

FIRST STORY **YOUNG
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PROGRAMME

PUBLISHING MODULE

2. What is a literary
magazine?



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A literary magazine is a magazine devoted to literature. It is somewhere for writers to publish individual pieces of work rather than book-length manuscripts.

Literary magazines vary widely in their format and content, from prestigious printed magazines like *Poetry Review* to a flash fiction zine produced by a couple of friends on a home computer and published online on a free Wordpress blog. There are many choices for the editorial team to make – it is up to you to decide what kind of magazine you want to publish.



Questions to discuss

- **Who is your audience?** Who will be reading the magazine? What type of writing do they like to read? How would they prefer to read the magazine?
 - **What is the purpose of the magazine?** Is it to publish new creative writing talent? Or showcase a particular genre? Is it to highlight or explore a theme or issue that concerns you?
 - **What will the magazine contain?** Will you limit it to short stories and/or poems? Or will you include other types of writing, such as articles, reviews and interviews? Will you include images such as artwork and photographs?
 - **How will you obtain the contents?** Will you commission people to produce content for the magazine? Or will you invite submissions from a group of people then select which to include? Perhaps you'd like a mixture of both? How will you ask people to write for the magazine?
- **What will your magazine look like?** Are you aiming for a professional-looking magazine, or will it have the look and feel of a zine? Will it be printed, digital, or both? If it's printed, will you pay a printer to produce a professional-looking magazine, or will you photocopy and staple it? If it's digital, will it be published online, downloadable as an ebook or PDF, or both?
 - **How will your audience find out about the magazine?** Do you plan to run a social media campaign? Will you put posters up around the school, or talk to other students in assemblies? Can you persuade your local newspaper or radio station to run a story on the project?



WATCH THIS

***How to Publish a Literary Magazine* is a video resource produced by the publisher Hachette. It includes lots of ideas – watch this before you make decisions about your magazine.**

Types of magazine content

It's up to the Editor(s) to decide what content to include in the magazine. Here are some ideas of content which you might want to include in your magazine:

1. Editorial

Written by an Editor to introduce the issue and give an overview of its content – and may also acknowledge people who helped produce the issue. Editorial can also be commentary on current issues in literature, publishing, or anything else the writer wants to talk about!

2. Written creative content

Creative content (stories and poems) could be broad or limited, for example by:

- genre (crime, science fiction, romance, etc.)
- theme (climate change, mental health, places, etc.)
- length i.e. min. or max. word count, or line count for poetry.

3. Other creative content

For example, artwork, comic strips, or photographs. In a literary magazine, these are usually relevant to the writing that's included.

5. Essays

Essays are non-fiction, prose writing about a subject. For example, memoir, travel writing, or humorous stories about real events.

6. Reviews

Critical commentary on other pieces of writing, such as books, individual stories, or poems. Reviews can be short – even just a paragraph – or much more in-depth analysis and opinion.

7. Interviews

(Usually) edited transcripts or accounts of conversations between the writer and a person of interest. If your magazine is online, you can even include a link to a recording of the interview.

8. Letters to the editors

Printed correspondence from readers (often edited for brevity), on any topic relevant to the magazine and its contents.

Literary magazine examples

To help you make the decisions you'll need to make about your own publication, take a look at examples of existing literary magazines, and work out what you like (and don't like!) about each one.

There's an extensive list of UK literary magazines on the website of [Neon Books](#). It's worth browsing their list to consider the types of material they contain. You can also find literary magazines as PDFs on [issuu.com](#). These are formatted like the print versions and free to read.

This list of literary magazines might be helpful for you to research too. Not all will have issues free to read online, but you'll still get a good idea of the types of content they include and how a literary magazine can look and feel.

RESEARCH

- [Black Fox](#) – an online fiction magazine published through [issuu.com](#), which allows you to read onscreen as if you were reading a printed magazine.
- [Bourbon Penn](#) – a printed and online magazine of short fiction. They produce an ebook version as well as publishing all the stories on their website.
- [Ink, Sweat and Tears](#) – a free webzine that publishes one piece of writing every day.
- [Mekong Review](#) – a magazine of Asian literature with many pieces free to read.
- [Poetry](#) – a printed magazine published by the Poetry Foundation. You can see the contents of the latest issue on the website and read many archived pieces from back issues.
- [The Letters Page](#) – a free printed and digital magazine composed entirely of letters, which must be submitted by post. It is released as a PDF that is emailed to subscribers, alongside a printed edition.
- [Visions](#) – a printed science fiction magazine. You can see lots of samples of the printed pages on the website to get an idea of the style and the kinds of writing it includes.
- [Zindabad](#) – a printed zine you have to buy, but the editor has written an excellent article about how and why she created the zine, which may give you some good ideas.

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