

Getting Started As A Freelance Writer



Becoming a freelance writer is a dream of many people. The good thing is that getting started as a freelance writer has never been easier or more in demand.

If you want to freelance as a writer, you'll need to understand the different ways a freelance writer can earn money, plus whether it's the right choice for you as a career. You also need to know how to get better at doing it so that you can grow your income and maintain it long term.

What Is a Freelance Writer? Can You Make a Full-Time Living?

A freelance writer is a solopreneur or business owner that sells the service of writing. They may write either for themselves or as a contractor writing on spec for other business owners or authors, or for themselves as a self-published writer. As a freelancer, you're on your own. You'll have no boss, and you won't have to sign in at a specific time.

However, as a freelance writer, you will have specific deliverables due at particular times. You'll have to be self-motivated enough to stick to your timelines with your clients, as well as to continue marketing for new jobs to have any hope of getting paid enough.

Making a Full-Time Living

As you think about this process, you may be wondering whether you can make a full-time living as a freelance writer or not, and the answer is yes.

You can earn as much money as you want to as a freelance writer. Many freelance writers earn multiple six figures writing from home (or the beach), while some like to keep it part-time and make "grocery money." How much you make will be determined by many factors – from the genre you choose to work in, to your skill level, and how fast you can produce deliverables that are acceptable to your clients.

As a freelance writer, you can work for a large company that likes to hire out their copywriting or produce content writing, such as ClearVoice.com, or you can work for a large publishing house that hires freelancers to ghostwrite part or all of a series that they've already planned and outlined. Alternatively, you can work for yourself and self-publish the writing that you make up and plan on your own and sell it directly to your customers.

Honestly, any type of writing that you are good at doing can be done on a freelance basis, and you can earn a full-time living doing it. The main thing is to work out how much you need to earn and only do things that make that possible.

The options are many. Your job is to figure out how much you need to earn, what type of writing you do best, who needs the kind of writing you do, and then the know-how

and ability to put yourself in front of your audience so that they can take your offers when you make them.

As a freelancer, you'll be doing this on your own, with no boss to tell you when, where, what, why, or even how. Are you ready to be a freelancer? Do you have the temperament to quickly write the copy you've been hired to write, while also marketing your services?

Signs That Freelance Writing Is Right for You

To become a freelancer of any kind, including being a freelance writer, you need to have specific characteristics in your personality that you are willing to display or learn. Characteristics such as self-reliance and practical writing skills are essential, not to mention a willingness to find your own customers and audience without needing someone to tell you what to do at every moment of the day.

You Are Self-Motivated

You don't always have to be the cheerleader in the room, but you do need to have the ability to tell yourself to get to work and complete a certain amount of work each day so that you can get paid regularly.

You're not going to be able to rely on motivation that doesn't exist. If in the past, you've had a hard time sticking to doing something without someone telling you to do it, evaluate this about yourself before you start.

You Have the Time

If you already have a job and other responsibilities, you'll need to dedicate some of your time regularly to not only the writing process but also on the marketing process so that you can find clients.

Even if you have only an hour a day, you can still become a freelance writer, but this limitation will inform what type of writing you can do, and for whom. A lot of other factors will come into play too, and as you make a choice of the kind of writing you'll do as a freelancer, all these issues make a difference.

You're Confident about Your Skills

You need to be sure that you can write at least to the level you need to write for the projects you want to work on. You don't need to write at a PhD. level if you're writing young adult fiction as a freelancer, for example. You only need to write at the level the audience is reading at. Most of the time, writing at about an 8th-grade level is good enough.

You don't even need to be the best at grammar if you're writing copy to sell someone's widgets. Poor grammar is often used in copywriting because it's about how it looks and how it persuades – not how the English teacher wants it to look. Each skill set is slightly different for the various writing genres, but you only need what you need. Don't make it harder than it must be.

You Are Flexible

If you're willing to start in one place because you know that you can work toward the place where you want to be, then you're flexible enough for freelance writing. For example, you may want to freelance as a recipe creator for a famous chef, but right now, the best work you can find is writing recipes for an unknown blogger. This is perfectly fine and probably the best thing for you, because you'll learn how to develop your process to be faster and better over time.

You Have the Financial Resources to Get Started

As a freelance writer, it will likely take you some time to get paid. It takes time to perform the service and finish the project as well as time to get clients. Even if you choose to write for yourself, publishing your own work on a blog or publishing print on demand books or digital books, it takes some time to get a product ready to sell and to start earning income. Therefore, you need to be able to support yourself in the meantime.

You Have Received Positive Feedback Regarding Your Skills as a Writer

If you've ever written at any level before, freelance writing might work for you. If you've written correspondence as a secretary or receptionist (or the PTA president), if you've updated blogs or websites, or if you've written a paper in school and someone told you that you're a good writer or complimented your work, then you may have the skill to be a writer. If you're not sure, write something right now in the field you want to work in, ask someone to read it and see what they say.

You Have the Education to Become a Writer

Even if you've done nothing other than writing to get your degree, it's essential to understand that you can become a writer. You just need to figure out which genre you want to write and get started. You already know the skill now. It's time to put it into practice. While there are differences between learning to do it and doing it, you will be able to proceed.

You Have Writing Experience

If you have any writing experience, then you already know more about the process of writing as a freelancer than most. Use your experience to help steer you in getting

started working for yourself. Even if you have no experience yet, you can begin gaining experience right now just by starting your own blog or writing in your journal.

You Have Business Experience and Knowledge

If you have any type of business experience, life experience, or knowledge about something that you're passionate about, you can write about it. Whether you can turn that into a freelance writing career or not depends on the niche, of course, but it's always possible.

If you can write about it and someone's interested, it can usually be monetized. But do remember that a freelance writing career is still a business, and all rules of business apply.

If you are willing to work on your writing skills, learn about marketing, and deliver clients the work you promised on time and on spec, you can become a popular freelance writer. As mentioned, many freelance writers earn six figures and more. How much you make will depend entirely on the genre you choose and how hard you want to work.

Freelance Writing Genres and Formats to Consider

There are many different genres that you can get involved in as a freelance writer. It really does depend on your desires, your skillset, and whether you're willing to do the work necessary in the genre. You also need to be able to produce the formats asked for by the client or that are needed for the system you use.

Magazine and Newspaper Writing

Every magazine and newspaper that you pick up need writers. You can look inside the magazine or newspaper to find the directions for how to get writing gigs for that publication. Follow the information correctly so that you don't waste your time, because they won't waste theirs by looking at incorrectly submitted information.

Journal Writing

Some journals take paid work as well, from medical journals to mechanical journals, and in every single trade and niche you can imagine. You can see a list of journals on the government website called ERIC. Each journal has information inside about how to write for them. The good thing is, if you do get hired, you'll likely get hired more than once. (<https://eric.ed.gov/?Journals>)

Self-Publishing Options

You can also sideline as a freelance writer writing for yourself and self-publishing your own work. You can self-publish easily today on sites like Amazon Kindle or even sell

your writing right off your own website by setting up a shopping cart.
(<https://kdp.amazon.com/>)

Fiction Writing Opportunities

If you want to write fiction as a freelancer, there are opportunities for this too. From writing screenplays to writing for stage plays to writing books, there are many opportunities for creative types who aren't as concerned with having their name on the project as they are with having done the project.

Non-Fiction Writing Opportunities

From writing factual articles to writing how-to articles, non-fiction writing opportunities abound. Many of your favorite websites might hire freelance writers. Scroll down to the bottom and look at the menu to find out if they're hiring writers.

Blog Writing and Article Writing

This is one of the most accessible genres to break into when it comes to freelance writing because it's the most sought after. Bloggers don't have time to keep their websites and blogs full of exciting content, so they outsource it. You can get started as a blog writer with clients on any of the freelance sites. You can also start your own blog to write on and earn advertising and affiliate dollars through your promotions.

Sales Pages and Copywriting

Every single website you go to needs copywriting on their sales pages, product descriptions, and offers. If you're good at this type of persuasive writing, you can market yourself to anyone who needs this type of writing.

This type of writing is very different than most of the freelance writing you can do, but it's also a specialized high-price service. Many sales page copywriters make thousands per sales page.

Landing Pages and Product Description Writing

You can niche down even further with the writing you want to do for others as a freelancer, by just doing landing pages and product description writing. Many landing pages aren't full-on sales pages but still require copywriting skills – as do product descriptions. For example, you may want to create a different landing page for your clients, depending on where they saw your link.

SEO-Focused Writing

Search engine optimization is vital on social media platforms, as well as in blog posts, website pages, and more. If you learn all you can about search engine optimization, you

can offer your services to clean up the writing someone else did to make it more SEO friendly. Or you can write the SEO-friendly content yourself. If you're good at making titles, headers, and using keywords in a natural way, SEO writing can be very lucrative.

Ad Copy Writing

Writing ads is very different from writing a blog post or other types of writing. It requires exceptional skills. If you are skilled in writing this type of persuasive copy for ads, then this can be a very lucrative niche for you.

Outlining and Script Writing

Many people who are video starters, spokespeople, or podcast or radio personalities, need help with their scriptwriting as well as outlining the information they want to share with others.

Recipe Creation and Writing

Food bloggers, YouTube stars, cookbook authors, and more need people who create recipes – sometimes to their specifications, sometimes to your own. You'd write the recipe, test it out, and maybe even photograph it for the people who need them.

Case Studies and White Paper Writing

Writing case studies and white papers take a certain type of organizational and writing skill that is specific to this type of writing. You'll collect the information and put it together for them in a way that tells the story they want to impart to their audience.

Technical Writing

This type of writing is used too, often internally in businesses and to teach someone something. You might write how to use specific software, how to onboard as a new client, or how to do anything that your client wants you to teach.

Newsletter, Email Marketing, and Brochure Writing

Businesses need newsletters, email marketing messages, and even brochures, today more than ever. If you understand how this type of marketing writing works, then this might be a niche that you can get into.

The career of freelance writing is wide open. If you start to look around, you'll notice that writing is used in almost everything. You see it in the nightly news broadcast as the announcer reads the prompter; you see it whenever anyone gives a speech; it's in the advertisements you view and the stories you read; and you see it each night when you read your child a bedtime story. Writing is all around you. Because of this, it's a lucrative career to start.

Developing Your Writing Skills

As a freelance writer, it's up to you to do what you can to develop and improve your writing skills. As you write more, you will become better at it, so the first thing you want to realize is that just by getting gigs, you're going to be improving and developing your writing skills. This will mean that you can take on more gigs too.

Take a Course

There are numerous courses you can take through your local community college or university, or online through a site like Udemy.com, to help you develop your writing skills. Courses are a great way to give you the structure you need to learn more, but it's not always necessary to have a course to accomplish learning. However, it can be a great shortcut to learning if you know what types of things you need to work on.

Get More Feedback

Once you start working with clients, or you have readers that read your work before you publish, make it a habit to get feedback. Send a message to them automatically asking for feedback so that you can improve your writing.

Learn from Others

There are people who are already freelance writers making a lot of money doing this. Because of that, you know it's possible. And because of that, you can follow them and learn from them. Don't feel as if you must reinvent the wheel to become a successful freelance writer.

Hire a Coach

If you really want to develop your writing skills, hire a writing coach that is skilled in the type of writing you already do. They can help you learn what you need to work on to get better at your genre of writing.

Join a Community

It always helps to build a community around the things you love in your life. Join a writing community of other writers who enjoy the same type of writing and career you do. They'll share their trials and tribulations, and you can learn from each other.

Communicate More with Your Clients

You'll get better at producing the work your clients want when you open the communication with them. Talk to them about their expectations, about whether you met them, and what you can do better.

Get More Comfortable with the Writing Process

The thing that many people don't realize when they first want to write as a freelancer is that there is a process of writing. When you learn the process and follow the process, you become better at doing it expertly.

Use the Tools of the Trade

Today, aside from a pen and paper, there are tools of the writing trade that you probably will want to invest in. A good computer or laptop, an ergonomic area to work in, writing software, editing software, and so forth will all make your writing life go much more smoothly.

Work on the Other Skills You Need to Be a Freelancer Too

In addition to working on and developing your writing skills, you need to continuously work on the other skills you need to be a professional freelance writer. Skills like time management, editing, researching, technology, networking, and marketing are all essential skills for the freelancer.

Practice

The best way to improve how you write is to write more often. There is no such thing as writer's block because a writer writes. What if you went to the pharmacy to ask them for a recommendation for medication, and they said, "Oh sorry, I have a block today." This would not be acceptable. To become a better writer and develop the writing skills that will carry you to success, you need to write as often as possible.

Developing your writing skills is a process, just like learning anything. Start where you are, work on improving what you're already good at, and then dive in and work on the things you're not good at doing – while focusing on what you are good at doing naturally so that you can start making money from your writing now.

How to Get Paid for Your Work

Becoming a freelance writer isn't just about the romance of being a writer. It's about the financial facts of earning a living from a skill that you are good at and like performing. Because of this, you need to know in advance exactly how to get paid for your work as a freelance writer.

- **Get Your Financial Life in Order** – You need to set up your bills so that you're working toward paying off your consumer debt and managing the money you do have to pay all your bills and responsibilities on time. Know what you need and have a plan for it in terms of investing and living.
- **Set Up Your Business Bank Account and Payment Processing System** – It's essential to keep your business income and your personal spending totally separate. To do this, set up a business bank account, accept payment to that account only, then transfer money to your personal account for personal use only. Sign up for PayPal, Stripe.com, and any other payment processing system you'd like to use. The more options you offer your clients, the better.
- **Create Solid Contracts and Yes, Sign Them** – Write a basic contract and change only what needs to be changed to make it personalized for each of your clients. Ensure that the content states what you're responsible for and what they're responsible for, from A to Z. Address how work is performed and how it's paid and what the deliverables will consist of. Be very specific in the contract and ensure that you both sign them. You can use a system like Hellodoc.com for signatures.
- **Set Up a Process and a System for Billing and Payment** – Make the invoicing, billing, and payment process as simple as possible. You can send an invoice via email, submit it via your project management system, or even in an old-fashioned way via snail mail. However you do it, do it consistently so that it all runs smoothly.
- **Consider Passive and Recurring Income Options Too** – Don't forget that as a writer, you can offer products and services on a passive as well as a recurring basis. Most invoicing programs now let you automatically invoice on a recurring basis. If you like to create content for medical newsletters, for example, you could create a private label version and sell that repeatedly to others all over the country.

Getting paid for what you do is an important component of setting up your business model. Setting up processes and systems that ensure that you can work with the other person from the start of the project until the completion of the project ensures that everything goes smoothly.

How to Market Yourself

You know you have the skillset, and you're excited about being a freelance writer. You've done the work to set up a system and processes that enable you to onboard new clients, get the work done with them in an organized and timely manner, and you know how to get paid. Now it's time to get the word out there and market your service.

Word-of-Mouth

One of the most powerful methods of marketing ever known to man is word-of-mouth marketing. That is the main reason sites like Yelp and other review sites are so popular. People like knowing what others say about any product or service that they are using.

Your friends and family love you, so if you tell them about what you're doing, they'll tell others that they know; and before you know it, you'll find business through them.

Develop an Online Presence

Build your own website, and set up profiles on social media platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, and more – wherever your audience likes to hang out. That is where you should be making offers and having discussions with others. Focus your online profiles on you as a freelance writer so that they're all professional.

Self-Publish

As a freelance writer, you don't have to wait for a client to make money or write. Instead, spend the time you set aside to work for clients that you don't have yet on working for yourself. Publish in your own name on Medium.com, your blog, in the local newspaper and local magazines. You can also publish your book via print on demand or via Kindle through Amazon. These actions can help your clients evaluate you through the work you've already done. A book can be your calling card.

Get Good at Writing Queries

As a freelance writer, you'll have to find the people who are hiring for the type of work you want to do. Go to their sites and submit samples of your work and inquire as to what they need in a writer. Submit queries and track the answers you get. The more you submit, the more jobs you'll get.

Create a Marketing Funnel

Once you have your website set up and social media set up, you can create a marketing funnel. You'll need to understand the buying cycle of your customers so that you can create content for them at each place they are in their journey to persuade them to use your services.

Remember that your job as a freelance writer is to attract your customers to you. You want them to use your system or product (in this case writing) to solve their problems as it relates to your offers and fulfills their need for writing. When you don't have a client, use the time to find your customers, engage with them, and show them your offers.

How to Get Started Freelance Writing

Now that we've looked at what it takes to be a freelance writer, here is what you need to do to get started right now. To be successful at anything in life, it's imperative that you know who you are, don't put too much pressure on yourself to make it big, and are able to make plans and set goals that work.

- **Know Yourself** – This might seem like a strange thing to say, but the truth is, only you know deep down if you're willing to stick to a set of steps to achieve a specific goal or not. For example, if you know you hate calling people on the phone, don't do that; find another way around it.
- **Start Small** – You don't need to quit your job and go full time into freelance writing to test it out to see if it's for you. That's one thing that's awesome about this career. You can start with just one job to find out if it's for you or not.
- **Set Up Your Home Office and Business Legalities** – Follow the best legal steps as well as the best comfort steps that you can afford for starting your business. Get the right tools, the right chair, and, if needed, a business license so you can open a business bank account and open a PayPal account to accept payments.
- **Practice Writing Every Day** – If you have determination, you can work for clients five hours a week. And even if you don't have clients, you need to write during those five hours a week that you set aside for writing. This is the only way you will become a good writer: write.
- **Invest in Yourself** – Spend money on tools of the trade, training, education, courses, masterminds, and other investments that help you become better at whatever you need to become better at doing.
- **Set Goals for Everything** – When you get good at goal setting, you will also become good at implementing. Goal setting properly includes figuring out the steps needed to reach the goal.
- **Network with Other Writers** – Being a freelance writer can be lonely for some people. If you network with other writers, not only do you open up a whole new world of friendship, but sometimes you open up new connections for information that you may need too.
- **Persevere and Never Give Up** – No matter how many times someone tells you no, if you really want to be something when you "grow up", including a freelance writer, don't give up. Set up a process and steps based on your goals that enable you to build the freelance writing business you desire.

Freelance writing as a career is an excellent opportunity for anyone with the right skills. If you can write at the level needed for the work you want to produce, you can become a profitable freelance writer. You just need to get started.