

# A Way with Words



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Prepared for: Joseph A Blanc and Associates

Prepared by: Jerrica Black of A Way with Words



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## Executive Summary

A Way with Words is a start-up freelance writing and editing business with a lot of room to grow. The owner and sole service provider, Jerrica, is starting small but has grand dreams to be a pillar in the Ottawa arts and language sector. A Way with Words will offer editing services to emerging and indie writers and writing services to local small business owners. It will grow to offer workshops, critique groups and networking events.

Jerrica's education and life experience lend some unique qualities that not all editors or writers can offer. A Way with Words' big goals include fostering community, so in-person meetings are on offer, as well as digital ones, to add a human touch to the services. In addition to writing and editing, Jerrica has experience and education in graphic design which means she can offer not only web copy but graphic elements too. Her expertise in the food industry will give her an upper hand in the culinary arts world while her joy of board games and table-top roleplaying games gives her a unique perspective on fine arts and theatre.

This seed money will fund equipment, software, and marketing as well as coworking space and bus fare to fulfill the promise of in-person meetings.



Fotios, L., 2018

## Business Plan

### Mission Statement

A Way with Words works closely with clients to create strong, valuable writing. They help indie and emerging writers have clear writing with a consistent style through editing, and help small businesses build an attention grabbing and informative digital presence.

### Vision Statement

A Way with Words wants to create a space for writers to find community and small businesses to reach their full potential. A Way with Words will help many people's voices reach further while creating a network of like-minded creatives. We will help owners of small businesses flourish in Ottawa, Canada and beyond.



## Service Offerings

Service	Description	Price Point
<b>Editing Services</b>		
Light Copyedit/ proofreading	Final polishing. Focus on grammar/typos, clarity and conciseness	.02/word
Heavy Copyedit/ Stylistic Line Edit	A light copyedit with a deeper look at sentence structure and writing style. Considers word choice, active/passive voice etc.	.04/word
Substantive Editing	A higher-level edit looking more at structure and story elements with suggestions for large edits.	.06/word
The Works	A bundle with a substantive edit and a copyedit. We will work together overtime beginning with a substantive edit. The client can revise as they like. Then a copy edit of the revised manuscript will be done. By bundling clients receive a discount.	.05/word & .03/word
<b>Writing Services</b>		
Web Copy - Social Media Copy	Written social media posts for Instagram/X/Facebook with care to web copy best practices and SEO.	9.00/post Or 21.00/3 posts (7.00/post) Or 36.00/6 posts (6.00/post)
Web Copy - Social Media Graphics and Copy	Written social media posts for Instagram/X/Facebook with care to web copy best practices and SEO. Creation of graphics to accompany the copy with alt-text provided.	Social media costs + 10.00-25.00/post depending on graphic style
Web Copy - Flavour Text	Small sections of web copy for the client's website. Consider introductions, page descriptions, item descriptions etc.	.05/word
Web Copy - Blogs and Articles with research	Client will receive a blog post or article written with care to web copy best practices. I will do research to create the content.	.07/word +20.00/500 words for research time
Web Copy - Blogs and Articles - Fact set provided by client	Client will receive a blog post or article written with care to web copy best practices. Client will provide point form notes and/or links to the research they'd like to be included.	.07/word
<b>Other</b>		
Custom projects available on request	Clients may reach out to me to negotiate projects within my skills but not specifically offered	negotiable



## Market Segmentation

The target audience of A Way with Words is long reaching. There are two main categories of clients: indie writers and owners of small businesses. These can be further subdivided as seen below. A large part of my clientele will be Canadian, many will be local to Ottawa or nearby areas. I expect a large part of my clientele to be women and gender non-conforming people because we tend to seek each other out and support each other when possible.

### Indie and Emerging Writers

- Local (Ottawa-based) writers
  - o Self-motivated, hardworking artists
  - o Highschool +
  - o Average salary \$50K +\*
  - o Aged 20 - 45
  - o Motives include telling their story, polished writing, and creating great art
  - o Benefits of service include in-person meetings, their desired level of editor interference and a compassionate communicator
- Non-local (national and international) writers
  - o Self-motivated, hardworking artists
  - o Highschool +
  - o Average salary \$60K +
  - o Aged 20 - 45
  - o Motives include telling their story, polished writing, and creating great art
  - o Benefits of service include their desired level of editor interference and a compassionate communicator

### Small Business Owners

- Local (Ottawa-based) businesses
  - o Busy people
  - o Some college +
  - o Average salary of \$60K\*
  - o Aged 30 - 45
  - o Motives include community, sustainability and creating great art
  - o Benefits of service include clear, attention-grabbing communication, in-person meetings and time saved from doing it themselves
- Non-local (Canadian) businesses
  - o Busy people
  - o Some college +
  - o Average salary of \$70K
  - o Aged 30 - 45
  - o Motives include community, sustainability and creating great art
  - o Benefits sought include clear, attention-grabbing communication and time saved from doing it themselves

\*based on Career Beacon's estimate of Ottawa's average salary being \$64,500 ("What is a," 2025)



## Competitive Analysis

### Key Points

- Competition is English-speaking freelancers that advertise on social media
- My rates are based on average Ottawa salaries and are by the word rather than by the hour
- Strengths
  - o Education provided practical experience in addition to theory
  - o Experience with varied writing types (not just creative fiction)
  - o Knowledge of social media marketing
- Weaknesses
  - o Possible perception of diploma versus degree
  - o Lack of portfolio, particularly for editing
- Uniqueness
  - o Ability to offer writing, editing and graphic design
  - o Knowledge of the food industry
  - o Knowledge of table-top roleplaying games



### Research and Comparison

Despite being Ottawa based, I consider my competition to be anyone in the English-speaking world that advertises their services on social media, since that will be a large part of my marketing. Through my research, I've found people are very bad at marketing themselves; many freelancers' social media accounts don't directly link to their offerings nor an email. This will be a strength of my business as I have a better understanding of self-marketing.

Sites like Reedsy could have been helpful for setting rates, but I found many of their freelancers use hourly rates and my business structure uses by the word rates. Rather than base my rates only on other freelancers, I investigated average salaries of Ottawa-based freelance writers and editors on Glassdoor and Indeed. Editors with 0-1 year of experience make an average around \$55K/year (or ~\$26/hour) and writers make an average ~\$75K a year (or ~\$32/hour) (Editor Salary, 2025; Freelance Editor, 2025; Writer Salaries, 2025; and, Writer Salary, 2024.) With this in mind, I based my rates off 20-25/hour to account for my lack of experience in the field. These rates align with the rates I was able to find through social media searches.

My education sets me apart from others. Many freelancers have BA English degrees and MFAs, which are great degrees, but a college course like Professional Writing provided me with more practical experience. Since I have experience with university level English courses, I



understand the difference between academic styles of theory-based (at university) and practicum-based (at college) curriculums. This program also gave me experiences beyond creative fiction, allowing me to understand web-based and corporate-based writing which is missing from BA and MFA degrees. While I believe this is an asset it may also be a weakness; it is a double-edged sword since the experience is applicable, but the perception from prospective clients is unknown.

My main weakness comes from a lack of industry experience. I have little to put in my portfolio beyond school assignments. I have varied pieces of writing but my ability to edit is much harder to prove without published pieces to point toward. Getting started and finding clients will be the hardest part of this business.

## Why me?

I'm a bit of a jack of all trades. I have a wide range of skills thanks to the Professional Writing program at Algonquin College. I have experience with corporate writing like message houses and summaries; journalistic writing like press releases and articles; academic writing in both persuasive and expository essays; web copy with blogs, newsletters and social media; and both fiction and creative non-fiction. Not to mention my gained experience with graphic design which can help add a little pizzazz to social media, web design and layout.

I have a passion for communication and helping people which leads me to want to work closely with clients to get the results they desire. My communication, time management and organization are out of this world, meaning you'll never be wondering what state your project is in.

While I have nothing against working with larger companies, I really want to help indie and emerging writers meet their goals and help small businesses get their name out there.

I have experience with the food industry, table-top roleplaying games, and fine and fabric arts. My favourite genres are horror, speculative fiction and literary fiction. My editing is focused on shorter pieces, allowing me to stand out in a world of novel editors.

## Budget

Outlines how the funding will be used - Presents information in a visual format

Item	Description	Expected Cost
Software	Microsoft 365 (115/year), zoom (215/year), affinity (250)	600
Coworking Space	30-45/day, 3-4 visits/month (Deskpass, n.d.)	500
Commute	Bus Fare	400
Marketing	Promoting posts on social media	2000
Website	Wix (39/month)	500
Equipment	A new laptop	1000
<b>Total</b>		<b>5000</b>

Amounts rounded to account for taxes and fee changes over time



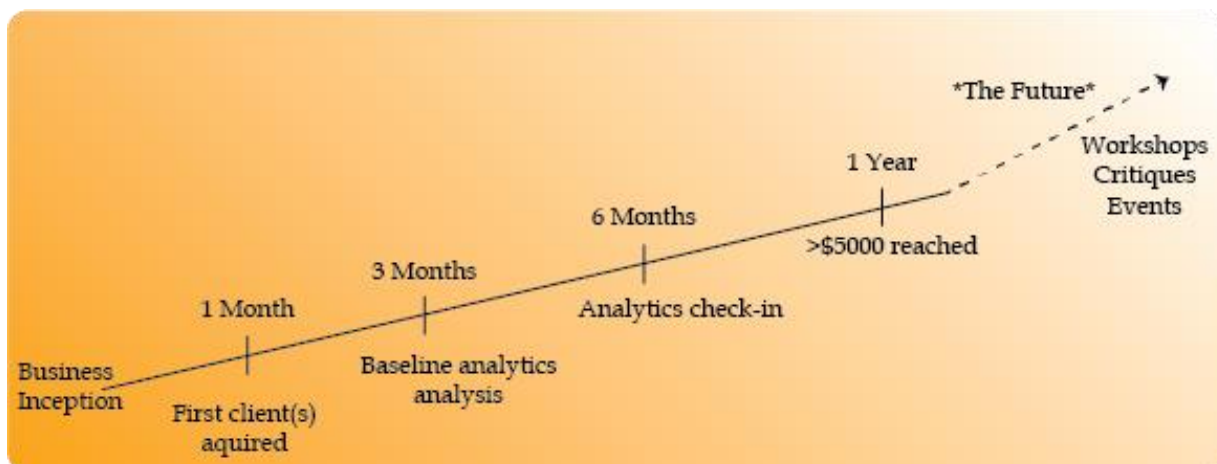
## Goals

Get my first client – By the end of the first month, I will have my first client. I will start a marketing campaign on X, Facebook and Instagram using my knowledge of SEO, graphic design and writing to advertise my services. In addition, I will reach out to local businesses I already have connections with to offer my services and request reviews to add to my credibility.

Make \$5000 – By the end of the year I will have made back the \$5000 seed money provided by seeking clientele through marketing and outreach.

Get noticed on social media – I will make a marketing plan and schedule and follow it for 3 months. At 3 months I will do an analytics analysis of X, Facebook and Instagram. I will make changes based on my understanding of these numbers. At 6 months I will review them again. At 6 months I will see an increase of 10% in engagement analytics.

## Timeline



## Impact

The impact A Way with Words will have on the Ottawa arts and language sector is highlighted by two key factors: in-person communication and community building. While these writing and editing services can be done entirely digitally, we will offer in-person meetings for those that prefer it. Additionally, Jerrica has a passion to create community. Part of A Way with Word's plan is to not only provide writing and editing services, but create virtual and physical community including workshops, critique groups and general social hours. We want to become a pillar of the arts and language community.



## Qualifications

### Jerrica Black

#### Skills and Expertise

- Command of the English language
  - o Grammar and spelling
  - o Word choice
  - o Writing structure - narrative, descriptive, expository and persuasive
- Experience in fiction and non-fiction writing (see publications below)
- Experience in the food industry
- Familiar with Adobe's Illustrator, InDesign and Photoshop
- Familiar with Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Experience with video recording and editing

#### Certifications and Publications

- Diploma in Professional Writing from Algonquin College (May 2025)
- Contributor on Spine Online Students Blogs: Finding Fun in Ottawa
- Contributor on Spine Online Specialty Section: Poetry - Psychopomp, The Raven
- Contributor on the Fruit Couture Blog
- Upcoming publication in Spine Online's *By the Fire* Anthology

#### References

- Jackie Bonilla - Previous employer - fruitcoutureca@gmail.com
- Colin O'Connell - Instructor - Professional Writing - oconnec1@algonquincollege.com
- Nathaniel Whelan - Instructor - Writing for the Web - whelann@algonquincollege.com
- Natalie Morill - Instructor - Editing & Creative Writing - morriln@algonquincollege.com
- More available on request

## Contact Information

For inquiries or additional information, please contact: Jerrica Black at [jerricablack0@gmail.com](mailto:jerricablack0@gmail.com)



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