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**Break in with Fillers: The Best Market for New Writers**

By Shelley Wake

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Interested in breaking into writing or breaking into a new area? You can't go past writing fillers. Fillers are one of the most overlooked opportunities in the freelance writing world and offer one of the best opportunities for new writers.

Fillers Are In Demand

I've spoken to hundreds of editors and been told over and over again that fillers are the one thing they never get enough of. Most publications tend to publish more freelance fillers than they do freelance articles. Yet, they often receive 100 times more articles than fillers. This is a gap in the freelance market that you can take advantage of.

Fillers are a Great Place to Get Started

Many publications are careful about publishing feature articles from writers they don't know. Even if your article is good, an editor might decide not to publish you because they don't know you as a writer. This is especially true if you don't have a lot of experience or any clips. But even without experience or clips, most editors will consider a filler. In fact, many editors treat writing fillers as the testing ground to see if a writer can be relied on to write feature articles.

Here's what one editor had to say about fillers:

"One of the best ways to break in is to write fillers. It gives me a chance to start to build a relationship with a writer and see that I can trust them. Of all the freelancers I work with, over half started out writing fillers." – Margaret, Magazine Editor

So not only can writing fillers get you some clips, it also has the potential to turn into a long-term writing opportunity. Consider fillers a stepping stone to much bigger things.

The Smart Way to Write on Spec

## Break in with Fillers: The Best Market for New Writers

Fillers are almost always submitted on spec. This means that you avoid the problem of having to query the publication and sell yourself as a writer, because your filler is doing the work for you and showing the editor your writing skill.

The big argument against writing on spec is that you spend your time writing pieces that might never sell. Fillers reduce this problem because they are short and take less time to write. So even if your filler doesn't sell, you haven't wasted as much time as you would have on a longer feature article. Fillers are also more flexible, with few publications having set guidelines for fillers. This means that a filler will often be suitable for more than market. So if it gets rejected once, it's not a waste of time. You can just send it to a new market, often without having to make any changes.

### Fillers Rely on Information, Not Writer Qualifications

Fillers usually rely on information, not on the writer's qualifications. This means that you don't have to sell yourself when you submit fillers. Instead, the information you put in the filler sells it for you. This makes fillers a perfect option for writers lacking the experience or clips to sell themselves to an editor.

### You Can Write a Lot of Them

Since fillers are short, you can write a lot of them and submit a lot of them. You could literally have hundreds of pieces out in the market for consideration in a short time. And if you write them well, you could have a lot of them published in a very short time. That means you can build a list of clips fast.

And one other benefit is that magazines don't have as limited a space for fillers as they do for feature articles. So if your filler gets accepted, it's likely to get published fast. The same isn't true for feature articles, where an accepted article will often be scheduled for an issue a year or two away. That's one more good reason why fillers are a great way to build clips fast.

Once you've got the clips, then you have a few more options. Until then, fillers are a great place to start.

And one final tip. Once you have the clips and start moving into feature articles, don't forget about fillers. As you're researching a feature, take note of interesting facts, trivia, or anecdotes you come across. These can make fillers and be an added bonus, bringing in some extra cash and some extra clips.

Shelley Wake is the author of "Getting Published Without Clips." This practical no-nonsense guide shows writers exactly where to go and what to do to break into freelance writing. Packed with inside information, proven methods, hidden markets, and more, it's successfully launched hundreds of freelance careers in record time.<http://www.writingstuff.com/fr02m.html>

## Freelance Writing on the Internet

By **Mridu Khullar** (<http://www.WritersCrossing.com>)

**Freelance Writing on the Internet by Mridu Khullar** (<http://www.WritersCrossing.com>)

So, you've decided to take up a career in freelance writing. You've hooked up the computer, installed the printer, and learnt the nitty-gritty of your word processor. You've maybe even been published a couple of times. You're all set to conquer the world of publishing. But wait. Do you know all the options available to you?

We've compiled a list of all the jobs a freelance writer can find on the Internet to keep the cash inflow steady:

#### Magazines

Most of the freelancing industry focuses on magazines, so let's start there. You'll find magazines on every topic imaginable. From teen issues to running, you'll find at least one magazine to fit in your interests. While magazine publishing is huge and widespread, don't try to get published everywhere at once. Find a few niche topics and start your way up from there. As your expertise and interests grow, branch out to other magazines as well. Topics most writers start out with include health and nutrition, computers, parenting, teens, relationships, disability, travel, etc.

#### Fillers in Magazines and Newspapers

Not all writers make it to the cover pages of magazines. At least not at first. In the beginning, you might just have to make do with fillers. And they pay as much as they're fun to do. Jokes, opinion pieces, short lists, news items and other short pieces are termed fillers. Editors are always on the lookout for good fillers, so you stand a good chance of breaking through.

#### Greeting Cards

With e-cards, paper greeting cards seem to have taken a backseat. Nevertheless, the sale of paper cards is still ongoing and they are still preferred when it comes to relatives, long-lost friends or special occasions. Despite popular myths, greeting card markets are not as easy to break into as they seem, can take a long time to respond and an even longer time to get your card into print. The upside is that greeting card markets pay extremely well for short writing. What's more, though limited, opportunities exist for e-card writers too. So when you need to take a break from the regular work, dip your fingers into the greeting card pool

#### Doormats, Magnets, Bumper Stickers, T-shirts, etc

If you've wondered how those words made it to t-shirts, stickers, doormats and magnets, think no more. Freelance writers are often required to write the slogans for such material and are paid quite well for it. If you have the ability to coin a catchy or humorous one-liner, this could be your shot to riches. You won't get a byline, and certainly no fame, but you could be earning as much as \$50 per word!

#### Posters

They're up in your room, you've seen them in your friend's office, and you often find a funny one at the fast-food place down the street. Someone must have written them. Why not you? A lot of companies sell posters and generate handsome sales from them. In fact, writers of posters are usually paid in

royalties, that is, by the number of posters sold. So, instead of being paid one-time, you'll be paid over and over again for something you wrote years ago.

### Resumes

Practically every one needs a resume (yes, even us freelance writers). Some people write them up themselves, some prefer to take the help of professionals. Write up a resume for a friend or two at work (even if she doesn't need one!) as samples and respond to advertisements and calls for resume writers. Keep in mind though that resume writing isn't your regular every day writing. You're not supposed to decorate the page with flowery prose or funny anecdotes. You need to be professional, crisp and attention-grabbing. Practice with a few fake ones, and you'll soon be on your way.

### Advertising

Advertisers need writers, commonly known as copywriters. They're the flesh and blood of the campaign. Getting into advertising can be a tricky business, but with a few credentials and a polished resume, you'll have no trouble at all showcasing your talent to the world. If you are indeed good at what you do, advertisers will line up to get you to work for them. If you prefer not to work for someone, you could set up your own copywriting business and promote it to get clients.

### Website Copy

With the Internet revolution finally having realized in its full form, small and big companies alike are looking for writers to write content for their websites. Not only do these companies pay well, but they also give the writer a much-desired break. If you've written website copy, you'll have no trouble finding more assignments of the same kind. Simply guide the prospective client to the website and he'll know what kind of work he can expect from you. Aim for start-up companies at first. They'll usually hand over the whole work to you and you can make a great portfolio.

### E-books

E-books are not here to replace print books. They're here to provide an alternative resource for distribution. However, as opposed to print books, e-books are short, contain lots of web links and usually provide answers to a customer's immediate needs. They can be downloaded off the Internet in seconds, and you can profit from a single e-book long after you've written it. Don't get fooled though—writing e-books takes just as much time and dedication as writing print ones. It's only the mode of delivery that's different.

### Ezines

Online newsletters, or ezines as they are frequently called, are becoming the rage of the publishing industry. Many of these ezines are paying markets and run regular features and columns. Many of them have associated websites too. While the pay in this market is less, you'll be writing shorter articles in much less time.

### Newspapers

Generally, when we think of newspapers, we think news. But newspapers hold a lot more information than that. With regular columns, reviews and updates, latest findings, and point-of-view articles, newspapers are the writer's best bet. And if you've gained entry into one section of the newspaper, the other sections of writing open up to you automatically. Though slow on the income, getting published in your local daily is still a major ego-booster!

### Newsletters

There are many households and small companies that publish newsletters. And all the more are

springing up each day. These newsletters are a great way to break into freelancing and gather clips. Their requirements are not as tough to meet as those of magazines and most editors are quite quick in their responses. To add to that, some newsletters also pay quite well, sometimes almost as much as small magazines.

### Ghostwriting

If it's the fame you're after, you won't get it here. But you can earn a decent amount of money ghostwriting memoirs, books or even articles for people who don't want to or can't write themselves. Ghostwriters are quite in demand today with more and more people trying to preserve their family history by getting memoirs or biographies written. However, apart from the money, there's nothing else. You don't get the credit, the fame or even the byline.

The prospects for writers today are immense provided you're ready to experiment in different areas. The Internet has made it easier than ever to find writing assignments not only in your own country, but around the world. A simple e-mail is all it takes to apply for a job and send in the assignment.

It's easy for a freelance writer to get stuck doing the same old thing over and over. It's not only fun, but sometimes necessary to introduce a little spice into your writing routine. If you've been writing articles all your life, try doing some greeting card writing instead. If the money is slow, and you could really use some extra money, apply for a resume writer job. If the book manuscripts are lying unsold, try selling short stories for a change.

With a little variation now and then, you'll not only find your income shooting up, but also your inspiration. So next time you find yourself waiting for word on that manuscript, send out a few short pieces instead. It'll definitely be worth the effort.

\* This article originally appeared on <http://www.WritersCrossing.com>

Mridu Khullar is the editor-in-chief of [www.WritersCrossing.com](http://www.WritersCrossing.com), a free online magazine for writers. Sign up for the free weekly newsletter to get a complimentary e-book with 400+ paying markets. Also check out her e-book, "Knock Their Socks Off! A Freelance Writer's Guide to Query Letters That Sell," available at <http://www.writerscrossing.com/queries.html>



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