

The complete 10-step method I developed to get published...FAST!

**How I Became a Published (and Paid!) Writer in Less Than a Week**

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## MY STORY

*“If I can do it, so can you!”*

“I wish I could be a writer.” That was a common lament of mine in my early 20’s, sitting around coffee shops, pouring my heart out to friends and family. I had always loved to write, and doesn’t everyone say you should do what you love? It only makes sense, right? That’s what all the books said. These were some of my most common arguments as I grumbled about my lack of a real career. My loved ones – along with dozens of chocolate fudge brownies – helped console me as I cried into my coffee, and generally felt sorry for myself.

My husband agreed that I should be a writer, and when I decided to write a novel he was the President and only member of my fan club. He always believed that I could become a successful writer, and he stuck with my dream, and me. I was fortunate that he had a regular full-time job to help us keep at least some of our bills paid while I worked on making my dream a reality. Thankfully, he really *loved* boxed macaroni and cheese! Because, sometimes that was our dinner a couple of nights in a row.

What I thought at the time was the biggest obstacle to a writer – actually finishing a novel – was in reality only the beginning. I celebrated the finish of my novel, sure that anyone else who read it would love it as much as I did. But, when after dozens of query letters to agents and publishers had left me with only a colorful collection of rejection letters, my heart and determination were at their lowest points ever. I had tried. I had given it all I had, but it must be true what people said – breaking into a writing career was *impossible*. Writing was for some elite class of scholars, not for an ordinary person like myself. Writing could be a hobby for me, nothing more. I’d have to struggle through an office job I absolutely hated, just to help us make ends meet.

The idea was terribly depressing to me – an admitted free spirit who hates wearing watches or sticking to a schedule. With a very heavy heart, I once more took to searching through the newspaper want ads. At least my defunct career as a novelist had left me with a very high typing speed. Temp agency recruiters marveled as my fingers danced over the keyboard keys. It looked like I would indeed spend the rest of my life typing – but it would only include entering mind-numbing data for a big faceless corporation.

A couple of years later I started a free ezine on how to make homemade bath and beauty products. This was a hobby of mine, and I had successfully sold some of these unusual and popular recipes on eBay. At least I could produce a free newsletter for people who would read my writing. But, when the subscriber base for that newsletter grew into the thousands, I started to re-think my ideas. “Wait a minute,” I told myself. “There are thousands of people willing to read my writing. Sure, they aren’t paying me anything. But, *editors* might pay me to write similar material for similar readers.”

Sure, getting a novel published had proved difficult. But, look at how these people were eating up the information in this newsletter? Could I try writing articles for magazines on non-fiction topics? This was something I had never thought of before. I didn't consider myself much of an expert in anything. I had hobbies I loved and actively pursued, and of course I loved to write. But was that really enough?

With my husband's backing once more, I decided that I wouldn't know unless I had the guts to try. I sent queries to dozens of magazine editors, describing my newsletter's popularity, and my idea for a column or articles for their publications. I included clips of my work, to show that I wasn't a complete ignoramus, and tried to forget about the queries I had sent. Once those babies were out of my hands, I swore to myself that life would go on as usual. To be honest, I thought of them constantly. My nails were bitten down to depths unexplored. And once again, chocolate brownies came to the rescue!

Early one Monday morning I received an email back from an editor in the UK. She liked my idea. It was as simple as that. She wanted more information, as this type of piece would fit in well with their magazine on a *monthly* basis! My hands shook as I typed a reply, trembling as I tried to sound as professional as possible. "Be confident, be confident," I chanted to myself over and over again as I immediately wrote the reply, and hit the send button. That morning we emailed each other back and forth until the details had been arranged. I would write a monthly piece for her crafts magazine for an agreed upon price. I was going to get paid each and every month for *writing*. It couldn't get any better than that!

After telling all my friends and family, and anyone else on the face of the planet that would listen to my miraculous success story, I was further moved to action. Hey, if this was an idea for a monthly magazine feature, why not a newspaper column? Now I was a published writer with real clips to show. I was sure that newspaper editors would give my ideas more consideration now that I had proven myself as a published writer. With gusto, I began to contact newspaper editors.

When all was said and done, I had landed my column in three newspapers and in a magazine in the UK. From there, I learned how to expand and increase my writing income, writing for online markets, newsletters, small trade magazines, larger consumer publications, and any other editors that would have me. I learned that it didn't pay to be too picky. If an editor wanted an assignment I could write, and they were willing to pay me for it, then I would take it!

Amazingly, I landed my first paying assignment within only a few days of sending query letters! Even more incredible was the fact that my first check had arrived less than a week later. I had proven the critics wrong somehow. They claimed that without the best education and experience you couldn't get published. But I had, and within seven days I had my first payment waiting for me!

Now I knew that writing was not an impossible dream after all. Since then I have written articles for dozens of different publications – varying from beekeeping to beauty, luxury living to cheap travel. I’ve written for publications aimed at seniors, teens, mothers and single men. My motto is: “If I can research it, I can write it!” Each assignment is furthering my education. I learn from researching the article itself, plus I learn more and more about what editors like, and what they hate.

Now, I want to share with you the actual steps I used from day one to get published so quickly and how I continue to use these ten basic steps to find new assignments, and make a living as a writer. This guide is filled with what I’ve learned along the way, and what I wished I had known right from the start, when I thought that I could only write fiction. Even though I managed to get my non-fiction work published quickly doesn’t mean I didn’t make my fair share of mistakes along the way! Boy, did I ever make some embarrassing faux pas at first. I learned the hard way, but with this book, I hope you won’t have to make the same mistakes I did.

As a writer I work at home in my pajamas most days. Some days I wake up at 4:30 a.m. and other days it’s around 11:00 a.m. when I drag my lazy self out of bed. I have a twenty-second commute to my office, where my assistants (my two spoiled cats) usually join me for a daily meeting. Actually, they’re squawking to get fed, but at least it’s a daily routine that I can count on. Through good and bad times in writing, I have come to love this career. I believe you will too.

But the sweetest part of making this dream of mine come true has been answering people when they ask me what I do for a living. “Oh, I’m a full-time freelance writer.” I say in a most casual tone. Every time I say it, it makes my heart soar.

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### **Why I Want to Help**

“*Why does this woman want to help me?*” you might be asking yourself. That’s easy for me to answer. Years ago when I first dreamt of being a writer, I wish I’d had a mentor to help guide me through the early days of self-doubt and discouragement. While I did have a few writing friends to talk to, none of us had managed to get published. You could say we were the blind leading the blind, although with the best possible intentions.

I told myself that if I ever became a published writer, then I would help others get started too. This is what I hope this book will be for you – a friendly, down-to-earth guide helping you down the road to publication. This book, along with my website [www.Freelancing4Beginners.com](http://www.Freelancing4Beginners.com) is my way of giving back and helping other writers who were in the same position I once found myself, crying like a fool in coffee shops.

I want you to learn what I’ve learned, and at the end of it all, I want you to believe that you can make a success of your chosen career too. People say: “If I can do it, you can too!” and perhaps it’s become a cliché. But, in this case I truly mean it when I say that if I can accomplish this, so can you. It comes down to being determined enough, willing to constantly learn and improve your craft, and of course making it happen.

Reading this guide will spur you on to action – getting published! And, it will show you the *real, practical ways* of attaining that goal.

Some others have asked me why I'm giving away my secrets. It's true that writing is a competitive field, and that it can be a very tricky field to break into. But, there's enough work for all of us. And, there is such a variety of writing work available, that I think we can all find our own niche to specialize in. Just as I would never query an automotive or hunting or computer magazine, many of you out there won't be querying the types of publications I do. So, I certainly don't lose any sleep over helping out a new writer.

Plus, I made that promise to myself years before. I had spent years of my life writing fiction, and never going anywhere with it. When I had the pleasant realization one day that writing was now my main source of income, I knew it was time to fulfill that promise, and to start writing this book. It was time to help introduce other newcomers to the field of writing. I wanted to let all of them know that working as a writer isn't impossible, as so many would have you believe.

And so this book was born!

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### **A Day in the Life**

What is a typical day for a writer? I often get asked this question, because people have such varying ideas of what writers must do. We are each so different, that I'm sure my routine is one unique to myself. Every day and week is different, which is one of the reasons why I love writing so much. It never gets boring, for each editor and each assignment is so unlike the others. It keeps me on my toes! Here's a typical day in my life as a writer:

*6:00 a.m.* Wake up. Make some coffee, grab a muffin and head to the computer to check emails. Check my writing calendar to figure out what I'll be concentrating on today. (Because unlike my first dreams of no scheduling whatsoever, when writing you *must* get yourself organized, and turn assignments in on time if you have a hope of working consistently. See step one for more help in this regard.)

*6:30 a.m.* Work on my newspaper column. Once it's complete, email it to the various newspaper editors I work with. Feed the cats.

*8:00 a.m.* Time to find new work! Time spent on research and new markets online. Send a few queries.

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9:00 a.m. 15 minute break; watch some of the morning news. Flip through newspapers to get new ideas for stories, etc.

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10:00 a.m.– Work on an article assignment. Often this includes research, interviews by e-mail or phone, and a great deal of editing.

12:00 – Schedule work for tomorrow. End of my work day!

Some days I don't work. Other days I might spend a couple of hours working on a specific project. On other days I'll work from early in the morning until late at night, burning the midnight oil to complete a challenging assignment with a looming deadline. Or, if I'm working on a major project such as a book like this one, my schedule will be more packed until the project is completed. This flexibility is one of the aspects I love about writing. I have the freedom to choose when and where I work, within reason.

Occasionally I even take a whole week off to recuperate and refresh my tired old brain. After a draining assignment, I sometimes need that kind of break. But, mostly I try to wake up early and work until noon, since it's in the morning that I feel the freshest and able to accomplish my best writing. So, while there's no 'typical' day for a writer, the above scenario gives you an idea of what an average day for me might look like. Yours might look similar, or completely different.

No matter what your life is like now, you can include regular writing in your schedule. Full-time employees, business owners, college students, retirees, and stay at home parents have all become successful writers. We have to let go of the notion that only certain people can write; that we're born stamped with a 'writer' label on our foreheads if that is our destiny. You have more knowledge and expertise than you probably realize. That, along with a dash of stubbornness, some natural talent, and willingness to learn, will help you become a published and paid writer.

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## **An Introduction to Freelance Writing**

*Why writing may be more than just your dream job...*

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- *An Introduction to the Writing Life*
  - *Dealing with rejections*
    - *Writing rights*
- *Sample writing markets (What do those terms mean?)*

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