

Insider Life - Features pitch guide

Welcome to the pitch guide for Insider Life's features department! I'm [Allie Pape](#), daily features editor for Insider Life, and I work with freelance reporters to publish great features about lifestyle topics.

This guide will tell you everything you need to know about what to pitch, how to pitch it, and the kinds of stories our readers love.

What we cover

These are the beats we cover here at Insider Life:

- Entertainment: TV, movies, music, gaming, podcasting
- Digital culture: Social media, influencers, and online trends
- Health: Personal health, fitness, wellness, reproductive rights, relationships, sex and sex work, cannabis and recreational drugs (but not cannabis business/economics)
- Parenting
- Food and drink
- Fashion, beauty and style
- Home and design
- Travel
- Weddings
- The royals

What qualifies as a feature?

As a features editor, I commission longer, reported pieces, mostly (but not exclusively) in the 800 to 2,000-word range. Features should be deep dives into a topic or phenomenon, typically involving interviews with multiple sources and/or on-scene/experiential reporting.

Some features can be written in a couple of days; others can take months. But they should feature multiple voices and a deep, thoughtful perspective.

Here are some things I am **NOT** looking for:

- "Takes" or cultural criticism
 - ex. *"Why we should be talking more about narcissists," "How 'WandaVision' gets mental illness wrong"*
- Personal essays. Features can have a first-person component ([example](#)), but it must be complemented by reporting and interviews.
- Listicles

- ex. *“The 5 best places to travel this summer,” “The 10 best movies of 2021”*
- “Soft” travel/food stories
 - ex. *“Why the Swiss Alps are the best place to travel this winter,” “Where to go for a great weekend of eating in Seattle”*
- Advice/guidance pieces
 - ex. *“How to treat erectile dysfunction,” “The best paint colors to choose for a kitchen”*
- Single-source interviews with celebrities or newsmakers
- General-interest profiles of celebrities or newsmakers — stories about an individual person need to center on a narrative or controversy

Some things our readers love

While your imagination shouldn’t be limited by this list, these types of stories are always very popular with our readership.

- Deep dives into controversial, love-’em-or-hate-’em figures
- Investigations into influencer drama
- The inside stories behind big pop-culture moments
- Exposés of lifestyle brands/companies behaving badly, or facing internal drama
- Stories with a celebrity hook that aren’t profiles (for example, a story about [no one showing up for Goop’s first cruise](#); Gwyneth was not on the boat)
- Stuff that is intense or gross
- Bad behavior of all kinds

A note for international journalists

Insider Life’s coverage is heavily centered on English-speaking countries, particularly the US and UK, where most of our readership is based. The bar to get a story about another country approved is extremely high.

If you plan to pitch a story about a country that is not the US or UK, it will need to have one of the following aspects:

- Directly impacts Americans/Brits in a notable way (most likely via tourism)
- Has a 1:1 correlation with something that’s newsy in the US or UK — either because it’s very similar to, or very different from, how we do things here.

If your feature does not fit these criteria, consider pitching it to [Edith Honan](#), Insider’s editor for global news correspondents. [Here is a Twitter thread](#) about what she’s looking for and how to contact her.

Examples of great features we've published

Entertainment

- [The untold story of how Britney Spears wrote 'Everytime' with her backup singer — and their dramatic fallout behind the scenes](#)
- [An oral history of Tom Holland's sensational 'Lip Sync Battle' performance](#)
- [Inside the bizarre 2-decade battle by Pamela Anderson's hat designer to prove she created Scrat from 'Ice Age'](#)
- ['Succession' star Jeremy Strong went viral for irritating his co-stars with method acting. Bad behavior from method actors is all too common, directors say.](#)

Digital culture

- [TikTok's algorithm is making women who've only dated men realize they're queer](#)
 - [Inside the surreal life of a young couple who won a viral contest to live for free on a remote Irish island without electricity or hot water](#)
 - [How QAnon infiltrated the yoga world](#)
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Health/parenting

- [Steroid use is rampant among fitness influencers, trainers and bodybuilders say. Most use in secret, claiming their gains come from workouts and diet plans.](#)
- [The overwhelmed heroine of 'The Lost Daughter' walked out on her kids. These real-life mothers did, too.](#)
- [Doctors are refusing to take out IUDs, so people are pulling them out at home — and posting how-to videos on TikTok and YouTube](#)
- [Girl Scout cookie sellers as young as 5 are being harassed for selling unhealthy food and a conspiracy theory about cookie money funding abortion](#)

Other lifestyle (travel, culture, food, etc.)

- [Well-off parents are fighting over secondhand Christmas gifts and flipping them for extra cash amid the supply-chain crunch](#)
- [Move over, #VanLife: TikTok influencers who live in their cars say they can still cook, shower and do it all while traveling the US](#)
- [Boudoir photography is booming as people strip off their pandemic sweatpants for tasteful nudes](#)
- [Bali has become a breeding ground for rule-breaking tourists during the pandemic, and tensions with locals are running high](#)

How to pitch

My email: apape@insider.com

- All pitches should go through this email. Twitter DMs will not be considered.

The subject line: Should have the word “Pitch,” followed by a brief description of your pitch.

- *Pitch: “The Lost Daughter” and real-life moms who walked out on their kids*
- *Pitch: How QAnon infiltrated the yoga world*

The first paragraph: Introduce yourself and tell me about the topics you typically cover and the publications you’ve previously written for. Link me to 2-3 of your previously published stories — the ones you feel best exemplify the type of piece you’re hoping to write for Insider.

- *Hi! I’m Jane Doe, a freelance writer covering health and parenting. I’ve previously written for Shape, Women’s Health and Romper. Some recent stories I’ve written include [a deep dive into the pandemic alcoholism crisis among working moms](#) and [a look at a unique preschool that teaches young kids how to use hatchets and stoves](#).*

The second paragraph: Make your pitch in a few sentences. Tell me what the story would be about, why it’s relevant/interesting at this moment (the “news hook”), and any reporting you may have already done. Please also give me an estimate of expected word count.

- *I’d like to write a story for Insider about the pressures on non-birthing parents not to take parental leave. Even though Congress is currently considering four weeks of paid leave for both birthing and non-birthing parents, many non-birthing parents who already have access to company-provided leave (especially fathers) say they feel pressure to not use all or most of it. I have two fathers who are willing to discuss their experience. One was successfully pressured into taking less time than he was technically allowed and now regrets it. Another insisted on taking his full leave, only to be penalized for it when he returned to work. I also have two experts who can talk about why leave is ultimately good for companies and non-birthing workers, and ways to push back against this pressure without risking your job. I anticipate this story will be about 1,300 words.*

And that’s it! Keep it short and sweet. I’ll take a look and get back to you if I’m interested in moving forward on the pitch, or can suggest ways to refine it that might work for us.