

The Anatomy of a Great Query

A query letter must be:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Structure and Formatting

Email subject line:

- Always use the word “query” somewhere
- If referred by someone, include their name too

Salutation:

- Use _____
- Never use “Dear Editor” or “To whom it May Concern” (research)

Length:

- One page only
- No more than _____
- Single space the letter with extra an space between paragraphs.

Closing:

- Just use “Sincerely” No need to get cute (i.e. “Biting my nails in anticipation”)
- Include _____
- (Optional) Social media or website URL

The Content of Your Query

Paragraph 1: **The Hook (Why)**

Paragraph 2: **The Book (What)**

Paragraph 3: **The Cook (Who)**

Paragraph 4: **The Look (Where)**

10 Don'ts for Query Letters

1. Don't be coy or include teasers (i.e. "My idea is so hot I can't write about it here.")
2. Don't send the same query to different editors at the same company. That's annoying.
3. Don't follow-up on an unsolicited query. No reply means "No thanks."
4. Don't mass mail a query. It's cold, impersonal, and editors can tell what you did.
5. Don't try to describe more than one project per query. (i.e. Here's five articles, which one do you like?")
6. Don't attempt to send the piece of work along with the query, to save you time/effort.
7. Don't send a query for your "nonfiction novel." There's no such thing.
8. Don't use neon-colored paper stock just to get attention. A well-written query shouldn't need that kind of help.
9. Don't forget to record a "move on" date on your submissions spreadsheet so you know when to submit the work to another pub.
10. Don't include your photo or bio. Wait until they actually request it.