

# PENGUICON 2019: Writers: Get Paid!

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## Facts

- SFWA “professional rate” is **\$0.08/word**.
- Average advance for a first novel is \$10,000 (\$5,000–\$15,000; usually won’t earn out). Word count is ~90k. So that’s **~\$0.11/word**.
- The average professional rate for commercial copy is **\$0.50–\$1.00/word**.

## Where You’ve Got the “Pros” Beat

- Your words are “cheap”
- You like to write and can write fluently
- You are aware of the audience
- You’re used to rejection; “zero ego” about this work

## Where You Need to Step Up Your Game

- **WRITING**
  - Write short sentences!
- **MARKETING**
  - Learn the difference between a “feature” and a “benefit”
  - Find out what a “landing page” is
  - Pin down the prospect’s ***pain, fear, hope, dream***
  - Learn about writing a “call to action”
- **BUSINESS**
  - Figure out your rate and how to talk about pricing
  - **⚠ NEVER WORK FOR FREE!!!**

## How to Launch Your Commercial Writing Career in 4 E-Z Steps

1. Start telling folks you’re a “freelance writer” (technical writer, content writer, copywriter, ghostwriter, etc.)
2. Pick a couple pro-bono clients who:
  1. You like
  2. Do good graphic design work
  3. Are willing to be a case study/give a testimonial
3. Set up your professional **website** and **LinkedIn profile**
  1. **⚠ NEITHER OF THESE GENERATE LEADS!!!** They are your business card/resume—**POTENTIAL CLIENTS WILL GOOGLE YOU!**
4. Make a retirement plan!
  1. [www.davideriknelson.com/retire](http://www.davideriknelson.com/retire)

