

## Guidelines

### Please read before you submit:

If your work is set in anyone else's world, uses anyone else's characters, or uses any material trademarked or subject to copyright owned or licensed to anyone else except you, please verify the details of your authority to submit this work for publication. If your work can be categorized as fan fiction, fan art, fan film, or filking, please do not submit it to Phase 5 for publication.

If your work contains explicit sex or graphic violence, please make sure it is necessary to the story. I'm not squeamish, but unnecessary elements like these tend to distract from the story.

If your work sounds more like a movie, anime, radio play or the like, please reconsider what it should be, format and market it appropriately (meaning submit it to folks who do that sort of thing.)

Phase 5 does accept simultaneous submissions (you can submit to Phase 5 and other publishers, if they also allow simultaneous submissions). Phase 5 also accepts multiple submissions (just complete a separate form for each, and email the works separately. If you choose to publish elsewhere before you receive our review, please notify [submissions@phase5publishing.com](mailto:submissions@phase5publishing.com) so it can be removed from the review queue.

A Note: I am aware this tends to get a little overwhelming and possibly off-putting. There is a lot of information here. The "not" directives are not derogatory toward those things (except the hate-mongering), just an indication that those things are not well at home in Phase 5's brand.

### What Phase 5 is looking for

Phase 5 accepts art and fiction of the science fiction, fantasy and horror genres (speculative fiction). Role-playing submissions will also be considered if the content, concept and mechanics are not otherwise licensed.

### Phase 5 accepts completed science fiction, fantasy, horror (speculative fiction):

- Well-written fiction of all lengths
- Two-dimensional visual art of all static types (computer generated, hand drawn, inked, colored, painted, 3D, serials, illustration and comics)
- Role-playing products

### Phase 5 does not accept:

- computer/video games
- pornography
- "torture porn"
- Work actively exclusively licensed elsewhere or created under contract or "work-for-hire"

- o work that infringes upon the property rights of another
- o fan-fiction, fan-art (Want to get paid for writing fan fiction? Check out [Amazon's foray into licensed content](#).)
- o work that incites, advocates, or espouses hatred or harm to another actual living species, ethnicity, genotype, phenotype, religious affiliation, nationality, personal preference (be it in gender expression, sub-culture, mating preference, political bent, etc.) ancestry, lineage, etc. Life is too short.
- o Work that is not in genre. Political musings, apocalypse stories involving an actual, currently practiced religion, spoofs on religions, social rants, memoirs, romances, mundane mysteries or crime fiction, erotic stories (supernatural or not), copies of someone else's work, historical stories (alternate history is not "historical"), revamps of previously published works, adding vamps (or zombies, or werewolves, etc.) to previously published works, well-known faerie tale characters (ok, maybe a short story here or there, if it is exceptionally well done).

### **Phase 5 Publishing's Guidelines for Submissions**

These are not comprehensive, but hopefully will help you determine whether your work is ready for submission.

Make sure the work is clearly identifiable as being in the science fiction, fantasy or horror genres. For example, a war scene or story may be horrific, but that does not make it a work of horror. There should be elements that clearly depart from reality. If you are unsure if your elements are sufficient to lodge your work in your intended genre, check out some of the many, many discussions on the internet, or ask people (not your friends) who are fans of your intended genre if your work is a good fit.

#### **Fiction**

- o Please submit only complete manuscripts.
- o Phase 5 does not have a lot of rules about formatting of manuscripts. Generally, single-spaced, generic fonts are preferred. Don't get cute with formatting, keep it clean.
- o Note your punctuation usage - there should not be a lot of semicolons, dashes, ellipses and the like.
- o Check your spelling and grammar, even if you are making up words, spell them consistently.
- o Follow the basic conventions of fiction writing: change paragraphs with changes in speaker when writing dialog; use quotation marks; internal speech or thoughts are italicized; half-inch indent at the beginning of paragraphs, etc.
- o Make sure you have followed all the basic principles for a good story.
- o The characters and setting should have depth; in many good stories the setting is as important as a main character.
- o Be sure you engage the readers' senses (not just visual). Sprinkle your descriptors through the story, rather than using long descriptive paragraphs. And keep background and history narration short. Long histories break the pace and flow of the story.

- Utilize description and body language to provide information to the reader about a character or his or her demeanor at that point in the story. However, do not give a head to toe description all at once. It is much more fun to "discover" a character than to get a police bulletin style description. Incorporate a character's physical self frequently to make him/her tangible to the reader. How one character sees or feels about another tells us a lot about both.
- Review (with others in a story group or blog, perhaps) to be sure your plot, dialog and characters are believable. Do not rely on your friends for this. You want opinions from different demographics.
- If it is a lengthy story, the characters should struggle and grow - unless, of course, it is a characteristic of the character that he/she cannot or will not.
- Pick a point of view and stick with it. If the narration is third-person and you follow different characters at different points, make a break in the scene to change POV.
- Pick a tense and stick with it.
- Make sure your systems (technology, magic, psionics, government, etc.) are cohesive, have their own rules, and relate to the world in which the story is set.
- The passage of time should be clear.
- Research any aspects you are not personally familiar with (survival skills, deterioration rates, historical details, scientific details, belief system tenets, philosophies, political structures, military tactics, technical details, vocabulary, psychological characteristics, etc.) If your knowledge is dated, brush up on the current status/situation. You don't know what you don't know.
- Make sure each element and scene serves the story.
- Review your manuscript before you send - aloud if this is your first story - especially the middle, it's very easy to get lulled into the story and miss errors in the middle. Don't do this all in one sitting. Maybe do a chapter to three chapters in a review session. Make corrections now. You want to provide us with a good work you believe is ready for publication, not a first draft. No one wants to read a first draft. The version you send us is the manuscript's interview; make a good first impression.
- Be patient. With yourself in finalizing the manuscript. With Phase 5 in getting to the review.
- When you get the review results, take it with an open mind and a grain of salt. The goal is to help you make your story the best it can be, and all comments are directed toward that goal.
- File formats: word processing formats are accepted. .mobi, .pdf, etc. are not

### **Art**

- "A picture is worth a thousand words" is a good place to start.
- If your work is illustrative, make sure sufficient details are included to tell us the story you intend to tell.
- If your subject is a character, it should not look like a character sketch (unless you are submitting to "Characters" anthology) - meaning the setting and mood should be part of the work. The character should also have his/her/its story somewhat evident or hinted at by clothing, accessories, props, expression, etc.
- Abstract art is generally not sufficiently rooted in genre to meet our criteria.

- Adding a cool filter to a photograph generally will not be considered sufficiently *in genre* unless the subject of the photo is in genre.
- If your art process is to blend several photographs, do it very well. The market is flooded with slap-shod work of this type, and I have developed very high standards for that particular process.
- Fractals are cool, fractals are great, but they are better if they reference something in the genre, or are combined with other elements or in a way to invite the viewer to see more than just a pretty pattern. A title can suggest meaning, but the art needs to lend itself to that meaning in some way.
- Generally, mixed media, sculpture, collage work and the like does not lend itself to the printed page. Consider the art magazines and sites instead.
- If your work is serial, be sure each frame contributes to the story, the characters, the pace and the venue of the story it tells. And review the Guidelines for Fiction.
- Be sure the piece is truly finished - the textures are applied, the highlights and shadows are all in, perspective is clear, subject is clearly depicted, setting is fully rendered. Submission is your piece's interview, make a good first impression.
- Do not submit work that is "not my best work" or "I've gotten better since this" – why would you do that? If you need to do a second version with your current skills and talents, do that.
- If your work is composed entirely in Poser or similar software, be sure it does not look like it came directly from that software. Skin should have texture that is appropriate to the style, light should react with the surfaces in an appropriate way, everything should be finished with the appropriate noise and blur.
- Yes, reflection and atmosphere settings are cool, but fog, cloud or water effects alone do not an artwork make. Unless they are particularly awesome in some way.
- File formats: .jpg, .gif, .tif, .bmp, .png, .svg accepted.
- File size: Please submit a copy of your file reduced to less than 3 MB. If your work is accepted for publication, Phase 5 can request the larger size after the contract is completed.
- If you are submitting to a particular anthology or cover call, please carefully read the details of the brief before submitting. If your work does not fall into those constraints, consider submitting for the *Phase 5 Annual Art Review: Imaginations* series of anthologies instead.
- Please do not submit random art to be used as a book cover. Phase 5 does not engage in the practice of slapping any pretty picture on a book as a cover. Phase 5 issues a cover call for a specific piece of art for our book covers.