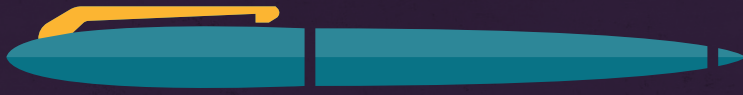


THE POCKET EDITOR



FINISH YOUR BOOK!

Conquering Writer's Block &
Finding Time to Write





Tips for Wrangling Writing Time & Remedies for Writer's Block

Every writer deals with finding time to write. And then when we finally work time into our busy schedule, sometimes we find that the well of inspiration is bone dry. We've compiled some of our proven tools, tips, and tricks for finding hidden writing time and for banishing writer's block.

Make Every Minute Count



Invent the time to write and you will create your masterpiece. You can take advantage of extra, unexpected moments in your day by squeezing in writing time with intentional strategies.

Find hidden moments in your hectic day to brainstorm your ideas. Carry a notebook or capture tool everywhere you go.

Turn your smartphone into a personal assistant. There are voice-recording apps you can download so you can capture quick notes anywhere, anytime. Evernote allows you to capture notes and snap photos.



Assign one place for all of your notes on your writing project (a steno pad works well) then move all the information or photos you collected throughout the day on your phone or scraps of paper to your designated place before your head hits the pillow every night.

Find Unexpected Opportunities & Strategies



Scribble ideas for organization, resources, quotes, stories and scenes anywhere:

- At halftime or breaks during the kids' games
- On your lunch break
- While you're waiting for an appointment
- While you wait in eternally long lines at Wal-Mart or Costco

Look for hidden brainstorming and writing time:

- On your daily commute
- Running the kids around town
- In the shower
- At the gym
- Before you drift off to sleep



Multitask Like a Pro

You can purchase a desk treadmill. Yes, there really is such a thing. Or you can retrofit your own treadmill at home and walk while you write. You can even pause for a few minutes here and there to sprint. Or you can read over your drafts and ideas and make sloppy reminder notes while using a stationary bike.

Take the kids to the gym's day care but spend the last few minutes of your allotted time writing.



Trade babysitting with a friend. Or find a group of writers who also have children. The kids can play while the writers write. Or you can take the kids to a fast-food play place with WI-FI and power outlets. The kids are contained and safe. Headphones and a playlist can provide enough of a noise barrier so you can concentrate.

Schedule writing time before and after work and on your lunch break. Find a coffee shop near your office or away from the house. Regard that time like you have a scheduled appearance on Oprah—something you would never miss. Make sure you choose a place that isn't frequented by friends and colleagues so that you have uninterrupted writing time.



Use Mindset Techniques

Research has shown that when you limit the amount of time you have for a task, you get the task done faster. The more time you have, the more time you'll take. Tap into this mindset trick with any of the following ideas.



Use the Pomodoro Technique. You can set aside one day, half a day, or a couple hours a week—or every other week—for this technique if you can't write every day.

- Set your task to write.
- Set the timer for 25 minutes.
- Ignore Facebook, the urge to snack, or the sudden need to clean out the closet.
- When the timer goes off, stop writing. Even if you want to keep going, stop.
- Take a break.
- You can now check your phone, grab a quick bite, or go for a walk.
- For every four Pomodoro sessions, take a longer break.
- Now it's time for lunch or dinner, or you can sneak in an episode on Netflix.

- Follow the same process until that book is drafted.

Many writers have drafted a book in as little as 3 weeks using this technique!

Write in 15-minute spurts. If your schedule is somewhat unpredictable, you can use a ticking clock for an even shorter writing commitment.

Find two or three times a day to write for 15 minutes. You can set an alarm to wake up 15 minutes early, or plan 15 minutes at lunchtime, or right before bedtime.



Don't stop for mistakes. Edit later—just get your words out. If you need to look up a fact, date, source, or verify history or research, note it in your manuscript to check later. Use a placeholder for a character you don't have a name for, like Doctor Mary, Senator Mary, or Mother Mary. Every car is a red Corvette.

You can join Facebook writers' groups that host group writing sprints. A great resource is NaNoWriMo.org which sponsors a timed-writing event with support groups every November. There is also writing-software that forces you to write quickly by timing you, deleting words if you pause too long. And there are sites that reward you for reaching word-count goals. WrittenKitten.net rewards you with a pop-up of a cute kitten.



Use Your Senses to Surround Yourself with Inspiration & Clarity



For a writer to reach readers, to create a cathartic experience and to move readers to action, it's critical to take them on an emotional journey. If you want to capture the attention of publishing professionals and a readership, you have to "show, don't tell" your story. This applies whether you are writing a cookbook, the next motivational or marketing best seller, or any other genre. You want to build a roller coaster and then take your readers on that ride.

A fundamental rule is to write from the senses. How does the ocean smell? How does the grass beneath your fingers feel? Apply this rule to your writing process to wake up your own senses. Create your own rain dance when your bucket of inspiration is empty.



Sight: Write in a place that stimulates peace and creativity. The key is to make certain that where you write works for you. Have a writing chair at your house. Natural light will support your creative brain. Try writing in a park, at a library, or even ride the train for a change in scenery.

Hearing: Some writers find that need absolute silence. But many writers find that music supports their ability to write. You may find that music with lyrics is distracting. Do what works for you. Create a playlist and choose songs that are close to your heart, songs from your adolescence or songs that evoke the emotional response you are trying to capture in your manuscript.



Taste: Set yourself up to write. Have whatever drinks and snacks next to you so you don't need to interrupt the flow when you're on a roll. Choose comfort drinks and foods that evoke a sense of peace. Feed your body what it remembers and your brain will tap into expanded creativity.

Touch: Keep lotion, lip balm, throws, socks, hairclips, a fingernail file, your reading glasses and anything else next to you so that you have creature comforts nearby. You won't have to stop writing and can quickly handle dry lips. Have something handy like a sequined pillow for tactile stimulation and interruption. Fingers get tired. And the stimulation will also wake up a tired brain.



Smell: Use scented candles, lotion, or essential oils to stimulate memory and creativity. Peppermint oil will sharpen a tired brain. If you are struggling with creativity, try blindfolding yourself and taking in the essence of oranges. This will wake up your creativity and allow your brain to travel back to memories so you can capture them on the page.

Spidey Sense: Your "Spidey sense" is that tingle, or the chills you get when a story moves you. It's also the knot in your stomach that alerts you to danger. Or that inexplicable sense of impending doom that hits you in the gut before something terrible happens. Take care of your Spidey sense. Make a list of everything you need to do and tape it to the wall. Handle any 5-minute things, or assign someone else to take care of them. Tell your brain that you will get back to your list when you're done writing. This trick really works.



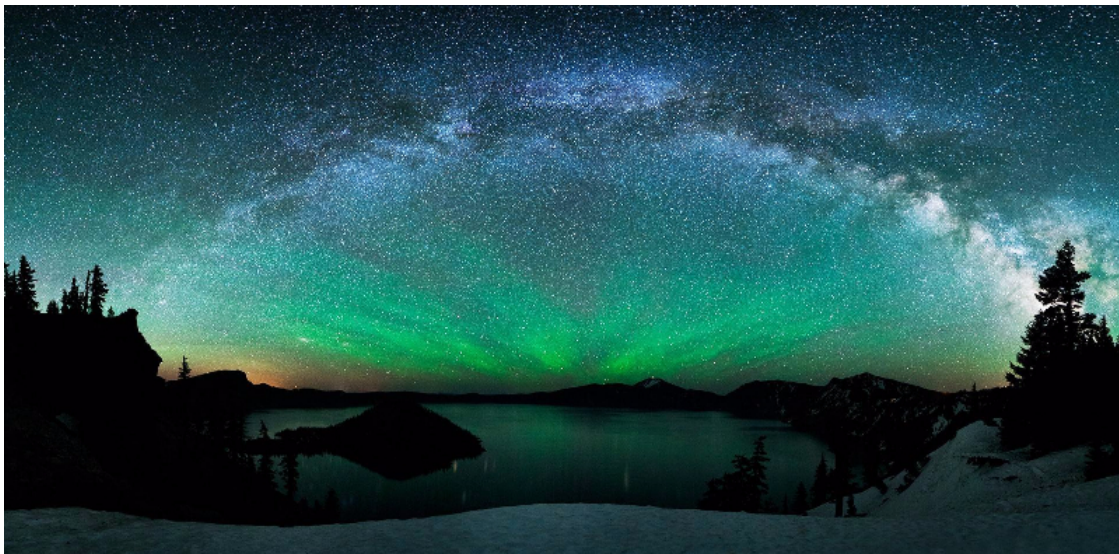
Make sure the environment for your words also appeals to your senses. Shaxpir.com offers writing software that not only organizes your material and allows you to share your content with beta readers, your editor, or your writing coach, it is also a pleasing, beautiful place to hang out. Go into "billing" after you register and enter the code: CALLIOPE to receive 6 months free!

Writing takes a lot of energy. You must also take time away to replenish yourself. When you take time away from writing, experience the world around you. Notice the sounds, sights, smells, the touch of it all. No shaking your finger at yourself. Tell yourself this is rejuvenation time.



Write from a Place of Wonder

Science has begun to understand that the human brain is plastic and can rewire through language what we previously believed was hardwired. A book has the power to reach millions. You have the power to influence ideas, to change the world. When you write from that space of wonder and awe, that communicates to your audience, they too will be willing to consider new and innovative ideas.



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