

Top Ten Tips

How to make your submission to Islandport Press the best it can be

#1: This seems so obvious to us, so we're not sure why people overlook, ignore, or avoid this, but this is the first step: Read our submission guidelines! Here's a link to the [SUBMISSION GUIDELINES](#) on our website. These are linked from every page on our website. Please follow the guidelines. No poetry means don't send poetry. We are focused on books that reflect the character and sensibilities of New England. That doesn't mean you can just find and replace the name of the town where your book is set!

#2: Please don't call or visit the office! Just because we're a small publisher doesn't mean we have time to answer questions you can find answers to somewhere else; it's actually quite the opposite!

#3: Do your research. There are vast—vast!—amounts of information available online about how to submit a manuscript, and the book industry in general. A small amount of legwork will go a long way. Libraries, writing workshops and groups, literary organizations, and books, websites, and blogs on writing can help as well. How long should a book be? What is an early reader? What is a narrative arc? How can I turn my idea into a book? We are not able to help you with those questions; we should be the last, not first, stop on the development of your book.

#4: Check the market. Here's what we mean by competitive title research: What other books are exactly like yours, and might—or might not—compete against yours in a bookstore? Go to bookstores and libraries and see what's out there. For instance, if you have written a book about a moose in Maine, how many other books like that are there? Are they new, or out of print? How are they the same, or how are they different, from yours? How will your book compete in this very, very crowded market?

#5: Make it your best. Don't send a rough draft or work in progress. Don't say, for instance, "I don't care about grammar and syntax; I'm only concerned with content." We want you to care.

#6: Never send your only copy. This applies triple if you are sending artwork. We are not able to return manuscripts, even if you send a self-addressed stamped envelope. These seldom work and we spend a lot of time at the post office figuring out postage errors, so we are no longer able to do this. I repeat: do not send your only copy.

#7: Proofread. That is all.

#8: Remember the basics. Write a nice cover letter. Include the date on your letter. Make sure your e-mail address is on your letter. Make sure your mailing address is on your letter. Make sure your letter is addressed to Islandport, not another editor/person/publisher.

#9. We are not a vanity press. If you have a finished product and you want to pay someone to print and distribute it, that's not us. After careful consideration, we have decided not to take on previously self-published titles. If you have already published your book in print or as an e-book, we will not be able to take it on, either as a new title or as the book's distributor.

#10: Be patient. Six months might seem like a ridiculously long time to wait, but we get lots of submissions, we read them all, we reply to them all. All of us do many different things beside read manuscripts. If three months passes and you haven't heard back, please see Tip #2.