

WHY DO YOU NEED A LITERARY AGENT?

In order to submit your manuscript to book publishers, you need a literary agent to represent you. The majority of major book publishers will not consider an unagented submission or an unsolicited manuscript.

If you send your manuscript to a book publisher without an agent, the manuscript will be destroyed. See submission guidelines for these major publishers: [HarperCollins](#), [Penguin Random House](#), [Simon & Schuster](#), [Macmillan Publishers](#), [Hachette Book Group](#), [Scholastic](#), [Houghton Mifflin Harcourt](#), [McGraw Hill Education](#)*, [Candlewick Press](#), [Sourcebooks](#)* (*will consider your work without an agent)

There are rare exceptions - for example you are personal friends with an editor at a publishing company and the editor will read and consider your manuscript. There are book publishers (generally small presses) which will consider your manuscript without an agent. An excellent book on presses is [SMALL PRESSES AND INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS](#).

In the event you can't find a literary agent, and you decide to self publish your book, at a later time period you will need a literary agent if a traditional book publisher contacts you. For example, Colleen Hoover originally self published her books.

Initially, your agent will read your query letter and if they are interested in your book, request the complete manuscript. However, in most cases you will need an agent to make the initial deal with a book publisher which requires finding the appropriate editor and book publisher, negotiate the publishing agreement, protect your interests, and deal with [various departments](#) (Contracts, Copyright Page, Legal, Permissions, Subsidiary Rights, Foreign Rights, Special Sales/Premium Sales, Inventory, Editorial, Copyediting, Production, Art, Marketing, Publicity, and Sales Departments). In addition, your agent will handle problems with your editor and/or publisher, offer promotional/marketing ideas for your book for in person events and online, and provide social media and career advice for future book ideas.

HOW TO FIND A LITERARY AGENT

Hunting for the right literary agent who will represent you and your books, and sell your manuscript to a book publisher is a serious task for you. Organize your search with a spreadsheet of the agents you contacted, their name, agency name, address, phone number, email address, and the date you sent your query letter, and the date you emailed your manuscript.

You will receive rejections to your query letter (and manuscript) and you have to accept that this is part of the process. Do not get discouraged. Many successful and famous authors have experienced rejection. (J.K. Rowling, Stephen King, James Patterson) Your novel or nonfiction book might be perfect for one agent, but another agent doesn't feel enthusiastic. Material is subjective, and you have to be patient in waiting for results, and handle rejections. Make sure your manuscript is in great shape before you submit to a literary agent.

There are many ways to find literary agents. *Publisher's Weekly*, *Literary Marketplace*, Writers Conferences, Publishers Marketplace, *Poets & Writers Database*, and *Writer's Digest* (Books Division) has guides to Literary Agents. As to your question on getting published with a small agent vs a large agency/most popular agent(s), I don't think that matters. I suggest you make sure your manuscript is in great shape, the opening page grabs the reader, and your query letter gives the agent enough information about your novel/nonfiction book to hook the agent! This is a pitch for your book - and if you read catalog copy for forthcoming books in major book publishers' list of titles on their websites, you will learn how to summarize your book and entice the potential book buyer.

BEST QUALITIES FOR A LITERARY AGENT

The agent must have the ability to suggest editorial changes for your manuscript. If you don't agree with these changes,

that requires the right chemistry between the agent and writer, the agent must

Here is a list of some ways of finding a Literary Agent.

1. [Publisher's Weekly](#) - weekly magazine and agents big or special deals are in the magazine
2. [Literary Marketplace](#) - listing of literary agents
3. [Publishers Marketplace](#) - note deals by literary agents
4. [Poets & Writers Database](#) of literary agents
5. Acknowledgment pages in books mentioning agent's name
6. Find books in bookstores, online, or libraries, and check to see if the books are in

print. Call the Contracts Department or Permissions Department for your selected book and their book publisher, and ask who the agent* is for this book. Then is not *confidential information.

7. Recommendations from Jan Kardys' list of agents at [Unicorn Writers' Conference](#)

8. Writers Conferences where you can meet literary agents

9. [Jeff Hermon's Guide to Book Publishers, Editors & Literary Agents, 29th edition](#)

10. [Guide to Literary Agents 30th Edition](#) Writer's Digest Books

11. Recommendations from published authors - meet at book signings or via social media

12. The Writer's Magazine, Writer's Digest Magazine and Poets & Writers Magazine