



# Surviving National Novel Writing Month

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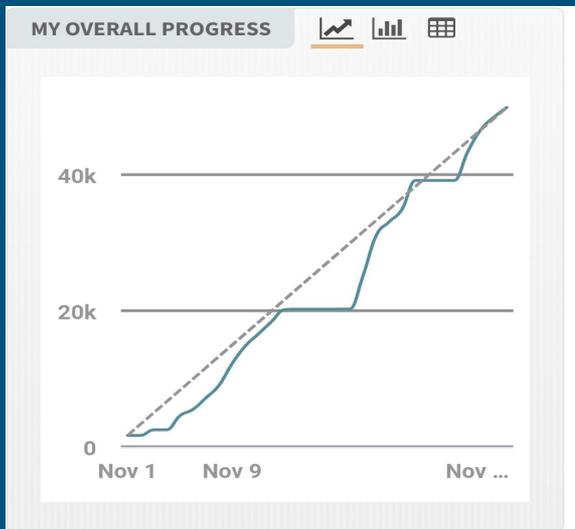
With 50,000 words (and your sanity)!



# About Me:

I have been participating in Nanowrimo since 2009.

With some good years:



Some great years:



Some...Not so much:



# Topics to cover

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- **The Basics:** some terms, first steps, setting up your goal, the Nano website
- **Day One:** write ins; getting that first word on the page
- **The Blank Page:** tips and tricks; helpful websites
- **The Backspace Key:** the dumpfile
- **Writing:** typing anywhere, anytime; when not to write; rewards
- **The Quick and Dirty:** cheap tricks to get that word count up.
- **List of websites**

# The Basics: Terms

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- **Nanowrimo:** National Novel Writing Month, or Nano
- **Old-school Wrimo:** One who starts a brand new novel from word one on Nov. 1st
- **Nano Rebel:** One who writes anything but a brand new novel on Nov. 1st
- **Planner:** planned out your whole project, now just need to type.
- **Pantser:** no idea where your project is going, when in doubt: add ninjas
- **Planster:** Somewhere in between.
- **Municipal Liaison:** volunteer guide to the world of Nano

# The Basics: First Steps

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- Tell everyone that you are participating in Nano: Your spouse, your friends, your family, your dog, social media
- Get an accounting buddy who will check in to see if you are still writing. Arrange (if comfortable) rewards and punishments.
- Arrange for others to do your chores for you during November, if you have that luxury
- Get familiar with your writing software of choice
- Declare your project on [Nanowrimo.org](https://nanowrimo.org)

# The Basics: Setting your goal, the Nano website

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- Decide what you are going to do:
  - A new novel?
  - An old novel?
  - A set of short stories?
  - Poetry?
  - Lectures?
  - Ph.D. Theseus?
- The Nano website:
  - Account
  - Declaring project
  - Badges
  - Region
  - Forums

# Day One: write ins

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- **Write Ins:** The Nano participants best friend. A space in a coffee shop, restaurant, library, or online, where other crazy people like you are writing right along with you. A place to run writing sprints, and be guilted into actually making those keys click!
- **Sprints:** A period of time where the writer (or group of writers) does nothing but write. Sometimes there are prizes for the writer with the most words written.

# Day One: getting that first word on the page

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- **Free Write:** your first word does not have to be Shakespeare. It doesn't even have to be See Spot Run. Just write stream of consciousness until you get into the flow.
- **Have an extended outline:** For some, the more planning, the less worry. You can type from your outline.
- **Write the first sentence/paragraph/scene/chapter BEFORE Nov. 1st.:** Then copy it on the first. No editing, no checking your typing, just typing as fast as you can. You can do the same on the 2nd.

# The Blank Page: Tips and Tricks

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- **Turn off your inner editor:** This is a first draft. It's not supposed to be good. Or spelled correctly.
  - Turn off spelling/grammar check
  - Turn your font color to white (on a white screen)
  - Reduce your font size to 2 pt.
  - Don't look at your screen while you are typing

# The Blank Page: Tips and Tricks

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- **Research:** If you can't find it on the first page of a google search, you don't need to know it in November.
  - Type FQ (Fact Question) or a double question mark, or something you can easily scan for in your document on December (or January) 1st.

# The Blank Page: Helpful Websites

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- **Write Track:** Rather like the Nano site, in that it is a word tracker. This site allows you to weigh days so you don't have to write an even amount of words every day. ([Writetrack.cloud](http://Writetrack.cloud))
- **Written? Kitten!:** a website that gives you a picture of a kitten after you have written X number of words. ([Writtenkitten.com](http://Writtenkitten.com))
- **Write or Die:** Set an amount of time and a word goal. If you stop typing there will be consequences, including: red screen, flashing lights, creepy pictures. Kamikaze mode eliminates words if you stall too long. Free version and paid version available. ([writeordie.com](http://writeordie.com))
- **4thewords:** A gamers website, where your word count defeats monsters. Something of a pay-as-you-go site. ([4thewords.com](http://4thewords.com))

# The Backspace Key: Your Enemy

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- Don't. Just don't.
  - Well, do hit the backspace if you can't read the word you just wrote. Or you look down to find your fingers are on the wrong keys.
  - But even then, those are words written in November, right?
  - Tape a piece of paper or cardstock over that button, build a tiny fort around it, smear it with honey, anything to stop your finger from reaching for it.

# The Backspace Key: The Dump File

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- Create a separate document, or file within Scrivener notebook
  - Dump all those awful paragraphs. The bits that go nowhere. When you realize that the story is traveling in on itself and you need to erase the previous chapter and a half.
  - You might need those words later, in revision!

# Writing: Anywhere, anytime

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- Got a tablet that you can carry around? Haul that thing everywhere! I've typed on my school bus waiting for kids. I've typed on the floors of gyms while the team is playing, in the parking lots of museums, and on park benches outside the zoo.
- No tablet? Take your phone. Type while waiting in the grocery line. Take a journal, make it look like you are taking notes in that very important (could've been an email) meeting.
- You'd be amazed how much writing time you actually have during the day.

# Writing: when not to write

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- Don't write ALL the time. We are trying to keep our sanity intact.
  - Cuddle your cats. Remind yourself that there is sunshine. Say hello to your significant other or your children.
  - Schedule time to sleep and eat and exercise and sleep and massage your hands from typing, and shower. And sleep.
  - Did I mention sleep? This is a marathon, not a sprint. You will need the same amount of energy on the 30th that you had on the 1st.

# Writing: Reward Yourself!

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- Celebrate the small things:
  - The Nano site awards badges for achievements, even if it is recording a new word count for five days in a row.
  - Maybe you are wanting something special. Give yourself permission to get that once you reach a certain day or word count.
- This is a challenge. Remember that you don't HAVE to make it to 50,000 words. Maybe 5,000 words is a major accomplishment. It's 5,000 words you didn't have before.

# The Quick and The Dirty: Cheap Tricks

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- Don't (Do not) use contractions. Search for "n't" and replace with "not". Then again with 're and 've. You'll be amazed how many words that adds. (Oh! 'll!)
- Got character profiles? A beat sheet? A forty page outline? Copy that into your document.
- All that time you are thinking about how a scene will go? Type that out in stream of consciousness. Have two characters debate the love triangle. Add in all the As-You-Know-Bob scenes your inner editor refused to let you write.

# The Quick and The Dirty: Cheap Tricks

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- Describe everything, down to the last stone on the last courtyard on the last inner keep of the castle.
- Desperate?
  - Characters deserve two names: Sarah Jo. Billy Bob. Jo Betsy. Why stop at two? Chief Petty Officer Joe Bob Morton Junior. Her Royal Highness Princess Leticia Amy Morganstern, First of Her Name, Duchess of Eastern Anglophobia, Countess of the Angels, the Conqueror, The Unburnt, Mother of Dragons...
  - Then search and replace every instance of the original name.

# The Quick and The Dirty: Cheap Tricks

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- Towns shouldn't be London or Paris when they could be Higgly on the Walk or Greater North Eastern Fandlington. Same search and replace applies.
- Give each of your chapters titles, rather than numbers.
  - Chapter Twenty Three: Having Been Cruelly Rejected, Our Dejected Heroine Wanders Out Onto the Moor, Intent on Doing Herself Harm
  - But, Instead, Encounters the Dread Werewolf, Whereupon She Screams, and Our Dashing Hero Rides Valiantly to Her Rescue.

Most Important of All



# Have FUN!

(And ignore all the tricks that don't work for you)

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# Helpful Websites:

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- [Nanowrimo.org](https://nanowrimo.org)
- [Writetrack.cloud](https://writetrack.cloud)
- [Writtenkitten.co](https://writtenkitten.co)
- [Writeordie.com](https://writeordie.com)
- [4thewords.com](https://4thewords.com)

Slides available on my website:

[Tokengeekgirl.blog](https://tokengeekgirl.blog)

Under the “Geek Tutorials” tab