

New York Times Guide for Freelancers

Unfortunately, opportunities for new freelancers are quite limited. Most material in the section comes from staff writers or regular contributors. We do look at articles and essays on spec, and we make very occasional assignments for news features that catch our eye. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- The article should be newsy and timely. It should tell readers something they don't already know, and within the first few paragraphs it should answer the question "Why are you telling me this now?"
- Topics can range widely over science and health, but bear in mind that important news developments, including major findings reported in science and medical journals, are likely to be covered by our staff writers. The best outside articles are those that make a reader (in this case an editor) sit up and take notice, by calling attention to a surprising or underreported development or trend.
- Articles generally run 500 to 1,500 words. Science Times pays \$1 a word on publication. Queries or pitches should run no more than 300 words.
- The pitch or cover letter should indicate whether the news has already been reported — in The Times, the mainstream press (including Web sites, TV and radio) or scientific journals. A yes answer does not necessarily mean we're not interested, but we need to know what kind of exposure the story has had.
- Queries and finished articles on medicine and health should be sent by e-mail to Mike Mason at mmason@nytimes.com. On other science topics, to David Corcoran at corcoran@nytimes.com.