



Scrap Paper: A Creative Writing Newsletter

GETTING STARTED: THE BLANK PAGE

By Chase Rodriguez

Sometimes the most difficult part about getting your story started is actually just that: getting started. An important thing to remember when beginning the pre-writing process is that everyone has a different approach. Sometimes, brainstorming involves long drawn out story boards or maps that cover every detail in the story. This can include timelines, character charts, setting descriptions, and all sorts of other story elements. Brainstorming could also involve research on a specific topic: maybe there's a real world location that you want in your story, maybe there's more background information you need for your character, or maybe you just need a little bit of inspiration. In all cases, research can help jumpstart your narrative and even boost your confidence as you start drafting.

Another strategy to getting started with your story is a little less organized, but it may give you the motivation to stick with it: freewriting. Freewriting is... writing without boundaries, letting go of structure, and ignoring the rules. Sit down in a comfortable writing space with the sole purpose of getting an idea out, and let yourself become immersed with the story. The process of freewriting is not bound to one practice, you have the freedom to write what you want- this could be a dialogue between two of your characters, a monologue from your own memory, or a description of your setting.

You may notice that some of the elements found in story-boarding also apply to freewriting (i.e. designing setting). That's because, as mentioned earlier, there is no rigid structure to the process of getting started. Everyone will have their own strategies that may or may not work for someone else. So don't be discouraged if you're having a tough time getting started, it's normal. But instead of scrapping the piece of paper you've been scribbling on for the past hour, try talking to someone about it. This might allow you to work out the part of your story that's been giving you trouble. Another part of the brainstorming process actually is talking about your writing, as it can help you think through your story from another's perspective. For more information on writing support, check out the article below that Jacqueline wrote on finding a support group.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Getting Started: The Blank Page 1
- Creating Your Own Writing Space 2
- Qua Literary and Fine Arts Magazine 2
- How to Find Your Writing Home Away From Home 3
- Finding a Support System 4
- Setting Goals and Deadlines ... 4

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- UM-Flint Poetry Award
- Qua is accepting submissions
- Qua is hiring for Fall 2023
- Creative Writing Hub



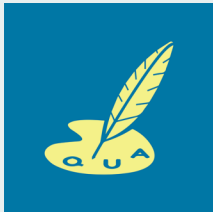
CREATING YOUR OWN WRITING SPACE

By Kay Sheffield

Things to consider:

- Create a comfortable space where you can spend a lot of time and not get sore or antsy (a comfortable chair at a desk or table, your bed, etc.)
- Move somewhere that's away from distractions (parents, partners, kids, pets, phones, etc.)
- Make sure you have access to a kitchen or bathroom for breaks; we're human, not machines. We'll have to get up sometime, so it's best to be prepared for the inevitable pulling us away from our work for a moment. You can always bring snacks with you if you're worried about hunger being a distraction however.

“Get cozy, feeling comfortable while doing tasks is a great way to make them seem less like a chore and more like quality time with yourself.”



QUA LITERARY AND FINE ARTS MAGAZINE

Seeking Submissions for Winter 2023 Issue

Qua is calling for submissions! Anyone living in Michigan is welcome to submit poetry, prose, and visual art for consideration in their Winter 2023 issue. The deadline is March 5th! Submit [here!](#)

Hiring for Fall 2023

Interested in editing and design? Qua is looking to hire staff, and a new editor-in-chief, for the following academic year. Please visit their [Get Involved](#) page to express interest in joining the team!

Ways to make the environment work for writing:

- **Filter out sound:** Wear noise canceling earphones, or play music/sounds that help you concentrate. Sometimes you can even make a playlist to fit the vibe of the kind of story you're writing to help give more inspiration.
- **Adjust the lighting:** Staring at a screen for a long time can cause strain on the eyes. Having soft warm light and possibly dimming the brightness on your laptop can help. *If writing with pencil and paper, then make sure there is adequate lighting, just not too harsh.
- **Get cozy:** Feeling comfortable while doing tasks is a great way to make them seem less like a chore and more like quality time with yourself. Dress in comfy clothes or pjs, snuggle under some blankets, make sure the room is well-ventilated for best temperature control and air quality, as feeling too hot/cold/stuffy can be distracting.
- **Associate your favorite things:** We are ruled by our senses in more ways than we realize. Associating your writing time with a certain taste or smell that makes you happy will associate that behavior with that mood. Find your favorite scented candle or essential oil, or grab your favorite beverage to give yourself those happy vibes.

Other things to consider:

- Make sure you block out enough time to write where it won't cut too close to another obligation. This way you won't feel pressured by your other responsibilities during your writing time.
- This doesn't have to be an all-day endeavor. Sometimes even just writing for 30 mins each day can be very productive.
- Remember, everyone's best writing spaces will look different from each other's.



Marian E. Wright Writing Center

HOW TO FIND YOUR WRITING HOME AWAY FROM HOME

By Guinevere Hammond-Stone

Writing at home may not always work for writers. One alternative to writing at home can be to write in public. Writers may choose to write in places like restaurants and cafes. However, these places require you to spend money to be there and this can be a financial hardship for writers on a budget. A more budget friendly option for writing away from home are public libraries. Many public libraries will have tables available for both patrons and the public to use.

If you live in the Flint area, you may want to consider checking out the Flint Public Library (FPL). The FPL is newly renovated and has many wonderful writing spaces. According to the librarians at the Flint Public Library, there are many spots available in the library for writers to work. On the first floor, there are seating areas with excellent light from the windows and access to power. Additionally, there are six study rooms that can be booked with a FPL library card. If you are looking to write in a group, there are some larger conference rooms on the second floor that can, also, be booked with an FPL library card.

If you live in Genesee County, you may want to check out the Genesee District Library. They have nineteen different branches, so there is a good chance there is one near you! A list of the branches can be found [here](#) and a map of the branches can be found [here](#).

On the University of Michigan-Flint campus, there are the Thompson Library and the Marian E. Wright Writing Center. The Thompson Library has many desks, tables and computers available for people to work at. The Marian E. Wright Writing Center is located inside the Thompson Library and has computers available for use as well. Additionally, the Writing Center has tutoring appointments available for writers who would like another set of eyes on their stories. The Writing Center tutors everything from resumes and cover letters to essays and creative writing.

No matter what type of writer you are, there will be somewhere for you to make your writing home.

WHERE TO FIND YOUR NEW FAVORITE SPOT

The Flint Public Library:

1026 East Kearsley St.
Flint, MI 48503

Phone: 810-232-7111

Email: askus@fpl.info

Website: www.fpl.info

The Genesee District Libraries:

Website: www.thegddl.org

Frances Willson Thompson Library:

303 E Kearsley St.
Flint, MI 48502

Phone: (810) 762-3400

Website:

libguides.umflint.edu/library

The Marian E. Wright Writing Center:

308 Thompson Library

Phone: (810) 766-6602

Email:

flint.writingcenter@umich.edu

Website: www.umflint.edu/writingcenter/

UM-FLINT POETRY AWARD

Currently enrolled students can submit a max of 2 poems with 50 lines each for a chance to win the 1st place prize of \$250, or an honorable mention worth \$50. A link for the contest can be found [here](#).

Deadline to Submit:

March 24th, 2023



FINDING A SUPPORT SYSTEM

By Jacqueline Burant

Having someone with you on your writing journey is a valuable tool. Whether you're looking for motivation, feedback, or community, a writing support system can keep you engaged with your creative pursuits.

Joining a writing group can help. These groups provide members with dedicated writing time during meetings. They also allow members to check in with each other on their writing endeavors. Writing groups can provide interesting discussions, valuable feedback, writing connections, and new friendships.

There are multiple writing groups on campus, including the Writing Center's Writers' Circle. They meet virtually on Wednesdays from 12-1 PM and Thursdays from 6-7 PM.

For more individualized support, try finding a writing buddy you can share your writing with. A writing buddy can help you:

- **Boost your confidence**
- **Gain an outside perspective on your writing**
- **Stay excited and motivated to write**

The Writing Center tutors could help you with your writing as well. Many of us are creative writers, and we'd love to read your work! You can book an appointment with us [here](#).

SETTING GOALS AND DEADLINES

By Jacqueline Burant

Every student knows the feeling of submitting an assignment just before it's due. We rush the rest of the work to meet our upcoming deadline, but that often leaves us with something we know we could've done better. "We just needed more time." What we really needed, though, was better management of our time.

We can improve our time management by setting our own goals and deadlines before the final deadline. This can make our workload less overwhelming in the long run.

Naming the purpose or requirements of your writing can help guide your choice of goals. Some possible goals include:

- **Word count**
- **Time written**
- **Drafting or revision of specific sections**

Keep your goals specific and challenging. Vague goals can emphasize intention over quantifiable success, which makes it easier to slack off. Specific goals like word counts and time written, in contrast, provide a clear target to reach. Specific goals can help you strive for success, as long as your goals are reasonably high. If goals are too high, you'll be more likely to lose motivation and give up. But, be careful not to make your goals too easy either. Easy goals don't result in much personal improvement because you don't have to strive to meet those goals.

You can also divide goals into specific categories:

- **Non-negotiable:** Tasks that must be completed when they're set to be completed. No excuses.
- **Negotiable:** These tasks need to happen at some point, but the time frame for completion is more flexible.
- **Optional:** Additional tasks you'd like to do, if possible.

These categories can help you prioritize the order in which you complete your tasks. And, for a busy writer, prioritization is key.

Check out this [post](#) by Michelle Renee Miller to learn more about goal-setting and accountability partners!



CREATIVE WRITING HUB

Visit the Writing Center's [Creative Writing Hub](#) to stay updated on submission opportunities and learn more about our Writer's Circle!

WRITING CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

To be critical readers and listeners who provide helpful feedback to writers and speakers.

THE MARIAN E. WRIGHT WRITING CENTER



The Marian E. Wright Writing Center began in 1971 under the direction of Patrick Hartwell and Bob Bentley as a place to help students from all disciplines with writing. Our Writing Center is the oldest writing center in Michigan.

Our center helps students, faculty, and staff with their writing and speaking needs. Highly trained student tutors work with students at all academic levels and from all disciplines, providing in-person and online tutoring. We conduct in-class and co-curricular writing workshops on topics ranging from writing resumes to how to do peer reviews. The Writing Center also helps faculty with their scholarship and provides venues for creative writers to receive feedback and publish through periodic writing contests.

MARIAN E. WRIGHT WRITING CENTER

303 E Kearsley Street
308 Frances Willson Thompson
Library
Flint, MI 48502-1950

Phone: (810) 766-6602

Email:

flint.writingcenter@umich.edu

[Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#) • [Instagram](#) •
[Blog](#)



MARIAN E. WRIGHT
WRITING CENTER

Contributors:

Jacqueline Burant

Guinevere
Hammond-Stone

Chase Rodriquez

Kay Sheffield

Writing Center Director:

Jacob Blummer

Writing Center Coordinator:

Vicky Dawson

