

The Pro's and Con's of freelance writing

"Write without pay until someone offers to pay" – Mark Twain

To be a freelance writer means to be self-employed and write a variety of different pieces for different clients. Traditionally freelance writers wrote for magazines, newspapers and the radio, but now the remit has widened and freelancers can contribute to non-fiction and fiction books, film and television, and the Internet. As society's means of communication broadens, so do the possibilities for freelance writers.

For many people, the idea of working for yourself, usually at home, is very appealing. For others, the lack of structure, everyday contact with colleagues and a stable salary make the prospect of working as a freelancer a very daunting experience. As with all career choices and new ventures, freelancing has a series of positive aspects and negative aspects, all of which need to be considered when contemplating commencing freelance work.

The Pro's

- You are your own boss. You can decide which work to take and when. You have a greater level of flexibility to build around your individual lifestyle, which means that if you want to start work at 5am, but take Friday afternoon's off, you can
- You work within your own environment, so you don't accidentally end up involved in office politics, or suffer from having to work alongside the same colleagues day in, day out. Freelancers generally have to pick up work from a variety of different clients, which helps keep the working life varied and interesting
- You have the opportunity to write in a variety of different genres, and cover a vast subject-matter area. Not only does this keep your work interesting, it allows you to develop a range of writing skills
- You have the ability to live and write wherever you choose, whether that be your local coffee shop, the pub, the park, the garden, in bed, abroad or simply at home
- You get to see your name in lights! Well, in print anyway!

The Cons

- There is no guaranteed work or cash flow. Both the flow of work and cash peak and trough, and, especially in the early months whilst you are looking to establish yourself as a freelancer, this can be a particularly big hurdle to overcome
- You need to be able to cope with rejection. As with all spheres of the writing world, you will often find that your work or ideas will be rejected, that publications already have their list of established freelancers that they work with and they aren't interested in picking up any new talent! Having sufficient determination to pick yourself up after rejection is a necessary quality in the freelance world
- You can feel isolated. Working alone day in day out can be very difficult and you need to be content with your own company. Whilst there is contact with current and potential clients, this contact is minimal as the majority of your research and writing you will undertake alone

- Being your own boss means having enough self discipline to complete your work to standard and to deadline, and dedicate sufficient time to sourcing new clients and keeping up to date with your research. It can be hard to rise out of bed each morning when you know the only person making you get up is you!
- You lose some of the corporate perks that you gain when you work for an employer, for example developmental training, access to a reference library, free access to trade magazines, a computer, printer, scanner and photocopier!
- It can be hard to maintain a work / life balance when your work is generally wherever your home and family are

Often the best way to decide whether freelance writing is for you is to bite the bullet and try to start breaking into the freelance market whilst still operating as an employee for another firm or organisation. By beginning to actively seek paid freelance writing you are in a position to get a better understanding of the market, and test how successful you would be in that market, before giving up the comforts of a steady income. This of course means increasing your workload for a short time, but it at least gives you the opportunity to suss out the freelance world, before jumping straight into it.

As a freelancer, you will need to [proofread your articles](#), let Words Worth Reading Ltd take the strain!