

Writer's Workshop (Part 2 Of 6): Write Your First Book



by [John Wasowicz](#)

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Getting your creative juices moving

Last month, I recommended you write 250 words each day to launch yourself on your journey to write your book. If you did, you likely discovered one of the great secrets to successful writing: It's not about writing a lot in a short amount of time but, rather, it's

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about writing a little bit over the long haul. Do you think Tolstoy wrote War and Peace in a day? Of course not. And you won't finish your masterpiece in one sitting — whether it's a book about your family history, a guide to improve quality of life or a romance novel.

Write consistently four times/week

If you haven't yet started to write your book, I encourage you to hit the keyboard today.

Write in 'spoonfuls' of words. A little each day. Do it consistently. You probably won't write seven days a week, but set a goal to write at least four days weekly. You will find you build content in no time at all.

Do the math. If you write 250 words a day four times a week, you add 1,000 words weekly. In little more than a year, you'll complete your story. As all of us in the 50+ age group know, a year out of your life is not a lot of time.

Writing is a Process

Writing is no different than preparing a meal or fixing a leaky faucet. To cook, you splice, dice, stir, simmer, combine ingredients, then stir again before you can dig in to enjoy your creation. If you're a fixer-upper type, you lay out the tools and go through a series of steps before you solve the problem at hand.

To write a book, you research, jot down ideas and prepare and edit drafts. It's all about exploring and narrating the topic. Similar to when you make a meal, you move ahead one step at a time; the difference is simply that others consume pages instead of a meal.

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The dreaded empty screen

It's daunting to sit in front of an empty screen and fill it with text. Even Hemmingway found it difficult to face an empty page. It's a little scary. In fact, once you sit down in front of the computer or typewriter, you might actually think to yourself, "I had all these ideas in my head, but now I don't know where to start."

How to unfreeze? Simply write the first word. Any word. Now the screen is no longer empty, and you might find the next few come to you much easier. Once you start, an amazing process takes over to guide you on your journey. And, as you become comfortable with that process, it will begin to grow, just like a flower.

Your Creative Juices

As you begin to write on a consistent basis, the creative juices begin to flow. You develop a voice. Themes and sub-themes reveal themselves to you. As you write a

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paragraph, reread it, then revise it, you'll discover supporting information around every corner - in movies, television shows, news reports, magazine articles.

Next, someone will nominate you for the Nobel Prize in Literature! Okay, maybe not. But you get the idea. Once you start to write on a consistent basis, the creative process takes over and it becomes much easier to convey your thoughts and feelings on paper.

Trust me. I've been there. Many times I sat in front of an empty computer screen and unleashed the creative process simply by compelling myself to write a specified number of words each day. It worked for me — I have three published books at this point. It can work for you too.

Keep Track of Ideas

Once the creative process takes over, you might feel unstoppable. Your head might turn into the equivalent of a popcorn machine with ideas popping up all over the place. In fact, so many ideas might flood your brain that it's hard to keep track of them.

Keep a pen and pad close by at all times! Write down single words to jar your memory later.

Let me use an example. I'm thinking about my trip to Paris with my wife and two sons. I write down "Paris Trip." Now let's write the accompanying text:

"Paris Trip." One of my best memories is our Paris trip after our youngest child graduated from college. We almost didn't go, but I'm so glad we did, particularly given the way things turned out with COVID-19. There's a lesson here: Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today!"

Did you see what just happened? I wrote down a memory of a trip but ended up rendering advice about not waiting to act to fulfill your dreams

As soon as the word strikes the paper (or screen!), it begins to spread. It's an organic process, just like a drop of water falling on a napkin.

New Topics and Approaches Appear Magically Before You

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The creative process unleashes your conscious and subconscious self, taking you in unexpected directions. It allows you to develop your unique ideas and works in every discipline: painting, cooking, gardening, pottery, and, yes, writing.

Write down something that's on your mind. Like "Paris Trip." Now begin to write. See where it takes you. You may find yourself writing about something completely unexpected.

As soon as you take the time to develop an idea, a magic process takes over. Embrace it. The topic and approach may change as you proceed. Your writing style develops as you write; you might start with short, crisp sentences and perhaps your sentence structure later becomes expansive and poetic. Just go with it!

Assignment two

This month's assignment is the same as last month's, but with a twist: Write 250 words a day. But this time be conscientious and write each and every day.

Now for the twist:

Mid month, send your writings to someone you trust. Ask them to read your outline, chapter, or musings. Request a short critique via email or a phone call.

Select someone who's opinion you trust. Be sure it's someone who you know to be honest and won't just tell you you're the greatest writer on earth since Shakespeare.

It may be you decided to write just for yourself, like a journal. That's okay. But the likelihood is you write because you want to share a story with family, a community of like minded people, or the general public. It's time to open yourself up to criticism. I get that it's hard to be vulnerable, but it's important.

Next month, we'll talk about finding your voice: Should your narrative be a first-person or a third-person accounting? Until then: Write on!

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About the author:



John Adam Wasowicz is an author and practicing attorney. His first book, [*Daingerfield Island*](#), introduced readers to Mo Katz, a defense attorney who had previously worked as a city prosecutor. The popularity of the book led to a sequel, [*Jones Point*](#), and that book led to a series with the publication of [*Slaters Lane*](#). The stories are set in Old Town Alexandria, VA. All of the books are available in paperback, ebook, and audiobook from major online retailers or through indie bookstores. Book Four, *Roaches Run*, is scheduled for publication in 2021. John lives in Mount Vernon, VA, with his wife, Robin.

John Adam Wasowicz Mo Katz mystery series; the trilogy (consisting of *Daingerfield Island*, *Jones Point*, and *Slaters Lane*) is available in paperback, ebook, and audiobook on Amazon.com and other online bookstores.