

Illustrated Book Submissions: The 7 Don'ts

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<http://greatstorybook.com/illustrated-books-the-7-donts/>

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There is a short list - VERY short list - of things you should never do when submitting an illustrated storybook to a publisher or book producer.

Here we go:

1. Do not include or place the words for your story directly onto your original artwork. This is a really big deal, actually. If your story needs to be adjusted in any way - be it for a simple edit or perhaps a translation of the book - your artwork has to be text-free. When you place the words right onto the art, that means you will likely have to recreate the artwork sometime down the road.

In any case, if you want to submit your storybook manuscript to a publisher or a book producer, you need to be sure to submit a professional manuscript. There is a standard in the industry, and that means no text on the original images. I've recently created an [Essential Manuscript Format Guide](#) because I see certain mistakes made a lot and because people tend to ask me questions about this stuff. Download it and let me know what you think.

2. Do not insert images of artwork in the text manuscript. The images should always be kept separately, not pasted as a jpg into a document. The manuscript should be text only, and then copies of the artwork - perhaps a few samples - should be added to the end of the submission. If you are submitting via email, attach a manuscript file and then artwork samples individually.

Keep in mind that most publishers and producers prefer to choose their own artist for a storybook. Though it can happen that they love your style and decide to go with your artwork, don't be crushed if they would rather hire another artist to match your story. It's quite common.

If the publisher does want your artwork, be prepared to submit the entire manuscript contents to them when they are ready. It's best if you have the entire project completed [before submitting](#) or pitching to professionals.

3. Don't ever send the original artwork to a publisher. (You probably inferred that already.) Anything can happen in transit, and even more could happen at the final destination. Keep your originals and send copies. Most publishers mention this in their submission guidelines.

4. When it comes to Submission Guidelines, don't take them as a guide but as a law. If you do not follow the publisher's guidelines, it's like shooting your best shoes. Forget the foot. Your best damn shoes ever.

5. Do not post your story online or publish an ebook of it yourself. Again, this only applies if you want to submit the story to a publisher. If you want to publish the book yourself, you can post whatever you want about it... in fact, the more you post about it, the better. It's a great way to build anticipation.

You could argue (easily, in fact) that publishers shouldn't mind if you post portions of your book online because it builds anticipation and establishes you as a storybook creator. It's a type of marketing strategy. But publishers don't really like this. If they are going to buy first rights, they really want first rights. It's good to know what rights you're potentially exchanging for a publisher's contract. You can [familiarize yourself with types of copyrights here](#).

6. Don't get impatient and start calling the publisher because you haven't heard from them in a month or two or even three. This is how it is. They will contact you when they contact you. It's a sloooow mooooving mechanism. If they don't know you personally, you and your submission will have to

wait just like everyone else. They will say two months but it's really more like half a year.

Remember: if you are simply submitting your manuscript to them, they don't know you. There are thousands who sent their manuscripts before you did and thousands more during the time you wait to hear back from the acquisitions editor or the editor's assistant. Be prepared for a [rejection most of the time](#). Don't give up! Just be prepared.

7. Don't send a manuscript without permission. It will just end up in the trash. Contact the publisher first either via email or letter and ask them if it's alright. That's what a Query Letter actually is. It's asking permission to send in your manuscript.

This is why I recommend that instead of sending queries, get your manuscript together in a professional way and attend a major Book Fair or some other book event where you will be able to meet publishers, producers, agents and editors face-to-face. It's a much more effective way of getting your foot in the door... after *not* shooting your best shoes. Ahem.

Keep a [mock-up of your storybook](#) at the ready so that you can show them exactly what you are talking about.

So tell me: have you submitted a manuscript? What happened and what did you learn from it?

Keep creating, no matter what.

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