

# How Do I Set and Negotiate Writing Fees?

*By Rebecca Matter*

Rebecca Matter here – ready to wrap up my 5-part series on the questions I hear the most from people who have just discovered AWAI and are excited about all the opportunities *the writer's life* has to offer.

So far we've tackled ...

1. [How you get started ...](#)
2. [How you create a roadmap to follow ...](#)
3. [How you get experience and create samples when you're just starting out ...](#)
4. [And how you find and approach clients.](#)

And today, I'll close things out with something aspiring writers tell me they fear the most ...

How to set and negotiate fees.

More specifically, how to get paid as much as possible, and get paid what you're worth, but without overpricing yourself out of the running.

Today's question is a biggie, and while I'm going to give you some practical advice you can follow whenever you sit down to price a project, know this ...

**You'll become more confident with pricing and negotiating the more you do it.**

There's not one single "right answer" that works for everyone ... because like writers, every project, every company, and every product or service is different.

Now don't get me wrong, some paths come with pretty standard ranges clients expect to pay, where there's only a tiny difference between the high end and low end of the scale. Things like case studies, press releases, non-selling video scripts, etc. ...

But even then, you can add more services to the projects to increase their value – things like designing the case study, optimizing the press release and disseminating it to your press contacts, or preparing the slide deck for a video presentation.

But, if you're doing anything where there's a sale involved – there's potentially going to be a wider range of "acceptable" fees.

Here are a few things you should consider before setting your fees:

### **1. Are you pricing by the hour or the project?**

I'll let you make the decision, but my recommendation is to always price by the project ...

As you gain more experience, you'll begin to work faster and more efficiently. You'll gain speed, and you'll have solid processes in place to help you handle projects more competently.

For example, the first time you write a landing page, it may take you five hours. As you write more of them, each one should take you less time. If you charge by the hour, you'll end up making *less* money each time! But if you charge by the project, you'll be maximizing your earning potential the more experienced you get.

Bottom line is, you should be rewarded for the expertise you gain, and charging by the hour doesn't work to your benefit.

### **2. Are you trying to build up your portfolio or do you have a lot of experience?**

When you're just starting out, it may make sense to charge less. You'll be able to build up your portfolio quickly. And, you'll collect testimonials and promotion results to show new prospects.

On the other hand, if you're a skilled copywriter with more work than you can handle, you should be working your way up the pay scale.

(Note: If you don't know the pay ranges for the services you plan to offer, don't worry ... I'll give you some resources in a minute.)

### **3. Are you writing for small businesses or big-name clients?**

You'll want to consider the size of the business when quoting fees.

There's a big difference between writing for a cabinetmaker in Austin and writing for the headquarters of KraftMaid® cabinetry. Not only will their marketing budgets be very different, the revenue they're expecting from their marketing efforts will vary greatly, too.

Which leads me to the next consideration ...

### **4. What is the project value to your client?**

Will the client potentially make \$10,000 or \$10 million from the promotion? Obviously, there's a big difference, and the more your client stands to make, the more you'll be able to charge.

## 5. Is the project scope complex or on the simpler side?

If you're writing a sales page for a brand-new investment advisory service, your copy will inevitably be more complex than if you're writing a product description for a new book by a renowned financial expert. You should expect to charge more for a more complicated project.

## 6. What is your time investment and long-term income goal?

While I never recommend you charge by the hour, you still need and want to "take home" a rate you're comfortable with. For every project, you should estimate how much of your time it will take to complete, and make sure the rate you quote provides you with a reasonable return for your time invested.

Remember, as you get more efficient and can do the work faster, the value of each hour goes up! Don't charge clients less simply because it takes you less time.

**And, if a client balks at your fee, there are a few things you can do:**

1. Resell the value. Show them what they'll get in return for the expense.
2. Revise the proposal taking away some of the services.
3. Walk away. It's going to happen! You're going to pitch clients who simply can't afford your fees, or don't value enough the service you provide. But understanding the value of your time is an important lesson in building a successful writing business. And you may be better off in the long run spending that same time finding a new potential client.

So, there you have it!

The top 5 questions I hear most often from aspiring writers. Of course, I hear a lot more ...

And you may have questions that are unique to your business. If you do, post them here or [connect with me on Facebook](#).

I'll do everything I can to help you get the answers you need, so you can continue moving forward toward your dream of living *the writer's life*.

P.S. I almost forgot the pricing ranges ...

Since there are so many ways to make a living as a writer, it would be impossible for me to list all of the fee ranges in this email, but we typically include them in every promotion about a writing opportunity, and go over pricing in more detail within the program itself.

So, a good place to start is with the AWAI catalog and inside any programs your taking.

You can also check out a webinar I did for *Writer's Digest*, [Get Paid to Write: How to Land Paying Gigs Writing Copy and Content](#), where I go over a few of the best writing opportunities, including how to price and land them.

And then finally, we published two pricing guides for two of the larger niches for writers that detail the various projects and their respective fees:

[How to Price and Land the Top 7 Web Copy Projects](#)

[How to Price, Quote, and Win B2B Writing Projects](#)

If you still can't find what you're looking for, by all means let me know! You can post a comment here, or [connect with me on Facebook at any time](#).

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#### Related Content:

- [How to Set and Negotiate Writing Fees](#)
- [AWAI's Simplest Guide to Pricing Copy Projects](#)
- [Package Your Copywriting Services in 8 Simple Steps](#)
- [Web Writer's Pricing Guide](#)
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## 10 Responses to "How Do I Set and Negotiate Writing Fees?"

Rebecca:

I have loved each part of your series. There is a wealth of great information for the new writer (like myself) that is not well established yet.

Thank you for taking the time to help us.

You Rock!

*K Barbara* – over a year ago

**@K Barbara - thank you! You made my day and the time spent writing the series worthwhile. Have a wonderful weekend! Rebecca**

*Rebecca Matter* – over a year ago

Rebecca-I'm being considered for a hard-copy & online newsletter writing job in Mexico. I have loads of experience and the editor is very interested. It would be 20-30 hrs/week and she wants to know how much \$ I want. My 7 previous newsletters were very successful, but volunteer! I'm making a list of Q's to ask about what's needed(there were no job details). The newsletter is free but has steady ad sales. I can also write ad copy if needed. Charge hourly or project? Any suggestions?

*Diane Young* – over a year ago

Thank you for the series. It really makes things easier for the aspiring writer (I am). It is cool you are available to answer questions.

Great!

*Guest (Emil)* – over a year ago

**@Diane Young - do not charge hourly. You already know how much time you'll be spending, so just keep that in mind when setting the project fee. You're bound to get faster as you go, and will end up making less in the end if you go hourly. You already have a track record (go you!), and you know they sell something in their newsletters. It's hard for me to strike a price w/out knowing more about the company size, industry, etc. Good luck!! Rebecca**

*Rebecca Matter* – over a year ago

**@ Emil - thanks for the feedback and yes! Everyone at AWAI is more than happy to help you on your journey. Just let us know what you need. Rebecca**

*Rebecca Matter* – over a year ago

Thank you so much for detailing about the fee to be charged. It has given me some of the best tips to negotiate for the best price. I have a lot of bad debts in my account. Clients waive the payment and my work hours go vain as I never receive payments from few clients in spite of repeated requests.

*Guest (arundhathi)* – over a year ago

**@ arundhathi - I'm glad I could help! Sounds like you need to collect more up front - and find better clients. Hopefully there's more earlier in this series too that will help. Good luck! Rebecca**

*Rebecca Matter* – over a year ago

I just joined today. I'm very excited as I want to utilize my equipment to make money, do something I enjoy - writing and do it on my own time and terms.

I will start tomorrow morning, on a Sunday, so I start a fresh week!

*Marielle V Turner* – over a year ago

**@ Marielle - welcome to AWAI! Please let us know if we can help in any way. And here's to a wonderful future as a well-paid writer. Rebecca**

*Rebecca Matter* – over a year ago

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