



## THE ROADMAP: 2016 WRITING PLANNER

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## WHY PLAN?

The problem with New Year's resolutions is that they often focus on the negative, on what's 'wrong' with us rather than looking forward to where (and who) we want to be, on all those things we think we really *should* do or stop doing rather than what we really, truly want..

For us though, it's easy. What we really, truly want is to write.

Instead of just promising to do 'better', you can review the year and look at what has gone the way you wanted, what hasn't and why. Then plan next year by getting clear about what's important to you, what you want to do, why, how you want to feel about your writing and, importantly, *how to get there*.

How are you going to get an agent for your first book if it's sitting in the drawer? Or maybe you've published two books already, but the third won't magically write itself. You have to decide to do it, work out how to fit it in, commit to the work then put one foot in front of the other. You're in control of your writing habits, your creativity and managing your time and energy.

A fulfilling life as a writer is possible, and it's yours to create. Planning will show you exactly what you can do or change to get there in manageable steps.

Dreaming is great, but doesn't having a dream and a map sound better?

This process will probably take you an hour or so, but there's a cheaty quick version you can do in 10 minutes at the back if you're the impatient type.

Happy writing!  
Charlie



## A QUICK REVIEW OF 2015

Do this quickly, in 10 minutes. Write everything you can think of, then check your diary for events or milestones you might have forgotten.

What went well in your writing life last year? What did you achieve? What made you happy or proud? Did you have goals you hit?

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What wasn't so positive? What could you have done differently? When were you frustrated or stuck? What felt like a failure or was a missed goal?

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# THE PLANNING PROCESS

Now for the fun bit.

Step 1: in an ideal world, what would you like to see when you look back on 31<sup>st</sup> December? What do you really want to write this year? Brainstorm and make a list of all absolutely everything you might like to do this year using the suggested headings, then pick the ones you like the look of most, the things that fill you with joy.

Step 2: pick the things you like the look of most, the ones that fill you with joy, and turn them into specific goals. Then you'll investigate how to actually do it, using a nifty little trick.

Step 3: has two parts. Strategies and actions is where you define the choices you need to make and the things you need to do in order to reach your goals. Maybe you'll decide that the best way to write what you want to is to commit to writing 500 words every single day, or that to increase your audience you should do a blog tour and give book copies away. To improve your writing you might take a class, enter a competition each month, go to a writing group fortnightly. Write down everything you can come up with for each goal, and again try to be specific.

Then you'll look at the milestones you want to hit, the numbers or measures that will let you know you're on track. Work out some key progress markers and add in dates: if you want to have your novel with an agent by the end of the year you might put in deadlines for when you want to plan, reach 10,000 words, 50,000 words, the end, find 10 great agents, etc. Then go back and check that your strategies will help you reach the milestones.

Step 4 & 5: monthly and weekly planning. Once your goals are complete, move onto the planner and start filling in what needs to happen each month, using your milestones. Then take a look at it. Is it realistic? Does it look fun? If not, revise it. Break it down further and fill in weekly goals month by month with tiny action steps and weekly targets, so that you're allowing room to adapt your goals as you go. Remember, you're in charge of your writing (and of your plan), and it's fine to adjust your targets as you go.

## STEP 1: WHAT DO YOU WANT?

What are the things (stories, ideas, subjects) that you want to write about, the things you want to say? Spend 5 minutes writing without stopping, then check your notebooks and add in any other ideas you've had floating in your head.

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What do you want to write in 2016 or achieve with your writing? List anything and everything that comes to mind.

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What would you like to do in your wider writing life? E.g. growth/learning, developing a steady habit, build website, etc.

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## STEP 2: SET GOALS

Now pick between one and three goals for the year, big things that you'd really love to do this year from your list. Make them the things you want more than anything else, the things you hardly dare wish for. Try putting them in one of these formats (or something similar that works for you).

I want to \_\_\_\_\_ . In 2016, I'd really love to write about \_\_\_\_\_ .

I'm going to write \_\_\_\_\_ , then I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ .

### Examples:

- ⤴ I want to be a published children's author in 2016. What I really want to do is develop my idea for a book (for ages 3-5 yrs) called *Hush Now, Snorosaur*, write it, then I'm going to edit it and submit it to agents.
- ⤴ I want to learn to be a better writer by writing more. In 2016 I'd really love to write about love and the complexity of relationships. I'm going to write at least one short story a month to submit to competitions.

Goal 1:

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Goal 2:

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Goal 3:

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Now for the sneaky superpower trick. Write quickly, without stopping. Imagine it's 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 and you've achieved all of your goals. How did you actually do it? What daily/weekly habits got you there? How did you react when things went badly and you thought your writing was horrible and pointless? How did you think and feel about writing? What did you have to change from your actions in 2015 to achieve your goals?

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Circle the 2-3 habits or attitudes that will make most difference to your progress, or the things you're doing already that you know make a real difference to your creativity and productivity.

## STEP 3: STRATEGIES AND MILESTONES

Time to plan what you need to do, habits, attitudes and actions you need to take to reach each goal. You can include anything you think will help in the strategies and actions section.

Set milestones for each goal too, mini-targets, with a date you want to complete each one by. The smaller you break your goals down, the more achievable they will feel and the easier you'll find it to keep going.

Goal 1:

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Strategies & actions .....

.....  
Milestones & dates .....

Goal 2:

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Strategies & actions

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Milestones & dates

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Goal 3:

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Strategies & actions

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Milestones & dates

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## STEP 4: 2016 MONTHLY WRITING PLANNER

Pop your milestones and what your focus will be for each month into the planner, using the previous pages.

January	February	March	April
May	June	July	August
September	October	November	December

## STEP 5: WEEKLY PLANNER

Break each month down as you go (print a whole set now to make life easy later and pin this to your wall) or work in batches of three months.

Month:

Goal:

Week starting	Actions	Milestones/weekly targets
Week starting	Actions	Milestones/weekly targets
Week starting	Actions	Milestones/weekly targets
Week starting	Actions	Milestones/weekly targets
Week starting	Actions	Milestones/weekly targets

## THE QUICK & DIRTY VERSION

Pick between one and three goals for the year, big things that you'd really love to do this year. Make them the things you want more than anything else, the things you hardly dare wish for.

Put them in one of these formats (or something similar that works for you).

I want to \_\_\_\_\_ . In 2016, I'd really love to write about \_\_\_\_\_ .

I'm going to write \_\_\_\_\_ , then I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ .

### Examples:

- ✦ I want to be a published author in 2016. What I really want to do is develop my idea for a children's book (3-5 yrs) called *Hush Now, Snorosaur*, write it, and then I'm going to edit it and submit it to an agent.
- ✦ I want to learn to be a better writer by writing more. In 2016 I'd really love to write about love and the complexity of relationships. I'm going to write at least one short story a month to submit one a month to competitions.

Now, what are you going to do or change to make sure you get there? Come up with at least three things.

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# ABOUT URBAN WRITERS' RETREAT

You want to write, really you do, but sometimes life just... gets in the way.

I'm Charlie. I provide time and space dedicated to your writing without distractions. I've been running [writing retreats](#) in the UK since 2008.

Being around other people who understand what it's like to be a writer is lovely, and being at a retreat where everyone is there to write creates a productive working environment.

One-day retreats take place in a little haven in the heart of the city, while residential writing breaks in Devon are made up of days on end of blissful writing time interrupted only by country walks and cake breaks. Retreats in Europe are next on the cards...

I also work with writers across the world online. I can help you to find that space and time in your everyday life through the [Writer's Block Detox](#) for stalled writers, or the [Six Month Novel](#) if you're looking to complete that novel idea that's been floating in your head for ages.



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