*Mel Candea is a freelance writer who travels Europe with her husband. You can find their adventures on **[Westfalia Digital Nomads](#)**.*

Nothing annoys me more than when I look for a freebie quick fix and it's 'pseudo free.' I don't mind that people are charging money for their genius.

It does bother me that they advertise a 'free writing tool' when it's not. Why else do they need my credit card for a trial, right?

I can't be the only writer it drives crazy, which is where I got the inspiration to come up with a list of (truly) free tools for freelancers.

"I don't care how much money you have, free stuff is always a good thing." –Queen Latifah

I've included tools to help with ideas, editing, tweaking and images. I've even included a few little-known gems for writers, just because.

How many of *your* free go-to tools made my list?

Super Free Pre-Writing Tools

Photo by Annie Spratt

How would you describe that feeling you get when you sit down to start work on a new piece of writing?

Anticipatory? Maybe. Giddy? Probably. Crestfallen? Only if you've not one clue what to write about.
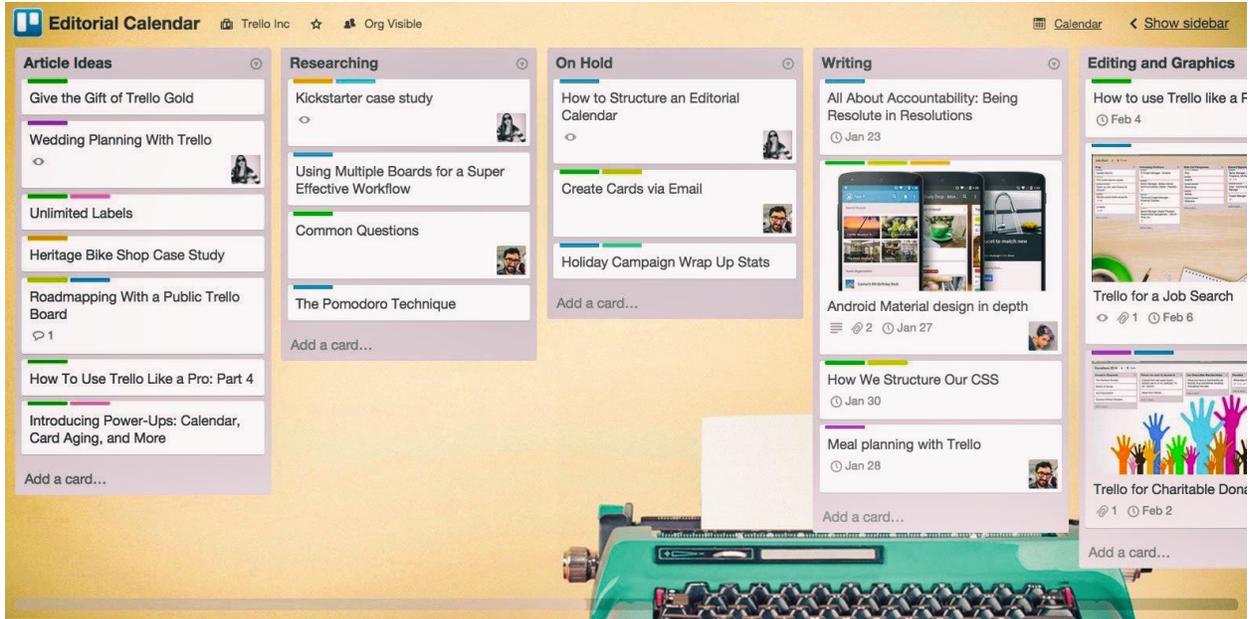
It happens to us all.

Whether we're stumped for a fresh post or are working on an article that's out of your familiar zone, the pre-work you put in can help in the formulation of solid writing.

Organizing Your Gigs and Posts

I'm old school, and not in the hipster way. I still use paper notebooks to jot thoughts, brainstorm and even write full articles. But I still need organization.

These are two free tools that I've found handy for collecting my thoughts cohesively and keeping up with deadlines or responses from queries:

1. **Airtable** With easy-to-use templates, it can be used for editorial calendars and team projects.

2. **Trello** I've just recently signed up for this one, and I already love it. Some of the samples can be copied to your board and edited to your needs.

Desperately Seeking Inspiration

It's always good to keep your finger on the trends of the moment, no matter what your niche or gig might be. If you're lacking idea inspiration, check these out.

- **Feedly** or **Medium** Choose your favorite categories, magazines and reads to get the latest news and freshest articles.

- **Topic Ideas** Trending questions about your subject, which shows you what people have recently asked about. It's also a gold mine for brainstorming.

- **Answer the Public** Question mind mapping. Honestly, I love this site mainly because of the entertaining older fella and his facial expressions while I wait for the results. Grin. If you've never tried it, give it a go. Just once.

- **Product Hunt** This isn't just your average techie-gadget specialty site. It has loads of unique products in an interesting variety, like *'Freelance TV.'*

Online Research for Freelance Writing

Internet Archive Take the Wayback Machine to pretty much anything that's ever been on the Internet, ever. Don't get lost.

Refseek and/or **ERIC** When you need impeccable sources or links for your writing, these two should help. Definitely with an academic bent.

Duck Duck Go My personal preference for a search engine. There's no tracking (meaning no ads designed around your last search) and it shows relevant results without the commercial whisper.

The Search Engine List Oh, wow – there *are* other search engines beyond Google-! Even I forget it sometimes. You might be surprised by results from other search engines.

Related: Lifewire: '*How Real Online Research Works*'

Photo by Gellinger

Keywords Are Kind of Important

Even though Uncle Google is finally smart enough not to index keyword-stuffed shoddy writing any longer, keywords are still important.

After you've figured out what the subject is, your next job is finding the best words that'll help people find your post – by finding keywords.

1. **[Keyword Tool io](#)** It's exactly what the name says and it works brilliantly for finding popular terms or long-tail keywords.

2. **[Keys4up](#)** I kind of discovered this one accidentally, when I was looking for something else. I'm glad I did. It lists related keywords with their rank.

3. **KW Finder** It gives you the full spectrum of your keyword, including live links and their activity. It does have a daily limit of 3 searches for free, so use it when you've really narrowed it down.

Related: Backlinko: '*Keyword Research for SEO: The Definitive Guide*' (You can download the PDF version for free, with your email)

The Writing Process

Of course no tool is going to help you write like you. Your tone, word choice and dynamic personality are originals.
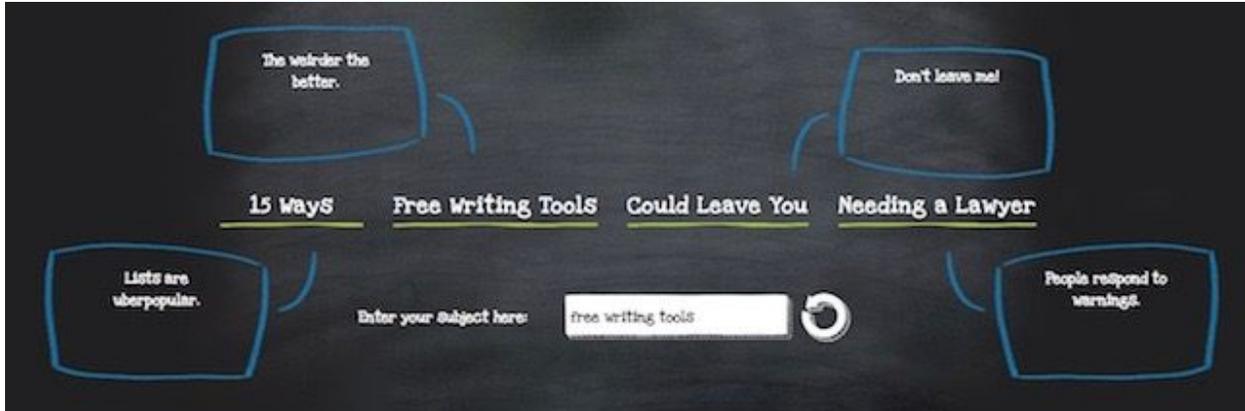
It doesn't mean you can't use a little help with the technical side, though. Headlines have to be more than stellar. Bad grammar kills a writing piece.

Free Tools for While You're Writing

All of us approach writing in a different way. Some of us start with a title; some of us write the title last.

You might like to have a grammar check as you write. In no particular order, these writing tools could be useful:

● **Portent's Title Maker** When you're really stuck for a title and want some free entertainment, this could help break the block.

- **Headline Analyzer** AM Institutes analyzer gauges the emotional or intellectual level of your headline. It can help with your tone. For example, a business article needs a higher intellectual % and higher emotional is perfect for a travel blog.

- **Sharethrough Headline Analyzer** This analyzer gives you a checklist and tips for improving the headline in 'real time.' It lets you re-analyze after you make changes to see the difference, which is handy.

- **Open Live Writer** I personally don't use this, but I know a lot of writers that swear by it. It's an editor designed specifically for blogging/blogs. It's a free download.

- **After the Deadline** My personal favorite from Polish My Writing, you can download the free grammar and style checker or use the demo online with a copy/paste. It's a great editor (for me).

- **Tip of My Tongue** If you're like me and you just –can't- quite- remember a word in the middle of a prose flow, this quirky little writing tool is ace.

Related: CopyBlogger: '*10 Modern Editing Tips for Meticulous Bloggers*'

'Tweak-Checkers,' or Refining Your Writing

Photo by Nolan Isaacs

Raise your freelance writing hands if you've ever been guilty of over-writing?

We all have, whether it's using words with more syllables than sense or repeating a theme. These tools can help tweak the tricky bits.

1. **Readability Test** or **The Writer's Readability Test** Either one gives you the heads' up on how easy your writing is to read. To give you an idea: Trump's speeches = 4; Shakespeare = 11 and you want to aim for a 7 or 8.That's right.

   Write for a 14-year-old if you want your piece to be smooth.

2. **Cliché Finder** Have cliché, will travel. Actually cleaning clichés out of your writing makes it tighter and more unique.

3. **Small SEO Tools** or **Word Counter** These are good tools on 2 fronts. If you tend to repeat yourself or use the same words too often, you can spot it. The second plus is seeing how dense your keywords are sprinkled. You   really don't want to get on Google's bad side by over-using.

4. **Daniel Soper** Another odd little tool, it analyzes the overall sentiment of your piece. It helps to make sure your tone is what you wanted.

5. **Read-O-Meter** By knowing or showing the expected reading time, you can either edit or flesh out as needed.

6. **Quetext** or **Plagiarisma** Yes, there are tons upon tons of plagiarism checkers. And the free ones are the ones used with the most suspicion.

Related: Writer's Digest: '*5 Key Questions Writers Should Ask When Revising Writing*'

SEO Tools

Every writer these days has to have some knowledge of SEO, even if you aren't an expert. It's the backbone of most articles and posts.

Without it, your writing disappears in the quagmire of the Internet.

> *"Google only loves you when everyone else loves you first." -Wendy Piersall*

Yoast If you use WordPress, you more than likely already have it. In case you don't, it's a plugin that optimizes your posts for SEO. It's color coded - green is good.

SEO Mofo A virtual Google SERP tool for testing the search results, so you can optimize your snippets.

Coffee Cup Free web design software by two fellas (Bob and Larry) that include an HTML editor and a Pixconverter, to name a few.

Related: Signup with **expert websites** (just costs you an email) to keep you in the loop of the latest. It also gets you a lot of writing goodies like **The Hoth**: '*Free SEO Toolkit*'

Making It Pretty with Visuals & Images

You don't have to go picture-crazy (unless you're a photographer) in posts or articles, but you *do* need some eye candy.

Relevant, high-quality images and graphs are no longer optional. It's not as dire as it sounds, take a look:

Photos

Finding the perfect images for your perfectly written piece can be a perfect pain in the #&@.

You can bypass the stock sites and find copyright-free photos for free if you know where to look:

- **Unsplash** I just love this site. They have amazing images that haven't been used by everyone and they're all copyright-free.

- **Gratisography** Free high-res downloads from photographer Ryan McGuire. The images are full of whimsy and character.
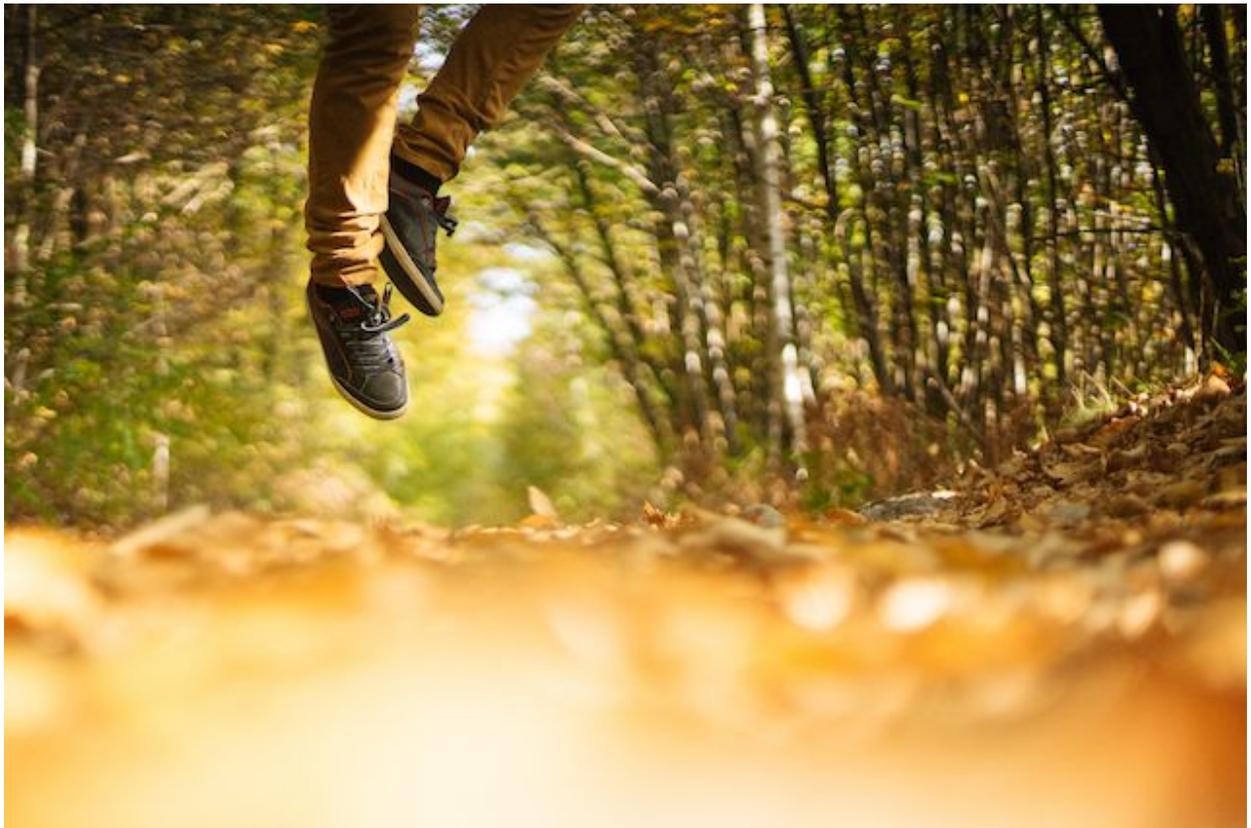

Photo by Splitshire

- **Splitshire** Another photographer who's ace: Daniel Nanescu. He had a big backlog of great photos and decided just to post them for anyone to use them, for free. Evocative and enchanting images.

- **Burst** A free image site from Shopify that has its focus on products and situations. It's got a good selection of high-quality photos.

- **Google Nik Collection** This might seem a surprising free image tool to recommend, but I've had a lot of fun using this to make drab images go bam-! It's easy to use, too.

- **Optimizilla:** or **Pic Resize** It's frustrating when websites require so many different sizes or dimensions, but using either an image compression or a resizer makes it easier.

> *"Articles containing relevant images have 94% more total views than articles without images, on average." –MDG Advertising*

Graphics

Graphics are really coming into their own lately. Charts, graphs and the no-longer-passe infographics can really add some pizazz and authority to your writing.

- **Canva** A graphic design one-stop (free) shop. You can create visual titles; infographics; and X to name just a few.

- **Snappa** Great for creating graphics and charts. It has all of the social media sites and sizes in templates, ready to use.

- **Infogr.am** Obviously an infographics creator, it has lots of ready-made templates for any infographic your text desires.

Screenshots

With the vast amount of 'How Tos' and tutorials to walk people through a process online, it's not surprising how screenshots have soared in popularity.

Awesome Screenshot or **Screenshot**

Both free screenshot tools are user-friendly, with cropping, blurring and highlighting capabilities.

Related: Hubspot: *'20 of the Best Free Stock Photo Sites to Use in 2017'*

*Bonus: Free Freelance Writer Business Bits

(Who doesn't love a bit of a bonus-?)

1. **Clippings.me** It's not just for newbie freelance writers anymore. Clippings is a free writer's portfolio site where you can show your work without buying a writer's website. It also gives you more online visibility.

2. **Freelance Contract Templates** from **The Balance**: As freelance writers, we often forget about contracts before starting work with a client. At least until we deal with the 44th revision request or non-payment.

Photo by Camdiluv

3. **[Wave](#)** Everything for the freelancer or small business owner to keep track of expenses and payments. An account includes things like accounting and receipts.

…And You've Arrived at the End of Our Free Writing Tools for Freelancers List.

Well done, you! We hope our list of free writing tools for freelancers has been useful. What about you, have you tried any of these? What did you think?

Or have I missed any of your free favorites? Let us know in the comments – we'd love to add to our list!