

Overview: Writers and editors produce a wide variety of written materials delivered to an audience in an increasing number of ways. They develop content using any number of multimedia formats for readers, listeners, or viewers. Writers fall into two main categories—writers and authors and technical writers. *Writers and authors* develop original written materials for books, magazines, trade journals, online publications, company newsletters, radio and television broadcasts, motion pictures, and advertisements. Their works are classified broadly as either fiction or nonfiction and writers often are identified by the type of writing they do—for example, novelists, playwrights, biographers, screenwriters, and textbook writers. Some freelance writers may be commissioned by a sponsor to write a script; others may be contracted to write a book on the basis of a proposal in the form of a draft or an outline. Writers may produce materials for publication or performance, such as songwriters or scriptwriters.

Copy writers are a very specialized type of writer. They prepare advertising copy for use in publications or for broadcasting and they write other materials to promote the sale of a good or service. They often must work with the client to produce advertising themes or slogans and may be involved in the marketing of the product or service. *Technical writers* put technical information into easily understandable language. They prepare product documentation, such as operating and maintenance manuals, catalogs, assembly instructions, and project proposals. Technical writers primarily are found in the information technology industry, writing operating instructions for online Help and documentation for computer programs. Many technical writers work with engineers on technical subject matters to prepare written interpretations of engineering and design specifications and other information for a general readership.

Education and Training: Some employers look for a broad liberal arts background, while others prefer to hire people with degrees in communications, journalism, or English. For those who specialize in a particular area, such as fashion, business, or law, additional background in the chosen field is expected. Increasingly, technical writing requires a degree in, or some knowledge about, a specialized field—for example, engineering, business, or one of the sciences.

Other Qualifications: Writers and editors must be able to express ideas clearly and logically and should enjoy writing. Creativity, curiosity, a broad range of knowledge, self-motivation, and perseverance also are valuable. Writers and editors must demonstrate good judgment and a strong sense of ethics in deciding what material to publish. In addition, the ability to concentrate amid confusion and to work under pressure often is essential. Editors also need tact and the ability to guide and encourage others in their work.

Job Outlook: Employment of writers and editors is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations. Competition is expected for writing and editing jobs because many people with the appropriate training and talent are attracted to the occupation.

For More Information: <http://www.bls.gov/oco>

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook