

WHY RAIDERWRIMO?



Why RaiderWriMo?

"The biggest thing separating people from their artistic ambitions is not a lack of talent. It's the lack of a *deadline*. Give someone an enormous task, a supportive community, and a friendly-yet-firm due date, and miracles will happen.
- Chris Baty, *No Plot? No Problem!* (14)

Ever thought about writing a novel?

Love to read novels?

Have something to say?

Looking for a creative outlet?

Have a lot of extra time on your hands?

Feeling bogged down by the monotony of life?

Looking to spice things up a bit?

Feel the need to achieve a goal?

Looking for a challenge?

Bored?

Aimless?

Looking to infuse your life with some passion?

If *any* of the above statements apply to you, then you are in the right place.

If *none* of the above statements apply to you, but you still want to sign up for RaiderWriMo, welcome! You're still in the right place. You don't need any reason to be here other than the simple fact that you want to write a novel, darnit.

Whatever your reason for being here, the important thing is that you want to write a novel. Now, we all know that wanting something isn't enough. You may be thinking that, while this whole write-a-novel-in-a-month thing sounds like fun, it just isn't practical.

Read on, friends, read on.

WHY NOW?



Chew on This

THE TIME IS NOW.

In his book *No Plot? No Problem!*, Chris Baty, creator of NaNoWriMo warns against being a “One Day” Novelist—that is, someone who plans to write a novel “one day.”

If you want to do something, anything, including write a novel, the time is now.

You will never again be as young as you are *right now*.

You will never again have as much life left ahead of you as you have *right now*.

So, I have to ask: What are you waiting for?

BUSY PEOPLE GET THINGS DONE

Are you a very busy person? Is your To Do List so long you could fill an entire roll of toilet paper with items? Do you fall into bed at night and count all the things you didn't get to in your very busy day? If so, this is great news! Why? Because busy people get things done. This may sound crazy, but it's the truth.

Think about the last time you had a whole day all to yourself, with nothing planned, and no obligations to anyone else? How productive were you on that day?

The truth is people get more done when they have things to do. Plain and simple. So, if you're thinking you may be too busy to take on NaNoWriMo, you're wrong.



In fact, busy is perfect.

WRITING IS DISCOVERY

You may be thinking that even though you want to write a novel, you don't really have any ideas just yet. That is okay. In fact, that's perfect! Writing is a process of discovery, and when you give yourself the time and the space to write, the ideas will come to you. That's a fact. Ask the next brain scientist you meet, she'll confirm it.

THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO BECOME A WRITER

Want to be a writer? There's only one way to do it, and that is to write. Every single day. Just as runners run, and drivers drive, and guitarists guitar, writers write. Now is the time to become the writer you've always wanted to become. Join us.



WHAT IS RAIDERWRIMO?

What Are You Signing Up For?

(Or, I should say: For what are you signing up?)

- 50,000 WORDS**
- 30 DAYS**
- 1 NOVEL**

You may be thinking “I can’t write a great novel in one month!”
You are correct.

But you *can* write the first draft of a mediocre novel in one month. As good old Ernie used to say:

**The first draft of anything is shit.
- Ernest Hemingway**

Talk about eloquent, eh?

In *No Plot? No Problem!*, Chris Baty makes a great analogy about writing:

He compares the first draft of your writing to a newborn baby. Have you ever seen a newborn? They come out all wrinkly, covered in stuff I don’t even want to think about, their noses smushed and their eyes scrunched up. There is nothing pretty about a newborn baby.

But then some time goes by, the proud parents bathe their new baby, put a bow in her hair, her face smoothes out, and poof! Your Facebook feed is filled with pictures of a beautiful, smiling baby girl.

Writing is a lot like babies: a little bit ugly when it first comes out, but with some cleaning up and attention, it is eventually ready for its close-up.

All you need to do during the month of NaNoWriMo is get that baby out, wrinkles and all. THEN you can worry about making it pretty in October and beyond.

SIGN ON THE LINE



Make a Real Commitment: Put It in Writing

Now it's time to separate the talkers from the walkers.

I'm going to ask you to do two things right now:

1. Sign *The Month-Long Novelist Agreement and Statement of Understanding*

This is right out of page 37 of Chris Baty's book *No Plot? No Problem!* (Have you bought a copy for yourself yet? You really should own it.) There's something about signing your name to a formal document that makes it feel official, isn't there? I'm going to have you sign the agreement and give it to me so I can hold it over your head mid-November when you're behind your word count and you need some tough love.

Here's the text from the agreement, just so you can remember what you signed:

I hereby pledge my intent to write a 50,000-word novel in one month's time. By invoking an absurd, month-long deadline on such an enormous undertaking, I understand that notions of "craft," "brilliance," and "competency" are to be chucked right out the window, where they will remain, ignored, until they are retrieved for the editing process. I understand that I am a talented person, capable of heroic acts of creativity, and I will give myself enough time over the course of the next month to allow my innate gifts to come to the surface, unmolested by self-doubt, self-criticism, and other acts of self-bullying.

During the month ahead, I realize I will produce clunky dialogue, clichéd characters, and deeply flawed plots. I agree that all of these things will be left in my rough draft, to be corrected and/or excised at a later point. I understand my right to withhold my manuscript from all readers until I deem it completed. I also acknowledge my right as an author to substantially inflate both the quality of the rough draft and the rigors of the writing process should such inflation prove useful in garnering me respect and attention, or freedom from participation in onerous household chores.

I acknowledge that the month-long, 50,000-word deadline I set for myself is absolute and unchangeable, and that any failure to meet the deadline, or any effort on my part to move the deadline once the adventure has begun, will invite well-deserved mockery from friends and family. I also acknowledge that, upon successful completion of the stated noveling objective, I am entitled to a period of gleeful celebration and revelry, the duration and intensity of which may preclude me from participating fully in workplace activities for days, if not weeks, afterward.

Signed

Date

Novel Start Date

Novel Deadline

BECOME AN OFFICIAL WRiMo



Make a Real Commitment: Sign Up!

2. Create an account on www.nanowrimo.org

The NaNoWriMo website is chock full of helpful resources, motivating videos, and other people who are as crazy as you are, and are also trying to write a novel in 30 days.

After you sign up, search for me on the site and we can become writing buddies. My name is “LoriO”. Then, search for other Oakton WriMos and anyone else you know, and buddy up with them, too.

Discover Your Writing Community

There are so many ways to get involved with other writers, RaiderWriMos and beyond. Here are just a few:

RaiderWriMo

Join us for workshops and write-ins during the months of October, November, and December. <http://researchguides.oakton.edu/nanowrimo>

Local WriMos

Check out the ChiWriMo homepage for information about local write-ins and other Chicago-area writing events. <http://chiwrimo.org/>

NaNoWriMo Forums

WriMos from all over the world gather on the NaNo forums to discuss everything from writing tools to favorite snacks. Join the conversation!

Goodreads RaiderWriMo 2011 Group

I created a group on Goodreads for RaiderWriMos. Once you join the site, search for me (loster@oakton.edu) and once we become friends, remind me that you’d like to join our RaiderWriMo group. www.goodreads.com

Goodreads NaNoWriMo 2011 Group

There’s already a general NaNoWriMo 2011 group on Goodreads, and you should join that one, too!

FIND THE TIME



Discover the Time and Space You Need to Write

FIND THE TIME
The Time Finder

On page 41 of *No Plot? No Problem!* Chris Baty details a great little tool for carving time out of your busy schedule to write. He calls this tool *The Time Finder*. Sounds like something out of Harry Potter, right?

THE TIME FINDER

Here's how it works:

- Record everything you do for one week
- Highlight all necessary things in red, all high priority things in blue, and all unnecessary things in yellow
- Plan to eliminate all of the yellow items from your life during NaNoWriMo
- Schedule your writing time based on all the space you have just freed from your schedule. Voila!

More information about time management for student WriMos can be found on the NaNoWriMo website: <http://www.nanowrimo.org/nanouniversity/students/guidebook/section2/ch1>

A Word of Caution:

DO NOT take more than one day off from your novel! That just muffles your muse!
Nobody wants a muffled muse. Nobody.



YOUR WRITING ZONE



FIND THE SPACE *Your Writing Zone*

Writers have writing zones. Your writing zone is that space you go to when you want to get serious about your writing. Your writing zone is like a magical little cave you can crawl into whenever you are in serious need of some good, quality writing time. Everything is great in the zone. You do your best writing in the zone. It is vital that you find your zone.

My current writing zone involves an overstuffed sofa, a warm blanket, at least one cat or dog curled up next to me, and a table within reach that holds a mug of hot coffee, a pen, my notebook. Most importantly, my zone involves a lot of silence. This is the environment in which I do my best writing, and this is *my* zone, so back off. You need to find your own zone. ☺

Maybe you do your best writing in the local coffee shop by your house with your iPod and some hot cocoa, or in a study carrel at the OCC library, or at your best friend's house with music blaring in the background, or in terminal B6 at O'Hare airport. Whatever it includes and wherever it is, you need to find and claim your own writing zone.

My writing zone is also my reading zone, which you can see here:



UNTIL NEXT TIME . . .

I'm so happy that you're planning to join the RaiderWriMos this year. As you go through this next week, make sure you do the following:

- Check out the various WriMo groups and communities listed on page 5.
- Convince your friends to join you. The more the merrier!
- Use the Time Finder to find at least one hour per day that you can dedicate to writing in November.
- Find your writing zone and claim it!
- Plan to join us next week for **Workshop #2: Gather the Tools You'll Need**
 - Tu 10/11: 11 AM to 12 noon, Oakton Community College Library Classroom 2418
 - W 10/12: 12:30 to 1:30 PM, Oakton Community College Library Lower Level