Some organizations, particularly those with large public relations staffs, have formal training programs for new employees. In smaller organizations, new employees work under the guidance of experienced staff members. Beginners often maintain files of material about company activities, scan newspapers and magazines for appropriate articles to clip, and assemble information for speeches and pamphlets. They may also answer calls from the press and public, work on invitation lists and details for press conferences, or escort visitors and clients. After gaining experience, they write news releases, speeches, and articles for publication or design and carry out public relations programs. Public relations specialists in smaller firms usually get all-around experience, whereas those in larger firms tend to be more specialized.

The Public Relations Society of America accredits public relations specialists who have at least 5 years of experience in the field and have passed a comprehensive 6-hour examination (5 hours written, 1 hour oral). The International Association of Business Communicators also has an accreditation program for professionals in the communications field, including public relations specialists. Those who meet all the requirements of the program earn the Accredited Business Communicator designation. Candidates must have at least 5 years of experience in a communication field and pass a written and oral examination. They also must submit a portfolio of work samples demonstrating involvement in a range of communication projects and a thorough understanding of communication planning. Employers consider professional recognition through accreditation a sign of competence in this field, and it may be especially helpful in a competitive job market.

Promotion to supervisory jobs may come as public relations specialists show they can handle more demanding assignments. In public relations firms, a beginner may be hired as a research assistant or account assistant and be promoted to account executive, account supervisor, vice president, and eventually senior vice president. A similar career path is followed in corporate public relations, although the titles may differ. Some experienced public relations specialists start their own consulting firms. (For more information on public relations managers, see the *Handbook* statement on advertising, marketing, and public relations managers.)

Job Outlook

Keen competition will likely continue for entry-level public relations jobs as the number of qualified applicants is expected to exceed the number of job openings. Opportunities should be best for individuals who combine a college degree in journalism, public relations, advertising, or another communications-related field with relevant work experience. Public relations work experience as an intern is an asset in competing for entry-level jobs. Applicants without the appropriate educational background or work experience will face the toughest obstacles.

Employment of public relations specialists is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through 2008. The need for good public relations in an increasingly competitive business environment should spur demand for public relations specialists in organizations of all sizes. Employment in public relations firms should grow as firms hire contractors to provide public relations services rather than support full-time staff. In addition to growth, numerous job opportunities should result from the need to replace public relations specialists who take other jobs or who leave the occupation altogether.

Earnings

Median annual earnings for salaried public relations specialists were $34,550 in 1998. The middle 50 percent earned between $26,430 and $46,330; the lowest 10 percent earned less than $21,050, and the top 10 percent earned more than $71,360. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of public relations specialists in 1997 were:

Management and public relations	$35,100
State government, except education and hospitals	32,100
Colleges and universities	30,600

According to a salary survey conducted for the Public Relations Society of America, the overall median salary in public relations was about $49,100. Salaries in public relations ranged from less than $22,800 to more than $141,400. There was little difference between the median salaries for account executives in public relations firms, corporations, government, health care, or nonprofit organizations—all ranged from over $32,000 to nearly $34,000.

Public relations specialists in the Federal Government in nonsupervisory, supervisory, and managerial positions averaged about $56,700 a year in 1999.

Related Occupations

Public relations specialists create favorable attitudes among various organizations, special interest groups, and the public through effective communication. Other workers with similar jobs include fund raisers; lobbyists; advertising, marketing, and promotion managers; and police officers involved in community relations.

Sources of Additional Information

A comprehensive directory of schools offering degree programs or a sequence of study in public relations, a brochure on careers in public relations, and a $5 brochure entitled *Where Shall I go to Study Advertising and Public Relations* are available from:

☛ Public Relations Society of America, Inc., 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003-2376. Internet**: http://www.prsa.org**

Career information on public relations in hospitals and other health care settings is available from:

☛ The Society for Health Care Strategy and Market Development, One North Franklin St., 27th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606.
Internet: **http://www.shsmd.org**

For a list of schools with accredited programs in public relations in their journalism departments, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

☛ The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Kansas School of Journalism, Stauffer Flint Hall, Lawrence, KS 66045. Internet: **http://www.ukans.edu/~acejmc**

For information on accreditation for public relations specialists, contact:

☛ International Association of Business Communicators, One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94102. Internet: **http://www.iabc.com**

Writers and Editors, Including Technical Writers

(O*NET 34002B, 34002C, 34002D, 34002E, 34002F, 34002G, 34002J, 34002L, 34002M, and 34005)

Significant Points

- Most jobs require a college degree in the liberal arts—communications, journalism, and English are preferred—or a technical subject for technical writing positions.
- Competition is expected to be less for lower paying, entry-level jobs at small daily and weekly newspapers, trade publications, and radio and television broadcasting stations in small markets.

- Persons who fail to gain better paying jobs or earn enough as independent writers usually are able to transfer readily to communications-related jobs in other occupations.

Nature of the Work

Writers and editors communicate through the written word. *Writers* develop original fiction and nonfiction for books, magazines and trade journals, newspapers, technical reports, online distribution, company newsletters, radio and television broadcasts, movies, and advertisements. *Editors* select and prepare material for publication or broadcast and review and edit a writer's work.

Writers either select a topic or are assigned one by an editor. Then they gather information through personal observation, library and Internet research, and interviews. Writers select the material they want to use, organize it into a meaningful format, and use the written word to express ideas and convey information to readers. Often, writers revise or rewrite sections, searching for the best organization or the right phrasing.

Newswriters prepare news items for newspapers or news broadcasts, based on information supplied by reporters or wire services. Columnists analyze and interpret the news and write commentaries, based on reliable sources, personal knowledge, and experience. Editorial writers express opinions in accordance with their publication's viewpoint to stimulate public debate on current affairs. Columnists and editorial writers are able to take sides on issues and express their opinions, while other newswriters must be objective and neutral in their coverage. Reporters and correspondents, who also may write articles or copy for print or broadcast, are described elsewhere in this section of the *Handbook*.

Technical writers put scientific and technical information into easily understandable language. They prepare operating and maintenance manuals, catalogs, parts lists, assembly instructions, sales promotion materials, and project proposals. They also plan and edit technical reports and oversee preparation of illustrations, photographs, diagrams, and charts.

Copywriters prepare advertising copy for use by publication or broadcast media, to promote the sale of goods and services.

Established writers may work on a freelance basis. They sell their work to publishers, publication enterprises, manufacturing firms, public relations departments, or advertising agencies. Sometimes, they contract with publishers to write a book or article, or to complete specific assignments such as writing about a new product or technique.

Editors frequently write and almost always review, rewrite, and edit the work of writers. An editor's responsibilities vary depending on the employer and editorial position held. In the publishing industry, an editor's primary duties are to plan the contents of books, technical journals, trade magazines, and other general interest publications. Editors decide what material will appeal to readers, review and edit drafts of books and articles, offer comments to improve the work, and suggest possible titles. Additionally, they oversee the production of the publications.

Major newspapers and newsmagazines usually employ several types of editors. The *executive editor* oversees *assistant editors* who have responsibility for particular subjects, such as local news, international news, feature stories, or sports. Executive editors generally have the final say about what stories get published and how they should be covered. The *managing editor* usually is responsible for the daily operation of the news department. *Assignment editors* determine which reporters will cover a given story. *Copy editors* mostly review and edit a reporter's copy for accuracy, content, grammar, and style.

In smaller organizations, like small daily or weekly newspapers or membership newsletter departments, a single editor may do everything or share responsibility with only a few other people. Executive and managing editors typically hire writers, reporters, or other employees. They also plan budgets and negotiate contracts with freelance writers, sometimes called "stringers" in the news industry. In broadcasting companies, *program directors* have similar responsibilities.

Editors and program directors often have assistants. Many assistants, such as copy editors or *production assistants*, hold entry-level jobs. They review copy for errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling, and check copy for readability, style, and agreement with editorial policy. They add and rearrange sentences to improve clarity or delete incorrect and unnecessary material. They also do research for writers and verify facts, dates, and statistics. Production assistants arrange page layouts of articles, photographs, and advertising; compose headlines; and prepare copy for printing. *Publication assistants* who work for publishing houses may read and evaluate manuscripts submitted by freelance writers, proofread printers' galleys, or answer letters about published material. Production assistants on small papers or in radio stations clip stories that come over the wire services' printers, answer phones, and make photocopies.

Most writers and editors use personal computers or word processors. Many use desktop or electronic publishing systems, scanners, and other electronic communications equipment.

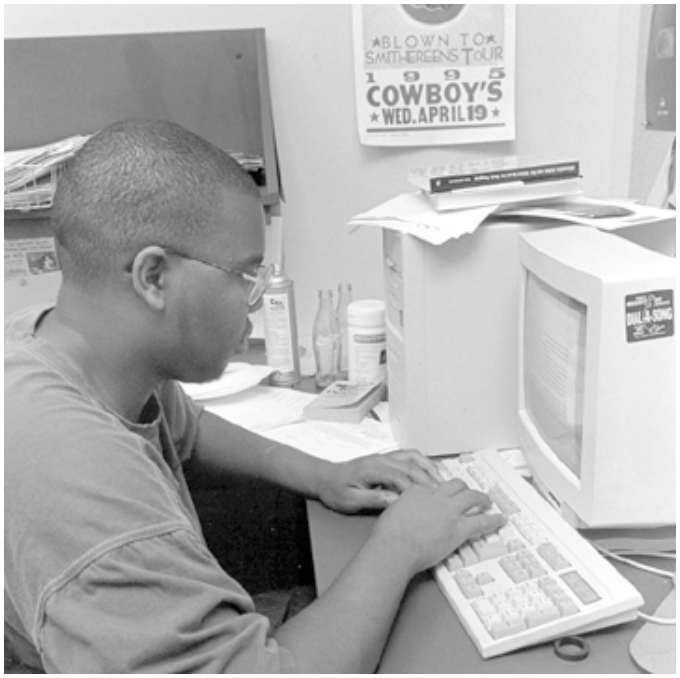
Working Conditions

Some writers and editors work in comfortable, private offices; others work in noisy rooms filled with the sound of keyboards and computer printers as well as the voices of other writers tracking down information over the telephone. The search for information sometimes requires travel and visits to diverse workplaces, such as factories, offices, laboratories, the ballpark, or the theater, but many have to be content with telephone interviews and the library.

The workweek usually runs 35 to 40 hours. Those who prepare morning or weekend publications and broadcasts work some nights and weekends. Writers, especially newswriters, occasionally work overtime to meet deadlines or to cover late-developing stories. Deadlines and erratic work hours, often part of the daily routine for these jobs, may cause stress, fatigue, or burnout.

Employment

Writers and editors held about 341,000 jobs in 1998. Nearly one-third of salaried writers and editors works for newspapers, magazines,



Writers and editors may work in noisy rooms and under extreme pressure to meet deadlines.

and book publishers. Substantial numbers, mostly technical writers, work for computer software firms. Other writers and editors work in educational facilities, in advertising agencies, in radio and television broadcasting, in public relations firms, and on journals and newsletters published by business and nonprofit organizations, such as professional associations, labor unions, and religious organizations. Some develop publications and technical materials for government agencies or write for motion picture companies.

Jobs with major book publishers, magazines, broadcasting companies, advertising agencies and public relations firms, and the Federal Government are concentrated in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. Jobs with newspapers, business and professional journals, and technical and trade magazines are more widely dispersed throughout the country. Technical writers are employed throughout the country, but the largest concentrations are in the Northeast, Texas, and California.

Thousands of other individuals work as freelance writers, earning some income from their articles, books, and less commonly, television and movie scripts. Most support themselves with income derived from other sources.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

A college degree generally is required for a position as a writer or editor. Although some employers look for a broad liberal arts background, most prefer to hire people with degrees in communications, journalism, or English. For those who specialize in a particular area, such as science, fashion, or legal issues, additional background in the chosen field is helpful.

Technical writing requires a degree in, or some knowledge about, a specialized field—engineering, business, or one of the sciences, for example. In many cases, people with good writing skills can learn specialized knowledge on the job. Some transfer from jobs as technicians, scientists, or engineers. Others begin as research assistants, or trainees in a technical information department, develop technical communication skills, and then assume writing duties.

Writers and editors must be able to express ideas clearly and logically and should love to write. Creativity, curiosity, a broad range of knowledge, self-motivation, and perseverance also are valuable. Writers and editors must demonstrate good judgment and a strong sense of ethics in deciding what material to publish. Editors also need tact and the ability to guide and encourage others in their work.

For some jobs, the ability to concentrate amid confusion and to work under pressure is essential. Familiarity with electronic publishing, graphics, and video production equipment increasingly is needed. Online newspapers and magazines require knowledge of computer software used to combine online text with graphics, audio, video, and 3-D animation.

High school and college newspapers, literary magazines, community newspapers, and radio and television stations all provide valuable, but sometimes unpaid, practical writing experience. Many magazines, newspapers, and broadcast stations have internships for students. Interns write short pieces, conduct research and interviews, and learn about the publishing or broadcasting business.

In small firms, beginning writers and editors hired as assistants may actually begin writing or editing material right away. Opportunities for advancement can be limited, however. In larger businesses, jobs usually are more formally structured. Beginners generally do research, fact checking, or copy editing. They take on full-scale writing or editing duties less rapidly than do the employees of small companies. Advancement often is more predictable, though, coming with the assignment of more important articles.

Job Outlook

Employment of writers and editors is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2008. Employment of salaried writers and editors for newspapers, periodicals, book publishers, and nonprofit organizations is expected to increase as demand grows for their publications. Magazines and other periodicals increasingly are developing market niches, appealing to readers with special interests. Also, online publications and services are growing in number and sophistication, spurring the demand for writers and editors. Businesses and organizations are developing Internet websites and more companies are experimenting with publishing materials directly for the Internet. Advertising and public relations agencies, which also are growing, should be another source of new jobs.

Demand for technical writers is expected to increase because of the continuing expansion of scientific and technical information and the need to communicate it to others. In addition to job openings created by employment growth, many openings will occur as experienced workers transfer to other occupations or leave the labor force. Turnover is relatively high in this occupation; many freelancers leave because they cannot earn enough money.

Despite projections of fast employment growth and high turnover, the outlook for most writing and editing jobs is expected to be competitive. Many people with writing or journalism training are attracted to the occupation. Opportunities should be best for technical writers because of the growth in the high technology and electronics industries and the resulting need for people to write users' guides, instruction manuals, and training materials. This work requires people who are not only technically skilled as writers but are able to keep pace with changing technology. Also, individuals with the technical skills for working on the Internet may have an advantage finding a job as a writer or editor.

Opportunities for newswriting and editing positions on small daily and weekly newspapers and in small radio and television stations, where the pay is low, should be better than those in larger media markets. Some small publications hire freelance copy editors as backup for staff editors or as additional help with special projects. Persons preparing to be writers and editors benefit from academic preparation in another discipline as well, either to qualify them as writers specializing in that discipline or as a career alternative if they are unable to get a job in writing.

Earnings

Median annual earnings for writers and editors, including technical writers, were $36,480 in 1998. The middle 50 percent earned between $27,030 and $49,380 a year. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $20,920 and the highest 10 percent earned over $76,660. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of writers and editors of nontechnical material in 1997 were as follows:

Advertising	$38,100
Periodicals	$35,900
Books	$35,200
Newspapers	$28,500
Radio and television broadcasting	$26,300

Median annual earnings of technical writers and editors in computer data and processing services were $39,200 in 1997.

Related Occupations

Writers and editors communicate ideas and information. Other communications occupations include news analysts, reporters, and correspondents; radio and television announcers; advertising and public relations workers; and teachers.

Sources of Additional Information

For information on careers in technical writing, contact:

☛ Society for Technical Communication, Inc., 901 N. Stuart St., Suite 904, Arlington, VA 22203. Internet: **http://www.stc-va.org**

For information on union wage rates for newspaper and magazine editors, contact:

☛ The Newspaper Guild, Research and Information Department, 501 Third Street NW., Suite 250, Washington, DC 20001.

Visual Arts and Design Occupations

Designers

(O*NET 34038A, 34038B, 34038C, 34038D, 34038F, 34041, 34044, and 39999H)

Significant Points

- Four out of 10 designers are self-employed—almost four times the proportion for all professional specialty occupations.
- Creativity is crucial in all design occupations; formal education requirements range from a high school diploma for floral designers to a bachelor's degree for industrial designers.
- Despite projected faster-than-average employment growth, keen competition is expected for most jobs, because many talented individuals are attracted to careers as designers.

Nature of the Work

Designers are people with a desire to create. They combine practical knowledge with artistic ability to turn abstract ideas into formal designs for the clothes that we wear, the living and office space that we inhabit, and the merchandise that we buy. Designers usually specialize in a particular area of design, such as automobiles, clothing, furniture, home appliances, industrial equipment, interiors of homes or office buildings, movie and theater sets, packaging, or floral arrangements.

The first step in developing a new design or altering an existing one is to determine the needs of the client and the ultimate function for which the design is intended. When creating a design, the designer considers size, shape, weight, color, materials used, cost, ease of use, and safety.

The designer then prepares sketches—by hand or with the aid of a computer—to illustrate the vision for the design. After consulting with the client, an art or design director, or a product development team, the designer creates a detailed design using drawings, a structural model, computer simulations, or a full-scale prototype. Many designers are increasingly using computer-aided design (CAD) tools to create and better visualize the final product. Computer models allow greater ease and flexibility in making changes to a design, thus reducing design costs and cutting the time it takes to deliver a product to market. Industrial designers use computer-aided industrial design (CAID) to create designs and to communicate them to automated production tools.

Designers sometimes supervise assistants who carry out their creations. Designers who run their own businesses also may devote a considerable amount of time to developing new business contacts and to performing administrative tasks, such as reviewing catalogues and ordering samples.

Design encompasses a number of different fields. Many designers specialize in a particular area of design, whereas others work in more than one. *Industrial designers* develop countless manufactured products, including airplanes; cars; home appliances; children's toys; computer equipment; and medical, office, and recreational equipment. They combine artistic talent with research on product use, marketing, materials, and production methods to create the most functional and appealing design and to make the product competitive with others in the marketplace. Most industrial designers concentrate in an area of sub-specialization, such as kitchen appliances.

Furniture designers design furniture for manufacture. These designers use their knowledge of design trends, competitors' products, production costs, production capability, and characteristics of a company's market to create home and office furniture that is both functional and attractive. They also may prepare detailed drawings of fixtures, forms, or tools required in the production of furniture. Some furniture designers fashion custom pieces or styles according to a specific period or country. Furniture designers must be strongly involved with the fashion industry and aware of current trends and styles.

Interior designers plan the space and furnish the interiors of private homes, public buildings, and commercial or institutional establishments, such as offices, restaurants, hospitals, hotels, and theaters. They also plan the interiors for additions to and renovations of existing structures. Most interior designers specialize, and some further specialize in a related line of work. For example, some may concentrate in residential design, and others may further specialize by focusing on a particular room, such as kitchens or baths. With a client's tastes, needs, and budget in mind, interior designers prepare drawings and specifications for interior construction, furnishings, lighting, and finishes. Increasingly, designers use computers to plan layouts that can be changed easily to include ideas received from the client. Interior designers also design lighting and archi-

Designers combine practical knowledge with artistic ability to turn abstract ideas into formal designs.