

8 Affordable Book Ghostwriting Services Compared by Price and Process

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In brief

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Both can appear when you search for "affordable book ghostwriting services." The phrase only becomes useful once you look at what the price includes, who actually writes the book, how much control you have over the process, and what happens after the manuscript is finished.

The eight options below are grouped by where they sit in the market rather than ranked from first to last. Price, control, speed, editing, publishing support, and writer selection vary considerably between them. Nobody paid for placement here.

Quick comparison

Service: Chapter (AI) | Starting price: ~\$97 to \$240/year | Model: AI drafting software | Best fit: A fast first draft that you plan to edit further

Service: Fiverr / Upwork | Starting price: Under \$1,000 to \$5,000 | Model: Open freelance marketplace | Best fit: Shorter or lower-stakes projects where you are comfortable vetting writers yourself

Service: The Urban Writers | Starting price: ~\$500 per 10,000 words | Model: Freelance platform with tiered packages | Best fit: High-volume nonfiction and ebooks on a tighter budget

Service: Writers of the West | Starting price: ~\$1,500 | Model: Full-service agency covering writing, editing, cover design, and publishing | Best fit: Authors who want one team handling most of the process without taking a royalty cut

Service: Reedsy | Starting price: ~\$3,500 to \$40,000 | Model: Curated marketplace where the author chooses the writer | Best fit: Authors who want to compare and interview ghostwriters themselves

Service: Scribe | Starting price: ~\$10,000 to \$25,000 | Model: Structured agency process | Best fit: Nonfiction authors who want extensive interviews and editing support

Service: Gotham Ghostwriters | Starting price: ~\$15,000 to \$100,000+ | Model: Boutique writer-matching network | Best fit: High-profile memoirs and thought-leadership books

Service: Kevin Anderson & Associates | Starting price: \$50,000+ | Model: Premium agency | Best fit: Projects with large budgets and a focus on experienced, established ghostwriters

AI tools and open freelance marketplaces

Chapter

Chapter costs roughly \$97 to \$240 per year. That fee buys access to AI book-drafting software. You provide the prompts and direction, the software creates the draft, and human editing costs extra if you want it.

For founders, marketers, and creators who mainly need to turn an idea into a manuscript quickly, the speed can make sense.

Memoirs and personal thought-leadership books have a different requirement. Much of their value comes from extracting specific experiences, opinions, stories, and details from the person whose name appears on the cover. AI can organize and draft material, but the author still needs to supply those experiences and usually spend substantial time reviewing the result.

The low subscription price therefore does not make Chapter directly comparable with a human ghostwriter. It solves a different part of the publishing process.

Fiverr and Upwork

Fiverr and Upwork have the lowest entry prices among the human-writing options covered here. You can find writers offering short projects, sample chapters, ebooks, and full manuscripts for well under agency pricing.

The main difference is responsibility for vetting.

You choose the freelancer, review their previous work, check references or reviews, agree on the scope, and manage the relationship yourself. There is no agency selecting the writer for you or assigning a dedicated project manager to oversee the manuscript.

That can work well for a short piece, a test chapter, or a project where you already know how to assess writers.

For a full-length book, spend more time checking the writer's published work and contract terms before committing a large deposit. An unusually cheap 60,000-word manuscript can become expensive if it needs to be rewritten later.

Lower-cost agencies and managed platforms

The Urban Writers

The Urban Writers is a Canadian platform with a freelance network of roughly 5,000 writers. Pricing is around \$500 per 10,000 words across Standard, Premium, and Pro tiers.

Its pricing can suit high-volume nonfiction, lead-magnet ebooks, business content, and projects where cost per word matters.

The platform is built around a standardized ordering process, which also means authors looking for a highly individual literary voice may want to examine samples closely before choosing a package.

Independent comparison guides have raised concerns about inconsistent fiction quality, so fiction and memoir authors should pay particular attention to the writer match and sample work.

Writers of the West

Writers of the West is based in Houston and was founded in 2004. The company also has teams in Los Angeles and New York, with contracted writers across more than 30 U.S. states and over a dozen countries.

Package pricing on its ghostwriting services starts at around \$1,500 for shorter projects in the 15,000 to 30,000-word range. Longer manuscripts cost more.

The service is aimed partly at coaches, consultants, business owners, and first-time authors who want several parts of the book-production process handled by the same company.

Editing, formatting, and cover design are included in the package rather than hired separately. Payment plans are available at 0% interest, with deposits starting as low as \$300.

The company does not take a royalty share. Its publishing arrangement can also assign the book's ISBN entirely to the author, although Writers of the West remains the publisher of record.

After the manuscript is finished, hybrid publishing and distribution services typically take about two months.

Writer selection works differently from a marketplace. There is no public roster where you browse every available writer and choose one directly. You submit information about the project and the company matches a writer based on genre, voice, and other requirements.

Full pricing for larger projects requires a quote.

More control over the writer or the process

Reedsy

Reedsy lets authors browse profiles, review previous work, and request quotes directly from a curated group of ghostwriters.

Around 200 vetted ghostwriters are available through the platform, with prices ranging from roughly \$3,500 to \$40,000 depending on the writer and project.

This model gives the author more control over writer selection. You can compare candidates and decide who you want to work with instead of accepting an agency's match.

You also take on more project coordination.

Editing, cover design, formatting, and other publishing work are generally separate hires, with separate costs. If you want one company managing the complete book from interviews through production, a marketplace structure may require more involvement from you.

Scribe

Scribe sits higher in the price range, at roughly \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Its process includes deeper interviews, several drafting stages, and professional editing as part of the service. The author remains involved during development rather than simply handing over an outline and waiting for a finished manuscript.

That structure is aimed primarily at nonfiction authors who want help extracting and organizing their ideas as well as writing the book.

The price puts Scribe outside what many people expect when searching for a cheap ghostwriter, but it gives a useful reference point for what a more managed book-development process can cost.

Premium ghostwriting agencies

These companies sit far above the budget end of the market, but they are useful benchmarks when comparing expensive proposals.

Gotham Ghostwriters

Gotham Ghostwriters runs a boutique matching network that includes veteran journalists and bestselling authors.

Its work is particularly associated with memoirs, thought-leadership books, and projects involving public figures or established professionals.

Pricing starts at around \$15,000 and can extend past \$100,000. The company is selective about projects and writer matching.

A quote in this range should therefore be judged against premium services such as Gotham, rather than against a low-cost freelancer or AI drafting tool.

Kevin Anderson & Associates

Kevin Anderson & Associates starts at roughly \$50,000.

The company works with experienced ghostwriters, including writers with bestselling books and established publishing credentials. The price reflects that end of the market.

Few authors searching specifically for an affordable ghostwriter will choose this tier, but knowing the upper end helps put \$2,000, \$10,000, and \$30,000 quotes into context.

How the services were compared

Four practical factors were considered across the companies in this list.

The first is operating history. A company that has worked with authors for years gives you more information to examine than a newly created service with little public history.

The second is published work. A ghostwriting company or writer should be able to point to books, writing samples, or other work that can be checked independently where confidentiality allows.

Contract terms matter just as much. The agreement should explain the scope, payment schedule, revisions, confidentiality, ownership, deadlines, and what happens if the project ends early.

Reviews were also considered across more than one platform where available. A single review site rarely gives a complete picture.

Red flags before paying a ghostwriter

Price alone does not tell you whether a ghostwriting service is legitimate. The process around the payment tells you much more.

Watch for:

- No written contract or NDA before payment is requested.
- A full-length human-written manuscript quoted at a price that seems impossible for the amount of work involved.
- No writing samples or published portfolio that can be independently checked.
- A refusal to discuss a paid sample chapter when you want to test the working relationship first.
- Pressure to pay the entire project cost up front instead of using installments or milestones.

A sample chapter can be particularly useful on larger projects. It gives both sides a chance to test voice, communication, and expectations before committing to tens of thousands of words.

Frequently asked questions

How much does an affordable ghostwriter cost?

For a full-length human-written book from an established agency, the options in this comparison put the lower end at roughly \$1,500, with more managed services reaching \$10,000 and beyond.

Below that range, you are more likely to find AI drafting tools, individual freelancers, shorter-book packages, or marketplace offers that require more vetting from the author.

Premium ghostwriting services can exceed \$100,000 for high-profile projects.

Is a cheap ghostwriter worth it?

It can be, provided the lower price comes with a clear scope, a real contract, writing you can evaluate, and a process for revisions and delivery.

A low price becomes more concerning when the provider cannot show relevant work, will not put the agreement in writing, or wants a large payment before clearly defining what will be delivered.

Compare the process as carefully as the quote.

Do authors keep the rights and royalties to a ghostwritten book?

Reputable ghostwriting arrangements commonly give the author ownership of the finished work, but this needs to be confirmed in the contract.

Check who owns the copyright, whether the ghostwriter or company receives any royalties, and how the ISBN and publishing rights will be handled.

Those terms should be settled before the manuscript work begins.

How long does it take to write and publish a ghostwritten book?

The supplied service information puts the writing stage anywhere from a couple of months to close to a year, depending on manuscript length, interviews, revisions, and how involved the author is in the process.

Editing, formatting, cover design, and publishing can add another one to two months after the manuscript is complete.

A short business book with limited interviews may move much faster than a long memoir built from dozens of hours of conversations.

How I would narrow the shortlist

If I were comparing two or three ghostwriting quotes, I would ask each provider for the same information before paying a deposit: work I can verify, a written scope, the revision process, payment milestones, the expected timeline, and a clear statement covering copyright and royalties.

That comparison usually tells you more than the headline price.

A \$1,500 service and a \$15,000 service may both produce a manuscript, but the amount of interviewing, editing, project management, publishing support, and direct access to the writer can be completely different. Compare what is actually included before deciding what "affordable" means for your book.

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