



Australian Society of Authors

ASA Rates 2011 for Authors and Illustrators

Introduction

The ASA membership list is a virtual compendium of the types of writers and writing, illustrators and illustrations in Australia. A sample would include—among others—one-time, part-time and full-time writers who contribute to or produce newsletters, newspapers, pamphlets, journals, magazines and books brought out by small and large presses with local, national and international distribution. As well as print, our members write for screen, stage, radio, or the web.

Their subject matter includes arts/business/science (natural, social and political), teaching/research, criticism/theory, sport/hobbies/leisure. They create how-to and DIY books (cooking books prominent among them), whodunnits, histories, life writing (biographies/memoirs/autobiographies), comics, speculative fiction and books for children, along with illustrations for such texts and even stories exclusively comprising pictures without accompanying words. And many ASA members work in more than one of those categories.

Although not all authors are in it for the money, all of us should be interested in maintaining and improving the status of writers and illustrators, especially now when the future of the book seems so uncertain on account of rapid developments in online and electronic publishing.

Historically, different genres and disciplines have developed their own assumptions and conventions regarding rates and conditions which, although they might be changing, have a long way to go before they become uniform. Thus, producing an exhaustive and universally applicable guide to rates and conditions for writers and illustrators working across such a broad spectrum is not possible.

Whereas someone who published a 2000-word story in *The Bulletin* a few years ago received \$2500 for it, even today someone placing a short story in a struggling 'little magazine' might be offered only a copy or two of the issue in which it appears. An academic with an article in a learned journal might not receive even that, instead having to hope that another publication on the curriculum vitae will improve her/his chance for promotion and/or tenure. Indeed, in the not-so-long-ago past it was not unheard of for a researcher in the so-called 'exact sciences' with an article accepted in a prestigious journal to have to come up with 'page fees' for its publication, ostensibly to subsidise the extra typesetting costs generated by the special symbols used for the concepts and the formats required for the formulas—such fees could be hundreds of dollars.

And none of those would be examples of what is traditionally called 'vanity publishing.' Comparably, various practices obtain across genres and disciplines regarding speakers' fees, travel support and the like. Part of the ASA's commitment to achieving better conditions for writers and illustrators also involves working for greater uniformity of practices in the publishing industry.

When the work of writers and illustrators falls into different categories, they can choose among the recommendations on rates and conditions that have been established by kindred professional societies. For example, ASA recommendations here on poetry rates accord with those of [Australian Poetry](#)

[Limited](#) (formerly the [Australian Poetry Centre](#) and [Poets Union](#)), but its recommendations for illustrators also acknowledge alternative sources with different rates—the [Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance](#) and the ASA's recommendations for comics writers/illustrators. Writers and illustrators must decide which set of recommendations best applies to the kind of work they do.

These rates take into account the time and effort members devote to researching and writing and/or illustrating books and making public appearances in connection with promoting them. While members occasionally might allow their work to be used for less, we encourage them to regard ASA rates as an industry standard and, if possible, to negotiate fees higher than the minimum.

The ASA indexes its rates in accord with the Consumer Price Index for the previous year—the CPI tracks the changing costs of food, clothing, housing, education, health, transportation and the like. Thus ASA rates serve as a useful guide for writers and illustrators to consult when selling their work or to refer to when negotiating with a would-be publisher. The rates here do not include the Goods and Services Tax: members who charge GST should add 10% to the rates shown.

Prose

Book publishing

In its *Model Publishing Agreement Template*, the ASA recommends authors receive a minimum royalty rate of 10% of RRP (recommended retail price) for print books. This royalty rate applies to traditional publishing contracts where authors licence their work to a publisher to be sold in book form.

An estimated potential royalty can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Potential royalty} = \text{RRP} \times \text{print run} \times 10\%$$

Thus for a \$32.95 paperback with a first print run of 3000 copies, the potential royalty would be \$9885.00.

Typically, an author will be paid a proportion of this amount (up to 50%) as an 'advance', the remainder being 'earned out' as the book is sold in shops. Often the advance may come in instalments: on signing the contract, on delivery of the final manuscript and on publication.

For more about royalty contracts and the *Model Publishing Agreement*, see *Australian Book Contracts* (4th Edition) or Lynne Spender's *Between the Lines: A legal guide for writers and illustrators* (both published by Keesing Press).

Freelance writing

These rates are based on the 2010 National Freelance Rates approved by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance and apply to all genres except poetry. They apply to prose (such as articles or short fiction for magazines, journals or newspapers) which is commissioned on a freelance or casual basis and previously unpublished. See the [MEAA website](#) for more information.

- Per day = \$878.00
- Per half day = \$585.00 (2/3 day rate)
- Per hour = \$219.00
- 1000 words or less = \$892.00
- Per word thereafter = \$0.89

Wilson da Silva's *Short Guide to Freelance Journalism* is available from the ASA website.

Prose anthology rates

Minimum rates for previously published material

Price per 1000 words

- Where the RRP is less than \$25 = \$135.00
- Where the RRP is \$25 - \$39 = \$205.00
- Where the RRP is \$40 - \$55 = \$267.00

NB: The minimum rate of \$134.00 applies for work under 1000 words. Works over 1000 words are calculated as a proportion of the price per 1000 words.

For example, a 1800 word story in an anthology with an RRP of \$24.95 would be calculated as:

$$1.8 \times \$135 = \$243.00$$

Minimum rates for original material

The rates above apply to work which has already been published. Where material for an anthology is specifically commissioned or previously unpublished, a minimum rate of \$325.00 per 1000 words or part thereof should be paid in addition to the minimum rate for previously published material. These rates apply to all kinds of anthologised prose.

Poetry

These rates have been developed in consultation with [Australian Poetry Limited](#). NB. These poetry rates apply to first publication. For previously published poems, see the poetry anthology rates below.

- Per line = \$3.00
- Up to 40 lines = \$118.00
- 41-60 lines = \$180.00
- 61-90 lines = \$272.00
- 91-135 lines = \$447.00
- 136-200 lines = \$596.00
- 201-300 lines = \$894.00

Poetry anthology rates

The rate for previously published poems used in anthologies is \$1.18 per line per 1000 copies printed, the minimum rate being \$56.00 per poem (see chart below). Thus for a 65-line poem in an anthology of 2500 copies, the rate would be \$191.75 (65 lines x \$1.18 x 2.5 thousand copies).

Number of lines —————>

	10	15	20	30	40	50
250	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00
500	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00
1000	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00
1500	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$70.00	\$88.00
2000	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$70.00	\$95.00	\$118.00
2500	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$88.00	\$118.00	\$148.00
3000	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$70.00	\$107.00	\$142.00	\$178.00
3500	\$56.00	\$60.00	\$82.00	\$124.00	\$165.00	\$206.00
4000	\$56.00	\$69.00	\$95.00	\$142.00	\$189.00	\$236.00

Optionally, editors and poets could share a one-off payment of 12% of the RRP of the edition distributed among the editor/s and the poets. For example, 2% of the RRP might be attributed to the editor/s and 10% be attributed proportionately to the poets: 10% of the RRP times the size of the print run would be divided by the number of poems in the anthology in order to produce a dollar value for each poem; and then each poet would receive a sum based on the number of her/his poems appearing in the anthology (a sequence being counted as the total of the number of poems within it.)

This system of paying poets whose works are anthologised could advantage them: anthologised poems would receive an up-front 10% whereas publication for poems in books that pay on the basis of sales, despite the size of the print run, could produce less than 10%.

These rates should be used with the *ASA poetry book/anthology non-exclusive licence* (available from the [ASA website](#)).

Book illustration

The following rates are based on A4-size projects. Rates can be increased depending on detail required, research involved and conceptual input required. For 'one-off' or single illustrations paid on a flat fee without royalties add 20 per cent; for online usage, a limited time agreement of a maximum of two years and an indication of the type of access should be specified. The rates are exclusive of GST.

Roughs

- Black and white = \$65.00
- Colour = \$95.00

Black and white book illustration

- Quarter page or chapter head = \$215.00
- Half page = \$340.00
- Full page = \$455.00
- Double page spread = \$575.00

Colour book illustration

- Quarter page or chapter head = \$300.00
- Half page = \$475.00
- Full page = \$675.00
- Double page spread = \$900.00
- Cover = \$1300.00

NB: These rates are based on the recommendations of the ASA's Illustrators portfolio holders. Alternative rates are available in the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance's [2010 National Freelance Rates](#) (for media, journalism and commercial illustrators) and SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators).

Comics and graphic novels

These rates can be used by publishers, organisations such as teaching institutions, the corporate sector and individuals wanting to commission comics creators to produce comics work

The rates apply to commissioned work (work-for-hire) situations where the copyright might or might not reside with the artist or writer.

The ASA recommends that comic creators who create original work where the Intellectual Property (IP) is already pre-owned do so under an exclusive licence whereby they retain the copyright. However, if the work is produced for a pre-owned project, then the comics creator may need to assign copyright.

Comics creators could negotiate two payments for the one work: (1) pages rates; plus (2) royalties for copies sold over a certain threshold. For example, assume that a publisher releases 50,000 copies of a comic book containing 24 pages of art and story with a recommended retail price (RRP) of \$5.00. The writer will receive a page rate of \$100.00 per page, totalling \$2,400.00; and the artist will receive a rate of \$100.00 per page for pencilling and also \$100.00 per page for inking, totalling \$4,800.00. As well, once sales exceeded 35,000 copies (say), the writer and artist could ask for up to 5% each.

Publishers or other commissioners wanting to audition creators for jobs should pay the recommended rates for work performed during the audition period.

Where publishers or other commissioners want to bundle jobs with one particular artist (eg, pencilling, colouring and lettering), then the commissioner needs either to pay out the rates for each individual job component or else the artist can negotiate a reasonable package rate that does not undercut by more than 15% the recommended rates for the total of all job components.

Please note that these rates should apply as minimum Australian rates; some overseas companies pay higher rates. There will also be variations in pay scales for emerging talent as opposed to established brand-name creators or those who have amassed a large backlist of titles and many credits.

CATEGORIES	MINIMUM COMICS FREELANCE PAGE RATES	APPLICATIONS
Concept sketches / Model sheets	B & W: \$55 - \$65 per piece Colour: \$85 - \$100 per piece	<i>These rates can be used when artists are employed only to produce concept art or model sheets for a project.</i>
Thumbnails / Roughs / Layouts (Comics page / panel / shot design)	\$35 - \$50 per page	<i>Layout artists can be attached to a project to work exclusively on thumbnails (rough sketches in panel layout usually on an A5 page). The panel layout artist focuses on panel and shot design on each page using the script as a guide.</i>
Pencilling (hand-penciling or digital-design)	\$100 - \$200 per page	<i>Applies to clean pencilled artwork.</i>
Inking	\$75 - \$150 per page	
Colouring (digital colouring)	\$100 - \$150 per page Covers (digital): \$250 - \$500 per cover	
Painting (hand-painted)	\$200 - \$350 per page Cover (hand-painted): \$500 - \$1000 per cover	
Lettering (hand-lettering or computer-lettering)	\$35 - \$50 per page	<i>This job involves creating print-ready caption boxes, sound effects, thought and speech balloons and titles.</i>
Writing (story and script)	\$75 - \$100 per page	<i>Writing involves creating the story outline, page breakdowns and script.</i>
Cartoon / comic strip (print and webcomic)	\$150 - \$195 spot cartoon or comic strip	
Zines	\$50 - \$75 per page	<i>Zines are low-circulation self-published mini-comics or mini-magazines using original or appropriated text and images, which can include sequential art (comics content). They can be hand-made or produced digitally and are usually photocopied.</i>
Convention sketches	Up to individual artist	<i>We recommend artists charge for convention sketches, as some recipients collect free sketches and then trade them for profit (e.g. sell them on eBay). Make sure all pieces are signed and dated.</i>

Original finished comics pages for sale (penciled, inked and/or coloured)	Up to individual artist	<i>We recommend artists rank their pages in the following groups: Covers and A, B and C pages and work out rates on a descending scale according to grouping, popularity of the published work and reputation of the artist. Make sure all pieces are signed and dated.</i>
Commissioned artwork (one character piece or landscape or object sourced from comics properties)	Up to individual artist	
Editing / Script Assessment	\$55 - \$75 per hour or \$15 - \$25 per page	<i>Increase rates by 20% or more if doing a written script assessment.</i>
Project Management / Consultancy	\$75 to \$120 per hour	<i>Consultancy can include talent scouting.</i>

Public appearances

Speaking and teaching

These rates apply for literary festivals, residencies, writers centres, tertiary institutions, and other public appearances except for schools. Members are encouraged to negotiate fees that are higher than the minimum.

- Whole day (max. 6 hours) = \$880.00
- Half day (max. 3 hours) = \$550.00
- Per session (max. 1 hour) = \$350.00
- Keynotes = \$1000.00
- (This does not include online or print publication—which must be negotiated separately)
- Weekly rate (max. 5 days - average 6 hours per day) \$3600.00

Schools (primary and secondary)

Groups of over 120 or with mixed ages may incur an additional charge. Sessions may run for 45-60 mins, to be set by the speaker. Workshops for longer may be negotiated.

- Whole school day (max. 3 sessions) = \$600.00
- Half school day (max. 2 sessions) = \$450.00
- Per school session (max. 1 session) = \$300.00
- Weekly school rate (max. 5 days - average 3 sessions per day) \$2500.00

NB: This discounted rate applies only if the booking is for one school, for a one-week block.

Online sessions

Sessions may run for 45-60 mins, to be set by the speaker.

- Whole school day (max. 3 sessions) = \$550.00
- Half school day (max. 2 sessions) = \$400.00
- Per school session (max. 1 session) = \$250.00

Reading

- Per session (max. 30 mins) = \$230.00

Judging

- Whole day (max. 6 hours) = \$500.00
- Half day (max. 3 hours) = \$350.00

Travel and expenses

Travel, accommodation and meal expenses should be reimbursed in accordance with the Australian Tax Office's (ATO's) reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts. For the 2010-11 income year, see the ATO's TD 2010/19.

Car expenses will be paid at the ATO's rates for deductions using the cents per kilometre method. In the 2010-11 income year, for ordinary cars the rates are 63 cents per kilometre (1600cc engine capacity), 74 cents (1601 to 2600cc) and 75 cents (over 2600cc).

- Allowance for travel time (2-6 hours) per hour \$50.00
- More than 6 hours travel time per day \$300.00

Superannuation

Casuals employed by most employers for 20 shifts or more within a 13-week period and freelancers who earn over \$450.00 in any one month from the one commission, qualify to have the equivalent of 9% of their earnings paid into a superannuation fund—free of charge—once you have asked for it.

Further Reading

On the ASA website:

- *ASA Guidelines to Permissions*
- *ASA Model Publishing Agreement Template*
- *ASA poetry book/anthology non-exclusive licence*
- *Australian Book Contracts* (4th Edition) Keesing Press
- *Between the Lines: A Legal Guide for Writers and Illustrators* by Lynne Spender (Keesing Press)

NB: This is a summary only and is no substitute for a legal document. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information, the ASA accepts no liability for loss arising from any inaccuracies contained within it. Contact the Australian Society of Authors on 02 9318 0977 or email asa@asauthors.org if you have any queries regarding this information.

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