through the words that they speak.

Do not be overwhelmed by this if you have never written a script before. If you follow the writing maxim one and get the words on paper, in whatever way works best, you can always develop and adapt what you have written through re-writing.

- ✍ In fact, particularly if you are writing a play, you must be prepared to work with actors and producers and develop your work by performing scenes and acting them through in workshops and rehearsals.
- ✍ Being pro-active and contacting local actors and getting them to read your work will aid your development as a writer ten-fold.

Shakespeare lived and breathed the theatre; you should at least try to do the same. How else are you going to know what can be done? How actors work? What opportunities are available?

The BBC Writer's Room contains great guidelines for setting out your scripts for TV and radio. There is also a script archive where you can look at scripts that have been produced and you can download *Script Smart* software for free. *Script Smart* offers a variety of templates for use with Microsoft Word which will help you set out your scripts professionally.

For more information visit www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom

Other useful websites –

- ✍ www.storyinsight.com/index.html
- ✍ www.howto.co.uk/writing/tv-writing/the_basics_4/

There is also a good example of a film script online at www.oscars.org/nicholl

In **Agents and Contracts** you will find several books that will help you lay out and write stage plays and film scripts.

(ALL – Arts, Languages and Literature, Floor 3 and 808.23 is the location number)

- ✍ **Barry Turner,**
Screenwriter's Handbook, 2009, (ALL, 808.23, Practical Film)

- ✍ **Caulfield, Annie,**
Writing for radio: a practical guide, 2009, (808.222)

✍ **Jurgen Wolff,**
Your Writing Coach, 2007, (ALL, 808.02)

✍ **Linda Cowgill,**
Writing short films, 2005, (ALL, 808.06, Practical Film)

✍ **Raymond Fensham,**
Screenwriting, 2008, (ALL, 808.23, Practical Film)

✍ **Rib Davis,**
Writing dialogue for scripts, 2003, (ALL 808.2)

✍ **Ronald Wolfe,**
Writing comedy, 2003, (Business Insight: Creative Insight, Ground Floor)

✍ **Shaun Macloughlin,**
Writing for radio: how to write plays, features and short stories, 2001, (ALL 808.222)

✍ **Vincent McInerney,**
Writing for radio, 2001, (ALL808.222)

✍ **William Smethurst,**
How to write for television, 207, (ALL 808.225)

3. Poetry

The printed market for poetry is limited with fewer big publishers even interested in putting out poetry books from established writers let alone new comers. While this may sound bleak for all you budding poets, there is hope; the whole poetry scene has had to become more vibrant and dynamic to combat it's ousting from lucrative shelves in the high street bookshops. It has moved into pubs and theatres as a performance art, reclaiming the brilliant oral tradition of spoken word entertainment.

- ✍ As a poet you should seek out other poets and the places they perform and become part of the 'scene' yourself.

You may be nervous about reading your own work out in public but once you get over the initial nerves it really is not so bad. Watch the local press and go to your local art centers to find out the times and places where poets perform.

- ✍ For regular **open mic events** in Birmingham and around the country check out www.poetrykit.org/events.html.

When you are more confident about your work and performance ability you should be prepared to spread your wings and travel, like the troubadours of old. A list of poetry nights in London can be found at www.pulp.net

Another aspect of performing is something called '**slamming**' which is a competitive form of poetry performance whereby poets get together to deliver machine gun bursts of their work in the slickest vocal style they can to try and win a prize. Slamming was invented by a poet called Mark Kelly Smith in Chicago in 1987. You can check out Marc Kelly Smith's web pages at: www.slampapi.com

- ✍ Check out www.poetrysociety.org.uk

Once you have tracked down and become a part of your local poetry scene you can perhaps consider putting together your own selection of poems and self-publishing in some way. Chapter 8 contains more information about this but you should realize that it's probably best not to go crazy and publish a big expensive book on the back of a couple of good gigs in the back room of your local pub in front of your mates.

- ✍ Find out more at www.poetry-online.org/publishing-poetry.htm

Think small, a well designed A3 sheet folded into a simple map format with several poems on it can be very effective and cheap. In this way you keep costs low and you will have something you can tout to the audience after performances. Such a thing will help you to 'be the poet' and market yourself professionally in the literary world.

Arts, Languages and literature in Birmingham Central Library is also a designated '**Poetry Place**' which is an initiative to promote the reading and writing of poetry. We have a great collection of books by new poets, many of them self-published.

- ✍ Display your poem on our Poetry board in Arts, Languages and Literature.

Another initiative run by the library is the yearly election of The Birmingham Poet Laureate. Anyone can apply to become the second cities poet laureate and the competition opens in September in each year. The internet is also a great place for poets and you can find more on this in the internet and online magazines.

Suggested Reading

(ALL – Arts, Languages and Literature, Floor 3 and 808.23 is the location number)

Chad Davidson

Writing poetry, creative and critical approaches, 2008, (Lending copies, 808.1)

Kenneth Stephen

Publishing poetry, the essential guide, 2010, (Central Lending, First Floor, 808.1)

Matthew Sweeney

Writing Poetry, 2003, (ALL, 808.1)

Ruth Padel

Silent letters of the alphabet, 2010, (ALL, 808.1)

Agenda (Poetry Magazine)

www.agendapoetry.co.uk/

4. WRITERS' ORGANISATIONS

Publishing is a business and you should learn as much about it as possible if you want to be successful. Making friends and getting contacts in the industry can make a difference and there are a whole range of societies and organisations which aim to help writers by offering advice, administering prizes and awards and in some cases offering funding support.

ASSOCIATION OF ILLUSTRATORS

2nd Floor, Back building, 150 Curtain Road, London E22A 3AT, Tel 020 7613 4328

Website: theaoi.com

Promotes illustration and protects artist rights. Produces a number of related magazines.

AUTHORS' LICENSING AND COLLECTING SOCIETY

The Writers' House, 13 Hayden Street, London EC3N 1DB, Tel 020 7264 5700

Website: www.alcs.co.uk

Established to help writers make a better living through the protection and exploitation of their rights, a leading authority on copyright matters.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS

89 Fleet Street, London, EC4Y 1DH, Tel: 020 73533003

Website: www.bajunion.org.uk/

Aims to protect and promote the professional interests of journalists.

BRITISH GUILD OF TRAVEL WRITERS

335 Lordship Road, London N16 5HG, Tel 020 8144 8713

Website: www.bgtw.org

Professional association of travel writers, acts as a forum for debate and 'networking'.

BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

Website for their magazine Vector: www.vectormagazine.co.uk/index.asp

Aims to promote the reading, writing and publishing of all things rocket fuelled and fantastical. Various guidance and networking services offered to its members as well as opportunities to submit material.

BRITISH SOCIETY OF COMIC WRITERS

Mr Ken Rock, 61 Parry Rd, Wolverhampton, WV11 2PS, Tel: 01902 722729

Website: www.bscw.co.uk

Runs events and workshops, keeps members posted on news and opportunities.

THE HORROR WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

Websites: www.horror.org and www.horror.org/uk

International organisation of horror writers. Publishes a newsletter and issues e-mail bulletins keeping you up-to-date on all the industry information. They also present the annual Bram Stoker Awards.

THE POETRY SOCIETY

22 Betterton Street, London, WC2H 9BU, Tel: 02074209880

Website: www.poetrysociety.org.uk

The top organisation for poets. Funded by the Arts Council, they offer free advice on writing and getting published. They run the National Poetry competition along and produce the Poetry Review magazine and newsletter.

SOCIETY OF AUTHORS

84 Drayton Gardens, London, SW10 9SB, Tel: 020 7373 6642

Website: www.societyofauthors.net

An independent trade union providing advice on contracts with publishers and dealing with disputes relating to breach of contracts, copyright etc. Publishes The Author magazine and administers trusts which provide grants to authors in financial difficulty.

TINDAL STREET PRESS

217 The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4AA, Tel 0121 773 8157

Website: www.tindalstreet.org.uk

The Press is Birmingham's new national publishing house set up by a fiction group in 1998. Submissions are always welcome but do get in touch first.

TV ARTS PERFORMANCE SHOWCASE

Shepperton Studios, Studios Road, Shepperton, Middlesex, TW17 0QD, Tel: 01932 592151

Website: www.tapsnet.org

The TV Arts Performance Showcase is acclaimed as one of the best ways for talented writers to break into TV. They run courses, set up networking events and present live showcases of writers' work which they send to producers.

UK FILM COUNCIL

10 Little Portland Street, London, W1W 7JG, Tel: 020 78617861

Website: www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk/

Promotes and supports all aspects of filmmaking in the UK.

WEST MIDLANDS ARTS

82 Granville Street, Birmingham, B1 2LH, Tel: 0121 643 7239

Website: www.arts.org.uk/regions/westmidlands

They provide numerous services including a reading service for poetry, prose, film and television scripts (costing £15) and provide funding via Creative Ambition Awards. The whole arts council is currently under review and changes are expected to the services they intend to offer in the future.

WRITERS' ADVICE CENTRE FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

16 Smiths Yard, London SW18 4HR, Tel 020 8123 4567

Website: www.writersadvice.co.uk/

This organisation exists to provide a support network, both for beginners and more experienced children's authors. They run courses and have offered a manuscript reading service in the past.

WRITERS GUILD OF GREAT BRITAIN

40 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4RX, Tel 020 7833 0777

Website: www.writersguild.org.uk

The Guild is the trade union for professional writers, providing help and advice on all aspects of a professional life.

WRITING WEST MIDLANDS

Unit 16, The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham B9 4AA, Tel 0121 246 2770,

Website: www.writingwestmidlands.org

A Literature Development agency for the West Midlands that works to help good writing and literature activities flourish

This is just a small selection of writers' organisations. Many more, like The British Guild of Beer Writers and The Crime Writers' Association, are listed in *The Writers' Handbook* and *The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook*. Both of which are available to view in Information Services on floor 4 of Birmingham Central Library.

5. CREATIVE WRITING GROUPS

Creative writing groups are full of writers who are willing to share their work and discuss it in a friendly environment. You'll get feed-back, criticism, advice, an audience and a chance to discuss all those niggling problems that would bore non-writers to tears. They may even help you get moving by setting assignments or introducing you to writing competitions.

You have to be brave to go to a creative writing group for the first time because the words you have written are going to have to stand naked in front of a room of strangers and hold their own. Don't worry however, because this is nothing compared to what you are going to learn from the experience. The first thing you will probably learn is that most of what you write is rubbish or least not as good as you thought it was at home. If you are serious about writing though, it is better to learn this straight away from the confused faces of contemporaries instead of laboring under a yolk of ignorance, deluding yourself that maybe you just have to get lucky.

Writing groups are a good first way to improve your writing and gage your work in a family of like-minded friends.

A **full list of Creative Writing Groups** which meet in and around Birmingham is available at the web address below.

✍ www.birmingham.gov.uk/artslibrary then select Lists and Guides

If you would like more information, please contact Information Services:

information.services@birmingham.gov.uk

To find out more about Creative Writing in the West Midlands check out
www.writingwestmidlands.org/region/writing-groups/

There is also a large online community, check out the following websites –

www.oneofus.co.uk/

One of us provides a place for amateur and professional writers from around the world to share their creative writing tips, hints, and advice. It is based in the UK but you don't have to be. The site features original creative writing articles, and advice to encourage you to get involved in the discussion forums.

www.writing.com/

Writing.Com is the community for writers of all interests and skill levels, it has been going strong since 2000. They provide an extremely creative environment for authors, offering hundreds of unique writing tools and opportunities for creation and inspiration.

www.writers.com/

Writers.com/Writers on the Net has been offering online writing classes since 1995 -- the first writing school on the Internet. Whether you simply have a passion for writing and want to learn more or have a specific interest (creative writing, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, screen writing, playwrighting, journaling, autobiography, memoir, travel writing, writing for children, blogging and new media, mystery, science fiction,) they can help you improve your skills and explore new directions. There is a charge for some of their services.

www.writewords.org.uk/

Writewords was created to bring together all the things writers at all stages need. It covers every aspect of writing - journalism, non-fiction, fiction, poetry, stage, film, TV and genre- and covers news, jobs, funding opportunities, writing groups, an archive to display your work, and a fully searchable directory to make finding the right publisher, agent, theatre company or poetry magazine as easy as possible.

www.nawg.co.uk/

The National Association of Writers' Groups aims to bring cohesion and fellowship to isolated writers' groups and individuals, promoting the study and art of writing in all its aspects. We have over 150 affiliated groups and over 100 associate (individual) members spread across the United Kingdom.

www.greatwriting.co.uk/

Online home of aspiring writers; sign up, submit a piece of creative writing, and get advice and constructive criticism. There is also a general discussion area where you can promote your work, ask questions about all aspects of writing and publishing, or just chat with friends.

6. COPYRIGHT

"It is perfectly possible for two writers to produce similar work totally independently of each other." - A. Fact.

Copyright is your right to prevent the copying of your work and ideas. Your work is covered by copyright the moment you create it, that is to say, the moment it is actually written down or otherwise recorded in a relevant medium. No formal registration is needed although in America registration may be desirable since no legal action can take place until the work has been registered.

Copyright can protect:

- ✍ **literary works**, including novels, instruction manuals, computer programs, song lyrics, newspaper articles and some types of database
- ✍ **dramatic works**, including dance or mime
- ✍ **musical works**
- ✍ **artistic works**, including paintings, engravings, photographs, sculptures, collages, architecture, technical drawings, diagrams, maps and logos
- ✍ **layouts or typographical arrangements** used to publish a work, for a book for instance
- ✍ **recordings** of a work, including sound and film
- ✍ **broadcasts** of a work

Although not essential to help protect your copyright work, you can

- ✍ mark it with the © symbol, the name of the copyright owner and the year in which the work was created.
- ✍ **send yourself a copy by special delivery post.** This gives a date stamp on the envelope, **leave the envelope unopened on its return.** Make sure you also know what is inside each envelope in case you do this more than once.
- ✍ lodge your work with a bank or solicitor.

It is important to note, that this does not prove that a work is original or created by you. But **it may be useful to be able to show the court that the work was in your possession at a particular date.**

You cannot copyright ideas for a work e.g Love Triangles, stereotypical drunks, heroes riding off into sunsets. Copyright covers the manner in which you have expressed your ideas, the originality of your exact prose. Titles of books or periodicals are not given protection because they are too short to be regarded as literary works. The law also upholds your moral rights. This is the right to be credited as the author of your work and the protection of the work from derogatory treatment, ie: any deletion from, addition to, or adaptation which distorts the work or is prejudicial to your honour. Copyright expires 70 years after the end of the calendar year in which the author dies.

Lawyers specialising in creative rights say that to prove copying of your work in court you have to prove firstly that your material existed prior to the material that you think was stolen from it and secondly that they had access to your work prior to the theft. Work that has been published or shown to the public is more defensible since it is harder for a subsequent author to deny they have seen it. The greatest difficulty comes in defending an unpublished work when submitting it to publishers, record companies etc.

This is only a brief introduction to the main points of this complex law. If you have any specific questions we advise you to pursue further reading and contact one of the major writers organisations such as the *Authors' Licensing And Collecting Society* who is listed in the first chapter of this pack and considered an authority on UK writers' law.

The Intellectual Property Office covers copyright in the UK have a good introduction to the topic on their web pages - www.ipo.gov.uk/types/copy.htm

7. AGENTS AND CONTRACTS.

"Almost anyone can be an author; the business is to collect money and fame from this state of being." - A.A.Milne.

While publishing houses still employ editors to wade through new material they are much more accommodating to work sent to them by agents who have already done all the hard work. Publishers deal with agents because they only put forward work good enough to make them money, and if the work is good enough to have an agent sniffing about it then it must be worth its weight in gold.

Literary agents work closely within the industry and while you may take a dim view of Mr 10% as an unnecessary intermediary, getting a good agent will mean your instant arrival on the literary scene and your prosperous survival. They will deal with all the contracts and legal aspects of your work. The problem with agents is the fact that they may act out of self-interest rather than literary merit and many already have books full of clients, which they prefer to back rather than new unproven writers.

Both the *Writers' Handbook* and the *Writers' Yearbook*, contain lists of agents. I would advise that you ring them first or send an introductory letter asking for their requirements before you send off your work. Many agents are not looking for new clients and are only listed in such books because it would look bad for them not to be. It is customary only to seek representation from one agent at once but with long response times it is only wise to give them a reasonable time to reply, a week or two, before approaching another. As with publishers they do specialise so make sure you get in touch with one that deals with your kind of work.

CONTRACTS

When all those years of redrafting have finally paid off and you are about to get published by a major publisher you will have to sign your name on the dotted line of a contract. Unless you have an agent or representation from another writers' organisation or solicitor you might sign away more than you would like too. What follows is a short introduction to some of the main points you should be aware of when considering a contract.

1: The Option Clause.

This deals with terms for future work by yourself and it is advised that you should negotiate for a limited option clause that will not necessarily tie you to a publisher on unfair terms. Allow them the first option on any new work but give yourself the option to reject their offer.

2: The Reversion Clause.

Most books go out of print within a few years of publication. If your career suddenly gets a shot in the arm years later the reprint rights can be worth serious money. There are many issues to consider with this clause and numerous ways publishers can keep hold of the rights to your work so further reading is recommended. Contracts will say that, out of print or not, a book can't revert to you until a certain number of years have passed. Try and keep it to as few years as possible.

3: Electronic Rights.

Watch carefully for any contract that will allow the publisher to produce derivative works from your text in electronic form, e.g.: CD Roms, Web Pages etc.

4: Royalties.

Concern should be expressed about how your royalties are totalled. In the perfect world you should get the necessary information about your book's financial activity, i.e.: the number of copies printed, the number sold, the number returned, details of subsidiary sales, the royalty rate etc so you can check the figures yourself. However, there is no standard way publishers produce this information so you should be watchful for creative book keeping that can put you out of pocket.

5: Auditing.

Many publishers have a standard clause about royalty reports being binding unless disputed within two years. Try and get rid of this as it will force you to police their accounting department or fund an expensive audit every two years to make sure you're not losing any money through royalty reporting errors.

6: Publication.

Ensure that there is a time-frame in place for them to publish your book and if they do not do this, that the rights then return to you without having to repay any advance.

7: Subsidiary Rights.

Do not give away any subsidiary rights for foreign markets, dramatic adaptation or audio reproduction. If a publisher is not planning to publish a hard cover version you should try and retain the rights as you may then get the opportunity at a later date to publish a popular work with a special run through a small publisher. Ensure that the following phrase exists somewhere on the contract: Any rights not expressly granted herein to the Publisher reside exclusively with the Author.

Obviously, this is just scratching the surface of contract law and you should remember that most publishers aren't looking to rob you. There is no room here to cover all the possible problems that can occur in contract law so further reading is advised and the Internet pages of the **Society of Authors** is a good place to start - www.societyofauthors.net/home

8. SELF PUBLISHING, THE VANITY CON & ISBN's

When deciding to go it alone, the first thing to be wary of is

✍ **Vanity Publishing**

is very different from self-publishing. Vanity publishers are flatterers who earn their income by over-charging authors to have their work printed and this is the only part of the publishing process that they get involved in. Vanity publishers may be printers touting for business by pretending to be interested in content but very often they have no connection to a printing firm at all.

The books are usually shoddily produced copies of your work which you could have produced yourself much cheaper. Vanity Publishers will make no real effort to promote or sell your book and we strongly advise you to avoid them. They will use flattery and pretend to engage with editorial advice but it is little more than a confidence trick. The reputable publisher will be prepared to accept all the financial risks in publishing an author. The money comes from the publisher to the author it should never go the other way.

✍ **Self-publishing**

is something different entirely and there are many reasons why a writer might want to self-publish. Many respected authors past and present have undertaken this route and been successful. Most of the successful ones are people who have been published before and have the experience to judge their own work as worthy but your manuscript could have been rejected by hundreds of editors for many different reasons and yet still be worthy of attention and highly prized.

Before self-publishing you will need to become familiar with all aspects of production and effectively have a strategy that determines commercial decisions, i.e. how many copies do you want to print and at what price? In the commercial publishing world the

✍ **Unit cost** is total production costs (editing, proofing, typesetting, design and printing).

✍ **Selling price** of an individual book is calculated by unit cost x 5.

If, for example, we decide to have a print run of 500 books and the total production costs for this number are £1,000, the unit cost is £2 (1,000 divided by 500). This unit figure is then multiplied by 5 representing the following factors: one for production, one for author, one for profit and 2 for distribution. In the example above it would be £2 x 5 making £10 the selling price of each book. Although this is purely hypothetical, would all 500 copies of your book sell at this price? It is only if they will that all costs will be covered and you will make a profit. You must research your market carefully.

There are two main options. Having put your manuscript together will give you an idea of how large a publication it will be; you then need to decide on how it will look; by looking through published books you can decide on the type of style you wish to imitate.

✍ Go to a number of local printers (find addresses in the *Yellow Pages*) specialising in low print runs. Depending on what type of manuscript you have the cost can range from a few hundred pounds through to several thousand.

✍ The cheap alternative is Desk-Top Publishing. Many word processors are equipped with programs to enhance the look of a text. Photocopying of the pages could be the most inexpensive option, together with either stapling or plastic binders, with a cover printed by a printer. Of course this will look cheap but if you're just trying to get your work 'out there' it might be the best option and provide a good test run that won't break the bank.

ISBNs?

International Standard Book Numbers are the numbers printed on the back of most books. They are used by libraries and bookshops to allow a book to be catalogued and located. ISBNs are not necessary for a small print run with a mostly local market but if you want to get one you can apply to:

**The Standard Book Numbering Agency,
12 Dyott Street,
London, WC1A 1DF
Tel 0891 132100**

Apply in writing, giving details on your proposed book. If appropriate, you will receive an ISBN by return.

CONTACTS:

**The Author-Publisher Network
6 Kelvinbrook,
West Molesey,
Surrey,
KT8 1RS**

These people are dedicated to helping those undertaking self-publishing. Facilities include running various courses; a newsletter *Write to Publish*, and a directory of services.

FURTHER READING:

Finch Peter, *How to Publish Yourself*, Allison & Busby, (ALL:070.5)

Deegan T, *The Truth about Vanity Publishing*, Millennium, (ALL:070.593DEE)

The Small Press Guide, *Writers' Bookshop*, (ALL: KB 070.502541 SMA)

9. HELPFUL BOOKS

"I think you should only read books which bite and sting you." - Franz Kafka

Writing books about how to write books is a major industry in itself and you will find 'How To' books about every possible genre from love poems to sick notes. Most ubiquitous are the books claiming to tell you how to write best sellers by unknown hacks rather than the actual writers of best sellers. This is highly suspicious, especially as they often cost £15 a pop. If there was a standard formula for a best seller it wouldn't work for long. This said though there are books out there that will help you write, that will help you dismantle your prose like you would take apart a Ford Fiesta and put it back together like a Jag.

Listed below are a small selection of the books about writing that are available from Arts Language and Literature (ALL) on the third floor of Birmingham Central Library. Some of them are also available for loan from community libraries. If you require help please ask at the enquiry desk on Floor 4, or check the catalogue to reserve a copy. Two indispensable books for aspiring writers are **The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook**, and **The Writers' Handbook**. These are annual publications which provide comprehensive listings of publishers, magazines and agents. They are available on request from ALL and at most community libraries.

SCREEN WRITING (ALL: 808.23 FRE)

Frensham Raymond, Hodder and Stoughton, 2008

One of the most comprehensive guides to the process of writing screen plays. It also shows you how to set out and market your script.

THE NOVELIST'S GUIDE (ALL: 808.3 GER)

Geraghty Margaret, Piatkus, 1997

This innovative guide combines practical advice on all aspects of the novel; producing good dialogue, strong plots, believable characterisation etc.

WRITING A PLAY (ALL: 808.2 GOO)

Gooch Steve, A & C Black, 2001

Covers every aspect of play writing including collaboration.

RESEARCH FOR WRITERS (ALL: 808.02HOF)

Hoffman Ann, Black, 2003

Recognised as the standard guide. Covers working methods and facilities with a list of major information sources throughout the UK.

HOW TO WRITE FOR CHILDREN AND GET PUBLISHED (ALL: 808.068)

Jordan Louise, Piatkus, 2010

Childrens books encompass illustrations, educational fiction, older and teenage fiction as well as poetry, magazines and non-fiction so it is important to know which market you are aiming at.

WRITING FANTASY FICTION (ALL: 808.38766 LEF)

Lefanu Sarah, A & C Black, 1996

There is a burgeoning fantasy market and the author examines the specific requirements of sub-genres such as children's fantasy, comic fantasy and dark fantasy along with the more practical elements of writing.

AN AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO PUBLISHING (ALL:655.5LEG)

Legat Michael, Robert Hale Press, 1998

Examines the changing world of publishing and what is required by publishing houses, along with advice on submitting work, contracts and legal matters.

WRITING AND PUBLISHING POETRY (ALL: 808.1WAD)

Wade Stephen, How To Books, 1997

Publishing poetry is very difficult, but this guide, which discusses the skills and techniques involved in the writing of poetry, also provides advice on the various markets and opportunities available to see your work in print.

THE LONGMAN GUIDE TO STYLE AND WRITING ON THE INTERNET, (ALL 808.0420285 SAM)

Sammons, Martha, Pearson Education, 2007

A CREATIVE WRITING HANDBOOK: DEVELOPING DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE, INDIVIDUAL STYLE AND VOICE (ALL 808.02 NEA)

Neale, Derek, A&C Black, 2009

CREATIVE WRITING FOR DUMMIES (ALL 808.2 HAM)

Hamand, Maggie, Wiley, 2009

Ignore the title, a very good book on the basics of all types of writing

YOUR WRITING COACH (ALL 808.02)

Wolff, Jurgen , Nicholas Brealey, 2007

Everything you need to know about writing: novels, non-fiction, new media, scripts and short stories

HANDBOOK OF CREATIVE WRITING (ALL 808.02)

Earnshaw, Steven, Edinburgh University Press, 2007

This book explains the basics of how to write a novel, script or poetry and the practicalities and problems of being a writer

WRITING FOR RADIO; A PRACTICAL APPROACH (ALL 808.222 CAU)

Caulfield, Annie, Crowood, 2009

Advice and inspiration for anyone wanting to write or beginning to write for radio

STAGE WRITING; A PRACTICAL APPROACH (ALL 808.2 TAY)

Taylor, Val, Crowood, 2002

HOW TO WRITE YOUR FIRST NOVEL (ALL 808.3)

King, Sophie, How to Books 2010

This book guides the budding novelist through the first steps through the author's own experiences

10. MAGAZINES

You will be amazed at the wealth of magazines we take at Birmingham Central Library and every one of them is a great source of research and inspiration as well as being a potential market for your work. We also take some magazines specifically about writing and the publishing industry. The following are available in Arts, Languages and Literature (ALL) on the third floor of Birmingham Central Library. Current issues are kept on the periodical rack and back issues in the store.

- ✍ **THE AUTHOR** (ALL: B655.52) Issues 1949-2000
84 Drayton Gardens, London, SW0 9SB
This is the official journal of the Society of Authors. Typical articles concern legal and technical aspects of authorship, as well as selected reviews.
www.societyofauthors.net/author

- ✍ **MSLEXIA:** for women who write (ALL: BQ805) Quarterly
As the title suggests, a magazine for women who write in all genres. It gives tips and guidelines, information on opportunities, competitions and interviews with women writers
www.mslexia.co.uk/index.php

- ✍ **POETRY REVIEW** (ALL: B808.1)
22 Betterton Street, London, WC2H 9BU, Tel: 020 7420 9880
This is a quarterly publication from the Poetry Society. Maximum of 6 poems to be submitted at any one time, along with SAE.
www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/publications/review/guidelines/

- ✍ **POETRY UK NEWSLETTER** (Back issues not kept)
Bonacia, Remus House, Coltsfoot Drive, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 9JX
Provides a good round-up of current competitions as well as advice and information on all aspects of poetry. The first issue had a workshop on writing sonnet's and future issues will examine other poetry forms in an accessible way.
www.poetryuk.co.uk/

- ✍ **WRITERS' MONTHLY** (ALL:BQ808.025)
The Mill, Bearwalden Business Park, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4JX, Tel: 01799 544200
Monthly publication offering advice and information to aspiring and established writers. Regular features include interviews and profiles of writers; a 'target market' slot which provides an analysis of titles on a given subject and the opportunities for freelancers; short story and poetry competitions.

- ✍ **WRITING MAGAZINE & WRITERS' NEWS** (ALL:BQ808.025)
5th Floor, 31-32 Park Row, Leeds, LS1 5JD
Industry news and cute, short articles about writing with competitions and advice features.
www.writersnews.co.uk/main/wm.asp

We also take a number of magazines about books with essays about literature and all the inside gossip on the publishing industry. We have: *The Hudson Review*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Modern Language Notes*, *The Bookseller*, *The London Review* and *The Modern Language Review*.

There are many magazines that print short fiction and this market is where you will probably cut your teeth as a writer. The big magazines sometimes receive over a hundred unsolicited stories a week so competition is tough and I don't know of any writer who has been successfully published without collecting a couple of hundred rejection slips from fiction editors along the way (there are also lots of stories about great novels that were turned down repeatedly, so don't be discouraged).

IMPORTANT: You must read a magazine before you submit work because you will only look like an arrogant amateur to an editor if you send them a story that does not suit his publication.

CONTEMPORARY FICTION – Magazines publishing fiction on any subject.

✍ **AGENDA** (ALL: B821.9108)

5 Cranbourne Court, Albert Bridge Road, London, SW11 4PE .

Publishes poetry and criticism quarterly, £20. per year. Payment: varies and contributors should study the magazine before submitting material.

✍ **AMBIT** (ALL:B805)

17 Priory Gardens, Highgate, London, N6 5QY, Tel: 02083403566

Publishes poems and short stories. Payment by arrangement. Quarterly.

✍ **GRANTA** (ALL:B082.2)

12 Addison Avenue, London W11 4QR Tel: 020 7605 1360

Modern contemporary fiction, produces theme issues.

www.granta.com/About/Contact-us

✍ **SCRIBBLE**

14 The Park, Stow on the Wold, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 1DX, Tel: 01451 831053

The short story magazine

www.parkpublications.co.uk/scrabble.htm

✍ **STAND** (ALL: B820.5)

The Editors, Stand Magazine, School of English, Leeds University, LS2 9JT

Quarterly magazine publishing poetry, short stories and criticism. Also administers short story and poetry competitions. Please send SAE's when submitting material.

www.people.vcu.edu/~dlatane/stand-maga/index.html

WOMEN'S MAGAZINES - One of the largest markets for short fiction are the women's magazines. They each have their own style and preferences so you should read them to get the best idea of the type of story they're after. Here are some of the larger ones you might like to contact.

✍ **Woman's Realm**

Kings Reach Tower, Stamford St, London, SE1 9LS Tel:020 7261 5000

Two short stories used every week, 1000 - 2000 words. Ring first.

✍ **Woman's Weekly**

Kings Reach Tower, Stamford St, London, SE1 9LS Tel: 020 7261 6322

Shorts: 1000 - 2500 and serials up to 30 000 words.

✍ **Take A Break**

Shirley House, 25-27 Camden Rd, London, NW1 9LL Tel:02072418000

Short, sharp stories, often with a twist. Maximum 1000 words.

✍ **The People's Friend**

80 Kingsway East, Dundee, DD4 8SL Tel:01382 462276/ 223131

Two serials and several shorts a week. send an S.A.E. for their writers' guidelines.

✍ **Best**

197 Marsh Wall, London, E14 9SG Tel: 020 75195500
One short story slot. Maximum 1000 words.

✍ **Bella**

Shirley House, 25-27 Camden Rd, London, NW1 9LL Tel:020 724 8000
Short stories, maximum 2000 words.

CRIME AND MYSTERY MAGAZINES - The following magazines accept fiction submissions in the crime, mystery and thriller genre. They were located on the Internet on the writers' site: www.writersdigest.com
Check the site for full submission details or contact the magazines directly at the following addresses:

✍ **The Strand Magazine**

P.O.Box 1418, Birmingham, MI 48012-1418, U.S.A.
www.strandmag.com/

✍ **Indigenous Fiction**

P.O.Box 2078, Redmond, WA 98073-2078, U.S.A.

✍ **Hardboiled**

P.O.Box 209, Brooklyn, NY 11228, U.S.A.

✍ **Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine**

267 Broadway , 4th Floor, New York, NY 10007-2352
www.themysteryplace.com/eqmm/

✍ **Murderous Intent**

P.O.Box 5947, Vancouver, WA 98668-5947

SCIENCE FICTION

Science Fiction is probably the biggest single market for short fiction and on the Internet you will find the writers' guidelines for some of the main publications in this genre. The site of the Science Fiction Writers of America is a good place to start: www.sfwaweb.org.

✍ **Asimov's Science Fiction**

Dell Magazines, Asimov's Science Fiction, 267 Broadway, 4th floor, New York, NY 10007-2352.
www.asimovs.com/

✍ **Fantasy and Science Fiction**

P.O. Box 3447, Hoboken, NJ 07030.
www.sfsite.com/fsf/

✍ **Interzone (UK)**

TTA Press, 5 Martins Lane, Witcham, Ely, Cambs CB6 2LB
<http://ttapress.com/interzone/>

✍ **Strange Horizons**

www.strangehorizons.com/

The Writers' Handbook and **The Writers' and Artists' Yearbook** also publish lists of magazines, both of which are updated annually and are available on request from Information Services Enquiry Desk on Floor 4.

Advice for writers submitting short stories to magazines

- ✍ It is still better to send your submissions by post rather than email. As emails clog up in-boxes and need to be printed off for editors, who would still rather read hard copies.
- ✍ Type your story on one side of the paper only.
- ✍ You should also include an SAE although not all magazines will return unused stories.
- ✍ Put your name and contact number on every page of a short story (just in case some go astray!).
- ✍ Read the magazine you are submitting to before sending off your story. This will help you get a feel for the readership and the style of stories accepted.
- ✍ Most magazines will work 6 months in advance and stories for seasonal issues are selected well in advance of publication so remember this when sending in your seasonal story.
- ✍ Payment varies from magazine to magazine. Guidelines will be given on websites or by the editorial department of the magazines.

Other outlets to consider:

✍ **Radio**

BBC Radio 4 is the biggest single producer of short stories as readings and radio drama in the UK. The afternoon slot at 2.15 has an audience of up to 400,000 people, the majority of whom are aged 50+.

✍ **Newspapers**

Over the last three years many newspapers have axed their regular short story slots. Most of the nationals will now commission short stories for seasonal celebrations – summer reading, Christmas books, Easter, Mother's Day etc. but again this is mostly from established writers.

Regional papers are often open to suggestions from local authors for seasonal or occasional stories. The Features Editor of your local paper should be able to give guidance.

11: THE INTERNET & ONLINE MAGAZINES

The Internet really comes into its own as a resource for writers. It is an invaluable tool for research and there are many sites, based along the same lines as this dedicated to helping writers. They vary in quality and content but they all offer assistance in various ways; by listing competitions, publishing helpful articles and giving you information about markets for your work. What differentiates them is the type of writing they support and the quality of their information. The best sites are updated regularly and have the latest information.

You can also self publish on the Internet relatively cheaply, if you have access to a computer. For a guide on how to set up your own website check out any of the books written on the subject, such as *The Internet For Writers* by Nick Daws (ALL:808.02028DAW) or just go on the net itself and you will find numerous sites that will help you get set up. What follows is a short list of some of the best sites for writers we have found. Other internet sites are listed throughout this pack under the relevant heading -

✍ **www.forwriters.com**

This site is packed with lists of available markets and publishers who you can send your work to and is a great reference point for so many other writers' sites. They also have lists of competitions and a large database of essays about every aspect of writing.

✍ **www.sfwaw.org**

The home of the Science Fiction Writers of America. They have links to available markets and a great collection of essays about writing.

✍ **www.burymann.com**

An online writing community with lots of writers in discussion and a great database of articles on every aspect of writing. Lists of other websites and publishers and competitions world-wide.

✍ **www.yourdictionary.com**

A Web of Online dictionaries, in 190 different languages, and an extensive range of grammar material.

✍ **www.poetrykit.org**

Great poetry site. Lists hundreds of competitions.

✍ **www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom**

The BBC's excellent pages dedicated to helping and developing all forms of writing. Some good competitions and opportunities appear here.

✍ **www.lit-net.org**

This literature based web-site has particular emphasis on the West Midlands region, and provides details of writing groups, local publishing ventures and links to other literature web sites.

✍ **www.abctales.com**

Site that aims to publish work on the internet. Sign up to submit material but do read their terms and conditions which are very much weighted in their favour.

✍ **www.dowse.com**

Site that sets itself up as a creative muse with links to some interesting research material.

✍ **www.writersguild.org.uk**

Writers' Guild of Great Britain

✍ **www.writebuzz.com**

A literary hub, where writers can publish and be read! There are always a number of competitions on the site with prizes of up to £1500.

✍ **www.unheardwords.com**

An online writing group for new writers of colour. Submit work for publication, join the discussion group and get tips through the writers' resource pages.

✍ **www.worddistillery.com**

An online forum for writers.

Online Magazines

There are now hundreds of internet based fiction journals where you can try and get your work published. Few of them pay but it can be a good way of getting your work into the market place and appreciated. As with all publications, they vary greatly so do check that they have a stated copyright policy assuring you of your rights.

Many of them will only accept work via e-mail but don't let that stop you if you don't have a computer since access to the internet is now free in libraries across the U.K. You will find hundreds of opportunities to place your work on the internet and one of the best lists of online journals can be found at **www.newpages.com** which will help you find the sites most suitable for your work.

Here is a short list of some of the best internet magazines currently looking for work. Do check their submission guidelines before you send anything.

✍ **[www.3ammagazine](http://www.3ammagazine.com)**

The website of 3AM Magazine, "cutting edge short fiction to political satire and music reviews..."

✍ **www.pulp.net**

Pay one hundred pounds per story but only publish three per month.

✍ **www.3rdmuse.com**

The 3rd Muse Poetry Journal.

✍ **www.absinthe-literary-review.com**

Stylish magazine looking for quality work from semi-pro writers. They pay a small fee for accepted work.

✍ **www.barcelonareview.com**

An electronic, bilingual international review of fiction.

✍ **www.carvezine.com**

New fiction published monthly. Home of the Raymond Carver Short Story Award which offers a big cash prize.

✍ **www.dmqreview.com**

Poetry site interested in finely crafted poetry regardless of style

✍ **www.poetry.com**

For poets of all kinds.

✍ **www.birminghamwords.co.uk**

Produces a monthly printable magazine. Considers anything.

12. COMPETITIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

It is always worthwhile entering a competition; in addition to the usual cash prizes and publication if you are short-listed, they provide you with the experience of producing work to a deadline.

Listed below is a selection of competitions that have been running annually for the last few years. We have tried to include prizes and competitions for each and every one of you, whatever you write, but if you search hard enough in writing magazines and on the internet you're sure to find a competition, somewhere, that is suitable for your work. **Beware of fake competitions** - it is a popular scam to set up bogus publications and try and rake in entry fees from unsuspecting poets.

L. RON HUBBARD'S WRITERS OF THE FUTURE CONTEST

Writers Of The Future Contest, PO BOX 1630, Los Angeles CA 90078

An international search for new writers of short stories or novelettes of science fiction. It runs every three months and is free to enter! For a full list rules and regulations check out their internet page:

www.writersofthefuture.com

THE BRIDPORT PRIZE

The Bridport Prize, P.O Box 6910, Dorset DT 6 9BQ

Website: www.bridportprize.org.uk/

Annual award for previously unpublished poems and short stories, with publication of an anthology of prize winning entries. Cash prizes.

ENVOI POETRY

Envoi, Meirion House, Glan yr afon, Tanygrisiau, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd LL41 3SU

Tel 01766 832112

Website: www.cinnamonpress.com/competitions/

Envoi poetry magazine regularly runs competitions with prizes of £200 and subscriptions to the magazine.

LICHFIELD PRIZE

Tourist Information Centre, Donegal House, Bore St, Lichfield, Staffs, WS13 6NE

Biennial award for a previously unpublished novel based wholly or partly in the Lichfield area. The prize is £5,000 and possible publication

NATIONAL POETRY COMPETITION

Competition Organiser, The Poetry Society, 22 Betterton Street, London, WC2H 9BU

Website: www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/competitions/

This is one of the most prestigious competitions for poetry. Poems should be previously unpublished. Big cash prizes.

IAN ST. JAMES AWARDS

c/o The New Writers Club, PO Box 60, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 2ZR

These awards aim to give encouragement to previously unpublished writers of short fiction. There are 10 prizes in all, and winning entries are published in an anthology.

WRITERS BUREAU AND SHORT STORY COMPETITION

The Writers Bureau, Sevendale House, 7 Dale Street, Manchester, M1 1JB

Website: www.WritersBureau.com

This is an annual award for poems up to 40 lines and short stories of up to 2,000 words, with an entry fee of £3.50.

The Poetry Library in London produces a list of poetry competitions every few months. You can see it on their Website: www.poetrylibrary.org.uk

Opportunities

There are grants and bursaries out there to help you. They are by no means easy to get and there aren't that many of them but they could make a difference. There are also literary festivals happening all the time, why not try and get involved? Even if it's only helping out at a venue you could gain valuable insight into how the publishing world is run. You could become friends with the organisers. Who knows, the next year might see you hosting your own event about new writers.

The following is a small list of bursaries, fellowships, grants and festivals.

Kerouac Writers in Residence Project

Website: www.kerouacproject.org

Offers selected authors three months board and accommodation in Jack Kerouac's old house in Orlando.

The Hawthornden Castle Fellowship

Hawthornden Castle, The International Retreat For Writers, Lasswade, EH18 1EG, Tel: 0131 440 2180

Offers five writers the chance to stay in a castle outside Edinburgh for a month of seclusion.

The Alfred Bradley Bursary

BBC Radio Drama, Room 2130, New Broadcasting House, Oxford Road, Manchester, M60 1SJ

Biennial award aiming to encourage new radio drama writers in the BBC North region. Up to £6000 is available.

The Society of Authors

84 Drayton Gardens, London, SW10 9SB

Website: www.societyofauthors.org

Has a variety of trusts, awards and bursaries available for writers.

Fulbright Awards

The Fulbright Commission, Battersea Power Station, 188 Kirtling Street, London SW8 5BN

Website: www.fulbright.co.uk

Organises scholarships at post-graduate level to study/research in American colleges.

Edinburgh International Book Festival

Scottish Book Centre, 137 Dundee St, Edinburgh, EH11 1BG

The worlds largest book festival.

The Charles Pick Fellowship

School of English and American Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ

Website: www1.uea.ac.uk/cm/home/schools/hum/lit/awards/pick

An annual award to support a new unpublished writer. Judged on quality of work and reference from an agent or publisher.

Check out other bursary and scholarship sites - www.writersservices.com/agent/bur/index.htm

The book **Artist and Writers Colonies** by Gail Hellund Bowler (ISBN: 0936085347) contains a more comprehensive list of places like the two above. At present the book is only available for purchase from bookstores and on the internet at www.amazon.co.uk

Compiled by Information Services, Central Library,
Chamberlain Square, Birmingham B3 3HQ Telephone: 0121 303 4545
Email: information.services@birmingham.gov.uk
www.birmingham.gov.uk/artslibrary