

Get paid to write!

FabJob Guide to  
**Become a  
Freelance  
Writer**



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## 1. Introduction

You may have dreamed of “becoming a writer” ever since you were a child, but today is the day that you’ll find out how to turn this vision into reality.

As you read the *FabJob Guide to Become a Freelance Writer*, you’ll be amazed at the numerous options that are spread out before you as you carve out your own fabulous career. You can write to motivate, to persuade, to entertain, to educate, to inform and to clarify. The list goes on and on – and only you know the ways in which you intend to use your writing skills in your career.

Because each piece of original writing is unique, each writer creates a unique career. Here is what freelancer Deanna Adams has to say about what she loves about hers:

*“The creativity of it, making something worth reading that didn’t exist before. To take an image, idea or story you have in your head and – through*

*words – implant it into someone else’s. That’s just so cool! To weave words together and work at it to make it better and better until you read it and just can’t believe that actually came from you.”*

It doesn’t get any better than that! So, get ready. This guide will provide you with the step by step advice that you’ll need to fulfill your dream of becoming a freelance writer. Let’s get started!

## **1.1 Freelance Writing as a Career**

### **1.1.1 Types of Freelance Writing**

Writing is one of the primary ways in which people communicate information – and share hopes and dreams, goals and visions. As a freelance writer, there are multiple avenues that you can choose to pursue – and many freelancers choose to pursue several of them, rather than just one. In the big picture, though, there are two main routes and, really, there is no reason why you can’t choose to do both kinds of writing!

#### **Writing for Publication**

The type of freelance writing that most people are familiar with is writing for publication. When you write for publication, you may write articles or other pieces (such as essays, columns or reviews) for publication in magazines, newspapers, newsletters, websites, books, or even encyclopedias.

If you choose to write for publication, you will work with editors, copyeditors, fact checkers and, on occasion, directly with publishers. You will be paid per word or per piece written. This type of freelance writing is covered in detail in chapter 3.

#### **Writing for Clients**

This type of freelance writing involves writing for clients such as corporations, non-profit organizations, government agencies, or even individuals who want to hire a writer. If you choose this route, your writing work will depend on your clients’ needs and your own interests and skills.

For example, many freelancers are hired by clients to write marketing and advertising materials such as brochures, press releases, web pages and more. Freelancers are also hired to write grant applications, proposals, speeches, training manuals – or anything else that a client needs written.

If you choose to write for clients, then you will work with advertising or marketing firms or directly with clients. Pay is usually an hourly or per project rate, although there may be other pay arrangements depending on the client and the work. This type of freelance writing is covered in detail in chapter 4.

## 1.1.2 The Writing Industry

The United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, projects that, overall, jobs for writers will grow about 3 percent from 2012 to 2022, slower than the average for all occupations. “Writers and authors who have adapted to online media and are comfortable writing for and working with a variety of electronic and digital tools should have an advantage in finding work,” according to the 2012 U.S. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.

Writers (known as *copywriters*) who focus on creating effective webpages for businesses are working in a significant growth area, as well. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also states that:

“Opportunities should be best for technical writers and those with training in a specialized field. Demand for technical writers and writers with expertise in areas such as law, medicine, or economics is expected to increase because of the continuing expansion of scientific and technical information and the need to communicate it to others. Legal, scientific, and technological developments and discoveries generate demand for people to interpret information for a more general audience. Rapid growth and change in the high-technology and electronics industries result in a great need for people to write users’ guides, instruction manuals, and training materials. “

In addition to creating more opportunities for writers, the Internet and other technology allows writers to work from home. You can now live practically anywhere where you can get a reliable Internet connection and work as a writer. In other words, previous geographic limitations

that used to hold back some writers from succeeding are no longer a significant factor to consider.

You also are not limited by your background. Some people would like to write for a living, but assume that they need a journalism degree – or, at a minimum, a degree in a related field, such as English, communications, creative writing or marketing. As you read this guide, you’ll discover that’s not true. In fact, there are as many ways to become a writer as there are writers.

### **1.1.3 Benefits of This Career**

By deciding to become a freelance writer, you truly are choosing a dream career. Benefits of this career include:

#### **Meeting Intriguing People and Visiting Fascinating Places**

As a writer, every day of life is an adventure!

Because of my freelance writing career, I’ve been able to talk to Nora Roberts about the publication of her 100th book, I’ve listened to Toni Morrison as she gave a speech in her hometown after winning the Nobel Prize for Literature, and I got to ask Mary Elizabeth “Tipper” Gore about the breast cancer initiatives she was promoting while her husband was vice president of the United States.

I descended three quarters of a mile into the earth while exploring the Seneca Caverns for a magazine article and I attended the United States National Boomerang Tournament, meeting lots of fun and quirky people there (did I mention “quirky?”) – and I’ve even participated in a television show filmed by ESPN, thanks to the biography that I wrote on controversial baseball player, “Shoeless” Joe Jackson.

And, one more thing. I also got to give a presentation on Shoeless Joe at the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York – and then I got to watch a World Series game in the hallway where the plaques of hall of fame players hang. For a baseball fan, that truly was a dream come true!

The bottom line is that writers often have access to politicians, celebrities and other interesting people – and, if that sounds good to you, then this is an excellent career to pursue.

## Working from Home

*“Now that I’m a parent, I can spend more time with my son that I couldn’t if I were working outside of my house. I can also choose to cut my hours back without having to negotiate with a boss for ‘flex-time’ or part-time hours. I’m the only boss I have to ask for ‘time off.’ Now that I’m a parent, I work 10-15 hours a week and make almost as much as I did working fulltime – and that’s an incentive for me to work more efficiently, too.”*

— Kelly James-Enger

The great majority of freelance writers work from home – and love every minute of it! The money that you used to spend on gasoline and car maintenance can now largely stay in your pocket – and your bank account – and, by telecommuting, you’ll be kinder to the environment. Rather than needing enough good suits and/or other types of professional clothing for daily trips to the office, you’ll get by with one or two decent outfits to wear when you’re meeting with clients. (And, just think of all the money you’ll save on dry cleaning bills!)

Kelly James-Enger has this to add about her freelance writing career. “I get to set my own hours,” she says. “Yes, there may be times I have to work nights or weekends, but I decide when I’m going to work. I also love having left the commuting hassle behind and that I no longer have to wear business clothes every day. And yes, some days I do work in my pajamas.”

## Low Start-Up Costs

A freelance writing business is remarkably inexpensive to start up, when compared to most other careers. The main piece of equipment that you need is a quality computer, with a printer and a reliable Internet connection. It’s entirely possible that you already own that! You can set up an office at home with a desk, a chair, a bookcase and a filing cabinet, and then fill in optional items as your business begins to grow.

## Financial Rewards

According to the United States Department of Labor, as of May 2012 the median pay for salaried writers working is \$55,940 per year, with the highest ten percent earning more than \$117,860. So, there are excellent financial opportunities available to you in your writing business!

As a freelance writer, you may come upon unexpected financial bonuses, too. For a few years, I interviewed authors, editors and agents for the Writer's Club on America Online. One morning, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that a Canadian company was willing to pay me \$2,000 to have the right to also use these interviews on their website – and, since I owned the rights, I sold them. (That \$2,000 is how we got new carpeting for our downstairs!)

Meanwhile, Kelly James-Enger points out that she makes a “lot of money selling reprints—that is, offering rights to stories that have already appeared in print. This is pretty much ‘free money’ in that I can make as much as \$500/hour, plus it’s fun to see how many times I can reprint a piece—and watch the checks add up.” She also adds that she “loves getting royalty checks! Money in the mail for work you did years ago—nothing better.”

## Making a Difference

As a writer, you may also have opportunities to make a difference in other people's lives. Perhaps, by writing journalistic pieces about a promising new test for cancer, you can help people get earlier diagnoses and increase their chances to be cured. Maybe you'll write an expose about an unethical financial investment firm that stops people from investing – and losing – their money with that firm. Or maybe you can share information about fundraising walks to raise money to fight hunger and, through your passionate prose, inspire people to participate in those walks with all their hearts.

There is no better feeling than knowing that something you did made a positive difference in other people's lives – and, as a writer, you'll have that opportunity.

## It's Just . . . Really Cool

Really, really cool.

### 1.2 Inside This Guide

The *FabJob Guide to Become a Freelance Writer* offers expert advice in a step-by-step manner to help you get started and succeed as a freelance writer. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, competition for writing jobs is expected to remain keen through the year 2022. So your investment in this guide will pay off when you are competing with less informed individuals.

Chapter 2 (Getting Ready) provides vital information about developing your skills so that you can succeed as a freelance writer. It begins by outlining the skills you will need to succeed as a freelance writer, then offers resources for developing those skills. It also explains how to get writing experience, learn from other writers, and educate yourself through writing courses or self-study.

If you want to write for publication, you will learn how in chapter 3 (Writing for Publication). It describes the different types of publications you could write for, offers advice on choosing a writing specialty, then gives practical advice on working with an editor. You will learn how to find and contact editors to get writing assignments, plus what to do once you have a writing assignment.

If you want to write for clients, chapter 4 (Writing for Clients) will give you the information you need to get hired by corporations and other clients. It explains what types of clients you can work for, the best and worst ways to find clients, how to respond to inquiries, and how to get hired by corporate clients. The chapter also provides information about preparing a contract and advice on working with clients.

Chapter 5 (Starting Your Own Freelance Writing Business) offers practical business advice. As a freelancer, you will be a small business owner, and this chapter can help you prepare for each step along the way. It covers exciting decisions you'll make when starting your business – such as whether to incorporate, where to set up your office, and what to name your business – and offers practical advice on financial matters including setting your fees and getting paid.

Finally, the information in chapter 6 (Marketing Your Writing Business) can help you build a profitable freelance writing business. This chapter includes information about a variety of marketing tools and techniques you can use – from creating a portfolio to getting free publicity for your writing business. Like the other chapters in this guide, it offers samples you can adapt to use in your own freelance writing business.

When you're finished with this guide you will know what step to take next and where to go from there. By applying what you learn here, it's just a matter of time before you'll be where you want to be – in a rewarding career as a successful freelance writer.

**You have reached the end of the free sample of the *FabJob Guide to Become a Freelance Writer*. To order and download the complete guide go to <https://fabjob.com/program/become-freelance-writer/>.**