

FREE FROM AUTHORWINGS

Book Writing Template

Plan, track and finish your first draft. This template follows the 10 steps in our guide [How to Write a Book, Step by Step](#).

How to use it

Print it, or fill it in on screen. Work through the pages in order: your promise, your reader, your target, your outline, then track your words each week. When the draft is done, use the revision checklist and the beta reader questions.

What's inside

- Page 2: Your book promise and reader (Steps 1 and 2)
- Page 3: Word-count target and pace planner (Steps 3 and 5)
- Pages 4 and 5: Chapter outline, 24 rows (Step 4)
- Page 6: Weekly word tracker (Step 6)
- Page 7: Revision checklist and beta reader questions (Steps 7 and 8)

Full guide: authorwings.com/how-to-write-a-book/

Your book promise and reader

Kind of book (novel, non-fiction, memoir, children's, other)

Working title

Fill in your one-sentence promise:

My book is a _____ (kind of book)
for _____ (reader)
who want _____.
By the end, they will _____.

Your reader

Who is your reader? (age, situation, what they already know)

What problem, question or wish brings them to your book?

Three books like yours that your reader already buys

What your book does that those three don't

Word-count target and pace planner

Kind of book	Typical length	Notes
Picture book	400 to 800 words	Ages 3 to 7, usually 32 pages
Chapter book	5,000 to 12,000 words	Ages 7 to 10
Middle grade	25,000 to 50,000 words	Ages 8 to 12
Short non-fiction guide	15,000 to 30,000 words	A focused guide
Non-fiction book	40,000 to 70,000 words	Business, self-help, how-to
Memoir	60,000 to 80,000 words	One story from your life
Novel	70,000 to 90,000 words	Debut adult fiction

Typical ranges as of October 2026. Ranges vary by genre and publisher.

Your plan	Your numbers
A. Target word count	
B. Words per writing session	
C. Writing days per week	
D. Writing days needed ($A \div B$)	
E. Weeks needed ($D \div C$)	
F. Start date	
G. Target date for a finished first draft	

Worked example: 80,000 words $\div$ 500 words a day = 160 writing days. At 5 days a week, that is 32 weeks, about 7 months.

STEP 4

Chapter outline

One line per chapter is enough. Mark the beginning, the turning point or main idea, and the ending. Your outline will change as you write.

#	Working chapter title	What happens, or what the reader learns	Target words
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			

#	Working chapter title	What happens, or what the reader learns	Target words
21			
22			
23			
24			

STEP 6

Weekly word tracker

Write your word count each day you write. Missing a day is normal. If you miss a week, restart with a smaller target.

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Week total	Running total
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									

Revision checklist

Let the draft rest for two to four weeks first. Then revise from big to small.

Structure

- ☐ Every chapter serves the book's promise or story
- ☐ Chapters are in the best order; nothing is repeated
- ☐ The opening makes the reader want to keep going
- ☐ The ending delivers what the beginning promised

Chapters and scenes

- ☐ Each chapter starts late and ends strong
- ☐ Each chapter moves the story or the argument forward
- ☐ All [TK] gaps are filled and facts are checked

Sentences

- ☐ Read aloud: no sentence makes you stumble
- ☐ Names, spellings and terms are the same every time

Five questions for your beta readers

1. Where did you lose interest or skim?
2. What confused you?
3. Which part did you like most, and why?
4. Did the ending (or the last chapter) feel worth the read?
5. What would you tell a friend this book is about?

Want help finishing? A book coach reads your pages and keeps you on deadline: authorwings.com/book-coaching/