

TIPS AND ADVICE FOR WRITING PITCHES, POSITIONING STATEMENTS & LOGLINES

WRITING A PITCH

- Write down the main elements of your story: the protagonist, the inciting incident and/or set up, the objective/goal of the story, the stakes, and the ticking clock.
- Use a description in addition to the protagonist's name – a teen gymnast, an honor roll student, a farmer's daughter – something descriptive and memorable.
- Raise a question—or better yet, two or more deeply compelling questions—in your reader's mind.
- Include early reveal that raises even more questions in the reader's mind. (I promise you're not giving it away.)
- Highlight only what the reader needs to know to understand your story.
- Review everything you highlighted and ask yourself: Do they really need to know that point? If not, cut it from your pitch.
- Do that last step several more times.
- Polish the language of your pitch. Use the pitch as an opportunity to showcase the writing of your novel, evoking tone and style and voice.

TIP: Use your pitch to draw in the reader (agent, editor) and pique their interest, so they will want to read more. But don't give away the whole story. Otherwise, they won't need to read on. (A pitch that includes the ending is a synopsis—a helpful tool but not the one to use in your query letter or flap copy.)

WRITING A POSITIONING STATEMENT

- Find comparable books for your project. What does that mean? What if there are no books that are exactly like yours? No problem. Find books that have elements similar to yours: plot points, characters, setting, tone, writing style, voice. Look for titles published in the last three years that have sold well—but not too well. The best comps will have large fan bases of readers that will be attracted to and want to read your novel.
- Use those comps to create a positioning statement. Here are some formulas to get you started:

“[Adjective] and full of [noun], [TITLE] shows us [main emotional truth]. The story explores themes of [theme], [theme], and [theme].”

“This [adjective], [category] is a [positive adjective] [genre] with the [element] of [COMP] and [element] of [COMP], in a [style] perfect for fans of [COMP].”

“With the [element] of [COMP] and the [element] in the vein of [COMP], [TITLE] explores [theme] and [how a reader will connect emotionally with the book].”

WRITING A LOGLINE

- Write down the main elements of your story: the protagonist, the inciting incident and/or set up, the objective/goal of the story, the stakes, and the ticking clock.
- Craft those elements into a single sentence:

“When [the inciting incident happens], [the protagonist] must [achieve the objective], or risk [the stakes], before [ticking clock.]”

- Revise and polish the sentence at the line level. Think smart, snappy, and scintillating. Less is more!

Pitches and positioning statements can be daunting to write, but when you nail it, I promise you, nothing is more gratifying. Best of luck!