

Writing Careers: The Business Behind Becoming an Author

Becoming a published author is an arduous road career path filled with decisions. Should you publish traditionally or on your own? Do you want to write a book, or are your skills more tailored to shorter forms of writing? With a great deal of effort and dedication, a career in writing can be for you, once you've narrowed down your goals and set your sights on achieving them.

Education

Skills

Of course, the biggest and most important skill you need to become an author is the ability to write. Basic grammar and spelling are important, as is the ability to write an engaging plot. However, being a published author isn't just about writing the best story. An author also needs to be focused on finishing work before a deadline, comfortable with themselves and others editing their work, and good at researching things they aren't experts on. If what you're writing has any basis in reality, it will need to be accurate!

- [Seven Skills You Need to Practice to Become a Successful Writer in the Digital Age](#)
- [What Skills Are Needed to Become a Published Writer?](#)
- [Five Skills Every Writer Should Develop](#)

College Degrees for Writers

An English degree is a common choice for college-bound people focused on a writing career. Earning an English degree will allow you to read a wide variety

of literature, which is a great asset when you're beginning to write. There are many other majors that may also prepare you for a writing career, especially at more specialized schools, such as creative writing or business writing. Other possible majors for students looking to become authors include journalism, communications, and linguistics.

- [Writing Majors for College Students](#)
- [Six College Majors to Consider if You Want to Become a Writer](#)
- [How to Choose a Major and Minor for a Career in Writing](#)
- [What Is the Best Degree for Becoming a Writer?](#)

Career Options

Writing a book isn't the only way to become a writer. Journalists write every day, and so do professional bloggers. You could also become a technical writer, especially if you have an interest in a complex subject area. Being able to translate technical language into more comprehensible writing is a skill that many people appreciate.

- [Six Awesome Careers for Writers](#)
- [14 High-Paying Jobs for People Who Love Writing](#)
- [12 Awesome Writing Careers for the Wordsmith](#)
- [There's More to a Career in Writing Than Being a Journalist or Novelist](#)

Self-Publishing

If you're interested in getting published as a writer, nowadays, publishing houses aren't your only option. Rather than sending a manuscript, getting rejected until you find an agent, and going through countless edits and business decisions to get published, you can take it all on yourself and self-publish. This gives you the freedom to publish exactly what you want to

publish with no interference.

- [The History of Self-Publishing](#)
- [About Self-Publishing](#)
- [To Self-Publish or Not?](#)

Choosing the Right Self-Publishing Company

Halfway between a traditional publisher and fully self-controlled publishing lies self-publishing service companies. They will not control your work or reject your manuscript, but they may still offer editors, designers, and consultants to help you through the publishing process. When hiring a company, one of the most important factors to consider is the contract. Do you still have rights to your own work, or are you giving up some or all of them? The next step is to look at other books published by that company and the reviews of other authors.

- [Choosing a Self-Publishing Company](#)
- [Navigating Self-Publishing Services](#)
- [How to Choose a Self-Publishing Service](#)

What to Be Wary Of

Looking at previously published books and author reviews can give you great insight into what might be a red flag for a self-publisher. Guarantees of sales are an automatic red flag: Even if you write the most compelling book in the world, there's no guarantee it will catch on, and any publisher that makes wild promises is lying to get your business. Another common red flag is not allowing the author to walk away from a contract; this is why reading the contracts you sign is paramount. In addition, a self-publisher may ask you for a percentage of sales of a book. This is not self-publishing; this is a tactic used in traditional publishing, where the company has invested in you and is not

charging you for their services.

- [Five Red Flags for a Self-Publisher](#)
- [Four Red Flags of Questionable Self-Publishing Companies](#)
- [How Can You Tell Legitimate Publishers From the Bad Guys?](#)

Approaching a Publisher

How to Get an Agent

Research is the first step to getting an agent. Research can be as simple as going to a bookstore, finding books similar to yours, and seeing which agents they used. Once you have a list of potential agents to send your manuscript to, many authors use spreadsheets to keep track of when something was submitted to that agent, if they responded, and what the response is.

- [How to Find a Real Literary Agent](#)
- [11 Authors Discuss the Road to Getting a Literary Agent](#)
- [The Ultimate Guide to Getting a Literary Agent](#)
- [Online Tools to Help Writers Find a Literary Agent](#)

Book Proposals

Once you've found an agent you're ready to pitch your work to, it's time to create your proposal. This is a bit different depending on if you're writing fiction or nonfiction, but either way, it should always include a synopsis of your book, an outline of your chapters, and information on yourself as the author. The biggest question you're going to answer in your proposal is "why should they pick my book over all the other ones like it?" Include any unique angles you might address, any authority you might have on a topic, and what audience you're targeting. Remember that you only need one "yes," so you

don't need to feel too discouraged if you get dozens or even hundreds of rejections before you find the right agent for your book.

- [How to Write a Book Proposal](#)
- [A Guide to Convincing Publishers to Spend Their Time and Money on Your Book Idea](#)
- [Write a Book Proposal That Agents Will Love](#)

Editing Your Book With an Editor

Once you have an agent, the next step toward publication is working with an editor. Even before you find an agent, you may hire an editor on your own to increase your chances of landing the agent. You'll also work with an editor once the book is sold to a publishing house. It's important to remember that the editor is there to help you. They're not looking to tear you down: They're there to help you improve on your work so it can be seen and enjoyed by as many people as possible. Some editors are more focused on technical aspects of editing, while others are focused on flow and content. Make sure that you're working with both types along the way.

- [Self-Editing Basics](#)
- [How to Make the Most of Working With a Professional Editor](#)
- [What it's Like to Work With an Editor](#)
- [Ten Tips for Working With an Editor](#)