

**Book Proposals That Sell  
Muse Online Conference**

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Links for entire handout: [www.terrylinks.com/muse](http://www.terrylinks.com/muse)

Realities of today's marketplace

Realities of today's editor

Several Reasons Why Fiction Is Rejected

Several Reasons Why Nonfiction Is Rejected

The Importance of First Impressions

**Additional Resources:**

**Book Proposals That Sell**—Different Ways to get it:

[www.right-writing.com/ways.html](http://www.right-writing.com/ways.html) or Ebook: [www.bookproposals.ws](http://www.bookproposals.ws)

**Editor Reveals Book Proposal Secrets:** over three hours of audio teaching about book proposals [www.editorbookproposals.com](http://www.editorbookproposals.com)

**Straight Talk from the Editor, 18 Keys to a Rejection-Proof Submission**—a FREE Ebook: [www.straighttalkeditor.com](http://www.straighttalkeditor.com)

Contact information for 400 Literary Agents: [www.terrylinks.com/agents](http://www.terrylinks.com/agents)

**Platform Building Ideas for Every Author**—A FREE Ebook: [www.terrylinks.com/pb](http://www.terrylinks.com/pb)

*Right Writing News*—over 400 pages of FREE how-to-write information: [www.right-writing.com/newsletter.html](http://www.right-writing.com/newsletter.html)

The Writing Life blog with over 725 searchable entries: [www.thewritinglife.ws](http://www.thewritinglife.ws)

Right-Writing.com – hundreds of pages of articles [www.right-writing.com](http://www.right-writing.com)

## Book Proposal Check List

### Is Your Idea Saleable?

- Who is your audience?
- Why would they want to read your book?
- Research at several large bookstores to see if anything is already available.
- Check a large major library for competitive titles
- Examine *Books In Print* and *Paperbound Books in Print*, plus the latest edition of *Forthcoming Books* to see if there are potentially competitive works. Look at Amazon.com but understand Amazon has errors.
- What makes your idea significantly different or better than the competition? These distinctions become your primary selling points. You need at least one major distinction between your idea and the competition for it to be saleable.

### Proposal Mechanics

Most book proposals range from 15 to 30 pages. These proposals are always 100% typo-free and double-spaced with generous margins. The proposal takes many forms and the writer inevitably dictates the shape of the proposal. The common elements include:

**Overview** -- this is the most important part of your proposal and should be 1 to 3 pages long. In clear and succinct style it covers:

What is the book about? Why the book is important, useful and necessary?

Who is the audience? Who will buy this book?

What makes the book different or better than any other book in on this subject?

What is the book's marketing handle? This is a twenty word or less description.

What can you do to help the book in terms of promotion?

**Chapter Summaries.** These summaries are an outline of the book. They can be as long as you desire but no less than 150 words for each chapter. Select the format, which works best for you--i.e. outline, narrative, bulleted list of key points, etc.

**The Sample Chapter** You will need at least one sample chapter and probably two chapters (if a chapter is less than ten pages). These chapters should give the reader a strong sense of the book's tone and style.

**About the Author.** Don't be shy. Why should the editor give you this project? Of everyone in the world why you? Specifically show how you are the most qualified individual for this project. In traditional publishing every editor is investing *at least* \$50,000 (that's with a modest advance and zero marketing dollars) so show your worth.

**The Competition.** Everyone believes their book is unique. **No book is unique** so please detail what other titles would be in direct competition.

**Manuscript Delivery and Length**—important information and many people do not include this information. Your vision for the book is very important.

**Promotion/** Special Markets/ Volume Buy Backs (anything over 5,000 copies)/ Endorsements