

PSYCHE

Writing for Psyche

Information and guidelines for writers

The editorial process

There are four stages to the editorial process for Psyche First Person, from commission through to publication.

A: Commissioning

1. After your pitch is agreed, you will receive a contract from our accounting department outlining your commissioned word length, draft due date and payment rate, this editorial process outline, and some information on what we require for factchecking your piece.

Please note you can refer to our full author terms on the Aeon website:

<https://psyche.co/author-terms>

B: Writing

2. We recommend you keep a careful record of your research sources as we'll be requiring these later in the production process.

3. A first draft must be submitted to your commissioning editor by the due date. Each Psyche First Person is also read by another senior editor at first or second draft, who works with the commissioning editors to help steer any restructuring and stylistic reworking.

4. We work through at least two drafts with you. Once your first draft has been assessed, your piece will be assigned a publication date, and a number of production deadlines will be activated.

5. You will need to submit your final draft with factchecking references (see section on factchecking below) no later than **four weeks** before the proposed publication date – your editor will advise on the deadline.

C: Production

6. The First Person will then go through a final production process. It will be copyedited for house style by our copyeditor; broadly, this follows UK spelling conventions and is in line with the style used by *The Guardian*. Images will be assigned by our photography and illustrations editor; and final headlines and standfirsts written, and the copy proofed and checked over, by our editorial director. We allow two weeks for this process. Your editor might send you a PDF preview of the First Person if they believe it would be helpful for you to see it.

7. During this time you will also be contacted by a member of our production team who will liaise with you to create a Psyche user profile, complete with bio and a photo (optional). This profile will allow you to engage in discussions with Psyche readers after publication in our Comments section, if comments are enabled on your First Person; comments are enabled on a select number of pieces each week.

D: Publication and payment

8. The First Person piece will be published on a selected date – you will be notified in advance by your editor. On the day of publication, it will feature in our newsletter and our homepage and will be promoted on our social media channels. We encourage you to promote the First Person using your own social media network and to engage in the commenting on site, if comments are enabled on your First Person. Please notify us in advance if there are any hooks or useful contacts we might use for social media and distribution of your piece.

9. The week of publication, you will receive a pre-filled invoice from our accounting department for you to complete, along with information on what is required for processing your payment. You will receive payment within 30 business days of us receiving your correctly completed invoice.

The factchecking process

All pieces submitted to Psyche are factchecked prior to the copyediting stage. You will need to provide a referenced copy of your First Person to your commissioning editor at least four weeks before publication date. Your editor can tell you the publication date after you have submitted your first draft.

What do we check?

- The accuracy of references to scientific or scholarly research
- Names: spelling and positions/affiliations
- Quotes from published sources or written primary sources
- Numbers and calculations
- Details of news events

Note that we do not check archival newspapers, or quotes from personal interviews. Information based on your own recollection will generally not be checked

What do you need to provide?

Our factchecking method is to sight all sources, so rather than scholarly referencing, accessible links, files and visuals are preferred. Ideally, these should be provided in a hyperlink in the Word doc, as a link in a comment on the Word doc, or as a link in a footnote in the Word doc. Please be as specific as possible (include page numbers, relevant keywords, timestamps, etc.)

- **Books**

Please provide Google Books link (preview available) with page number or PDFs.

Alternatively, please provide a good-quality photo (eg, via smartphone) or a scan of the page, with the title and author clearly visible.

Or reference with a footnote, giving the title, author, date and page number.

- **Data/numbers/percentages**

Please provide a link to the source, photo or PDFs.

- **Newspaper articles (any references to events, dates etc)**

Please provide link to article. Source should be generally reputable.

- **Websites, including social media**

Please provide a link, as well as PDFs or screenshots in case the links disappear.

- **Translations**

Please specify if the translation is your own.

If it is from a secondary source, please provide a link or photo/scan or reference with the title, author/translator, date and page number.

If you are unsure what to reference, please ask your commissioning editor to highlight your draft to indicate what will be checked, or you can send a general enquiry to production@aeon.co.

The invoicing process

It is **very important** that all the information in your invoice is filled out correctly. When dealing with international transfers, if any information provided is incorrect, the transaction is rejected and a fee is incurred. Please note, if your payment does not go through due to incorrect information you have provided, we may deduct the banking fee from your payment.

How to fill out your invoice correctly

From: Please enter your name and address here.

Invoice no: If this is your first invoice with us, please put 1 here; if this is your second, 2; and so on.

Date of Invoice: The date you are filling out the invoice.

Payment Method:

We offer two options for payment of your invoice:

1. PayPal, or
2. Bank transfer – Domestic (Australia only) and International (outside Australia).

PayPal and bank fees

Aeon Media Pty Ltd will pay sending fees incurred at our end for making the payment. **You, the payee, are responsible for any fees charged for processing the payment at your end, including:**

PayPal fees charged to the recipient (which vary depending on currency received)

Or

In the case of bank transfers, bank fees which may be charged by intermediary/correspondent banks, and incoming transfer fees which may be charged by your bank.

Bank fees vary from bank to bank. As a rough guide, we recommend the use of PayPal as a lower-fee option for payments under USD 1,000.

PayPal/bank details for payment

(Please contact your bank if unsure.)

PayPal

Account email address	The email address associated with your PayPal account
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Banks Outside Australia

Account Name	The name that your bank account is registered under, (personal or company name), EXACTLY as it appears on your statement, eg John Smith or Smith Company Limited
Name of Institution	The name of your bank
Bank Address	The address of your bank
Account Number or International Bank Account Number (IBAN)	Your bank account number
SWIFT Code	An eight-11 character identification code of a bank or financial institution
Routing Number	A nine-digit number used to identify a financial institution in a transaction

Australian Banks

Name of Institution	The name of your bank
Account Name	The name that your bank account is registered under (personal or company name), EXACTLY as it appears on your statement, eg John Smith or Smith Company Limited
Account Number	Your bank account number

BSB (Bank-State- Branch) Number	A six-digit number (usually formatted as xxx-xxx) that identifies both the bank and the branch where the account is held
ABN (Australian Business Number)	Please quote your ABN. Alternatively, if you are not supplying an ABN, simply fill out and attach a statement by a supplier form. If you do not quote an ABN or provide a supplier statement, Aeon Media Group Ltd will be obliged to withhold tax of 47 per cent from your payment.

If you have a banking arrangement that does not appear to fit in the standard template, please contact your bank to check the details required for an international funds transfer, and advise us by email of your particular arrangements.

Intermediary banks and credit unions

Some banks and credit unions use an intermediary bank for international transfers. Please find out whether the foreign bank (our bank) is supposed to nominate an intermediary or whether your bank uses its own intermediary. If the latter, the details would look something like this:

Details Required for Payment through Intermediary Accounts

Wire funds to:

Name of Institution: Bank Name

Bank Address:

Swift Code or Routing Number:

For credit to:

Receiving Bank Name: eg Your bank

Receiving Bank Account Number: eg Your Bank's Account Number

For final credit

Account name: Your Name or Business Name as it appears on your bank account

Account Number: Your Account Number

Contacts at Psyche

All queries during the writing process should go to your commissioning editor.

For production queries after your final draft has been submitted you may contact your commissioning editor, or our production team: production@aeon.co

For invoice and payment queries, please email: accounts@aeon.co

For queries relating to your Psyche user profile, please email: contact@aeon.co

Aeon+Psyche are getting into the "Life Stories" space, with three formats --asking for first person essays or profiles on stories of change and aspirational lives; as-told-to pieces; and Q&As. Stories of scientists very much of interest.

Here's a summary of the first person essay format, called "stories of change --these should run 1200-1500 words.

These are short personal essays that explore a turning point in a life: an inner or outer shift, and its aftermath. They are focussed on a specific experience—a particular change and its implications, rather than broader life transitions—and are propelled by the writer's desire to make sense of it. Change can be interpreted broadly—big or small, lofty or absurd, something you initiate versus something that happens to you—but is explored through a distinct narrative frame. ..It should feel transporting, like entering another emotional and sensory world. In addition to a narrative arc, an arc of self-reckoning is essential: rather than trying to build towards an argument stated at the outset, or assert the uniqueness or universality of an experience, the writer is searching for insight. Why did this happen? What is it going to mean? The ending feels earned: a flash of insight, a kernel of wisdom, some degree of emotional processing having taken place.

Here are fees for 3 formats, and we will also consider Q&As, though at just \$200. Details on other formats to come. If you have an idea, send two sentences to me at pamela.weintraub@aeon.co

This would be a pitch for a pitch, and if interested we will ask for more.

Profile -long form

\$3500

£2800

A\$5550

€3370

First Person or As Told To -1,500 words, short form

\$550

£450

A\$875

€525

PSYCHE PROFILE | WRITER BRIEF

"Ah well, so be it. The compensation of growing old, Peter Walsh thought, coming out of Regent's Park, and holding his hat in hand, was simply this; that the passions remain as strong as ever, but one has gained — at last! — the power which adds the supreme flavour to existence — the power of taking hold of experience, of turning it round, slowly, in the light."

VIRGINIA WOOLF, MRS DALLOWAY

What is a meaningful life? The *Psyche* Profile explores this question through conversations with individuals who have grappled with it in their own lives: people who have blazed trails or broken new ground, who have tested the limits of the human body or of social acceptability, who have been dealt a unique or peculiar hand in life—or whose lives have swerved suddenly and dramatically, by chance or choice. We are as interested in household names as in the quietly remarkable, so long as subjects are willing to look upon the sweep of their life and reflect on what they have learned or unlearned, reconsidered or rediscovered. What burdens do they still carry, what desires do they continue to harbor, and in what ways do these intersect? Do they feel at home in the world; if not, what are they homesick for? Can their life and the choices underpinning it tell us something about how to live—live *well*—in the world today?

We are not seeking to publish dispassionate, strictly observational profiles. If a person isn't inclined to examine their beliefs and values, how these have been shaped by circumstance and surroundings, how they relate to their achievements in the world and their distinct picture of a well-lived life, they will not be a suitable subject for a *Psyche* Profile. At the same time, we are not seeking to publish puffy hagiographies. We expect writer and subject to spend time together—to venture out into the world together and for this to serve as a springboard for reflection and revelation—and to wrestle with difficult questions and emotions, but with care and mutual respect, animated by fellow-feeling and fair-minded inquiry. The best profiles, we believe, combine the psychological and the sociological; therefore, along with an insight into their inner lives, we are looking to profile people as they exist in the(ir) world.

The *Psyche* Profile will take the form of a reported narrative between 3500-4000 words. Published monthly on the new Life Stories channel, it will build upon *Psyche's* continued illumination of the human condition, propelled—to borrow from the great Janet Malcolm—by “the rapture of a first-hand encounter with another's lived experience.” Have someone in mind who fits the bill? Please send us a pitch of ~800 words that includes the following:

- **Life story.** Has the subject led an interesting life? In what way? Will it make for a captivating narrative/reading experience? In what way does it speak to our current moment?
- **Relevance.** How does the subject's life trajectory address the Profile's overarching question of what it means to live a good life?

- **Access, availability.** Do you have confirmed access to the subject? Are they prepared to reflect openly and at length on their life, its highs and lows, on what they think it means to live well?
- **Stakes.** Is your investment in the subject sufficiently evident? Is it clear why this would (also) be of interest to readers at large?
- **Reporting plan.** Where will you meet with the subject? How many times? What will you do together?
- **Writer-subject pairing.** Is it interesting, generative, provocative or counter-intuitive in some way?
- **Writerly ability, publication record.** Does the pitch give a sense of how you'll approach the piece in terms of style and narrative? Are you able to toggle between the universal and the particular — what is sometimes known as [the ladder of abstraction](#)?

Launched in 2020, *Psyche* is a digital magazine from [Aeon Media](#) dedicated to promoting self-knowledge and wellbeing via a multi-disciplinary approach, through psychology but also history, anthropology and more. For the Life Stories channel, which will debut later this year, we are keen to publish a range of writerly tones, rather than enforce a stodgy house style, and are drawn to prose with personality, playfulness, and a point of view. We want to commission writers who are entertained, intrigued or charmed by other people and whose writing communicates this interest with empathy and warmth and — dare we say, *love*.

We are eager to match writers with subjects in novel ways—a literary critic profiling a politician, say, or a science writer interviewing an athlete—with the expectation that unusual pairings may generate unique insights. Structural experimentation is encouraged, too. When Janet Malcolm interviewed the postmodernist painter David Salle for *The New Yorker*, the resulting [piece](#) comprised 41 distinct ledes, mimicking the artist's signature collage style. When *Vanity Fair* published a [profile](#) of bear enthusiast (and eventual bear victim) Timothy Treadwell, author Ned Zeman wrote the opening section from the point of view of the bear. If you have a long-shot idea on how to approach a particular piece, your editor will hear you out and, wherever possible, conspire with you to pull it off.