

I love writing and I know that many others are looking to earn a living doing something that they love. If you love writing too, read on to get a kick-start on becoming a freelance writer in 4 steps.

1. Brainstorming ideas
2. Establishing credibility
3. Finding jobs
4. Pitching to editors.

First off, grab the handout called “Pyramid of Dreams” before you get started. (This lovely sheet was created by a freelance writer who’s been published in Marie Claire, Salon, Quartz, Narratively, and The New York Observer to name just a few!)

With the handout, you’ll select 4 publications that you wish to publish in, the editors that you need to contact and develop pitches that will make them fall in love with you!

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming – it is essential because you’ll need to create a lot of content on a consistent basis. One of the best tips I can provide is to read newsletters every morning. Skim, the Wall Street Journal and Next Draft are good ones to start off with.

Why? You need to know what’s going on in the world to write content that is relatable and that is up-to-date. Also, try this: when you are done reading an article, think of questions that the author did not answer for you. Sometimes, that by itself can be an article of interest to many since there will be many who have the same questions as you did.

Next, make sure to set a time limit for your brainstorming sessions so that you will actually get some writing done instead of just creating a never-ending list. A good start is 10 pitch-able ideas in 30 minutes, then use that and get to writing!

Try to stick to a few topics that you most enjoy writing about. By doing that, it will help you to think of ideas more easily and it will give you credibility in those niches. You can always write about other topics occasionally to bring in a bit more money if needed. However, do not do that too often, or you will no longer enjoy writing if you are constantly writing about something you have no interest in.

I also suggest that you try out **Nuzzle** – a tool that connects to your Twitter account and sends an email to alert you to the news that your network is sharing the most. It helps you see what it is that people really care about.

ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY

The most important part of being an established freelance writer is to have a professional online presence. When anyone looks you up on Google, you want it to be obvious that you are a professional writer.

The first way to do this is to establish an online portfolio. ***Contently*** is a great tool for this. It lays out all the pieces/clips that you have in a clean format, provides information such as how many shares there are for each of your pieces, as well as show others how many followers that you have. That is going to give you a great sense of credibility.

If you are new writer and do not have any professionally published items, don't worry. As long as you have something, you will still have to opportunity to grow and get to where you want to be. You can add papers that you wrote while in school or just small pieces from projects that you've worked on, even if you haven't been paid for it.

You could also create your own writer website and publish some pieces on there. Two good places for this is ***Squarespace*** and ***Wix***. When you are trying to get a job, editors are going to want to see what you can do. Take a look at other writer's websites to get an idea about what you want your own site to look like.

New writers might want to consider doing a little work for free, just to give you the chance to build up some clips. There a few great sites that will give you credibility but are unable to pay for content (for now).

Once you have your online portfolio created, make sure to add that link to your email signature. This lets everyone you are corresponding with see that you are a professional writer.

Lastly, take control of how you present yourself on social media. Never refer to yourself as an "aspiring" writer. That is a meaningless term. You are a writer now, so own it. If you want others to take your work seriously, it should begin with you.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an extremely important resource in your career, especially ***Twitter*** and ***Facebook***.

Facebook groups can be of help you when you have questions, are looking for ideas, suggestions and especially in networking. Just use the search bar to find what you are looking for (ex. romance writer, children's writer) and you will likely find groups for that interest.

For Twitter, you can search for "freelance jobs" but make sure you select live tweets to weed out the promotional ones. This will allow you to see all the jobs that are posted most recently first.

Pinterest is an odd one, but still a good resource to find clients. Just search for what you are interested in and in the results, you will see some smaller publications. This is a good tool for your lowest level of your Pyramid of Dreams.

Last is ***LinkedIn***, the obvious choice for resources and connections. Everyone is there for the same reason, so do not feel weird about sending messages. It enables you to establish a professional relationship right from the start.

JOB BOARDS

First off is a warning: if you do not already have a connection to an editor, you are going to need to apply to thousands of jobs. There are *many* freelancers applying for jobs at *all* times, and with this competition, networking is crucial.

Each time that you come in contact with a potential, future client, put their needs ahead of your own in order to establish a good bond. Once that is created, you will have an important contact for future jobs and pitches. Networking needs to be at the front of your mind at all times.

For options other than networking, look for creative freelance agencies. Find ones based in your city and ones that are based solely online.

If you want to work strictly for yourself, that is ok too. You will want to check out these job boards first: [Media Bistro](#), [Craigslist](#), and [The Morning Coffee newsletter](#).

PITCHING DIRECTLY

Now that you have a great online portfolio, you can finally pitch to editors. The typical pitch to editors starts with “Hi. My name is Jane Doe and I have been published in XYZ publication.” Then, you’ll include links to the relative content that the editor might be interested in. If you don’t have that, they’re probably not going to be interested and they will not accept your pitch.

Please know, that when you are a freelancer, you get a lot more rejections than you do acceptances. Just remember that it is part of the gig and an editor gets a ton of pitches all the time. They might have just given it to someone else the day before or they are no longer looking for what you submitted. Just keep that in mind, stay positive and keep pushing on.

Next is finding the editor’s email address. If it is not listed on the publication’s website, try looking on Twitter and LinkedIn. If you don’t find it there, here is a great article on finding the email. [5 Strategies For Finding Editors Email](#)

To see what a really great pitch looks like, checkout [The Open Notebook](#) pitch database. This site shows accepted pitches for different publications. It is another really great resource for writers.

GET STARTED!

That just about covers the surface! So, get to work because putting it off means it’s likely to never get started. See below for more resources and great articles. Happy writing!