



2017 WRITING PLANNER

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WHY PLAN?

The problem with New Year's resolutions is that they often focus on what's 'wrong' with us, 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', let's look at what has gone well, what hasn't and why. Then you can get clear about what you want in the coming year, 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? Maybe you have two published books, but the third won't magically write itself. Once you know what you want you can plan and set up routines and habits to give yourself the best chance of getting there. You're in charge of your writing habits, your creativity and managing your time and energy, and by committing to small steps you'll make it.

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

This is a choose-your-own adventure planner. It's what I use, but I like to plan; you can pick the parts that work for you and leave the rest. The full 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

SPEEDY REVIEW OF 2016

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?

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?

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.

What specific things do you want to write this year or achieve with your writing?

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

SET YOUR GOALS

Re-read your answers to the last section, then pick between one and three goals for the year, (one is fine, you don't have to pick three!). Make them the things you want more than anything else, things you hardly dare wish for. Put them in this format, or adapt it to make sense to you:

I want to_____. I'd really love to write about _____.

This year I'm going to write _____, then I'm going to_____.

Examples:

- ^ I want to be a published children's author. What I really want to do is develop and write a book (for 3-5 yrs) called *Hush Now, Snorosaur*. This year I'm going to plan and write the story, 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. I'd really love to write about love and the complexity of relationships. In 2017, I'm going to write at least one short story a month to submit one a month to competitions.

Goal 1:

.....

Goal 2:

Goal 3:

TIME MACHINE

Now for the sneaky superpower trick. Write quickly, without stopping. Imagine it's 31st December 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 the way you acted and thought last year?

TO DO OR NOT TO DO

Looking at what you've just written, what are you currently doing that's unhelpful? Is the way you're thinking about your writing holding you back? And what are the everyday habits or attitudes you can develop that will make the most difference to your progress in the coming year?

List the things, thoughts and habits you want to avoid or do. Put these lists up somewhere prominent and incorporate the to-do list into weekly plans.

Not to do

To do

BREAK IT DOWN

Breaking goals into chunks makes them more manageable, but with quarterly goals you can still see the overall picture. Goal/s go in the first column (this is your goal by the end of Q4), then work backwards to split them into quarterly goals. Remember it might work best to stagger goals through the year (for example, if you write short pieces or need to focus on one thing at a time), or you can adjust them here if they look unrealistic.

| This year's goal | Q3 target (Jul-Sep) | Q2 target (Apr-Jun) | Q1 target (Jan-Mar) |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Goal 1: | | | |
| Goal 2: | | | |
| Goal 3: | | | |

WEEKLY PLANNER

| | | | |
|----------------|--|-------|-------|
| Quarter dates: | Goal/s: | | |
| Wk 1 | Wk 2 | Wk 3 | Wk 4 |
| Wk 5 | Wk 6 | Wk 7 | Wk 8 |
| Wk 9 | Wk 10 | Wk 11 | Wk 12 |
| Wk 13 | <p>Note your overall goal/s and important deadlines and dates (including weeks when you can't write), and date the boxes if you like.</p> <p>Then split your quarterly goal/s into weekly targets by splitting it into 3 broad chunks and filling in the right-hand columns first, then working backwards. Use different colours to make it clearer.</p> <p>Word-count targets can be useful, but this format is also great for habit-based targets like writing x days a week or task-based targets like contacting x agents/entering competitions.</p> | | |

WORD-COUNT TRACKER

If planning in word-count is more your thing and seeing the numbers mount up gives you a thrill, this one's for you.

| | Q1 | | | Q2 | | | Q3 | | | Q4 | | |
|---------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|------------|
| Week | Target | Actual | Cumulative | Target | Actual | Cumulative | Target | Actual | Cumulative | Target | Actual | Cumulative |
| 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Q Total | | | | | | | | | | | | |

YOUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

Want to be able to see your year all together? Here you go. Mark deadlines and targets here, using a different colour for each project.

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

THE QUICK & DIRTY VERSION

Pick between one and three goals for the year (and yes, you are allowed to have just one). Make them the thing/s you want more than anything else, thing/s you hardly dare wish for. Use this format, or make up something similar that works for you.

I want to _____ . I'd really love to write about _____ .

In 2017, I'm going to write _____ , then I'm going to _____ .

Examples:

- ⤴ I want to be a published children's author. What I really want to do is develop and write a book (for 3-5 yrs) called *Hush Now, Snorosaur*. This year I'm going to plan and write the story, 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. I'd really love to write about love and the complexity of relationships. In 2017, I'm going to write at least one short story a month and submit one a month to competitions.

Goal/s:

.....

Now, what are you going to do or change to make it happen? Come up with at least three milestones or habits that will help get you there.

.....

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](#) to super-charge your productivity since 2008.

One-day retreats take place in a little haven in the heart of London, 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.

I also work with writers across the world online. The [Writer's Block Detox](#) helps stalled writers to get going again, while the [Six Month Novel](#) will help you to get that idea that's been floating around in your head for years out into the world and actually finish the first draft.



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