

B Alan Bourgeois

Y'ALL WRITE

A Month-Long Guide
to Achieving
Your Writing Goals



REVISED & EXPANDED EDITION



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Texas Authors Museum & Institute of History, Inc.

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2027 REVISED & EXPANDED EDITION

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A Note from the Author

Dear Fellow Authors,

I created this guide to be useful, not intimidating. Writers already carry enough pressure: the pressure to create, to finish, to improve, to publish, and often to figure out the business side at the same time. Y'all Write is meant to bring the focus back to the work itself - showing up, putting words on the page, and learning what helps you keep going.

This revised edition keeps the straightforward spirit of the original book while adding more structure for the actual month-long challenge. You will find clearer goal-setting tools, weekly check-ins, a full month of prompts and micro-challenges, progress trackers, and a practical plan for what comes after the month ends.

You do not have to write a novel. You do not have to chase somebody else's word count. Your goal may be a short story, a screenplay, poetry, a memoir chapter, revisions, research, or simply proving to yourself that writing can become part of your life.

Use what helps. Skip what does not. Adjust the challenge to fit your real life. The goal is not to perform writing. The goal is to write.

Happy writing - and make the month count.

B Alan Bourgeois

What Is Y'all Write?

Y'all Write is a month-long celebration of writing built around a simple idea: writers grow by writing. The challenge is designed for writers at different experience levels, working in different forms, with different lives and different definitions of success.

The program is not built around one mandatory word-count target. A meaningful goal may be measurable in words, pages, scenes, poems, chapters, revision sessions, research hours, or days you showed up. What matters is that the goal is specific enough to guide you and flexible enough to survive real life.

The Y'all Write Principles

- Choose a goal that matters to you.
- Measure progress in a way that fits your project.
- Write forward before you polish backward.
- Use community for accountability, encouragement, and perspective.
- Adjust when life changes instead of treating adjustment as failure.
- Finish the month with a next step, not just a final number.

How to Use This Book

Read Part One before the challenge begins if possible. During the month, use the weekly chapters as checkpoints rather than rules. Part Three helps you turn the experience into a sustainable practice. Parts Four and Five can be revisited whenever you need inspiration, community, or a practical reset.

If you prefer to work directly in the book, the workbook pages near the end are designed for notes, tracking, and planning. If you are using a digital copy, recreate the exercises in a notebook or document.

Before You Begin

Your one-page starting point

My Y'all Write project:

What are you working on?

My primary goal for the month:

Use words, pages, scenes, sessions, or another meaningful measure.

Why this goal matters to me:

Name the reason you want to finish or make progress.

My minimum-success goal:

What result would still make this month worthwhile?

My stretch goal:

What would an exceptional month look like?

My regular writing time:

When are you most likely to protect the work?

My accountability plan:

Who or what will help you stay engaged?

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PART ONE: PREPARING FOR Y'ALL WRITE

A good writing month begins before Day One - with purpose, realistic expectations, and a plan you can actually live with.

I. Why We Celebrate Writing

Writing is easy to reduce to output: a word count, a finished manuscript, a publication date, a review, or a sale. Those things matter, but they are not the whole experience. Y'all Write begins from a different place. It treats writing itself as something worth celebrating.

Every finished work begins with private effort that nobody sees: the sentence rewritten before breakfast, the notebook opened during a lunch break, the scene that finally works after three false starts, the decision to return after a week when life got in the way. A month-long challenge gives those invisible acts a structure and a name.

Writing Is an Act of Creation

Writers take memory, observation, imagination, research, emotion, argument, and experience and turn them into something another person can enter. Fiction lets readers inhabit lives beyond their own. Nonfiction preserves knowledge and challenges assumptions. Poetry compresses feeling into language. Memoir turns lived experience into meaning. Scripts create blueprints for performance. Even a private journal can clarify a life.

Why a Month Matters

A month is long enough to create evidence. One inspired weekend can feel exciting, but several weeks of repeated effort reveal more: when you write best, what interrupts you, how much you can realistically produce, where your project slows down, and what kind of support helps you continue.

The point is not to prove that you can be relentlessly productive for thirty or thirty-one days. The point is to learn how you work and to move a meaningful project forward.

There Is No Single Correct Goal

- Draft new material.
- Finish a stalled project.
- Revise a manuscript from beginning to end.
- Write a group of short stories, poems, essays, or scenes.
- Complete research and an outline for a larger project.
- Build a repeatable writing routine.

- Return to writing after a long absence.

A goal should challenge you without requiring you to pretend you have a different life. The best Y'all Write goal is not the biggest one. It is the one that creates useful progress.

The Community Matters

Writing may happen alone, but writers do not have to work in isolation. A challenge creates permission to share goals, ask for help, celebrate milestones, and admit when the work is difficult. Community is most useful when it reduces shame and comparison rather than increasing them.

Your First Commitment

Before you measure anything, make one commitment: show up honestly. Some days that may mean 2,000 words. Some days it may mean twenty minutes of revision. Some days the most useful writing work may be solving a plot problem or cutting a scene that does not belong. Record what you did, learn from it, and return.

Reflection

- What do I want writing to feel like by the end of this month?
- What would make this challenge personally meaningful?
- What am I willing to stop comparing myself to?

Y'all Write is not a test of whether you deserve to call yourself a writer. It is an invitation to do the work and to build evidence that you can continue.

2. Setting Your Writing Intentions

Every great writing journey begins with a clear intention. Before you dive into the exhilarating chaos of Y'all Write, it's crucial to define what success means for you. For some, it might mean completing 50,000 words. For others, it could mean writing every day, creating a habit, or finishing that one stubborn project that's been sitting on the back burner. This chapter is about helping you set goals that inspire and motivate you without becoming overwhelming.

The Power of Setting Intentions

Intentions are more than just goals; they are commitments to yourself. They provide focus, direction, and a sense of purpose. In a month-long challenge like Y'all Write, where consistency is key, clear intentions help you stay on track even when the going gets tough.

Case Study: Emma, a new writer, joined Y'all Write with the vague goal of "writing more." By day 10, she felt lost and unmotivated because she didn't have a clear endpoint. After reevaluating, she decided her primary goal was to finish three short stories she had outlined. With that clarity, Emma completed her stories and ended the month feeling accomplished.

Defining Your Success

Ask yourself these questions to clarify your goals

What do I want to achieve by the end of this month?

Examples:

- Completing a draft of a novel.
- Writing 10,000 words of poetry.
- Building a daily writing habit.

Why is this goal important to me? Connecting emotionally with your goal will keep you motivated.

What challenges might I face, and how can I overcome them? Being realistic about potential obstacles (e.g., time constraints, self-doubt) allows you to plan solutions.

Choosing a Goal That Fits Your Life

When setting your goal, balance ambition with practicality. A challenge should stretch you, but not to the point of burnout.

Example:

If you work full-time and have family obligations, a goal of writing 15,000 words in a month might be more achievable than 50,000.

If you're a student with a flexible schedule, you might aim for a higher word count or multiple projects.

Breaking Down Your Goal

Once you've defined your overall goal, break it into smaller, manageable steps.

Daily Word Count Targets

Divide your total target by the number of writing days you plan to use during the month.

Example: To write 30,000 words, aim for 1,000 words a day.

Weekly Milestones

Checkpoints keep you accountable and allow room for adjustment.

Example: Week 1 = 7,000 words. Week 2 = 14,000 words, and so on.

Reward Yourself

Celebrate small victories.

Example: Treat yourself to a favorite snack or activity after reaching each milestone.

Writing Multiple Goals

If you have more than one goal (e.g., writing and revising), prioritize them. Example Goal Hierarchy:

Write the first draft of three short stories.

Revise an older piece for submission.

Explore a new genre through journaling.

Creating a Mission Statement

A mission statement crystallizes your intentions and serves as a motivational anchor throughout the month. Template:

"In March, I will [specific goal], because [reason], and I will achieve this by [strategy]."

Example: "In March, I will write 15,000 words of my mystery novel because I want to establish a daily writing habit, and I will achieve this by writing 500 words every morning before work."

Accountability and Public Declarations

Sharing your goal publicly can increase your commitment. Consider posting about your Y'all Write intentions on social media or joining a writing group where you can update others on your progress.

Example: Jake posted on Instagram: "Y'all Write Goal: Finish the first draft of my YA fantasy novel by March 31st. Hoping to hit 2,000 words a day. Hold me accountable, folks!" His friends checked in regularly, cheering him on and keeping him motivated.

Reflection Exercise

Before moving to the next chapter, take a moment to write down your intentions:

My goal for Y'all Write is: _____.

I want to achieve this because: _____.

My strategy to stay consistent is: _____.

Your writing intentions are your North Star during Y'all Write. They'll guide your efforts, keep you focused, and provide a benchmark for your success. Remember, the most important thing is showing up for your

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writing every day, no matter how small the progress. Let's march into the next chapter-building the mindset you need to succeed!