



The Write Recipe Book: A Guide's Cookbook for Concocting Writing Quests

Dedication

To the valiant scribes, the architects of imagination, and the weavers of words—

This guidebook, *The Write Recipe Book*, stands as a testament to your unwavering commitment and your boundless creativity as a Quest Guide. You are the unsung heroes behind the facilitation of the Quests, the silent guardians of the narrative realm. Your dedication to the craft inspires novices to pen their first words and encourages the seasoned to redefine their art.

May this guide serve as a beacon, guiding aspiring Writing Quest Guides through the exhilarating odyssey of writing challenges. Your contributions have shaped this guide and fortified the foundation of a community united by the love of storytelling.

We honor your passion, celebrate your achievements, and cherish your invaluable gift to the world of Writing Quests.

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Welcome to the Write Recipe!

Feeling overwhelmed? No worries, we're here to light the way! This cookbook is your map to a land of imagination and camaraderie. It's packed with clever tips, playful tricks, and a sprinkle of inspiration to ensure your Quest is as smooth as a well-told tale and engaging as the plot twist you never saw coming. Feel free to use these ideas as you see fit or not at all—it's your Writing Quest, after all! We do encourage you to give them a go, though.

At the heart of our Writing Quests, we champion the joy of creation and community spirit. We encourage guides, organizers, and their helpers to infuse each quest with elements of fun and engagement, crafting an experience where writers hone their craft and forge lasting connections with fellow scribes.

Let's turn the page to an unforgettable chapter where every writer is the hero of their own story!

Create your own Writing Quest

Writing Quests provides a [framework](#) for customizing your Writing Quest.

Please consider Writing Quest to be a challenge, not a competition. Everyone is eligible to win.

Let's discuss what may help you establish your rewarding and enjoyable Writing Quest within the provided framework by blending planning, motivation, inclusivity, and SMART goals.

- Make sure the Quest accessible and flexible
- Make sure the Quest rules, goals, and rewards are communicated clearly
- Make plans to create a series of quests rather than one large quest
- Encourage each participant to embark on a journey of growth and discovery
- Encourage community growth by sharing progress
- Encourage peer support through in person meetings, forums, and/or social media
- Encourage participants by coming up with ways to help them with motivation
- Celebrate by recognizing the effort of all participants for small achievements and large
- Be mindful of how a challenge may discourage participation or continued participation
- Be mindful of what appeals to the larger group of participants
- Allow flexibility towards levels of participation
- Be mindful that some participants may be chatty at in-person events, so plan how to keep them engaged. While others may be introverted and need engagement as well
- Be mindful to add some diverse challenges (eg: a variety of writing prompts or games) to cater to different styles and interests
- Keep the Quest goal simple
- Establish a reasonable time limit

SMART Goals for Writing Quests

- SPECIFIC- Guide participants to make specific long-term and short-term goals
- MEASURABLE- Guide participants to their preferred measurement (word count, hours or days worked, or percentage completed)
- ACHIEVABLE- Guide participants to make goals that are reasonable so they can achieve them each day
- RELEVANT- Guide participants to stay on track with this Quest's topic
- TIMELY- The Quest itself lends to being timely for the participants

Tools

Writing Quests provides the sample rules to create a customized quest for your writing community, virtual badges, a virtual winner's certificate, and a versatile tracker.

Badges and Certificate

With each Quest, participants will create a personal or group goal. When you hit certain milestones of percentage complete you will receive a badge in the tracker. The badges are fun incentives to help motivate you while you are working on your project as you update your status each day. Currently there is a basic amount of milestones to reach (5% is the first one). There are ideas for more milestones for future Quests. When you reach your goal at 100% completion, you will be able to download the certificate of completion.

Writing Quest Tracker

See tracker.writingquests.org for information about available progress trackers, where to access them, and how to use them.

Data Recovery

Guides are encouraged to remind participants to save their work during the Quest. Reminders of this nature are always welcome, and especially important for the younger generations who might not realize this is needed. Things can happen and happen at the least convenient times, and we are aiming to never hear the horrible news a Quest project is lost.

Ways to encourage participants to save their Quest projects can vary. Despite the fact that there are products that autosave like Google Docs, having your project saved in multiple locations in some capacity is one option. Making sure that your products are uploaded to a cloud so it can be reached on any device is another good idea. You can always email the projects to yourself as well. A tried and trusted way to save a digital project could also be to print it out. If you are a pen and paper type of person, take pictures of your work. Having multiple copies of your work in progress will save you the heartache of losing all your hard work.

Here is an example reminder that you may adapt for your Writing Quest:

Hear ye, hear ye, noble questers of the written word! In the grand adventure of crafting tales and spinning yarns, heed this sage counsel: **Save Thy Documents!**

In the realm of Writing Quests, where the pen is mightier than the sword, and the keystrokes are the footprints of your journey, saving is akin to a knight's shield against the dragons of digital doom.

Forsooth, the perils of lost progress are many—a rogue power outage, a treacherous software crash, or the simple slip of a finger can undo hours of toil. Thus, saving your document is not merely a click of a button; it is the sacred ritual of preservation, ensuring that each word you weave is kept safe within the fortress of your files.

Let it be known that the wise and the valiant do not merely save at the end of their questing day. Nay, they save often, they save well, and they save with the fervor of a bard protecting their most cherished lute.

So, take up this habit as your trusty steed and let it carry you forth across the vast landscapes of your imagination. With each save, you fortify your work against the unforeseen and honor the creative spirit that drives you forward.

Save, and save often, for it is the guardian of your creative realm! 

Preparation Tasks

Before your Quest begins, you may want to consider doing prep work with your participants. This will look different for every Quest Guide. Keep in mind, you will have planners who will benefit greatly from this type of event, and you will have people who do not plan but may enjoy the hype before the Quest. These events can also serve as a community building activity as well.

Note: Writing Quest plans to offer Prep Quests in the future. Keep up-to-date with our social media platforms for updates on when that feature will become available.

Topics Worthy of Prep

For those who want to get ready in advance of your Writing Quest, here is a section of ideas for Guides to help them plan their work. Feel free to choose which topics to include in your in-person meet-ups, emails, posts, question of the day, or even a prep calendar. Even consider having worksheets available for the topics listed that are relevant for your participants.

General

- Brainstorm
- Choose the genre
- Choose a theme
- Choose a narrative voice
- Research
- Worldbuilding
- Market research

Plot

- Premise
- Outline and outline revision
- Plot background story
- Beginning - where does the story start?
- Climax - where is the story going?
- Rising action - how does the story reach the climax?
- Complications and obstacles

Character

- Protagonist profile
- Protagonist background story
- Interview the protagonist following the events of the story
 - ★ How did you become involved?
 - ★ What happened to you?
 - ★ How has your life changed?
 - ★ Were you scared (or other strong emotion)?
 - ★ How did you overcome that?
 - ★ When were you at your lowest?
- Antagonist profile
- Antagonist background story
- Minor character profiles
- Other characters who may be allies and enemies of the protagonist

Setting

- Cultural setting
- Setting list
 - ★ Descriptions
 - ★ Images
 - ★ Google Maps
 - ★ Real estate listings
 - ★ Travel sites

Self-care

- Clean your desk and writing space before the Writing Quest officially begins
- Schedule regular appointments such as oil changes, vet check-ups, etc.
- Stock up on your go-to beverages and snacks before the Writing Quest begins
- Meal prep, or for those who have the means, set up a meal delivery service for the duration of the Writing Quest

Workshops

Feeling bold and want to build enthusiasm for your Writing Quest? Why not schedule an in-person or online get-together with your participants to discuss the Quest, answer questions, and help anyone who feels overwhelmed before the Quest even begins?

Panic Jar

Write up plot ideas and place them separately in a cup. If attendees take one, they must write it into their story, even if they remove it later.



Storywall Party

The idea behind this party is to have a brainstorming session with your fellow Writing Quest participants.

If this were to be held in person, some materials, such as a whiteboard, index cards, or post-it notes, would be needed. Perhaps a meeting chat would work online, but a whiteboard simulator or presentation software would be more visual for attendees.



Ground Rules

- ★ Divide into groups; four is the suggested group size, but may be impractical depending on the number of overall attendees.
- ★ Introduce yourself, possibly by pen name, and let the others know what your inspiration was for this Writing Quest project.
- ★ Decide who will go first with their story wall
- ★ Select a scribe/moderator for the first session
- ★ The author will have five minutes to present their characters and story. Please highlight where there is weakness to solicit suggestions.
- ★ The team brainstorms for fifteen minutes on the author's self-described weak areas.
- ★ Repeat steps 5 and 6 for the other authors, rotating who is scribe/moderator for each story wall.

Guidelines

- ★ Stay focused on the author's objective(s).
- ★ Only one person should speak at a time. Please don't hog the microphone.
- ★ Be respectful of everyone's input. Not every idea will fit with the author's vision, but that doesn't make it a bad suggestion. When it comes to ideas, please remember that there are currently six Sharknado movies.
- ★ Keep an open mind.
- ★ Respect everyone's time and avoid going over.
- ★ Have fun.

Preparation

To prepare for a Storywall party, writers should have a high-level idea of what they intend to write before the party. Come prepared with a brief summary and some information about the characters the reader will encounter. It's okay to bring notes. Give the other party attendees hints at what you need help with. Some suggestions are:

- ★ Here is my protagonist and this is their goal.
- ★ What keeps them from reaching that goal.
- ★ Where and when this story takes place.
- ★ What parts I'm struggling with.
- ★ How do I end this story?
- ★ I've built this world, but what is the story?
- ★ How do I get these folk from the beginning to the story's climax?
- ★ Yes, but I don't feel motivated to write a twenty-chapter road trip. Do you have other suggestions?
- ★ Can you help me with a logline? Example logline for *The Godfather*: The aging patriarch of an organized crime dynasty transfers control of his clandestine empire to his reluctant son.

Online Spaces

Writing Quests welcomes all writing communities, and your community may already have established an online presence. If you haven't, please consider the benefits of establishing one to foster a vibrant and dynamic environment for creativity, collaboration, and growth.

Networking and Community Building: Writers can connect with peers, mentors, and industry professionals, expanding their network and finding support. Online forums and social media platforms provide spaces where writers can share knowledge, seek feedback, and find mentorship opportunities.
Note: Online forums should be monitored by Quest Guides to maintain respect.

Inspiration and Idea Development: Digital writing allows ideas to develop organically, with writers receiving feedback more frequently. This can help overcome writer's block and inspire new thoughts, leading to more fluid and well-developed insights.

Dynamic and Organic Writing: Unlike traditional writing, which remains static once published, digital writing is dynamic. Writers can edit their work at any stage, and the writing evolves with real-time feedback and collaboration.

Multimodal Integration: Online spaces enable the seamless integration of multiple forms of media into writing, enriching the content and allowing for new meanings and interpretations to emerge.

Accessibility and Flexibility: Online groups are available 24/7, accommodating writers' different schedules and time zones. This constant accessibility means writers can engage with the community and their work whenever inspiration strikes.

Skill Enhancement: The collaborative nature of online writing communities allows writers to improve their craft by learning from others' feedback and experiences.

Online spaces transform the solitary act of writing into a shared journey, enhancing the writing experience through community engagement, continuous development, and a wealth of resources at a writer's fingertips.

Even if we've sold you the usefulness of having an online space for your writing community, there are so many options. Here are two common ones:

Facebook

Your community members may be comfortable on Facebook as it is used widely. On Facebook, a group that is either publicly findable or only open to those invited may be established. *Note: Not all participants choose this platform, so make sure you have a means of reaching all members.*

[Facebook](#) offers a variety of features that can be incredibly useful for a writing community, enhancing the experience of sharing, learning, and growing together. Here are some key features that may enhance a sense of community and collaboration among your members:

Groups: Facebook Groups are central to building a community. They provide a private space where writers can share their work, ask for feedback, and discuss writing-related topics.

Events: The Events feature allows the community to organize virtual write-ins, workshops, or live Q&A sessions with authors and industry professionals.

Files: Members can upload and share documents, such as writing resources, templates, or guidelines for group activities.

Polls: Polls can be used to select writing prompts, vote for the best pieces, or organize group activities.

Live Video: Writers can broadcast live readings, writing sessions, or instructional content to engage with the community in real time.

Member Summary: This feature shows admins a consolidated summary of each member's activity, which can be useful for recognizing active members or managing group dynamics.

Lists: Custom friend lists can help writers organize their contacts and control who sees their updates, which is great for sharing content with specific sub-groups within the larger community.

Discord

[Discord](#) is a platform for creating and managing online communities, offering a range of features catering to your writing community's collaborative and interactive nature. It primarily functions as an instant messaging social platform.

Dedicated Channels: Discord allows you to create various text and voice channels for different topics, genres, or activities, keeping discussions organized and focused.

Workshopping Channels: These channels can be used to discuss plots, characters, and world-building and to solicit feedback on specific paragraphs, chapters, or entire stories.

Showcase Room: A special channel where writers can post the work they're proud of, celebrating their achievements and sharing their finished pieces with the community.

Resource Archive: Discord servers can compile and share a growing list of resources, tips, and writing aids contributed by users, making it a valuable knowledge base.

Events and Challenges: The platform supports monthly events, writing sessions, and challenges, which are great for keeping writers engaged and motivated.

Community Support: Discord's server structure fosters a close-knit community of writers ready to help and support each other in their creative endeavors.

Inclusivity: With support for various languages and a global reach, Discord can accommodate writers from all over the world, regardless of their background¹.

Real-Time Interaction: Voice channels allow for live discussions, readings, and collaborative sessions, providing an immediate and personal way to connect with fellow writers.

Discord bots: Discord bots are automated programs that can perform a variety of functions to enhance the experience within a Discord server. They are particularly useful for writing communities.

Writing Prompts: Bots can provide daily writing prompts to inspire writers and help them overcome writer's block.

Sprints and Goals: Some bots are designed to manage writing sprints, allowing writers to set timed challenges for themselves and others. They can also track word count goals and progress.

Random Generators: For those looking for inspiration, bots can generate random names, places, and ideas to spark creativity.

Feedback and Critique: Bots can organize and facilitate peer review sessions by collecting submissions and distributing them among writers for feedback.

Community Engagement: Bots can help engage the community through games, quizzes, and interactive storytelling sessions.

Administrative Tasks: They can assist with moderating the server, managing roles and permissions, and providing information to new members.

Integration with Writing Tools: Some bots integrate with external writing tools and platforms, providing seamless access to resources and services.

Here is a brief list of some useful Discord bots, but there are [many others](#):

Carl Bot: A widely used bot used for moderation and customization capabilities.

MEE6: An alternative to Carl used for automating tasks and engaging members.

Sprinto: A writers' sprint bot that runs writing sprints with your friends or writing group. It's perfect for sharing word counts and is ideal for word wars.

The Storyteller: This simple bot provides writing prompts and can be a helpful tool for overcoming writer's or artist's block.

Writer-Bot: This bot is tailored for writing-based servers, offering features like writing sprints, word count goals, prompts, random generators, and more. It's a comprehensive tool for managing writing projects and motivating writers.

WriterStats: WriterStats is the ultimate bot for writers who want to monitor their writing trends and times. It allows you to work on multiple projects and keep track of your writing on a session-by-session basis.

Online meeting tools

In addition to Facebook's [Messenger Rooms](#), which allows creating a video call with up to fifty participants, and Discord's [group calls](#), Google Meet, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams are also available. As a writer, you may have a Google Workspace subscription, which includes Meet, or a Microsoft Office subscription, which includes Teams.

Of course there are many other platforms. Gauge your participants' needs and wants to determine overall what works best for you. You may try some platforms only to find in a year or two, you didn't have much interaction there. It is ok to pivot and find something better.

In-Person Events

Meeting in person can be a lot of fun. Find a place that is as user friendly to your needs as possible. The locations will be unique to your group, so as a Guide, keep the group dynamics in mind. Be as welcoming as possible.

Where to meet?

Availability of appropriate spaces differs greatly from place to place, so we can't give you a one size fits all answer. There might be a local library or similar public space that will be perfect. In warmer months, meeting up in a park can also be a great idea. Sometimes a local cafe, bar, pub or restaurant can be a good choice and this offers food options for participants. Make sure it is suitable for your needs. Some things to consider:

- Does the location require a fee for usage?
- Can you make a reservation for a larger table, or are you sure that sufficient space will be available at the time you meet?
- Is it quiet enough that people can concentrate on writing if this is what you intend to do?
- Is it so quiet that your loud group of writers will annoy other patrons?
- Is electricity and wifi available for your participants?

If you are unsure about anything, ask the staff or manager if this might be the right place for you. Unusual places like stations, trains, etc. might turn your meeting into a special occasion and give your group some unusual ideas.

Accessibility

Make sure the place you're going to meet in is accessible to everyone, not only active participants: there are always lurkers who might stay silent online but will show up to in-person meetings. Consider locations that don't have stairs or tight spaces and if there are accommodations that can be made for disabled participants.. The place should be all ages, all-genders, and all religions friendly. If possible, pick a bar or restaurant that has a variety of menu items. Consider the noise level of the location you chose and if it can be manageable for your event.. **Ask participants if they have any special needs (dietary, disabilities or otherwise).**

While booking the space, please remember that someone might come unexpectedly.

Timing

Remember, you are the Quest Guide! You are generously giving your time and efforts to support and encourage your participants. Make sure to do only as much as you can. Schedule the Quests around your schedule and note that an event tends to run for a few hours. You set the limit; 2 hours, 3 hours, or more. There are no limits for the duration. When picking a time there is always a chance not everyone will be able to attend. If it's impossible to figure out the time that'll suit everyone - go with the majority. Next week you can choose an alternate date and time.

Don't ask open questions—give people a few days and times to choose from and have a vote. You may consider picking up on the same day and time every week—i.e., each Saturday at 5 PM—it allows people to plan their weeks more easily.

It is helpful to book your venue well in advance, in case there are complications with the first venue you choose and you need to find a new one. It gives you time to prepare for your events adequately during this time. You are able to send dates/calendar to your participants in advance which ensures more can attend. It also allows you to also be at ease to not only run the Group Quest, but to also have more time for your own personal Quest.

Golden rules of meeting in public

1. When meeting in a restaurant or a bar - order and keep ordering during your stay.
2. Choose slower traffic times to use their facilities.
3. Don't be a nuisance to staff or other patrons. It's easy to get carried away and start behaving too loudly.

It's time, what now?

When meeting for the first time, it would be a good idea for everyone to introduce themselves and say a few words about their writing. Then you could play an icebreaker game to get to know each other or one that is writing related. After the first time, there is a section of activities that you may use for possible ideas.

Your job is to facilitate the event and keep the participants on track. Have several activities planned, ensure there are chunks of time dedicated to working, account some time for when your members are eating, and keep talking about the projects when there is downtime. Keeping the conversation on topic can be beneficial for participants, but the more you get to know each other, there will be times you veer away from being on track. That's okay, too!

Activities

All activities can be used and/or modified for in-person events or virtual ones. Consider doing any number of the listed ideas below. Depending on the character of the challenge and participants, it might happen that a few smaller groups or teams are taking part. You can also divide the group into teams, but remember that the goal is friendly competition, not splitting the group. This is a great way for your participants to make new friends and boost word count.

Kick-off Party

Meeting before the start of a Quest or the day the Quest can be a great opportunity for everyone to discuss their writing, ask questions about the upcoming challenge, and get to know each other.

Mid-Quest meeting

Getting to the midpoint is also a great moment to meet, discuss the Writing Quest so far and cheer each other up.

End of Quest celebration

It's good to meet again just after the Quest has ended and discuss how it went and plans for the future.

Word Sprints

A sprint is a short writing burst, usually 15 minutes. The goal is to write without distraction for a given time. Sprints are a great way to boost word count. Participants can compare their word counts at the end, but they don't have to.

To run it, you need willing participants, something to write on, and a way of tracking time. If it's held online via Discord, a number of bots help with running sprints like [Sprinto](#) or [Writer-Bot](#). If you have the bots added to your Discord server, anyone can run a sprint anytime.

Side Quests

Side Quests are mini-challenges that can take various forms: single-word prompts, pictures, music. The goal of a side quest is to write but approach your work in a different manner. Example: *sum up your novel as a Florida Man news title* or *pick an actor to play your MC*.

The purpose of side quests is to keep the community engaged, so the best idea is to spread them out over the duration of the Writing Quest. Pick prompts that are as ambiguous as possible to allow participants to interpret the prompts as they please. Create a space for participants to share their quotes; it's always fun to see how diverse those are!

Remember to emphasize that such side quests are optional and intended to help spark new ideas and nobody is obliged to take part in them.

Word Wars

Word war is a simple friendly competition where individuals or groups compare how many words they've written. It might be a good motivating factor for some people to write a bit more that day or at **least a few** words when they don't have time to write at all. Wars can be held for one in-person meeting, a week, or for the duration of a challenge. As a host, provide a space to count words such as post-it notes or maybe a Google sheet for tracking word wars if you intend to make it more long-term. The document can also provide instructions on it.

Remember to keep things fun and friendly.

Word Crawls

Word crawls are a collection of word sprints and word wars while adding a theme and at times prompts to help keep the participant engaged and encouraged to keep writing their project. It helps them chunk their writing in a challenging way. These crawls have different themes and is almost like a choose your own adventure. You can do timed sprints (2, 5, 10, 15, or 30 minutes), use dice to decide how many words to aim to write, and a variety of other creative ways to reach smaller chunks of words.

They can be long or short crawls. Guides can use them to help run an event (in person or virtual) or participants can use them independently.

You can check out a list of crawls [HERE](#).

Writing Olympics

Interactions between the writing groups don't have to be strictly writing-related. If you have a friendly writing group that is doing a similar challenge at the same time you can create a set of competitions that let people know each other well and have a little break from writing. Each week can be hosted by different group or you can mix it together - it doesn't really matter. Typical Olympics side-quests might include picking a set of gifs that represent your writing process, creating a cover for your book, sharing your best cookie recipe or taking a picture of your desk.

You can, but don't have to, pick winners of each competition, i.e. in the form of emoji-voting under each post.

Relays

Relays are amazing in keeping the community engaged and producing high word counts.

What is a relay?

Relay rules are simple: it's about keeping a writing streak as long as possible with changes each hour. The person holding the baton writes for an hour without any breaks (toilet is allowed but nothing more) and 5

minutes before the end of said hour passes the baton to the next person in line. Repeat for as many stages as you can. The standard length of a relay is 24 hours but you can make it shorter or much longer (i.e. 100 hours) if you wish!

Exchanges happen in the last 5 minutes of each hour. If the baton is not picked up - the relay ends. To avoid premature ending of a relay it's good to have someone waiting to pick up the baton if the designated runner doesn't show up.

Remember to avoid writing for more than one hour straight or taking only one hour breaks - it's exhausting and takes a lot of fun away from the writing. More than one leg a day is perfectly ok though.

How to organize a relay?

You'll need a spreadsheet, an exchange zone, place for a free discussion (and extreme excitement) and a baton.

The spreadsheet is the heart and center of each relay: this is the place where you plan who's going to run which leg of the race.

Baton can be anything. Pick up an emoji or even a codeword.

Exchange Zone is a place when the baton is passed to the next participant. It can be a Discord channel, forum thread or a comment section under a facebook post (or anything else that works in real time).

Exchange should look like this: person currently running posts "I've written [x] words. I pass the baton to [name of the person next in line]". Person running next should post "I got it!" - and get to writing.

Remember! While a typical relay leg is one hour, nothing prevents you from making it a set of 15-20-30 minute sprints. We recommend an hour because it's enough to be a serious challenge without being impossible to achieve - and you can write a lot in an hour.

Motivational Writing Resources

Bowl of Doom

[Bowl of Doom](#) is a website that allows you to receive an improbable writing prompt.

Box of Doom

[Box of Doom](#) is a website that allows you to set a word count challenge for a personal word sprint.

Most Dangerous Writing App

[The Most Dangerous Writing App](#) is an online application where one needs to write the entire session, or all progress will be lost.

4theWords

[4theWords](#) is an online writing application that blends writing with game mechanics.

Miscellaneous Writing Resources

[Coffetivity](#) is a recreates the ambient sounds of a cafe to boost your creativity and help you to focus better.

Rewards can vary from a Guide. These can be simple like stickers on a chart or little items. Keep in mind that rewards are fun, but they usually come at the Guides expense. For example, one can get post-its, pens/pencils, journals, stickers, or larger items like books for writers or editors. This is not required, and is at the discretion of the Guide.