



Okang'a Ooko

Novelist, Editor, Writer, Senior Designer, TEFL Coach

Curriculum Vitae, 2022

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A talented and versatile writer, senior designer and content creator, proficient in all aspects of creative and technical communications

IN BRIEF

Experienced writer, editor, proofreader, and designer with a long, successful career in print, web, branding, marketing communications, advertising, publishing and in the digital arena.

Creative fiction and nonfiction content writer in the form of the written word i.e. in ghostwriting, web content, blogs, eBooks, documentation, reports, articles, advertising copy, sales copy, and books. **Graphic designer** Provides graphic design problem-solving and creative support for print design, publishing, branding, corporate identity, packaging, illustration, book interior layouts and cover design, advertising, photography, photo editing, typography, POS, signage, etc. **Print designer** for Print industry, marketing collaterals, Layout design:

books, annual reports, magazines, menus, newsletters, etc. **Web Design & Digital Content Creator** HTML and WordPress Web designer developing graphics for web pages, digital marketing creator managing ecommerce efforts for companies creating personalized, ever-evolving journey and storytelling of branded campaigns, new launches & core items in meaningful and relevant approaches through creative writing, graphic design, HTML, creating digital ads, social media graphics, web graphics, paid social ads, organic social (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, etc.), SMS graphics, email campaign design, flow email design and product page design. **English Second Language Teacher (TEFL)** Advanced level part-time TEFL qualified teacher/coach teaching English as a second language and an IELTS coach.

Fine artist hand drawing, painting, vector graphics. I do pastels, watercolours and oils).

INTERESTS - Reading: I love the written word. Even if I don't have time, I read. Topics vary from, technological developments around the globe, historical fiction, to modern African literature.

Artist, Author, Editor, Writer & Senior Designer with 20+ Years Experience

I am an artist, designer, author, editor and respected professional writer with over twenty years' experience in the industry working in print and online media. I am a novelist and short story author with work appearing in various print venues. I am an

experienced wordsmith with more than 20 years creating different types of keyword-rich content for clients in various industries. I have written blogs, researched articles, prepared marketing copy, ghostwritten ten books and collaborated on video-based content. In addition to being a graduate of Comprehensive Writing, I am a qualified graphic Designer. My writing style flows like water; it can adapt to different tones and purposes. I follow a 3-stage writing process: Structure – Research – Quality Assurance. All completed projects are subjected to tests for plagiarism, grammar, spelling, and readability.

I am the author of *Businesswoman's Fault*, (stories), and three mainstream novels, including *Bengaman*, *When You Sing To The Fishes* and the latest, *Hunter & Gatherer* mostly vivid accounts of scandalous vices, human folly, power games, and peopled by men and women struggling to succeed in the new African renaissance. I write thrilling and intriguing character-driven fiction based on African characters and situations. My work presents a compelling narrative voice and a new way of seeing the world.

I am a very ambitious and hardworking writer for this generation. My three Must-Read cavalier bestselling novels are in categories that matter to me: history, politics, pop culture (especially music), love-and-danger, business, corruption, true crime, and self-development. Known as “Kenya’s new master storyteller”, I epitomize a new shift in African fiction and my books are mostly set in Kenya. I love to dispel the myth that Africans don’t read, and incredible readers who have stumbled upon my books have liked them tremendously. I have been writing since childhood when my mother took me to the local library in my hometown of Kisumu, in Western Kenya, to keep me out of the company of bad boys. As a serial daydreamer, it was nice to finally get the stories on paper when I started writing full time in retirement in 2017. I have not looked back since. I believe current African issues (pop culture, politics, business, corruption) make dramatic stories with or without a literary bent, and I know there is a huge potential to create intriguing stories around these themes. No writer is doing it. With my new book, *Hunter & Gatherer*, I currently aim to shepherd my vocation as a writer of commercial African fiction.

In addition to being a prolific writer, I am an artist, an acclaimed graphic designer and musician. I live the life of an artist. When I am not reading or writing engaging stories, I give writing lectures, create graphic arts, play the guitar and draw things. I was born and raised in Kisumu, in Kenya. I live in Nairobi with my wife and four children.

SUMMARY:

I am a fine art professional and a fiction writer with a strong sense for design and a demonstrated passion for one area within it: graphic design, web design, video design, print design, illustration, teaching English as a foreign language and digital content creation. I am a clear and concise communicator, comfortable working autonomously. I possess a demonstrated ability to multi-task across a set of projects operating often on short and flexible deadlines and for multiple clients and I am dedicated to meeting deadlines. Strong experience with and knowledge of Word, HTML, Wordpress and CSS. Strong experience with and knowledge of Adobe Creative Cloud applications and other

common graphic-production tools, such as Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. Knowledge of Premiere and After Effects.

A reviewer once said "Ooko is exceptional. From the quality of his work to the adherence to deadlines, he is amazing. He communicates very effectively and I am confident whatever task is thrown at him; he can handle with flying colors!"

As an author, I have written, formatted, and published many books (Amazon Kindle and print) in the last few years. I edit books for independent self-published authors and writers looking to get their work traditionally published. I've worked as a freelancer and development editor for hundreds of clients in a wide variety of writing genres, categories and styles, including fiction, non-fiction and technical, essay, poetry, drama, memoir, inspirational, Christian, academic, autobiography, critique, law, business (promotional writing, proposals, presentations, press releases etc), scientific, software documentation, and more. I have worked for newspapers and magazines as a writer, editor and copy editor. I have authored first-rate essays and articles for publication in print and online venues and I have mentored high school and college students as well as writers of all ages wishing to advance their skills. My strengths are simplifying sentences, finding plot holes, and proofreading for technical error.

For years I have been known and seen, and best regarded as a good designer. I have worked professionally as a writer, designer and consultant in development projects in roles like project designer, design project manager and design consultant. I see myself simply as a designer with broad experiences and a penchant for doing hard tasks that directly use my expertise to increase value and benefits to businesses in Kenya. This is to say the least. I use every opportunity to expand my knowledge. Besides being very creative, I am a compulsive learner. I am a hard-working person and I can do long and solitary projects that requires commitment and high levels of creativity. I am also a good manager and an effective organizer and team player. I think I have enough experience to do more than just creative projects.

RECENT FEEDBACK:

"Ooko was an amazing writer. He explored all details of our topics and made independent research on his own. His writing skills clearly show a deep academic foundation with talent to structure opinions in a neutral way. I would fully recommend him to all technical and non-technical works." - Dr. Oseno Ben, lecturer, School of Business, Masinde Muliro University, Kakamega, Kenya, September 2018.

"Wonderful and a great editor. Would recommend." - Dr. Evelyne Ndege, Lecturer, School of Music, Dayster University, Nairobi, May 2018.

"Ooko was exactly what I was looking for. I asked for honesty and he gave it. I would definitely hire him for any future project. He is a vital asset that made my work better." - Prof. Peter Wanyande, Lecturer, School of Political Science, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, May 2018.

SKILLS:

- **Writing services:** Experience writing the following types of content: Long- form blogs (1,600+ words), short-form blogs (300 to 800 words), articles, technical writing (journals, manuals), web copy, marketing copy, and product reviews.

Words are my muse and I use them to speak volumes of emotions and feelings, all with the ultimate goal of helping my clients. I am widely read on a variety of topics and have an extensive academic background in the arts and social sciences. Knowing exactly what to say is crucial in today's media driven world. I am a writer gifted with creativity. I am proficient at creative writing, content writing, and ghost writing. In my craft, I concern myself with Textual Analysis of soundness of structure, transitions and cohesiveness of composition. My writing services cover: Fiction writing of any length: flash fiction, poetry, drama, short stories, novellas, novels, short stories, poetry, character led narratives etc); non-fiction ghostwriting • Creative writing • Content Development • Copy Articles • Memoir & Biography • Research • Technical ghostwriting • Promotional ghostwriting • Business writing • Personal Development books • Product description and labels • Sales copy • Academic Writing • Newsletter writing • Blog writing • Book Review & Consultation • Reports • Company profile • Company mission statements • Business plans • Ad copy • Short product descriptions etc); **Online writing** (eBooks, blog writing, social media management, content writing) et cetera;

- **Editing and proofreading:** I am a professional book editor in English, offering copyediting, error correction for grammar, punctuation, typos and spelling errors; and developmental editing services. I work closely with authors and brands to clarify and improve the quality of their message. I have development editing experience and have worked with many authors. I am also a diligent and experienced Proofreader with strong experience assessing and correcting a wide variety of business and research texts. Superior interpersonal and communication skills in explaining needed changes to authors and executives. Proven ability to handle multiple projects simultaneously. I offer everything from intensive manuscript development editing to proofreading and basic editing and reviews. I also offer transcription services.);
- **InDesign typesetting;** I have 20+ years of experience typesetting experience in the publishing industry, with experience ranging from Production Artist to Design Director, including eBooks. Over the years I've typeset numerous Fiction, Non-Fiction, book interiors. I have extensive experience using Adobe InDesign and I'm very well-versed in creating and analyzing design specifications and layouts. My files use all of the automation features InDesign offers, resulting in consistently accurate, professionally designed and typeset files.
- **Graphic design:** I am a Senior Graphic Designer who has exceptional design skills, is a creative thinker and problem solver and has experience working with a diverse group of people (engineers, marketing, sales, corporate, etc.) Experience in page layout, typography, editorial grids, style sheets, and template design

(Print and digital applications), 2D Designing, Corporate Design, Print Design, Illustrations and Fine Arts in various media. (Print Designs/marketing collaterals, Layout design: annual reports, magazines, menu, newsletter, etc Design mockups- Marketing assets, eBook mockups, web graphics iPhone mockups, or any device), Visualization, Vector, Photoshop editing, InDesign typesetting and layout;

- **Visual content production:** Produce high-quality designed products (including event graphics, video graphics, animated graphics, logos, custom imagery and graphics for editorial work, and other elements of visual identity, physical signage, etc.) quickly and efficiently across multiple media and toolsets, balancing clients' requirements and branding guidelines. Ensure that text within graphics is correctly and consistently typeset and free from grammatical errors, and that it uses correct formatting and follows style guides.
- **Photo editing:** Selecting, editing, retouching, and positioning photographs for print and web marketing collateral, ensuring consistency and alignment of image tone with brand messaging. Editing raw photographs using Adobe Photoshop).
- **Web designer & Digital content manager:** Word-Press experienced Graphic Website Designer Develops beautiful, clean code • Tests for design, functional, and technical QA criteria • Launches and maintains websites and servers. A practitioner in digital marketing arts able to manage the workflow of content from different online media platforms as Web Content Developer, Digital Content Developer, Creative Director, Social media marketer, Brand designer. Art Director, Email marketer. Extensive knowledge of Content Management Systems (CMS), Dreamweaver, HTML, CSS, web publishing, JavaScript, PHP, SEO copywriter.
- **Visual design advisor:** Advise the Engagement team and programs on design across all media—web, social media, video, physical production displays, and print.

Summary of Competence:

- I offer writing, editing, proofreading, book/print publications' interior design and cover design, eBook conversion & distribution, contractual publishing services to writers, publishers, students and companies.
- I create TEFL coursework for online and classroom instruction in English for foreign/non-English student.
- I create fresh graphic from concept to final art and visual design that communicate
- I manage all aspects of print and digital book publication, including design, pre-press preparation, and quality control.
- I act as a print broker and project manager for publishers, self-publishers, and literary magazines.

- I design and build websites and initiate meaningful and relevant approaches through creative writing, graphic design, HTML, creating digital ads, social media graphics, web graphics, paid social ads, organic social (Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, etc.), SMS graphics, email campaign design, flow email design and product page design
- I assist fellow writers, authors, students, lecturers and storytellers to polish their work to its brightest shine.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

International Diploma in Creative Writing by correspondence

The Writing School, Kings Road, London, 1988 - 1991

Bachelor of Arts Graphic Design & Communication

University of Nairobi, 2002 – 2005

Diploma in Business Management

Kenya Institute of Management, 1998

Additional areas of study:

Diploma Graphic Design, Print Design, Communication

Kenya Polytechnic, 1990 – 1992

Higher Diploma in Graphic Arts

Manchester Polytechnic, UK, 1998

LANGUAGES PROFICIENCY:

British (Commonwealth) English, American English, Dholuo, Kiswahili and Lingala

SOFTWARE MASTERY:

Expertise in:

Primary design tools: • CorelDraw • Adobe Indesign • Adobe Photoshop • Adobe Illustrator • After Effects • Adobe Premiere • Microsoft Office • Word • PowerPoint • Publisher • Google Slides • Google docs. • Apple Keynote • Apple Pages

I possess practical working mastery of top-of-the-range design programs. I like to create layout in InDesign and graphic design in CorelDRAW. I can use Illustrator or Quark if necessary. However, I usually use CorelDRAW to draw and Illustrator to create design. I prefer CorelDRAW and normally work faster and achieve a lot with it. Photoshop is my preferred image editor and InDesign is my favourite page layout designer.

- I can use almost every famous publishing program or I can learn a new one very fast, if it is not in my list.
- I am at home both on PC and on Mac, but I prefer PC, even though I have more experience with Mac.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Currently:

1. October 2010 – Present (11 years)

Founder and Owner of online bookstore store.obakunta.co.ke

Senior Creative Writer

A creative publishing company founded by writers, designers and editors.

Oba Kunta Octopus, writing, editing, publishing, creative agency, Nairobi, Kenya

www.obakunta.co.ke

Oba Kunta Octopus is Kenya's leading writing, editing, and publishing company with an impressive client list specializing in a variety of creative services as well. The company helps companies achieve results beyond their dreams. Oba Kunta provides quality end-to-end page composition and publication services to new and established authors, editing and publishing companies, creative and marketing agencies, professionals in all areas, literary agents and independent writers working in all genres, educators, learning institutions, NGOs, International organisations, private companies, governments institutions, entrepreneurial business leaders, career seekers and students. Clients are at the center of Oba Kunta Octopus' business, and we take pride in assisting authors throughout the entire writing, editing, revising, and publishing (or self-publishing) processes.

- Weaving the threads of personal or professional narratives into resonant stories.
- Developing a unique narrative voice uniting in-depth scholarly accuracy and a playful, confident, and accessible tone.
- Researching and writing articles and columns for internal communications and intranet use.
- Researching, composing, and editing for various content types, including social media and blogs.
- Secured contributing writers, initiated account collections, managed and met all production deadlines, and designed the layout for each issue.
- Oversaw a new advertising campaign that increased company sales by 50%.
- Conducted in-depth analyses of market trends and competition to formulate innovative ideas in order to drive profitable growth through various channels.
- Worked with many branded companies such as JICA, AU, Safaricom, Unilever to help them increase their visibility through their printed marketing materials.

- Recruited freelancers and contributing editor; created successful special sections, reports and electronic newsletter. Revamped trade show coverage, achieving greater focus and usefulness.
- Leads Publishing teams who manage publisher relationships and client integrations
- Manages a diverse management staff and skilled employees.

2. August 1995 – Present (24 years)

Author *Freelance writer and designer @www.okangaooko.com Nairobi, Kenya

Novelist, short story author, ghostwriter and script writer, journalist.

3. January 2012 – Todate, Nairobi, Kenya

TEFL Freelance English Tutor

- Tutored high school students and foreigners from Francophone countries three times a week.
- Instructed five sections of English, grades 11-12, including one section of Advanced Placement.
- Supervised the production of the Uwezo, high school literary magazine.
- Advised SOMA club, aiding students in the promotion of reading habits.

4. February 2012 – December 2014

Lead consultant Lake Victoria Writers' Group, Kisumu, Kenya

English coach, writer, graphic arts instructor and creative writing consultant

Coached new writers • Consulted with authors and publishers on the development of book-length manuscripts • Published short, creative prose and poetry in numerous magazines and online venues.

5. January 2006 - September 2010

Senior Graphic Designer - Mashariki Brand Communications Ltd., Nairobi, Kenya

WRITING DUTIES:

- Pagination of books and reports, including rewriting of copy and working with public relations professionals and press releases; writing occasional weekly editorials and columns.
- Assisted with business development and proposals as needed.

- Contributed to proposal strategy development and enforcement.
- Assessed rough text copy for consistency and accuracy.
- Worked for many organizations documenting case studies and writing mission statements, company profiles and conducting research studies.
- Served on committees for two extensive redesigns, and several small redesigns, of a client company's annual reports.
- Ghostwrote nine books

EDITING DUTIES:

- Edited text to maximize readability and accessibility for a variety of audiences.
 - 1) Secured, selected, and coordinated publication of manuscripts in book form
 - 2) Reviewed submitted manuscript, determined demand based on consumer trends and personal knowledge and made recommendations regarding procurement revision
 - 3) Conferred with author / publisher to arrange purchase details, like publication date, royalties and number of copies to be printed
 - 4) Coordinated design production activities
 - 5) Assigned supervise editorial staff
- Provided proofreading for sales presentations and proposals.
- Proofread company documents for spelling and grammar usage.

GRAPHIC DESIGN DUTIES:

- Conceptualized, designed book covers, did typesetting and book/magazine layouts, wrote, illustrated and published nine original books.
- Performed key role in the design and production of print, identity, packaging, multimedia, web design and web applications.
- Trained, supervised and provided art direction for junior designers.
- Managed press checks, art directed photos, supervised design teams.

PUBLISHING DUTIES:

- Consulted with authors and publishers on the development and publishing of more than 100 book-length manuscripts.
- Contracted publishers to produce books and other publications.

6. 2000 : Writing staff

FIT Resources Ltd.

Successfully launched a new print publication that became profitable within the first three months of operation.

7. 1999 - 2000 : Design consultant

Technoserve Inc.

- Successfully completed a research project on the occupational safety in the Jua kali (informal manufacturing) sector and published a researched paper in collaboration with Housing and Building Research Institute (University of Nairobi) and Wageningen University (Netherlands)
- Utilized computer resources such as: SyllaBase, The Writing Studio, The Bedford Researcher, Hyperfolio, Library Databases, and e-mail, to assist work colleagues with their writing and to extend the classroom.
- Participated in various presentations on using computers to teach writing and research during Professional Internship in English meetings.

8. 1998 : Creative Consultant **FIT Uganda Ltd.**

Actively participated in the complete redesign of all presentation, print communications for an ambitious internet-based development project.

9. 1994 - 1998 : Private Tuition for Various Nairobi Schools

Academic co-advisor to high schools: taught writing and design skills and taught English to foreign students.

10. 1993 - 1997 : Researcher & Product Design Trainer

Undugu Society of Kenya

- Worked mainly as product designer in the design and production of furniture and small functional farming and low-cost house building machines and implements for the benefit of micro and small-scale manufacturers.
- Participated in year-long research project that worked towards designing a model for training informal metalworking with emphasis on diversifying their products.
- Assisted in teaching fundamentals of product design to informal metalworkers for Product Design and Diversification course offered through Undugu Design Unit and funded by Terra Nova, an Italian aid. Oversaw group work and machine shop sessions. Guided students in construction of their end-of-program

projects, a new product employing applications of design and engineering.
Organized and led recreational activities after class.

- Accomplished a major research project and published **Scrap Metal Recycling: A Product Development Study of Shauri Moyo - Kamukunji Jua Kali** in 1995.

11. 1993: Independent art professional

- Assisted in the creation of Falaki Arts, an artist's club based at the Kenya National Theatre specialized in adapting novels into plays for writers at CSU.
- Learnt the Internet, HTML, and Desktop Publishing
- Concentrated in lending my expertise in theatrical productions, set design, flyer design and adapting novels into plays, directing, producing and post-production.

SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES:

- Novelist, author, short story writer.
- Editor and proofreader.
- Writer (ghostwriter, technical writer, biographer etc.) and occasional journalist.
- Graphic designer: design typesetting, visualizing, digital imaging, vector graphics.
- Creative director and brand manager in advertising.
- Product designer and development worker.
- Artist, visualizer and illustrator.
- Web designer and Digital content creator
- Other experiences include but not limited to: extensive, eBook conversion, publishing (in Kindle format) and distribution.
- TEFL Foreign Language English Teacher.

PUBLICATIONS/ WORKS: <http://okangaooko.com/books.html>

Currently	Working on Kalamindi , <i>novel</i>
April 2020	Hunter and Gatherer , <i>novel</i>
December 2019	When You Sing To the Fishes , <i>novel</i>
July 2018	Kisumu , <i>novel</i>

October 2017	Businesswoman's Fault , <i>seven stories</i>
January 2016	Happy 9th Birthday , <i>horror novella</i>
June 2013	Kiss Ya Bangongi , <i>short story</i>
July 2011	Rude Awakening , <i>short story</i>
July 2009	First and Second Rhythm Guitars in an Old Benga Song , <i>short novella</i>
October 2006	Why No One Knows Where Death Lives Papyrus Artists Organisation, kids short story, audio podcast
2005	Infinity Eulogy for my friend Martin "Sande" Owino, Hawi Magazine Volume I, Lake Victoria Writers' Group, <i>poem</i>
August 2004	Moni Afinda Published in Eve Magazine, short story
June 2004	Innocents Longings, Dangerous Fulfilement www.voicenet.org , <i>poem</i>
May 2002	The Proposal Published in Black Voices Online, <i>short story</i>
2001	Adventurer Published in Lady magazine, <i>short story</i>
1998	Pollution Control of Small –Scale Metal Industries In Nairobi , Final Report of Small–scale Metal Industries Environmental Pollution In Kenya, research study for International Labour Organisation (ILO)
May 1997	Scrap Metal Recycling , A study of Kamukunji Jua Kali Sector Published by the Undugu Society of Kenya, research paper, <i>working document</i>
November 1996	Kichorocho Published in Flash, newsletter of the Undugu Society, issue no 98, <i>short story</i>
May 1995	Running Wild Published in Flash, newsletter of the Undugu Society, issue no 55, <i>short story</i>
September 1993	Now The Sun Doesn't Shine Kenya Polytechnic Drama Club, an AIDS allegory with ritual drama, <i>play in three acts</i>

CERTIFICATES AND AWARDS:

- Afro-Fusion Horror Society Award for **Happy 9th Birthday**
- 10 Certificates of Achievement for completion of continuing education courses
- 5 Blogger Achievement Certifications
- Certificate of Distinction, Kenya Polytechnic, 1998
- 14 exams passed for Best Designer Certifications

REFEREES:

1. Gabriel Dinda, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Writers Guild Kenya - Nairobi, e: www.writersguild.co.ke
e: write@writersguild.co.ke ph: +254 716 115 189

2. Dr. Tom Odhiambo, SENIOR LECTURER

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m: +254 720 009 155 m: tom.dhiambo@uonbi.ac.ke e: odhiambotom@gmail.com
url: www.uonbi.ac.ke

3. Dr. Oseno Ben, AUTHOR AND SENIOR LECTURER

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m: +254 720 053 915 e: osenoben@yahoo.com