

DSDT

So... You Want to Be a Writer?

Writing as a career

Welcome, everyone. Take a seat. Or don't, writers love avoiding structure, so if you need to pace in circles like you're crafting the next great novel, go for it.

Today, we're talking about **careers in writing** and, more importantly, **how to actually get paid so you don't end up sustaining yourself entirely on ramen and existential dread.**

The Big Question: "Can You Make Money as a Writer?"

Short answer: **Yes. Absolutely.**

Long answer: **Also yes, but you'll need strategy, patience, and possibly caffeine in IV form.**

Writing can be a wildly profitable skill... if you understand that it's a business **vector** not a single career path. You're not "just a writer." You're a content engine, a storyteller, a translator of human thought into recognizable sentences, and brands, readers, and companies pay for that.

THE MYTHS ABOUT WRITING (AND WHY THEY'RE WRONG)

First myth:

"Writers are always broke."

False. Some writers are broke because some humans are broke. Some are rich because some humans are rich. Writing is not the cause, planning is.

Second myth:

"You have to become a famous author to make money."

Ha! Absolutely not. The world of writing is so much bigger than publishing a book. In fact, writing careers that pay the best often never involve your name on a cover.

Third myth:

"Writing talent = money."

Also false. Talent is nice. Money comes from *value*, consistency, and understanding markets.

You don't need to be the next Toni Morrison or Neil Gaiman. You need to understand how to use words to solve problems, entertain, or help businesses make money.

Alright, myth cleansing complete. Let's move on.

The Many, Many Careers in Writing

Writing isn't one job. It's a whole *ecosystem*. Here are some paths:

A. Creative Writer / Author

The Author (a.k.a. "The Dreamer")

These are the folks crafting epic novels, poetry collections, thrillers, memoirs, fantasy worlds, dystopian futures where everyone wears beige jumpsuits, you know the vibe.

Authors earn money through:

- Book sales
- Royalties
- Advances
- Film/TV rights
- Speaking engagements
- Sometimes merchandise

Example:

Someone writes a fantasy novel about an awkward teenager discovering they have magical powers (which is already 80% of YA fiction) → sells movie rights → buys a house.

Is it common? No.

Is it possible? Absolutely.

Ah yes, the dream: sitting in a cozy café writing your masterpiece while strangers look over and whisper, "They're definitely writing something brilliant."

Reality: half the time you're googling "synonyms for betrayal."

How authors get paid:

- Book sales (traditional or self-published)
- Royalties
- Film/TV rights (hello, J.K. Rowling)
- Speaking engagements

- Patreon memberships

Example: A novelist may earn modest royalties at first but build a long-tail income. One breakout book? It can pay for your house *and* your therapy.

B. Copywriter

If authors write for the heart, copywriters write for the wallet.

As a copywriter, you write:

- Ads
- Website copy
- Landing pages
- Email campaigns
- Social media content
- Product descriptions
- Taglines

Copywriters are **highly paid** because their words make companies money.

Examples:

- “Just Do It.”
- “Think Different.”
- “Because You’re Worth It.”

Someone wrote those. Someone got paid. And some of them are still getting paid.

Copywriters are the people who convince you to buy a product you didn’t know you needed... like an avocado slicer. Or a toothbrush that connects to wi-fi for reasons unclear.

You write:

- Ads
- Websites
- Email campaigns
- Social media content
- Product descriptions

Paycheck reality:

Copywriters are paid **very well** because their words drive revenue. Companies don't like losing money, so when your writing increases their sales, they love you.

Example: "This vacuum cleaner sucks... in the best possible way."

Boom. \$400 invoice.

The Content Writer (The Educator + Storyteller Hybrid)

Content writers create:

- Blogs
- How-to guides
- Tutorials
- Articles
- SEO content
- Brand storytelling

This is the kind of writing that answers the question: "How do I fix my sink without causing a flood?" or "Top 10 Travel Destinations for Introverts Who Hate People But Love Scenery."

Content writers can earn steady income and grow into strategists or editors.



C. Technical Writer

Technical writers take complex information, like how robots work, or how your 97-button TV remote functions, and explain it in a way humans can understand.

They write:

- Manuals
- SOPs
- Help docs
- White papers
- API documentation

And they get paid *very well* because very few people can write clearly about complicated things.

If you're the kind of person who reads the IKEA instructions instead of winging it, this might be your calling.

You explain complicated things in simple, non-confusing human language.

Think: software manuals, medical instructions, robotics documentation, “how not to accidentally ruin your expensive new gadget.”

Who hires technical writers?

Tech companies, engineering firms, manufacturing, government agencies.

Pay:

Very good. And you don’t need to be a coding genius, just able to understand and simplify.

D. Journalist / Reporter

Journalists tell stories that matter. They chase facts, interview people, uncover problems, and communicate truth.

This includes:

- Magazine writers
- News reporters
- Investigative journalists
- Entertainment journalists
- Cultural commentators

Journalism isn’t always the highest-paying, but grants, freelancing, and specialized niches (like tech or finance) can be very lucrative.

You chase stories, research, dig up facts, expose truths, and sometimes interview people who pretend they don’t want to talk but absolutely do.

Income streams:

- Salaried positions
- Freelance pieces (\$100–\$1,000+ per article)
- Grants
- Book deals

Tip: Specialize. Tech reporting, entertainment, investigative, gaming, travel, niches pay more.

E. Content Writer / Blogger

You create blog posts, guides, listicles, brand stories, how-tos, and SEO-friendly content.

How you earn:

- Freelance writing
- Running your own content site
- Affiliate marketing
- Ad revenue
- Sponsorships

Example: Someone writes one article about “Top 10 Camping Tents of 2025” and earns thousands a month in affiliate sales because people click the Amazon links. Yes, it happens.

Ghostwriter (The Silent Professional)

You write books, speeches, articles, and content for people who want their name on something but don’t want to do the writing.

Ghostwriters often make:

- \$10,000–\$60,000 for a single book
- Premium rates for speeches and articles
- Steady income with zero publicity pressure

You don’t get credit, but you get paid. Beautiful arrangement.

F. Game Writer / Narrative Designer

You write:

- Characters
- Dialogue
- Quests
- Lore
- Worldbuilding
- In-game text

If you love storytelling + gaming, this is a dream career. Growing fast, too.

You invent worlds, characters, dialogue, lore, quest lines... basically the story glue that holds the gameplay together.

If you've ever played a game and thought:

"This character's dialogue is awful,"

congratulations, you're emotionally ready to be a narrative designer.

Income:

Jobs at studios, freelance gigs, royalties, scriptwriting for indie devs.

G. Screenwriter / Scriptwriter (The Visual Storyteller)

You write for:

- Film
- TV
- YouTube videos
- Commercials
- Short films
- Web series
- Game cinematics

Screenwriters can earn large sums, if they can handle rejection. Hollywood will ghost you harder than your last situationship.

You get paid by the script, per page, or via royalties.

And yes, Hollywood contracts can be *chef's kiss* money, but also kind of like dating: you'll get ghosted a lot. It's fine. You're strong.

3. How to Monetize Your Writing (Like... Actually)

Let's get to the juicy part: **turning words into income streams.**

HOW WRITERS ACTUALLY MAKE MONEY

Now let's address the elephant in the room:

How do you turn writing into an income stream instead of a hobby?

Here are the main ways:

1. Freelancing

You offer your skills as a service.

Platforms:

- Upwork
- Fiverr
- LinkedIn
- Direct outreach
- Niche job boards

You start small → build a portfolio → raise prices → raise them again → raise them a third time when you finally realize clients pay more for confidence than verbs.

You can freelance as:

- Copywriter
- Editor
- Ghostwriter
- Blog writer
- Scriptwriter
- Resume writer
- Grant writer

Example:

Freelance copywriter charges \$250 per email.

Company orders a set of 20.

Writer earns \$5,000 for a week of work.

2. Self-Publishing (The Passive Income Goldmine)

Thanks to KDP and other platforms, you can publish:

- Novels
- Non-fiction
- Guides
- Journals
- Low-content books
- Coloring books
- Short stories

Earn royalties every month while you sleep like a Victorian poet with better lighting.

3. Digital Products

Turn your writing into:

- Ebooks
- Courses
- Workbooks
- Templates
- Checklists
- Guides
- Newsletters

Digital products = one-time creation → lifetime earnings.

4. Social Media Writing

If you can write engaging posts, threads, captions, or scripts, you can monetize through:

- Sponsorships
- Brand deals
- Ad revenue
- Affiliate links
- Selling your own services

Some writers make a full-time living writing 30-second TikTok scripts. Amazing what the world has become.

5. Email Newsletters

Platforms like Substack let you charge:

- \$5–\$10/month
- \$50–\$100/year

If you get 1,000 subscribers at \$7/month, that's \$7,000 a month to write a newsletter.

Some writers hit 10k+ subscribers and start earning CEO salaries.

6. Write for Brands

Brands need constant content.

You can write:

- Taglines
- Campaigns
- Website copy
- Brochures
- Social scripts
- Case studies

This is one of the *most stable* and *highly paid* writing paths.

7. Teaching / Workshops

If you know how to:

- Write
- Communicate
- Explain

...you can teach writing.

People pay for:

- Creative writing classes
- Workshops
- Online webinars
- Editing services
- Book coaching

You can also speak at schools, events, podcasts, conferences.



5. Email Newsletters (very lucrative)

Platforms like Substack and Beehiiv let you charge subscriptions.

Imagine 1,000 people paying \$5/month.
That's \$5,000 per month for... writing.
Some writers make \$30K–\$100K/month on newsletters.

6. Write for Brands

Brands need:

- Taglines
- Scripts
- Blog posts
- Web copy
- Product packaging
- Email campaigns

If you can write memorable lines like
“Melts in your mouth, not in your hand,”
companies will throw money at you.

WHAT MAKES A WRITER VALUABLE (AND THEREFORE PAID)

Let's break it down to one sentence:

 **Writers get paid for solving problems with words.**

If your writing can:

- Sell something → you get paid
- Teach something → you get paid
- Simplify something → you get paid
- Entertain → you get paid
- Hold someone's attention → you get paid

The value is not the writing itself, it's the *impact* the writing has on readers or businesses.

HOW TO START RIGHT NOW (NO EXCUSES)

Here's a simple starter plan:

Step 1: Choose a niche

Generalists stay broke longer.

Step 2: Build a small portfolio

3–5 pieces is enough to start.

Step 3: Offer your services

Message 10–20 businesses.

Your first client is the hardest. The rest follow.

Step 4: Create your own writing presence

Blog, newsletter, or socials, pick one and stay consistent.

Step 5: Keep improving your craft

Read. Write. Repeat.

Writers aren't born, they're built, usually through a combination of caffeine, deadlines, and emotional support from memes.

FINAL WORDS (THE HONEST TRUTH)

Writing is one of the few careers where:

- You can work from anywhere
- You can start cheap
- You can scale infinitely
- You can create passive income
- Your age doesn't matter
- Your background doesn't matter
- And you can pivot into dozens of industries

You don't need permission from a publisher.

You don't need an agent.

You don't need a degree.

You just need:

- Discipline
- Curiosity
- A willingness to keep learning
- And the courage to put your writing into the world.

If you can do that?

Then yes, you can absolutely make money as a writer. Even great money. Even “I can’t believe people pay me to do this” money.

Welcome to the world of writing.

Now go write something you’ll get paid for.