

NaNoWriMo Prep Packet

Name _____ Teacher _____ Period _____

NaNoWriMo Word Count Goals

In order to help you be successful in writing a novel in a month, you will first choose your own word-count goal. It is important that your goal be:

- **Practical** (Consider how much you like to write, how many words you wrote in our 10-minute practice, how much “story” you want to put into your novel, etc.)
- **Challenging** (Some people might write 300 words in one day, while others might write 1000. So it is important that you choose a goal that makes sense for you.)

If you wrote _____(x) words in 10 minutes, that means you can write about _____ (3x) words in ½ an hour and _____ (6x) words in one hour.

	Total word goal:	14 class days + 16 homework days = 30 writing days:
Minimum 8 th grader goal...	10,000	334 words / day
Do you love to write? How about...	15,000	500 words / day
Always wanted to write a book? Ready to really challenge yourself? How about...	20,000	667 words / day
Are you up for Mrs. Bradley’s word goal?	25,000	834 words / day

So... **what do you think?** Choose a goal that will be **practical** (not impossible or too scary) but also **challenging** (you will have to work hard and write often). Complete the following and share your goal with your parents:

My total word goal is: _____. I understand that I will need to write at least _____ words/day for 14 class days and 16 homework days in Oct. and Nov. I also understand that I might need to write on **more** than 30 days to meet my goal and win.

Student (novelist) signature: _____

Parent (of a novelist) signature: _____

Directions: This packet will help you prepare for your novel-writing adventure. You don’t need to use complete sentences here (unless directed) -- but you do need to **write down as many** _____ **details as you can** to help you be completely prepared (and excited) to write.

Creating Juicy Characters

To give your novel a great plot, first you need to create **complex**, _____ characters. Details like their favorite music and least favorite food can make for more interesting scenes in your novel, but even more valuable are their faults and conflicts. Get to know your characters well!

Boring Characters vs. Juicy Characters

Boring Character: *Sunflower lives in Kentucky.*

Interesting Character: *15-year-old Sunflower just moved from California to Kentucky. She's having a hard time making friends at school. Her strange name and the old, rainbow-painted van her dad drives her to school in every morning have not made it easy on her.*

To make matters even worse, the girls are jealous of the attention she gets from guys because of her wild green eyes, dark tan, and cool California accent.

They are also jealous of her shoes. She has every shoe known to man. Colorful sandals, hip skate shoes, cute high heels, wedges, boots, tennis shoes, running shoes—she wears a new pair each day. Little do they know, Sunflower makes them all herself.

Not only are characters with hidden depths and _____ more fun to read about, they're also more fun to write about! Your characters will fall into one of three categories: The **protagonist**, the **supporting characters**, and the **antagonist**.

The Protagonist is the character with the _____ role in your book. In most novels, the protagonist is on a _____ to get what he or she wants more than anything else in the world, whether it's fame, or revenge, or something as simple as making the high school football team.

The Supporting Characters _____ the protagonist achieve his or her goal. Many novels have several supporting characters, including your protagonist's family members, friends, wise old mentors, etc. These characters also have _____ of their own, and their adventures will add even more excitement to your novel.

The Antagonist is the character that _____ of the protagonist achieving his or her goal. That does not mean that all antagonists are evil, scheming monsters. Some antagonists get in the way through jealousy, misunderstanding, or by having a set of goals that differs from the protagonist's. It's up to you to decide who's going to stand in your protagonist's way, and how he or she is going to do it.

Directions: On the next few pages, plan **as much information** as you can for your characters. The more **detailed** you are now, the more **interesting** your characters will be and the **better** your novel will be.

Your **protagonist** is your most important character, so you want to know him/her really well:

	Be as detailed as possible!	How does this affect the character and/or story? Be specific.
Protagonist's name & age:		
Physical appearance: consider height, body type, eye/hair colors, unique features (tattoos? birthmarks? scars?.....?)		
Hobbies/ interests - what does he/she do in spare time?		
Special skills/ abilities - what is he/she really gifted/good at?		
Weakness or something he/she is not good at:		
Family members: who does he/she live with? Ages? Relatives not living in the same house?		
Favorites: music? food? TV shows? games? sports? books?		
Pet peeves: what really gets on his/her nerves?		

Who are your **supporting** characters? Who will be there to journey with and **help** your protagonist?

	Name, age →	Name, age →
Relationship to protagonist and how they met (relative? Friend? Neighbor? Teacher? Boss? Coach? etc.)		
Favorite thing(s) about protagonist		
Similarities to protagonist		
Differences from protagonist		

Who is your **antagonist**? Create a **complex** character to get in the way of your protagonist:

Name and age of antagonist	
Why is he/she facing off against (getting in the way of) the protagonist? What is their history and/or current battle ?	
What are his/her likeable/good traits? (your story will be better if your antagonist is not "all bad")	
What are some ways to defeat your antagonist? (what are his/her weaknesses ?)	

Back-story: How did all your characters **meet**? Have they known each other their whole lives? Are some relationships new, others old? The more **specific** you are, the better for your story!

In your spiral notebook: Dig deep and create all the details about your main character(s):

- Favorite clothing style/outfit(s)...
- Unique gestures/movements ...
- Things about his/her appearance he/she would most like to change...
- Fondest memory...
- Insecurities...
- Temperament (easy-going? short temper?)
- Negative traits...
- Things that upset him/her...
- Things that embarrass him/her...
- This character really cares about...
- Deepest, darkest secret...
- Reason he or she kept this secret for so long...
- Other people's opinions of this character...
- Any pets? If not, what pet would he/she get? Why?
- Best and worst things that have ever happened to this character.

Point of View

Who will tell your story? Will we hear it from your protagonist's POV? Or from multiple characters? Decide now **which POV** you will use and **be consistent**:

- **First person.** (One of the characters tells the story using the word "I".)

Example: *A hurried scribble on the wrapping addresses the package to Clay Jensen, so I pick it up and head inside. I take the package into the kitchen and set it on the counter.*

(from 13 Reasons Why, by Jay Asher)

- **Third person.** (The story is not told by a character. No "I" is used.)

Example: *The early summer sky was the color of cat vomit. Of course, Tally thought, you'd have to feed your cat only salmon-flavored cat food for awhile, to get the pinks right..... Tally Youngblood was waiting for darkness. She could see New Pretty Town through her open window.*

(from Uglies, by Scott Westerfeld)

Example: *Sam Temple was sitting in third-period history class staring blankly at the blackboard, but far away in his head. In his head he was down at the beach, bracing for that first plunge into cold Pacific water..... Sam turned to Mary Terrafino, who sat just to his left, "You saw that, right?"*

(from GONE, by Michael Grant)

- **Multiple perspectives.** (More than one POV is used -- but don't confuse your reader!)

Example:

Chapter 1, KYLE: *Arms crossed over his chest, he just waited me out. I shrugged. I was in such deep trouble that I guess it didn't make much difference if Cass McBride was dead or not.*

Chapter 2, CASS: *David Kirby's funeral was this morning. I didn't go. It would look beyond strange if I did.*

Chapter 3, BEN:

"How old is the kid?" Ben asked.

"Roger says he's seventeen, but says he's almost positive it's not a case of party hearty and too loaded to make it home."

Ben nodded. "Go ahead and call Crime Scene out." (from What Happened to Cass McBride?, by Gail Giles)

→ → **Try it:** In your spiral notebook, write two sentences of your story in 1st person, and then again in 3rd person. How does POV change your story? Which do you like better?

Setting

- **When** does it take place?
 - What **year** is it? (is it set in a historical time period? The present? The future?)
 - What **season / weather**? (how can winter, summer, spring, or fall affect a scene?)
 - **Time** of day? (how is a scene affected if it takes place in the morning? Mid-day? Afternoon? Night? Middle of the night?)
- **Where** does it take place?
 - How does city / town / village / wilderness affect the story?
 - Is your story in the U.S. or another country? Or is it on another planet?
 - Consider specific settings, like: classroom, house, park, dance, car, store, etc.

The setting should be used to communicate information about a character or event. Notice how this writer just **tells** you about Larry:

Larry was having a hard time. He felt sad and trapped. He was once a famous author, but he hadn't written a word for years.

In addition to telling you about Larry, this writer uses **setting** details to **show** us about Larry:

Larry's apartment was less of a living space than a glorified closet. The bathroom was just big enough to sit on the toilet without having his knees touch the sink, and the window was more like a ship's porthole. The bed was so small his feet hung over the edge, and there was really not much to do but watch static on the television. The place did not have a kitchen, so he bought a camping hotplate to make his single-serving meals. He ate the same thing every night, but like a house cat, he did not seem to mind the monotony of his repeated dinner of rice, wilted spinach, and baked beans. Nothing hung on the walls of Larry's place, but old framed photos of family members he no longer spoke to cluttered his small desk. An old dusty typewriter and a stack of blank paper took up the rest of the space there. He hadn't written a word in years.

Larry doesn't even have to speak for himself; his apartment speaks for him!

→ → **Try it: In your spiral notebook, write a description of a setting that is important to your protagonist. Use that setting to show a lot about that character.**

How do certain settings affect your characters?

Think about different settings in some books you have read. How do those settings affect a character's behavior, feelings, thoughts, actions, etc.? What do we learn about a character and what is revealed because of a certain setting?

Setting:	Why does this setting matter? How is a character affected? How does a character feel there? How does he/she behave? Why?
The Dursley house in <u>Harry Potter</u>	

Hogwarts School (how does it affect Harry when he first arrives? What about later?)	
Ponyboy's house in <u>The Outsiders</u>	
The church in <u>The Outsiders</u>	
District 12 in <u>The Hunger Games</u>	
The woodlands around District 12	
The Arena in <u>The Hunger Games</u>	

Settings in your novel: plan different settings for your main character(s). Where will he/she feel most comfortable and safe? Where will he/she be challenged, or nervous, or self-conscious? Where will he/she feel confident, strong, successful? Consider backstories for some settings: what happened there before that affects your character(s) today?

Setting:	Why does this setting matter? How is your character affected? How does he/she feel in that setting? How does he/she behave? Why?

Now it's time to do some research so your settings are accurate for a certain location:

→ **In your spiral notebook, take notes and start planning/brainstorming:**

→ **FIRST**, use your iPad to **research** information about a **specific location**:

- City, state, country:
 - Find a Chamber of Commerce or tourist information website for your setting.
 - Look for local attractions, specialties, restaurants, leisure activities, sports, etc.
 - Check: weather, geography, outdoor settings (beach, forest, mountain, desert, etc.)

→ Now get **specific** about your story's locations:

- your character's house:
 - inside: kitchen / bedroom / basement / family room
 - outside: front porch/yard / backyard / garage/driveway
 - ?? _____
- character's house location within the town/city:
 - heart of a big city / in a small town / on the outskirts of a city/town
 - in the country - away from a lot of houses, activity, etc.
 - ?? _____
- neighborhoods:
 - streets / sidewalks / businesses / other houses / animals / cars / bikes
 - transportation -- how will your characters get around?
- school:
 - inside: classrooms / cafeteria / office / counselor's office / library / gym / locker rooms
 - outside: quad / parking lot / football/soccer/baseball fields, etc.
 - ?? _____
- friends' houses (which specific rooms will matter in your story?)
- places to hang out:
 - restaurants / fast food / coffee shops
 - park / theater / bowling alley / ?? _____

- parents' / other adults' work places (will they matter in your story?)
 - local attractions
 - the weather:
 - seasons
 - how the weather affects the story
 - time period - what details will show the reader the time period?
 - present - what historical influences affect your present location?
 - past - research so you can show accurate details
 - future - be creative with some specific details of what it might look like
-

Creating Conflicts

Now it is time to figure out what your characters are going to _____ in your story. Most stories are ultimately about the same thing — **the _____ a protagonist goes on to get what he or she wants**. Whether the goal is to become the next "American Idol" or to discover the cure for cancer, his or her journey is never easy, and your character will **encounter many setbacks** along the way. Though they're no fun for your protagonist, these _____ **are what make your story _____ to read.**

Imagine a story about Jim who wants a sandwich more than anything. How boring would the story be if all Jim had to do was walk from his bedroom to the kitchen and eat a sandwich? That story is so uneventful it can be told in one sentence. But what if Jim is seriously afraid of the dark, the power is out in his house, and he has to walk down a dark hallway to get to the kitchen? And, once there, he has to fight his cruel older sister for the last two pieces of bread?

That story has both _____ conflict and _____ conflict.

External Conflict: The external conflict is the one **between a protagonist and antagonist**. In the above story, the protagonist (Jim) has a goal (to eat a sandwich), but a motivated antagonist (Helga) has his or her own agendas (to also eat a sandwich). The struggle between Jim and Helga over the last two pieces of bread is the external conflict in this story.

Internal Conflict: The internal conflicts are the **fears and insecurities that a protagonist has to overcome** in order to get what he or she wants. In the story above, Jim has to overcome his fear of the dark in order to get the sandwich he wants so badly.

→ **Now it's time to answer some deeper questions about your characters' hopes and fears in order to create the conflicts that will make your novel interesting.**

Your Protagonist: More than anything in the world, my protagonist wants: _____

What is getting in the way of your protagonist getting what he/she wants? Consider both internal (doubts, insecurities, fears, past experiences) and external (other people, the setting, etc.) factors.

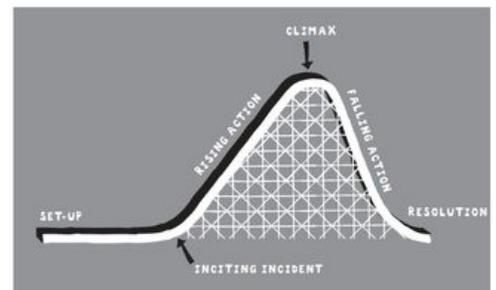
Your Antagonist: More than anything in the world, my antagonist wants (this can be as simple as defeating the protagonist or something more ambitious like world domination): _____

My antagonist is in conflict w/the protagonist because (his/her issue with the protagonist is): _____

What is getting in the way of your antagonist getting what he/she wants? Consider both internal (doubts, insecurities, fears, past experiences) and external (other people, the setting, etc.) factors.

Outlining Your Plot:

Now that you've created some exciting conflict for your novel, you probably have an idea of what is going to happen in your book. You may know what kind of journey your protagonist will undertake, and you know what will stand in his or her way. Now it's time to take the next step and map out how everything is going to happen.



Writing an entire novel from beginning to end may seem impossible, but **once you have a plan, it is not as hard as you think**. Trust us. Most stories have the same structure, and break down into the same six sections that make up a plot. See the diagram above.

The Set Up: What kind of rollercoaster are we getting on?

Though some novels begin with an “inciting incident”—which you will read about in just a second—many of them start by telling the reader a little bit about the characters, the setting, and the conflict before jumping into the action. Just like you'd want to know what kind of rollercoaster you're getting on before waiting in line, a reader wants to know what kind of novel he or she is about to read before committing time to it.

Let's look at examples of set-ups from a couple novels:

Title:	Title:

Okay, what makes these good set ups? We have been introduced to each protagonist and their story's main conflicts. Now we want to know what's going to happen next...

The Inciting Incident: Getting On the Rollercoaster

The inciting incident launches your protagonist into the adventure whether he or she is ready or not. It can be a pretty scary moment for your main character. Once it happens, there's no turning back. What are the inciting incidents in our sample novels?

Title:	Title:

If an inciting incident never happened, our protagonists' lives wouldn't change. That wouldn't be much fun to read (or write) about.

Rising Action: Climbing the Big Hill

This will be the longest section of your novel. You will develop your characters, deepen their relationships with one another, and lay out everything that happens to them before the climax. Think of the rising action as the biggest hill on the rollercoaster—the higher you go, the more suspenseful it gets. The rising action is made up of many events, each of them building to the most exciting part of your story: the climax.

List at least five main events that occur in our sample novels that take us up the rollercoaster:

Title:	Title:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

The Climax: The Top of the Rollercoaster

This is the “_____” moment. This is the moment at the very top of the rollercoaster, right before your high-speed drop. This moment doesn't last long, and neither does the climax in your novel. It can be as short as one paragraph—just enough to make your readers hold their breath in suspense and ask, “What's going to happen next?!”

What are the **climax** moments in our sample novels?

Title:	Title:

The Falling Action: The High-Speed Drop

The falling action is what happens next. It is the fast-paced, action-packed part of your novel. You're finally speeding down the tracks of the rollercoaster with your hands in the air! Does the antagonist get defeated? Do the protagonist's dreams finally come true? If so, how? What are the falling action moments for our sample novels?

Title:	Title:

The Resolution: Getting Off the Rollercoaster

This is how things work out in the very end, after your protagonist gets (or doesn't get) what he or she wants. It has been said by creative writing sages that your characters—especially your protagonist—must change over the course of the book. This change happens little by little as your character battles his or her fears, defeats villains, and builds friendships and relationships with a cast of amazing characters. All of these adventures will end up changing the way your main character sees the world and his or her place in it. Try to use the final scenes to highlight those changes.

How does the story wrap up in our sample novels? How does the protagonist change?

Title:	Title:

→ **Now it's your turn to create your plot.** If you do a thorough job with #1-6 on the next page, writing your novel will be ten times easier. You don't have to describe everything that will happen; this is just to get an idea about what will happen in the beginning, middle, and end of your book.

In your spiral notebook:

- 1. Describe Your Set-Up** - In a few sentences, describe a **scene that introduces** your characters, your setting, and the main conflicts in your story. You may want to review your **Conflicts** pages before you do this.
- 2. Describe Your Inciting Incident** - In a few sentences, describe **the event that launches your protagonist** into his/her adventure.
- 3. Describe Some of Your Rising Action** - Now write a list of **five or more events** that build up to the climax of your novel. Try to include your supporting characters in these events!
- 4. Describe Your Climax** - In a few sentences, describe what will happen in your novel's climax (**point of greatest tension**).
- 5. Describe Your Falling Action** - In a few sentences, describe what happens **after the climax**. Does your protagonist get what he or she wants? Does the antagonist get defeated? How?
- 6. Describe Your Resolution** - In a few sentences, describe **how everything works out** in the very end. Is it a happy ending? Sad? Remember to show how your characters changed because of their journey.

FINAL NOTE ON PLOT! Novels are filled with flashbacks, flash-forwards, and unexpected plot twists. Experiment with your plot by thinking beyond the "one-hill rollercoaster" formula. Rearrange events, add some twists, and flip that resolution on its head. This can really energize your story.

Writing Really Good Dialogue

Dialogue is what happens when two or more characters speak to one another. We experience dialogue all the time in our everyday lives. Here's some dialogue you might have heard today:

"Hey, dude. How are you?"
"I'm really good. Thanks for asking. And you?"
"Good, thanks."

Of course, this kind of dialogue is important. If we didn't say hello and ask people how they are doing, we might lose a lot of friends, fast. But in a novel, **long scenes of this kind of daily dialogue end up being boring**. Readers want to experience something outside of their everyday experience. They want to hear characters make interesting or exciting declarations, or challenge each other, or reveal the whereabouts of hidden treasure.

Dialogue in a novel should do one, if not all, of the following:

1. Move the story _____
2. Increase the _____
3. Help to define _____

- Dialogue that **moves your story forward**:

The phone rang, and Jerry picked it up.
"Hello?"

There was a moment of silence on the other end, then, "Jerry? Is this Jerry Simmons?"

"Yes. Who's this?" Jerry asked.

"Jerry..." The other man paused. Jerry could hear him take a deep breath. "Jerry, my name is Dave. I'm your brother."

"I don't have a brother." Jerry said, losing his patience. "My family died years ago."

"Not your whole family," Dave said.

Right away, we want to know who this Dave fellow is, if he's telling the truth, and how he found Jerry. The discovery of a long-lost sibling is certain to move your story forward in interesting ways.

- Dialogue that **increases the tension**:

"Dave!" Jerry shouted. "We've got to get away from here! The building's gonna blow!"

"We've got to go back!" Dave screamed.

"Why?"

Dave pointed at the roof. "Because Susan's still up there!"

It's a matter of life and death here, and this little exchange of dialogue has us wanting more.

- Dialogue that **defines characters**:

In your own novel, you might think about the ways an accent, some slang, or funny quirks of speech can really work to enhance and define your characters. A character that says "Shiver me timbers!" all the time is certainly a different person than a character that says "Dude, totally!"

Notice how the dialogue of Mark and the waiter help to define who they are:

"What up, G-dawg?" Mark said. "You got a table for one? I'm starved!"

The waiter looked up to see Mark. "Good morning to you, young man. Welcome to our fine establishment."

"I've been playing Rock Band for 40 hours straight! I need like ten sandwiches!" Mark exclaimed.

"I am so sorry, but I am going to have to ask you to keep your voice down if we are to provide you with the ten sandwiches you requested," Greg said.

Obviously, Mark and the waiter are two very different people, and we can tell this just by the way they _____.

→ → **Try it: In your spiral notebook, write a scene of dialogue for two or more of your characters.** Remember to:

- **indent** EVERY TIME you change speakers
 - (when typing, press **tab** to indent a new paragraph. On an iPad, press 5 fingers at the same time on the space bar to indent for a paragraph)
 - put **quotation marks** around the words that each speaker actually **says**
 - instead of using "said" every time, show the character's **actions** as he/she is speaking.
-

Back to the Beginning!

There are several ways to start your novel. You can begin with **the inciting incident** or work **backwards from the resolution** to the beginning. Novels are filled with flashbacks, flash-forwards, and unexpected plot twists. So feel free to begin anywhere you like!

You might want to:

- Start at the beginning.
- Start at your inciting incident.
- Start in medias res (in the middle of things).
- Start at the end.

Start at the Beginning

As you learned in the "Outlining Your Plot" worksheet, the beginning or set-up of your novel needs to introduce your characters and your conflict. Starting a novel at the very beginning is a great way to ease your readers in. So many stories and fairy tales begin this way (Once upon a time...), that readers feel right at home in your story almost immediately.

Example: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone starts with the delivery of the baby Harry to his aunt, uncle and cousin's home. His parents have been killed, so now he will be raised by his mother's family, the Dursleys. This book starts at the very beginning of Harry's life, and then jumps to when he is 11 years old.

→ → **Try it: In your spiral notebook, try starting your novel at the beginning.** Go back to your plot plan and review your set-up. Make sure you include your protagonist in your beginning, and you may also want to introduce your main conflict, and a supporting character.

Start with the Inciting Incident

The inciting incident, as you know, is **the moment that changes your protagonist's life and launches them into his/her adventure**. Starting with this moment sucks your readers into your story, and leaves them wondering what will happen next.

*Example: Gone starts with the characters at school. Suddenly everyone over the age of 15 disappears. The young characters' normal lives are completely changed when they have to figure out how to get food and shelter, take care of each other, and resolve conflicts without any adults. The disappearance of the adults is the **inciting incident** that launches them into their story.*

→ → **Try it: In your spiral notebook, try starting with the inciting incident.** Go back and review your inciting incident and then write a beginning to your novel that starts with this event.

Start In Medias Res

In medias res (pronounced en med-ee-ya rez) is Latin for "in the middle of things." It literally means starting your story right **smack in the middle of the action**, and then filling in the holes — explaining who the characters are and what got them into the mess they're in. A lot of suspense, mystery, and action novels begin in medias res. It's a great way to draw readers in and to make sure they stick around for all the details.

Example: The Girl who was Supposed to Die starts right in the middle of a kidnapping. The main character wakes up on the floor of a strange place and overhears men talking about how she has to die. Half way through the book, the story jumps back two months, giving the readers information about what happened prior to the kidnapping. Then the story goes back to the present time.

→ → **Try it: In your spiral notebook, try starting in medias res.** Check out your rising action, falling action, and climax to see if there are any moments you might want to start with.

Start at the End

This one is a bit tricky, but well worth a try! You basically tell the ending to your readers, but leave just enough mystery to keep them reading. Then, you can either work backwards to reveal just how that ending came about or jump to any other point of your novel and continue.

Example: Notes From the Midnight Driver starts at the very end of the story, when the main character (Alex) is sitting in a hospital room next to an old man who Alex expects will die soon. Then the book jumps back to the inciting incident, when Alex drives to his father's house, runs over a lawn gnome, and gets arrested for driving drunk.

→ → **Try it: In your spiral notebook, try starting at the end.** Include clues to the story's main conflict so readers get some idea of what the rest of the novel will be about and intrigue them to keep reading and learn more.

Now you have a bunch of beginnings to start with. When it's time to start writing, just choose one of these and you're ready to go.

Here's some good news → → You will probably be able to **use the rest of your practice beginnings somewhere else in your novel.**

NaNoWriMo Survival Tips

5. **Reward yourself.** Make sure you do really nice things for yourself all throughout November. Every time you reach a word-count milestone, give yourself a reward! Eat cookies for lunch, drink soda for breakfast, or call all your friends and brag about how many words you've written so far.

4. **Keep moving.** Get out of that chair and stretch your arms and legs. Do a couple of sit-ups or jumping jacks. Keeping your blood moving will keep the ideas flowing.

3. **Get plenty of sleep.** Just because you're writing a novel doesn't mean you should neglect sleep. Besides, you never know what great ideas your dreams might reveal.

2. **Borrow from your everyday life.** It is totally okay to borrow material from your life, and the lives around you. Professional novelists do this all the time, even if they don't admit it. In fact, writing about your life is a great idea if this is your first novel. Just remember to change the names before you let your friends read it!

1. **Never say you "can't."** This is the most important thing to remember next month! There are no can'ts in month-long novel writing.

You can do it!