

WHAT IS A PITCH?

"A pitch is where you tell me about your book in the most exciting way so that I'm compelled to read your manuscript. Publishers are always looking books that they love and books they think a lot of other people will love too (they are often the same thing), so it's good for your pitch to persuade me that your story is one or both of these things." - HarperCollins

PITCHING TIPS FROM PUBLISHERS AND AGENTS

- Come prepared to talk about what your inspiration is behind your story – why did you write it and how are you connected to it?
- Tell them a bit about yourself and why you've written this story
- Who is it for? (e.g. preschool children, kids who like history, young adults etc.)
- What's the genre? (e.g. fantasy / poetry / history / memoir / romance etc.)
- Try to be clear about the audience your book is appropriate for – where would it sit in a bookshop?
- Keep some of these questions in mind when preparing your pitch:
 - What's the one-sentence summary of your book?
 - What's unique about your book?
 - Who will read it? What's the market?
 - Why did YOU write this book?
- Summarise your story's plot in three sentences

PITCHING TIPS CONTINUED

- Are there other successful books that are similar to yours?
- Similarly, if you can think of comparative books or pieces of writing (in content, tone, etc.) that helps give a big-picture idea of how you see your book/writing, and who it might be targeted at. People love a comparison for reference!
- Why will people want to buy this book?
- Before you write your pitch, think about who your reader is – then write the pitch as if you're speaking to them.
- Consider who the audience is and include that in your pitch – writing is a creative and solitary experience, but it's important to keep in mind who you want or think the writing will connect with. For publishers, it helps us have a clearer idea of who the writing should be targeted at
- If you're thinking about submitting: Polish the first few chapters, and only submit once they're as good as they can possibly be. We tend to take those early chapters as indicative of the strength of the rest of the manuscript – though that's not to say that the whole thing shouldn't be in excellent shape when you submit it!
- You can read your pitch if you need to – you don't need to memorise it!
- A pitch is where you tell me about your book in the most exciting way so that I'm compelled to read your manuscript. Publishers are always looking books that they love and books they think a lot of other people will love too (they are often the same thing), so it's good for you pitch to persuade me that your story is one or both of these things.

PITCHING TIPS CONTINUED

- If there are big twists in the story, don't give them away in the pitch – this is your chance to build anticipation for the story so that the reader will drop everything and start reading your manuscript straight away.
- The pitch will need some thinking about – so often it's helpful to ask yourself what's the one distinct, fascinating and original idea in your story.
- Pitches crucially also tell us *what kind of story* it is – is it funny, charming and uplifting, or tense, brooding and chilling? Is it a dark psychological thriller, is it a charming romantic comedy, is it moving historical fiction?
- You've probably thought about how you're going to start your pitch. But do you know how it ends? Find something impactful to leave your audience with.
- If possible, use dot point notes and make the pitch more conversational rather than reading a long script.
- Know who you are pitching to, and try to find out a little bit about what they do (doing your research about the publishers / literary agents)
- Be prepared for the question 'are you working on anything else?'. If you are not, don't worry! Just be honest if this is your first project.
- A pitch is just a conversation – you don't have to be loud or good at 'selling' – clarity and authenticity is the key. Just be yourself.

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