5 Freelance Careers with the Easiest Learning Curve

Discover how to break in using free and affordable books, podcasts, courses and other tools to start your side hustle.

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Jumping into freelance work isn’t always easy. The truth is that some of the most in-demand freelance skills right now are highly technical. A quick search of what’s in demand on Upwork might lead you to step back and plan to revisit the whole down the road.

There are, however, several pathways that don’t require a four-year degree, advanced technical knowledge of software or development or a long period of trial and error before you get your system just right. Here are five freelance side hustles you can dive into with a minimal learning curve.

If you’ve always loved grammar, spelling and the flow of great writing, a few books and some online courses might give you what you need to hit the ground running as a proofreader. Proofreaders tend to look for obvious copy and punctuation mistakes, whereas editors can run the gamut from light copyediting all the way through to complex developmental edits. You can decide which end of that spectrum you want to stay on, but either way, having an eye for good writing and catching mistakes will help you provide proofreading support to companies or individuals. Nearly everyone from nonprofits to solopreneurs and bloggers need help with that extra set of eyes.

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To break into proofreading and editing, consider asking a friend if there's a project you can help with for free or for a reduced price to put that piece into your portfolio. Track Changes in Word works well for illustrating your edits. Another trick I've used is to order cheap content from Fiverr providers and use the final product to showcase my own ability to edit someone else's work.

Virtual Assistance

Have you always been good at staying organized and tackling administrative projects? A virtual assistant functions much like an actual admin assistant, except that the work is done completely online. Commonly requested skills include data entry, reporting, email- and calendar-management and file organization. With so many businesses sprouting up online, plenty of them will hit a high level of success where the owner starts looking for ways to offload administrative tasks. This is the perfect storm for virtual assistants, who might just have to educate themselves about some software programs to get up to speed.

Focus on your ability to handle small and big projects and take stress off of other people if you're hoping to break in as a virtual assistant.

There are many jobs for freelancers working as generalists in the social media field, as well as those focusing on particular channels, like Pinterest. If you enjoy figuring out how to optimize these channels for your personal use, this could be a great opportunity to learn more. What makes this field so full of potential is that more businesses are recognizing the importance of having an organic social media strategy and don't have the interest or time to stay on top of trends and best practices. That's where you, the social media

guru, come in.

Content Writing

To be fair, it can take a little bit of work to uncover the strategy behind different kinds of writing projects. However, if you've always loved writing, then consider learning sales copy, technical writing, SEO or article writing as the roadmap for helping you share concepts clearly. Having great writing skills can be amplified by teaching yourself some of these other strategies and getting some practice work. Starting your own freelance writing business can be a very fulfilling venture and one that keeps you busy as a side hustle or full-time business.

Content writers are in high demand due to the volume of online material that most businesses post across their website, email newsletters and social channels. If you have strong experience in a niche or industry, lean on that to break in as a content writer.

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Customer Service

Do you love helping people have a great experience with online or physical products and services? With online courses and printables surging in popularity, plenty of business owners need support in the form of customer-service reps to help them scale. If you love keeping track of all details and developing systems, you can leverage a lot of offline experience in customer service in the online space. When interviewing, focus on your ability to problem solve with a cheerful attitude.

Online courses on Udemy, as well as podcasts and books that highlight the freelance experience, can all help you get the

grounding you need to break into freelance work.

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