

AUT

A FUTURE IN
**CREATIVE
WRITING**

WHAT IS CREATIVE WRITING ABOUT?

“Don't try to figure out what other people want to hear from you; figure out what you have to say. It's the one and only thing you have to offer.”

Barbara Kingsolver

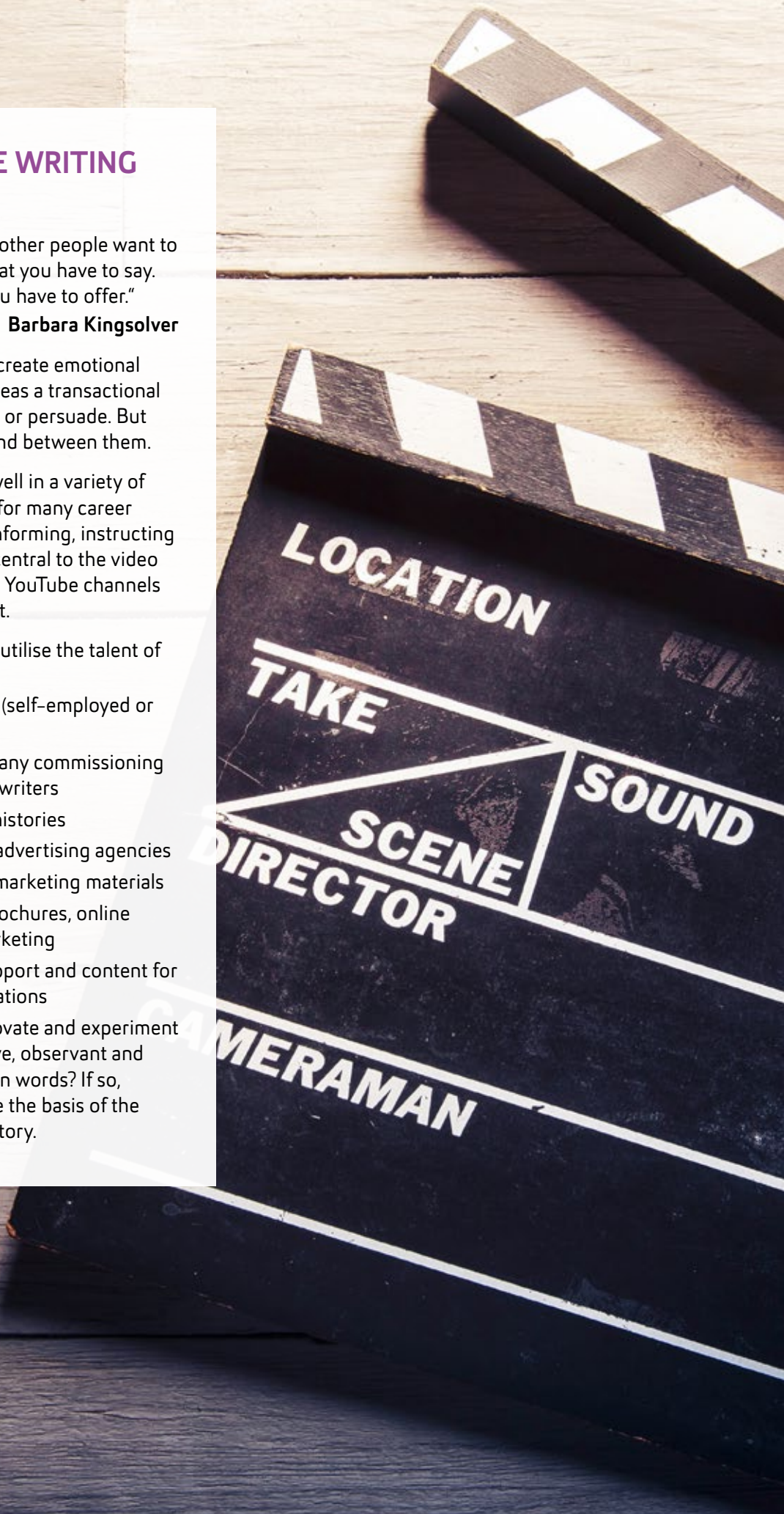
The creative writer seeks to create emotional effect and significance, whereas a transactional writer seeks to inform, argue or persuade. But there is much common ground between them.

The ability to use language well in a variety of media is a core requirement for many career paths. Skills in storytelling, informing, instructing and entertaining are just as central to the video gaming industry, bloggers or YouTube channels as they are to traditional print.

Many employers are keen to utilise the talent of a creative writer to:

- write new works of fiction (self-employed or for businesses/publishers)
- work in a publishing company commissioning the work of other creative writers
- produce biographies and histories
- write copy and scripts for advertising agencies
- create press releases and marketing materials
- devise content for sales brochures, online promotions and direct marketing
- engage in social media support and content for public and private organisations

Do you love to research, innovate and experiment with ideas? Are you inquisitive, observant and good at expressing yourself in words? If so, creative writing could well be the basis of the next chapter in your career story.



OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

The digital age

The digital revolution and the internet have fostered a proliferation of new types and platforms of communication, such as blogs, social media, YouTube clips and interactive news sites. These new technologies have caused a decline in printed media (books, newspapers) but not in the demand for writers – in fact the need for high quality and engaging writing skills is stronger than ever.

Self-publishing

Self or indie publishing is an important emerging trend for writers wanting to publish their own novels, short stories, poetry collections, graphic novels etc. Self-publishing gives the writer more control over the process, but it is necessary to be wary of book publishing services demanding up-front fees and/or an excessive cut of sales revenue. It is also important to acknowledge impartial editing makes a big difference to polishing copy.

Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) is the biggest e-book self-publishing platform. KDP is free to use and authors keep up to 70% of book sale revenue. Similar self-publishing services are offered by Barnes & Noble (Nook Press), Apple (iTunes Connect) and others.



CAREER POTENTIAL

1. Producing your own creative works

Novelist, poet, comic/graphic novel writer, songwriter (lyricist), short fiction writer, playwright, screenwriter, filmmaker, blogger

2. Producing work for organisations, other people or specific purposes

Greeting card writer, advertising/copywriter, marketing, public relations, media writer, digital content producer, publisher, editor, blogger, social media writer, legacy writer (writing bios and family histories), ghost-writer, travel writer, columnist/article writer, journalist, video game writer, filmmaker

3. Coaching, teaching, instructing, advising

Writing coach, creative writing instructor/tutor, creative writing consultant, teacher (primary, secondary, tertiary or adult/community education)

Options for graduates

Graduates primarily head into employment in education, media and new media (including social media management, web content management and online community management). Alternatively, those with double majors in languages and other arts majors or a conjoint degree with a different discipline can move into business, travel, trade, diplomacy or creative industries roles.

CAREER ROLE EXAMPLES

Fiction writer (novels, scripts for stage or screen, poems, performance art)

Although there is no 'one size fits all' description, a writer typically develops an idea, that they write and rewrite, drawing on their imagination. Includes researching and gathering information to build the alternative worlds they create. They then submit to publishers/theatre groups/movie companies. If accepted, they then go through an editing process.

WORK OPTIONS AND SETTINGS

Rapidly changing communication technology and media have ushered in an e-scape of new ways of working beyond the traditional computer/pen and paper at desk. You could be sitting, standing, walking or lying down while using a mobile device for dictation, video-making or collaboration. You may be based in an office, your home, a café, at the beach or wherever you are when inspiration strikes. There is also an increasing emphasis on working in collaborative hubs on projects.

Hours can vary widely. If employed in a specific role for an organisation, you may be working traditional business hours. Freelance writers however, may work long, irregular hours to meet editors' deadlines.

And for many, especially those writing novels, poetry, plays and other self-directed projects, writing has to fit around other employment streams and can involve early mornings and/or late nights, as you earn from other jobs to keep food on the table while you're working on your creative piece.

Social media content writer

Manages all aspects of an organisation's social media presence. Develops and delivers new content ideas. Researches and provides direction for blog posts. Supports client relations through social media, creating and managing online relationships. Writes and edits marketing emails, press releases and blog entries for the organisation.

Travel writer (freelance)

Researches, writes and sells stories to travel-related publications, agencies, websites and organisations. Promotes and pitches articles, books or script ideas to publishers. May work for several publications or companies, submitting regular columns, or series of related articles. Writes about travel-themed topics, such as transportation, culture, destinations, ecology, adventure and current events.

Copywriter (advertising)

Receives a brief from the client and/or account manager. Researches the product to be advertised and develops ideas with an art director or other team members. Presents ideas to the client for approval. Produces the copy (written content) of the advertisement.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

High level of written communication skills, with strengths in language structure and grammar, and the ability to:

- produce clear, easy-to-follow writing
- identify or create ideas and storylines that will interest and engage readers
- research text-based and online resources and interview people for information
- select the most appropriate information and writing techniques
- utilise their general knowledge of local, national and world affairs
- develop in-depth knowledge of key themes or subjects contained in their work
- have awareness of what people are interested in

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- a vivid imagination
- able to handle criticism and rejection
- able to work independently
- have the ability to promote themselves and their work
- originality, determination and discipline.

SALARY GUIDE

For writers not working in organisational roles creative writing income can vary dramatically, from zero to many thousands of dollars (if the work is popular). Sometimes writers are paid advance royalties or a writer wins a scholarship or grant.

If working on freelance contracts, writers will usually be paid per assignment.

Other salary examples:

| | Salary (per year) |
|-----------------------|--|
| Web content manager | \$41,000 - \$97,000, depending on experience and organisation |
| Blogger | \$0 - \$60k+ depending on number of blogs, whether full time or casual and payment type, eg flat rate per blog, view, word or a combination. |
| Communication advisor | \$41,000 - \$76,000, depending on experience and organisation |

Sources: Payscale.com, Hudson Salary Guide 2015, Robert Walters Global Salary Survey 2015.

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication and should only be used as a guideline.

THE AUT ADVANTAGE

AUT's Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing is New Zealand's first university-based undergraduate major in Creative Writing with an emphasis on framing narratives in multiple genres, media and settings for both artistic and more industry-related purposes.

In their final year, students complete a co-operative education placement, putting their skills and theoretical knowledge into practice in a 'real-world' workplace setting.

FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

Further study in creative writing is available at postgraduate level, including the Postgraduate Diploma in Arts, Master of Creative Writing, Master of Philosophy, and Doctor of Philosophy. Many creative writers hone a creative work, maybe their first novel or screenplay, through a postgraduate year such as the Master of Creative Writing.



LAURA OUWEJAN

Content Producer in Digital Media, TVNZ
Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing

"I work at TVNZ as a content producer in digital media. My main responsibility is website curation – I create visual and editorial content for the TVNZ list of television shows and for TVNZ OnDemand. For example, I write the online text accompanying My Kitchen Rules Australia and curate the page and imagery involved.

I work closely with Marketing to determine how they want things represented online, such as target audience and messages. I also work with Technology who look after the content management systems. They assist us with technical queries and we help them by testing new products before launching them. And I work with Sales, curating sites for TVNZ clients, like TheMix.

When I left high school I was unsure of my desired career path and opted to enter the workforce. However three years as an account clerk highlighted that I was unsuited to a structured admin job. I wanted a challenge and to express my creativity and that is when AUT's unique creative writing major caught my interest because reading and writing has always been a passion for me."

EMPLOYER COMMENT

"Laura is a great addition to our team at TVNZ. She has definitely hit the ground running, quickly mastering the main responsibilities of the role. With a superb level of attention to detail and creativity, Laura helps bring the online experience of some of our key television shows to life. It's great to have a safe pair of hands who I can rely on to get things done."

Robert Gough
Content Producer Team Leader, TVNZ.

USEFUL WEBSITES

The Big Idea / Te Aria Nui – a hub for news, views, events, jobs and opportunities in the creative sector

www.thebigidea.nz

Writing forward – a helpful creative writing blog

www.writingforward.com

Writers' Digest

www.writersdigest.com

FURTHER INFORMATION


For the most up-to-date information on Creative Writing and the BA, please visit our website:

www.aut.ac.nz/creative-writing

FUTURE STUDENTS

Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: www.aut.ac.nz/enquire

futurestudents@aut.ac.nz

 @AUTFutureStudents


CURRENT AUT STUDENTS

Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information:

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EMPLOYABILITY & CAREERS

For other Future Career Sheets visit:

www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets


For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through


<https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>


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The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, August 2019.

