

## ATTENTION NOVICE WRITERS! HOW TO GET A STORY PUBLISHED

Any writer will tell you how thrilling it is to see your name on a byline with your first published piece. They'll also usually tell you it took quite a while to get that big thrill. Writers are not known for their marketing skills. You may be a terrific writer, but if you don't market your skills, it's pretty slow going. Once you know how to go about getting a story published, it can happen fast! If you're just starting out in your writing career, here are some pointers on the fast track to getting published.

You finished your story. You revised and nitpicked until it screams perfection. After a final proofreading, you submitted your work to that national woman's magazine. You're prepared to wait the two to three months for a reply.

What's wrong with this scenario? Although you followed the standard protocol, your chances of getting a story published in this magazine are probably not good. This does not necessarily reflect on the quality of your work. Perhaps the editor is simply not interested in your topic at this time. You may not even receive a rejection notice. Worse yet, you sit and wait, wasting time and other, better opportunities. You may even start to lose confidence in your writing skills! This is not the way to go!

Sometimes, you must indeed be willing to stoop to conquer. This does not mean you must humiliate yourself in order to succeed. It means you may need to let your work be published, without compensation, at least for a short while. This is one way to build a portfolio that opens doors tomorrow.

Google 'submissions wanted'. You'll get thousands of results. This term is usually used when no compensation is offered. The trick to getting a story published where it benefits your career lies within your control. Be choosy in deciding which publishers get to publish your work! They're getting it for free, after all. Read submission guidelines and policies. Most reputable publishers ask only for first-time electronic rights and one year archive rights. You retain copyright and receive a byline.

Another avenue in getting a story published is in the article directories, websites which compile databases of articles in an array of categories. Search out and explore some of these directories until you find a few with articles of good quality. Let's say you know a lot about pet care or gardening or martial arts. Write a few articles and submit. You'll soon hear if your pieces are accepted. You receive no compensation, but you get lots of exposure and credit for the work. A martial arts website may pick up your article as a feature story for its newsletter. This type of exposure can turn into future paid assignments.

Getting a story published is not so difficult as you might have thought. Once you have a few good clips, the road becomes easier and your dreams start coming true.