

## How to Read a Writer's Market Listing

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Editors and publishers issue market listings that describe exactly what they want from writers. Successful freelance writers follow these postings to the letter. Discover what works and what doesn't, and gain some insight from an experienced freelance writer.

### Market Listings Tell You How to Succeed

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Market listings tend to follow the roughly the same format. The name of the publication and the publisher will appear at the top. A description of what they need from writers will take up a few lines. Generally, an indication of the pay will follow, plus if they pay on acceptance or publication. Sometimes there's an editor's name and instructions about how to query. Finally, there's a mailing address. Sometimes there's also a web address and an email address.

There is some key information in each that will help you decide if you want to query or not, and if you do, determine your approach.

Here's How to Read and Use a Market Listing:

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Note if the publication 'pays on acceptance' or 'pays on publication.' If it pays on publication that means you'll have to wait until the piece is published before you get paid. They can tie up your manuscript for years. You may want to find another market that pays on acceptance, or put a time-limit on the sale.

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Look for the stated pay rate. If it doesn't meet your standards, you may want to move on.

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If you want to write for the publication, pay particular attention to words like 'focus,' 'addressing,' and other words and phrases that tell you the purpose of the publication. These words are the key to what you'll write and the way you'll write

it.

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Look for 'Current Needs,' or similar phrase that tells you what the editor wants now.

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Read the market listing all the way through - even if it contains information you don't think will apply to your project.

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Find out how they want the query. Some editors want email queries only, some want mailed queries and some will accept them either way.

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Note if they accept and pay for photos or other art - if you can provide art as well as writing, you enhance your chances of success if they use art and photos.

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Acquire a copy of the magazine and study it. Some magazines will send you one for free, others require you to pay for sample copies. Either way, you simply must get a copy if you expect to be successful writing for the magazine.

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Prepare your query and send it. (See Sample Magazine Query.)

### Market Listing Tips

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Follow the directions! They sum up how the publication wants to do business.

- Studying two or three current copies of the publication will give you a good feel for the editor's wants and needs.

Write well, and often,