

SECTION 3



WHAT IS MAKING A LIVING?

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MAKING A LIVING

Okay, here we go, controversial from the get-go! People say you can't make a living as a children's author in Australia ... heck, they probably say that everywhere.

But what do they mean? What does "make a living" even mean? What if one person can survive on \$15,000 a year, and one person struggles on \$160,000 a year?

Make a living is different for every person. Maybe creating books will be a side hustle at the start, so "making a living" is irrelevant! You might write for joy and to bring in \$3,000 extra a year to pay for a holiday. It's all up to you. **As Derek Sivers talks about in *Anything You Want*, it's your business. You make the rules!** (Actual quote is in the video!)

I can't tell you what a satisfactory level of income is for you, but you will have an idea ... and that idea will **definitely** change as time goes on. But I can tell you this ... **what you aim for is very often what you get**, so if you believe you can't make a living as a writer, you probably won't.

"Whether you think you can, or think you can't, you're right." ~ Henry Ford.

This section then, before we start anything else, is about you. No one else. Just you. I don't care what the average income for an author or illustrator is. I don't care what I earn or what JK Rowling earns, or what an engineer earns.

This is about you and finding the level you want to aim for. You won't get there straight away, but setting goals is a massive key in giving yourself a chance. Here, and in the next section, we're going to write some numbers and set some goals, not all of which will be based around money and income, but will be part of the process of building that up.

So let's get to it.

HOMework

First up, **what does making a living mean to you?** How much do you need to live (bills, food, etc)? How much do you need/want for other things (pleasure, holidays, gifts, etc). You don't need to be extravagant here, this is basically just writing down where you stand right now, so what making a living is to you.

Fantastic! So that, right now, is making a living for you. But is it your ideal? Write down, right now, **what your ideal income would be, and here you can be extravagant** ... but you don't have to be! You may want to minimise and live in a tiny house and live off the land, so your ideal lifestyle may require quite a low income.

Right now, **gut feel**, what would you love to earn in a year. **Back yourself and your instinct**, and write it down. This is for you and no one else.

Great! Okay, so you may have gleaned (*nice word!*) some answers from the **What does this course cover introduction**, but what are the ways **you** think **you** could create an income from children's books? Write 'em all down, even if they seem silly! Trust me, people have created income using methods **EVERYONE** thought were silly, but they worked (possibly **because** they were silly!)

Wonderful. Now write down what you think you could do with your books to cover certain aspects of your living. You won't know all the answers for this yet, so it may involve some guesswork, but we will cover all the options as we go through the course, I promise. Sometimes it's great to know what you don't know at the start of a course, so you can see how far you've come by the end.

Example: \$3000 would cover a holiday. This would be covered by an advance from a publisher, or by self-publishing and selling 1000 books, or by doing 5 school visits.