

PROPOSAL WRITING 102
Lesson 10 -- Sample Chapters
By Susan M. Warren

Hey, can you believe this is our last lesson? Wow, these two weeks have flown. or maybe you're thinking that you are still trying to claw your way out of the weight of all this information. Please, don't worry if you can't process all of this..keep the lessons in your files, if you want, and refer to them when you get to that place when you'd need them. Thank you, all of you, for your participation.

I've tried to answer all of you, at least once, personally. However, if you had a lesson that you particularly felt you needed help on and I didn't get back to you, could you resend it to me today? I will do what I can to answer you promptly. Thanks!

Okay. Your proposal is nearly finished! You have your well-threaded synopsis with a your big bang first paragraph and a compelling query letter that hooks your editor. NOW, all you need are the SAMPLE CHAPTERS!

Lesson 10: Sample Chapters:

Every proposal package include sample chapters for the story you are proposing. Even if you are a multi-published author, you will have to write sample chapters for new contracts with new publishers, so it is wise to learn how to write them now. There are so many elements to writing decent sample chapters, I think we should cover it in another class, but I felt we needed to touch on them in order to fully cover the proposal package.

Your sample chapters (usually your first three), are usually the beginning of your story. They should be your best writing. By chapter 3 you should have jump-started your plot and have the h/hn already engaged and hopefully in conflict. Think of the synopsis as your editor's first introduction to your writing.the teaser, so to speak. The sample chapters are where they fall in love with your style. You want to make sure your characters are compelling, your story riveting. Refer to your threads and be sure to throw in that first obstacle, and hint at their darkest fear. Most of all, leave the editor wanting more.

When you prepare your sample chapter, refer to the publisher's guidelines as to format. Some want a specific type style and margins. Always put a header on top with your name and the name of the ms. And page number in upper left hand corner.

I usually spend at least two weeks on my sample chapters. It pays to take the time to get it right. Usually a good proposal takes me a month..1 week for research, 2 for sample chapters, and 1 for synopsis/query and polish. Don't rush it. Once they review your work, if they turn it down, it is hard to get a second chance.

This weekend, if you have time, write your first three chapters. You don't have to post them to the group. It is just a personal challenge. But, may the Lord bless you as you seek to write for Him!

Thank you for letting me teach this class. It's been a pleasure.

Warmly,

Susan

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