

Glossary of Writing and Publishing Terms

by Debbie Hardy

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| Acquisitions editor | The person at a publishing house charged with acquiring manuscripts. |
| Advance | Amount paid up front for a manuscript. This is deducted from future royalties. |
| Agent | A representative who sells an author's manuscript to publishers. They receive part of your royalties <i>after</i> the book is published. You don't pay them anything up front. |
| Author | Someone who has written a book, published or not |
| Draft | A rough, unedited version of a manuscript. There may be many drafts before a book goes to print |
| Edit | Add, change, or remove words from a manuscript (Usually remove – get used to it) |
| Elevator Pitch | Brief description of your book. Imagine you get on an elevator with someone who could help publish your book. You have 30 seconds with them until they get off the elevator. What would you say to sell them on your idea? |
| Fiction | A story from imagination. About 20% of all new books are fiction. |
| Format | The way a document looks. Standard format is Times New Roman font size 12, double spaced, 1" margins on all sides, ½" indent first line. |
| Genre | Type of book, like biography, Christian, reference, or romance. This is printed on the back cover so a bookstore owner can tell on what shelf to place the book. |
| Logline | One or two sentences describing your book, like a TV guide listing |
| Manuscript or MS | A written document |
| Marketing | Selling your book online, in person, through bookstores, or any other way |
| Memoir | Personal story, all true, with no fiction, no made-up conversations or situations |
| Nonfiction | The sky's the limit! |
| Novel | A story, usually 80,000 to 100,000 words |
| Pitch | Sell. When you meet an agent, editor, or publisher, you talk to them about your book and yourself, trying to sell both. If scheduled in advance, this is a pitch session. |
| Platform | The people you know or can influence; those who will likely buy your book |
| POV | Point Of View from which a story is told |
| Proposal | A detailed description of your nonfiction book, including a cover letter, short author bio, synopsis, marketing plan, Table of Contents, and first chapter or two |
| Publication | A magazine or newspaper, either hard copy or online |
| Publicist | Someone who gets you publicity, such as radio and TV interviews |
| Publisher | Someone who publishes your book or article |
| Query letter | A short letter to an agent or editor to see if they're interested in your work |
| Rejection | A way of life for a writer. A rejection doesn't say that your writing is bad, only that the person who will love your work is at a different address. |
| Royalties | Percentage of book purchases paid to authors. Agents also get a percentage of this. |
| Slush pile | Stack of unsolicited manuscripts on an editor's or publisher's desk, waiting to be read |
| Synopsis | 2-3 paragraphs describing your nonfiction book. Fiction synopsis will be 2-10 pages. |
| Target audience | The people you anticipate will read your book. Write specifically to them. |
| WIP | Work In Progress, what you're working on |
| Word length | The number of words in a manuscript. Publications have a strict word count; books vary from short e-books to 120,000-word novels. |