

Nonfiction Proposal Sample Outline

Please note:

- This outline is for informational purposes only.
- All text in purple/light gray italics is explanatory information. Delete it before submitting.
- If you are signed as a client, you will be expected to transfer your proposal information into her agency proposal format that will be provided to you. This outline will make that easier to do.

Working Title

Subtitle if applicable

A Nonfiction Book Proposal

by your name

Website
Email Address

Hook

1-2 sentences summarizing your book.

Overview

This is your chance to hook the publisher. Make it count.

What problem is your book addressing?

Why are you the best person to write this book?

Why is it important that your book be written?

What is the reader going to gain by reading your book?

Approach

I am promising my reader...

I will accomplish this by...

Why This Book? Why Now?

This section isn't always necessary, but is sometimes helpful to cut down on the size of the overview. Delete if not applicable.

Takeaway

My reader will understand...

Target Reader

This should be pretty specific. Not everyone is going to buy your book, nor should you be writing your book for "everyone."

The target reader is:

Secondary audience:

Tertiary audience:

Affinity Groups

In this section, list a broader audience demographic and organizations that would be interested in your book. For example, if you're writing a book for moms, you may include MOPS groups here. If your book is a true crime book, you can include Fans of NCIS and Law & Order.

Affinity groups for my book include:

Manuscript Details

A. Genre:

B. Anticipated word count: _____ words

C. Status: *If the book is complete, you can list that here. If not, you can remove this.*

D. Completion: _____ months upon signed contract

E. Alternate titles:

This is a great place to show the publisher that you're easy to work with. If you can't think of an optional title, say that you're open to suggestions.

F. Sections

My book will have:

- Foreword
- Part One, Part Two, Part Three
- Resources
- Bibliography
- Other: _____

Marketing Plan

You have a lot of room to be creative here. This is a basic outline for the marketing plan, but you can add features that highlight how amazing you and what you're going to do to sell your book.

A. Biography and Headshot

B. Publication Credits, aka Publishing History

I have been published in:

C. Speaking Engagements

List your public speaking engagements, past and future. You can also include a list of places that you'd like to speak at. Make note of the distinction, though.

D. By the Numbers

If your numbers aren't strong, it can be helpful to remove a platform from the list. Here's where you list your "reach" and following. Focus on your strengths. Link to your social media pages and website.

Website: _____ unique visitors

Email list number of subscribers:

Social Media:

Facebook:

Instagram:

Tik Tok:

LinkedIn:

YouTube:

Twitter:

Pinterest:

Marketing Campaign

Insert your marketing campaign here. Make sure to connect your book to how you plan to sell the book. The publisher will also market the book but a lot of the responsibility falls on the author's shoulders.

Possible Endorsers

Who do you know within the space or genre of your book that you could ask to endorse it?

Ex: Joe Smith, bestselling author of I'm a Superstar Author

Comparative Works

List the books that are comparable to yours. They need to be titles that have sold well. You're showing the publisher that (1) your book is relevant and (2) the topic sells. The Amazon bestseller list is a great resource. Do not include Amazon rankings.

Format example:

Book Title by Author. Publisher. Date.

ISBN:

(paragraph 1) Description of how our books are similar.

(paragraph 2) Description of how they are different.

Tips:

- Use 5+ comparative titles.

- Use books that are within the last 3-5 years, unless it's a bestseller that is still in the top selling list.
- As a general rule, do not use self-published books in your comparative list section.
- Do not specify the Amazon ranking.

Chapter Breakdowns

The Chapter Breakdowns show the publisher that you know where your book is headed and that it's plotted out. You know how your book will start, what happens in the middle, and how it will end. This shows that you'll be able to finish the book.

Typically, you'll want the chapter breakdowns to only be a few sentences. What is the problem that the chapter addresses? Why is it important? Focus on the takeaway for the reader. I like to include Spiritual Takeaways as well.

Chapter One: _____

In this chapter, readers will...

Spiritual Takeaway (for Christian market):

Sidebars:

Sample Chapters

Each publisher or agent may want to see a different number of chapters, but typically you can provide the intro and three chapters as a rule of thumb. They are looking at your writing skills and ability to hook-and-hold their attention.