



Submissions Guidelines

ABOUT DAYBREAK PRESS.....	3
WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR.....	4
What types of manuscripts do we accept?.....	4
Do the editors have a wish list?.....	4
Do we have any genre-specific advice?.....	4
Does my manuscript have to be Islamic?.....	6
Are there other publishing criteria?.....	6
What kind of authors are we looking for?.....	7
Do we accept queries from agents?.....	7
HOW TO SUBMIT.....	8
IS MY MANUSCRIPT READY?.....	8
SUBMITTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT.....	9
Do I need materials besides my manuscript?.....	9
How can I prepare these materials?.....	11
My materials are ready. Now what?.....	12
AFTER SUBMITTING.....	13
When will I hear back?.....	13
Wow! Will it really take that long?.....	13
So I'll get an email?.....	13
If my manuscript is accepted, when will my book be published?.....	13
Why was my manuscript rejected?.....	13
I really want to be an author. Do you have any advice?.....	14
APPENDIX: STYLE GUIDELINES FOR NONFICTION.....	16

ABOUT DAYBREAK PRESS

At Daybreak Press, we are committed to publishing works that uplift women's voices, foster positive cultural change, and reflect the values and ethics of the Muslim community.

Established in 2014, Daybreak Press has published fourteen books, including fiction and nonfiction titles for adults and children, poetry, translations, and a planner/journal. Our books have reached thousands of readers all over the world, and many are slated for translation. Please read more about our titles [here](#).

We are continuously on the lookout for authentic works from Muslim women authors to share with the world. Enriching the literary landscape requires each of our voices. We would love to read your work!



WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Our mission is to uplift Muslim women who are ready to share their unique voices and experiences with the world.

What types of manuscripts do we accept?

We are currently accepting manuscripts of all types, categories, and genres, including but not limited to the following:

- novels, novels in verse, plays, and short story collections for adults, young adults, and middle grade readers in all genres (e.g., contemporary, romance, historical fiction, mystery, fantasy, sci-fi, etc.)
- nonfiction for all ages that is directly about Islam or about another topic and from an Islamic lens (e.g., self-development from an Islamic lens, climate change and Islam)
- memoirs
- books for younger children, including picture books, early/graded readers, and chapter books
- collections of poetry

Do the editors have a wish list?

The editors are especially excited to receive these types of manuscripts:

- nonfiction books that explore unique but culturally relevant topics from an Islamic lens
- novels with BIPOC characters and/or authors
- inspirational romance novels
- fantasy novels

Do we have any genre-specific advice?

ROMANCE

Excellent halal romance stories are hard to find, and we'd love to publish yours! Great romance stories should have characters who grow over the course of the novel, an overarching plot that is not the love story, a halal/"closed door" relationship, and a happy ending.

The most common mistake that new romance writers make is that they forget to give their novel a plot or premise that is independent of the love

story. Here are some examples of romance novels with an overarching plot that is separate from the love story:

- The female main character is trying to help save her parents' failing restaurant when a flashy new restaurant (run by the male love interest) opens nearby. Battle lines are drawn.
- In a war-torn city, the female and male main characters meet while working for the revolution. The female main character is desperate to get her family to safety, and the male main character wants to stay to continue serving the revolution.
- The female main character reluctantly agrees to an arranged marriage so her parents will agree to name her legal guardian of her autistic brother. But before she can get married, her long-lost childhood best friend/sweetheart (and the son of her parents' enemies) shows up at her work. As they work together on a project, she finds herself having to choose between herself and her family.

An overarching plot will provide a framework for a more realistic and engaging story. Also, more conflict means more tension for readers to feel and more delight at the happy ending.

CHILDREN'S FICTION

When it comes to **children's fiction**, we love to see main characters who are unapologetically Muslim, who face a conflict that will allow them to grow, and who work to solve their problems on their own.

Picture books in rhyming verse are extremely difficult to do well. Please consider prose unless you are entirely confident about your structure, meter, and rhyme. (Forced rhymes are a manuscript killer!)

ADULT FICTION

Here are some tips for adult fiction:

- Make sure you identify your audience and write specifically for them.
- Introduce your main character, what they want, and what's in their way as soon as possible.
- Make each word earn its place: Every single word should either advance the plot or contribute to character development.
- Make sure the climax falls at approximately the 90% point of your manuscript.

Does my manuscript have to be Islamic?

Since we are an Islamic publisher, all submissions should be influenced by Islam.

If your manuscript is **nonfiction**, it should either be about Islam or about a topic that is presented through an Islamic lens. For example, *Finding God* by Claudia Azizah Seise is a collection of stories of converts to Islam. *Auntie Aisha Answers* by Aisha Hussain Rasheed is a tweens' guide to growing up written through an Islamic lens.

If your manuscript is **fiction**, the main character should be Muslim and their Islam should show up on the page (e.g., readers see them praying or contemplating *tawakkul* or saying *salam*). If the main character is not Muslim, the book would probably have to be about their journey to Islam in order for us to publish it.

Of course we agree that not every book published has to be Islamic or about Muslims, but there are plenty (more than 3,000 in the US alone) of other publishers to publish those. We are all about uplifting Muslim women's voices as they celebrate Islam!

To ensure that the manuscripts we publish align with our mission, we ask that all submissions uphold **Islamic teachings and values**. Content that explicitly contradicts core Islamic principles will not be considered. This includes, but is not limited to, *the promotion or glorification of:*

- Haram activities such as alcohol consumption, adultery or fornication, gambling, or drug use. Vulgar language will also not be accepted.
- Immoral or violent content, including gratuitous violence, murder, or graphic depictions of crime with an unclear moral framework.
- Blasphemy or disrespect toward religion, including disrespectful depictions of Muslim or non-Muslim beliefs, practices, or figures.

Are there other publishing criteria?

Yes, manuscripts should also demonstrate a high level of **literary quality**, with well-developed characters, engaging narratives, and thoughtful prose. For nonfiction submissions, scholarly rigor and adherence to academic standards and *Chicago* style are essential.

In addition, manuscripts should be **original** and offer new perspectives or unique insights. (Manuscripts that include plagiarism, the use of AI, or unoriginal content will be automatically rejected.) We encourage submissions that creatively approach common themes or explore new territories within the framework of Islamic values.

By adhering to these criteria, you help us continue our mission of publishing works that not only entertain and educate but also uphold the dignity and values of the Muslim community. We look forward to reading your submission and potentially sharing your work with the world!

What kind of authors are we looking for?

Passionate, driven, collaborative Muslim women.

The publishing process is rife with deadlines. Editors and staff work with authors to create feasible timelines; authors should be prepared to meet all deadlines to ensure the publishing process remains on schedule.

While we only accept manuscripts that we truly love, no manuscript is perfect, and half the fun of getting the book to market is collaborating with your editor! Our publishing team acts as a neutral source of feedback and advocates for future buyers and readers. Therefore, editors and authors work together to best deliver the author's intentions to readers, but owing to experience and understanding of the market, the publisher has the final word in case of any differences of opinion.

Do we accept queries from agents?

Yes, agents may email dbpmanuscripts@rabata.org.

HOW TO SUBMIT

We're so glad you've decided to share your work with us! The following sections describe how to finalize and submit your work.

IS MY MANUSCRIPT READY?

Here is some advice from the Daybreak Press editors: No one but you (and perhaps your cat) should ever read one of your first drafts. Here is what we recommend you do with a first draft instead:

1. Say "alhamdulillah" and recognize yourself for your hard work!
2. Put the draft in a drawer (literally or figuratively) and forget about it for six weeks. Don't look at it!
3. After that time has elapsed, reread it carefully, evaluating it for big-picture elements (e.g., plot arc, character growth, pacing, and setting for fiction; thesis, organization, evidence, and tone for nonfiction). Mark up the manuscript and/or take notes on the areas that need work.
4. Edit, edit, edit.
5. Reread it again carefully, this time focusing on the writing. Are you showing and not telling? Are you using strong verbs, or are you leaning on *is/are* and abusing adverbs? Do your verbs change tense between paragraphs? Are your sentence lengths varied and appropriate to the tone and pacing? Is your writing repetitive or redundant? Is there any purple prose that needs to be eradicated? Are ideas expressed clearly and concisely with appropriate transitions between topics? Have you checked for punctuation, capitalization, etc.? Mark up the manuscript and/or take notes on the areas that need work.
6. Edit, edit, edit.
7. Get at least five of your writer friends and colleagues to beta read your manuscript and offer feedback. While your mom can definitely read your polished manuscript, she would not be considered a beta reader. Beta readers are experienced readers and/or writers who know how to look for things like inconsistencies, timeline gaffs, tone changes, etc. A piece of advice: Give your beta readers deadlines if you'd like to see your book in the next century.
8. Read their feedback with an open (but critical) mind and... You guessed it! Edit, edit, edit. Their feedback can be a valuable opportunity to see your manuscript through new eyes, but that doesn't mean you need to take everyone's advice.

9. Do a final polish of your manuscript to ensure that there are no typos or misspellings. Submitting your absolute best work shows publishers how much you care about your work, and it tells them that they should care about it too. (Printing a hard copy can be especially helpful at this stage; the change in format allows your eyes to catch things you might have previously missed.) If you are submitting a nonfiction manuscript, see the additional style guidelines in the [Appendix](#).
10. At this point, some writers hire a professional editor. Others search for an agent or begin querying publishers while they dive into their next project. It's up to you!

Now, it's time to submit.

SUBMITTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Submitting a manuscript to Daybreak Press is easy. We have streamlined our submissions process to a single Google form with three sections.

1. In the first section, you'll fill out your name and email and choose a category for your manuscript.
2. In the second section, you'll upload your materials. The form will prompt you to upload the appropriate materials according to the category you chose in the last part.
3. In the third section, you'll sign a statement that affirms that your manuscript is original and aligned with Islamic values.

Do I need materials besides my manuscript?

Yes, when submitting your manuscript to a publisher, you'll submit some materials alongside it. These materials will differ according to the type of manuscript you're submitting: fiction or nonfiction, for children or adults, etc.

The following table names the materials you'll need to prepare. The section after the table gives more information about how to prepare each of these materials.

Category	Examples of this category	Materials to submit
Fiction for Adults, Young Adults, or Middle Grade Readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • novels • novels in verse • dramatic works • short story collections • any genre (fantasy, romance, mystery, historical, etc.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Query 2. Synopsis 3. Complete manuscript
Nonfiction for Adults, Young Adults, or Middle Grade Readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all nonfiction works, whether focusing on religion or another topic • memoirs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposal 2. Outline or table of contents 3. Complete manuscript, or at least three sample chapters
Children's Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • picture books • early/graded readers • chapter books • nonfiction for younger readers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Query 2. Complete manuscript <p>***You do not need to send illustrations (minimal art notes are acceptable). The author and publisher will collaborate on the choice of an illustrator, and the publisher will hire them separately.</p>
Poetry		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Query 2. Complete manuscript

*Most manuscripts will fit into one of the above categories. If you believe your manuscript does not, please email DBPmanuscripts@rabata.org.

How can I prepare these materials?

Please follow the instructions below for preparing the query, synopsis, manuscript, proposal, and outline for submission.

QUERY

(for fiction, children's literature, and poetry)

The query letter is the first thing an editor reads. It tells her who you are, what you're submitting, and why she should publish it. It is your opportunity to get the editor excited about reading your manuscript before she even opens it.

Follow [this link](#) to learn all about query letters.

Here is a simple guide to writing a query letter editors will appreciate:

- Address your query letter to a person, or in lieu of a person, something like "Dear Daybreak Press Submissions Team."
- In the first (few) paragraph(s), present your hook (150–300 words). This description of your book should be similar to the marketing copy that appears on the back of a book: It introduces the main character and premise of the book while also reflecting its tone. The hook should talk *about* the story without telling the story, and it should not give away the ending.
- In the next paragraph, identify the book. Name its title, word count, and category and/or genre. Feel free to identify comparable titles here.
- In the final paragraph, identify yourself. Only include biographical information that is relevant, such as education, experience, and awards that are related to writing or to the topic of your writing. If you are a nonfiction writer, use this space to demonstrate that you are qualified to write on your topic.
- Thank the editor and close it professionally.
- Keep your letter to one page or less.

SYNOPSIS

(for fiction)

Write a complete synopsis of everything that happens in your book, hitting all major plot points and *including the ending*. It can be written in paragraphs or

as bullet points. Do not submit the kind of stylistic marketing copy that would go on the back of a book (save that for your query letter).

MANUSCRIPT

(for all submissions)

Submit a *complete* manuscript unless you are submitting an unfinished nonfiction work. In that case, submit at least three sample chapters.

Format your manuscript as follows: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with indented paragraphs. Submit it as a Microsoft Word file. (For poetry or previously published works, a PDF may be submitted if preferred.)

PROPOSAL

(for nonfiction)

If you have written (or are writing) a nonfiction book, then you will be submitting a proposal.

Follow [this link](#) to learn all about proposals. Feel free to use Jane Friedman's [template](#) to write your proposal. (In this template, the outline/table of contents and sample chapters are included in the same document. For Daybreak Press submissions, please create a separate document for the outline/table of contents and for the sample chapters.) Your proposal should be 10–20 pages.

OUTLINE OR TABLE OF CONTENTS

(for nonfiction)

An outline or a draft table of contents will reveal the overarching organization of your work and its trajectory after the sample chapters.

My materials are ready. Now what?

Go ahead and use [this Google form](#) to submit! We can't wait to read your work.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out at DBPmanuscripts@rabata.org.

AFTER SUBMITTING

Yay! Thank you for submitting your manuscript! We hope we get to work together!

When will I hear back?

Please allow up to six months for a response.

Wow! Will it really take that long?

It depends. Sometimes our team will go pedal to the metal working on an upcoming book release, and submissions will be on the back burner. At other times, we may be able to read your submission right away. In any case, we want to be able to devote the appropriate time to evaluating your manuscript and deciding whether it is a good fit for our press. So thanks for your patience!

So I'll get an email?

You'll initially receive an email confirming receipt of your submission.

Then, we will respond with an email either accepting or rejecting your manuscript.

If your manuscript is accepted, congratulations! Your acceptance email will detail next steps.

If your manuscript is rejected, please continue to submit your rewrites of that manuscript and/or other manuscripts you have written.

If my manuscript is accepted, when will my book be published?

The journey from a manuscript to a published book takes 1–2 years. See a more detailed breakdown [here](#).

Why was my manuscript rejected?

Manuscripts are rejected for a variety of reasons, including the following:

- Your manuscript is not ready for submission and needs more work.
- Your manuscript contradicts Islamic values or is not sufficiently centered on Islam.
- Your manuscript breaks the rules of your genre.

- Your manuscript is not marketable because it neither fits into an existing category/genre nor successfully creates a new one.
- You did not follow the instructions for submission.
- Our publishing calendar is full for the type of manuscript you submitted.

I really want to be an author. Do you have any advice?

“If you don’t have time to read, you don’t have the time—or the tools—to write. Simple as that.” —Stephen King

“Read, read, read. Read everything—trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You’ll absorb it. Then write. If it’s good, you’ll find out. If it’s not, throw it out of the window.” —William Faulkner

“Protect the time and space in which you write. Keep everybody away from it, even the people who are most important to you.” —Zadie Smith

“You have to get to a very quiet place inside yourself. And that doesn’t mean that you can’t have noise outside. I know some people who put jazz on, loudly, to write. I think each writer has her or his secret path to the muse.” —Maya Angelou

“You can’t wait for inspiration, you have to go after it with a club.” —Jack London

“This is how you do it: You sit down at the keyboard and you put one word after another until it’s done. It’s that easy, and that hard.” —Neil Gaiman

“There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed.” —Ernest Hemingway

“Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.” —Anton Chekhov

“Never use a long word where a short one will do.” —George Orwell

“Every sentence must do one of two things—reveal character or advance the action.” —Kurt Vonnegut

“Always carry a notebook. And I mean always. The short-term memory only retains information for three minutes; unless it is committed to paper you can lose an idea forever.” —Will Self

"Quantity produces quality. If you only write a few things, you're doomed."
—Ray Bradbury

"You can fix anything but a blank page." —Nora Roberts

"I went for years not finishing anything. Because, of course, when you finish something you can be judged." —Erica Jong

APPENDIX: STYLE GUIDELINES FOR NONFICTION

If you are submitting a nonfiction work, please adhere to the following house style guidelines:

- Use IJMES transliteration for Arabic words.
(<https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-file-manager/file/57d83390f6ea5a022234b400>)
- Do not transliterate words that appear in *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (e.g., hadith, hijab). (merriam-webster.com)
- Use the *Chicago Manual of Style* (18th ed.) Notes and Bibliography style for references.
(https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)
- Cite Quran and hadith as follows.
 - Quran 12:53
 - *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2732
- Use the following honorific symbols after each mention.
 - Allah ﷻ
 - Prophet Muhammad ﷺ