

The Just Write Life

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President's Article

How to Write a Novel First Draft in a Week

by Ann Gordon

Years ago, at an LTUE conference, L.L. Muir (Leslie) gave a presentation on how to write a novel in less than a week. Not the whole, complete novel, but the first rough draft of one. Leslie is a prolific author who has used this process to publish a new book (or novella) of 30,000 to 50,000 words every three weeks. She's amazingly productive. Her process is divided into two parts: Preparation and Writing.

Preparation:

1. Make lists so you don't have to do research during the writing. For example:
 - Characters names and descriptions
 - Locations and time periods
 - Events (goals, plots, conflicts) + write a sentence for each scene
 - Weapons, tools, transportation, fuel
 - World building basics
2. Write a brief structure or frame to hang your story on. This is not really a plot. Just a list of scenes and actions you want to include.
3. Divide your story into four sections with six chapters each for a total of 24 chapters. The last chapter of each section should have a killer twist.
4. Each section has a goal that the chapters work toward. The twist determines the goal for the next chapter.



Writing:

1. Determine your words per hour, for example, 1,000 words per hour.
2. Divide your ultimate goal of 50,000 words by the production rate to determine the hours required and divide by five to seven days (your preference).
3. Find a place to write with no interruptions, Internet, or phone. Leslie recommended going to a hotel if you cannot get full isolation in your home.
4. Keep a tight schedule for daily word count, waking time, eating, writing, rest and anything else that needs to be done.
6. Write your first draft.

While I have not written a rough draft of a book or novella in as little as a week, one of my writing friends has made good use of Leslie's method for NaNoWriMo. She often pens her requisite 50,000 words for NaNo in three weeks. I suggest giving this process a try for your next writing project.

Upcoming Events

The Quills Conference is the LUW's premium writer's weekend at Marriott University Park, Salt Lake City; it's streamed online for virtual attendees.

Come learn what you need to be successful in writing and publishing.

Whether you're looking for traditional publishing or exploring indie publishing, find insider tips from top professionals.

Visit <https://www.leagueofutahwriters.com> for more information.



New Members

Welcome to the following new member of Just Write:

- ❖ Stephen McDonald
- ❖ Stephen Wunderli



“If you don’t have the time to read, you simply don’t have the tools to write.”

– Stephen King

Member Spotlight

Steven McDonald



Hi everyone, I'm Steven McDonald, and I'm excited to be part of the Just Write! chapter!

I was born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah, though I've lived in Philadelphia, PA, and Manassas, VA for four years each.

I currently live in West Valley City with my wife, who's a pharmacist, and my three children: Evelyn (10), Adeline (7), and Liam (5).

I graduated from Weber State University in 2007 with a Bachelor's in Creative Writing and their literary journal currently stands as my only publishing credit. I haven't done much writing since then, opting to teach elementary school instead, which I did for about a dozen years. My current jobs: writing, narrating audiobooks (I currently have two on Audible, with a third by June), and raising my kids, pays dividends, but only in joy and satisfaction!

I finished the draft of my first novel in January, am currently working on revising it, and plan to publish traditionally. It is literary speculative/environmental fiction inspired by Dr. Seuss's "The Lorax." Speculative fiction is my most common genre to write in, but I have also written YA fiction, horror, fantasy and poetry.

Member Article

7 Tricks to Enjoying the Writing Process

by Alex Hugie



1. **Motivate yourself with rewards.** Even though I love writing, it can be mentally exhausting. Often I'm tempted to take the path of least resistance and watch YouTube or browse social media instead of being productive. Instead, make that YouTube video or Facebook indulgence your reward for accomplishing some writing. How much writing and how much reward is up to you. (I recommend pie!)
2. **Find the right music.** It's hard for me to write a dramatic fight scene if my ears are filled with slow, soporific string music. Better to pick a playlist that fits what you're writing. If it's emotional and sad, set the mood appropriately. And everyone's tastes are unique, but I personally can't listen to music with lyrics while writing without getting distracted. So just be aware of what helps you and what doesn't.
3. **Get lost in your world.** One way to get in the "zone" is to drop yourself into the head of your character and let your imagination run wild. This may or may not include writing the next chapter. It could also mean worldbuilding, refining character motivations, or researching obscure topics related to your story—but be careful not to get so mired in the details that you never actually make the story happen.
4. **Have fun with the art of writing.** No matter what kind of story you're writing, you can take pleasure in crafting the language. Write stupid jokes and clever lines, passive-aggressive dialogue and witty banter, absurd metaphors and silly hyperbole. Allow yourself to appreciate a well-worded turn of phrase. Don't worry about how much of it will survive the editing process; this is for *you*!
5. **Do "pictographic research."** With today's technology, you don't need to wait for a professional book design to see pieces of your story come to life. You can Google images of celebrities to fan cast your own book-to-movie adaptation. You can even use AI to generate images that represent oddly specific elements of your story. (A friend of mine created a trailer for his book, *Clucked*, using AI-generated images of chickens swarming around an evil Colonel Sanders in an exploding factory. It was amazing.)
6. **Share your ideas.** Whether it be a spouse, a friend, or a writing group, having someone for you to bounce off ideas for your story can be a great motivator. I've found that doing so helps me form my thoughts into more concrete ideas, and I get good feedback on which story elements my confidante finds intriguing. This, in turn, energizes me to go and pour those ideas onto the page.
7. **Take breaks.** This applies whether you're on a tight deadline or not. Trying to do too much at once always leaves me with a fried brain and mediocre writing (even for a rough draft). Wash some dishes. Get a snack. Play an instrument or work on another hobby.

In some cases, maybe you even need a longer break from a particular project. Maybe another story idea is calling to you and you'll be more productive (and happy) switching gears for a while. That's okay! If your writing process feels dull or miserable, make a change. Make your writing habits improve your life—not drag it down. Finding the right balance between productivity and pleasure is key to making your writing a healthy part of your life.

Links to Websites

Three Links to Websites

by Ann Gordon

1. "I Self-Published My Book. Two Days Later, I'm Full of Regret." Article from a newly published writer, listing everything she wishes she had done differently before self-publishing:
<https://medium.com/swlh/i-self-published-my-book-two-days-later-im-full-of-regret-49effa9f909b>
2. "21 Terrific Small Presses Open to Direct Submissions" from Authors Publish:
<https://authorspublish.com/21-terrific-small-presses-open-to-direct-submissions/>
3. "Why Your Book is Still Unfinished [It's your phone's fault]" from Author Media:
<https://www.authormedia.com/why-your-book-is-still-unfinished-hint-its-your-phones-fault/>



"Don't use a big word when a singularly unloquacious and diminutive linguistic expression will satisfactorily accomplish the contemporary necessity."

– Unknown

Who's Penned What

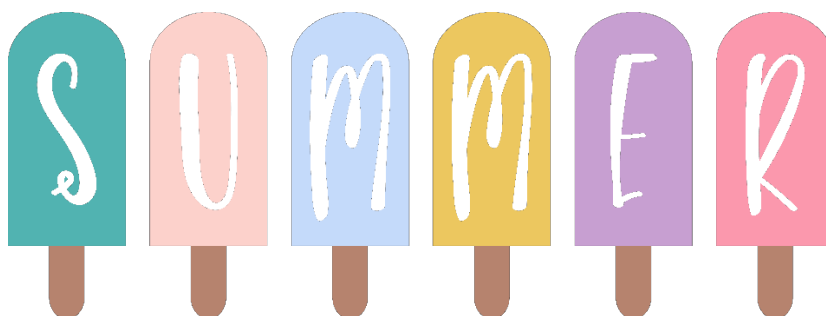
Lorraine Jeffery's poetry has been published in the following journals: Metronym, Nagatuck River, Keysner Poetry Anthology, Inscribe, Synkronicity, Last Stanza, Ocean Anthology from Kelp Journal, Parcham and Please See Me. She has also won "category prizes" in some state contests. Indiana, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania and Mississippi.

Nicole Klunder's poem, *Home*, was chosen for the *Where You Belong* anthology with the league.

Linda Smith's short story (literary fiction) entitled *Retirement* and reviewed by our Just Write chapter was selected to be included in the next LUW Anthology. Thanks to all her reviewers!

Beta Readers Needed

Shawn Pollock is looking for beta readers for his short story collection, "Alleys and Outskirts," crime genre, approximately 73,000 words.



Member Article

My 2nd Annual Writers Conference

by Nicole Klunder

In February I attended my second annual *Write On* St. George's Winter Writers' Conference located at The Kayenta Center of Arts in Ivins, Utah. There are no words to explain the beauty and awe-inspiring backdrops of the bright red rocks hovering in the distance. The drive was full of excitement, snowy mountain caps, and what was to come of the day!



The theme was, “Everyone has a story; tell yours.”

Months before the conference, I was asked to present the last author of the day, so I think I had anxiety the entire first four hours! I did, but I didn't realize I did. I met a friend there, who was in the last critique session with *Write On*, which I attended a couple weeks prior where I read a chapter from a short story I've been working on for well over a year now.

Meeting a friend was a great distraction today. I've gotten used to speaking in front of a couple people or a small group, thanks to critique sessions and writing meetings—but a small room filled up with at least thirty people? Not my cup of tea! Luckily, it wasn't the stage auditorium room!

My friend and I exchanged notes, shared tips, and what we're currently writing, including what we were excited about for the day's conference and our life experiences. She told me she has friends who have published cookbooks in the past. She gave me their information for a future connection to help me. I was grateful for this. (Two months later, and I now have a rough outline after connecting with this individual about cookbooks, and where I can go from my “I don't know what to do next” moment.)

When the conference commenced, the words that sunk deeply for me were, “Today is a day of love and enrichment.” Ahh, I love words!

Another tip that struck a chord was that we are given permission to take breaks from our writing. Life and work does happen so it's inevitable. I truly embrace this. I've noticed when I do gracefully embrace and accept it, I find more production and fulfillment when I do sit down to focus and write. After all, this writing we all love and have passion for can feel like it's “work.”

Craft tips that I have added to my toolbox:

- **Fast scenes (fights, action) versus slow scenes (emotional)**
- **Create a poll on social media:** Maybe you have several projects and want to know what would be most popular as a fan fave. Create a social media poll and watch the votes flow in.
- **Scene by scene:** List 10 things the character does at the beginning of chapter one of the book.
- **Age-appropriate writing:** I had not realized there are so many options and details within age groups and genres.

I found a wonderful book titled “1000 Words” by Jami Attenberg. I highly recommend this book. I've been reading it for three months because I don't want it to end! The advice, fun, motivation, reflection, sudden realizations, troubles, and writing tips to stay on track and creative is done so well in this book!

The ultimate “why” we write and what we are capable of! Write because you can. Choose to write! Write for those who can't! Timing is everything they say!

See you next year *Write On* St. George Writers Conference!!

Website Author Bios

Just Write Members: Please check out your website bio page and let Ann or Nancy know if you would like any changes to your writing bio. <http://justwritechapter.org/MemberBios.html>

If your bio isn't on the website, and you want it to be included, send Nancy or Ann a picture of yourself and an author bio no greater than 125 words. Questions you could answer include:

- When did you realize you wanted to write? At what time in your life, etc.
- What genres do you like to read?
- What are you currently working on?
- Do you have a writing schedule? If so, what's that like?
- Links to social media.

Critique Sessions and Submission Guidelines

Critique sessions run twice a month. Invitation emails are usually sent the first and sixteenth of each month; these invitations include an RSVP deadline. Once the deadline has passed, the spreadsheet with current group information is sent. Each session is generally divided into two or three groups with three to six participants each, depending on how many members participate.

Submissions are then emailed to each member of the participant's group and returned by the end-of-session deadline, usually the fifteenth or the last day of the month. If you want to read a submission from someone in a different group in addition to those in your own group, you may request their work, but please do not expect them to read yours in return.

Fiction and non-fiction chapters, short stories, articles, and poems are all welcome in our critique sessions...query letters too.

Submission Guidelines

- 3,200 words or less (not including any synopses at the beginning)
- Include a synopsis if there are chapters/ sections prior to your current submission
- 12-point or larger serif font (such as Times New Roman or Cambria)
- Double or 1.5 spaced lines
- Word document format (.doc, .docx)
- Include your name or initials in the filename
- Submit within three days of receiving the group spreadsheet

Critiquing Guidelines

- Please make at least six suggestions or comments in your reviews (AI grammar programs should not be used)
- Be honest, kind, and encouraging
- Corrections and comments are made using the "Track Changes" and "New Comment" features under the "Review" tab in Word
- Include a note at the end of the document or in the email with an overall review or comment
- Ideally, return your reviews by the last day of the session

Chapter Officers

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|---|--|
| ▪ Ann Gordon, President
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(writerscache435@gmail.com) | ▪ Website: Ann Gordon |
| | ▪ Nancy Roe, Newsletter Editor
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“To create an impact at the end of a scene, structure the final sentence so it ends with an emotion-charged word. Instead of ‘She knew she had to kill it.’ Write ‘She knew she had to kill.’”

– Rayne Hall