

## Crafting Quality Queries Handout

### Step 1: Define a Query

A query letter is:

Like an introduction there is a \_\_\_\_\_ way and a \_\_\_\_\_ way to introduce yourself.

Why did we just talk about how people introduce themselves?

- Because these examples \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- They did not \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### Step 2: Demonstrate a sincere interest in the editor and the publication.

A. **Study** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

B. **Obtain** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

C. **Acquire** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

D. **Read** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

E. **Know** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

When you regularly do those **five** things, you will **demonstrate a sincere interest in the editor and the publication and their audience.**

### **Step 3: Write a winning query**

Most editors and agents will spend \_\_\_\_\_ seconds, maybe a minute, reading your query.

Most query letters follow a basic formula of four paragraphs on one page:

**Paragraph 1: Hook** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Don't** begin with explanations or boring information. Instead, we \_\_\_\_\_ the lesson we're about to impart and grab the editor by the lapels by using:

- \* \_\_\_\_\_,
- \* \_\_\_\_\_,
- \* \_\_\_\_\_,
- \* \_\_\_\_\_, and/or
- \* \_\_\_\_\_.

Okay, your turn. Take one of your ideas and write an opening paragraph that will hook the editor with your idea.

**Paragraph 2: Sell** \_\_\_\_\_.

You'll want to include some key components in this paragraph:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_,
- b. \_\_\_\_\_,
- c. \_\_\_\_\_, and
- d. \_\_\_\_\_.

Here's a tip:

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Your turn again ...**

**Write your second paragraph expanding on the idea and selling it to the editor. Feel free to tweak the first paragraph as you develop the second.**

**Paragraph 3: Convince** \_\_\_\_\_.

In this third paragraph you give your \_\_\_\_\_.

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

Your turn again . . .

Write your third paragraph convincing the editor you're the best writer for this article or book.

Remember, **don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

We're nearing the end of our query letter, which is . . .

**Paragraph 4: Thank the editor for their time and ask for the assignment.**

Remember to keep it \_\_\_\_\_.

Your turn one last time . . .

Write your fourth paragraph thanking the editor for their time and asking for the assignment.

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do** \_\_\_\_\_.

Congratulations! You have just written a query first draft that you can polish after the conference. If you want to polish your query and email it to me by June 30, I will make a few comments from the perspective of an editor/former agent's reader and return it to you. My e-mail address is [petersk.ktp@gmail.com](mailto:petersk.ktp@gmail.com).

That takes us to ...

**Step 4: Polish and send your query**

**Don't** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Do . . .**

\* \_\_\_\_\_,

\* \_\_\_\_\_,

\* \_\_\_\_\_, and

\* \_\_\_\_\_.

Then send your query to the appropriate editor.