

2-Page Market Analysis Assignment

Sonstroem, English 111

Due in class, November 1

Your third story will need to be written targeting a specific market. That means you will choose a specific magazine (or other venue that purchases short fiction for publication), and write your story with that specific magazine in mind.

This Market Analysis assignment will help you by giving you the clearest possible view of the target for this third story.

“What kind of stories does a given magazine buy?” Answers to this question can come from 3 different places:

- 1) **The 2012 Writer's Market** (or a similar publication that contains annotated market listings). This book will list some basic guidelines for writing stories for the magazine you are interested in selling your story to. Our copy of this book is in the Reference section of the library. Use it.
- 2) **The magazine's own “Submission Guidelines.”** Every fiction market has a document like this, giving a much more detailed list of what they are looking to buy. Almost all markets have these guidelines listed somewhere on their web page, although occasionally you will find a magazine that prefers to mail their submission guidelines to prospective authors in a SASE through snail mail.
- 3) **The stories in the magazine itself.** A serious author won't just rely on the first two to learn what a magazine likes to publish. Instead, he or she will read a couple issues of the magazine, cover to cover, to try to figure out what really appeals to this magazine's editor. Their submission guidelines might say they take any kind of story. But reading a bunch of their published stories you will start to notice a distinct set of preferences, what some people would call the “feel” of the magazine. Maybe you'll notice that they prefer stories with a strong female protagonist. Maybe you'll notice they prefer stories with ambiguous endings. Maybe you'll notice that they like stories with lots of really short scenes, or with a certain type of humor, or a certain philosophical or political bent. What kind of balance do they like between dialog, action, description, and back story? Etc, etc...

For this assignment, I want you to use *all three methods* to write a detailed analysis of your chosen market. **Mostly use the third method.** In addition to the *Writer's Market* blurb and the Submission Guidelines, seek out and read *at least 6 stories* that have been recently published in this magazine. Try to get inside the editor's head, reverse-engineer their likes and dislikes from the stories you've read. Then you can use this market analysis almost like a checklist or instruction sheet when you sit down to write your third story.