

Can You Write 50,000 Words in 30 Days?

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November is Nanowrimo, short for National Novel Writing Month, a month-long competition for writers of all types to come together and write 50,000 words in one month in order to win prizes such as a discount to Scrivener, a popular writing software. Nanowrimo welcomes all writers, whether it's fiction, fantasy, poetry, fanfiction, nonfiction, short stories, or scripts. Nanowrimo also offers Camp Nanowrimo and a Young Writer's Program.

Many try Nanowrimo, but few can “win” the prizes at the end. Writing 50,000 words may seem easy, but it's actually very hard. There are more factors to it than just writing, you have to keep a consistent story and fight your inner editor to keep moving and not rewriting a single line several times over. Many people give the advice of ‘write crap’ for Nanowrimo, which is basically saying write whatever and sort through it later. This is good advice if you can silence your inner editor enough. Which most can't do.



Nanowrimo just got a new website that offers many different features. There's the goal tracker which when you input your total word count, the number of words you're writing per day or hours depending on how you set it up, is displayed using a graph to help you track how much you've written per day. It also offers badges. There are two kinds of badges, ones that you assign yourself and ones awarded to you when you write a certain amount or write for a certain amount of days. The first ones are badges such as “Weepy Writer” which you give yourself when your writing makes you tear up and cry, others include “Pantser” which is a writer who writes by the seat of their pants with no plan and “Planner” which is a writer who does an outline in “Nano Prep” months. The ones awarded to you are for updating your word count for two days in a row or meeting the 10k mark in your word count.

The badges are fun, but they're not what brings writers to Nanowrimo, the other writers are. Most new writers find Nanowrimo through experienced writers or social media and stay for the community. Nanowrimo is a big deal in the writing community, most writers do it and post their word count online to share with their followers and friends. It's also a very friendly community, with writers encouraging others and those who aren't participating being “cheerleaders” for those who are. It's not a requirement of being a “true writer” since there is no “true writer” with everyone's methods being different and unique. But, it's still a fun thing for a group of writers to do together. They also have the “Region” tab where you input your city and get connected with the writers in your area. Regions then host “write-ins” where the writers get together and write and complain. That's what writers do, they complain about writing.

Nanowrimo also offers year-long programs such as the Young Writers Program (YWP) and during the months of April and July Camp Nanowrimo. YWP is mainly for younger writers and teachers, but it's still a nice way to ease into the Nanowrimo lifestyle. With both YWP and Camp Nanowrimo, you can choose your word count and edit it throughout the time. YWP also offers a teacher side, where they can enroll their students and create a challenge for them. A great way to let students express their creative side and get them into the habit of completing work by a deadline. Camp Nanowrimo doesn't offer a teaching side, but it offers its own variety of fun with cabins. Camp Nanowrimo is advertised as a "retreat smack dab in the middle of your busy life" which isn't entirely true. It offers cabins like an actual camp, but it's still a competition against yourself, not much of a retreat. The cabins are the fun part, you can either make your own, get invited to one, or join a random one. You're spending a month writing, complaining, and celebrating with a total group of strangers or a group of your friends.

Nanowrimo is a hassle, but it's fun and gets your creative juices flowing. Even if you don't have 50k at the end of the month, it's still an achievement to write something. To make a world with your own two hands. 50k is a pretty short novel, but that's just a starting point. You can keep going and working on your story. Dream big and reach for the stars.