

People with Voices

Writers Guide 2013

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Writers Guide

Editorial Policy

We aim to publish news content that reflects the social and cultural diversity in Britain and around the world, and that is produced by people from diverse backgrounds. Our mission is to inform and educate our audiences and to offer perspectives that are sometimes missing from the mainstream news media. As a news publishing and training enterprise we aim to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards of journalism and as such adhere to the [Press Complaints Commission Code of Conduct](#).

Types of Articles Published

News stories: Length should be around 300-500 words and include quotes from valid sources and at least one interview. If you have not had professional training in writing news stories, do not attempt to write one, write a feature or commentary instead.

News Features: Length should be between 500 and 1000 words and must contain proper analysis of your chosen topic including at least two interviews.

Commentaries: Length should be 500-1000 words, for articles written from an informed viewpoint (i.e. knowledge and expertise of the topic) and that includes evidence to support your viewpoint. Alternatively, the shorter length commentaries can be 300-500 words and should be a personalised opinion piece on a topic of your choice written in an informal, punchy style.

Reviews: (books, film, theatre, music, TV & art) Length should be around 500 - 700 words

Submission Guidelines

- Submissions must be an original and unpublished work by the submitting author.
- Articles can be submitted online: <http://peoplewithvoices.com/submit/>
- Alternatively articles can be emailed to: info@peoplewithvoices.com
- Please check your copy thoroughly for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Articles may be edited for house style, legal compliance; or to reduce the length.
- You will still own the copyright to your article.
- There is no monetary compensation for your submission.

Editing of Submissions

You are free to submit an article on a topic of your choice provided that it falls broadly within any of our news categories. However, we will not publish any content that is defamatory, that breaches privacy laws or that is offensive or insensitive to particular groups in society. All submissions are reviewed by the editorial team to maintain legal and ethical compliance.

Writing Tips

Writing Features - What makes a good feature?

1. Detailed planning.
2. A newsworthy topic.
3. Bringing “fresh” information to what is already known.
4. Strong analysis of the subject.
5. Good interviews with relevant quotes.
6. A clear structure that flows well.
7. A good intro.
8. A strong conclusion.
9. Good grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Writing Commentaries – What makes a good commentary?

A Good Commentary Should:

1. Be entertaining.
2. Engage the reader.
3. Contain a coherent argument.
4. Should back up arguments with evidence and examples.
5. Have a strong conclusion that is thought-provoking.

Writing Reviews

The Format of a Non-Fiction Book Review

Author; Title

Intro (summarise briefly what the book is about)

Description of Content (What are the main arguments made)?

Assessment and Opinion (Merits and defects – with examples from text)

Comparison with Other Work by This Author

Comparison with Work by Others on this Subject

Conclusion

ISBN

Publication Date

Publisher

Guidelines for Writing Fiction Book Reviews

- A review on a work of fiction should be your personal response to your reading experience.
- It is permissible to write in the first person.
- A fiction review should be assessed in the context of the genre to which it belongs – e.g. crime, thriller, science fiction, romance, historical, etc.
- When you summarise the plot do not give away surprise endings or you will spoil the reader's pleasure.
- Comment on the quality of writing – is there anything unique in the prose style?
- When comparing the book with others consider whether it is offering something new or just a variation of an old theme.
- Are the characters realistic, exciting or memorable?
- How well structured is the novel – does it flow seamlessly?
- What are the underlying issues being explored in the novel?

NB. Book reviews are always written in the present tense because a book's contents are felt to be permanent – the text is always there.

Guidelines for Writing Film Reviews

- Give a brief summary of the plot without giving away the ending.
- Consider the genre – what type of film is it – drama, comedy, action, sci-fi etc?
- How does the film compare with others in this genre?
- How good is the script?
- How well directed is the film? Give examples of specific scenes.
- Comment on the performance of the main actor (s)
- Is the length of the film appropriate?
- Are the locations used for the film appropriate?
- If based on a true story is the film a realistic representation?

At the end of the review include:

The Release Date

Director (s)

Writer (s)

Main actors

Rating

Running Time

(This information is easily obtained online from <http://www.imdb.com>)