

INTRODUCTION

It's no stretch to say writing was invented to earn money. Ancient Sumerians created cuneiform, the earliest-known script, to make accounts and written contracts. By pressing a stylus into soft clay, the resulting pictographs told a story and, later, evolved into word concepts that more closely resemble what we understand a word to be today. And, in a neat parallel to modern life, archaeologists call slabs of cuneiform "tablets."

Today, writing remains a money-maker for those who consider it a career, art form, and tool. Writers and editors find success across a variety of pursuits in communications and media. Technical writers edit complex material so that it's easily understood by the layperson. Public relations specialists and marketing experts know how to use their writing skills to target an audience of consumers. Editors who can make a time-pressed executive's annual report read smoothly and clearly are often well-compensated.

Consider this volume a guide to career opportunities in editing and writing, while understanding that videography, film, photography and voice—such as podcasting—have become as critical to telling a story as the written word.

The tectonic shift from print to digital is well underway and impacting the profession. The changing landscape is pushing change in traditional jobs such as newspaper reporting and creating new opportunities in content-driven media. This extends across media including TV, radio, and old-school print publications, as well as business-focused fields such as advertising, marketing and public relations. The name of the game is storytelling, and smart writers and editors know it's necessary to perfect the multimedia skills required to communicate on a twenty-first-century tablet. These skills are executed across any number of platforms, whether websites, specialized apps, or social media.

Making a successful career means making strategic decisions as you learn your craft and adapting to market and technology changes. Many journalists, for instance, make the leap to public relations and marketing after several years because earnings are higher and opportunities are more abundant. From there, many fan out across the gig economy, adding business development skills so they can sell their writing skills to clients.

And while there are many practical ways to earn money by writing, creative and literary writers who aspire to be novelists still populate Master of Fine Arts programs. It's true that the literary life is well-known to be a tough road. Plan on rejection—from publishers, editors and fellow participants in writing workshops—and blaze your own trail. Academia is a well-trod, if challenging, path to literary success.

Here are career options to consider:

Advertising, including social media

Clients pay advertising firms to promote their brands and products. Advertisers create messages to influence behavior change in an audience in order to boost those brands and sell those products. Plenty of avenues exist to do so: print advertising, radio and TV commercials, online pop-ups, and search-engine and social-media ads, among others. Words and pictures in various formats, deployed under well-formed marketing strategies, deliver the message. The job growth among advertising, promotions, and marketing managers is faster than average, at 8 percent, through 2028, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Education, including testing & assessment and curriculum development

Writing as an educator includes writing curriculum; job growth for the people who do this work—called instructional coordinators—is keeping pace with the average of all occupations, according to the BLS. You could also teach writing, like former high school English teacher William Golding. He went on to write *Lord of the Flies*.

Arts & entertainment, including video and photography

Arts and entertainment jobs cover a wide range of possibilities and may take you to unexpected places. Consider a museum or historical site, for instance, that needs its story told using words and pictures. You may do this as a consultant hired to update a website, or you might do it as a member of the venue's public relations or marketing staff. Or, you may focus on being a film and video editor who organizes raw footage, sound and graphics to tell a story for a publication/platform, business, or motion picture. Film and video editors are seeing 11 percent job growth, much faster than average, according to the BLS.

Journalism, including correspondents and reporters

Journalism is fast-paced, exciting—and a terrific training ground if you want to write concisely and quickly. Unfortunately, newspapers have been consolidating and layoffs have become the norm in recent years, so keep your eye on successful digital platforms and move on as quickly as you can. Or head for TV and radio, armed with multi-platform reporting skills. Employment is expected to rise 2.4 percent among reporters and correspondents, with the best-paying jobs clustered in big cities and the Northeast corridor including Washington, D.C., metropolitan New York City, and metropolitan Boston, Massachusetts, according to the BLS.

Government, including grant writing, legal writing, and court reporting

Writing for or within government ranges across many jobs.

Grant writing is a highly valued and specific skill in which the writer targets an organization in need to an appropriate funding source and ensures the funding source's application and awards guidelines are met. Focusing an organization's story,

including its needs and budget, and showing how the money will be spent are all part of a grant proposal. While grants are issued by any number of foundations and businesses, governments at the state, local and federal levels are well-known sources of grant opportunities.

Attorneys and, sometimes, paralegals, write for the courts. Attorneys, who write legal briefs, use persuasive language based on law and precedent to convince judges to accept their position. Paralegals are more likely to write pleadings, which are procedural in nature. Court reporters and captioners are hired to record, verbatim, the words spoken in a court room or other legal arena, including a conference room in an attorney's office where depositions are taken. Jobs as a lawyer are growing at the national average—6 percent—while court reporters and captioners can expect 7 percent job growth through 2028.

Science, including technical and academic writing

Science writing can take different forms. Technical writers specialize in making complicated or difficult technical information accessible by writing instruction manuals or articles for the general public and often work in tech or computer industries. Typically, scientific or medical writers might hold a graduate degree (MS, MD, or PhD) and often work for biotech or pharmaceutical companies to write literature on medications and products. These positions also are available in academic or nonprofit institutions writing about research, whether for an internal newsletter or a general audience. Scientific manuscripts are typically written by scientists who are principal investigators or post-doctoral researchers. However, some journalists specialize in writing about science for a general audience, turning the work into articles and books or, possibly, a public relations consulting opportunity. Job growth among technical writers is outpacing the national average and stands at 8 percent, according to the BLS.

Business, including finance and analysis

Businesses and corporations need clear-eyed and creative communicators, and many public relations (PR), marketing and advertising professionals work in-house for a particular company. In addition, many communications consulting firms contract to do PR, marketing or advertising work for businesses. Finally, independent PR consultants who can take a field's specialized writing and transform it into words easily understood by the general public often find work writing press releases, articles, and social media posts.

Publishing, including editors, authors, poets, and novelists

Fiction or non-fiction, publishing employs writers to execute articles, novels, poetry, books and even scripts. An editor acts as a sort of project manager, brainstorming ideas with writers, establishing production schedules, and editing work so it grammatically conforms to a style, is properly organized for readability, and retains a writer's style. This is not a growth industry; the BLS predicts flat growth for writers

and authors and a decline in positions as editors. Many people who work in this field freelance, which means taking jobs on a project-by-project basis and often moving between traditional publishing clients and business clients.

—Allison Blake