

Frequently Asked Questions (with some answers)

What type of writing service do you provide?

A service for both non-writers and writers.

- For non-writers, this includes all listening, writing, typing, story development, editing and presentation tasks
- For writers, this means planning and project framework tasks and editing
- Please ask for an information pack, the ideas may help you

How do I contact you?

I am usually able to visit you, as regular trips are organised. Any follow up work is completed over the phone with regular calls. Emails and post options also available. If we do not meet, then we can complete your work via phone or email.

You talk about being a university-trained researcher and that ethics are important. How?

This area is most important to my business. As I have written up numerous sensitive stories for people, being ethical is uppermost in my mind; whether they are cultural stories or family stories. All materials are read and held in confidence and not reproduced elsewhere. Any photos and events are named to respect any privacy concerns.

At the end of the writing project, you decide what information will be in your story and what information will be left out. Some people choose to produce a “public story”, then any remaining sensitive information is placed within a “private story” for selected people to read. Alternatively, any private information can simply be returned back to you.

Describe how you can assist me?

With over 15 years of experience writing over 50 life stories, both short and large stories written, means that I can assist in ways to suit you. For the writer, this may mean a phone call once per month to see how you’re writing is tracking, or it may mean weekly emails to read your work, or to progress your writing and planning activities.

For the non-writer, it may mean I listen and write, listen and write, listen and write! Yes, there’s a lot of listening going on and my pen certainly makes a mark on the paper. These notes can be recorded on a digital voice recorder if it suits you. Then we are underway, and I begin to type up and organise the notes into eras, subjects and potential stories for you to consider.

These typed notes are given to you to read or if you wish, I can read them back to you over the phone. Any changes are made which gives you control over what information you want in your memoir, and what information should be sent to the bin.

After more work, the life story or memoir begins to take shape. Photos, maps, drawings, artwork, tables, references and information boxes can all be added. Once the story reaches the final stages it is returned to you for checking. Then editing and final presentation is arranged.

You said that some services are free. Why is this?

The free detailed quote allows you to make decisions based on the funds you have at the time.

A free introductory two-hour meeting allows you to consider the writing project, and to see if you wish to work with me. If you change your mind afterwards, then our writing project does not start.

A free writing schedule plan is written for you, once the project begins. This keeps both of us on track. It lists tasks to complete, time frames, our expectations, the end result you're looking for, and any other bits and pieces to keep us organised and working towards your story.

So, what are your costs then?

My standard rate is \$35 per hour. However, for pensioners the rate is between \$25 and \$35 per hour, negotiable. The price is worked out for each customer because I have found that every person has unique needs and writing goals.

Travel costs are worked out for each person. They are kept to a minimum.

What are some of the printing and publishing options in front of me?

Most people prefer to self-publish, whilst others print their story for family and friends without publishing.

This might only mean a couple of books or booklets, or two dozen. Printing can be a very small cost (\$50) or a large cost (\$5,000) depending on how many copies you wish to have printed and the quality of the printing. Please note: printing costs are extra to any quoted price.

If the story is published, it will be lodged with the National Library of Australia and the relevant state library. When published, a unique identifying number called an ISBN is given. These costs are borne by you.

After printing, some people choose to give their books to family and friends, whilst others may choose to sell the books in their town or region. Occasionally, people take their self-published or printed book or manuscript to commercial publishers for reviewing and opinion.

Will the copyright remain with me?

Yes. The copyright of your work remains with you. This is for both non-writers and writers.

What happens if I change my mind?

If you're part-way through your story, and you no longer wish to continue, the project will end and all materials will be returned to you. As I charge by the hour, only the work completed will be charged to you.

How often will you bill me?

A record is kept of each hour I work on your writing. This information is given with each account, which is sent to you after every 15 hours worked. These can be more frequent if you wish.

You said you provide payment plans and pensioner discounts. How does this work?

First, we need to agree on a per hour price. Please refer to my price list in my information pack. Second, we work out the total cost. I will advise you what hours I can then work, and what type of book or booklet we can write together.

The payment plan is arranged to suit you. It can be fortnightly or monthly, or after a dollar limit is reached.

How long will the writing take?

Most writing projects take between 6 and 12 months, although some may continue longer. As life is busy and changing, the work rate can be adjusted to suit you. Other smaller writing jobs may only take a few hours or days.

Will I receive an electronic copy?

Yes. As we work through your story, some people like to write with me. The latest version of your story is emailed through and you fill in the questions and stories as we go. This is emailed back, and I develop the story for you. This can work out cheaper for some people.

For all writing projects, at the end (once the account is settled), a Microsoft Word version and a pdf version of your story is returned to you.

I have special needs, can you assist?

Perhaps English is your second or third language? I can always use your preferred language amongst English text in your story. These often make the most interesting and beautiful stories to read.

Perhaps you have hearing, memory or vision loss? Then I can always assist you. I have written various life stories and memoirs for people whose needs have changed, particularly as they age. Using different resources, I can pool together information from other areas too.

What is your writing style?

This varies with each person I assist or write for. Culture is integral to your identity. So, each story I write reflects you and your voice, using the unique ways you talk and phrases you use. The stories are written up to sound and read just like you are really here, talking in person. Some people may find the way they talk and the way they write are different. This is something for us to discuss.

Can I see examples of your work?

Yes, of course. I have copies with me, and upon request I can forward an electronic copy via email. Please ask for an information pack.

Do people enjoy putting together their life story or memoir?

Yes they do! At the end of the writing project, everyone has agreed how worthwhile it has been for them as well as their family. At times, sensitive topics and areas are discussed and these are always handled respectfully and gently. Most of all, the writing allows you to reflect across your life and for most people, a degree of acceptance and peace is found.