

START

Writing for an extended period of time is a great way to make significant progress. However it takes some planning. This guide will walk you through why you should create your own at-home writing retreat and help you out before, during, and after so that you'll be successful!



WHY

Blocking out an extended period of time to devote to your writing can be super beneficial both in terms of progress on a project and in terms of teaching you about yourself as a writer. These articles make the argument for why you should challenge yourself to commit to a writing retreat.

What Is a Writing Challenge?

Melinda Van Lone

A writing challenge is a great way to make significant headway on your current or new work in progress. Melinda walks you through some truths she learned about writing from participating in a writing challenge. In short, a writing challenge is a chance. Are you ready to take one?

Extended Study: Writing challenges come in all shapes and sizes. A writing retreat is a great way to challenge yourself to get words on the page. How do you want to challenge yourself as a writer? Are you interested in devoting more time to your writing or are you focused on increasing word-count?

How a Writing Challenge Can Help YOU

Gabriela Pereira

Now that you know what a writing challenge is, Gabriela writes on some of the long-term effects of a writing challenge. Specifically, how they can help you write more, write better, and write smarter. She emphasizes the importance of having a plan and some goals and how to integrate positive habits into your writing process.

Extended Study: What writing habits are you hoping to adopt through an at-home writing retreat? Do you already have some positive habits or are you starting fresh? Take some time to journal or reflect on the state of your writing life and what you hope to get out of it in the future. This will help you in the next step of the process: planning your retreat.

Five Ways NaNoWriMo Makes You a Better Writer

Elisabeth Kauffman

An at-home writing retreat is a writing challenge just like NaNoWriMo is a writing challenge. Here, Elisabeth walks you through the ways NaNoWriMo makes you a better writer, showing you how a challenge of your own making will help you improve as a writer too.

Extended Study: Are you feeling excited yet? Conversely, are you still feeling a little resistance? Take some time to journal or reflect on what you are concerned about, what you are excited about, and what you are hoping to get out of a writing retreat. Once you're done, turn the page and begin planning your own at-home writing retreat!



BEFORE

While it might be tempting to just block out a large chunk of time to devote to writing, it can be extremely daunting when you actually sit down to write. Having a plan is key for success. But where to begin? What do you need to consider as you plan a writing retreat? As always, we've got your back. The following articles will help you set some goals for your writing retreat, reflect on your writing life, and take you into the nitty gritty of planning your own writing retreat.

Episode 75: Stop Dreaming, Start Doing

Gabriela Pereira

There is a huge difference between dreaming about doing something and actually doing it. In this podcast episode and accompanying article, Gabriela walks you through her approach to resolutions and goal-setting, giving you the framework you need to make some serious progress during your at-home writing retreat.

Extended Study: Work your way through the seven steps Gabriela details in the article. Keep what works for you and discard what doesn't as you begin planning your retreat and what you want to accomplish.

Determine the Themes of Your Writing Life

Sara Letourneau

As you plan your writing retreat, doing a little digging into your past as a writer and examining your habits, you can discover what drives your writing and how that can help you develop and improve your craft.

Extended Study: Spend some time journaling or reflecting on the questions Sara poses to help you discover your writing life themes. Then think about what patterns keep popping up and how you can put them to use.

Create Your Own Virtual Writers Sabbatical

Richelle Lyn

Now that you've set goals and contemplated the themes of your writing life, it's time to dive a bit deeper into planning your writing retreat. Richelle walks you through the planning process from scheduling to finding travel companions to creating an itinerary.

Extended Study: A clearly defined plan helps ensure success. Use these tips to plan your at-home writing retreat. When are you doing it? Are you going to enlist an accountability buddy? How are you going to organize your time during your retreat? Now you're ready to begin your retreat!



DURING

You've set goals and you have planned and scheduled your writing retreat. Now it's time to prepare your space so that as you sit down to write, you are in the right state of mind to get the maximum output.

The following articles will help you cultivate the right mindset, clear your space, and set the mood so that you can make the most of your at-home writing retreat. We cover everything from reducing stress and anxiety to getting proper fuel, from dressing for success to setting up the perfect space. Write on!

Integrate Tranquility into Your Writing

Indiana Lee

Sitting down to write for an extended period of time can be a daunting proposition for any writer. Indiana Lee shares tips to set yourself up for success during your writing retreat by creating a calm environment to help you relax and get words on the page.

Extended Study: Before you begin writing, try a little meditation to help de-stress. Make sure you properly fuel yourself by eating a good meal and grabbing some snacks and a bottle of water. Next, pay attention to your writing space by following Indiana's tips.

Set the Mood

Gabriela Pereira

Many writers establish rituals that get them in the mood for writing. Gabriela offers some of her best tips for creating the mood. She also reminds you that there is no such thing as the "right" mood for writing, so don't stress too much and get to it.

Extended Study: Do you work better by establishing a routine or do you operate better when you disrupt things? During your writing retreat, try it both ways. You might surprise yourself to learn a new way to get yourself writing!

Make the Most of a Writing Retreat

Bess McAllister

Proper preparation from goal setting to choosing the right attire will help set you up for success when you sit down to do some extended writing. Bess offers some of her best tips for having a successful retreat.

Extended Study: How many of these tips do you already incorporate into your writing life? Are there any you are going to try for this retreat? Can you think of any other tips for extended writing success?



AFTER

You've been writing for hours (or days). You've gotten tons of words on the page. Now what? We have two articles that help you edit what you've written.

On the other hand, maybe your writing retreat didn't go like you had hoped. That's OK. The important thing is to learn from the experience and apply those lessons the next time you sit down to write, which I hope will be soon.

Marie Kondo Practices for Revisions **Jennifer Brinkmeyer**

A few years ago Marie Kondo took the world by storm with her method for tidying up your house and creating space. Jennifer applies those principles to her revision process. Revision isn't the most fun part of writing, but it doesn't have to be painful.

Extended Study: Use these tips to begin revising what you wrote during your writing retreat. Were any of these practices new to you? Were they helpful? Do you have any other methods for revision?

Eight Essential Edits for Your Novel

Jeanette Smith

A second level of editing occurs at the word and sentence level. Jeanette the Writer walks you through these micro-revisions that will improve your prose word by word and sentence by sentence after you've gotten the broad strokes of character, world, and plot finalized in the first round of revisions.

Extended Study: Incorporate these types of micro-revisions in the writing you've done throughout your retreat. Did anything surprise you?

Turn around a Bad Writing Week

Bess McAllister

Let's face it: sometimes despite your best intentions, the words just don't flow. That's all right! Bess walks you through some ways to help dust yourself off, reframe your attitude, and be able to start writing again. Not every day will be a great one, but not every day has to be a bad one either.

Extended Study: Reflect on what didn't go well, then let it go! What changes can you make for next time to head off where you struggled? What went well? Now keep writing!



WRAP UP!

There you have it! You have just finished your at-home writing retreat. Maybe you finished an entire story or novelette, maybe you made major progress on a larger piece, or maybe it didn't quite turn out like you expected.

The important thing is that you chose to prioritize your writing and put in the time. The fun doesn't have to end here. Writing is a journey. Writing is a way to escape from reality for a bit. A mini-vacation, if you will. You can use this guide over and over to create many writing retreats both at home and away.

If you're looking for a fun, virtual writing vacation this summer, watch your inbox because we'll be sharing more about a brand-new event at DIY MFA called ScribLandia. Part immersive storytelling adventure, part virtual writing retreat, ScribLandia will help you get those creative juices flowing and help you master the craft. Watch your inbox for more info, or [click here](#) to join the waiting list.