

WRITER



SALARY

Varies enormously depending on the type of writing and experience

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Increasing demand for writers in online media • Fierce competition for work in every sector • Work predominantly freelance based

JOB DESCRIPTION

Writers work to inform, educate, or entertain their readers. They are skilled at using the written word to convey meaning or to tell stories, and work in a huge range of industries in diverse roles. Some writers achieve fame by writing novels or working as journalists or screenwriters, but many more make their living by writing press releases, articles for magazines and websites, or copy (text) for advertisements.



AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Writing • Languages • Literature and reading • Performing arts • Drama • Technical and scientific subjects



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS There are no specific requirements. Some have higher degrees in professional or creative writing; others have little formal training.



LIFESTYLE Many writers are self-employed and set their own working hours. They usually need to meet deadlines set by publishers.



LOCATION Writers may work on a computer in an office, a library, or at home. They sometimes need to travel to meet clients or conduct interviews.



THE REALITIES A writer's earnings can be as unpredictable as their workload. Writing is an isolating experience, and all writers need great perseverance.

CAREER PATHS

The majority of writers work on a freelance basis, specializing in one of many areas, from children's books to technical manuals. As with many other creative jobs, there is no formal career structure, and some people can become writers without undergoing any training. Reputation, talent, and experience count for more than any qualifications.

BLOGGER Writing a personal blog or contributing to a college magazine gives you a chance to develop your writing skills. Showing your work to online or print publishers may win you a paid commission.



GRADUATE A degree in English or creative writing is useful, but not required. You may be better off earning a degree in another area that enables you to become a writer on a specialized subject.



▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **JOURNALIST** see pp. 54–55
- ▶ **EDITOR** see pp. 56–57
- ▶ **PROOFREADER** Checks documents for accuracy, grammar, spelling, and consistency before their publication.
- ▶ **WEB CONTENT EDITOR** Writes text, and researches and collects images for publication on websites. Web content editors ensure that the content is accurate and is arranged correctly. They also check that links to other pages function properly.

A successful writer needs determination: J.K. Rowling's first novel, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, was rejected by 12 publishers.

SKILLS GUIDE

-  Excellent writing and communication skills for creating lively and readable text.
-  A high degree of creativity in inventing stories, characters, themes, and dialogue.
-  Perseverance in the face of criticism from clients or the rejection of work from publishers.
-  Good knowledge of computers and social media to network with potential clients and self-promote.
-  Strong organizational skills to manage a schedule when working on your own.
-  An eye for detail to ensure that text is accurate and free from grammatical and spelling errors.

REVIEWER Analyzes a variety of artistic works, including books, films, and theatrical performances, and then critiques them, in newspapers, magazines and journals, or online.



POET Expresses an emotion or tells a story through verse. Some poets write with the goal of being published; others choose purely to perform to audiences.



NOVELIST Writes fictional stories to entertain readers. There are many genres of novels, from science fiction to romance.



WRITER Some people are commissioned to write by a publisher. Others write speculatively, hoping to sell their completed work. Experienced writers can find work in many fields.



SCREENWRITER Writes scripts for films and TV productions, sometimes adapting existing works. Can also find work writing speeches for business leaders and politicians.

