Please keep in mind that this is a template, which cannot possibly be reflective of your expertise, your interest in the story you want to tell, or your unique talent. If it is at all useful to you, please think of it as a framework for your early pitches to writers.

Some preparations to make before you start writing your pitch:

-- Have a story in mind: This seems basic, but early-stage writers and journalists often write in to publications offering their expertise on a subject. Saying, "Hello, I am a science writer" will almost certainly get you the response, "Thanks, we'll keep that in mind" which may not always be meaningful. Saying, "Hello, I am a science writer and I would like to write a 1500-word story about ISRO's ten-year plan for space exploration" will get a conversation started.

-- Personalise your email: Editors know when you're sending the same email to four others. It also allows editors to assume, reasonably, that you have only your interests in mind, and not those of the publication you are pitching to.

I'm sure I don't have to tell you that you should target your pitch as specifically as possible. Many pitches that come into our inboxes go along the lines of: "Dear Science Editor, I'm writing a story about the new iPhone specs, let me know if you'll carry it." Sadly, it rarely does! Because:

1. Science editors are not the same as technology editors.
2. Your email is cursory and doesn't give any indication of how your story will fit the needs of the editor's publication.
3. There's an unspoken assumption that the editor is familiar with the writer's work. This is often not the case.

-- Know your audience. This is the broad-spectrum requirement that complements the narrow point above. Your story will always be yours first and foremost. But once it is published it is also belongs to the outlet that publishes it. Who are the people who read that publication? Why is your story useful to them? Getting a sense of this is important both for the direction of your story, and for the acceptance of your pitch.

Any pitch should ideally be targeted personally to the editor of the section/page in which you are interested -- it just saves time for everyone. Many major publications have websites with contact details for their section heads, or editors who are active on social media. Please don't feel shy about reaching out to them.

Good example of social media outreach: @ScienceEditor Hi there, I have a tech story I'd like to pitch to your magazine, whom can I write to? Thanks!

Less good example of social media outreach: @ScienceEditor Hi, I've a story about new iPhone specs I want to write for your magazine, can I have your email?

Either of these messages may or may not guarantee a response. But in the first one, you've asked for a small favour, kept it professional, and indicated your interest as a writer. In the second one, you've made a slightly more personal request, asked a slightly bigger favour ('tell me whom' to write to v/s 'read my story') -- and given away the topic of your story.

-- Make a generic email personal: Sometimes, without any direct contact, the only way to pitch a story may be to a generic email address like mail@magazine.in. Usually, these emails get read, too, so please make the pitch email as action-oriented as possible.

Less-action oriented email: To whom it may concern, I have a story about iPhone specs I'd like to write for your magazine. Please consider it for publication.

More action-oriented email: Hello, I am writing a story about iPhone specs in time for the October launch of the new model. I would like to send your publication a detailed pitch about this. Please let me know whom to get in touch with at your magazine, and how I can contact them.

(PS. This is one reason it's always useful to have an action item like this at the end of a standard pitch email. Your first email to Miss Science Editor might actually have been fine if you'd sent this:

"Dear Science Editor, I'm writing a story about the new iPhone specs, let me know if you'll carry it."

With an additional line, stating. "In case I should be writing to someone else about this email, apologies! Please let me know where to redirect this email, thanks.")

-- Make the pitch about the story, NOT the story. Please do not send out a full story even if it is complete. At the pitch stage, the editor's goal is not to get your story published. It is to ascertain if your story has the potential to benefit their publication, in exchange for payment and credit to you. Editors rarely have the capacity to read and assess a full story, and are often put off by the idea that you've written something they've had no involvement in conceptualising or drafting.

Note: It's totally fine if you have a story written out. It's very common to be left with a story commissioned by someone else that didn't work out. It's also perfectly okay to sell it onwards. But let your pitch email be an introduction to the story. And if it's possible to be honest about the circumstances, please do so. ("I worked on this story for Science Editor's Magazine, but they don't have space for it. I'm happy to rework and edit it if you're interested in the idea!" -- professional, up-front and collaborative.)

-- Make the pitch about the story, not about your resume. Please do not confuse a pitch with a job conversation. If you are looking for a job with the publication, please be clear about that. But sending a resume instead of a pitch isn't very useful either to the story or to the editor.

-- Sound as confident as possible. Every editor dreams of a pitch in their inbox from a writer whom they will never have to second-guess. It's totally fine if you're not that person. That first pitch email is a transaction. But every transaction is also a relationship.

If you can convince the editor that you're a sure bet, that you are trustworthy, that you know what they and their paper want and that you will be dedicated to producing that for them --

that's a very big deal, and a very rare quality in writers. Even if it's the first time you're sending a pitch to any publication ever, this matters. Because you got this far, right? And you can only have done that if you really believe you have something meaningful to publish.

Congratulations! That's a big step taken. Now, let's discuss the pitch itself.

Here's what I like to see in my inbox.

OPENING:

Hello _____ [I like just 'hello' if they don't know my name, but this is a personal preference]

I got your email ID from _____ [it's usually on the site/their Twitter, but also let me be up front here; editors universally have the bad habit of paying 2x more attention to the email if you can say you got put in touch by someone they know. If at all possible to introduce a personal connection, do not be afraid to do so]. I'm a writer from ___, and I wondered if you'd be interested in a story I'm working on.

IDEA:
Here, include a short description of your story idea. ["From March to June this year, I was in rural UP working in a mango orchard where an old and rare strain of the fruit is suddenly growing robustly, leading growers and locals to believe that there's going to be a major revival in its popularity next summer."]

RELEVANCE:
In this graf, talk about how this story is in the news, or why it should be in the news. This is the peg of the story, the hook that should convince the editor to give it a chance. ["This was briefly covered in the local papers: here are no more than two links to the coverage, because I know you, an editor, can Google further"]. If it hasn't been covered at all, here's a short explanation of why I am the first writer ever to talk about this ["This news never really got out of the villages surrounding the orchards, so it was a you-had-to-be-there development."]

This graf should answer the question: Why should this story be in this editor's publication, and why now?

EXPERTISE:
Here, describe why you should be writing the story. ["Personal, hands-on experience; an interest in writing about this as a wider phenomenon, rooted in agricultural and socio-economic change, a year of experience researching mango farms in UP]

EXECUTION:
Tell the editor briefly how you would like to start researching and reporting the story. [I've already researched a paper presented on the subject; have interviews planned with four mango farmers, six labourers, three salesmen at the bazaar, a local food historian, and two women who used it in their home cooking and came up with a new recipe for mango dal"]

USP: (optional)

If you have a particular connection with this story, please let the editor know. [Brief explanation is enough. "I ate a lot of these mangoes and they really do taste unique"]

FINAL ARGUMENT: (optional)
This is where you describe why you are pitching this story to this publication. ["I really love your magazine and some of your earlier stories, including "Worms: The Hidden Destroyers of Apple Health" and "Chillies: How Can We Eradicate Them From This Earth?" inspired me to think of this as a potential story.]

Don't write this if it just feels like sucking up. Just as you can tell when someone's buttering you up, most editors can, too.

ABOUT YOURSELF
Write a brief and relevant paragraph about your past experience ["In the past, my work has appeared in Flowers & Fruit, Human Health, and the Times Of Orchards. A couple of links to my most relevant work: ____, _____.

My newest story is actually about the new iPhone, which is quite different from
this one. But it's just appeared in Bitter Apple Users Magazine, here: ____"]

If you are just starting out, please say so. There is no need to explain or apologise for this. It is simply a set of facts for the editor to consider. ["This is my first time pitching a story to a publication. In my earlier life, I was a full-time plant parent. You can see some of my photos on Instagram, where I have written eloquent captions that will hopefully convince you of my quality as a writer; my Facebook page
about fruit-bearing plants is here: _____]

Note about the above for debut writers: it is very important that editors get a chance to see your work, even if that work is available on blogs or social media.

CONCLUSION:
Some version of this will always work: If this is something that interests you, please let me know. If I should have pitched this to someone else at the organisation,
apologies! I hope you can redirect me to them. Thanks in advance.

Regards,
[Your name]
[Your number]
[Link to your work online]