**FAQS**

***The Author*, journal of the Society of Authors**

**Does *The Author* accept articles sent on spec?**

The majority of articles are commissioned but we are always keen to see proposals, especially from members. We will read pieces submitted on spec but we prefer to be sent a pitch first. (There’s some advice on pitching below.)

**Does *The Author* pay?**

Of course: we believe in paying authors for their work! As long as the article conforms to the brief and deadline, we pay the agreed fee in full. We do not pay expenses.

**What length should an article be?**

It depends on the subject, so it’s best to discuss an idea with the Editor first. Most articles are around 700–1500 words.

**Who do I pitch to? Where do I send my proposal?**

To The Editor, The Author, the Society of Authors. Please email theauthor@societyofauthors.org or write to 24 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4EH

**Who gets published in *The Author*?**

All types of authors, literary translators, scriptwriters and illustrators, but we also feature articles by lawyers, publishers, agents, accountants, book-trade journalists, and so on. The SoA is proud to be an inclusive organisation, and we seek to reflect that in *The Author*. We particularly encourage pitches from first-timers and authors from communities that have not been well represented in the media in the past. Broadly, we want the magazine to reflect not only the diversity of membership as it is, today, but the membership we would like to build for the future.

**What kinds of articles do you publish?**

Articles that make a particular argument or are tightly focused on a single issue related to writing, illustration or publishing, and those of practical use to the SoA’s membership. Articles that struggle to find space are those about recently published books, including those about the process. Memoirs and career retrospectives are rarely accepted, unless they’re linked to an issue of wider relevance to the membership. Articles that could be filed under ‘complaints’ are not favoured, and *The Author* does not publish obituaries, poetry or book reviews, as a rule, or only in exceptional circumstances. We rarely accept articles that have already been published elsewhere, even if it is just an author’s own blog.

**What about letters to the Editor?**

Letters to the Editor are warmly encouraged, but the Editor is not obliged to publish all those received. Letters in *The Author* are not paid for; by submitting a letter for publication you are giving us the non-exclusive right to publish it in *The Author*. We cannot accept anonymous letters to the Editor but, where appropriate and on request, can withhold your name and say ‘name and address supplied’.

**What kind of artwork do you publish?**

We publish a broad range of styles and mediums, typically illustration and photography, that fit alongside our articles and bring the text to life. We will mainly commission pieces of art for particular articles or themes but we also accept submissions (please email Carlotta Eden at [theauthor@societyofauthors.org](mailto:theauthor@societyofauthors.org) with your portfolio and idea). For commissioned works, we will always supply a clear brief, including timeline and payment.

**What rights does *The Author* take? Can I republish elsewhere?**

Contributors retain copyright. We seek the first right to publish your contribution, in *The Author* in print and digitally, and the non-exclusive right to make it available to members for non-commercial purposes as part of *The Author* via our website or otherwise. This means that until the contribution has appeared in *The Author*, you may not make use of it elsewhere. At any time after your contribution has appeared in *The Author*, you can make any further use of it you please – indeed we encourage you to do so. We appreciate a credit to the effect that the piece ‘was first published in *The Author*, the journal of the Society of Authors www.societyofauthors.org’.

**Who has editorial control?**

We edit all articles, but any significant changes (beyond matters of house style, etc) are subject to the contributor’s review and approval. Moral rights do not apply to magazines, but we nevertheless respect the spirit of such rights – the right to be credited and the right not to have your work subject to ‘distortion or mutilation’. We always send a proof prior to publication. Artwork will also undergo review and we prefer to see drafts of any commissioned artwork before the final draft. The Editor is not bound to publish any contribution, commissioned or otherwise.

**Does *The Author* use images?**

Most contributions will include an author headshot (and 20-50 words of biography). We also commission illustrations for many articles. If an image in which you control the rights (or which is out of copyright) strongly suggests itself, it’s useful to know about it and we will consider whether to include it. It is the contributor’s responsibility to clear rights with the photographer or artist of any accompanying images and to inform us of any artistic credit/copyright line.

**Who obtains permissions?**

Contributors must ensure quotations, illustrations and photographs do not infringe copyright, and must obtain and pay for any permissions that may be needed. Remember that copyright in a photo belongs to the photographer, not the person photographed, and that identifiable living people who feature in a photo taken for private purposes have a right to privacy. For details about when you need to secure permission, and how to do so, see [our *Guide to Copyright and Permissions*](https://societyofauthors.org/SOA/MediaLibrary/SOAWebsite/Guides/Guide-to-Copyright-and-Permissions.pdf)*.*

**Should I supply footnotes?**

*The Author* doesn’t generally use footnotes or references. If a fact is sourced from the public domain (e.g. a newspaper article), it’s helpful if the reference is supplied – either as part of the article (“Joan Jones, writing in *The Guardian* on 9 March 2015, claimed...”) or noted separately.

**Is there any legal stuff I need to know?**

Contributors warrant that their contribution is not unlawful, and indemnify *The Author* against losses arising from any breach of the warranty. The main danger areas are defamation/libel; invading someone’s privacy; the breach of a non-disclosure agreement or similar; and infringement of copyright. If contributors are at all uneasy about any aspect of their contribution we ask them to raise that with us at an early stage. As regards data protection, we undertake to treat all contact details in confidence.

**Do you offer any advice on pitching, for writers who haven’t done it before?**

There are no rules, but we suggest you put the central idea in the first sentence of an email, then sketch the skeleton of the piece or the key points, then introduce yourself briefly. It helps if there is something timely, or you can come at an idea from a particular angle. Ensure the subject hasn’t recently been covered in the magazine. The Editor replies to all pitches but we are a small team working on a quarterly magazine – so it may be some time before you hear back. Please feel free to nudge us if you haven’t heard.

**How is payment made?**

Contributors should send their invoice to [theauthor@societyofauthors.org](mailto:theauthor@societyofauthors.org) – including the contributor’s name, the agreed fee, a VAT number if relevant, and the relevant bank details (the relevant bank account number, account name and sort code). If payment should be made to your limited company or your agent (or your employer e.g. if you are a publisher), please let us know. Occasionally a contributor asks that their fee be donated to a charity. We prefer to make the payment to the contributor and for them to donate directly; this allows the charity to claim gift aid. We do not require a PO number.