

Unlocking the secrets of WRITING AS A CAREER

Long hours of nothingness with not a word on the screen or pages when the deadline is near is the most feared as well as the most recurring event in a writer's life. The computer screen glares at your blood-shot eyes for even the slightest reciprocation of creative love, but all it sees is an anxious editor or, if you are at home, a bored spouse looking over you. Those are the daunting challenges that a writer has to come to terms with. Needless to say, there are not many people in the country who have the audacity to tread this uncertain and a rather haphazard path, but those who did dare have not returned dissatisfied. Allow me to walk you through the maze of taking up writing as career and to alleviate some, if not all, of your fears.

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF SOME CAREER OPTIONS INVOLVING THE ART OF WRITING:

Self-publishing

Many writers began as a blogger and still maintain a blog of their own. Chances are that if your blog is interesting and accurate (interesting alone may not suffice), publishers will either pick up your article for republishing or even better, pick you as a guest contributor. With websites, such as Scribd, you can self-publish and distribute your book/e-book online. While most self-published books/e-books have been dealing with self-improvement topics, you could choose to stray away from the mainstream by breaking into other categories, such as science fiction.



Freelancer

Freelancing is typically associated with service. It entails flexible workload and non-committal to any one employer or independent provision of services, which spreads out your reach across multiple companies, increasing the probability of landing more work. Freelance writing is mostly common in journalism and screenplay. However, freelance writers usually begin with little office experience, so publishers might be initially reluctant to source work from them. Therefore, establishing yourself as a credible freelance writer with a significant track-record might take you a while.



Novels

The genre could be anything, but the writing style usually follows a creative flair and a certain structure. You may choose to write a novel, a memoir, a collection of short stories, a travelogue, or an anthology of your best opinion pieces that have

been published by dailies previously. This is by far the hardest (and costlier than the rest) and will test your patience till you are on the verge of giving up. What will help you during this phase is a mentor or a fellowship guiding you through the writing process, providing feedback on your work, and developing your skills. Writing fellowships and workshops take place regularly around the world.



Comics

Mention this category and you will most likely face a bunch of perplexed well-wishers looking at you with sympathy, in the ardent hope that you "grow up," and yet, Tintin, Chacha Chowdhury, Spider Man, Archie, and the Hulk have become household names and shaped a world of their own despite being fictional characters. Truth is that generations have grown up reading (and collecting) comic books, and

this habit is not withering away anytime soon according to estimates available online. If there is one thing that makes us all nostalgic, it would be a comic book that we would read – under the table – in class, and then trade it for another during the break. Creators of online memes may find this category interesting.



Khaled Hosseini (1965-present): Being the writer of three back to back international bestsellers, Hosseini's books have been a refreshing look into his home country, Afghanistan, which otherwise people perceive as nothing but a war ravaged country. Before turning into a writer, Khaled Hosseini worked as a doctor for ten years until a year and a half after the release of The Kite Runner. However, he often referred to his job as a doctor as an 'arranged marriage' and after his first book got released he could not help it but to go towards his true calling. Currently Hosseini is a Goodwill Envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Journalist

Journalism involves plenty of roles, such as the reporter who collects information from sources, the staff writer who writes the article in the proper grammar and style, and the editor who checks for linguistic as well as content accuracy, among many other different roles. Since journalism is crucial in shaping public opinions on a mass scale, it also involves numerous principles for a free, fair, and accurate reporting. Online journalism is becoming increasingly popular. World Pulse, a social media enterprise based in USA, picks up articles focused on women's rights from around the world and delivers them to influential media outlets, such as the Huffington Post and United Nations Women's Reporting Network. In Bangladesh, traditional print media still reigns and numerous papers and magazines are joining the scene.



Copywriter

Copywriting, like journalism, involves multiple roles, such as crafting direct mail, creating taglines, writing jingle lyrics, and preparing social media content. Broadly, copywriting is the act of writing for the purpose of advertising or other marketing activities. If you believe you can do much better than lifting up foreign songs to advertise a product or a service (we are tired of cringe-worthy jingles and taglines), then this might be the best fit for you. While almost anyone can craft a message within 140 characters, the process of creating one that disrupts the noise, reaches the target audience, and communicates the desired information is complex and requires careful thought. The shorter your word limit, the harder it is to fully express yourself.



Publishing houses are constantly seeking out new talent. The industry can be a profitable one if writers nurture the talent. While the writing career may not make you a millionaire overnight (which line of career does?), there are other benefits, such as the opportunity to travel and meet new people, which might interest you.

Here are certain steps you can take to venture into writing:

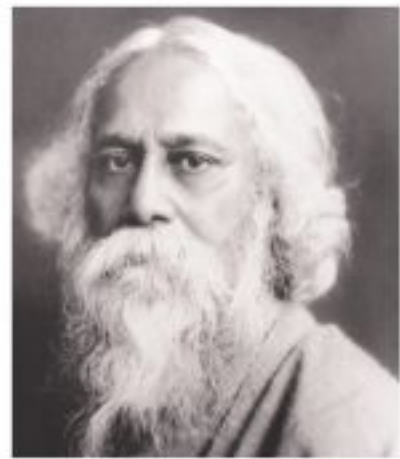
1. Have a regular routine for writing as well as reading.
2. A strong passion for writing is not necessary initially, but you must possess the basic interest for writing (or even public speaking because writing lets your opinions to be heard).
3. Follow websites, such as World Pulse and Commonwealth Writers, which provide regular updates and opportunities pertaining to writing.
4. Follow other writers and take lessons from their struggles and routes to success.
5. Learn constantly and explore new genres. If you are into environmental reporting, take an active interest in fashion and entertainment, and you might just surprise yourself and your editor for being an all-rounder!
6. Take the help of a mentor or writing fellowships to hone your skills.

MONICA ISLAM

Writers to inspire you

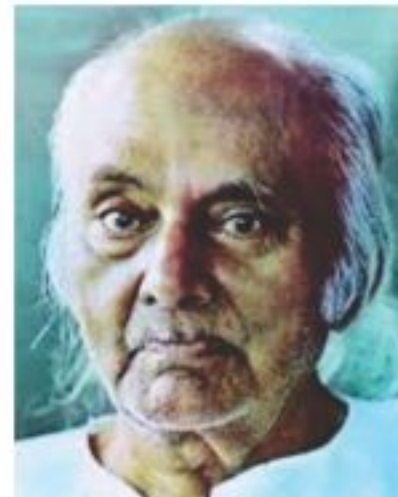
In the twenty first century, we are seeing people become famous overnight because of what they write. Writers have the power to inflict huge chaos in societies and also bring in immense joy. Aspiring writers' more often than not, tend to look over at the works of well-known writers for inspiration, and try to emulate ideas from there into their own works. So, yeah, writers' are important. As a tribute to all the aspiring writers out there who wish to make their mark, this writer has compiled a list of ten inspiring writers of all times.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941): This Bengali bard was not only the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize in Literature but also the first Non-European to do so. Having started writing with poetry from the age of eight, Tagore famously (though ironically) hated formal education. A couple of years after his winning the Nobel Prize, Tagore was awarded the Knighthood, but he renounced his knighthood, in response to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre –becoming the first public figure to acknowledge the massacre.



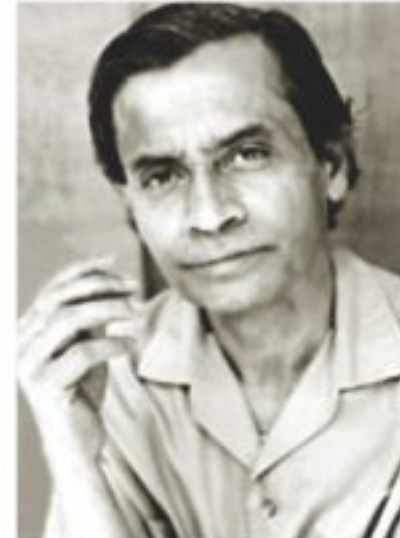
Ernest Miller Hemingway (July 21, 1899 – July 2, 1961) was an American author and journalist. His economical and understated style had a strong influence on 20th-century fiction, while his life of adventure and his public image influenced later generations. Hemingway produced most of his work between the mid-1920s and the mid-1950s, winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954.

He published seven novels, six short story collections, and two non-fiction works. Three novels, four collections of short stories, and three non-fiction works were published posthumously. Many of his works are considered classics of American literature.



Kazi Nazrul Islam (24 May 1899 – 29 August 1976), is famously known as the Bidrohi Kobi (Rebel Poet), and at times as Nazrul, was a Bengali poet, musician and revolutionary who initiated poetic works adopting intense spiritual rebellion against fascism and oppression. He also worked with theatrical groups with the help of whom learned of poetry, drama, and literature. After serving in the British Indian Army, Nazrul established himself as a journalist in Calcutta. His poetry and nationalist activism earned him the popular title of Bidrohi Kobi. Accomplishing a large body of acclaimed works through his life, Nazrul is officially recognized as the national poet of Bangladesh and highly commemorated in India. He also composed the Bangladesh military march "The Song of Youth", now known as "Chal Chal Chal".

Buddhadeva Bose (1908–1974) was one of the most versatile Bengali writers of the 20th century. Frequently referred to as a poet, he was a versatile writer who wrote novels, short stories, plays and essays in addition to poetry. He is recognized as one of the five poets who moved to introduce modernity into Bengali poetry. It is said that since Tagore, perhaps, there has been no greater talent in Bengali literature.



(Nelle) Harper Lee (1926 -Present) is an American author known for her 1961 Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel To Kill a Mockingbird, which deals with the issues of racism that the author observed as a child in her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama.

CONNECT TO NEXT STEP



facebook.com/
thedailystar.nextstep

Email: nextstep@thedailystar.net

Download the PDF

version from our website.

Take your next step to connect to us. Email us if you have an interesting story to share related to career.

