

NaNoWriMo

Writing Resources

2021

McCord Memorial Library

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Introduction

Five weeks of writing fun! (Can begin during November or before)

Within this booklet you will find questions pulled from longer resources available in full at the NaNoWriMo website, prompts, and other fun things to get your writing started (or un-stuck).

Happy writing!

Week 1: Idea

Plot Generators: Want to just click a button and get random prompts to get those creative juices flowing? That's what a plot generator does! You can find an annotated list of plot generators at mccordlibrary.org/nanowrimo as well as more resources. Here is a fun prompts. Try to use it write a story in the space provided.

- **Setting**

Mac Guffin: "MacGuffin" (a.k.a. McGuffin or maguffin) is a term for an object or element in a story that drives the plot, but serves no further purpose

- **Plot**

Rags To Royalty: A classic of literature, this Changeling Fantasy is as simple as it is sublime: the beautiful, hard working, put upon commoner girl who never loses her hope will be a princess or queen by the story's end.

- **Narrative Device**

Frameup: Framing someone means providing fake evidence in order to falsely prove someone guilty of a crime. "Frame" here means making someone innocent look guilty by "putting the person in a picture frame of suspicion".

- **Hero**

The Hero: This person is a hero, pure and simple.

- **Villain**

Fashion Designer: These characters may be royal dressmakers, haute couture designers, movie costume designers, or simply make and design clothes as a hobby.

- **Character As Device**

Pride Before A Fall: A character is introduced as an insufferable jerk; arrogant because of some amazing talent or high station in life.

- **Characterization Device**

In The Original Klingon: This is the ethnic character who will, contrary to the wisdom or knowledge of all present, insist that some cultural icon, item, form of art, technology, stock quote, etc. is native to their country.

Week 2: Character

Let's interview your main character. Here are 5 questions. You can find more resources at mccordlibrary.org/nanowrimo

1. What does your character do when they think no one's looking?

2. Their wallet gets stolen. What do they do?

3. What's the one thing they've always wanted to do? Why haven't they done it yet?

4. What book does your character pretend to have read?

5. How does your character feel about bugs?

Week 3: Plot/Outline

1. Fast draft. Do you need to write a draft quick? Try these!

You can find more resources at mccordlibrary.org/nanowrimo

1. Start with a **SHORT** story pitch. What's your story in 140 characters or less?

2. Expand your pitch into tent pole beats. Expand on each “tent pole” to make a longer pitch. Make each “pole” 140 characters or less.

Opening Scene:

Inciting Incident:

“A” Plot (the main plot):

Stakes:

“B” Plot:

Midpoint:

Stakes Raise:

Character Arc:

Failure:

[illegible]

Week 4: Setting

World building. Answer these questions to flesh out your setting.

You can find more resources at mccordlibrary.org/nanowrimo

1. What does the calendar look like? Is it different than our Earth calendar? 5 day weeks, 37 hour days?

2. Visualization is your friend. What does everyone look like? What fruit can you find? What do they drive? Sketch a few notes below.

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Week 5: Organizing

Make a plan to plan. You can use note cards, sticky notes and red string, or online programs.

You can find more resources at mccordlibrary.org/nanowrimo

Some starting notes:

What color is the sky?

Who rules the world?

Do dogs exist?

What do people eat for breakfast? (Do they even eat breakfast?)

How much water is available?

What climates does your world have? (ex: Desert, Rainforest, Tundra)

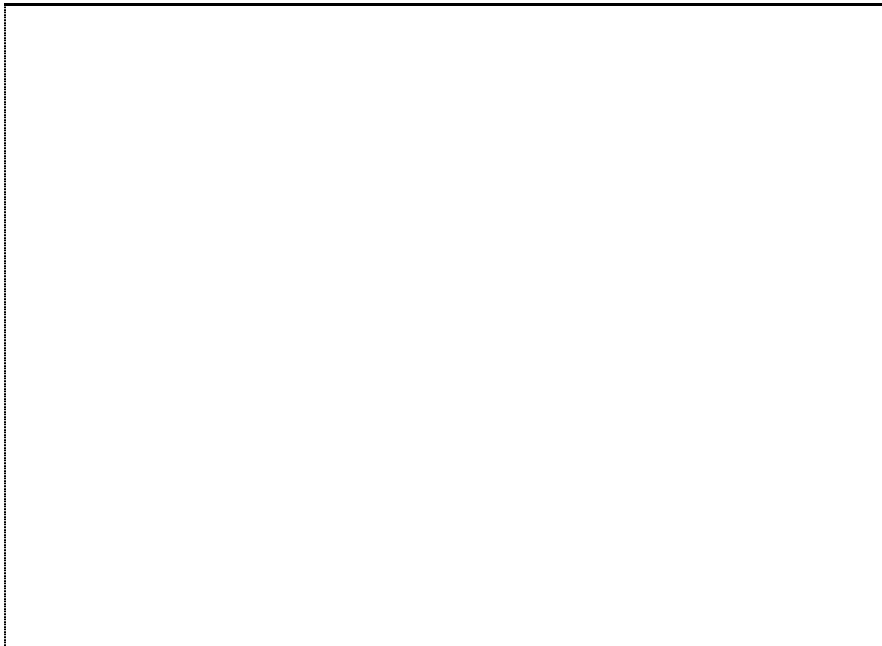
Does your world have coffee shops? Is caffeine available at all?

What are the dating rituals?

What is your main character's guilty pleasure?

What is your main character's goal?

What do people wear? (sketch)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a sketch of clothing.

Writer Pep talks: Words of Encouragement!

- “The middle is where you prove what you’re made of. This is where you pull up your socks and think of some interesting things for your characters (who should be pretty well developed by now) to do with/for/to each other. And it had better be some good, exciting, and maybe even evil stuff. Personally, I always kill someone.”

–Charlaine Harris

- “You write. That’s the hard bit that nobody sees. You write on the good days and you write on the lousy days. Like a shark, you have to keep moving forward or you die. Writing may or may not be your salvation; it might or might not be your destiny. But that does not matter. What matters right now are the words, one after another. Find the next word. Write it down. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat...The search for the word gets no easier but nobody else is going to write your novel for you.”

--Neil Gaiman

- “Don’t give up. Keep your eyes on the project you’re working on right now, and make it the best that it can be. More importantly, *love* that process. In the end, that’s what made me stand up and get back to work on book thirteen: the realization that I loved telling stories. No stack of unpublished novels, no matter how high, would change my enjoyment of this process—no more than a finished set of dives would make a scuba enthusiast feel discouraged about diving again.”

--Brandon Sanderson

- “Close your eyes and see if there is a movie playing on the black screens behind your eyes. Then scribble down the details of this movie, all the colors and foliage or furnishing. Maybe you can see one of your character’s faces: how she tucks her head when she enters a room, like a shy duck; or how he takes on the persona of a bank president, arrogant and amused and yet pretending to care, even at meetings with his child’s homeroom teacher. Maybe you can see his child’s face—the pride she takes in her father’s potency, or the shame.

“So describe that to us on paper, in words and images, imperfectly. That’s all. One small moment, face, locale, conversation at a time, maybe overwrought or trying to sound like Hemingway or perhaps with a bit too much magical realism for the suburb your characters inhabit.”

--Anne Lamott