



WRITERHELPWANTED.COM



**Save Your Time & Sanity**  
**Your 10-Point Guide**  
**to Evaluating Freelance**  
**Writing Opportunities**

# Don't Fall for Sub-Par Writing Jobs: Use This Handy 10-Point Job Evaluation Guide

In the information age where content rules the web, there is no shortage of writing work available. If you look at freelance sites like Freelancer.com, UpWork.com and the many others, you can find plenty of jobs.

The problem is, it's not always easy to see which opportunities are worth pursuing and which you should pass on. It's particularly difficult when you're new and are eager to get your first job, but that doesn't mean you should let yourself get taken advantage of. This quick guide will help you make more informed decisions before pursuing a writing job opportunity.

Exploring the writing job market can certainly be overwhelming. There are hundreds of jobs to review each day and even though at WriterHelpWanted we put [many of the of the job opportunities into one place for you and handpick promising ones](#), it's still a lot to process. What makes it much easier is having a checklist that helps you decide which jobs are right for you, so you can quickly pass on the rest.

## Meet Your Write for a Living Experts, Alice Seba and Ron Douglas

There are plenty of resources out there that will teach you about writing and even how to write for pay, but few do it like WriterHelpWanted.com.

Combined, we have over 27 years experience using the Internet to grow our incomes through writing. Alice has built a business around creating content for over 20,000 customers and Ron is a New York Times bestselling author who has sold over 1.5 million books and ebooks.



We both live our dream of having freedom in our lifestyles, working when we want and without having to answer to editors or employers, just to ourselves. Alice enjoys that lifestyle in Vancouver, Canada with her husband and 3 children, while Ron does the same in Long Island, New York with his wife and 2 children.

Now we've taken all this experience and put it into a resource that will help you find quality writing jobs to earn extra income or even replace a full-time income, but also elevate you to a business that provides you with the freedom you desire. Where you go from here is all up to you and it would be our pleasure to serve as your guides.

With that in mind, let's take a look at a ten checkpoints to help you quickly assess each potential opportunity.



## 1. Client Work History and Feedback

Many freelance job sites provide information about the person or company that has posted the writing job. One key piece of information to review is the client history and feedback. What do their past contractors have to say about them?

Here's an example from Elance that shows the freelancer feedback about the client.



The screenshot displays a job listing for a 'Private Job'. The client's rating is 5.0, represented by five gold stars. The job was completed on Jan 16, 2007, and is categorized as 'Private' and 'Technical Writing'. The client has provided feedback comments, which are highlighted in a red box. The feedback comments are as follows:

**My Rating for this Job**  
★★★★★ 5.0

**Freelancer:** [Redacted]

Jan 16, 2007 | Private | Technical Writing | Completed | [Job Details](#) ▼

**Quality** ██████████  
**Expertise** ██████████  
**Cost** ██████████  
**Schedule** ██████████  
**Response** ██████████  
**Professional** ██████████

**Feedback Comments:**  
"Everything done exactly as required. Excellent work!"  
— [Client Info](#)

**Freelancer Feedback Comments for Client:**  
"Hello, I would work with this buyer again. He is very easy to work with and very clear on what he wants. I also never had to worry about payments. I enjoyed the project."  
— [Redacted]

It's important to realize that there is a bias to keep in mind. As a contractor, you may not want to review a past contractor too critically or to make a habit of giving negative feedback because you may be viewed as someone who is difficult to work with. However, if you do see a client with a pattern of negative feedback, that is likely a warning sign.

You can also look at the feedback they leave for the freelancers to see how critical they are and possibly get an idea if they could be difficult to work with. If they never seem to be pleased, it's probably not going to be any different with you.

Below, you can see some examples of feedback from a client to a freelancer.

### Private Job

My Rating for this Job

★★★★★ 5.0

★★★★★ Quality  
★★★★★ Expertise  
★★★★★ Cost  
★★★★★ Schedule  
★★★★★ Response  
★★★★★ Professional

Freelancer: ██████████

Apr 24, 2007 | \$250 | Technical Writing | Completed | [Job Details](#) ▼

Feedback Comments:

“Write-Design, Thank you for another excellent work!”

— [Client Info](#)

### Private Job

My Rating for this Job

★★★★★ 5.0

★★★★★ Quality  
★★★★★ Expertise  
★★★★★ Cost  
★★★★★ Schedule  
★★★★★ Response  
★★★★★ Professional

Freelancer: ██████████

Mar 20, 2007 | \$250 | Technical Writing | Completed | [Job Details](#) ▼

Feedback Comments:

“Thank you for being so flexible. Another great work from Write-Design.”

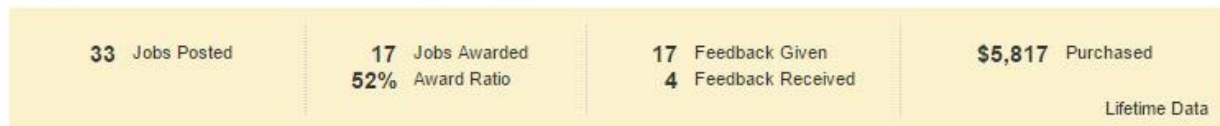
— [Client Info](#)

## 2. Percentage of Awarded Jobs

Another element to look at is the number of jobs that the employer posts and the number that they actually award. Don't be surprised to see that an employer only awards a small percentage. They may change their mind about the project, not be excited about the offers they get, or they're simply using the site to do research for their business.

In the example below, we can see that this user actually offers jobs on half of the jobs they post.

### My Job Posts and Ratings (35)



A low job award percentage doesn't mean that you shouldn't bid on a project if you're interested in it. However, it does mean that you shouldn't invest a ton of time on your bid and it's a good idea to keep your expectations in check.

## 3. Geographic Location

Some writing jobs will be on-site and the employer will want you to be able to work in their office. It's something to pay attention to before you apply for a job or bid on a project.

Here is a listing for a job in a particular geographical area.

is seeking an english copywriter for the office in Miami and New York.

Candidates should be English speaking natives (exclusionary) Have at least 1/3 year(s) of working experience as copywriter in the advertising industry, specially in online and offline projects. Excellent written communication skills, including copy writing, writing for email, editorial and proofreading abilities. This is a full time position.

- Principals only. Recruiters, please don't contact this job poster.
- do NOT contact us with unsolicited services or offers


On sites like Elance, the hiring company can specify that they prefer Freelancers from a certain location. On Elance, whatever appears beside "Location" is their preference, as you can see below.

 Posted: 29 minutes ago

 Time Left: 6d, 23h


 Location: United States

 Start: Immediately

 Budget: \$200 or less

 Fixed Price Job

 Elance Escrow Protection

 W9 Not Required

#### 4. Client Communication

Because the nature of most of your work will be online, it's important to make sure that you're able to clearly communicate with the client. There are many components to communication. The bottom line is that you want to make sure that you're able to understand the project.

If you and the client seem to speak a different language, there may be issues. Additionally, some people just aren't easy to understand. They may be abrupt when you prefer more detail and want to be able to ask questions. They may be more detailed and you prefer succinct information. You don't always know this ahead of time, but can get an idea from any back and forth communication you have before the actual hire. If it doesn't feel right, don't accept the job.

#### 5. Is it a Good Match?

Finding projects to bid on isn't difficult. Finding opportunities that are a good match is something else. As a general guideline find jobs that meet the following:

- It's a topic you feel comfortable writing about or you're interested in researching and learning about thoroughly.
- You have experience writing the type of content. For example, copywriting is very different than writing blog posts and requires more specialization.

- That the goals for the content are goals that you understand. For example, if the project is SEO (Search Engine Optimized) content then it's important to understand what that entails.

Of course, it's okay to bid on content that you've never written before. After all, you have to start somewhere. However, you should be confident that you can create the content to the client's specifications and that you're willing to put in the work necessary to meet their expectations. Even so, remember there are so many jobs available out there. Focus on the ones where you can do the best job possible for the client and build your portfolio.

## 6. How Reasonable are The Client's Expectations?

Most clients who have successfully been using freelance job sites and job directories for a while are reasonable with what they expect. For example, if a potential client says that they want the book you write for them to be an Amazon bestseller, that's not something that you can promise and the expectation is unreasonable. Or if they want work done with a very quick turnaround, you might not be able to deliver.

Any unrealistic demands or requirements are a red flag to pass on that opportunity.

## 7. How Clear is the Project Description?

You might be surprised how many projects are extremely vague. You'll see listings that say things like:

- 100 Blog posts on dog training
- Web content
- Or
- Writer with a passion for beaches.

It's pretty darn difficult to write a good proposal or quote for a project that wants you to have a passion for beaches. How do you charge for that? If they want a blog post or web content, what's the word count? What are the specific topics? It's better to stick with writing for clients who know exactly what they want or ask for clarification if you think it might be an interesting job.

Here's an example of a listing to probably avoid:

**Needs to hire 2 Freelancers**

Looking for a legal researcher/writer for articles and blog writing.

Look forward to hearing from you.

### Skills Required

Article Writing

Blog Writing

Content Writing

And one that provides much better detail:

Seeking a professional with academic credentials in Business Management, IT and/or the Telecom industry and with a fair to full command in Urdu for translation services.

The applicants should live in Hong Kong, Thailand or Taiwan and should be available for work at short notice.

Ability to travel is a clear advantage as part of business delegations.

### Desired Skills

Information Management, Telecommunications Engineering, Translation Urdu English

All of this information will help you write an accurate bid. It also ensures that should you win the bid, you'll be able to give the client the content that they want and they'll leave you positive feedback or hire you again.

## 8. Turnaround Time

In many cases, you'll see postings that have a general delivery timetable. For example, they may want their content in 10-14 days from acceptance. Make sure that the turnaround time is something that you can commit to and pay attention because you will find posts with unreasonable turnaround times.

If you like the project but the timetable seems too short, consider whether you could actually pull it off and deliver the content and figure out what that extra effort is worth. Short time tables can demand higher fees. You can charge more for a blog post that you have to deliver in 24-hours than a blog post that you have a month to write.

Here's an example of a listing that raises some red flags:

### Details

I'm looking for a quality writer that can write e-books about Psychology techniques. But can find information if needed to create original books on different subjects

You must have good grammar and spelling!!

I'm willing to pay up to 110\$ (USD) for a 13,100 words books in the following week. I am looking to build a long-term relationship with someone that can provide quality books for me. On February next year I will be able to pay more money and will sure have more projects for the months ahead.

I will provide a template of the book along with a TOC. This saves you some research time to construct the outline of the book.



The above client expects a quick turnaround of a week and is not willing to pay much for that work. They claim they will be able to pay more later, but never take work now for an amount you are uncomfortable with for someone you don't know with a promise to pay more at a later date.

## 9. What's in it For You?

There are some non-monetary considerations to make. For example, you might take on a project that doesn't pay very well because it is with a recognizable brand name and will look great on your resume. Or you might take on a project simply because it's a topic that you love or that it will be a nice addition to your portfolio.

These are all things you need to determine on your own terms and not feel pressured by anonymous listings on a freelance or job site to lower your expectations. You might take some free jobs to build up your portfolio, but do this with jobs that are meaningful to you.

## 10. Trust Your Intuition

Finally, trust your gut. If a job seems unappealing, skip it. There are too many other opportunities to review and spend your time on. You'll come across language that a client may use that feels as if the client doesn't value writers or their work. For example, "this should be an easy job for someone knowledgeable on this topic," is dismissive and undervalues the work required. This type of language is typically used to encourage people to bid too low.

Here's an example of a listing with similar language. Our guess is the actual job will take more than a "few minutes".

I need someone to do a quick update to an existing wikipedia page....

I have the edits and proper citing,, it will take someone with experience only a few minutes.

Here are some surefire red flags for projects and opportunities to avoid:

- Requests that you work for free or provide a free sample that ***they can use***. It's common and acceptable to ask for writing samples, but these should be for the purposes of evaluating your qualifications, not for providing the client with free work.
- Low money with a promise that they'll send you future work. This is a company that can't currently afford to pay their writers well, or doesn't want to pay them well. There is no reason to believe that will change in the future.
- Requests to work outside of the freelance job site. Many freelance job sites like Elance require all work and communication to be conducted through the site. If a client asks you to work outside of the site, it's a red flag and there can be penalties from the freelance site.



- Refusal to use escrow services. Elance and other providers require a client to pay for the project up front. They then release those funds to you when the project has been delivered and accepted. If a client refuses to use this system they may have no intention of actually paying you for your work.
- Unethical requests. You may get requests to rewrite content that has already been published by someone else. You might get requests to write content that you find distasteful. It happens. Expect it and avoid it.

Now that you know what to look for and even to avoid, once a particular job opportunity or project has meet your criteria, it's time to write a winning bid. There are a few important elements to consider as you create your proposal and that's something [we can help you with](#).

## The Best Way to Avoid Junk Listings

If you're using freelance sites, the 10 points we've provided will certainly give you valuable guidance in separating the junk listings from the good ones, but the reality is, getting on the freelance site treadmill is exhausting.

After you have a few jobs under your belt, it makes sense to establish yourself as the go-to service provider for your type of work. Instead of chasing down clients, make them come chasing you. All that comes from establishing your own writing business and getting your own website up and running. That may seem like a daunting task, but it's easier than you might think.

In fact, we've helped countless others do the exact same thing and it's all part of our training at WriterHelpWanted.



Join us at [WriterHelpWanted.com](http://WriterHelpWanted.com) for:

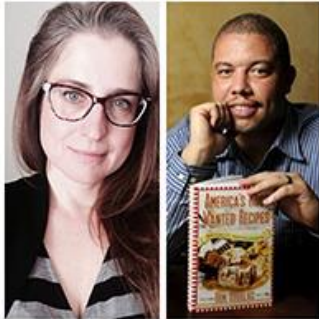
- **34 Writing Market Profiles:** We've got even more in-depth research into these 34 writing markets, including how much you can make, tips for success and how to get jobs and even earn passive income.

- **Case Studies of Successful Writers:** Discover how they found success in a variety of areas including ghostwriting, screenwriting, blogging, ebook publishing and more.
- **Expert Advice and Proven Strategies:** We'll guide you from getting your first writing job to creating your own business that helps you create the lifestyle you want.
- **Daily Job Listings:** If you want those listings, we've got daily ones and we even handpick some of the best ones to save you plenty of time researching.

[Click here to get the full details](#) – you'll also discover 3 critical mistakes most writers make and how to avoid them.

We'll see you there. If you've been trying to turn your writing talents into a steady stream of income instead of working yourself to the bone for peanuts, this is absolutely for you.

To your success,



Alice Seba & Ron Douglas  
WriterHelpWanted.com