

FAQ for Pat Curry's E-Course on Writing for Trade Magazines

Who should take this course?

The course is set up for established freelance writers who want to expand their market into writing for trade magazines. It's not going to cover the mechanics of writing a query letter or picking out experts to interview; it assumes you already know how to do those things for consumer publications. It will show you how to adapt the skills you already have from writing for those pubs to be successful with the business-focused mission of trade magazines.

What is the e-course schedule?

Week 1. Overview of the Three Types of Trade Magazines

Week 2. Finding Trade Magazines

Week 3. The Critical Differences Between Writing for Trades and Consumer Magazines

Week 4. Specialization

Week 5. Story Categories for Trade Magazines

Week 6. Letters of Introduction

Week 7. Story Pitches that Give Trade Magazine Editors What They Really Need

Week 8. Reslanting and Reselling Trade Magazine Articles to Consumer Publications

How much does the e-course cost?

My e-course on building a career writing for trade magazines costs \$200.

How are payments handled?

You can pay via PayPal or check.

How do I access the lessons? Do I need special software?

I will email them to you once a week. No special software is needed.

Do I have to be in a certain place at a certain time?

No. Read the assignments and do them at your convenience. If you're jammed up for time, you can skip a week and double up the next week. If you want feedback on your assignments, obviously, you'll get a lot faster response if you do them one at a time.

Can I pass along the lessons to other writers?

The lessons are copyrighted – and it will make me really cranky if you give away the information I've spent a decade gathering.

Where do I send my questions or assignments?

You will email them to me at patscurry@bellsouth.net

What's your teaching style?

Even Olympic gold medalists have coaches to help them get better at what they do; I like to think of myself as a coach for aspiring trade magazine writers. I'll motivate you to do your best, cheer on your successes, and nudge you back on course if you're wandering off track.

What kinds of questions can I ask?

I prefer questions that relate to the coursework, but since I've been a freelancer since 1987, I'm up for just about any question you want to ask about the freelance life. What I can't answer: I'm not an expert on writing contracts, so I suggest that writers with questions about contracts contact the Contracts Committee of the American Society of Journalists and Authors (www.asja.org). It's free, and you don't have to be a member. I also can't answer questions about authoring books, finding an agent, or writing book proposals. Haven't been there, haven't done that.

Do you offer a money-back guarantee?

Yes. You have two weeks from the start date of the course to drop the course and get a full refund. After two weeks, refunds are on a case-by-case basis.

I'm going on vacation for a week during the course. Is that okay?

Yes. If you need to take some time off, I'm happy to extend the e-mail support for however long you were off so that you get the full eight weeks. But please let me know if that's your plan.

Will there be any interaction with other students?

My e-course is one-on-one: You send me your questions and assignments directly, and no one sees them but you and me. It's like having a private, weekly coaching session.

When will you answer my questions/critique my assignments?

My goal is to answer questions within two business days and to critique assignments within the same week that they're assigned.

Do I have to turn in my assignments for critiquing?

Obviously, you'll get more out of the class if you do, but it's your money and your time. You can do the assignments on your own if you wish.

Will you critique this query or letter of introduction that I already wrote?

I'll do this on a limited basis, but in general, I want to stick to critiquing projects created for class.

At the end of the e-course, what will I have?

At the end of my e-course, assuming you do all the assignments, you should have a good working knowledge of what trade magazines are, how they differ from consumer magazines, how to find them, and what they want. You should also have a list of several magazines you'd be interested in contacting, a good letter of introduction, a usable query, and some ideas about areas in which you could specialize.

Can I make a decent living writing just for trade magazines?

I have never written exclusively for trade magazines, but they've been a sizable part of my income for several years.

I can't decide whether to take your course or the one offered by MediaBistro/WritingClasses.com/etc. How does yours differ?

I can't say because I haven't taken those courses. When you're choosing an e-course, ask yourself:

- What are the instructor's credentials? Has he or she written for many magazines? Are they magazines that you've heard of or that you'd be interested in writing for?
- How much does it cost? E-course prices vary greatly. I wouldn't advise shopping by price alone (sometimes there's a good reason that a course is super-cheap or free!), but I understand that price is a consideration for most people.
- How is the course formatted? If you want to interact with other students, look for a course that takes place in an online group setting. If you don't want to interact with other students or share your ideas and critiques, consider a one-on-one course (like mine).
- What do others say about the course? There are many threads on various writer's forums where writers discuss and critique the e-courses they've taken. Try www.mediabistro.com, www.absolutewrite.com, and other sites that have forums.

What are your credentials for teaching this course?

In 1986, I left my job as a daily newspaper reporter in South Florida when my first daughter was born. My husband and I decided that I would try freelancing for a year, then reassess our finances and see if I needed to go back to the paper. I found that in terms of real dollars (salary – child care, lunches, wardrobe, transportation, etc.), I could make more money freelancing. Twenty-two years – and many thousands of assignments -- later, I'm still working from home.

Over the years, I've written for newspapers, magazines, websites, corporations, non-profits, universities, governmental agencies, PR firms – pretty much anyone who needed the services of a professional writer.

For about the first half of my freelance career, most of my work was on the consumer side – I've written for USA Weekend, Country Weekly, American Profile, Working Mother, Consumers Digest, etc. – but in 1998, my career shifted dramatically and I began to write much more about small business for a then-new website called Bankrate.com.

From there, my work began to show up in publications such as Industry Week (my first \$1-a-word assignment!), Smart Business, Emerging Business, JM&A Today (a custom pub for car dealers), ProSales (for building materials suppliers), Big Builder (for volume home builders), Replacement Contractor (contractors who specialize in replacing windows and doors, roof, decks and siding) Tools of the Trade, El Nuevo Constructor (for Hispanic contractors), Military Retailer and BUILDER. At the same time, I was a contributing editor at Bankrate.com and a standing columnist for Pages, a magazine about books and authors that folded in 2007.

In February 2006, I joined the staff of BUILDER as a senior editor. In 2009, after the worst housing contraction since the Great Depression, and two earlier rounds of staffing cuts, I was laid off. Since then, I have returned to full-time freelancing. I'm now a contributing editor for Professional Builder, a managing editor for Building Women, and senior editor for Cleaning & Restoration.

I have a question that's not answered here. What should I do?

Please e-mail me your question at patscurry@bellsouth.net

