

Markets have different formatting guidelines, but a good place to start is Shunn Modern Manuscript Format. Use it as a baseline and tweak depending on what individual markets want. There are a lot of places to find market listings online. My favorite is the Submission Grinder. There's a wealth of searchable information about markets—genres, pay rates, word ranges, etc.—as well as user-submitted data about markets' response times. There are also flags for limited-demographic markets (e.g. LGBTQIA+ writers) and those with non-standard contracts. It's a great way to get the lay of the land when you're starting out, and it will continue being useful as your short fiction career continues.

## FINDING MARKETS

# HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR SHORT FICTION TO MAGAZINES + ANTHOLOGIES

## INTRODUCTION

So, you're a writer and you've completed a story. Congratulations!

This advice on submitting for publication is intended for early career writers, especially writers of science fiction, fantasy, and horror. Those genres have a rich short fiction ecosystem.

## YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Your manuscript should be complete when submitted. Perfection is unattainable, but make your manuscript as clean and polished as possible before sending it out.

You can consider an infinite number of factors when choosing markets, and your priorities may change over time. Ask what type of market you want and consider how readers will encounter your work. Free to read on the web? Downloadable as an ebook? Printed on paper? Multiple formats for the reader to choose? What vendors carry issues or other books by the publisher? Do you want to break into a magazine with an established track record, or get in on the ground floor of a new venture? What is the market's funding model?

## CHOOSING A MARKET

## WEBSITES

Shunn Manuscript Format:  
[www.shunn.net/format/story/](http://www.shunn.net/format/story/)  
Submission Grinder:  
[thegrinder.diabolicalplots.com](http://thegrinder.diabolicalplots.com)  
Flights of Foundry:  
[flights-of-foundry.org](http://flights-of-foundry.org)  
Codex:  
[www.codexwriters.com](http://www.codexwriters.com)  
HWA:  
[horror.org](http://horror.org)  
SFWA:  
[sfwa.org](http://sfwa.org)  
Writer Beware:  
[writerbeware.blog](http://writerbeware.blog)

"Money flows to the writer." This simple piece of advice was codified as a law sometime in the '90s. There won't be a lot of money. SFWA pegs professional rates at \$.08 per word. And there are plenty of semi-pro and nonpaying markets that are perfectly legitimate (not scams, and in some cases very well-regarded).

## YOGA'S LAW

In addition to magazines and anthologies, there are a lot of contests (many of which offer publication to winners). Assess those in the same way you do any other market.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Plenty of folks do just fine on their own, but finding writing communities can be a good source of support. That may mean local in-person groups, Discords, conventions or formal organizations.

Flights of Foundry has a lot of good programming geared toward new writers. As you get more sales under your belt, you can consider joining groups like Codex, HWA, and SFWA. Writer Beware is a very useful resource that tracks complaints against bad actors in publishing.

## EDITORIAL RESPONSE

Most markets use email or submission portals to manage their slush piles. Follow the market's guidelines: some may want anonymized manuscripts, tickboxes asserting no AI was used, or a bio of a specific length.

## HITTING SEND

scam, that behavior isn't well-regarded in the genres. If anyone is making money off a publishing venture, the writer should be getting paid something for their work.

If you get a no, you're done. Move on to the next market. Don't respond (not even a nice *thank you for reading my story* email); it just clogs inboxes. And don't be discouraged: you'll hear no *a lot*.

If you receive a request for rewrite and think the editor's suggestions improve the story, then go ahead and make changes (and, in all likelihood, the sale).

If you hear yes, you should receive a contract. *You are not obligated to sign this contract*. If you don't understand some of the terms, ask or check some of the resources at the end of this guide. Don't hesitate to negotiate. Losing a sale is generally better than signing a bad contract.

Be professional in your dealings with editors—and by “professional,” I mainly