

## Assignment

### Prompt: Writing a (P)Review + a Pitch (15%)

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For this assignment, you will compose and pitch a **review** or **preview**. These genres represent two common opportunities for freelancers—both as entry-level work and as sustainable niches in the industry. Reviews and previews also offer writers a chance to demonstrate analytical skills, strong ethics, creativity, and a “critic’s” voice.

**Reviews** cover events, performances, a new product, or a particular media (a book or books, a film, a song or album, a video game, a YouTube video, and so forth). Restaurant reviews fall in this category, too. There’s also a market for **previews** of upcoming events and performances (a book reading, a festival, a live band, a concert, a conference). Both previews and reviews sometimes include a profile of a key person (a performer, author, and so forth), often based on an interview.

### The Proposal Assignment

This assignment also requires you to **pitch** your idea to the editor. A good pitch requires **research**, which you will summarize in an email proposal that includes the following:

**First**, identify a publication you’re interested in submitting your work to (such as the publication you reviewed for Assignment 1). **Second**, examine the submission guidelines. What’s the process—email an editor, fill out an online form or ...? Do the guidelines identify what types of submissions the publication accepts or is looking for? **Third**, how well does your idea fit the publication and how timely or otherwise relevant is your idea? In other words, put yourself in the editor’s shoes and consider the publication’s target audience. **Then** summarize this research as a proposal via email to Drs. Hoermann-Elliott and Williams by the end of week 4. This email should contain the following:

- Publication name
- Owner of publication (company or individual)
- Interesting historical or contemporary info on the publication (briefly)
- Editor(s’) name(s) (hint: find the right editor for your idea)
- Genre of your proposed submission
- Focus of submission (briefly)
- Anticipated word count
- How you’ll appeal to the editors
- Questions you have regarding the publication or pitch process

### The Pitch Assignment

As noted above, your **pitch** should be a separate attachment. Here are a few suggestions for developing short, effective pitches:

- Craft a compelling, interesting, and appropriate **subject line**.
- Use appropriate **salutations**.
- **Introduce** yourself (briefly).
- **Connect** with the editor—either by referencing a past encounter or noting something she or he wrote that you enjoyed.
- Explain any relevant **expertise** on the subject matter.

[This file is supplemental material to Hoermann-Elliott & Williams, *Scaffolding toward Self-Efficacy: Preparing Underrepresented Writers to Pitch as Freelance Authors*, prompt 7.1 (2023), doi: 10.31719/pjaw.v7i1.105]

- Get to **the point** quickly. Keep the email short.
- Place other contact information in the **email signature** line.

## The Key Features

1. **Audience awareness, appropriateness & expectations:** Meet the needs and expectations of your target audience and publication (for example, *Rolling Stone* magazine doesn't publish reviews of classical opera). Also, include relevant information about the subject, such as its genre, media, and performers (if applicable); scheduling/ticketing information; publishing & citation information; and so forth. What does this audience want from your review/preview? A recommendation? New and/or interesting info? A fresh and/or creative perspective?

2. **Review criteria/evidence:** Support conclusions and recommendations with clear criteria and evidence—in other words, provide details that back up your key points.

3. **Critic's voice, style, and mechanics:** Demonstrate knowledge about what's being reviewed and why it's timely. Write in a style suitable for your target audience/publication—and minimize errors in grammar and other mechanics.

4. Follow the **genre and ethics conventions** of the rhetorical situation. For example, good movie reviewers avoid giving spoilers about the plot; and scholarly versus pop-culture book reviews follow significantly different genre conventions.

5. Craft an engaging **title** and lede that **hooks** your audience with an interesting, creative, and/or engaging angle; and finish with a good **ending**.

## The Samples

“A Reviving Mural” (art review); “Earthly celebrations” (event preview); “Twelfth Night Shakes Gender Order” (theater review); “Just down the road” (food-scene review); “Blue Texas” (book review); “Finding Mañanaland” (art-gallery review); “Asheville’s 12 Bones launches comfort-food cookbook” (book/food review); “White Christmas: Winter Wonderland” (theater review)

## The Final Submission

By the end of week 6, complete a **draft** of your review/preview, as well as your **pitch**, and bring them to class for that day's peer review session. Bring your notes, too. The target word range for this assignment is **800-1,200 words**. You will be given a follow-up **work day** for this assignment, and you'll have additional **conference time** to ask questions related to this piece.

By the tentative due date for this assignment (the end of week 7), email your **final submission** to Drs. Hoermann-Elliott and Williams with the **pitch as a separate attachment**. Please use the email submission as a **cover letter** in which you will describe:

- 1) Any peculiarities of the publication or submission guidelines that influenced your creation of the piece (links are helpful).
- 2) What you found most rewarding about this assignment.
- 3) What you found most challenging about this assignment.
- 4) If or how you plan to submit this piece for formal publication.

**Rubric: Writing a (P)Review + a Pitch (15%)**

Aside from organization/formatting, each of the categories below is explained in the assignment sheet. For a **“Better”** rating, the writer will have exceeded expectations or been so thorough or impressive in another way so as to suggest mastery in that area. A rating of **“Good”** indicates that the writer did an overall good job; however, a few oversights or errors may be present or detracting from the quality of the piece. An **“Unsatisfactory”** indicates that an aspect of the piece is substantially lacking in terms of quality, readability and/or attention to detail.

<b>The Proposal</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Cover Letter</b>			
<b>Title, Hook &amp; Ending</b>			
<b>Audience Awareness, Appropriateness, Expectations</b>			
<b>Review Criteria, Details &amp; Support</b>			
<b>Organization and/or Format</b>			
<b>“Critic’s” Voice, Style &amp; Grammar</b>			
<b>Genre Conventions</b>			

<b>The Pitch</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Proposal Submitted</b>			
<b>Subject Line</b>			
<b>Salutations</b>			
<b>Introduction</b>			
<b>Editorial Connection</b>			
<b>Relevant Expertise</b>			
<b>Brevity/ Efficiency</b>			
<b>Email Signature</b>			

The writer will receive a check mark for completion of each of the following or an X for missing, inadequate or incomplete items.

<b>Word Count</b>	
<b>All Necessary Documents Submitted</b>	
<b>Peer Review Participation</b>	