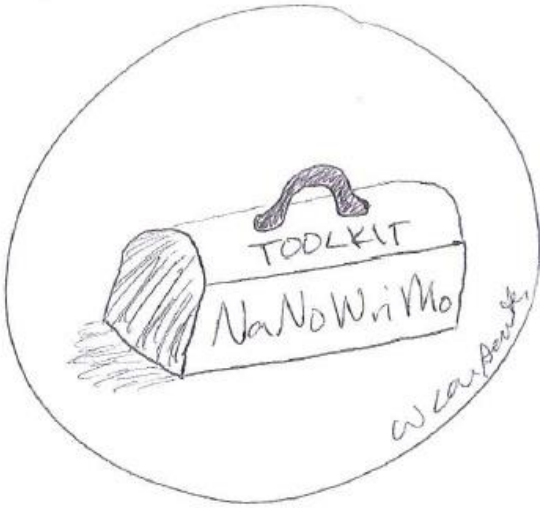


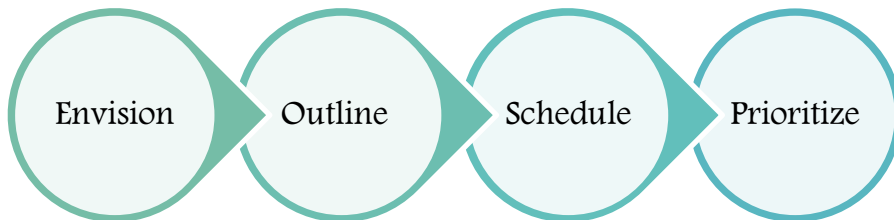
NovPrepWo - A NaNoWriMo Preparation Workbook



Get ready for National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo, <http://nanowrimo.org>)! In the month of November, the goal is to write 50,000 words in 30 days (that's ~1,667 words per day)!

It's an ambitious goal, but it can be done - I managed to do it in 2008! I've attempted it a number of other years, but that was the year I prepared best. You can do it too, if you plan ahead.

Four Steps



Step one - Envision

Have a vision for your project. Some people like to just sit down and write whatever pops into their head but, for my successful NaNoWriMo project, it helped that I was writing a prequel to another story, so I knew exactly what had to happen to get the characters to the end point, which was the start of the other story.

Try to nail down the 4 Ws; who, what, where, and when.

WHO: Spend some time really picturing your characters, have them fleshed out and personalized before November 1! Know who they are, what they want, and what their relationships are to the other characters. Know their favorite colors and what they had for breakfast. Make friends with these people so they are ready to run with you on day one.

WHAT: Know the gist of your plot arch. Give your characters something to do. Knowing the route you're taking with them makes it much easier to get your daily word goals met.

WHERE: Know your setting. If it's a real place, look at photos and learn local history. If it's a fantasy or future world, make up as much detail as you can. Make it real. Know the layout like the back of your own hand. Get familiar with it. Live in this place before day one.

WHEN: Know the timeline for your story. Are you covering 24 hours or 24 years? Pick a date for your story. Know if something happened in the recent past that might be important to your characters or the setting. Think about the context for your novel.

With the 4 Ws in your toolkit, you'll be ready to go on Nov 1.

What are your 4 Ws for your NaNoWriMo project?

WHO _____

WHAT _____

WHERE _____

WHEN _____

Step two - Outline

This is the "How" section of your planning. How will you tie together the 4 Ws?

First off, it helps to *know your writing goal*. I find that, when my goal is to actually finish a draft and have something to show for my work, an outline is the way to go. If your goal is just to play and see what comes up when you sit down to write, an outline may be impossible.

Personally, I have a love-hate relationship with outlining. Many people may have a dominant left or right brain, but I'm somewhere in the middle. I like to organize and plan things like vacations and workout schedules, but I'm also very creative and whimsical.

When it comes to writing, my left brain likes the idea of an outline, and my process goes more smoothly when I have one, but my right brain feels constrained. I've developed a middle ground of outlining, basically a high-level plan but with lots of room close-up to play. I decide where my characters are, where they're going, and a couple of main events that happen along the way. I split my story arch into thirds and try to plan a little more detail for just the third I'm working on, then I do more detail for the next third in turn. This lets me adjust as I'm going, if necessary, as small events may throw off bigger ones later on, etc.

The problem with writing is that *every writer is different and every story is different*. What works for Stephen King, as explained in his excellent book, *On Writing*, may not work for you. You have to be open to learn from your process as you experiment with different techniques. I have been resistant to this concept, because I want there to be an easy formula to follow, and of course it doesn't work like that. Be on the look-out for what is working or not working for you, and don't be afraid to change process mid-story to make things easier on yourself.

To meet the NaNoWriMo goal of 50k words in 30 days, I found it invaluable to have an outline, whatever form it may take.

*How do you feel about outlines?
What kind of preparation feels right for you?*

Step three – Schedule

Once you have your outline figured out, it becomes easy to *break it down into daily sessions and word-count goals*.

When I was successful with completing NaNoWriMo, I decided I would do two daily sessions of 835 words (50,100 words total). I have trouble writing for more than 30–45 minutes at a sitting, so I knew that two sessions per day would work better for me than one long session. I estimated three sessions per chapter (2,505 words), or two chapters complete every 3 days (20 chapters total). With my outline, I was able to print out a November calendar from Microsoft Outlook and assign which chapter I would write each day. I was writing it chronologically, so that worked for me for that story. Knowing and scheduling which scene/chapter to write each day was essential to my success that year, because I wasn't wasting valuable writing time to find my place each day.

This kind of detail may not work for everyone, so *find and use whatever works*. I'm sharing my process as an example, but the main thing is to do whatever will get you to 50k words in 30 days!

If my process doesn't appeal to you, *sit down and think about what would work better for you*. What has or hasn't worked for you in the past? The important thing is to have a plan that fits you as a writer.

What kind of a writing schedule will work best for you this month?

Step four – Prioritize

Prioritize your goal of finishing NaNoWriMo. If you don't make it important, you will find 101 other things to do in November.

The first year I tried NaNoWriMo, I met a boy and we started dating. Spending time with him used up my writing time. I prioritized the boy over my project. The boy didn't last 3 months! I would have been better off finishing my novel.

If your novel is important to you, *choose it*. If shaping your inner world on paper is important to you, *do it*. Most writers don't write because we want to; we write because we need to. *Allow yourself to need the month of November to write a novel*. Don't be an "aspiring novelist" any longer; write your novel! The beautiful people behind NaNoWriMo know that the world needs your novel. We need everyone's voices and words and worlds.

You may also have to work, eat, shower, etc. *Make a list of the absolutely necessary tasks for November and cut out everything else.* If you want to participate in Thanksgiving, try to pad in some extra words each week prior so you can slack off a bit that weekend. Otherwise, use your DVR, your voicemail, your email out-of-office message; technology can help you filter down to what is important.

Remind yourself that your words are important and prove it to everyone by taking the time to write them. *Those 50,000 words are already in your head, a few 50,000 times over; you just need to sit down and let them come through your fingers.* Sign up for NaNoWriMo (http://nanowrimo.org/en/sign_up) and go for it!

(If you sign up, friend me so I can follow your progress!
<http://nanowrimo.org/en/participants/catcar>)

Are you ready to prioritize your writing for one month?

What unnecessary tasks can you drop in November to make more time for writing?

NaNoWriMo Preparation Checklist

- An exciting story idea
- Characters you want to spend time with
- The 4 Ws
- A creative imagination
- An open mind
- A playful muse
- A pencil/pen and paper or a typewriter/computer
- Self-confidence and trust
- Daring
- Dedication to contribute your voice
- A dash of insanity
- A month to prioritize your writing
- Emotional support from friends and other writers

I would love to know how you do with NaNoWriMo! Let me know at exploringyourdepths@gmail.com.

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Cathy Carpenter * Exploring Your Depths, LLC

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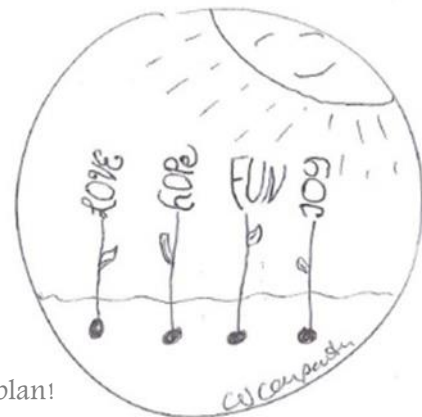
Creativity and Life Coaching

First, take my [Creativity Health Assessment quiz](#) to identify your primary creativity dis-ease which holds back your creative potential. Then consider signing up for free creativity coaching:

Free

Free "Creativity Health Plan" Session, 30-45 min.
Creativity health doesn't happen over night; make a plan!

Look at and address your primary creativity dis-ease and set a plan to work through it



I also have paid sessions ranging from \$60-495 to focus on work-art balance, creative abundance and vitality, and accountability to make your creative dreams real! See the [Coaching page](#) on Cathy's website for more information.

- "Creativity Health and Wellness Program" Session, 45 minutes; To create a solid routine and foundation for your creative wellness (\$60)
- "Creative Block Buster" Session, 45 minutes; Bust your block and reclaim your creative power (\$60)
- "Yes, and ..." package, 90 minutes; You can have a day-job and eat your creative cake, too (\$125)
- "Anchor Away with Accountability" package, 180 minutes; 3 months of accountability can liberate you from limitations! (\$245)

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