

## Get to Yes!

### How to Land an Agent

with

Jes Trudel, a literary agent with [The Rights Factory](#)

#### What Literary Agents Do

- Submit manuscripts to publishers on your behalf
- Negotiate publishing contracts for you, representing your interests
- Guide you through the publishing process
- Sometimes help you improve and polish your manuscript(s)
- Sometimes help you strategically manage and develop your career

#### Where to Find Agents

- Through agency websites
- In digital and physical publications like [Children's Book Insider](#), the free [Children's Bookshelf](#) ezine from *Publishers Weekly*, *Writer's Digest*, SCBWI's "Essential Guide
- [Publishers Marketplace](#), an online subscription database of publishing deals along with the agents who sold them and the editors who bought them.
- Manuscript Wish List ([manuscriptwishlist.com](http://manuscriptwishlist.com)) and QueryTracker ([querytracker.net](http://querytracker.net))
- Through the [Writer Beware](#) blog and "whisper networks" (for who not to query)
- At conferences and other bookish events
- On social media

To appraise the potential value of your manuscript, agents perform market research using a variety of sources:

- Publishers Marketplace
- Personal sales history
- Agency sales history
- Conversations with editors
- Word of mouth
- BookScan/BookNet
- Professional book review sites
- Goodreads/Storygraph
- Amazon rankings
- Media mentions

**RED FLAGS** that might get an immediate “No” from an agent include:

- Unrealistic expectations
- Inability or unwillingness to follow instructions
- Lack of industry knowledge
- Low morale/energy
- Animosity toward the industry
- Racism, misogyny, transphobia, and other forms of bigotry

Other clues that your manuscript might be a “poor investment”:

- Long-winded queries
- Wordcounts well over or under industry standards
- Poorly edited samples/fulls
- Authors with poor industry knowledge
- Authors with little to no platform
- Authors whose demeanour or personality could negatively impact relationships in the industry

**Agents Must Answer Three Questions About Your Manuscript**

1. Can I sell this manuscript?
2. Can I sell this manuscript “as is”?
3. Can I work with this author?

**QUESTION #1: Can I sell this manuscript?**

Considerations that go into answering this question include:

- Does it match my expertise and is it in a genre/audience I rep?
- Do I have the industry connections needed to sell it?
- Do I know how to position it in the market?
- Is this a book I want to be associated it/stake my reputation on?
- Is there demand for a book like this?

How to improve your chances:

- Make sure you follow submission guidelines and send to the right agent Research comp titles and pick ones that sold/reviewed well
- Keep up on what is happening in the market and industry
- Follow genre conventions (unless you’re purposely breaking rules)
- Ensure your query focuses on what makes your story unique

**QUESTION #2: Can I sell this manuscript “as is”?**

Considerations that go into answering this question include:

- Does it align with industry standards for audience, length, genre, etc.?
- How much editing does it need?
- What kind of editing does it need (story, line, and/or proofs)?
- Are there sensitivity/authenticity issues?
- Do I have the bandwidth needed to prepare it for submission?

How to improve your chances:

- Take writing courses or webinars when possible to increase your skills
- Read plenty of books about writing and in the genre you’re submitting
- Join writing organizations and critique groups to get feedback
- Act as a beta reader for other writers
- Research and follow guidelines for wordcount, audience, etc.

**QUESTION #3: Can I work with this author?**

Considerations that go into answering this question include the 3 P’s:

- Professionalism: Do you follow instructions, speak candidly but with appropriate deference, and respect professional boundaries?
- Public Persona: Do you have a public presence and do you conduct yourself with dignity and respect for others/the industry?
- Personality: Do you have a personality they vibe with?

How to improve your chances:

- Be cognizant of when and how much time you demand of your agent
- Conduct yourself professionally in public/meetings
- Be aware and purposeful with how you present yourself online
- Be honest with your agent, ask questions, but trust their expertise
- Be yourself (don’t be who you think they want you to be)

**Other WriteForKids webinars with Jes Trudel:**

The Transformative Power of Outlining

[writingblueprints.com/p/the-transformative-power-of-outlining](https://writingblueprints.com/p/the-transformative-power-of-outlining)

Finish Big: Mastering the 5 Kidlit Story Endings

[writingblueprints.com/p/finish-big-mastering-the-5-kidlit-story-endings](https://writingblueprints.com/p/finish-big-mastering-the-5-kidlit-story-endings)

Learn more about Jes Trudel on her website at [writingcommunity.ca/agentjestrudel/](https://writingcommunity.ca/agentjestrudel/)