

**100+**

# **FREELANCE WRITING QUESTIONS**

# **ANSWERED**

**BY CAROL TICE**



**EDITED BY ANGIE MANSFIELD**

# **100 Freelance Writing Questions Answered**

*By Carol Tice*

*Edited by Angie Mansfield*

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# Get Support for Your Freelance Writing Career

Freelance Writers Den is the learning and support community where freelance writers learn to grow their income – fast. The Den offers support forums, live Den meeting events, and more than 300 hours of recorded trainings and transcripts.

Membership is \$25 a month – no obligation, leave at any time. You can see what members say about how the Den helps them earn more, and [view a video on all the Den's benefits.](#)



# Chapter 2: Making the Leap to Freelancing



## 7. How do I know I'm ready for full-time freelancing?

**Q:** “Should I wait to get some good-paying freelance jobs before I dive into the freelance writing field, or should I quit my job as soon as I have the funds to do so without starving to death, so that I can focus completely on writing? How long should I be writing, and what kind of jobs should I have set up, before I can consider myself “ready” to do this as my lone source of income? Can I do both until I’m comfortable, or is that not realistic?”—John P.

**A:** John, I never got to mull over those questions—I started freelancing because I got fired. Many others in 2008-9 or so found themselves laid off.

But for deciding on the right moment to go full-time freelance, I recommend Linda Formichelli’s book *[Write Your Way Out of the Rat Race, and into a Career You’ll Love](#)*. It’s all about making that transition.

The short answer is that when you might make the jump into full-time freelancing depends a lot on your expenses, obligations, and appetite for risk. And certainly, writing on the side is a viable way to ease into it.

## 8. How do I transition to freelancing when I’m under a non-compete agreement at work?

**Q:** “I would really like to move into freelancing, but I’m currently under a non-compete agreement with my job at a tech marketing firm. I’m woefully underpaid for the kinds of documents I’m pumping out daily, but I can’t slowly ramp up freelance work without violating the agreement. How do I get started?”—Miranda

**A:** Miranda, read your non-compete carefully. Then, start freelancing for industries and niches where you’re free to do so.

It may preclude you from working for other clients in your city, your country, one industry, or may just name a few specific competitors you can’t write for.

If your non-compete is onerous (namely, forbids you from writing for anyone anywhere), you might consider trying to renegotiate it to be more limited—ideally, naming just a few archenemies you can’t write for and leaving the rest of the field open. But

look through it for loopholes—could you target tech marketing firms in the UK or Canada, for instance, if you're in the US?

Sometimes, you can write for other niches within tech, or you could write for other industries entirely, such as healthcare or education. Depends on your non-compete's exact language.

It sounds like you've put together a portfolio of work pro bono, and should be ready to go after paying clients. Those pro bono samples don't usually magically "wash over" into paying gigs—that happens when you ask those clients for testimonials and referrals. Then, you use those to target bigger prospects in those niches and get paying clients through proactive marketing.

Also look at your contract to see if you can use any of your work for this employer as writing samples in your portfolio, or if you're banned from doing so.

### **Time to go?**

Ultimately, you may need to just take the plunge and leave, so that you can start earning what you're worth. Try to save up cash to tide you over. Also, beware of your non-compete—it may say you can't write for competitors for a time period AFTER you leave.

You really want to get that removed, if there's a clause like that in there. My understanding is those clauses don't really stand up in court—they can't make you do anything after you're not being paid by them. But you might want to consult a contract lawyer to see what your wiggle room is in this one.

## **9. How do I start with no samples?**

**Q: "I want to start a freelance writing career part-time for now, and I don't have a clue where I should start. I don't have any writing samples and generating ideas is harder than I thought. Do you have any recommendations on how I can get my wheels turning and start writing?"—Lisa M.**

**A:** These posts might help you with learning to develop ideas:

- [5 Unusual Places to Find Great Story Ideas](#)
- [The Easy Story Idea Sale That Few Writers Think to Pitch](#)
- [2 Simple Ways to Become That Writer With a Million Story Ideas](#)

If generating ideas is tough, you might consider writing for businesses or for trade publications, which might assign you stories or other writing work, based on your knowledge of their industry. I lay out exactly how to start from zero, quickly build a portfolio, and start getting paying gigs in my e-book *The Step by Step Guide to Freelance Writing Success*.