



Be a writer

From the news writer/editor working for a media house to the self-employed screenwriter seeking a break in the showbiz, writing is a heterogenous professional field. And though it offers a variety of ways to set foot into the industry, it guarantees success to only those who possess the power of the pen. Read on as **Aashna Bhalla & Vanshika Singh**, AIS VKC Lko, IX A, expound what it takes to build a career in the field of writing and the opportunities it entails.



Know the Expert

Ashima Syal, poet

A poet by profession, Ashima Syal published her first poetry book titled *Canopy* in 2019 and has co-authored over ten anthologies including *Seashore*, *Snowdust*, etc. Her anthology 'Bachpan Sunheri Yaadon ka Pitaara' has been recently selected for International Book of Records. One of her poems on the Himalayan Abode was also featured in the 2020 Kumaon Literary Festival.

The path

I had a keen interest in writing since I was in 8th grade. The idea to pen down your thoughts and weave them together in verse has always intrigued me. Thus, to turn my passion into a career opportunity, I pursued a creative writing course from Xavier's Institute of Mass Communication, Mumbai. A few years later in 2019, I finally published my first book of poems by the name *Canopy*.

The essentials

For a poet like me, creativity and originality of thought are the two most important details. Then comes the need to be observant enough. For in a very Pablo Nerudian sense, poets are capable of turning the ordinary into something extraordinary and beautiful. Apart from that, a good command over English certainly is a plus point, but you don't

have to stress over it much; poetic license saves the day for most of us.

The qualifications

A high school degree or equivalent is the minimum educational requirement to qualify for any kind of writing job. To add on to your skills, you can also pursue a graduate/post-graduate degree in creative writing. There's an abundance of institutes out there providing the same. Other than that, I would highly recommend every aspiring writer to enrol for Himali Kothari's Creative Writing Course at the Xavier's Institute of Mass Communication, Mumbai. I took this very course under her and to be fairly honest with you all, it helped me enhance my writing skills a great deal. You can all look up for such creative writing courses in your respective states.

The ups and downs

The most interesting aspects of writing fiction or poems are flexible schedules and the pleasure that one gets out of seeing one's name published on a book. The greatest dread of a creative poet, on the other hand, is writer's block which when occurs, slows down the whole creative process and leaves one out of ideas.

The growth

As far as the field of poetry writing is concerned, the avenues are endless. A good poet can work as a freelancer, can get their work published in literary magazines or can write a poetry book of their own. They can also work as songwriters if they ever get the chance to. The remuneration, however, depends on the reach, engagement, and the skill set of the poet, but they can earn anywhere between 5-9.5 lakh INR annually.



Know the Expert

Ramendra Vashisht, script writer

Having worked as a copywriter for brands like Colgate, Maruti, etc., and also as an Associate Creative Director for the likes of Zee and NDTV, Ramendra Vashisht today is a well-known script writer with credits in films like *Mary Kom* to his name. He also has his own production house, ZIVsadi Entertainment Pvt. Ltd., with several hit shows to his credit.

The path

I began my career as an advertising copywriter and crafted 30-second stories for several brands. This is where my interest in the showbiz stemmed. Having worked on several TV shows for a long time post that, I finally got my first break with *Mary Kom*. Recently, I have written dialogues for an OTT series titled 'The Final Call' that stars Arjun Rampal.

The essentials

To write well, you need to read, observe your surroundings, and most importantly, live. For experience, as opposed to formal education, takes centre-stage in the imaginative process of writing screenplays. Additionally, an aspiring script writer must be hungry for stories. To have a keen eye is equally significant. If you are a multilingual at that, nothing can stop you.

The qualifications

A person does not need any sort of formal education to pursue a career in scriptwriting. Salim Javed, a scriptwriting legend, for instance, hasn't attended any particular course to achieve the skills he has today. He learned writing while being on the set as an assistant. But yes, there are several institutes that offer specialised screenwriting programs and degrees. Besides, a degree in English, journalism or communications would surely be a plus point.

The ups and downs

The most challenging part of being a scriptwriter is to get the recognition one needs to build a successful career in this field. Once recognised, coming up with something new in your script every time poses as another stumbling block. Because you are bound to run out of ideas every once

in a while. Conversely, the most rewarding thing is the satisfaction you feel once a script is ready. That feeling is just out of this world.

The growth

As far as the scope of script writing goes, there lies an unimaginable space for the writers to create anything and let the world see it. Somebody said "Rasode mein kaun tha" and the whole world knows it today. The growth in the viewership of the numerous OTT platforms is further giving a voice to the budding writers in ways previously unthought of. In this regard, most of these platforms are shelling out big bucks for quality writers, so the scope is huge. One can easily make 1-10 lakh INR per annum from a decent screenwriting job. And when it comes to the film industry, people can earn over 2-3 crore INR per film. Imagine!



Know the Expert

Divisha Manghnani, blog writer

A commerce and marketing student from Lucknow, Divisha Manghnani is a blog writer based in Dubai. Currently working as a digital marketer and freelancer, she is equipped with a considerable amount of experience in copywriting, content creation and editing.

The path

Back in 2017, I was going through a really tough time and I struggled a lot with my identity, as to who I really was. All I knew then was that I had a knack for creating and sharing things for people to watch and read. And so, I

started out as a blogger in Lucknow. It was later when I moved to Dubai, UAE, that I became a full-time professional blogger.

The essentials

Know that you don't have to be an expert in order to do well, you

just have to be smart. The most successful of businesses aren't always the best with what they do; the best-selling books aren't always the best written, the best often just means being best marketed. So, focus on being smart. In addition to that, learn to make and sustain connections with the right people. I know it might sound obvious but a lot of people miss out on potential opportunities due to a lack of it.

The qualifications

Blogging is all about experience. I had the required digital knowledge and was lucky enough to be given a chance based on it. It wasn't really my degree that played that role for me. Also, let's not forget that the social/digital world moves pretty quick. So, you can definitely access short term courses online, watch videos, and self-learn.

The ups and downs

Time management and keeping

up with the deadlines can be a real tricky hurdle here. For there were days when I would feel burnt out, but at the end of the day the most gratifying experience would definitely be when you are able to deliver well.

The growth

In 2020 and 2021, as the world has been hit by a pandemic, people who never even thought about having a digital presence are now tapping into it creatively. From small businesses to even therapy services, everything is becoming digital. As a result, people have started to trust influencers/bloggers before they make an investment on any kind of product or service, making it evident that blog writing as a career is here to stay and slay. And when we look at the pay scale, a professional blogger can easily earn somewhere between 3-10+ lakh INR per annum, depending on their reach and overall engagement with their followers.

