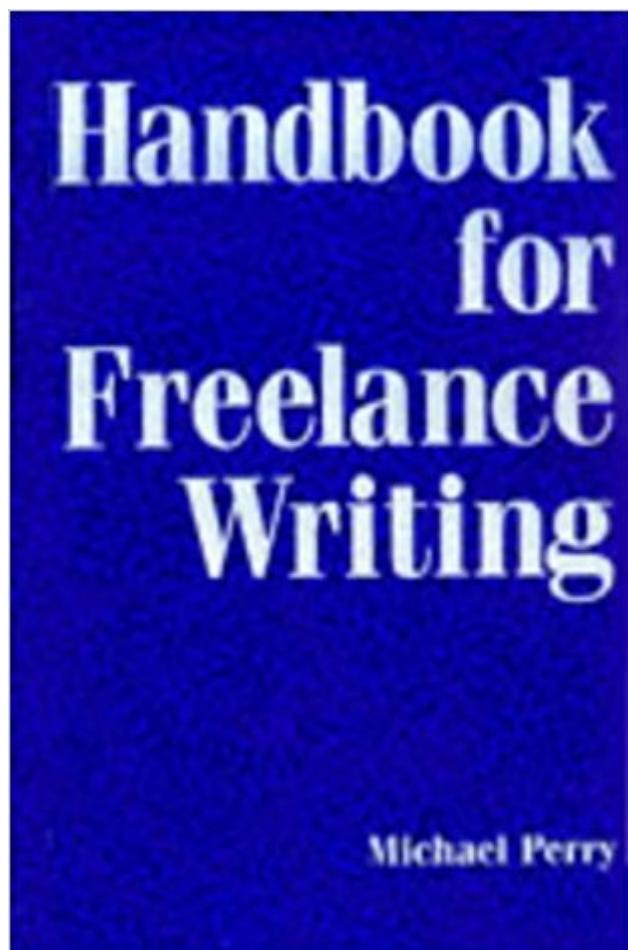


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# Handbook For Freelance Writing



## **Synopsis**

Running a successful freelance writing business requires an understanding of a host of critical details. This handbook looks at how to find markets, make contacts, get inside information, deliver work - and get paid promptly . '

## **Book Information**

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Company; 1st edition (April 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0844232556

ISBN-13: 978-0844232553

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 6.2 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #4,394,723 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #76 in Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Newspapers & Magazines #12884 in Books > Business & Money > Job Hunting & Careers > Guides #13229 in Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Fiction

## **Customer Reviews**

"Wherever you see words," writes Michael Perry in his Handbook for Freelance Writing, "someone wrote them." That means that there's an awful lot of freelance writing work to go around. While many prospective freelancers disdain commercial writing, Perry is more realistic. "Hack writing," he says, "is the writer's equivalent of playing weddings." In other words, commercial writing is a great way to support your magazine writing, at least until the New Yorker comes calling. Perry has managed to cobble together a very successful freelance career from some small town in the middle of nowhere, and, he makes you believe, so can you. Here he shares much of what he has learned in the process, from ferreting out markets, writing query letters, and conducting interviews to placating sources and wooing and wowing editors. Perry doesn't offer much in the way of business advice, but hey--that's what accountants are for. --Jane Steinberg

McGraw-Hill authors represent the leading experts in their fields and are dedicated to improving the lives, careers, and interests of readers worldwide --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Mike Perry's handbook on non-fiction freelance writing is a practical and obliging look at the world of publishing. The manner in which he spills forth information is not only useful but what's more it is witty too. An accomplished writer himself, Mike guides us through the types of writing, where to find possible publications, approaches to putting it down in ink, example query letters to editors, what to say and not to say, the processes of writing--from the opening of an article, to the body of text, to the ending. Since this publication in 1998, Mike has published several down-to-earth books. They are all first-class reads. Enjoyable and insightful. As Mike says, "herd some words".

I actually cannot post a comment from myself as I did not read this one. I got it for a writer friend who said he enjoyed it.

This book is terrific if you're interested in making a living as a free-lance writer and would like practical guidance about how to do it -- and it's funny too. The author focuses on the part most writers have trouble with -- finding a unique "take" on a subject -- and his advice about that is very good. I also heartily endorse his comments about how to present your work most effectively to editors. He doesn't downplay the drawbacks of working as a free-lancer, but he's also upbeat enough to make you believe it's possible if you're willing to put in the effort. I agree with his recommendation to find a good accountant to handle the financial aspects -- but, for those of us who don't live in a pop. 485 town, it would have been useful to have some hints about what to look for in an accountant! But in general this is an excellent guide to the free-lance life. However, based on my own experience (I've been making a living as a writer for most of my adult life), I have one caveat: Perry's life as a writer may not be the best life for you. If you just want to earn a living from your writing, and aren't fussy what you write about or for whom, this is a great book for you. If you have an area of specialization (e.g., computers), you can still free-lance successfully in that area -- and it's sometimes helpful in getting work for you to be an "expert." But if you're a writer who wants more time to work on your Big Project (your serious novel, your mystery series, etc.), you're better off taking a full-time job in a totally unrelated field and writing in your spare time. Free-lance writing is time-consuming, requires total commitment, and can be psychologically and physically draining; if you have any spare time at all, you'll want to go fishing rather than work on your novel! Before you quit your day job, consider WHY you want to become a free-lance writer; you may find you're better off where you are.

This is the book that got me started. I was a Registered Nurse from a small town in Wisconsin,

looking for a new career direction, when I stumbled on this book in my local library. I'd never heard of freelance writing before, but suddenly, right there in front of me was, was a book telling me how to make a living writing. I'd always loved writing! I picked it up with great curiosity and was sold when I discovered that the author was a former Registered Nurse from a small town in Wisconsin. If he could do it, I reasoned, so could I. After reading this book, I knew what I needed to do. I wasn't an expert, by any means, but I knew the steps and the process, and that was huge. Today, I'm a former Registered Nurse from a small town in Wisconsin who's written for a variety of national publications, including Parents, American Baby, Ladies' Home Journal and Boys' Life. I'm outlining a Writing for Magazines and Newspapers course, and one of the books I'm recommending to my students is Handbook for Freelance Writing.

I finished up Handbook For Freelance Writing by Michael Perry over the last couple of days. If you're looking to start writing as a freelancer (magazine articles, stories, etc.), this is a good book to read. He writes in a very practical and amusing style, and you'll get quite a few tips on how to start structuring your efforts in this field. You'll learn the different types of freelance writing, what to expect during the process of seeking out assignments, how to make yourself easily acceptable to editors, and much more. If you've been doing freelancing for awhile, you may already know most of this. If you're just starting out like I am, then you'll benefit quite a bit from this read.

This book actually contains a fair amount of useful information. It is primarily aimed at individuals who are setting out to write magazine articles. So, if you have no interest in writing magazine articles, this is probably not the book for you. In short, it essentially posits that one ought to approach magazine queries in the same manner that one would work a cross-word puzzle. i.e. Looking to multiple sources to max income on things. The author's approach follows his interests, which are diverse with a sub-specialization, ie country music, medical, etc. The general tone is conversational, and it is easy to read.

I really would not recommend this book to others. It does not give enough information on how to make it as a freelance writer or how to make good money. I would recommend Robert Bly's book *Secrets of a Freelance Writer : How to Make \$85,000 a Year or How to Start a Home-Based Writing Business* by Lucy Parker. I believe that these books give more actual information on how to get started, where to look for business and how to price your services. Bly's book is primarily about commercial writing but is worth buying whether you are doing magazine or commercial writing.

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