

How to Determine What to Charge as a Freelance Writer

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If you've been dreaming of quitting your day [job](#) to start working full time as a freelance writer, one of the first things you'll need to do is determine what to charge your clients. Determining your fee structure is complicated and largely depends on how badly you need the work versus how much you want to stick to your rates. Here are a few tips to point you in the right direction for determining how much to charge.

Difficulty: Moderately Easy

Instructions

things you'll need:

- A computer with Internet access
- A calculator
- A good idea of how much you spend on your mortgage (or rent), utilities, food, gasoline and other necessities

- 1 Insuring that you work regularly as a freelance writer depends on your connections, job offers and determining your writing rates. If your rates are too low, you'll never make ends meet. If your rates are too high, you'll never get work.
- 2 Do an in-depth analysis of exactly how much it costs you to live. Don't forget to include the cost of healthcare insurance and days off. Everyone needs a [vacation](#).
- 3 After you determine how much you need to live, add an additional 20 percent to accommodate emergencies, unexpected [car](#) repairs and other expenses that are difficult to anticipate.
- 4 Divide your desired annual salary by 1,000 to determine your hourly rate. You can always adjust this rate if the client offers you extended work contracts or you just want the job, but always have a base rate to quote from. For instance, if you'd like to make \$70,000 a year, your hourly rate would be \$70.
- 5 Determine what you'll charge for projects that pay by the word. The lowest rates range from \$0.01 to \$0.02 per word for writing on the web--the highest rates exceed \$2.00 per word for high quality magazine articles and other venues that publish in print.

Tips & Warnings

- When you begin, quote jobs conservatively in order to get the work.
- When quoting work estimates, ask the editor how much work they anticipate. If they have a lot of work to offer, you may be able to get away by quoting a lower rate.

- Always ask if the publication has a "kill fee." Kill fees are payments paid to you should the publication decide not to run your work after you've completed the assignment.
- Never lowball or under-quote jobs--not only will you never make money but it sends a signal to the editor that you don't think much of your own work.
- Stay away from freelance job sites that ask you to bid on work. Most of them are scams and don't offer real opportunities.