

# BROWNE & MILLER

LITERARY ASSOCIATES LLC

FOUNDED BY JANE JORDAN BROWNE

## **QUERYING BROWNE & MILLER LITERARY ASSOCIATES**

Before querying us, authors should visit our website ([www.browneandmiller.com](http://www.browneandmiller.com)) to ascertain whether we could be an appropriate agency for their project. If they decide that we might be right for them, they can contact us with a query letter. We do not read unsolicited material, and so initially, we ask to see a query letter only. If we are interested in the idea presented in the query letter, then we contact the author and ask to see more material.

Query letters may be sent either by regular mail or by email. Query letters sent by regular mail should be addressed to

Attention: Submissions  
Browne & Miller Literary Associates  
410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 460  
Chicago, IL 60605

and should include a self-addressed, stamped envelope, so that we may provide them with a response. Query letters sent by email should not include attachments.

The following are 10 general tips on crafting a strong query letter:

1. Overall, a query letter must be highly polished – typed, no spelling mistakes, typos, or grammatical errors. 1 page long, if possible.
2. It must clearly identify the genre or category the proposed book fits into and also provide some insight on general market positioning – where does it fit in the marketplace and on the shelf? This means an author must do her homework – visit a bookstore, be familiar with other works in the genre, etc.
3. It must offer a brief overview of the work that is clear, compelling, and makes one want to read more – this part should be somewhat reflective of the author's writing style.
4. We always advise against mentioning other unpublished works in a query – the focus should be on the one book the author is trying to sell. Agents don't necessarily want to know that an author has other unpublished manuscripts sitting on the shelf.
5. For new fiction authors, a novel is almost always sold on a complete manuscript. Author should indicate what material is available to send to the agent for consideration and the manuscript length (i.e. word count). We also advise new authors to write a detailed synopsis of the book (5 pages or so) as we usually ask for a synopsis and 3-5 sample chapters before asking to see an entire manuscript. For non-fiction, an author should have a full proposal plus chapters ready to send. We rarely sell non-fiction on manuscript; almost always on proposal. In general, we ask for an exclusive – that we are the only agents reviewing the requested material. We make exceptions in certain circumstances, however.
6. If the author is querying several agents, she should indicate that hers is a multiple submission.
7. The letter should also offer information about the writer: writing and publishing background, associations (i.e. RWA, MWA, etc.) or writers groups, awards and prizes, published works (even short stories, articles), academic background, anything notable. This would also include info on the author's PLATFORM – speaking engagements, conferences attended, media coverage, etc.
8. Author's contact information, including email address and phone number, should be included.
9. No gimmicks! We have seen our fair share of the bizarre over the years, including a query letter filled with glitter, handwritten queries on scented, colored paper in colored ink, queries containing nude photos, queries on candy bar wrappers, etc. These letters are memorable, but we did not pursue a single one of the books presented. Creativity is appreciated, but authors should present themselves professionally overall.
10. Author should always enclose an SASE with a mailed query. This agency does not respond to such queries without return postage.

There are several books available that touch upon writing query letters and a number of author-related websites that provide pointers as well. Authors seeking representation should do substantial research before contacting any literary agency.