

Chapter 1

Freelance Writing

Today And Tomorrow

I **mag**ine opening a business that takes very little money to start. You can work in your pajamas, if you want. You do most, if not all, of your work from your own home. You choose your work hours.

Welcome to the world of freelance writing! Here's a business opportunity that offers all of the above, plus many other benefits. You operate your own business, choose assignments, get your work done, and collect your fees. The trip to the bank always makes you smile.

The world of freelance writing is wide, competitive and open. One of its benefits is the ease of getting started. No matter in what area you choose to work, you can quickly offer your services as a freelancer.

In many businesses it takes weeks or months (if not a year or more) of planning before you can start your enterprise. It doesn't work that way in freelancing. Getting started as a freelancer in most fields, including writing, is fast and easy. You can literally start this morning—and be earning income this afternoon. Freelancing is often associated with journalism and the publishing industry because writers, editors, graphic artists and photographers often work as freelancers. Because it's popular in many areas, consultants, coaches and mentors often work as freelancers. Many computer programmers, database developers and application consultants work as freelancers. So you'll never be alone.

By using the internet to communicate, freelancer writers have extended their services and can seek assignments worldwide. Freelancing today often involves working with clients who are not located nearby. And even when the client is close at hand, e-mail and phone calls are still usually the means of communication between client and freelancer.

Freelancers are often confused with independent or temporary workers. Independent workers are not employees, but they're often bound to one company or client. Freelancers seek work and assignments from various clients. This is what makes a freelancer unique. The freelancer works until a project is complete and moves on, looking for another assignment from another client or source. Many freelance writers, however, do have enduring relationships with some clients.

A freelancer is simply a worker pursuing a profession without a formal commitment to, or employment contract with, any one person or entity. Freelancers develop clients and contacts, and work on projects as needed. Typical freelancers are fiercely independent, choosing to do the project work or assignments during their chosen hours. All freelancers work on a deadline, a predefined time when

Fun Fact

The term "freelancer" was first used by Sir Walter Scott in his well-known historical romance *Ivanhoe* to describe a "medieval mercenary warrior."



the work must be completed and turned in to the client. The freelancer is then paid for the work completed.

Many freelancing assignments include a degree of creativity. While some assignments require exacting work, often freelancers add their own creative inspirations to the finished product. A writer uses words to develop an interesting magazine article. A photographer uses an artistic eye to produce images that convey a message

through the photograph. Programmers often use special tricks to make their computer applications easier to use.

Self-employment offers great autonomy, freedom of expression and flexible scheduling. This is what attracts freelancers to the freelancing lifestyle. However, income can fluctuate and be uncertain at times. The continuous, time-consuming search for new clients can also be stressful.

Earning Potential

Freelancing offers journalists, authors, and writers excellent earning potential. Yet many freelancers don't earn as much as they could because they operate their writing businesses poorly. They don't properly market their services or expertise. They fail to seek more lucrative opportunities and overlook obvious assignments that could enhance their income. Freelance writers who properly operate their writing businesses, market themselves as experts, and seek new opportunities can earn more than \$100,000 per year.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are vast opportunities for writers, editors, and others working in print media. From reporters to journalists, technical writers to editors, the medium salary ranges from \$40K to \$75K for those employed by companies and organizations.

The overall outlook for most writing and editing jobs is expected to be competitive because many people with writing or journalism training are attracted to the field. On the surface, this may sound discouraging. But there are plenty of opportunities now, and there will be in the future, too.

Kinds Of Freelancing

Are you looking to fill some free time? Do you want to earn extra money? Some freelancers work only to supplement their income. They pursue small, part-time jobs that produce nominal income.

The Many Titles Of Nonfiction Writers

Nonfiction writers are called many things. Because of writing specialties, the titles can get specific. Some the titles assigned to writers are:

- ▲ Copywriter
- ▲ Sportswriter
- ▲ Journalist
- ▲ Travel writer
- ▲ Outdoors writer
- ▲ Medical writer
- ▲ Correspondent
- ▲ Stringer
- ▲ Columnist

The variety of titles holds true in many areas of freelancing, which may be why there are not many readily available statistics about the field. Because freelancers can adopt many different titles, it's not easy to keep track of them.

Are you planning to be a full-time freelancer? Is your goal to be self-employed? Do you want to maximize your income and take on exciting assignments? Many freelancers do just that. They work at building a long-term professional practice, one that is capable of producing ongoing and significant income for years.

Most freelancers work alone, but employ other freelancers when needed. For example, photographers who accept wedding assignments often engage a second photographer. The second photographer is hired for a few hours to cover a limited assignment. Writers sometimes employ copyeditors to fine-tune books or articles before they submit the finished work. Keep in mind that you might want to work as a freelancer who assists other freelancers. By doing this, finding work is usually easier.

Bright Idea

While your schedule is up to you to set, you're often at the mercy of others. Use an appointment book to set up interviews, meetings and phone calls. The better you can master scheduling your time and your work, the more successful you can be as a freelancer.



The Market For Freelancers

There are various reasons why a client hires a freelancer. They include:

▲ **The project is temporary.** The client only needs additional work done for a specific period of time. For example, a new products directory is being published.

▲ **Specific expertise is required.** The client needs precise knowledge as part of a project or task. The client—or the client’s staff—doesn’t have that expertise and needs it to complete the project. An example might be writing copy for a computer company’s website.

▲ **Specific equipment isn’t available.** The freelancer often uses his or her own equipment and doesn’t require anything from the client. For example, a copyeditor might have an indexing program that a client needs—but only for one project.

Stat Fact

The Freelancers Union, based in Brooklyn, New York, estimates that 30 percent of workers should be categorized as freelancers.



▲ **Adding an employee doesn’t make economical sense.** While a client could employ another person, to do so takes time. It’s also expensive to search, interview, investigate and employ an additional worker.

▲ **There’s no additional overhead expense.** Most freelance assignments don’t require the client to provide office space or other items that increase overhead because most assignments don’t need to be completed at the client’s location.

▲ **The work needs to be done now.** Current work load at the client’s office is such that additional projects can’t be assigned to the current staff. The only way to get the work done is to assign it to a temporary worker or freelancer.

There can be other reasons a client wants the services of a freelancer, but they usually boil down to either time or money. It’s often cheaper to give an assignment to a freelancer, pay for the work, and move on to the next thing that needs to be

Get Over It!

A writer who is not receiving many rejections is most probably not working hard. Rejections mean you are working and seeking opportunities. If you’re not getting rejected, you’re not pitching enough ideas.

You must learn to accept rejection. A big part of any editor’s job is to say no. Your ideas or work can be rejected for any number of reasons. It’s not always that you’ve created something terrible. Your idea could be rejected because the editor just bought a similar piece. Your editor could be out of money and can’t afford to buy your work. The editor is in a bad mood. These are all things that you can’t control. Expect rejections. It’s part of the writer’s life.