

First Write

JANUARY 1



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FIRST WRITE HANDBOOK

NEW YEAR, NEW WRITING



*Writing is thinking.
It is more than living, for it is being
conscious of living.*

~ Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Every January 1 throughout North America, hordes of human "polar bears" make a mad dash to icy waters for a quick plunge.

Why do they brave the elements and the possibility of frostbite and hypothermia?

Some say it's a family tradition or a way to combat depression. Others swear it is a spiritual experience.

But perhaps they also take the plunge for one of the same reasons writers write: they want to prove they're alive.

On New Year's Day, writers throughout the world will mark the occasion with an abundance of new words and a new tradition: a 24-hour writing challenge, called FIRST WRITE™.

NEW YEAR, NEW WRITING

What is FIRST WRITE™?

It is an annual 24-hour writing marathon that begins at midnight on January 1. (All time zones.) The purpose of this worldwide challenge is twofold: to create new works and to raise donations for tree planting organizations.

Which writing genres are eligible?

During FIRST WRITE™, you may write fiction, nonfiction, poetry, stage plays, screenplays, blog posts, anything—but it has to be a shiny new writing project.

Is there a fee required to participate?

No, but we do request that you make a donation to one or more tree planting organizations. (See list on page 30.) We believe this is a fair exchange for the paper resources you use daily.

Is FIRST WRITE™ just a writing marathon?

Not necessarily. You could invite some writing friends to a FIRST WRITE™ party or dedicate the day as your private New Year's writer's retreat. (See page 7 to learn how to combine writing with wellness.)

Do I really have to write for the full 24 hours? What about naps?

For the sake of your wellness, we suggest you take hourly breaks and occasional naps. To create your own schedule that is both challenging and productive, read "Step Five: Plan your schedule" on page 6.

How do I host a FIRST WRITE™ group event in my area or online?

We welcome FIRST WRITE™ groups throughout the planet with the understanding that you may use the FIRST WRITE™ name ONLY if you do not charge admission to your event. Also, FIRST WRITE™ is not responsible for any costs incurred by your group for venues, catering, advertising, etc.

Should you have any additional questions, feel free to contact FIRST WRITE™ organizer Eleyne-Mari Sharp at FirstWriteOrg@gmail.com.

NEW YEAR, NEW WRITING

Step One: Set your writing intentions

No doubt you've heard of the Law of Attraction, so why not apply it to your writing?

Visualize an entire scenario: you are finishing your book, sending the manuscript to the publisher, receiving the acceptance letter, autographing books at a bookstore, speaking onstage to a filled auditorium, hosting your own podcast, sitting on the couch as a guest on The Tonight Show.

Tick... tick... tick. You look at the clock, watching the second hand move slowly around its round, stern face. You tap your pencil against the desk. Lightly, at first, then harder... tap-tap, tap-tap... and soon you are having an imaginary drum-off with the great Buddy Rich—or maybe even Ringo, the funny Beatle.

The clock keeps ticking. You wonder about the laundry. You wonder what the kids are doing. You wonder what's on TV tonight. Did anyone take out the dog? Is the dishwasher full yet? Should you stop and do another load of laundry?

By this time, too many precious moments have been wasted and now you're feeling guilty because your writing time is gone. Time you can never get back.

Once you've made the commitment to stop wasting time, try to keep to your writing schedule. (See page 6.) If you're feeling guilty about trying to write for 24 hours, let it go now! (If it helps, write the word "guilt" on a piece of paper, take it to the bathroom sink and burn it with a match until all you see is ashes. Just let it go...GOODBYE!)

Think about it. You deserve the right to challenge yourself. You deserve the time to write. So unless there is a dire emergency, ignore the distractions—no matter who or what they are—and keep that pen moving!

Step Two: Determine your word count goal

Think of **FIRST WRITE™** as a new birth, an opportunity to challenge yourself. Want to write 12,000 words in 24 hours? More? Less? Set your writing goal and do your best to stick with it.

Step Three: Announce your participation

Copy and paste the **FIRST WRITE™** participant logo from our website at <http://www.firstwrite.org>. Post the logo on your website, social media account pages, and email signatures.

Should you decide to produce a vlog of your **FIRST WRITE™** journey, please let us know at FirstWriteOrg@gmail.com.

NEW YEAR, NEW WRITING

Step Four: Prepare your writing space

Feng Shui is the art of furniture placement so that you may create and enjoy plenty of chi. When you have good chi, you have good writing.

To ensure the flow of good energy (or chi), get rid of the clutter. Clutter is invasive and will eventually take over your entire writing space like those cute little Tribbles did in Star Trek.

You don't need any distractions, so tell anyone who needs to know that you will be busy for a certain amount of time and during that time you cannot be disturbed unless the building's on fire or the end of the world has arrived because the fat lady is singing.

Disconnect the phone, hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign and turn off all electronic devices unless you absolutely need it to write. Don't forget to drink plenty of water and keep eye drops handy to reduce computer eye strain.

Step Five: Plan your schedule

Twenty-four hours is a long time to write nonstop, so planning your schedule to include breaks is important for your overall productivity and health.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE #1

12AM-6AM - Write (with 5-minute breaks every hour)

6AM-9AM - Nap

9AM-2PM - Write (with 5-minute breaks every hour)

2PM-5PM - Nap

5PM-12AM - Write (with 5-minute breaks every hour)

SAMPLE SCHEDULE #2

Follow the Pomodoro Technique, writing for 25 minutes with 5-minute breaks. Every four hours, increase your break time to 20 minutes.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE #3

Write for 45 minutes with 15-minute breaks.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE #4

Follow the Writing & Wellness schedule on page 8.

FIRST WRITE HANDBOOK

WRITING & WELLNESS



*Adopt the pace of Nature:
her secret is Patience.*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

After much contemplation, you've decided to do FIRST WRITE™ and figure you need to stock up on plenty of snacks and caffeine. Well, that's certainly one tactic for "surviving" this writing marathon.

Another option is to kick-off the New Year with your own Writing and Wellness Retreat, complete with nutritious food, meditation, and aromatherapy.

You probably won't have a personal chef preparing your meals, but you can be just as creative. Making a salad? Sort the fruits and vegetables by color. Or paint a swirly design or the word "write" with the salad dressing.

The purpose of this retreat is to have fun, feel better, and WRITE ON!

WRITING & WELLNESS

SAMPLE SCHEDULE:

Morning

Color Countdown (page 9)

Writing prompts (page 18)

Personal writing project (write from 12am-12pm, with 15-minute breaks every hour)

Earth Shower (page 13)

Morning Tea (page 14)

stretching, yoga, meditation, exercise and/or nap

Apple Green Smoothie (page 14)

Lunch

Writer's Wrap (page 15)

Spa Water (page 14)

Afternoon

Personal writing project (write from 12:30pm-6pm, with 15-minute breaks every hour)

Nature Walk

Blissful Hands and Feet Soak (page 12)

stretching, yoga, meditation, exercise and/or nap

Dinner

Mandarin Orange Salad (page 14)

Guacamole Pasta (page 15)

Spa Water (page 14)

Evening

Personal writing project (write from 6:30pm-11:45pm, with 15-minute breaks every hour)

Rose Quartz Facial (page 12)

Yummy Lip Scrub (page 12)

Milk and Honey Bath (page 13)

stretching, yoga, meditation, exercise and/or nap

Lavender/chamomile herbal tea at bedtime

WRITING & WELLNESS

Color Countdown

Let's try a brief visualization to help get your creative juices flowing.

Relax your mind by using the rainbow colors of Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet to count down to the creative alpha mind state. It is here—in alpha— where you will be more apt to concentrate and produce more creative writing.

Close your eyes and take three deep breaths.

Picture yourself standing at the top of a rainbow staircase containing seven stone steps. The first step you see is Violet. As you imagine yourself stepping down onto the Violet stone step, inhale the color Violet, exhale, then think or say aloud: "I am a writer. I am always positive that things happen for a reason and will turn out fine. I know everything I need to write."

Now walk down to the second step, Indigo. Breathe in the color Indigo, exhale, then think or say aloud: "I am a writer. I am always a visionary and inspiring to others. I see everything I need to write."

Walk down to the fifth step, Blue. Breathe in the color Blue, exhale, then think or say aloud: "I am a writer. I am always an excellent and honest communicator. I speak everything I need to write."

Walk down to the fourth step, Green. Breathe in the color Green, exhale, then think or say aloud: "I am a writer. I am always healthy and healed. I love everything I need to write."

Walk down to the third step, Yellow. Breathe in the color Yellow, exhale, then think or say aloud: "I am a writer. I am always learning and worthy of the power of knowledge. I can do everything I need to write."

Walk down to the sixth step, Orange. Breathe in the color Orange, exhale, then think or say aloud: "I am a writer. I am always feeling good about myself and others. I feel everything I need to write."

Walk down to the seventh step, Red. Breathe in the color Red, exhale, then think or say aloud: "I am a writer. I am always receiving the support I need. I have everything I need to write."

Now, clap your hands and open your eyes! You are feeling creative...inspired....and wide awake. You are ready to write!

WRITING & WELLNESS

As writers, we depend upon our senses when creating our locations, scenes or characters. But one sense that is rarely discussed is our sense of smell.

For example, perhaps whenever you smell the scent of sweet orange essential oil, you feel immediately uplifted because it evokes happy memories of the childhood summers you spent riding your bicycle and slurping orange-flavored popsicles.

Aromatherapy helps writers ground, get focused, and feel more confident.

Here's a mini lesson on working with aromatherapy:

Essential oils may be made from flower petals, roots, grasses, resins, and gums. In perfumery, each essential oil is defined by its particular strength or note. There are base notes, middle notes, and top notes.

Top notes tend to be fruity. One point to remember is that top notes evaporate first. They are the first scent you smell and the quickest to evaporate. Some examples are angelica seed, bergamot, cinnamon, lemon, lemongrass, orange, sage, spearmint, and thyme.

Middle notes are floral or spicy, like chamomile, cinnamon, clove, frankincense, ginger, juniper, lavender, myrrh, rose absolute, and ylang ylang.

Base notes are earthy fragrances. They include benzoin, cedarwood, clove, frankincense, ginger, jasmine, rose absolute, sandalwood, vanilla, vetiver, and ylang ylang. Of these, benzoin, vanilla and vetiver are thick and gooey. Be careful when you are extracting them from their bottles so they don't drip onto your workspace!

WRITING & WELLNESS

Have you ever thought about creating your own Writer room spray? Use an eye dropper to add up to 10 drops of your formula into your spray bottle. Once the formula is in the bottle, pour distilled or spring water through a funnel until the liquid is about an inch from the top. Be sure to spray high in the air and avoid spraying on furniture or fabrics which might get stained.

To create a well-balanced Writer blend, begin with approximately 20% of your selected base note, add 50% of the middle note and 30% of the top note. Because essential oils are too pure to use directly on the skin, a carrier oil like jojoba oil or sweet almond oil is used to dilute the essential oils. (Warning: do not use clove, juniper, myrrh or sage if you are a pregnant or lactating woman.)

Here are some simple Writer formulas to get you started:

CREATIVITY

benzoin (base note), myrrh (middle note), angelica seed (top note)

CONFIDENCE

ylang ylang (base note), chamomile (middle note), bergamot (top note)

Be sure to store your Writer formulas in dark glass bottles, preferably in a cool area, away from the radiation of microwaves, televisions, and computers.

Yummy Lip Scrub

1 tablespoon sweet almond oil
1 tablespoon white or brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Combine ingredients into small bowl. Mix well and apply to lips. Scrub gently and leave on for 5 minutes. Rinse with cool water.

Soothing Eye Treatment

2 cucumber slices
2 chamomile tea bags, damp

Boil water for tea. Let tea bags steep in a cup and cool. Squeeze cooled tea from teabags before using and put aside. Place the cucumber slices over your closed eyelids for 10 minutes. Follow with chamomile tea bags for another 10 minutes. This is excellent for computer eye strain.

Rose Quartz Facial

Cleanse face with rosehips oil with one drop of rose absolute oil, then massage face with a smooth rose quartz crystal. This only takes a few minutes and feels wonderful because you're receiving the loving, vibrational energies of the color Pink and the natural rose quartz.

Blissful Hands and Feet Soak

sea salt, fine
5 drops rose absolute oil
5 drops lavender essential oil
1/2 cup sweet almond oil or jojoba oil

For hands: In a bowl or measuring cup, combine oils and stir gently. Scrub your hands with sea salt. Use a teaspoon of the oil mixture and massage hands. Take time to massage your palms, wrists and each digit. Rinse with cool water and towel dry. Follow with a manicure, if desired.

For feet: Fill a basin with warm water. In a bowl or measuring cup, combine oils and stir gently. Scrub your feet with sea salt and let soak in water. Use a teaspoon of the oil mixture and massage hands. Take time to massage your heels and each toe. Rinse with cool water and towel dry. Follow with a pedicure, if desired.

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Milk and Honey Bath

- 1 teaspoon dried lavender
- 1 teaspoon dried rosebuds
- 1 teaspoon dried mint
- 1 packet of powdered milk
- 1 cup of honey or 1 packet of powdered honey

Pour all ingredients into warm bath water.

Earth Shower

- 1 cup seasalt
- 1 cup ground coffee
- 1/2 cup sweet almond oil, jojoba oil or grapeseed oil
- a few drops of cinnamon or sweet orange essential oils

Mix ingredients in small bowl. Scrub vigorously, avoiding eyes. Rinse well.

In-the-Shower Affirmation: I am grounded and ready to write.

WRITING & WELLNESS

Apple Green Smoothie

2 apples
2 large Romaine Lettuce leaves
1 radish
1-2 cups spring water

Core and peel apples. Peel and chop radish. Put all prepared ingredients in blender. Blend until smoothie has reached desired consistency. Add more water if necessary.

Master Cleanse

2 tablespoons of organic lemon Juice
2 tablespoons of Organic grade B maple syrup
1/10 teaspoon Cayenne Pepper powder
10 ounces of filtered water

Drink throughout the day instead of food.

Spa Water

1 gallon of spring water
3 lemons, sliced
1 cucumber, sliced
3 mint leaves, fresh

Morning Tea

2 cups boiling water
one green teabag
1/2 teaspoon ginger powder
honey and lemon to taste

Mandarin Orange Salad

1 can mandarin oranges (drained, but keep juice)
sliced onions
slivered almonds
spinach or Romaine lettuce

DRESSING: 1 tablespoon honey, 1 tablespoon cider vinegar, 1 tablespoon olive oil, chopped mint leaves, leftover mandarin orange juice

WRITING & WELLNESS

Kale and Blueberry Salad

4 cups kale, chopped
1 cup blueberries, fresh
1 cup sunflower seeds, shelled
1 onion, minced
1/2 cup dried cranberries

Toss kale, berries, seeds and onions in large bowl. Add dressing and toss.

DRESSING: 1/4 c. white wine vinegar, 1/4 cup olive oil, 2 tablespoons honey, juice of 1/2 lemon.

Writer's Wrap

1 flour tortilla
1 cup tuna (or vegetarian substitute), packed in water
1/2 cup mayonnaise or vegannaise
1 apple, chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 teaspoon celery seed
1 Romaine lettuce leaf

Mix tuna, mayonnaise, apple, onion, and celery seed. Place Romaine lettuce leaf on the tortilla, then a few tablespoons of tuna mixture and wrap.

Guacamole Pasta

your favorite pasta
2 avocados, ripe
1 tomato, chopped (or prepared salsa)
1 onion, chopped
1-2 cloves garlic, chopped
1/2 lime, squeezed
taco cheese, shredded

Cook pasta. Toss with a little olive oil, salt, and pepper. Place avocados, tomato, onion, garlic and lime in food processor until smooth. Pour guacamole mixture over pasta and top with taco cheese.

WRITING & WELLNESS

Vegan Chowder

2 c. raw cashews
14 oz. oyster mushrooms (fresh or dried)
4-6 T. Earth Balance (soy or non-soy)
2 c. onions, chopped
1-2 T. garlic, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
2 1/2 c. vegetable broth
4 c. potatoes, chopped
2-4 c. vegan bacon, chopped
sea salt (to taste)
black pepper (to taste)
dill weed (to taste)
1 sheet of nori (crushed)

1. Soak raw cashews in water for at least 8 hours in the refrigerator.
2. In a large pot, melt 3 tablespoons of Earth Balance and cook potatoes until slightly browned.
3. Add vegan bacon, onions, celery, mushrooms and garlic and cook until softened (approximately 5 minutes.)
4. Pour in vegetable broth and cook on low until potatoes are tender.
5. Drain cashews. Place cashews in blender, adding water until there is an inch above the nuts. Blend for a few minutes until the mixture is creamy. (Add more water if you wish a thinner chowder.)
6. Pour cashew mixture into chowder pot and stir. Add nori, sea salt, black pepper and dill weed.

Mini Asparagus Frittatas

extra virgin olive oil
2 bunches raw asparagus, clean and cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces
1 dozen eggs
1 tablespoon half & half
1 teaspoon fresh or dried thyme
seasalt and ground pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 375 F. Lightly coat two 12-piece nonstick muffin tins with olive oil.

Crack eggs into a large mixing bowl. Add half & half, thyme, a dash of sea salt and cracked pepper to taste. Beat with a fork until egg yolks and whites are combined.

Scoop egg mixture equally into muffin tins, using a little less than 1/4 cup for each. Add 6-8 pieces of asparagus to each frittata, then add about 1 tablespoon parmesan cheese on top.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes at 375 F, then broil for 1 to 2 minutes until lightly browned.

FIRST WRITE HANDBOOK

FIRST WORDS



The beginning is the most important part of any work.

~ Plato

The ball has dropped, the toasts are finished, and now it's time to get busy and write.

Have you ever sat at your writing desk, staring out the window or down at a blank page, just trying to think of something—anything—to write?

Having writers' block is like being kidnapped by a dastardly villain who ties you to the railroad tracks. You may kick and scream in desperation but all you hear is the evil cackling from this horrible, mustached cad who is preventing you from accomplishing your dreams.

Whenever you're faced with a blank mind, simply get up from your chair and go observe something. Not just a glance, but

FIRST WORDS

a thorough examination, as if you're seeing it for the first time. Study a painting. Your cats. A fir tree. The inside of your refrigerator. The Oriental rug in your living room.

Reading a book or watching a news report can help stimulate ideas, too. And so can listening, like listening to music. Listen to your heartbeat. Listen to the conversations of others.

All this listening probably makes writers sound rude, but we do make the best eavesdroppers, don't we? And writing dialogue for books and screenplays is much more convincing when it's based on the real thing!



Let's start your FIRST WRITE™ marathon with some brief warm-up exercises.

Write a one word summary on how you feel about the previous year.

EXAMPLE:
exasperating

Next, write a list of all the things you are happy to release from the previous year.

EXAMPLE:
dried up writing pens
dead batteries
expired canned food and spices
leftovers in the freezer
raggedy old towels
toxic people
unwanted pounds

FIRST WORDS

Ready for another warm-up?

Imagine you have taken a cold plunge into icy waters and the experience was life-changing. Now complete this sentence:

"Since my courageous cold plunge, I am surprised to find that I feel differently about..."

Here's an example:

Mother used to carry me on her back. I liked that a lot but then one day she insisted I take my first solo plunge into the ocean. All polar bears did it, she said, but I was afraid. I didn't know how icy water would feel on my tender white fur. So I was really surprised to find that it wasn't so bad. A little upsetting at first, but fun and exciting at the same time. Now that I've accomplished this task, I feel there is nothing I can't master!

Write for 5 minutes. Just let it flow—no editing allowed.



Write whatever you wish for one minute, using the word "Freezing" as the first word in your first sentence.

EXAMPLE:

Freezing is not my idea of a good time. I've lived in some of the coldest places on the planet and as I grow older I find myself less tolerant of icy cold temperatures. I remember watching people do that crazy Ice Bucket Challenge and I could almost feel their goosebumps through my television screen. Their shocks and shivers were for a good cause, but why couldn't it have been something less painful, like a Chocolate-Bunny Eating Challenge? Now THAT'S something I could sink my sweet teeth into!

Write for 1 minute. Just let it flow—no editing allowed.

FIRST WORDS

Complete this sentence: "The last time I felt really cold was..."

EXAMPLE:

The last time I felt really, REALLY cold was during a blizzard a few years ago when the power was out for several days. Nick was in England and couldn't get home because of the bad weather, so it was up to me to keep our kitties warm. Luckily, we have a fireplace, even though it doesn't warm up the second floor. Wrapped in an icy cold blanket, I stayed awake for over 24 hours feeding the fire with wet logs and old bills. The fire kept going out and the kitties and I were miserable.

Set your timer for 5 minutes. No editing!



Did you know that Color can help you feel warmer? For instance, if your body is cold, you can try wearing something Red or just breathe in the color Red. Or eat Red food like apples, beets, cherries or strawberries.

Here is your final "icebreaker":

Write about the colors of winter. Which colors have you seen so far? How do these colors make you feel? Do these colors have a smell or taste?

Write for 10 minutes. Just let it flow!

FIRST WORDS



Prompt

**Write about your favorite
New Year's Day tradition.**

FIRST WORDS

Prompt

One thing I wish I had
finished last year was

FIRST WORDS

Prompt

**Write your life story in
three words.**

FIRST WORDS



Prompt

Write a story about
planting and nurturing
a tree.

FIRST WORDS

Prompt

**Write about the first time
you knew you wanted to
become a writer.**

FIRST WORDS

Prompt

**Write a letter to yourself
about the top three writing
resolutions you intend to
accomplish this year.**

FIRST WORDS



Prompt

Write a story about how
the world will change on
January 1st.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Editing

Grammarly is an online grammar checking, spell checking, and plagiarism detection platform. <https://www.grammarly.com>

Hemingway Editor is a word processing and proofreading tool created to make your writing bold and clear. It's like a spellchecker, but for style. <http://www.hemingwayapp.com>

Roget's Thesaurus is a widely used English-language thesaurus of synonyms and antonyms. <https://www.thesaurus.com>

Slick Write is a powerful, free application that makes it easy to check your writing for grammar errors and potential stylistic mistakes. <https://www.slickwrite.com>

Formatting

Dabble organizes your manuscript and includes your story notes to make writing as easy as possible. <https://www.dabblewriter.com>

Evernote helps you capture and prioritize ideas, projects, and to-do lists, so nothing falls through the cracks. <https://evernote.com>

Scrivener is the go-to app for writers of all kinds, used every day by best-selling novelists, screenwriters, non-fiction writers, students, academics, lawyers, journalists, translators and more. <https://www.literatureandlatte.com>

Storyist is a powerful novel writing environment for Mac, iPad, and iPhone. Helps you track your plot, characters, and settings, and keeps all of your writing organized and accessible so you can focus on your manuscript. <http://storyist.com>

Vellum is a software program that generates ebooks and print editions of your manuscript. <https://vellum.pub>

Name Generators

Behind the Name <http://www.behindthename.com>

Character Name Generator <https://www.namegeneratorfun.com/character-name-generator>

Fantasy Name Generators <https://www.fantasynamgenerators.com>

Place Name Generator <https://www.namegenerator.biz/place-name-generator.ph>

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Text to Speech

Balabolka <http://www.snapfiles.com/get/balabolka.html>

Google Docs Voice Typing <https://support.google.com/docs/answer/4492226?hl=en>

Natural Reader <https://www.naturalreaders.com>

Wellness

Exercises for Writers http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1DaJDo_GP0

Laughter Yoga <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ppABQ8Z3lXc>

Yoga for Writers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71Djd6iRj28>

Writing Process

Anne Lamott <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkYJCADawY8>

Elizabeth Gilbert <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86x-u-tz0MA>

George RR Martin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfffCzEZwqI>

Julia Cameron <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3KLocmjJwI>

Natalie Goldberg http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pF2mBQ_ZgY

Stephen King https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6SKj_eiY9k

Writing Techniques

Pomodoro Technique is a time management method using a timer to break down work into intervals, traditionally 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks.

<https://www.toptal.com/project-managers/tomato-timer>

The Snowflake Method illustrates how a one-sentence summary can expand into a full-fledged novel. <https://www.advancedfictionwriting.com/articles/snowflake-method>

FIRST WRITE HANDBOOK

GIVING BACK



*It is important to remember that we all
have magic inside us.*

~ J.K. Rowling

Have you ever considered how many trees have been sacrificed so that you may write and publish your books?

According to the One Tree Planted organization, 700 pounds of paper are used by the average United States citizen each year. And 80,000 acres of forests disappear from the Earth every day!

To make your FIRST WRITE™ experience especially meaningful, start the New Year with a new writing project and a commitment to give back to the planet.

One option is to download the [Forest app](https://www.forestapp.cc/en) at <https://www.forestapp.cc/en>. With this app, users can earn credits by not using their cell phones and plant real trees around the world with their credits.

GIVING BACK

Another way to pay it forward is to **donate to the tree organization of your choice:**

Brettacorp is a registered not-for-profit community association building forests in the Cassowary Coast region of Tropical North Queensland, Australia. <https://www.brettacorp.org.au>

Earth Day Network Canopy Project has a goal to plant 7.8 billion trees (one tree for every person on earth) in honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in 2020. <https://earthdaynetwork.salsalabs.org/thecanopyproject/index.html>

Eden Reforestation Projects is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that plants millions of trees every year on the behalf of donors, businesses, and foundations. <https://edenprojects.org>

Green Belt Movement engages Kenyan women in planting trees, protecting critical forests and watersheds, and empowering communities. <http://www.greenbeltmovement.org>

International Tree Foundation works with communities in Africa and the UK to carry out sustainable community forestry projects. <http://internationaltreefoundation.org>

Kentucky Writers and Artists for Reforestation is a collective of creative people with a simple mission: to plant native trees on abandoned strip mines. <https://www.kentuckywritersandartistsforreforestation.site>

One Tree Planted is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in Shelburne, Vermont, working with amazing reforestation organizations around the world that need financial support to help them get more trees in the ground. <https://onetreeplanted.org>

Plant a Billion Trees is a large-scale restoration initiative launched by The Nature Conservancy in 2008. Projects include Brazil's Atlantic Forest and forest projects in the United States and China. <https://www.plantabillion.org>

Plant for the Planet is a youth initiative to plant 1,000 billion trees worldwide by the year 2020. <https://www.plant-for-the-planet.org>

Trees, Water and People works directly with the Oglala Lakota Native Americans to restore fire-degraded landscapes, store atmospheric carbon, and improve the skills and livelihoods of the local Lakota youth who will primarily be planting these trees for future generations on the reservation. <https://www.treeswaterpeople.org>

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Clutter-free writing space
- ✓ Fully-charged computer
- ✓ Back cushion or yoga block
- ✓ Writing supplies
- ✓ Reference books
- ✓ Timer
- ✓ Food and beverages
- ✓ Vitamins and supplements
- ✓ Hand cream, lip balm
- ✓ Comfortable clothing
- ✓ Outline or storyboard
- ✓ Motivational signs

- ✓ Determine word count goal.
- ✓ Determine writing schedule.
- ✓ Determine donation goals.
- ✓ Determine your music playlist.
- ✓ Turn off telephone ringers.



First Write

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FIRST WRITE™ is an annual New Year's writing challenge. Our purpose is to create new works and to raise donations for tree planting organizations.

FirstWriteOrg@gmail.com
www.firstwrite.org



HAPPY NEW YEAR!