

## Glossary of Terms

**Advance.** A sum of money a publisher pays a writer before the publication of a book is usually paid in installments, such as one-half on signing a contract; and one-half on delivery of a complete and satisfactory manuscript.

**Agent.** A liaison between a writer and editor or publisher who advocates for his or her client (writer). Agents usually take a 10-15% commission from the advance and royalties.

**All rights.** The situation in which an author sells all rights to a work. Not recommended for writing that could have reprint potential.

**ARC.** Advance reader copy—an early version of the book sent out to media outlets for possible reviews and interviews.

**Assignment.** Editor asks a writer to produce a specific article for an agreed-upon fee.

**Auction.** Publishers sometimes bid for the acquisition of a book manuscript that has excellent sales prospects. The bids are for the amount of the author's advance, advertising and promotional expenses, royalty percentages, and more. Auctions are conducted by agents.

**Backlist.** A publisher's list of its books that were not published during the current season, but that are still in print.

**Bimonthly.** Every two months.

**Bio.** A sentence or brief paragraph about the writer; can include education and work experience.

**Biweekly.** Every two weeks.

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**Blurb.** The copy on book covers or book dust jackets, promoting the book and the author or featuring testimonials from book reviewers or well-known people in the book's field. Also called flap copy or jacket copy.

**Boilerplate.** A standardised contract.

**Bound galleys.** Prepublication edition of the book of final galley proofs, also known as "bound proofs."

**Byline.** Name of the author appearing with the published piece.

**Category Fiction.** A term used to include all genres of fiction.

**Chapbook.** A small print or digital book of poetry or fiction—usually fewer than 40 pages.

**Circulation.** The number of subscribers to a magazine.

**Clips.** Samples of a writer's published work.

**Contributor copies.** Copies of the magazine issues or books sent to the author in which the author's work appears.

**Co-publishing.** Arrangement where author and publisher share publication costs and profits of a book. Also known as cooperative publishing.

**Copyediting.** Editing a manuscript for grammar, punctuation, printing style, and factual accuracy.

**Comp titles.** Comparable or competitive titles—usually included in a book proposal.

**Copyright.** A means to protect an author's work.

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**Cover letter.** A brief letter that accompanies the manuscript being sent to an agent or editor.

**Critiquing service.** An editing service in which writers pay a fee for comments on the saleability or other qualities of their manuscript. Fees vary, as do the quality of the critiques.

**CV.** Curriculum vita. A brief listing of qualifications and career accomplishments.

**Electronic rights.** Secondary or subsidiary rights related to electronic or multimedia formats.

**Elevator pitch.** Concise pitch for a book or screenplay that can be delivered in the time it takes to travel in an elevator.

**Endcap.** Special retail display at the end of an aisle—usually seen in retail stores, including bookstores.

**Evaluation fees.** Fees an agent may charge to evaluate material.

**Exclusive.** A situation where an author gives an agent or publisher the ability to consider a submission without competition from other agents or publishers. Authors should always cap the exclusive period.

**Fair use.** A provision of the copyright law that says short passages from copyrighted material may be used without infringing on the owner's rights.

**Feature.** An article giving the reader information of human interest rather than news.

**Filler.** A short item used by an editor to "fill" out a newspaper column or magazine page.

**Film rights.** Rights sold or optioned by the agent/author to a person in the film industry, enabling the book to be made into a movie.

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**Foreign rights.** Translation or reprint rights to be sold in other countries and territories.

**Frontlist.** A publisher's list of books that are new to the current season.

**Galleys.** First typeset version of manuscript that has not yet been divided into pages.

**Genre.** General classification of writing, such as the novel or the poem, or to the categories within those categories within those classifications, such as the horror novel or the sonnet.

**Ghostwriter.** Writer who writes an article, speech, story, or book based on another person's ideas or knowledge.

**Graphic novel.** A story in graphic form, long comic strip, or heavily illustrated story; of 40 pages or more.

**Hi-lo.** A type of fiction that offers a high level of interest for readers at a low reading level.

**High concept.** A story easily expressed in a quick, one-line description.

**Honorarium.** Token payment.

**Hook.** The aspect of the work that sets it apart from others and draws in the reader/viewer.

**Imprint.** Name applied to a publisher's specific line of books.

**Joint contract.** A legal agreement between a publisher and two or more authors (or creators), establishes provisions for the division of royalties the book generates.

**Kill fee.** Fee for a complete article that was assigned and then cancelled.

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**Lead time.** The time between the acquisition of a manuscript by an editor and its actual publication.

**Log line.** Summary of a TV program, movie, or book that captures the main conflict of the story with an emotional hook to generate interest.

**Marketing fee.** Fee charged by some agents to cover marketing expenses. It may be used to cover postage, photocopying, or any other expense incurred in marketing a manuscript.

**Mass market.** Non-specialized books of wide appeal directed toward a large audience.

**Masthead.** Page in a magazine or publication that usually lists contact information, editors (and their titles), and more information that's helpful for freelance writers.

**Memoir.** A narrative recounting a writer's (or fictional narrator's) personal or family history; specifics may be altered, though essentially considered nonfiction.

**MG.** Middle grade. The general classification of books written for readers aged nine to 11. Also called middle readers.

**Midlist.** Titles on a publisher's list that are not expected to be big sellers, but are expected to have limited/modest sales.

**Model release.** Paper signed by the subject of a photograph giving the photographer permission to use the photograph.

**Multiple contract.** Book contract with an agreement for a future book(s).

**Multiple submissions.** Sending more than one book, article, or poem to a publisher at the same time.

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**Narrative nonfiction.** A narrative presentation of actual events. Also called creative nonfiction.

**Net royalty.** A royalty payment is based on the amount of money a book publisher receives on the sale of a book after booksellers' discounts, special sales discounts, and returns.

**Novella.** A short novel or long short story; approximately 7,000 to 30,000 words.

**On spec.** The writer submits a completed manuscript for publication "on speculation." The editor is under no obligation to buy the finished manuscript.

**One-time rights.** Rights allowing a manuscript to be published one time. The work can be sold again by the writer without violating the contract.

**Option clause.** A contract clause giving a publisher the right to publish an author's next book.

**Payment on acceptance.** The editor sends you a check for your article, story, or poem as soon as he decides to publish it.

**Payment on publication.** The editor sends you a check for your material when it is published.

**Pen name.** The use of a name other than your legal name on articles, stories, or books. Also called a pseudonym.

**Photo feature.** Feature in which the emphasis is on the photographs rather than on the accompanying written material.

**Picture book.** Book aimed at pre-schoolers to 8-year-olds that tells a story using a combination of text and art—or artwork only.

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**Platform.** A writer's quantifiable reach within their target audience, which includes speaking experience, publishing history, social media followers, and more.

**POD.** Print on demand.

**Proofreading.** Close reading and correction of a manuscript's typographical errors.

**Proposal.** Summary of a proposed book submitted to a publisher, particularly used for nonfiction manuscripts. Proposals commonly include a cover letter, a one-page overview of the book, marketing information, competitive books, author information, chapter-by-chapter outlines, and sample chapters.

**Query.** Letter that sells an idea to an editor or agent.

**Remainders.** Copies of a book that are slow to sell and can be purchased from the publisher at a reduced rate.

**Reporting time.** The time it takes for an editor to report to the author on his or her query or manuscript.

**Reprint rights.** The rights to republish a book after its initial printing.

**Royalties.** A percentage of money that an author receives from a publisher based off sales terms stipulated within a contract.

**SASE.** Self-addressed, stamped envelope.

**Self-publishing.** In this arrangement the author pays for manufacturing, production, and marketing of his book and keeps all income derived from the book sales.

**Serial.** Published periodically, such as a newspaper or magazine.

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**Serial fiction.** Fiction published in installments, often broken off at a suspenseful spot.

**Serial rights.** The right for a newspaper or publication to publish sections of a manuscript.

**Short-short.** A complete short story of 1,500 words or fewer. Also called flash fiction.

**Sidebar.** Feature presented as a companion to a main article or story highlighting one aspect of the main article or story.

**Simultaneous submissions.** Sending the same article, story, or poem to several publishers at the same time.

**Slush pile.** Unsolicited manuscripts and pitches received by an editor, publisher, or agent.

**Subagent.** An agent handling certain subsidiary rights usually works in conjunction with the agent who handles the book rights. The percentage paid to the booking agent is increased to pay the subagent.

**Subsidiary rights.** All rights other than book publishing rights included in a book publishing contract, such as paperback rights, book club rights, movie rights, and more.

**Subsidy publisher.** Book publishers who charge authors for the cost to typeset and print their books, the jacket, etc., as opposed to a traditional publisher who pays the author.

**Synopsis.** Summary of a story, novel, or play. As part of a book proposal, it is a comprehensive summary condensed into a single-spaced page.

**Tear sheet.** Page from a magazine or newspaper containing a writer's printed story, article, or poem.



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**TOC.** Table of contents.

**Trade book.** Book that concerns a special interest for a general audience.

**Translation rights.** Subsidiary rights for book to be translated and sold in another language.

**Unsolicited manuscript.** A story, article, poem, or book that an editor did not assign.

**USP.** Unique selling position—what makes your book or article unique in the marketplace?

**Work for hire.** The situation in which a writer writes material for a publisher or company for a specified amount of money—usually selling all rights to the work, including potential reprint rights.

**YA.** Young adult. Manuscripts are written for readers aged 12 to 18.