

Guidelines for pitch critique round table participants

Congratulations on signing up to have your pitch critiqued by an agent or editor! It's exciting to share your idea with an industry pro.

Keep in mind that this session is designed to help you improve and strengthen your pitch so that it will make your submission stronger.

BRING: Two printed copies of your pitch (12-point font or larger for ease of reading), or your one-page query letter. Also bring a pen or pencil to jot notes. Bring only one pitch for one manuscript.

AT THE SESSION: Silence your phone. If you'd like, ask someone else in the group to take notes for you when it's your turn and you can do the same for them.

WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN: The facilitator will start a 5-minute timer. You'll hand a copy of your pitch to the agent/editor, and then read it aloud for the entire group to hear. The agent/editor may ask you some questions, suggest places you need more information, or sections you could strengthen.

When your timer goes off, your time is over. Timers will sometimes interrupt the conversation or might even catch someone mid-sentence. (You may finish your sentence if it's no more than a few seconds.) This can feel awkward, but this is the nature of timed pitch events--the timer always gets the final word! To keep things moving and fair for everyone, it's best to try to lean into the experience, keep your sense of humor, and pass the ball when your time is up.

Some notes:

We suggest if you bring your query you only read aloud the parts that actually pitch the story or have information about your book. For instance, skip your bio unless it's pertinent to pitching this one manuscript (for instance, "With my PhD in anthropology, I have spent 10 years studying Roman bones in Crete as research for this book.")

If you'd like to add your comments to whatever the agent/editor says for an individual in your session, make a note of it and share that information with the person, individually, after the session ends.

Please do NOT put the agent/editor on the spot by asking whether they'd like to see your manuscript in their submission inbox.

Questions? Email southern-breeze@scbwi.org before Wednesday, March 25. After that we'll be traveling and may not see your email in a timely manner.