



The Complete Article Writer - Workshop 4 Handout

PITCHING

You need to answer **THREE** key questions:

1. *Why should the reader care about this?* Why is this article going to be of interest to this particular readership?
2. *Why now?* Why does this article need to be written now? Which issue are you targeting, and why?
3. *Why me?* Why am I the best person to write this article?

Top Tips

- **Address your letter/query to the right editor.** (Commissioning editor, features editor, travel editor, health editor, etc)
- **Remember to be business-like.** Don't waffle. Cut to the chase. Don't try buttering up the editor ... *I really love your magazine, I read it from cover to cover in one sitting it's so good ...*
- **Be clear in what you're offering.** Be precise. A 1,000-word illustrated article about
- **Show the editor you've looked at their magazine** A 1,000-word illustrated article about Fishguard for your travel section.
- **Explain the topicality hook.** February marks the anniversary of the invasion of Fishguard ...

- **Suggest the structure.** Show the editor how you will tackle the article subject. Use bullet points to succinctly convey the information.

- **Sell yourself** ... or what you can offer. Think of your expertise. Being able to offer photographs shows an editor that you've been there. Can you offer quotes? That demonstrates you've spoken to people.

If you're pitching, I sometimes ask a question. *Is there anything else you'd like the article to cover?* This enables the editor to twist it more to what they're looking for. Perhaps they'd like you to check out a particular attraction, pub, event.

Pitching Tips:

- If you have photos, attach a couple of low-resolution versions to your pitch. *Photos sell words.* I know I've gained a couple of sales based upon the photos I could offer.

- *Pitch by email.* Can't find the email address? Try the following format: `firstname.surname@magazine.co.uk` or `firstname.surname@publishername.co.uk` (There are some that differ, but many follow this format.)

- *Record your pitches.* Make a note of who you've pitched what to.

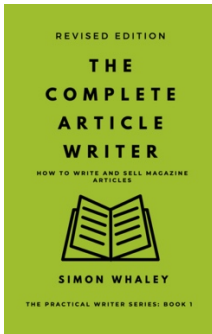
- *Chase them up* if you don't hear from them. But be polite. *Have you had an opportunity to consider my idea below?* I chase on a two-week cycle, and I chase three times. (Over a period of six weeks).

- *Some editors just don't respond. Get over it.* Because one day, out of the blue, they may get in touch.

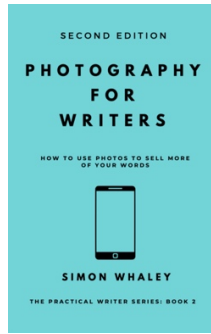
- *You can pitch the same idea to different magazines at the same time, as long as you understand that if they all come back with a yes - you can write different articles.* If you've done your market research, this probably won't be a problem, because for one magazine you'll be offering a 600-word piece, for another 1500-words and for another 900 words. They're going to be different articles because of the different lengths and different readerships.

Books for Writers by Simon Whaley

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<https://www.instagram.com/simon.whaley/>

Web: www.simonwhaley.co.uk

Email: contact@simonwhaley.co.uk