

Before we meet:

- **Make yourself unavailable.**
 - Set an autoresponder on your email. [Gmail](#) and [Outlook](#) make this pretty easy.
 - Cancel as many meetings as you can. If you can only attend part of the retreat, that's no problem – but it's best to give yourself uninterrupted days if possible.
 - Mute messenger alerts and other distractions.
- **Brainstorm goals for the retreat.** These don't have to be particularly granular – it's fine to just pick a project you want to focus on. Ideally, pick *just one* project where you can make significant strides. (If you have a zombie project that you've been struggling with, now's a good time to move that forward!)
- **Make a plan in advance for food.** Consider batch cooking, inexpensive prepared foods, etc. The goal is to reduce your cognitive load during the retreat so that you can focus on writing.
- **Join the Discord.** Yes, it's yet another chat platform – quite a bit like Slack. Don't forget to [set your nickname](#) so that we know who you are! Here's the invite link: <https://discord.gg/ZY6MERJnn6>
- **Set alarms for the check-in meetings:** Times are listed on page 2; subject to change. There will also be alerts set in the Discord server itself.
- **Skim this document.** Feel free to get a head start on the exercises on page 3.

Why a writing retreat?

Writing retreats are good for you! [Kornhaber et al. \(2015\)](#) identified five key elements of writing retreats conducive to increasing publication output: protected time and space; community of practice; development of academic writing competence; intra-personal benefits and organizational investment. (Ditto for [Woolf 1928](#).)

Who's coming to this thing?

This retreat is supported by the SSI Early Career group, but is open to everyone who needs to get some academic writing done. If you want to invite someone, contact Kristina (kvcollins@spacescience.org).

Will there be another one?

If we like this one, sure. Michelle and Shoshe will include a mention of this in their [AGU talk](#), so please do let us know what works and what doesn't. We'll use your feedback to improve future versions and, if it's successful, to request material support for writing retreats in the future.

Why Discord? Don't we have enough platforms?

Yes, we do. But we didn't want to use Teams (limited to SSI), Slack (limited to SSI), Zoom (no asynchronous participation) or email (no synchronous participation), and we ought to talk to one another somehow.

What each day looks like:

We'll have two video check-ins each day: one at 1 pm ET/ 10 am PT (except Wed., to accommodate SSI All-Hands) and one at 5 pm ET/ 2 pm PT. Each check-in will last about 20 minutes. The first will be a full group meeting; the second will be a breakout session (B) in small groups.

Each day will also have a balance challenge: a suggestion for a pleasant activity to balance out your work.

Day 1: Tuesday, 3 December 2024

Check-in #1 (1 pm ET/ 10 am PT): Introduce yourself and share your goals for the week.

Check-in #2 (5 pm ET/ 2 pm PT): (B) Share your academic mission statement. Describe your project to a partner and explain how it fits with your work.

Challenge: Get some exercise. Maybe a walk? Move around for at least half an hour.

Day 2: Wednesday, 4 December 2024

Check-in #1 (12 pm ET/ 9 am PT): General check-in – how's your work going?

Check-in #2 (5 pm ET/ 2 pm PT): (B) Make and share a Kanban of your writing pipeline.

Challenge: Get a change of scenery: plan to write today/tomorrow in a new place. Maybe a library, a conference room in another department, or just a spot you don't normally sit.

Day 3: Thursday, 5 December 2024

Check-in #1 (12pm ET/ 9 am PT): General check-in: Curating your publication pipeline

Check-in #2 (5pm ET/ 2 pm PT): (B) Make and share your project matrix.

Challenge: Consume a work of fiction. Consider a short story¹, a comic book², or a video game³.

Day 3: Friday, 5 December 2024

Check-in #1 (12 pm ET/ 9 am PT): General check-in: Feedback on the retreat

Check-in #2 (5 pm ET/ 2 pm PT): (B) Collaboration building – find someone to work with.

Challenge: Don't work this weekend. (You already weren't going to, right? Great, it'll be easy.)

¹ Suggested short story: "[The Aleph](#)," by Jorge Luis Borges.

² Suggested comic book: Consider a Free Comic Book Day entry, such as [Why Atomic Robo Hates Dr. Dinosaur](#). Or go to the library and see what they have.

³ Suggested video games: For something bite-size, consider [Dr. Langestov, the Tiger, and the Terribly Cursed Emerald](#). For something more narratively substantial, try [NORCO](#).

Exercises

Academic Mission Statement:

I use _____ to study _____ in order to _____.
[methodologies/theoretical frames] [population] [phenomenon] [context] [change you want to see in the world].

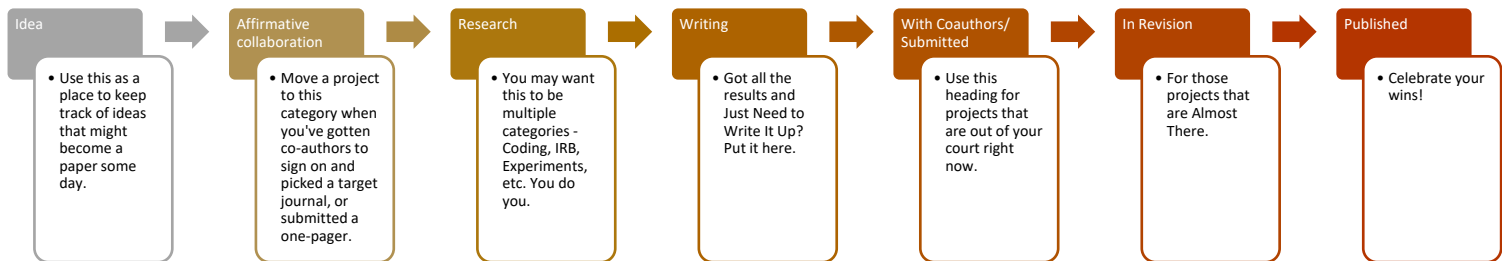
How do you want your writing practice to feel? Pick 3 words.

Ask yourself, “Why do you want to write more?” Keep asking “why” statements until you hit bottom.

Pipeline Kanban:

Build a [Kanban board](#) of your publishing pipeline. It’s best to have a physical representation in your office, on a bulletin board, or in a planner. (Post-it notes or [dry erase magnets](#) are great for this!) Write each of your projects on a Post-It note and put it in the relevant category.

Don’t be afraid to get creative with the categories. Here’s a suggested pipeline format:



Project Matrix:

The [Eisenhower Matrix](#) for soft money: Put your potential grants on a scatter plot of Funding vs. Interest.

