



Is College a Good Route for Writers?

Wise authors consider both the pros and cons of college.

Obviously this applies to our younger audience, but if you're already past college age, you may find this information helpful if a younger writer asks you for advice.

Our first question is if a degree is necessary to become a writer. Absolutely not. In the writing world, you stand or fall entirely on your raw skills rather than your education.

However, you need *some* education if you intend to become a top-notch author. The question then becomes what's the *best* avenue to gain the knowledge you need.

I'm going to start by presenting a case against college and then share the reasons our editor-in-chief, Josiah DeGraaf, was blessed by his college literature studies. We hope this will provide a well-rounded and accurate view of the realities of college.

Here are three reasons that college may not be the best option for you:

1. Whether you study online or on location, a creative writing degree can easily cost you tens of thousands of dollars. As I argued in the lesson, a quality writing education can be obtained for *less* than \$10,000.
2. College robs you of your writing time. As any published author can attest, the only sure way to sharpen your skills is to write profusely. From my observation, writers enrolled in college struggle to find time for their passion.
3. Maybe you have the money to spend and you're okay with waiting to put what you learn into practice after your four-year degree. You believe that a degree will set you up to outshine other writers. While sacred to tradition, it's debatable whether a degree guarantees success in the world. What if your professor taught the same lessons in an e-course at 1/10



the price? Would his insight suddenly become invalid? No, it would be just as profitable. There is no writing education you can get in college that you can't get outside of college.

Sadly, higher education may be one of the leading reasons why aspiring writers never achieve success, leaving them with little practice and little capital to jumpstart their careers.

However, college does have real value:

1. If you choose a school with a dedicated Christian community (whether the entire campus or a group within it), the experience can grow you as a person.
2. Some majors may help with certain aspects of writing. For instance, reading and studying great works of literature in a classical liberal arts program can teach you about masterful storytelling and the quality you should be striving for. Or majoring in history could equip you to write historical fiction.
3. If you're pursuing publication on the side, or if you want another career to fall back on if your writing career is slow to take off, a college degree could be an asset.

If your only goal in attending college is to become a published author, though, it's probably not the best route. Our editor-in-chief, Josiah DeGraaf, appreciated his college education for its external benefits, but if he were back in high school with the knowledge he has now, he would have done the following instead:

- Postpone college for 2–4 years to see if he could put himself on track to become a published writer.
- Use the money he would have spent on college to buy multiple books/courses and hire different tutors to teach him how to become a better writer and stronger marketer.
- Use the extra time to write and build a platform.
- Find 3–5 people to form a book club that studies and analyzes great works of literature for the purpose of learning fiction techniques. The meetings could be conducted in person or online through video calls.