

Writing Voice Survey Results

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About the survey

In the first quarter of 2023, I conducted a survey about writing voice.

Respondents: 255

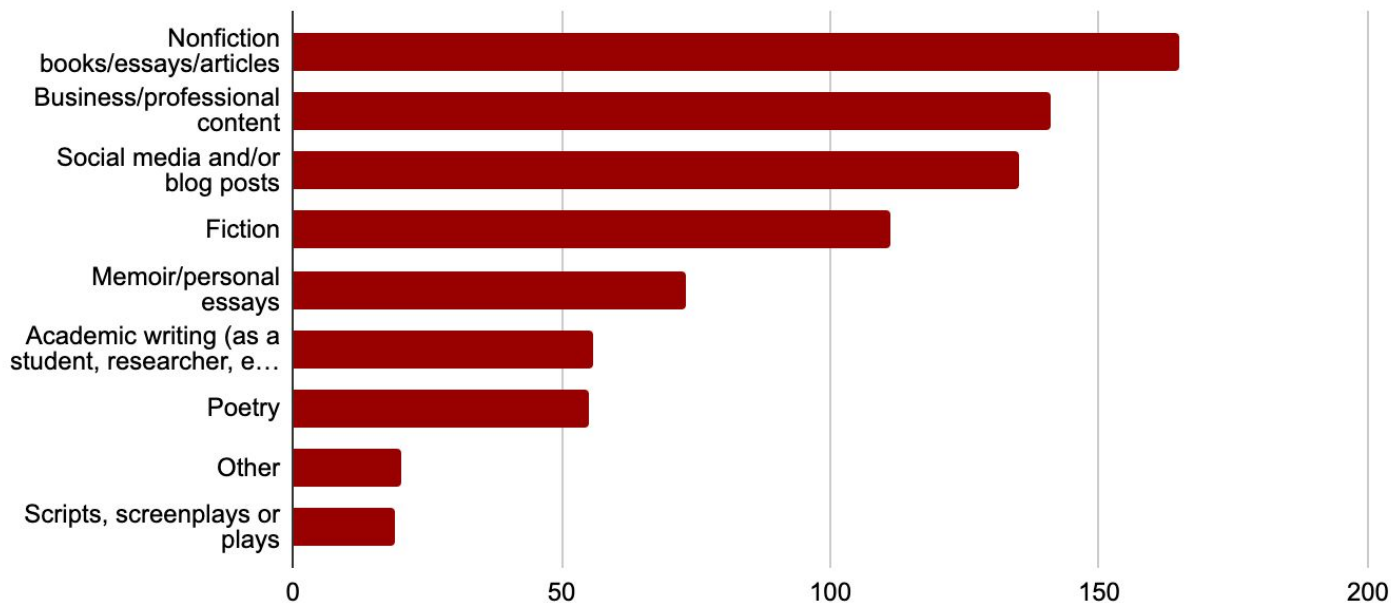
Sources: Most identify as writers

- Writers subscribed to my writing list
- LinkedIn contacts
- Writing groups

The Results

Most respondents wrote in multiple categories

What kind of writing do you do in your life and work? (Don't count journaling and personal messages.) Select all that apply



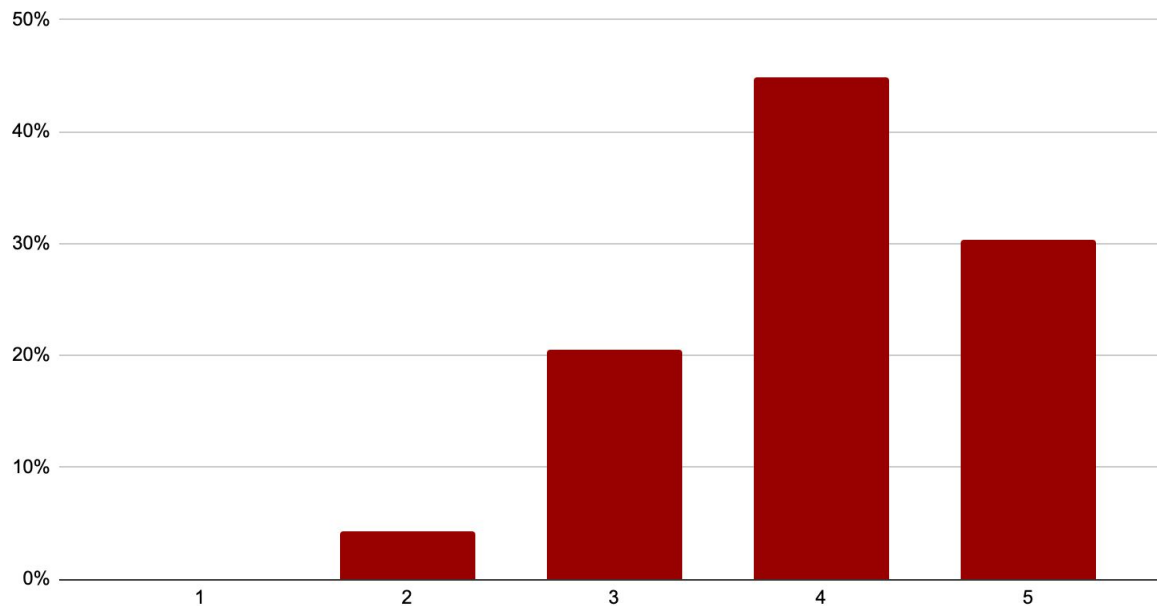
Many genres

Professional and nonfiction slant comes from the scope of my audience.

Surprises: Amount of fiction and poetry also happening!

Most report being contented with their writing voice

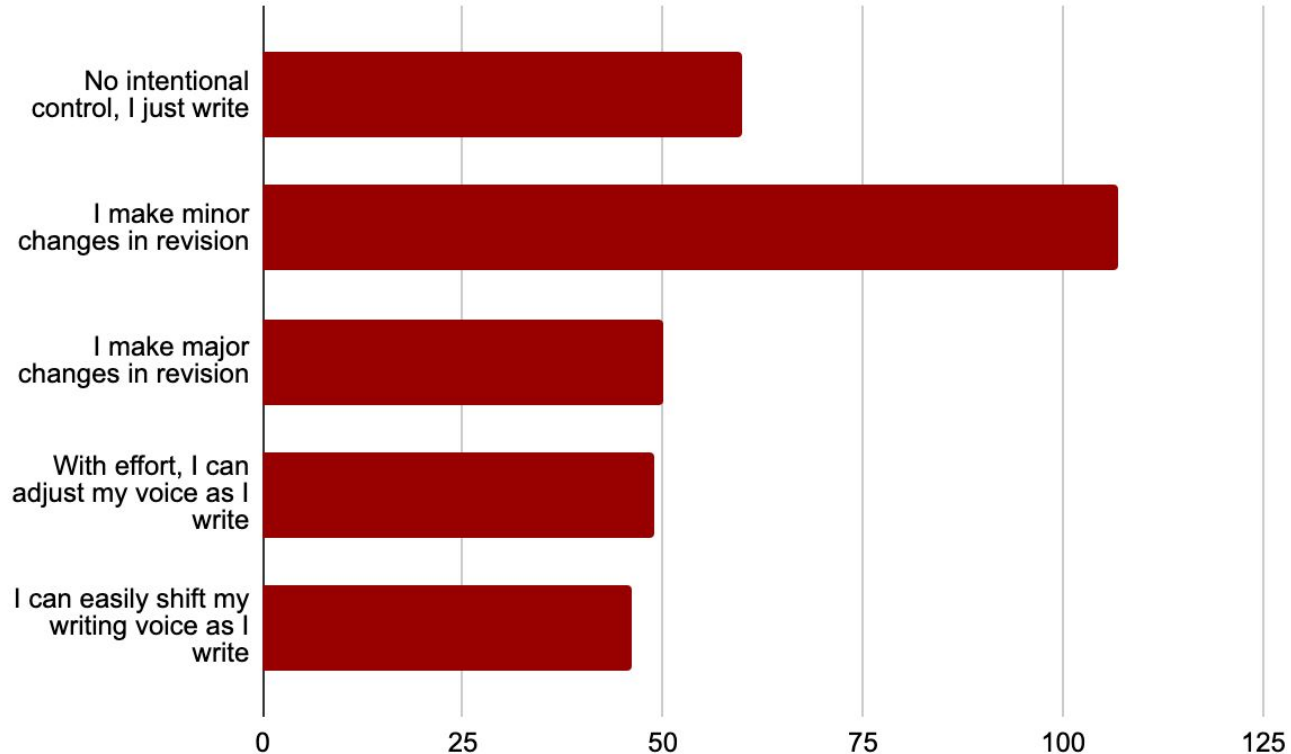
On a scale of 1 to 5, how happy are you with your writing voice and how it represents you and your ideas?



**Wait,
everyone is
happy?**

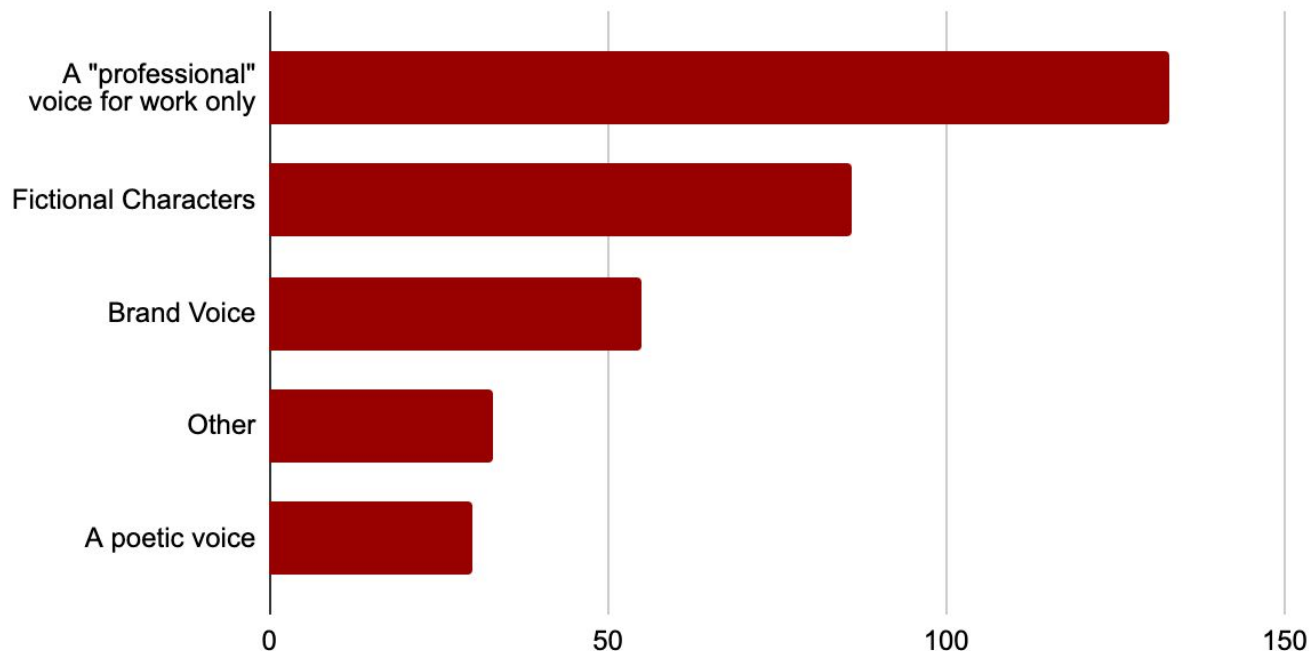
Or, perhaps they simply haven't really thought about it.

A majority make little effort to control their writing voice



Yet, people do switch into other “voices” regularly

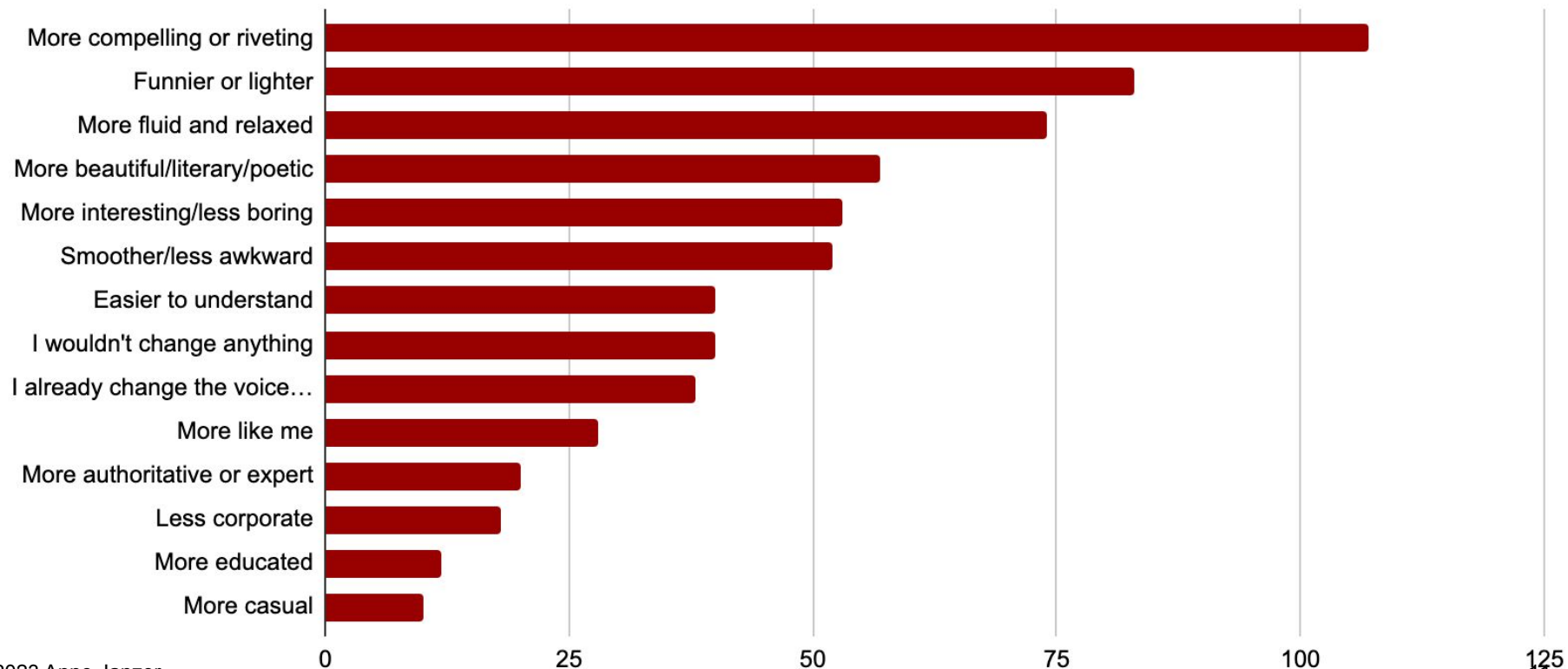
Do you ever write in other voices that aren't "authentically" you? Choose all that apply:



Digging deeper

Next, the survey revisited the question of how happy people are with their voice, this time by prompting them about what they wished was different.

Most writers wish to upgrade their writing voice



Other attributes people sought

Attributes that came up in the “other” field include:

- Warmth and empathy
- A balance of snark and respectful professionalism
- Clear, casual expertise
- Compassionate and caring
- Precise and elegant

Observations and Comments (from open-ended comments)

We don't understand voice well

“

Before this survey, I never gave voice much thought.

I am not sure what my voice is or how to recognize it.

What if you're not sure how your voice comes across to others?

Since I write business books and articles, I had not thought much about writing voice.

”

**Or, we have
strong
feelings
about it**

“

My writer's voice is probably more like me than I am in real life.

My best and most authentic voice comes in emails to close friends.

A great voice is distinctive – can't be mistaken for another.

Voice is the soul and sound my message carries.

”

Fiction writers on voice

“

I wish I could change my voice between characters. Right now, all my characters sound the same

I would like to be able to hear a fictional character's voice in my head and write in that voice.

The most difficult thing I find is assuming a different voice for my fictional characters. So hard to hear someone else in my head.

Would like to be better at using voice to make each character unique and believable and not just have my voice stand for all.

”

Lack of intentional control

Clearly, people adjust their writing voice without a lot of thought.

“

It is mostly intuitive, but that also makes it difficult to control and improve upon.

The voice itself feels easy to change WHEN and IF I have set the correct intentions.

”

Closing thoughts

- Many writers don't think about writing voice—and that's a missed opportunity.
- Ghostwriters, freelancers, and fiction writers benefit from being adept at switching and modifying voice.
- Those writers who master control over voice enjoy that ability:

“I've spent decades writing other people's ideas—including ideas they didn't think of. I can't imagine having just one voice.”

Want to explore your writing voice?

Some of the data here is included in my new book *The Writer's Voice*. It includes exercises for modifying your voice with intention.

Find more at AnneJanzer.com.

