

WORDSTORM

CONQUER THE NOVEL WRITING CHALLENGE



NORAH DEAY

WORDSTORM

CONQUER EVERY NOVEL WRITING MONTH

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **Wordstorm: Conquer every novel writing month**. If you're reading this, you're likely one of the hundreds of thousands of writers who embark on the exhilarating journey of a Novel Writing Challenge at least once a year. Each November, writers from around the globe commit to the ambitious goal of writing 50,000 words in just 30 days. It's a whirlwind of creativity, discipline, and, let's face it, a little bit of madness. But the thrill of completing a manuscript is incomparable, and I'm here to help you take that success even further.

As of the time of writing this edition, December 2024, the writing challenge landscape has changed, and writers are eager to participate in these challenges more than once a year. Yay!

A Novel Writing Challenge is an incredible opportunity to kickstart your writing dreams, but it's just the beginning. Drafting a novel in a month is a remarkable achievement, but what happens after November? How do you transform those 50,000 words into a polished, published book that readers can't wait to get their hands on?

In this Success Kit, I walk you through every step of the journey from a rough 50k word draft to a professionally published book. Whether you're a first-time novelist or a seasoned writer, you'll find valuable insights and practical tips to help you navigate the complex world of writing, publishing, and book promotion.

I've self-published over 100 books on several platforms and my own website. They haven't made me loadsa money but each month I get emails with a subject line that says, "Royalty Payment Notification."

I don't think I'll ever get used to that!

I've attempted a Novel Writing Challenge (NaNoWriMo) eight times since 2010 and 'won' twice! I love the build up to it, the sense of camaraderie with other writers, even the despair when you know you're not going to finish. But then, the elation when you WIN!

If you've conquered a Novel Writing Challenge, I'd love to know if you've gone further with your manuscript. Have you got further than the first draft? Have you published it?

I published ONE.

But I've also published lots of other books, fiction, non-fiction and low-content books. Those books are journals, notebooks, and colouring books etc.

At one time I had over 100 publications for sale online, but I've since taken a lot down. Limiting yourself to a certain period for the journals is not a great idea. The best bit of all that though was that I've become a bit of an expert in all things self-publishing, and I'd love to help other writers who've written 50,000 words in a month get their books published this year, and every year from now on!

For years I was a “Panster,” someone who winged their stories by the seat of their pants. Invariably I ran out of steam and the stories were never finished. Then I did a couple of courses on plotting, and I swear, I nearly lost the will to live!

I’m not great at following rules.

So, what I did was, I took the bits I liked, and I married them up with my old panster ways and I found a way that worked. I use a huge sheet of paper and mindmap my stories.

It works for me.

I don’t want this book to be a ‘bright, shiny, thing’ that ends up gathering dust on a shelf. I’ve tried to make it as helpful as possible so you can see how you can navigate a month of writing 50,000 words, while writing something you won’t hate at the end of it. You probably will though but that’s okay because as Anne Lamont says, *All first drafts are shitty!*

Focus on setting achievable goals, plan your writing schedule so you write at least 1,667 words per day , and don’t worry yet about developing compelling characters. That’ll be for the second or third draft. There’s practical advice on crafting a solid plot, world- building, and maintaining productivity. Overcome writer's block and connect with supportive writing communities - Writing Challenges will erase the writer’s block.

Go forth with confidence and enjoy being part of every Novel-Writing Challenge.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Here's a sneak peek

Checklist for Novel Writing Challenge Preparation:

We'll start with the essentials, offering a detailed checklist to ensure you're fully prepared for the Novel Writing Challenge. From outlining your story to setting up a writing schedule, I've got you covered.

Editing and Revision Guide: Once the frenzy of your Novel Writing Challenge is over, it's time to dive into the crucial task of editing. I provide a step-by-step guide to self-editing, tips on finding the right editor, and strategies to transform your manuscript into a polished gem.

Publishing Pathways: Explore the different avenues for publishing your book. We'll compare self-publishing and traditional publishing, highlighting the pros and cons of each, and help you decide which path is right for you.

Formatting Tips: Learn the best practices for formatting your manuscript for both eBook and print publication. I share tools and resources to make this process as smooth as possible.

Cover Design Essentials: Your book cover is the first thing potential readers will see. I'll provide tips on creating a professional and eye-catching cover, whether you're hiring a designer or DIYing it.

Building Your Author Platform: In today's digital age, having a strong online presence is crucial. I'll guide you through setting up your author website, blog, and social media profiles to start building your audience.

Book Launch Plan: A successful book launch can make all the difference. I'll give you a detailed timeline and checklist for planning and executing a launch that will get your book noticed.

Bonus Resources: I include templates for book outlines, editing checklists, and book launch plans, plus access to a private Facebook group or online community for additional support.

WHY A NOVEL WRITING CHALLENGE?

A Novel Writing Challenge encourages writers to silence their inner critics, to push past the barriers of self-doubt, and to embrace the creative process. The sense of community and support during a Novel Writing Challenge is unparalleled.

Participants cheer each other on, share tips and advice, and celebrate each other's victories, big and small. By participating in a Novel Writing Challenge, you're joining a global network of writers who understand the highs and lows of the writing journey.

But beyond the camaraderie and the thrill of hitting that 50,000- word mark, a Novel Writing Challenge offers a unique opportunity to develop a consistent writing habit. Writing a novel in a month requires discipline and commitment. It teaches you to prioritise your writing, carve out time in your busy schedule, and push through even when the words aren't flowing as easily as you'd like. These are invaluable skills that will serve you well beyond November.

FROM FIRST DRAFT TO BESTSELLER

Completing a Novel Writing Challenge is an incredible accomplishment, but it's just the first step in the journey of becoming a published author. I've designed this Success Kit to help you take those next steps with confidence and clarity. We'll break down the often-daunting process of editing, publishing, and promoting your book into manageable, actionable tasks.

CHAPTER 1: PREPARATION CHECKLIST FOR NOVEL WRITING CHALLENGE

Participating in a Novel Writing Challenge requires more than just the desire to write a novel. It demands preparation, strategy, and a clear plan to make the most of the 30 days. This chapter provides a detailed checklist to ensure you're fully prepared to dive into the Writing Challenge with confidence and excitement.

1. Setting Your Goals

Before the clock strikes midnight on November 1st, take some time to set your goals. Understand what you want to achieve during the Novel Writing Challenge. Is it simply to write 50,000 words? Or do you have a specific project in mind? Setting clear, attainable goals will keep you focused and motivated throughout the month. You will need to write a minimum of 1,667 words every day.

2. Outlining Your Story

Outlining is a crucial step that can save you from the dreaded writer's block halfway through the month. Even if you're a panster (someone who writes by the seat of their pants), having a loose outline can provide a roadmap to guide you.

Break down your story into three acts, map out key plot points, and get to know your characters. This doesn't have to be overly detailed, but a basic structure will keep you on track (I use a large sheet of paper and draw mind maps).

3. Creating a Writing Schedule

One of the biggest challenges of a Novel Writing Challenge is finding the time to write. Look at your calendar for November and block out dedicated writing time each day.

Whether it's an hour in the morning, during your lunch break, or late at night, make writing a non-negotiable part of your daily routine. Aim for a consistent word count goal each day—1,667 is the average daily target to reach 50,000 words by the end of the month. Take part in organised Writing Challenges or create your own.

4. Setting Up Your Writing Environment

Your writing environment can influence your productivity. Set up a space that's free from distractions and conducive to creativity. Gather all your writing tools—laptop, notebooks, pens, and any other materials you need. Consider using noise-cancelling headphones and creating a playlist of music that inspires you. Make your writing space a sanctuary where you can immerse yourself in your story.

5. Joining Novel Writing Challenge Communities

One of the most valuable aspects of taking part in a Novel Writing Challenge is the sense of community. You can

participate in groups online and/or local writing groups. Engage with other writers on social media using the #Novel Writing Challenge hashtag.

Sharing your progress, challenges, and victories with others can provide motivation and accountability. You're not alone in this journey—embrace the camaraderie and support of the Novel Writing Challenge community.

6. Preparing for Challenges

A Novel Writing Challenge is a marathon, not a sprint. There will be days when the words flow effortlessly, and there will be days when every sentence feels like a struggle. Anticipate these challenges and have a plan for dealing with them. Keep a list of writing prompts and exercises handy to spark creativity. Don't be afraid to take breaks and step away from your manuscript if you're feeling stuck.

The important thing is to keep moving forward, even if it's just a few words at a time. If you can, try to get extra writing done at the beginning when your adrenalin is high from the excitement of starting.

This word cushion can be the difference between finishing and not finishing on the 30th!

7. Stocking Up on Supplies

Prepare for the month-long writing marathon by stocking up on supplies. This includes not only writing materials but also snacks, beverages, and anything else that will keep you fueled and focused. Consider healthy snacks that provide sustained energy and stay hydrated to keep your mind sharp.

8. Setting Realistic Expectations

Finally, set realistic expectations for yourself. Writing 50,000 words in a month is a huge accomplishment, but it's okay if you don't hit that target. The goal of a Novel Writing Challenge is to kickstart your writing journey and develop a consistent writing habit. Celebrate your progress, no matter how small, and remember that every word written is a step closer to your goal.

CHAPTER 2: EDITING AND REVISION

Once the exhilarating rush of the Novel Writing Challenge ends, the real work begins, editing and revising your manuscript. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you through this crucial phase:

1. Take a Break

Once you've finished your book you might start thinking immediately about publishing. Please don't. Firstly, give yourself some distance from your manuscript. A break of at least a couple of weeks allows you to return to your work with fresh eyes and a clear mind. This period helps you detach emotionally from your writing, making it easier to find areas that need improvement.

2. First Read-Through

Your first read-through should focus on gaining a holistic understanding of your manuscript. Read your entire manuscript without making any changes. Take notes on your initial impressions, plot inconsistencies, character development issues, and any other aspects that stand out. Pay attention to your pacing, structure, and whether your story holds the reader's interest from beginning to end.

3. Structural Edits

Structural editing, also known as developmental editing, involves looking at the big picture. This stage focuses on the overall structure of your story, including plot, pacing, and character arcs.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does your story have a clear beginning, middle, and end?
- Are the stakes high enough to keep readers engaged?
- Are there any plot holes or inconsistencies?
- Do your characters have clear motivations and development throughout the story?

Consider using tools like **story grids** or **scene cards** to map out your story's structure visually. This can help you see the weak points and areas that need restructuring.

4. Character Development

Characters are the heart of any story. Ensure that your characters are well-developed, and their actions are consistent with their motivations. Each character should have a unique voice and purpose in the story. Consider the following:

- Are your protagonists and antagonists well-rounded and believable?
- Do your characters grow and change over the course of the story?

- **Are their motivations clear and compelling?**

Make sure your characters are relatable and evoke empathy from your readers. If a character feels flat or underdeveloped, spend time fleshing out their backstory and motivations. I love to write ABOUT my story as if I'm telling it to someone. This way, you can include the backstory and later you might be able to use it as a lead magnet or on social media to market your book.

5. Pacing and Flow

Pacing is crucial to maintaining reader interest. Ensure that your story moves at an appropriate pace, with a balance of action, dialogue, and narrative.

Ask yourself these questions:

- **Are there any sections that drag or feel rushed?**
- **Do you have a good mix of scenes that vary in intensity?**
- **Are your transitions between scenes smooth and logical?**

Adjust the pacing to ensure that your story keeps readers engaged from start to finish.

This may involve cutting unnecessary scenes (don't delete them, you can save them for another purpose), expanding on important moments, or reordering events for better flow.

6. Dialogue

Dialogue should be natural and serve to advance the plot or develop characters. During your revision, pay close attention to the following:

- **Does each character have a distinct voice?**
- **Is your dialogue realistic and engaging?**
- **Are there any instances of “talking heads” where the dialogue feels detached from the action?**

Ensure that your dialogue is concise and impactful, avoiding unnecessary fillers. Read your dialogue aloud to catch any awkward phrasing or inconsistencies.

Read the manuscript aloud every chance you get - this is where you'll find the stumbles and clunky writing.

7. Line Edits

Line editing focuses on the language and style of your writing. This stage involves refining your prose, improving clarity, and ensuring consistency in tone and style. Consider the following:

- **Are your sentences clear and concise?**
- **Have you varied your sentence structure to maintain reader interest?**

- **Are there any repetitive phrases or words?**

Eliminate passive voice where possible (it isn't necessary to delete it all) and ensure that your writing is vivid and engaging. This stage is also an opportunity to polish your descriptions and imagery, making your story more immersive.

8. Grammar and Punctuation

The final stage of editing involves checking for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. While you can do this concurrently with line editing, a separate proofread focusing solely on these elements ensures thoroughness. Consider the following:

- **Are there any typos or misspellings?**
- **Have you used punctuation correctly?**
- **Is your manuscript formatted consistently?**

Tools like Grammarly or ProWritingAid can be helpful for identifying errors, but a manual check is essential for catching nuances that software might miss. This is another time to read aloud.

9. Beta Readers

Once you've completed your revisions, it's time to gather feedback from beta readers. Beta readers are people who read your manuscript and provide constructive feedback from a reader's perspective. They can help identify issues you might have missed and offer insights on how your story resonates with your target audience.

Choose beta readers who are familiar with your genre and who can provide honest, constructive criticism. You can find Beta readers in Writing or Facebook groups.

Provide your beta readers with specific questions or areas of focus, such as:

- **Were there any parts of the story that were confusing or unclear?**
- **Did the pacing feel consistent throughout the book?**
- **Were the characters relatable and well-developed?**
- **Did the dialogue feel natural?**

Take note of recurring feedback and consider adjusting based on their insights.

10. Professional Editing

After incorporating feedback from beta readers, you might still want to consider a professional edit. A professional editor brings a fresh perspective and expertise to your manuscript, helping you refine it further. Types of professional editing services, include:

Developmental Editing: Focuses on the structure and content of your story.

Line Editing: Concentrates on language, style, and readability.

Copy Editing: Addresses grammar, punctuation, and consistency.

Proofreading: The final check for any remaining errors.

Investing in professional editing can significantly elevate the quality of your manuscript, making it more polished and ready for publication.

11. Final Read-Through

Before you consider your manuscript ready for publication, do a final read-through. This is your last chance to catch any remaining errors or make final tweaks. Read your manuscript in a different format, such as printing it out or reading it on an e-reader, to see it from a fresh perspective. Reading it backwards is also an unusual but effective way to catch errors.

Editing and revising your manuscript is a rigorous process, but it's essential for producing a high-quality book. I heard that agents often call December **NaNoSHREDMo**.

This is why each stage of editing brings you closer to a polished, professional manuscript that readers will enjoy. With careful attention to detail and a commitment to improving your work, you'll transform your Novel Writing Challenge draft into a book you can be proud of.

CHAPTER 3: PUBLISHING PATHWAYS

The path to publishing your book can seem scary, with several options available. In this chapter, we'll explore the various publishing pathways, from traditional publishing to self-publishing, and help you decide which route is best for your book.

1. Traditional Publishing

Traditional publishing involves securing a contract with a publishing house that will handle the production, distribution, and marketing of your book. Here are the key steps involved:

Querying Agents: Most traditional publishers require submissions to come through a literary agent. Research agents who represent your genre and submit a query letter, synopsis, and sample chapters. This process can be competitive and time-consuming.

Submitting to Publishers: If you secure an agent, they will submit your manuscript to publishers on your behalf. The publisher may request revisions before offering a contract.

Contract and Advances: If a publisher offers you a contract, it will include details about advances (upfront payment against future royalties), royalties, and rights.

Advances can vary widely depending on the publisher and the book's potential.

Editing and Production: Once under contract, your manuscript will undergo several rounds of editing. The publisher will also handle cover design, formatting, and printing.

Marketing and Distribution: Publishers have established distribution channels and marketing teams. They will help promote your book and get it into bookstores, libraries, and online retailers.

Pros of Traditional Publishing:

Professional Editing and Design: Your book will benefit from professional editing, cover design, and production.

Distribution: Access to a wide distribution network, including brick-and-mortar bookstores.

Marketing Support: Publishers have marketing resources to help promote your book.

Cons of Traditional Publishing:

Competitive: Securing an agent and a publishing contract can be highly competitive.

Less Control: You may have less control over your book's final content, cover, and marketing strategy.

Long Timeline: The process from submission to publication can take several years.

2. Self-Publishing

Self-publishing allows you to take control of the entire publishing process, from writing and editing to distribution and marketing. Here's how to navigate self-publishing:

Editing and Proofreading: Ensure you have a polished manuscript by hiring professional editors and proof-readers. This step is crucial for producing a high-quality book.

Formatting: Format your manuscript for eBook and print. Use tools like Vellum, Scrivener, or Draft2Digital for formatting. Ensure your book meets the requirements of various platforms.

Cover Design: Invest in a professional cover designer to create an eye-catching cover. Your cover is the first thing potential readers will see, so it needs to be compelling.

Publishing Platforms: Choose where to publish your book. Each platform has its own requirements and distribution networks.

Marketing and Promotion: Develop a marketing plan to promote your book. Offer excerpts or first chapters in exchange for email addresses. Utilise social media, email marketing, book bloggers, and online ads. Consider organising a virtual book launch or blog tour.

Pros of Self-Publishing:

Creative Control: You have full control over your book's content, cover design, and marketing strategy.

Higher Royalties: Self-published authors can earn higher royalties per sale compared to traditional publishing.

Faster Time to Market: You can publish your book much faster than through traditional publishing.

Cons of Self-Publishing:

Upfront Costs: You'll need to invest in editing, cover design, and marketing.

Limited Distribution: Getting your book into brick-and-mortar stores can be challenging.

Marketing Responsibility: You're responsible for all marketing efforts, which can be time-consuming and require a steep learning curve.

3. Hybrid Publishing

Hybrid publishing combines elements of both traditional and self-publishing. In this model, you pay a publishing company to handle aspects of the publishing process, such as editing, cover design, and distribution, while retaining more control and higher royalties than traditional publishing.

Pros of Hybrid Publishing:

Professional Services: Access to professional editing, design, and marketing services.

More Control: Greater control over your book's content and marketing compared to traditional publishing.

Faster Timeline: Generally faster publication timeline than traditional publishing.

Cons of Hybrid Publishing:

Upfront Costs: Requires a financial investment for the publisher's services.

Varying Quality: Quality of services can vary widely between hybrid publishers, so research is essential.

Potential Stigma: Some view hybrid publishing as less prestigious than traditional publishing.

4. Choosing the Right Path

Deciding which publishing path to take depends on your goals, resources, and preferences. Consider the following factors:

Control: How much control do you want over the publishing process? Self-publishing offers the most control, while traditional publishing offers the least.

Budget: What is your budget for publishing your book?

Traditional publishing typically has no upfront costs, but self-publishing and hybrid publishing require financial investment.

Timeline: How quickly do you want your book to be published? Self-publishing is the fastest, while traditional publishing can take years.

Distribution: How important is it to you to have your book in physical bookstores? Traditional publishing offers the best access to brick-and-mortar stores.

Marketing: Are you prepared to handle all marketing efforts, or do you want professional support? Traditional publishing offers marketing support, but self-publishing requires you to take the lead.

Each publishing path has its own advantages and challenges. Carefully weigh your options and choose the one that aligns best with your goals and resources. By understanding the different pathways, you can make an informed decision and set yourself up for success in your publishing journey.

CHAPTER 4: FORMATTING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Formatting your manuscript correctly is a crucial step in the publishing process. Proper formatting ensures that your book looks professional and is easy to read on any device or in print. This chapter will guide you through the essential elements of formatting your manuscript for both eBook and print versions.

1. Understanding Formatting Requirements

Different publishing platforms have specific formatting requirements. Before you begin, familiarise yourself with the guidelines provided by your chosen platform(s). Each platform has detailed instructions on how to format your manuscript for eBook and print.

Key Points to Consider:

File Formats: Most platforms accept files in DOC, DOCX, or EPUB formats for eBooks and PDF for print books.

Margins and Spacing: Standard margins are typically one inch on all sides. Line spacing is usually set to double for manuscripts.

Font and Size: Use a readable font like Times New Roman, Arial, or Garamond in a 12-point size.

Page Numbers: For print books, include page numbers in the footer.

Headers and Footers: These are optional for eBooks but required for print versions.

Formatting for eBooks

Formatting an eBook involves ensuring that your text flows well on various screen sizes and devices. Here are the steps to follow:

Use Styles for Consistency

Headings: Use heading styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.) for chapter titles and sections. This helps create a table of contents and maintains consistency.

Body Text: Use the Normal style for your main text. Avoid manual formatting like extra spaces or tabs.

Insert Page Breaks: Use page breaks (not section breaks) to separate chapters. This ensures each chapter starts on a new page on any device.

Add a Table of Contents

A clickable table of contents is crucial for eBooks. Use your word processor's built-in tool to generate it based on your heading styles.

Hyperlinks and Cross-References

Add hyperlinks for any URLs and use cross-references for internal links (e.g., linking to other parts of your book).

Embed Images and Multimedia

Ensure images are correctly sized and formatted. Use high-resolution images (300 dpi) and insert them in line with the text.

Metadata and Book Information

Fill in the metadata fields (title, author, keywords) correctly. This information is crucial for searchability and discoverability.

2. Formatting for Print

Formatting a manuscript for print is more detailed than for eBooks due to the fixed layout. Here are the essential steps:

Set Up the Correct Page Size

Choose the appropriate trim size for your book (e.g., 6 x 9 inches, 5.5 x 8.5 inches). This is important for print-on-demand services like KDP Print or Ingram Spark.

Margins and Gutter

Set the margins to one inch on all sides. For print books, you need to account for the gutter (the inner margin where the book is bound). Adjust the gutter margin based on your total page count.

Font and Typesetting

Use a professional font like Garamond, Times New Roman, or Georgia. Ensure the font size is 12 points for readability. Use italics and bold formatting sparingly and consistently.

Page Numbers and Headers/Footers

Insert page numbers in the footer. Typically, odd-numbered pages are on the right. Include headers with your book title or chapter titles.

Chapter Starts and Section Breaks

Start each chapter on a new page. You can use section breaks to manage this easily.

Insert Images and Tables

Ensure all images are high resolution (300 dpi) and placed in line with the text. For tables, use simple formatting to ensure they are legible.

Cover Formatting

You format your cover separately. Ensure it meets the specifications provided by your printer (e.g., KDP Print). This usually includes the front cover, spine, and back cover combined into one file with the correct dimensions and bleed areas.

3. Using Formatting Tools

Several tools can help streamline the formatting process:

Microsoft Word

Word is a versatile tool for both eBook and print formatting. Use styles, page breaks, and the table of contents tool to format your manuscript.

Scrivener

Scrivener is a powerful writing tool that also offers robust formatting options. It's particularly useful for organising large projects and exporting to multiple formats.

Vellum

Vellum is a popular tool for Mac users, specifically designed for formatting eBooks and print books. It's user-friendly and produces professional-quality results.

Calibre

Calibre is a free, open-source tool for managing eBook libraries and converting between different eBook formats. It's useful for checking your eBook's formatting and converting files.

Draft2Digital

Draft2Digital offers free formatting tools and converts your manuscript into various formats, making it easy to distribute across multiple platforms.

Review on Multiple Devices

If you're publishing an eBook, preview it on multiple devices and formats (e.g., Kindle, iPad, smartphone) to ensure it looks

good everywhere.

Print a Proof Copy

For print books, order a proof copy to review the physical book. Check the quality of the paper, cover, and print.

Gather Feedback

Share your formatted manuscript with a few trusted beta readers or colleagues to get feedback on readability and design.

Formatting your manuscript can be a meticulous process, but it's essential for producing a professional, polished book. By following these guidelines and using the right tools, you'll ensure your manuscript is ready for publication, whether as an eBook, print book, or both.

CHAPTER 5: COVER DESIGN AND BRANDING

Your book's cover is the first thing potential readers see, and it plays a crucial role in attracting their attention. In this chapter, we'll explore the elements of effective cover design and how to establish a consistent author brand.

1. The Importance of a Professional Cover A cover is the one thing you can judge a book by! Here's why:

First Impressions Matter: Your cover is usually the first interaction a reader has with your book. A well-designed cover captures their attention and piques their interest.

Genre Expectations: A good cover design signals the genre of your book. Readers have certain expectations for covers based on genre, and meeting these expectations can attract the right audience.

Credibility: A professional cover adds credibility to your book. It shows that you've invested in your work and helps build trust with potential readers.

2. Elements of an Effective Cover Design

Creating an effective cover involves several key elements. Understanding these can help you communicate your vision to a designer or guide you if you're creating the cover yourself.

Title and Author Name

Visibility: Your title and author name should be easily readable, even when viewed as a thumbnail. Use a clear, legible font.

Placement: Generally, the title should be placed at the top or centre of the cover, with the author's name at the bottom or above the title.

Contrast: Ensure there's sufficient contrast between the text and the background. This can be achieved through colour choices or text outlining.

Imagery and Graphics

Relevance: Choose images or graphics that reflect the theme, tone, and genre of your book. For example, a romance novel might feature a couple, while a thriller could use dark, suspenseful imagery.

Quality: Use high-resolution images to ensure your cover looks professional. Low-quality images can make your book appear amateurish.

Focus: Avoid clutter. A simple, focused image often works best. Too many elements can distract from the main message.

Colour Scheme

Psychology: Colours evoke emotions and can influence a reader's perception. For example, blue often conveys calmness or mystery, while red can indicate passion or danger.

Harmony: Choose a colour scheme that complements your genre and imagery. Use colour wheels and palette tools to find harmonious colour combinations.

Consistency: Maintain a consistent colour scheme across your book series to create a recognisable brand.

Typography

Font Choice: Select fonts that match the genre of your book. A fantasy novel might use a decorative font, while a thriller could use a bold, sans-serif typeface.

Hierarchy: Establish a hierarchy in your text to guide the reader's eye. The title should be the most prominent, followed by the author's name and any subtitle or tagline.

Spacing: Pay attention to letter spacing and line height to ensure readability.

3. DIY Cover Design vs. Hiring a Professional

DIY Cover Design

Tools: Use design tools like Canva, Adobe Spark, or GIMP. These platforms offer templates and easy-to-use interfaces for beginners.

Learning Resources: Invest time in learning basic design principles. There are many online tutorials and courses that can help you understand the fundamentals of cover design.

Templates: Many self-publishing platforms offer free templates. These can be a good starting point if you're new to design.

Hiring a Professional

For all that's Holy, hire a professional if you have no design experience.

Portfolio: When hiring a designer, review their portfolio to ensure their style matches your vision. Look for designers who have experience in your genre.

Budget: Professional cover design can range from affordable to expensive. Determine your budget and find a designer who offers a good balance of quality and cost.

Communication: Clearly communicate your vision and provide examples of covers you like. The more specific you are, the better the designer can meet your expectations.

4. Establishing Your Author Brand

Consistency Across Books

Series Branding: If you're writing a series, ensure all book covers have a consistent design theme. This can include similar fonts, colour schemes, and layouts.

Logo and Author Tagline: Consider creating a logo or author tagline that appears on all your book covers. This helps build recognition.

Online Presence

Website: Your author website should reflect your brand. Use similar colours, fonts, and imagery as your book covers.

Social Media: Maintain consistent branding across all social media platforms. Your profile pictures, cover images, and posts should align with your overall aesthetic.

Email Signature: Include your author logo or a small version of your book cover in your email signature. This reinforces your brand with every email you send.

Marketing Materials

Bookmarks and Flyers: Use your cover design elements in

promotional materials. These can be handed out at events or included in giveaways.

Book Trailers: If you create a book trailer, ensure it matches the tone and style of your cover and other branding elements.

Press Kits: Include branded materials in your press kits, such as a one-sheet that matches your book cover design.

5. Cover Design

Design Tools

Canva: User-friendly and offers a range of templates specifically for book covers.

Adobe Spark: Provides templates and design tools suitable for creating professional-looking covers.

GIMP: A free alternative to Photoshop, offering robust design features for more experienced users.

Stock Photo Websites + AI

Shutterstock: Offers a vast library of high-quality images, though it can be expensive.

Unsplash: Free high-resolution photos that can be used commercially.

Depositphotos: Affordable stock photos with a wide selection suitable for book covers.

Generated Photos: AI-generated stock photos offering unique and customisable high-quality images suitable for various creative projects.

Typography Resources

Google Fonts: Free fonts that can be used in your cover design.

FontSquirrel: Offers a wide range of free fonts that are safe for commercial use.

DaFont: A popular site for free fonts, especially decorative and thematic fonts.

Colour Palette Tools

Colors: A tool for generating colour palettes and finding harmonious colour schemes.

Adobe Colour: Helps create and explore colour palettes, ideal for ensuring your cover colours work well together.

Paletton: Another colour scheme generator that can help you find the perfect combination of colours for your cover.

6. Final Steps and Testing Your Cover

Feedback and Revisions

Gather Opinions: Before finalising your cover, gather feedback from trusted friends, beta readers, or writing groups. They can provide valuable insights and catch any issues you might have missed.

Adjust: Based on the feedback, adjust to improve the design.

Testing Your Cover:

Thumbnail Test: View your cover as a thumbnail to ensure it's still readable and attractive at a smaller size. This is crucial for online stores where covers are often displayed as small images.

Print Test: If you're publishing a print version, order a proof copy to see how the cover looks in physical form. Check for colour accuracy, image quality, and text readability.

A/B Testing: If you have multiple cover options, consider using A/B testing to determine which one resonates more with your audience. You can do this through social media polls or email surveys.

Your book cover is, in my opinion, the most important part of your marketing strategy. A well-designed cover can attract readers, convey the essence of your story, and establish your author brand. By investing time and resources into creating a powerful cover, you set the stage for your book's success.

Well, that's it - the Novel Writing Challenge Success Kit!

My hope is that you've found something valuable on every page but I'm realistic and so I hope you've found at least ONE thing that will make the 30 days of November (and beyond) a success for you, and your book.

If you need any help, want to brainstorm, or do some co-writing, you can reach me on any of the links below.

norahdeay@writerspen.co

<https://www.facebook.com/norahdeay>

BONUSES

These bonuses will help you all the way along your Novel Writing Challenge journey. You'll find them all in both PDF AND ePUB format on

[https://www.writerspen.co/resources-for-Novel Writing Challenge- success-kit/](https://www.writerspen.co/resources-for-Novel-Writing-Challenge-success-kit/)

- **Writing Prompts to get started**
- **Time Management Tools for Writing Challenges**
- **50,000 Words Book Outline Template**
- **Motivational Quotes & Affirmations for Writers**
- **Editing Checklist**
- **Launch Template**

WRITING PROMPTS TO GET STARTED

Welcome to your ultimate source of inspiration! Writing can sometimes feel like a daunting task, especially when you're staring at a blank page with no idea where to start. That's where writing prompts come in. They serve as a catalyst, sparking your creativity and helping you overcome writer's block. Whether you're a seasoned author or just starting your writing journey, these prompts will ignite your imagination and set your stories in motion. In this collection, you'll find 50 prompts each for Fantasy, Historical, Romance, Thriller, and Children's Book genres. Dive in, let your creativity flow, and see where these prompts take you.

Fantasy Prompts

- A young sorcerer discovers they are the key to an ancient prophecy.
- A dragon egg hatches in a small village, causing chaos and wonder.
- A mysterious map leads a group of adventurers to a hidden realm.
- An enchanted forest reveals its secrets to a lost traveller.
- A knight must team up with a witch to save their kingdom.
- A cursed object wreaks havoc in a peaceful town.
- A group of rebels fights against a tyrannical magical ruler.
- An ancient artifact grants its wielder immense power, but at a cost.
- A magical academy hides a dark secret beneath its halls.
- A portal opens to a world where mythical creatures reign.

- A prince/princess is transformed into a commoner by a vengeful sorcerer.
- A magical beast seeks help from humans to save its kind.
- A forgotten hero is resurrected to battle an ancient evil.
- A mermaid must navigate the human world to save her underwater kingdom.
- A magical storm changes everything for a secluded village.
- A thief steals a magical gem that holds the key to another realm.
- A prophecy foretells the rise of a new ruler with extraordinary powers.
- A young girl discovers she can communicate with animals.
- A hidden library contains books that come to life.
- A ghostly figure guides a group of adventurers on a perilous journey.

- A powerful mage loses their memory and must rediscover their identity.
- A kingdom in the sky is threatened by an ancient curse.
- A time-traveling wizard gets stuck in the present day.
- A group of outcasts forms an unlikely alliance to defeat a dark force.
- A magical artifact chooses its next bearer in a small village.
- A sentient forest protects a secret treasure.
- A young warrior must prove their worth by completing an impossible quest.
- A curious human discovers a hidden society of magical beings.
- A legendary hero is reborn in a new form.
- A cursed princess must find true love to break her enchantment.
- A group of misfits discovers they have latent magical abilities.
- A magical island appears and disappears at random intervals.

- A dragon slayer must protect a dragon hatchling from hunters.
- A powerful sorcerer seeks redemption for past misdeeds.
- A mysterious tower holds the key to an ancient mystery.
- A magical plague threatens to wipe out an entire kingdom.
- A hidden city of elves is revealed to the world.
- A young boy discovers a magical sword with a mind of its own.
- A legendary beast awakens and goes on a rampage.
- A group of adventurers must retrieve a stolen magical artifact.
- A magical book transports its readers into its pages.
- A hero must journey to the underworld to save a loved one.
- A powerful spell goes awry, causing unexpected consequences
- A young girl discovers she is the last of a powerful

magical lineage.

- A war between two magical factions threatens to destroy the world.
- A mysterious mentor guides a young mage in the art of magic.
- A magical festival attracts visitors from all realms.
- A hero must protect a magical creature from a ruthless hunter.
- A group of friends discovers a portal to a parallel world.
- A legendary hero is called upon to save the world once more.

Historical Prompts

- A young woman disguises herself as a man to fight in a war.
- A family navigates life during the Great Depression.
- A spy is sent to infiltrate the enemy during World War II.
- A prince/princess flees their kingdom to escape an arranged marriage.
- A slave plots an escape to freedom on the Underground Railroad.
- A soldier returns home to find their world changed after the war.
- A young girl fights for women's rights in the early 20th century.
- A famous artist's muse tells the untold story of their relationship.
- A shipwreck survivor builds a new life on a deserted island.
- A doctor battles a deadly epidemic in the 19th century.
- A noblewoman becomes a pirate to escape her fate.

- A merchant discovers a map to a hidden treasure in the Americas.
- A young boy trains to become a knight during the Middle Ages.
- A pioneer family journeys westward in search of a better life.
- A journalist uncovers a scandal during the Gilded Age.
- A samurai seeks revenge for their master's death in feudal Japan.
- A scientist makes a groundbreaking discovery in the Victorian era.
- A famous explorer's lost journal reveals secrets of their final expedition.
- A resistance fighter works to overthrow an oppressive regime.
- A couple's love story unfolds against the backdrop of the Renaissance.

- A witch hunt threatens a small village in colonial America.
- A gladiator fights for freedom in ancient Rome.
- A composer struggles to create their masterpiece in 18th century Europe.
- A secret society influences the course of history.
- A young girl survives the London Blitz during World War II.
- A king's advisor plots to seize the throne.
- A soldier falls in love with a local during the Napoleonic Wars.
- A treasure hunter seeks a lost city of gold.
- A young boy apprentices with a master craftsman in the Middle Ages.
- A woman's journey on the Oregon Trail is fraught with challenges.
- A political scandal rocks a royal court.
- A young woman becomes a spy during the Cold War.
- A legendary outlaw's life story is revealed.
- A monk uncovers a hidden secret within the

monastery.

- A soldier's letters home reveal the horrors of war.
- A young girl's diary tells the story of her life during the Civil War.
- A famous inventor's assistant tells the untold story of their breakthroughs.
- A young man joins the gold rush in search of fortune.
- A love affair blossoms during the Roaring Twenties.
- A musician's rise to fame during the Jazz Age.
- A famous author's life is chronicled through their letters.
- A young woman fights for social justice during the Civil Rights Movement.
- A family's struggle to survive during the Irish Potato Famine.
- A young man's quest to find his father during the American Revolution.
- A famous painter's life story is revealed through their art.
- A woman's journey to find her place in the world during the Enlightenment.

- A soldier's life in the trenches during World War I.
- A young girl's life in a Victorian orphanage.
- A famous queen's rise to power and the challenges she faced.
- A young man's journey to find his fortune in the New World.

Romance Prompts

- Two strangers are stuck together in an airport during a snowstorm.
- A woman returns to her hometown and rekindles a romance with her high school sweetheart.
- A famous actor falls in love with an ordinary person.
- A couple's love story unfolds through a series of love letters.
- Two rival business owners fall for each other.
- A woman falls for her best friend's brother.
- A couple meets on a spontaneous trip and decides to stay connected.
- A single parent falls for their child's teacher.
- Two people meet at a wedding and hit it off.
- A woman inherits a house and falls in love with the handyman.
- A couple reconnects at a high school reunion.
- A woman falls for her new boss.
- Two people meet through an online dating app and decide to meet in person.

- A woman moves to a new city and falls for her neighbour.
- A couple meets at a charity event and bond over their shared passion.
- A woman falls for a famous musician.
- Two people meet while volunteering and fall for each other.
- A couple meets at a coffee shop and sparks fly.
- A woman falls for her personal trainer.
- Two people meet on a blind date set up by friends.
- A woman falls for a single dad.
- A couple meets at a book club and bond over their love of literature.
- A woman falls for her travel companion on a group trip.
- Two people meet at a cooking class and fall for each other.
- A couple reconnects after years apart and realize they still have feelings for each other.
- A woman falls for her best friend's ex.

- Two people meet at a music festival and fall for each other.
- A woman falls for her brother's best friend.
- A couple meets at a holiday party and hits it off.
- A woman falls for her coworker.
- Two people meet at a yoga class and fall for each other.
- A couple reconnects after a long separation and realize they still love each other.
- A woman falls for her best friend's cousin.

- Two people meet at a bar and sparks fly.
- A couple meets at a sporting event and bond over their shared love of the game.
- A woman falls for her best friend's fiancé.
- Two people meet at a dance class and fall for each other.
- A couple reconnects after a failed relationship and realize they still have feelings for each other.
- A woman falls for her best friend's boss.

- Two people meet at a museum and fall for each other.
- A couple meets at a work conference and hits it off.
- A woman falls for her best friend's brother-in-law.
- Two people meet at a park and fall for each other.
- A couple reconnects after a long-distance relationship and realize they still love each other.
- A woman falls for her best friend's ex-husband.
- Two people meet at a farmer's market and fall for each other.
- A couple meets at a movie theatre and bond over their love of films.
- A woman falls for her best friend's stepbrother.
- Two people meet at a concert and fall for each other.
- A couple reconnects after a break-up and realise they still love each other.

Thriller Prompts

- A detective investigates a series of seemingly unrelated murders.
- A woman discovers a hidden room in her new house with a dark secret.
- A political journalist uncovers a conspiracy that goes all the way to the top.
- A man wakes up with no memory of the past week and a dead body in his living room.
- A hacker is forced to go on the run after discovering a government secret.
- A former spy is called back into action to stop a terrorist plot.
- A detective must solve a murder case where all the suspects have alibis.
- A woman witnesses a crime and becomes the next target.
- A man is framed for a crime he didn't commit and works to clear his name.
- A detective investigates a string of disappearances in a small town.

- A woman receives anonymous letters threatening her life.
- A detective must stop a serial killer who leaves cryptic messages at the crime scenes.
- A man discovers his new neighbour is a wanted criminal.
- A woman is kidnapped and must find a way to escape.
- A detective must solve a murder case before the killer strikes again.
- A man discovers his wife has been leading a double life.
- A mysterious stranger stalks a woman.
- A detective investigates a cold case that leads to a shocking discovery.
- A doctor wakes up in a strange place with no memory of how they got there.
- A woman is targeted by a dangerous cult.
- A detective must solve a murder case where the victim has no known enemies.
- A man discovers his best friend has been lying to him for years.

- A woman is haunted by the memory of a crime she witnessed as a child.
- A detective must stop a criminal mastermind before it's too late.
- A man discovers his new job is a front for illegal activities.
- A woman works to clear her sister's name when she's accused of a crime she didn't commit
- A detective investigates a series of arson attacks in a small town.
- A man is blackmailed into committing a crime.
- A woman is stalked by her ex-boyfriend.
- A detective must solve a murder case where the only witness is a child.
- A man discovers his new boss is involved in illegal activities.
- A woman is targeted by a hitman.
- A detective investigates a series of disappearances in a remote area.
- A man is framed for a crime he didn't commit and must find the real culprit.

- A woman is stalked by a mysterious stranger who knows all her secrets.
- A detective must stop a serial killer who leaves no evidence behind.
- A man discovers his new neighbour is a wanted criminal and must decide whether to turn them in.
- A woman is kidnapped and must find a way to escape before it's too late.
- A detective investigates a string of disappearances in a small town and discovers a dark secret.
- A man receives anonymous letters threatening his life and must find out who is behind them.
- A woman witnesses a crime and becomes the next target of the criminal.
- A detective must solve a murder case where all the suspects have alibis and no clear motive.
- A man wakes up in a strange place with no memory of how he got there and must piece together what happened.
- A woman is targeted by a dangerous cult and must find a way to escape their clutches.

- A detective investigates a cold case that leads to a shocking discovery about their own past.
- A man discovers his new job is a front for illegal activities and must decide whether to stay or leave.
- A woman is framed for a crime she didn't commit and must find the real culprit to clear her name.
- A detective investigates a series of arson attacks in a small town and discovers a dark secret.
- A man is extorted into committing a crime and must find a way out of the situation.
- A woman is stalked by her ex-boyfriend and must find a way to stop him before it's too late.

Children's Book Prompts

- A young girl discovers a magical portal in her backyard.
- A group of animal friends go on a treasure hunt.
- A boy befriends a dragon and helps him find his family.
- A magical treehouse takes children on adventures around the world.
- A young girl learns she can talk to animals.
- A group of children discover a hidden fairy village.
- A boy finds a genie in a bottle and is granted three wishes.
- A young girl helps a lost unicorn find its way home.
- A group of friends build a rocket and travel to space.
- A boy discovers he can become invisible.
- A young girl helps a ghost solve a mystery.
- A group of animals start a band and go on tour.

- A boy discovers a secret door in his house that leads to another world.
- A young girl becomes a superhero and saves her town.
- A group of children find a magical map that leads to a hidden treasure.
- A boy befriends a giant and helps him find his way home.
- A young girl learns to fly with the help of a friendly bird.
- A group of friends start a detective agency and solve mysteries.
- A boy discovers he has magical powers and goes on an adventure.
- A young girl helps a mermaid find her way back to the ocean.
- A group of children discover a hidden garden full of magical creatures.
- A boy builds a time machine and travels to the past.
- A young girl helps a lost puppy find its home.
- A group of friends explore a haunted house and

make a surprising discovery.

- A boy finds a magical book that brings stories to life.
- A young girl helps a fairy find her lost wand.
- A group of animals work together to save their forest.
- A boy discovers he can talk to trees.
- A young girl helps a wizard find his lost spell book.
- A group of friends start a club and go on adventures.
- A boy befriends a talking cat and goes on an adventure.
- A young girl learns she can control the weather.
- A group of children discover a hidden cave full of treasures.
- A boy finds a magical ring that grants him special powers.
- A young girl helps a lost baby dragon find its way home.

- A group of friends build a treehouse and discover it's magical.
- A boy discovers he can travel through time with the help of an old clock.
- A young girl helps a butterfly find its way back to its family.
- A group of animals start a bakery and make magical treats.
- A boy finds a secret passage in his school that leads to another world.
- A young girl becomes friends with a talking snowman.
- A group of friends explore a mysterious island and make a surprising discovery.
- A boy discovers he can talk to fish.
- A young girl helps a fairy find her lost wings.
- A group of animals work together to build a new home.
- A boy finds a magical mirror that shows him different worlds.

- A young girl helps a baby elephant find its way back to its family.
- A group of friends discover a hidden treasure in their town.
- A boy befriends a friendly ghost and goes on an adventure.
- A young girl learns she can talk to stars and goes on a magical journey.

I hope these writing prompts have sparked your creativity and helped you embark on new storytelling adventures. Remember, the goal is not just to write but to explore, experiment, and enjoy the process of creating something uniquely yours. Whether you've crafted a short story, started a novel, or simply enjoyed the exercise of writing, each prompt has the potential to lead you to new and exciting places. Keep writing, keep dreaming, and most importantly, have fun with your stories. Happy writing!

50,000 Words Book Outline Template

Welcome to the 50,000-Word Novel Outline Template! Crafting a novel is an exciting and ambitious journey that begins with a solid outline.

This template is designed to guide you through the process of planning your novel, providing structure and clarity to your ideas. Whether you're a seasoned writer or embarking on your first novel, a well-organised outline can help you stay focused, maintain momentum, and ensure a coherent and engaging story.

By breaking down your novel into manageable sections, this template will help you navigate the complexities of plot, character development, and pacing, setting you on the path to completing your 50,000-word masterpiece.

Act 1: Introduction

1. Introduction/Setup (0-5,000 words)

Introduce the Protagonist and Their World:

- Describe the protagonist's daily life, environment, and key characteristics.
- Establish the protagonist's current situation and context.
- Establish the Setting and Context:
 - Provide vivid descriptions of the setting to immerse the reader.
 - Highlight any relevant societal norms or historical contexts.
- Hint at the Protagonist's Main Goal or Desire:
 - Subtly introduce what the protagonist wants to achieve.
 - Use dialogue, internal thoughts, or interactions to reveal this.
- Introduce Supporting Characters and Relationships:
 - Present key supporting characters and their relationships with the protagonist.
 - Include details that show their significance to the protagonist's journey.

- Present the Inciting Incident:
- Introduce the event that disrupts the protagonist's life.
- Ensure this incident sets the story in motion and creates a sense of urgency.

2. The Inciting Incident (5,000-10,000 words)

Explore the Immediate Aftermath:

- Show the protagonist's reaction to the inciting incident.
- Detail the initial steps they take to address the change.
- Deepen World-Building and Establish Stakes:
- Provide more context about the world and its rules.
- Highlight what's at stake for the protagonist and others.
- Introduce the Antagonist or Opposing Force:
- Present the main antagonist or an initial obstacle.
- Begin to build tension and conflict.
- End with the Protagonist **Making a Decision:**
- Show the protagonist deciding to pursue their goal.
- Ensure this decision propels the story forward.

Act 2: Rising Action

3. The First Plot Point (10,000-15,000 words)

The Protagonist Embarks on Their Journey:

- Describe the protagonist's first steps on their quest.
- Highlight the challenges and obstacles they face.
- Introduce Obstacles and Minor Conflicts:
- Present smaller conflicts that complicate the protagonist's journey.
- Use these to build tension and develop the plot.
- Develop Supporting Characters and Subplots:
- Expand on the roles of supporting characters.
- Introduce subplots that intersect with the main plot.
- Show Initial Successes and Failures:
- Balance the protagonist's early victories with setbacks.
- Use these to highlight their growth and development.
- Foreshadow Future Challenges:
- Include hints or clues about upcoming conflicts or revelations.

4. Building Tension (15,000-20,000 words)

Increase the Stakes and Complications:

- Intensify the protagonist's struggles.
- Introduce new challenges that raise the stakes.
- Reveal More About the Antagonist:
 - Develop the antagonist's motivations and plans.
 - Show their actions impacting the protagonist.
- Develop the Protagonist's Skills and Resources:
 - Highlight the protagonist's growth and resourcefulness.
 - Introduce a mentor or ally who provides crucial support.
- End with a Significant Victory or Setback:
 - Present a major turning point in the protagonist's journey.
 - Ensure this event propels the story towards the midpoint.

5. The Midpoint (20,000-25,000 words)

A Major Turning Point:

- Introduce an event that changes the protagonist's perspective.
- Ensure this shifts the story's direction and raises the stakes.
- New Insight or Information:
 - Provide the protagonist with new knowledge or skills.
 - Show how this changes their approach to achieving their goal.
- Heighten the Conflict:
 - Deepen character development and relationships.
 - Intensify the protagonist's commitment to their goal.
- Show a Shift in Relationships or Alliances:
 - Highlight changes in the protagonist's relationships.
 - Use these shifts to add depth to the story.

6. Escalating Conflict (25,000-30,000 words)

Facing Increasing Opposition:

- Present escalating challenges and conflicts.
- Show the protagonist's determination and resilience.

Introduce New Complications and Subplots:

- Add complexity to the plot with additional obstacles.
- Develop subplots that intertwine with the main story.

Develop the Antagonist's Plan and Actions:

- Reveal more about the antagonist's strategies and goals.
- Highlight the growing threat they pose to the protagonist.

Show the Protagonist's Growth:

- Emphasize the protagonist's transformation and development.
- Build towards a major confrontation or revelation.

7. The Second Plot Point (30,000-35,000 words)

A Major Event:

- Introduce a significant event that pushes the protagonist to their lowest point.
- Highlight the emotional and physical challenges they face.

Significant Loss or Setback:

- Present a major setback or loss for the protagonist.
- Use this to deepen the emotional stakes and tension.

Set the Stage for the Final Confrontation:

- Prepare the protagonist for the ultimate challenge.
- Ensure this event sets the story on a course for the climax.

Act 3: Climax and Resolution

8. Preparing for the Climax (35,000-40,000 words)

Gathering Allies and Resources:

- Show the protagonist rallying their allies and resources.
- Build momentum as the story approaches the climax.
- Introduce final obstacles and tests of character.

Show the Protagonist's Determination:

- Highlight the protagonist's resolve and resilience.
- Prepare for the climactic showdown.

9. The Climax (40,000-45,000 words)

Decisive Confrontation:

- Present the protagonist facing the antagonist in a final showdown.
- Resolve major conflicts and subplots.

Highlight Growth and Transformation:

- Show the culmination of the protagonist's character arc.
- Emphasise their growth and development.

Achieving the Goal or Facing Consequences:

- Conclude the main conflict with the protagonist's success or failure.
- Ensure this resolution aligns with the story's themes and character arcs.

10. The Resolution (45,000-50,000 words)

Aftermath of the Climax:

- Show the consequences and aftermath of the climax.
- Establish the protagonist's new normal.

Tie Up Loose Ends:

- Resolve remaining subplots and conflicts.
- Provide a sense of closure for the reader.

Reflect on the Journey:

- Highlight the protagonist's growth and transformation.
- Reflect on the journey and its impact on the characters.

Final Image or Line:

- End with a powerful image or line that resonates with the story's themes.
- Leave the reader with a lasting impression.

Tips for Using the Outline

- **Flexibility:** Use this outline as a guide but allow for flexibility as your story evolves.
- **Character Development:** Ensure each chapter contributes to character development and plot progression.
- **Pacing:** Maintain a balance between action, dialogue, and description to keep the narrative engaging.
- **Conflict:** Continuously introduce and escalate conflicts to maintain tension and interest. Weave in your story's themes throughout the outline to create a cohesive and meaningful narrative.

This outline template provides a structured roadmap to help you write a compelling 50,000-word novel. Adjust and expand it according to your story's unique needs and enjoy the journey of crafting your novel!

Time Management Tools for Novel Writing Challenges

Participating in a 50,000-word Writing Challenge is an exhilarating challenge for writers of all levels. Committing to write 50,000 words in just 30 days requires not only creativity and dedication but also effective time management. As the month progresses, the initial excitement inevitably wanes, and the pressure to meet daily word counts can become overwhelming. This is where time management tools become invaluable. From daily word count trackers to productivity planners and goal-setting worksheets, these tools provide a structured approach to managing your writing schedule. They help you set realistic goals, monitor your progress, and stay focused, ensuring you maintain a balanced and productive writing routine.

By incorporating these tools into your writing practice, you can navigate the challenges of writing 50,000 words with confidence, turning a daunting task into a manageable and enjoyable journey. This guide explores some of the most effective time management tools available, offering insights on how to use them to enhance your writing process. Whether you're a seasoned novelist or a first-time participant, these resources will support you in achieving your writing goals and making the most of your Writing Challenge experience.

Daily Word Count Trackers

Scrivener: A comprehensive writing software that includes word count targets and tracking.

4thewords: A game-based writing tool that motivates you to reach daily word count goals.

WordCounter.net: A simple online tool to track word counts and set daily goals.

Productivity Planners

Trello: A project management tool that can be customized with boards, lists, and cards to plan your writing tasks.

Notion: An all-in-one workspace that combines notes, tasks, databases, and calendars.

Todoist: A task manager that helps you organize and prioritize your writing schedule.

Goal-Setting Worksheets

Evernote: A note-taking app where you can create detailed goal setting worksheets and track progress.

Microsoft OneNote: Another robust note-taking app with customisable templates for goal setting.

Google Docs: Create and share goal-setting worksheets using customisable templates available online.

Time Management Apps

Pomodoro Timer: Tools like Focus Booster and Pomodone help break your writing into manageable chunks with the Pomodoro Technique.

RescueTime: Tracks the time you spend on different apps and websites, helping you identify distractions.

Forest: A gamified focus app that encourages you to stay off your phone and focus on writing.

Scheduling Tools

Google Calendar: Schedule your writing sessions and set reminders.

Microsoft Outlook Calendar: Plan your writing schedule with integrated email and task management.

Time Blocking Tools

Apps like **TimeBloc** and **[Clockify](#)** help you allocate specific times for writing and other tasks.

Writing Software with Integrated Planning

Ulysses: A writing app for MAC that combines document management, writing goals, and productivity tracking.

Novlr: Online writing software designed for novelists, featuring goal- setting and tracking.

Habit Tracking Apps

Habitica: Turn your writing goals into a role-playing game to stay motivated.

Streaks: Track daily writing habits and build a streak of consistent writing days.

HabitBull: Monitor your writing habits and set reminders to stay on track.

Using these tools can significantly enhance your time management and productivity, ensuring that you stay on target with your writing goals.

Conclusion

In the high-stakes environment of these Writing Challenges where the goal is to write 50,000 words in a short period, effective time management is vital. Utilising the right tools can make the difference between success and burnout. Daily word count trackers, productivity planners, and goal-setting worksheets offer the structure and support needed to stay on track and maintain momentum. These tools not only help in planning and tracking your writing schedule but also provide the motivation to push through challenging days.

By setting realistic goals and consistently monitoring progress, you can ensure that your writing journey remains balanced and productive. As you integrate these time management resources into your writing practice, you'll find yourself better equipped to handle the demands of the challenge, ultimately leading to a more fulfilling and successful 50k-word Writing Challenge experience.

Embrace these tools, stay committed to your writing goals, and transform the daunting task of writing a novel in a month into a rewarding and achievable endeavour.

Motivational Quotes & Affirmations for Writers

Motivational Quotes

1. "The first draft is just you telling yourself the story." – Terry Pratchett
2. "You can always edit a bad page. You can't edit a blank page." – Jodi Picoult
3. "Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on." – Louis L'Amour
4. "The scariest moment is always just before you start." – Stephen King
5. "The secret of getting ahead is getting started." – Mark Twain
6. "Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass." – Anton Chekhov
7. "You fail only if you stop writing." – Ray Bradbury
8. "Write drunk, edit sober." – Ernest Hemingway
9. "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." – Maya Angelou
10. "The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt." – Sylvia Plath

11. "A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit."
– Richard Bach
12. "Write what should not be forgotten." – Isabel Allende
13. "You don't write because you want to say something,
you write because you have something to say." – F.
Scott Fitzgerald
14. "I write to discover what I know." – Flannery O'Connor
15. "The role of a writer is not to say what we all can say,
but what we are unable to say." – Anaïs Nin
16. "Writing is its own reward." – Henry Miller
17. "If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't
been written yet, then you must write it." – Toni
Morrison
18. "Don't bend; don't water it down; don't try to make it
logical; don't edit your own soul according to the
fashion. Rather, follow your most intense obsessions
mercilessly." – Franz Kafka
19. "The only way to do great work is to love what you
do." – Steve Jobs
20. "Writing is the painting of the voice." – Voltaire
21. "Write hard and clear about what hurts." – Ernest
Hemingway

22. "I can shake off everything as I write, my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn." – Anne Frank
23. "A word after a word after a word is power." – Margaret Atwood
24. "The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe." – Gustave Flaubert
25. "Write with the door closed, rewrite with the door open." – Stephen King
26. "To survive, you must tell stories." – Umberto Eco
27. "The difference between the almost right word and the right word is really a large matter – it's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning." – Mark Twain
28. "Stories are light. Light is precious in a world so dark." – Kate DiCamillo
29. "Writing is the only thing that, when I do it, I don't feel I should be doing something else." – Gloria Steinem
30. "I write to give myself strength. I write to be the characters that I am not. I write to explore all the things I'm afraid of." – Joss Whedon
31. "You can make anything by writing." – C.S. Lewis
32. "The task of a writer consists of being able to make

something out of an idea." – Thomas Mann

33. "Writing is the best way to talk without being interrupted." – Jules Renard
34. "I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in." – Robert Louis Stevenson
35. "Don't be a writer; be writing." – William Faulkner
36. "The writer is an explorer. Every step is an advance into a new land." – Ralph Waldo Emerson
37. "There is no real ending. It's just the place where you stop the story." – Frank Herbert
38. "Writers live twice." – Natalie Goldberg
39. "Writing is like driving at night in the fog. You can only see as far as your headlights, but you can make the whole trip that way." – E.L. Doctorow
40. "Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart." – William Wordsworth
41. "Writing is a socially acceptable form of schizophrenia." – E.L. Doctorow

42. "A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people." – Thomas Mann
43. "You have to write the book that wants to be written. And if the book will be too difficult for grown-ups, then you write it for children." – Madeleine L'Engle
44. "The writer must believe that what he is doing is the most important thing in the world. And he must hold on to this illusion even when he knows it is not true." – John Steinbeck
45. "Writing is the only thing that, when I do it, I don't feel I should be doing something else." – Gloria Steinem
46. "I love deadlines. I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by." – Douglas Adams
47. "Writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those who do not write, compose, or paint can manage to escape the madness, melancholia, the panic and fear which is inherent in a human situation." – Graham Greene
48. "Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go." – E.L. Doctorow
49. "Good writing is supposed to evoke sensation in the reader—not the fact that it is raining, but the feeling of being rained upon." – E.L. Doctorow

50. "There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." – Maya Angelou

Affirmations

1. I am a writer.
2. My words have power and purpose.
3. I create stories that resonate with readers.
4. Every day, I grow more confident in my writing.
5. My creativity continues to flow effortlessly.
6. I grow more disciplined and dedicated to my writing.
7. I overcome writer's block with ease.
8. I am proud of my writing journey.
9. My ideas are valuable and worth sharing.
10. I'm beginning to write with passion and commitment.
11. I am making progress every day.
12. I embrace the writing process, imperfections and all.
13. My writing is a gift to the world.
14. I am becoming focused and productive.
15. I have the discipline to meet my writing goals.
16. My stories inspire and entertain.
17. I am dedicated to my craft.
18. I enjoy the process of writing and rewriting.
19. I write fearlessly and boldly.
20. My writing voice is unique and important.
21. I believe in my ability to complete this novel.

22. I am a creative force.
23. I embrace challenges as opportunities to grow.
24. I am beginning to write with clarity and purpose.
25. I am persistent and resilient in my writing efforts.
26. My words have the power to change lives.
27. I am committed to writing every day.
28. I trust the process and let my story unfold.
29. I can achieve my writing goals.
30. I find joy in the act of writing.
31. I am in control of my writing journey.
32. I write with passion and enthusiasm.
33. My creativity knows no bounds.
34. I am proud of the progress I make each day.
35. I am beginning to write with confidence and clarity.
36. I am open to new ideas and inspiration.
37. My writing reflects my unique perspective.
38. I am disciplined and determined to succeed.
39. I embrace the challenge of writing 50,000 words with enthusiasm.
40. I believe I can write 50,000 words in 30 days.
41. I celebrate my achievements, no matter how small.
42. I am constantly improving as a writer.

43. Even though my words don't always flow naturally and effortlessly, I'm beginning to make improvements.
44. I am dedicated to finishing my novel.
45. I am proud of the work I produce.
46. I am focused and driven to reach my writing goals.
47. Writing is a priority in my life.
48. I write with purpose and passion.
49. I am confident in my storytelling abilities.
50. I am a successful Writing Challenge participant.

These quotes and affirmations should help keep you motivated and inspired throughout your Writing Challenge journey!

EDITING CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to ensure thorough preparation of your manuscript for publication, covering both stylistic and grammatical aspects that are crucial to crafting a polished and readable book.

Plot: Ensure all events are logically sequenced and clearly explained. Check for continuity errors and ensure subplot resolutions are clear.

Settings: Confirm that the descriptions of places and times are consistent throughout the book. Any changes in setting should be clear and contribute to the story's development.

Character Traits: Make sure characters act and speak in ways that are true to their established traits unless a change is part of their development.

Natural Flow: Read dialogues aloud to check if they sound realistic and appropriate for the context. Adjust wording to ensure smooth conversation flow between characters.

Character Voice Consistency: Double-check that each character's dialogue reflects their unique personality, background, and current situation. Ensure that changes in a character's tone or style are justified by the story's events.

Grammar and Punctuation Basics

Grammar: Review grammar rules related to verb tenses, noun-verb agreement, and sentence structure. Utilise grammar checking tools to identify and correct errors.

Punctuation: Pay close attention to the use of commas, semi-colons, colons, and other punctuation marks. Correct misuses that could lead to ambiguity or misreading.

Spell-Check and Commonly Confused Words

Spell-Check: Use software tools to perform a comprehensive spell-check. Review each correction to avoid replacing words with incorrect alternatives.

Commonly Confused Words: Examine the manuscript for there/their/they're, your/you're, its/it's, and similar pairs. Ensure usage is correct in each context.

Readability Check for Dense Paragraphs and Overly Complex Sentence Structures

Paragraph Density: Identify and break up paragraphs that are too dense, ensuring that each paragraph contains a single, clear idea.

Sentence Complexity: Simplify overly complex sentences. Aim to clarify meaning without sacrificing the voice or style that defines the narrative.

LAUNCH TASKS CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to help authors systematically plan and implement effective marketing strategies for their book launch, as well as maintain momentum in post-launch promotional activities. It covers various phases of the promotion, ensuring thorough engagement and maximum reach.

Pre-launch Tasks

Building an Email List: Start by offering a free chapter or exclusive content in exchange for email sign-ups. Use your website, blog, and social media platforms to promote this offer.

Setting Up a Book Landing Page: Create a dedicated landing page on your website with information about your book, author bio, testimonials, and pre-order options. Ensure the landing page includes a sign-up form for your mailing list and pre-order links.

ISBN Acquisition

Scheduling a Book Launch Event or Online Party: Plan a virtual launch event using platforms like Zoom or Facebook Live. Consider partnering with a bookstore or an influencer in your genre. Organise giveaways, Q&A sessions, and read excerpts during the event to engage attendees.

Wider Distribution: Purchase an ISBN through an agency like Nielsen or Bowker to use across all platforms, facilitating broader distribution and sales tracking.

PROMOTIONAL TASKS CHECKLIST

Launch Tasks:

Coordinating Social Media Announcements: Create a schedule for posting on all your social media platforms. Utilise countdown posts, behind-the-scenes content, and launch day announcements. Use targeted ads to reach a broader audience based on interests related to your book's genre.

Sending Out Press Releases: Prepare a press release highlighting the unique aspects of your book and its availability. Distribute this to local media outlets, relevant online platforms, and industry influencers.

Initiating Contact with Bloggers and Book Reviewers: Compile a list of bloggers and reviewers who cover your genre. Send personalised review requests with a copy of your book or access to a digital version. Offer exclusive interviews or guest blog posts as part of the promotion.

Post-launch Tasks:

Engaging with Readers: Regularly update your social media and author website with interactive content, such as fan polls, insights into your writing process, or teasers for upcoming projects. Respond to comments and messages to build a loyal reader base.

Distribution Options: Choose your preferred distribution channels. Decide whether your book will be available internationally and select relevant markets.

Uploading Manuscript and Cover Art

Manuscript Upload: Upload the final version of your manuscript according to the specific requirements of each platform.

Cover Art: Upload your cover art, adhering to the dimension and file type specifications of each retailer. Ensure that the cover is visually appealing and fits the genre.

HOW TO USE THE TEMPLATES

By sticking to these checklists, authors can enhance the clarity, engagement, and professionalism of their manuscript before it goes to a professional editor or is considered for publication. This structured approach aims to refine the manuscript systematically, ensuring that the final product resonates well with its intended audience.

Systematic Approach: Tackle one checklist item at a time for focused editing.

Peer Review: Consider having a trusted peer review of your manuscript with a checklist in mind to provide a fresh perspective.

Revision Cycles: Implement multiple rounds of edits focusing on different aspects with each cycle to manage the workload effectively.

And That's A Wrap!

I sincerely hope you've found this success kit helpful. I'm available at norahdeay@writerspen.co if you have any questions.