

The Write Pay

How to
make
money
as a
freelance
writer

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Acknowledgement

Writers for the longest time have faced the challenge of fully experiencing the joy of writing. It often feels like a choice between nurturing their craft and taking on a job that provides financial security. Unfortunately, this challenge leads many to set aside their love for writing in favor of stability.

If you are interested in understanding how you can position yourself to make a profit especially as a newbie freelance writer then you are in the right place.

Alexander Ikenna tailored this guide with you in mind, follow through to the end to be aided with all the information needed to give you an edge in your career.

Signed,

Imani Nnaemeka M.

OakSprout Editor.

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FREELANCER



If you're starting as a freelance writer, you'll be pleased to know that it's a great way to earn a decent living—if you're skilled at it. There are a variety of lucrative writing types and niches you can choose from, and a steady demand for them. While there's some concern about the market for writing being saturated, there's always plenty of room for excellent writers to thrive.

In this document, we will be laying out the path to making money as a freelance writer. But first, we will explain what freelance writing is. Then we'll outline the traits you need to have to succeed as one.

WHAT EXACTLY IS FREELANCE WRITING



Freelance writing is producing written material for several clients in exchange for pay, as opposed to simply writing for one employer.

The key thing to note is that your clients don't employ you on a full-time basis. They are contracting or outsourcing writing assignments to you as a non-staff.

You are a freelance writer if someone hires you to write their book for them, asks you to provide a single set of articles on a one-off basis, or has a long-term working relationship with you (spanning months or even years) that doesn't involve them employing you as their full-time staff.

As a freelance writer, you decide who you write for and how often you do so, and set your work schedule. You are your own boss.

TRAITS

YOU NEED TO **EXCEL** AS A FREELANCE WRITER

- ▲ A love of the written word (you should love reading, writing, and analyzing)
- ▲ A willingness to learn and improve your craft
- ▲ Internal motivation and self-discipline, both needed to do good work and keep to deadlines
- ▲ Willingness and ability to promote or market your skill and work

These four traits are must-haves. Thankfully, most of them can be acquired and improved upon. There are other things you'll need to pick up as you go, such as the ability to negotiate rates and contracts, and an eye for spotting potentially exploitative offers.

**STEPS TO MAKE
MONEY AS A
FREELANCE
WRITER**



Choose a Type of Writing

As we hinted earlier, there are several types of written material that freelance writers can specialize in. They fall into these categories:

Book Ghostwriting: This involves writing books for authors who may not be able to do so themselves.

Web Content Writing: Creating written content for website pages.

Blog Writing: Writing blog posts for blogs.

Copywriting: This means writing text for use in marketing or selling products or services.

Social Media Writing: Producing copy for social media posts.

Technical Writing: A type of written material intended to communicate complex industrial or scientific information to customers, co-workers, and other audiences.

Scriptwriting: Writing scripts for television programs, films, video games, podcasts, etc.

These are just some of the areas you can choose to work in as a freelance writer. You may go for one or a few of them.

While working in as many of these areas as possible will give you more opportunities to make money, it will take you longer to master them. Specializing in a few areas lets you master the form and style they require within a shorter period. That in turn allows you to complete writing assignments faster and put out better quality work.

Decide Whether to Niche Down or Not

You may also have to decide whether you'll write in one niche (or a few) or accept all kinds of niches.

There are as many writing niches as there are aspects of human endeavour—possibly hundreds. However, they don't all have the same money-making potential. Here is a list of some of the more popular niches that freelance writers work on:

- Digital marketing
- Health and fitness
- Beauty and personal care
- Fashion
- SaaS (Software as a Service)
- Cryptocurrency
- Personal Finance
- FinTech (Financial Technology)
- EdTech (Educational Technology)
- E-Commerce

Some freelance writers start by being generalists. They write content in (almost) every niche they're able to secure a gig in. They may then niche down after feeling their way through for a while. Others forego the generalist phase and just select niches early on.

The advantage of being a generalist is that you can explore more opportunities. However, a good number of clients prefer to work with writers who are specialists in their field. For example, some healthcare businesses will want to hire writers who either have a background in healthcare (e.g. a degree or certification in that area) or have specialized in writing healthcare content for a while. So, going with one niche (or a few) can give you an edge over generalists.

If you'd like to work in a specific niche, you should consider the following before making your choice:

Your Passion: You'll be more motivated to write if you're doing so in a niche you're passionate about. And you're likely to produce better quality work because you'll be eager to devote your energies to creating it.

Education and/or Experience: If you have a degree in an area or have considerable experience in it, you'll be more knowledgeable about it than most people who don't. You may be able to write about that area in a way that many other writers can't.

Availability of Work: Some niches present you with an abundance of opportunities (lots of writing assignments are available). Others don't. You will want to go for one that guarantees a stream of work that's steady enough for you.

Average Pay: Some niches pay better than others on average. For example, clients in FinTech tend to pay higher rates than those in, say, dog food.

Create a Portfolio

Having decided what niche you'll specialize in, your next step should be to put together your writing portfolio.

A freelance writing portfolio typically consists of sample articles from the writer who owns it. Portfolios are supposed to be representative of the best work from the persons who write them. Or, at least, they should contain examples of the kind of work that clients can expect from the writers they hire.

*But what if you don't have any writing samples yet?
How do you go about creating your portfolio?*

The first thing you'd need to do is to come up with the samples — whether they're articles, marketing copy, or other forms that represent the kind of work you want to do. You should write at least a few, so that potential clients can see the range of writing you're capable of.

If you can afford it, the next thing you'll want to do is set up a portfolio website, on which you'll publish your samples. That website could function as the go-to place for anyone who's looking for information about your freelance writing services. In that case, you'll also include such things as an "about me" page, another page that informs about your services, and some contact information.

But if you can't afford a professional website (yet), you may publish your samples on a free Wordpress or Wix website (which you can set up yourself at no cost to you), or on a platform like Medium. Make sure your bio is impressive, and include your contact information somewhere that'll be visible to visitors.

Establish a Social Media Presence

As a freelance writer, it's important that you build a personal brand that's visible to the audience you're targeting (i.e. potential clients). A big part of this is establishing a strong social media presence.

We advise that you start small, with just a couple of social media platforms—preferably LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter). Your bio should concisely explain what you do, and your posts have to present you as knowledgeable in your field. The latter comes down to sharing expert tips, relevant anecdotes, and anything else that'll enrich your audience's knowledge of your subject matter.

Make sure your branding is consistent across all platforms. Choose two or three (matching) colours that represent your brand, and use those everywhere your branded content appears. This allows your audience to recognize you quickly.

You will also want to follow and network with other freelance writers. Comment on their posts, re-share their posts when you think they've made good points, and try to build mutually beneficial relationships with them where possible. There's always a chance that a few of them will share information about available gigs and that you'd be one of the first to know.

Remember that it often takes time to build a profile on social media. Just commit to it for the long term, and continue posting informative and interesting content. It'll eventually become a valuable tool in your freelance writing toolbox.

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Set Your Rates

There are several ways to charge for your freelance writing assignments:

Flat Rate: You charge fees per project or assignment. For example, you may demand a flat fee of \$60 per article or \$5,000 for a book you ghostwrite.

Hourly Rate: This means charging per hour spent working on a project. If your charge per hour of a writing project is \$100 and you'll complete it in 2 hours, the total charge would be \$200.

Word Count: Here, you charge per word written. If your rate is \$0.10 per word, and you're going to write a 1,000-word blog post, the total pay you'll get is \$100.

Rate per Page: You charge per page you write. This is often used for projects like novels, e-books, and website content

When setting rates for your writing, you need to consider the following:

- ▲ How long it takes you to write
- ▲ Your level of experience (the more experienced you are, the higher the rates you can charge)
- ▲ Whether the work is a one-off or an ongoing project (freelance writers typically charge higher per unit of one-off projects than for ongoing work)
- ▲ Deadlines (the shorter the deadline, the higher the charge, other factors held constant)
- ▲ Type of work (for example, highly technical pieces often attract higher rates compared to less technical ones)
- ▲ Type of client (ideally, you should charge lower rates for clients that are easier to work with than clients who demand multiple revisions, for example)

Hunt for Gigs

Sometimes, clients will come to you, either because they've been referred to you by someone else, or they've seen your work or post somewhere and were impressed by it. But quite often (and especially when you're starting out), you'll have to seek them out yourself.

There are several ways to find clients. We explain the better-known ones below:

Freelance Platforms: Freelance platforms are websites on which you can register as a freelance writer, bid for gigs, and connect with potential clients. Popular freelance platforms include Fiverr, Upwork, Freelancer, PeoplePerHour, and Toptal. Your profiles on these platforms have to be impressive enough to stand out from most of the rest if you're going to increase your chances of getting hired.

Job Boards: These are websites on which clients (usually businesses) post jobs, allowing writers to apply for them. Examples are ProBlogger, Peak Freelance, FlexJobs, BloggingPro, Contenta, Indeed, and LinkedIn Jobs.

Social Media: Individuals and businesses in need of writers often put out requests on social media. You may be able to find them by searching for posts that use keywords or hashtags related to such requests.

For example, on X (formerly Twitter), you may look for posts that use the words "freelance writer", "looking for a (insert your niche) writer", "looking for pitches", "call for pitches", "writing gigs", "writing opportunities", etc.; or the hashtags #needawriter #writingjobs #lookingforwriters.

Another tip:

You can curate lists on X that comprise of other freelance writers, brands in your niche, and freelance job accounts.

Individual accounts and businesses on LinkedIn post requests for freelance writers quite frequently. These sorts of posts are easier to find if you're following the right people on that platform—that is, persons and businesses that work in your niche (or niches you're interested in).

Cold Pitches: This involves making a list of potential clients, and pitching your writing services to them, usually via email. If you're a SaaS writer, you could compile a list of, say, 500 SaaS companies and startups that may need your services, get the email addresses of relevant decision makers in those firms, and email them an inquiry about their need for a writer.

Cold pitches work best when you've researched the businesses you intend to reach out to, and have understood their need. For instance, they may not have a blog or their blog may not have been updated for months or years. When you know what your potential clients might need, you'll be better able to offer your services to them in a manner that will convince them to hire you.

A good idea would be to pitch to marketing agencies. They work directly with businesses that want content and other marketing material. You could become a marketing agency's go-to person when they want to outsource their clients' writing projects.

It's worth noting that most pitches do not get a positive response (or any response at all). But, the more pitches you make, the better your chances of getting a favourable reply. The likelihood of a positive response also depends on the quality of your pitch. Thankfully, many resources on the web explain how to write a good pitch and provide samples you could emulate.

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Improve Your Craft

If you're able to improve the quality of your writing and the speed with which you write, you'll very likely land higher-paying jobs.

Practice is the key to getting better at writing.

You could also read books and web resources that teach the art of writing, and try to implement the tips and strategies they talk about.

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Ask for Referrals

When you complete projects for your clients, make sure to ask them for referrals.

Do this especially when your clients are happy with your work. It's hard to over-emphasize how important referrals are.

In many cases, they constitute a large bulk of the work that freelance writers get. So they are a great way to increase your income.

CON CLU SION

Freelance writing offers creatives a great way to earn a decent living. It has good prospects, with growing demand and a wide range of niches. If you're great at writing, there's much work available for you, and a good deal of money to make from them — if you know how to find (or attract) clients.

In this guide, we have shared the steps needed to begin as a freelance writer. We have run through some of the niches you can work in, ways to create a portfolio, and how to build your brand. We have also discussed the various ways to set rates and find clients.

Follow the tips we've covered here, and you'll be well on your way to succeeding in your freelance writing pursuits. Godspeed!



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