

# Five Reasons You Should Start Your Fiction Writing Career with Short Stories



The life of a writer is a tedious one. It does get better when you get published. Even so, you still have to 'write constantly', which is where the tediousness resides.

If you love writing, chances are you don't mind the occasional boredom, necessary solitude, wakeful nights, and long-winded mental marathon. But everyone has a breaking point. When you now consider the many [challenges of breaking into the publishing industry](#), you begin to dread that your sweats and bleeding fingers

might turn out unavailing in the end.

This is why starting small with short stories is essential for the fiction writing career and can help alleviate the process and boost your confidence.

## **Discover Your Potentials with Short Story Writing**

By writing short stories, you don't only discover how good you are (through accepted submissions), you also learn the genre of fiction you are good at, develop your writing voice, and even improve your craft without having to contend with the laborious process of writing a novel whose chances of success are very slim. It is a learning process that allows you to master your craft with more manageable tasks.

As you advance in your career, you can try to break into higher-tier magazines to test your growth in fiction writing.

## **Retain Your Sanity with Short Story Writing**

Writers typically start a novel with much enthusiasm. But then along the way, that enthusiasm begins to dwindle. It can even get to the extent where writing that novel becomes too boring to handle. At that point, only the determined who truly love writing would continue writing.

Finishing a story is one of the most fulfilling achievements a writer can experience. Short story writing can offer you

that fulfilment in days or weeks, unlike novel writing, which is one of the hardest mental marathons in which a writer can engage.

Also, with short story writing, the probability of giving up on the way diminishes, because the end of each story is nearer and the variables are fewer. This helps you build the mental fitness and resilience required to contend with longer pieces.

## **Deal with Rejections with Short Story Writing**

Which is more tolerable? When your short story receives a rejection or when your novel is rejected? The former, right? Why?

Short stories are easier to write. The time and creative investments are less than those of novel writing. When you now consider that you are unlikely to get as attached to your short story as you would to your novel, you begin to see why your short story receiving a rejection is more tolerable.

By writing short stories first, you learn how to [easily recover from the disappointment of rejections](#). That way, when you finally write a novel and those rejection letters start swarming in, you can learn from them and simply move on.

## **Pay Your Bills with Short Story Writing**

It may be hard to believe, but short stories can put some money in your pocket if you are really good at writing them. Professional magazines pay as from 6cents per word. This means that selling a 5000-word short story every month (depends on your creativity and productivity) can fetch you \$300 monthly. Of course, that amount isn't going to sustain you, but it will solve some problems for you.

If you occasionally sell to big magazines like [Tor](#), [F&SF](#), [Fireside Fiction](#), [Clarkesworld Magazine](#), and [Strange Horizon](#) that pay more than 6cents per word, you stand to make more. Let's compare that with novel writing.

While a novel can put more money in your pocket, you have to strive for months or years without earning anything. Even when you are done with writing the novel, you still have to hope and pray that an agent and then a publisher make you an offer, and that the novel sells.

The solution is simple. If you can produce one short story per month while writing your novel, then go for it. It's actually brilliant.

## **Build a Solid Foundation with Short Story Writing**

Agents and publishers expect you to mention your publishing credits in your query. This doesn't mean that your work isn't going to sell without some publishing credits under your belt.

Your publishing credits are simply an evidence of your writing skills and, of course, your marketability. Agents and publishers are in the industry not just for their passion but for business also — perhaps more for business. They want to know that they aren't wasting their precious time reading your novel, that you already have ample experience, that your manuscript isn't riddled with errors, and that you already have an audience (however small) that can't wait to read your work.

By starting out with short stories, you don't only give your novel better chances of hooking an agent or a publisher, but also build a readership that can help you sell that novel.

No-one is saying that you can't simply jump into writing a novel. Many writers have broken into the publishing industry without attempting the short fiction form. You can even do the same. But you stand a better chance by starting with short fiction.

If you are interested in writing and publishing your short fiction, here are [the top fifty magazines accepting mainstream fiction](#). Go [here for magazines that publish speculative fiction](#).