

Laura Brennan's Handy Dandy Logline Worksheet

1) What is the medium? Is it a novel, a screenplay, a webseries?

2) What's the title?

3) What's the genre?

4) Who is the protagonist?

I don't care about her or his name. What matters is, who are they in terms of the story? A down-on-her-luck private detective, a teenage runaway, the ghost of a notorious jewel thief...?

5) What is the single most interesting thing about your hero's story?

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Now fill in the answers from Page 1 below:

Logline:

My _____, _____, is a _____
(1) (2) (3)

about a _____ who
(4)

(5)

This won't be perfect; it won't even be pretty. But it will be the skeleton of your logline. Refine it to make sense and sound right when you say it.

BEWARE THE WORD 'AND' -- when you say 'and' you almost always lose your listener there. The purpose of a logline is just to see if they're interested in this kind of thing or not, not to regale them with details.

Finally, remember that a 'no' doesn't mean your logline isn't working; it is working! It's separating out those who have no interest in your genre with those who do.

Helpful Pitching Hints

- Prepare their listening. Make sure they know what kind of piece it is and what the genre is before you launch into the story. People can only listen if they understand what they're about to hear.
- Be truthful. Do not pretend it's a broad comedy when it's really a dark dramedy. Do not bend the truth to meet what you think they want to hear.
- Be accurate. This is where friends and family can be helpful. You may not know exactly what genre it is; you may be too close. Poll readers to find out how they experienced it.
- A pitch gets people to want to read more; a summary gives them an excuse not to read it at all. Remember Cliff Notes in high school? I rest my case.
- Practice your pitch out loud to friends and family. Watch to see where their eyes glaze over. Cut those bits.
- The biggest temptation is to stuff too much into the pitch. Don't.
- Is your pitch for business or some new tech or a big project? The same principles hold true! Stick to the big picture and leave the details for when they show interest and start asking questions.
- Most of all, don't look at pitching as win-lose. It isn't. Pitching is always a win. It's about building a relationship with an agent or producer or editor or investor. Listen as enthusiastically as you pitch and find a way to follow up.