

How to Start Writing: A Checklist

Ready to build a writer's life? Here's how it's done.

Mindset

- Stop measuring success as:
 - Brilliance
 - Money
 - Fame

- Start measuring success as:
 - Progress
 - Commitment
 - Connections with readers and fellow writers

Writing Environment

Include these elements in your writing space:

- Comfort:** How much space do you need on your writing surface? What chair (or couch or bed) offers adequate comfort without putting you to sleep?
- Focus:** What do you need to shut out the world? Headphones? A door that locks? A clutter-free space? The hum of ambient noise?
- Inspiration:** What physical objects or music will draw you back into the world of your story? Could you benefit from having a bulletin board within view?
- Trigger:** What one thing can you add to your physical environment only when you write? A lit candle? A specific type of music? Your favorite pajama pants?

Writing Tools

Keep these tools in reach so you can stay planted in your writing space:

- Writing Software
- A Timer
- [Dabble Word Sprints](#)
- Notebook (Digital or Analog)
- Reference Books
 - Favorite Grammar and Style Book
 - Favorite Book on Craft
 - Favorite Book of Prompts or Writing Exercises
 - Reference Book Related to Your Subject
 - Any Book that Sparks Creative Thought

Create a Schedule

- Schedule writing sessions ahead of time—even short ones.
- Ask loved ones to support and respect your writing time.
- Show up.
- Repeat.

Set Goals

- Determine how you want to measure your goal. (Number of words? Number of hours? Days in a row?)
- Set a realistic monthly goal, then break that down into a weekly goal and a daily goal.
- Celebrate when you succeed.
- Adjust your strategies or your goal when you don't meet your numbers.

Read

- Create a reading list of books in your genre.
- Create a reading list of books on writing, particularly:
 - Books on structure and plot.
 - Books on character.
 - Books that address an area of writing that is a struggle for you.
- Bookmark useful articles from online resources like [Dabble](#).
- Schedule regular reading time.
- Actively notice what works, what doesn't, and take notes as you go.

Form Creative Habits

Find small ways to exercise your creative mind every day. Some examples:

- Keep a dream journal.
- Keep a regular journal.
- Keep a notebook handy to write down thoughts, observations, and inspiration.
- Read a poem every morning.
- Expose yourself to visual art and music.
- Eavesdrop on strangers' conversations.

Connect with Other Writers

Actively build a network of fellow writers. You can find them by:

- Joining the [Dabble writing community](#).
- Joining critique groups through:
 - [Meetup.com](#)
 - [Scribophile](#)
 - [Critique Circle](#)
- Taking a writing class.
- Attending seminars, workshops, and conventions.
- Participating in [NaNoWriMo](#).
- Searching Facebook Groups for a writing group in your genre.