

Author

You write books and long pieces for a living, usually alongside other writing work that pays the bills.

TYPICAL PAY

\$77,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$53k to \$110k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Home desks, libraries, residencies, publishers' offices

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 9 to 12
English and history. Read far more than is assigned. Write things and let people read them.
- 2 Learn the craft** 0 to 4 years
A degree in English or creative writing, a college writing program, workshops, or a disciplined reading and writing habit on your own.
- 3 Publish small** 1 to 5 years
Literary magazines, anthologies, online outlets. Small credits are how an agent or editor first takes you seriously.
- 4 Finish a manuscript** 1 to 4 years
The step almost everyone stalls on. A complete, revised book is the thing publishers can say yes to.
- 5 Agent and publisher** 1 to 3 years of submitting
An agent pitches your book and takes about 15%. Canadian literary publishers also accept direct submissions.

Pros and cons

- + No licence, no gatekeeper, no required school
- + You can start today, at any age, with a laptop
- + Canada funds writers through arts councils and library payments
- Very few people live on book income alone
- Advances are small and arrive slowly
- Rejection is constant and largely impersonal

Optional boosts

Grant writing. Ghostwriting. Screen and audio. Teaching.

Good to know

Libraries pay authors

Canada's Public Lending Right program, run by the Canada Council for the Arts, sends registered authors a yearly payment based on how many public libraries hold their books. For some writers it is the most...

Copyright outlives you

In Canada copyright now lasts for the life of the author plus 70 years, so a book can keep earning for an author's family long after they are gone.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Author in Canada, wages (updated November 2025)

Job Bank: Author in Canada, job outlook

The Writers' Union of Canada

Canada Council for the Arts

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/author>



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