

Survey of Freelance and Contract Writer Rates

The information in this database was collected in 1999. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in September 2007, \$1 in 1999 is equal to \$1.25 currently. Please multiply rates shown below by 1.25 to bring them up to 2007 standards.

The following rate information was supplied by National Writers Union members in a survey that the NWU Job Hotline conducted in the summer of 1999. Approximately 900 members from across the country were polled and more than 150 responded, providing nearly 1,000 answers on various freelance and contract writing rates across the country. (Please note that these are rates that writers are billing directly to their clients, and do not represent billing rates through an agency or other type of third party.)

This rate information represents national ranges of what many professional freelance and contract writers were billing for their services at the time the survey was conducted. It is being provided as a courtesy to writers and to people who hire writers. These rates were not set by the National Writers Union. Indeed, the Union does not set or otherwise advocate standard industry rates.

If you do not see your writing genre represented here, or if you have questions about the rates or the methodology used in this survey, please contact the Hotline Director by writing to hotline@nwu.org,

Terms/codes to know as you study the survey:

- **Resp** = "Number of respondents." The number of writers who supplied rate information for a given genre.
- **Range** = The lowest and highest figures among a group of rates supplied by writers for a given genre.
- **Avg** = "Average." The average rate taken from a range of rates supplied by writers for a given genre (the average is reached by adding all the given rates together and then dividing the total by the number of rates given).

BizTech

(Business, Instructional, Technical, and Electronic writing genres):

I. Business:

1. Corporate Newsletter. Resp: 24; Range: \$40-\$100/hour; Avg: \$70/hour
2. Corporate Reports: Resp: 16; Range: \$40-\$100/hour; Avg: \$77/hour
3. White Papers: Resp: 11; Range: \$40-\$90; Avg: \$64/hour
4. Online Publishing: Resp: 10; Range: \$35-\$100/hour; Avg: \$70/hour
5. Direct Response (direct mail): Resp: 15; Range: \$35-\$100; Avg: \$75/hour
6. Marketing Communications: Resp: 23; Range: \$35-\$100; Avg: \$76/hour
7. Biology Writing: Resp: 5; Range: \$40-\$100; Avg: \$70/hour
8. Medical/Pharmaceutical Writing: Resp: 13; Range: \$35-\$150; Avg: \$75/hour
9. Copy Editing:
 1. General: Resp: 16; Range: \$30-\$100; Avg: \$55/hour

2. Business-to-Business: Resp: 7; Range: \$45-\$65; Avg: \$55/hour
 3. Corporate: Resp: 15; Range: \$35-\$100; Avg: \$60/hour
 4. Science: Resp: 9; Range: \$30-\$100; Avg: \$56/hour
10. Proofreading:
1. General: Resp: 11; Range: \$25-\$50; Avg: \$38/hour
 2. Corporate: Resp: 14; Range: \$25-\$60; Avg: \$38/hour
 3. Science: Resp: 5; Range: \$25-\$100; Avg: \$50/hour

II. Instructional:

1. General: Resp: 10; Range: \$35-\$75; Avg: \$50/hour

III. Technical and Electronic:

1. Web Authoring and Design: Resp: 14; Range: \$40-\$100; Avg: \$65/hour
2. Senior Technical Writer (computer h/w, s/w): Resp: 26; Range \$50-\$85; Avg: \$65/hour
3. Technical Writer (computer h/w, s/w): Resp: 11; Range: \$40-\$75; Avg: \$51/hour
4. Technical Copy Editing: Resp: 6; Range: \$35-\$55; Avg: \$46
5. Technical Proofreading: Not enough responses to generate an average.

Book

1. Ghost Writing/Collaborating for a Firm:
 1. No research required:
 1. Per project: Resp: 9; Range: \$5K-\$30K; Avg: \$10K-\$15K
 2. Per hour: Not enough responses to generate an average.
 2. Research IS required:
 1. Per project: Resp: 8; Range: \$10K-\$30K; Avg: \$15k-\$20K
 2. Per hour: Resp: 7; Range: \$35- \$70/hour; Avg: \$56/hour
2. Ghost Writing/Collaborating for an Individual:
 1. NO research required:
 1. Per project: Resp: 13; Range: \$5K-\$25K; Avg: \$10K-\$15K
 2. Per hour: Resp: 8; Range: \$25- \$75/hour; Avg: \$55/hour
 2. Research IS required:
 1. Per project: Resp: 7; Range: \$7.5K-\$30K; Avg: \$15K
 2. Per hour: Resp: 6; Range: \$35- \$75/hour; Avg: \$66/hour
3. Copy Editing: Resp: 16; Range: \$15-\$75* (*most between \$25-\$50); Avg: \$37/hour*
(*average for \$25-\$50 range is \$40/hour)
4. Proofreading: Resp: 14; Range \$12-\$40; Avg: \$23/hour

Journalism

Please note: Per story rates do not give the length of the story. Well try to get this information on the next survey.

1. Large circulation magazine: Resp: 33; Range: .75-\$2.00; Avg: \$1.50/word
2. Medium circulation magazine: Resp: 29; Range: .40-\$2.00; Avg: \$1.00/word
3. Small circulation magazine:
 1. Per word: Resp: 23; Range: .10-\$2.00; Avg: .60/word
 2. Per story: Resp: 12; Range: \$25-\$500; Avg: \$220/story
4. Small circulation, neighborhood News:

1. Per word: Resp: 7; Range: .04-.30; Avg: .11/word
2. Per story: TWO GROUPS (those charging less than \$100 per story, and those charging more than \$100 per story):
 1. Less than \$100: Resp: 12; Range: \$10-\$75; Avg: \$41/story
 2. ii) More than \$100: Resp: 5; Range: \$100-\$500; Avg: \$340/story
5. Metropolitan News:
 1. Daily:
 1. Per word: Resp: 11; Range: .10- \$1.20; Avg: .46/word
 2. Per story: Resp: 24; Range: \$100-\$600; Avg: \$265/story
 2. Weekly:
 1. Per word: Resp: 8; Range: .08-.46; Avg: .25
 2. Per story: Resp: 19; Range: \$50-\$600; Avg: \$215/story
6. Online:
 - a) Per word: Resp: 15; Range: .10-\$1.00; Avg: .55/word
 - b) Per story: TWO GROUPS (those charging less than \$500 per story, and those charging more than \$500 per story):
 - i) Group one: Resp: 7; Range: \$40- \$300; Avg: \$165/story
 - ii) Group two: Resp: 7; Range: \$500-\$5,000; Avg: \$1,400/story
7. Trade Publications:
 - a) Large circulation:
 - i) Per word: Resp: 20; Range: .25- \$2.00; Avg: .90
 - ii) Per story: Resp: 12; Range: \$250-\$3,500; Avg: \$1,145
 - b) Small circulation:
 - i) Per word: Resp: 9; Range: .17- \$1.00; Avg: .50
 - ii) Per story: Resp: 11; Range: \$100-\$1,500; Avg: \$600
8. Copy Editing:
 1. Large circ. pubs (technical): Resp: 7; Range: \$15- \$85; Avg: \$44/hr
 2. Large circ. pubs (non-tech): Resp: 14; Range \$20- \$60; Avg: \$38/hr
 3. Small circ. pubs (technical): Resp: 7; Range: \$22- \$50; Avg: \$40/hr
 4. Small circ. pubs (non-tech): Resp: 12; Range: \$10- \$50; Avg: \$26/hr
9. Proofreading:
 1. Large circ. pubs (tech): Resp: 7; Range: \$15-\$50; Avg: \$29/hour
 2. Large circ. pubs (non-tech): Resp: 12; Range: \$12- \$60; Avg: \$31/hr
 3. Small circ. pubs (tech): Resp: 8; Range: \$7.50- \$50; Avg: \$29/hour
 4. Small circ. pubs (non-tech): Resp: 8; Range: \$8- \$50; Avg: \$20/hour

Other Genres:

1. Grant Writer:
 - a) Large, non-profit: Resp: 5; Range: \$40-\$75; Avg: \$51/hour
 - b) Small, non-profit: Resp: 7; Range: \$20-\$75; Avg: \$45/hour
2. Indexing: Not enough responses to generate an average.
3. Researcher: Resp: 8; Range \$25-\$150; Avg: \$65/hour
4. Screen Writer:
 - a) Per project rate: Resp: 7; Range \$7,500 - \$15,000 per project (\$35 - \$85 per hour); Avg: \$11,000 per project (\$60/hour)
5. Desktop Publishing: Resp: 7; Range: \$35-\$85/hour; Avg: \$50/hour

(Rates as of June, 1999. Multiply by 1.25 for equivalent rates in 2007.)