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Reader's Digest  
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Dear Writer,

Welcome to Reader's Digest!

Founded in 1922, Reader's Digest is one of the largest media companies in the world, producing 50 independent editions in 20 languages worldwide. The Canadian edition began in 1947 and is the largest magazine in Canada, with over 1 million paid circulation and almost 8 million readership between its two language editions. Since 1976, Reader's Digest Magazines has been a Canadian corporation, alongside the non-profit Reader's Digest Foundation, which supports journalism programs across the country. Editorial content is 80% Canadian or higher.

### **Writing for the Digest: How to Get Started**

RD receives many story proposals every week. To help us make fully informed decisions about your pitches and ideas, we ask that you follow the basic template below:

- DATE OF PITCH
- WORKING TITLE OF YOUR STORY/PITCH
- SUBTITLE/BLURB This should reflect your angle, what's at stake in piece/tweak interest
- YOUR NAME and FULL contact info (mailing address, email, phone numbers)
- PROPOSED LENGTH OF PIECE E.g., 800 words, 3000 words
- PROPOSED ROLE/SEC/DEPT IN MAGAZINE See "RD Departmental Breakdown" below
- ANY SEASONAL CONCERNS E.g., the story concerns an event that takes place in summer
- LEAD ANECDOTE This may change later, but you need to grab our interest now
- PROPOSAL Two or three well-considered, crafted paragraphs
- WHY ARE YOU THE PERSON TO DO THIS PIECE? "Because I know Joe" is not enough.
- Lastly: WHY SHOULD READERS CARE?

Please send story pitches and ideas directly to [editor@rd.ca](mailto:editor@rd.ca) with the subject line “Story pitch for Editorial Department.” **We regularly receive a large volume of queries and because of time constraints, we usually respond only to those that interest us. Please note that we also do not read or return unsolicited article-length manuscripts.** Please note that Reader’s Digest does not print poetry or fiction. If you are NOT a Canadian writer, please submit your query to the appropriate edition of Reader’s Digest.

### **Remuneration**

Reader's Digest has a well-deserved reputation for treating writers and artists with respect, and paying professional contributors well. Our rates start at \$1/word, and can go up according to shoe-leather, research and other factors involved. Features in RD range between 800-2500 words. We do not pay for published jokes or anecdotes (non-professional authors of these short items do, however, receive a free subscription).

### **RD Departmental Breakdown: Where Freelancers Can Contribute**

#### *Front of Book (FOB)*

- 1) **Columnists:** We regularly consider new column ideas across a wide range of subjects and approaches.
- 2) **Making it Matter:** 700-1000-word profiles of people who are doing something good for their community, their country, or the world. Not just feel-good: needs a real story.
- 3) **Character:** 700-1000-word profiles of quirky, unique individuals. These pieces must have great quotes, eye-popping scenarios, or make the ordinary seem extraordinary.
- 4) **My View:** 700-1000-word opinion pieces, rants or iconoclastic thoughts. You will help yourself immensely if you have evidence to support your opinion.
- 5) **My Story:** 700-1000 word first-person narratives.
- 6) **That's Outrageous!:** Short anecdotes that make your jaw drop at the bureaucracy, insensitivity or plain stupidity of a parent, civil servant, corporation, etc.

#### *Middle of Book/Core: Heart, Head, Hands, Humour & more...*

- 1) **Heart Features:** 1500-2500-word stories that change emotional perceptions; human stories you remember days and weeks later.
  - o “Loving Marguerite,” the true story of a lifelong alcoholic who, through the love and belief of her husband, turned her life around, got her Master’s degree, joined the Canadian Forces and is now an officer serving in UN missions overseas.
  - o “Fishing with My Daughter,” a poetic narrative of life lessons learned while fishing for sturgeon on the Fraser River.
- 2) **Head (or Issue) Features:** pieces about social issues and public concerns.
  - o “Beyond Blue: Fixing Teen Mental Health Care.” Why doesn’t Canada have a comprehensive plan for this, like England and Australia?
  - o “The Home Front,” an inspiring story of new autism treatments as played out in the

lives of a Nova Scotia couple and their autistic children.

3) **Hands (or Service) Features:** Short, factual pieces to stick to your fridge.

o “Aim to Claim,” seven things to consider before filing an insurance claim.

4) **Humour:** Unique, quirky, hilarious, witty pieces.

o “The Sound of Broccoli,” about a synaesthetic woman who “tastes” peoples names.

o “Lost in Translation.” The story of the inventor of karaoke.

5) **Influential Canadians:** 1500-word profiles of remarkable Canadians, both unknown and highly distinguished. Not their CV—their story.

o “Ben Perrin’s War,” the profile of a crusading U.B.C. lawyer who is fighting global sex trafficking through international human rights law.

6) **Dramas in Real Life:** One of the Digest’s most-loved features!

o “Journey to the South Pole,” the dramatic near-death narrative of one man’s determination to beat the Antarctic walking record.

o “Vanished,” the dramatic story of a 4-year-old boy who floats 15 kms down an icy river on a tiny plastic truck—and survives!

### *Back of Book (BOB)*

1) **RD Living:** Short 300-400 word service pieces. Family, Pets, Relationships, Style, Work, Technology, Garden, Home, Health, Sports, Money, Travel, Entertainment, etc.

2) **Food section:** Short 300-400 word pieces related to food, food culture, family dining, etc.

### **Book Choice or Bonus Reads**

o Excerpts from book-length non-fiction narratives or long-form magazine pieces.

Character development. Good stories. 500 to 5000 words or more. If you are an author

or

publisher who has published a non-fiction book you would like us to consider, please send us a copy of the book, any PR materials, and highlight sections you consider especially appropriate.

### **Pickups—Reprints from Canadian magazines**

o Recommend a story that you or a colleague wrote for another magazine. Don’t forget to

tell us what section or department you see it fitting into.

o Love a little-known magazine? Bring it to our attention! We are always looking to expand the list of titles we draw on for our pickups.

o Email PDFs (or mail a paper copy with cover note) to [editor@rd.ca](mailto:editor@rd.ca) with the subject line

“Proposed article for reprint.”

### **Final Note: Style**

Great magazine writing requires wit, verbal dynamism, direct address, strong statements of

belief, memorable quotation, intelligent insight or reflection, accurate facts, a light touch with statistics that persuade, and sometimes, just being the right person to write a particular story.

Worrying too much about these standards is, however, one good way to ensure that you will *not* write well. Trying to sound smart, taking an overly serious tone or straining to be funny will not get you into this venerable magazine. Reader's Digest is a magazine for everyone, from miners to university professors. You have to start by writing what you know, and build from there.

We look forward to reading your ideas, pitches and stories!