

Elements of a Nonfiction Book Proposal

Including these elements in your Sasquatch Books pitch or proposal will strengthen your submission with our Sasquatch Adult editorial team.

Overview

A concise selling statement that presents the book in a nutshell, tells about you (briefly), and makes a persuasive case for the market you intend to reach. Describe what makes this book project exciting, original, and necessary. The people reading this statement are trying to imagine how they will publish and sell your book, so explain why this book needs to be published, who the readers are, and why you are uniquely positioned to write the book. Allow 2 to 6 pages for this section.

Comp Titles

In this case, comp means comparison. What titles will be neighbors of yours when it's sitting on a bookstore shelf? Publishers and booksellers think in terms of categories. What current books will readers of your book have on their shelves? What are the differences between your book and these previously published titles? Include 3 to 5 titles in this discussion. In this section, you are showing how well versed you are in the category; how analytic you are in terms of positioning your book in the market; and you are making the case that your book is original, fresh, and significant. Along the way, address what readers will get out of your book that's missing in the marketplace. Comp titles should be relevant, recent (within last five years), and realistic. No *Educated* or *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*.

Marketplace

Reveal what you know about the people who will be readers of your book. Are they mainly one gender (or nonbinary), what's the primary age range, do they live in a particular location (the Pacific Northwest or an urban center)? Do they tend to participate in any specific activities, belong to certain groups, work in certain fields? Where do your readers shop—not just for books?

Publicity

Do you have media contacts? Do you blog? Where have you been published previously? Are you active on social media? What kind of public speaking have you done? Readers learn about books through publicity—from book reviews and beyond. Explain what publicity assets you bring to the table. Do you have connections with people who would endorse the book?

About the Author

It's time to tell us all about you! But only insofar as it relates to this book (we don't need your full CV or LinkedIn profile). Your personal story can be important even if it's not directly connected to the topic of the book because it could help connect you to readers.

Annotated Table of Contents

This includes a brief description of what would be covered in each chapter. Of course, in order to write this, you need to conceive of a set of chapters in the first place. This is the crux of the whole exercise of writing a book proposal, because it requires you to figure out the extent of your content (what's included, what's not); how you'll organize the flow of information; what will constitute a complete and satisfying manuscript. Each chapter description can be a few sentences to one page.

Delivery Date

How long will it take you to deliver the complete and final manuscript? Please give an estimate of how long the book will be, either in manuscript pages or word count. Related to this, if the book needs visual elements, please describe what you envision as well as the plan to generate or acquire these.

Sample Chapter

The voice in the proposal should reflect the voice that you'll use in the book. But still, for first-time authors, a sample chapter is important to include. It can be the introduction to the book, but an actual chapter is preferred. The sample offers up evidence of how you will handle the material, your sense of organization, and your writing style and proficiency.