

Peak Pitch

Guide

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What is a pitch?

- A pitch is a “message trying to **convince** a publication’s editor to **consider** an idea for a story. Pitches usually include a short summary of the idea [and] why it would be a good fit for the publication.”
- Typically, a pitch entails an idea for something you would like to write. Occasionally, you may request your pitch be assigned to a writer.

What *The Peak* looks for:

- An understanding of the publication, our values, and our focus. Pieces that are relevant to SFU or BC, and angles that focuses on equity and/or its intersections will be prioritized. Here are some examples of the kind of pieces we've published:
 - [Yes, disability justice concerns you too](#): Discusses disability justice and argues for its recognition, especially within the Canadian healthcare system.
 - [How a beloved Palestinian restaurant planted its roots in Vancouver](#): An interview with the owners of a local Palestinian restaurant about their journey to opening the restaurant, their fundraising, and its significance for the local community.
 - [SFU Woodward's Cultural Programs ends amid budget cuts](#): Reporting on a recent program closure at SFU that impacted students and local arts organizations.

What *The Peak* does not look for:

- Broad pitches about Canada, pop culture, or global news that does not have a specific focus.
 - Pitching about “covering Palestine” or “anti-trans legislation” is too broad. *How* will you cover it? *Why* are you the one to cover it and *what* do you have to say about it? Pitching about the [UBC Encampments](#) or [transphobia in BC](#) is more specific, and much more tied to our focus as a university paper.
- Album or film reviews on mainstream or blockbuster media.
- Humour that “punches down” on marginalised groups.
- Pieces about trends that cannot be made relevant to larger issues within our community.
- Any pre written articles. We need to be able to guide your pitch.
- Reviews we’ve covered before. Make sure to search our website before you pitch a review!

Guidelines:

- Your pitch to an editor should be a **minimum** of 150-200 words.
- It should cover **the angle** and *not the topic*. For example, if I'm writing about Latina stereotypes in the media I need to explain *what* I'm going to say about Latina stereotypes in the media.
- Provide **examples** of **what** you are going to talk about and/or **who** you are going to speak to and why.
- Tell your editor: **what is the point?** What is the overarching thing you want to say? Why is this important to the audience?
- **Finally, why are you the person to write about this topic?**
- Provide an estimated **word count**.

An example:

- If I'm writing about Latina stereotypes in the media I need to explain *what* I'm going to say about Latina stereotypes in the media.
 - “Latinas are being **boxed into a stereotype of being intensely hardworking**” is much better than “I want to write about stereotypes on Latina women.”
 - “I would draw on **the examples** of Amy Santiago, Elena Alvarez, and Marisol Fuentes to demonstrate ...” This shows you know what you want to say, and you've **already done the research** to write the piece. (If you are doing a news piece, you will likely need to reach out to an interviewee — and should have an idea of who you'd like to speak to and **why**).
 - “I would **argue for the necessity of different kinds of Latina women on TV**: soft-spoken, sensitive, and unsure of themselves.”
- As a Latina myself, I've observed how others categorize Latinx women and how their perception of me changes when they realize I'm Latina — I think this is largely due to media representation.

When taking an editor's pitch

- Our editors also read out their pitches at our weekly pitch meetings send out pitch emails. You are welcome to ask to take a pitch!
- You will often need to elaborate when you take an editor's pitch.
- Unless it's a section like News, where the direction of a piece is mainly just about who you will interview and what sources you'll consult, in the other sections, most of the editors' pitches are open-ended in some way to leave space for the writer to bring their own direction, interpretation, or opinions.
- A short summary of what you plan to do with a pitch will help the editor have an idea of what to expect, and the opportunity to help you brainstorm and guide your piece.
- **“I would like to take this pitch” isn't enough.**

An example:

- In the Humour section, pitches are typically just prompts. Here's an example of our Humour Editor's pitch:

Local girly pop is burnt out once again!

400-500 words

It obviously cannot be the fact that they have three jobs. Write a fake news article about this development that no one could have predicted!

- This pitch is a starting point to expand an idea into 400-500 word article. You need to tell the editor how you plan on expand on this premise in a way that will be engaging for that length of reading, and to do that, you will need to have some jokes prepared. Here are some things to consider:
 - What will be the main overlying joke of the piece?
 - How will the plot progress?
 - Can you add an unconventional setting or characters to deepen the joke/ add absurdity?
 - Will there be an unexpected punchline at the end that the story will build towards?

In summary:

1. Make sure your pitch entails something unique and fits our content. The topic doesn't have to be entirely brand new, but you need to bring something fresh to the table.
2. Do your research in advance. Tell the editors what you've already found and want to talk about.
3. Convince us that you are the right person to tell this story (though this is arguably less important in more casual pieces, and can be seen as optional if you are just picking up a pitch from a section editor).

You can send your pitches to an editor directly via email or stay after pitch meetings. Please note we *only* accept contributions from current SFU students and we do not accept pre-written articles. Pitches must be confirmed by editors before writing. Due to a high volume of emails, only pitches that are considered for publication will receive a response. We may also provide some guidance or ask additional questions to get a sense of which direction you're planning to take the piece in.