

A 'Writing a synopsis, Author Bio, Pitch and Chapter Summary Workshop'

With Brooke Dunnell

Held for the PCWC four centres' participants on 25 September 2022

Brooke Dunnell's workshop covered a crucial part of the publishing process - how to write a synopsis, author bio, pitch and chapter summary.

Prior to the workshop all participants were asked to research the specifics of publication opportunities and competition requirements which were suitable for their manuscript. This was to ensure that their submissions conformed to the necessary guidelines. Research of a publisher would also include the books they have previously published which were similar to the participant's manuscript

Synopsis

When writing a synopsis voice is important. Submissions need to be crafted to showcase the author's voice and writing skill.

A synopsis can take on multiple shapes and forms and needs to be curated to reflect the specific needs of a publisher or agent. It must be a blend of a sales pitch and a plot summary, communicating key information about the narrative while still building suspense. It is important to inject the themes where possible in a synopsis.

Pitch

A pitch is much shorter, and unlike a synopsis, does not reveal the ending. A pitch should be no more than 100 words and is designed to hook the reader in, leaving them wanting more..

Cover Letter

The cover letter must combine many facets including key facts about the book (genre, word count), the pitch, comparative titles, why you are the best person to tell this story and why the story has merit in the current landscape.

Author Bio & Chapter summary

Examples for writing author biographies and chapter summaries were given to the participants. One participant observed that, 'As Brooke outlined, these speak a little more for themselves, but there are still pitfalls to avoid and nuances to be aware of in developing them. At this stage in my writing, developing chapter summaries is particularly useful for me as I complete the scenes in my manuscript and develop the overall structure for the narrative.'