

# So You Want to Be a Freelance Writer...and Eat, Too

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## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- How writing as a business differs from writing as a hobby.
- How to make a story idea marketable.
- How to write a query letter.
- How to reslant a story idea to earn more money.
- How to grow a writing business the way you want it.

## WEEK ONE

### I. Introductions

### II. Writing as a BUSINESS

- As a writer, you are a small business owner. This mindset is key.
- Minding details and generating future work, *not* writing, takes up most time
- Achieving target hourly rate is most important
- Balancing clients – timely pay, market exposure/prestige
- Set goals to grow business – income, target markets (publications), niche(s)

### III. Finding marketable ideas

- Good ideas aren't enough.
- They must match the target market.
- They must be the right idea at the right time.
- You must sell yourself as the right writer of the piece.

### IV. Query writing 101

- The execution of marketable ideas.
- Allows you to delve into a subject to find out if there's really a story to tell.
- Gives editors a peek at your writing style.
- Know the editorial calendar – minimum six months ahead for magazines
- Samples that resulted in assignments. Compare to Freelance Writing Action Plan.

*HOMEWORK: Write at least one query letter and no more than three. Next week, bring enough copies of each so everyone in class can have one.*

## WEEK TWO

### I. Query Writing Continued

- Critique homework as a group against action plan
- Writing time in class to further refine

## WEEK THREE

### I. Story sources

- Finding and using them to your best advantage

## II. Carving a niche

- Specialist writer vs. generalist – which are you?
- Branching into other media/spinoffs: Radio, books, speaking, teaching
- Consider other types of writing – technical, grant, PR/marketing
- Balance your clientele: Consider nonconsumer publications: trade, specialty, corporate; copy writing for businesses, nonprofits, newsletters

## III. Relationship building

- Networking. Is it who you know or what you know?
- Travel to meet editors
- Following editors to various publications
- Never burn bridges...yet know when to say “No.”

## IV. Reslanting stories to earn more money

- How many stories can I write off one subject? Let me count the ways (and the dollars)
- Clips can transition between non-competing publications when trying to break in
- Mine the class queries already written for reslants.

## WEEK FOUR

### I. Business details

- Managing money – taxes, invoices
- Business planning, goal setting
- Marketing

### II. Contract basics/resources

### III. Writer Q&A panel

- Three local freelance writers share their strategies and take your questions.