



Writing Retreat Guide

The Writing Retreat Mission Statement

Here at the BWGWRWWW, we believe...

Writers are people who write. Writers who don't write aren't writers at all. That's why we write: we're writers. Or we want to be. Or we think we are. Anyone can be a writer as long as you are willing to put in the work. That's why we're all here.

So, **write**, dammit! We've gotten away to the middle of nowhere to escape distractions, surrounded ourselves with fellow writers to inspire us, and blocked off an entire weekend just for writing. This, friends, is the weekend we've all been waiting for. Don't end your sentences with prepositions.

The Point

Mission statements aside, you do want to set specific goals for the weekend. Goals give you direction and help you identify what's important to you. Goals help you measure progress, keep you motivated, and hold you accountable. Make sure you **write them down** and reward yourself (possibly with copious amounts of alcohol) for accomplishing them!

The Rules

Rules? We don't need no stinking rules! We're all here for the same thing. Do what works for you, so long as it gets you writing and doesn't prevent anyone else from writing. The only hard and fast rule is that distracting your fellow writers will be met with severe punishment. See below for examples.





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The Place

Oh the place you should choose. Here are some rules of thumb.

1. The retreat should not take place within 45 minutes of any attendee's home. It is far too easy to waste precious writing time running home to get that one thing you forgot. Trust us. This will happen.
2. The retreat should not be near anything interesting. This includes plays, shows, concerts, restaurants, bars, clubs and other public forms of entertainment and debauchery.
3. Make sure the place has plenty of writing areas. This includes tables, actual desks (a rare find!), couches, places outside, etc. Make sure you aren't going to all be lined up on a couch listening to each other click away. You need space.
4. Sleeping arrangements. This needs to be discussed ahead of time. Are people requiring an individual room vs. being willing to share? Are you all close enough to potentially share beds? You are never going to make everyone happy. Remember, the most critical part of the retreat is to write. Sleeping arrangements should be secondary.
5. Finally, the kitchen. All meals should be quick and easy, and everyone should take a turn, so the maximum amount of time can be spent writing. That said, sharing meals and what you've accomplished in the past many hours will help keep you motivated and your community thriving. Premake meals where you can, but make sure the food is good enough that you want to linger over it while you talk with your friends.

The Agenda

Each day, you should stick to a very specific agenda. Assign a moderator who will tell everyone when it's time to start writing and when to take a break. Have people sign up for coordinating the movement activity, the writing prompts, the games. No one should be forced to participate in anything they don't want to (although it's more fun if everyone participates.) The only mandatory parts of this agenda should be the uninterrupted writing time.

Typical Retreat Day

- 8:00 – Breakfast
- 9:00 – Something physical (hike, yoga, etc)
- 9:30 – Writing exercise
- 10:00 – Uninterrupted Writing
- 12:00 – Lunch/Discuss Writing
- 1:00 – Something physical (hike, yoga, etc)
- 1:30 – Uninterrupted Writing
- 3:30 – Something physical (hike, yoga, etc)
- 4:00 – Uninterrupted Writing
- 6:00 – Dinner / Dessert
- 7:30 – Group activities
- 8:00 – General revelry, and shenanigans

Suggestion for group activities: Read from your writing exercise earlier in the day, do dramatic readings: we did the worst erotica awards and it left us all in stitches, play board games, discuss your favorite reads, have a craft discussion. But put your story to rest for the night. It will be there for you tomorrow.

Remember that writing is the focus of the weekend, so other activities should be limited, but not eliminated. Everyone needs a break to maintain creativity. This is nothing but a suggestion. Feel free to modify this, to do your own thing without judgement. OK, maybe a little judgement, but we'll keep it to ourselves.