



Workshop: The Freaky World of Freelance

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By the end of this workshop we hope you will be able to...

- Develop awareness about the stories that are already at your fingertips
- Approach the research process for more challenging stories
- Craft a successful pitch
- Turn general topic ideas or assignments into concrete and innovative stories

Access

- What do you have to offer the editor that another writer won't have access to?
- This includes sources, research, and lived experience (travel, family background)
- Sometimes the story you *want* to write and the story you *can* write aren't the same
- Meet people! Put yourself in the social circles that you want to write about
- Complicate the narrative: get opinions from all sides of the story

Research

- Who will be reading your submission? Personally address your email to the editor
- What should your submission look like? Word count, format, proper email address, etc
- Has the publication recently run a story similar to yours? Would they be interested in this kind of story? Why?
- Who will be reading your story? Make the editor aware that you know their audience

A good pitch starts with a good email

- Your subject line should catch the editor's attention
- Don't start by pitching a feature. Start small so they can try you out
- Have a majority of the work already finished so the publication can see something tangible
- Connections: Name drop when you can. "So and so recommended that I contact you"
- Keep your email as short and simple as possible
 - *It might be a good idea to include these things in your e-mail:*
 - A deadline when you *could* have the piece done
 - Samples of your writing (the more relatable to your pitch, the better)
 - A brief description of your experience as a writer or researcher

The nitty gritty and the money stuff

- Get everything in writing - you NEED a contract.
 - Clarify your job status and term of employment.
 - Figure out if you'll still own your content.
 - Make sure you know the compensation up front, and be persistent when it comes to payday.
 - Ask about kill fees.
- Value your work and your worth — you need to decide if you are willing to work for free.
- Be aware of the laws that regulate your position. For example, in Canada, unpaid internships are illegal.
 - Get a clear understanding of your position before starting the work.
 - Enforce your rights -- be your own advocate.
- Invoicing
 - It may take time to see your paycheck — keep checking in

Pitching is a lifestyle

- It takes practice. Freelance is a lot of work.
- You need to do your homework
- Stay organized and hold yourself accountable.
 - Make time for writing and pitching in your weekly routine.
 - Keep a spreadsheet for your pitches: what did you pitch, you did you pitch, when, and how long are you going to wait to hear from them.
 - Keep on it! When the time is up, either follow-up or send it somewhere else.

Extra Tips

- Hold on to your fact-check materials.
- Check your deadlines.
 - Give notice if you can't make them!
- Take photos or source them
 - Find out if they'd be willing to pay for the images.
- Stick to the word limit or 10% over.
 - Do the work to polish your piece.
- Get your facts straight and be prepared to stand behind them.