

Guidelines for Ghostwriting

Ghostwriting

A ghostwriter is a writer for hire who gets paid for their work but is not credited for it. It could be a work of fiction (including screenplays, magazine articles, blog posts etc.), or non-fiction (including autobiography, memoir, blog posts, magazine articles, corporate histories etc.). An existing popular author may hire a ghostwriter to write fiction in their style to increase the number of books they can publish. Celebrity biography is a popular genre requiring ghost-writers.

A ghostwriter may have little involvement in a project, for example tidying up a draft; or be required to research, write and edit an entire project.

For the most part, ghostwriters remain anonymous and do not receive a credit for their work. There are exceptions in which the ghostwriter may be credited as 'editor' or 'The Story of X, as told to X'. The contract will stipulate that the ghostwriter signs over all rights to the work.

A ghostwriter may spend several months or more than a year researching, writing and editing a project for large or small clients. Therefore, remuneration is varied.

Remuneration

There are three suggested methods of payment:

1. Flat fee
The writer works out how long the project will take and quotes a flat fee. This is the preferred method, provided there are clear guidelines.
2. Hourly Rate
The ghostwriter charges by the hour, usually between \$25 and \$55. This works better for smaller projects.
3. Cents per word
The ghostwriter charges x cents per word of the final draft. This can range from 5c – 60c per word or more (10c -15c would be the average).

Fee Indications

The story of a celebrity personality	\$15,000 - \$80,000.
An individual who will probably self-publish	\$5,000 - \$15,000
Illustrated corporate history	\$25,000 - \$80,000
Corporate history (smaller scale)	\$15,000 - \$20,000
Small family history	\$5,000 - \$10,000

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