

How do you write beautiful, award winning novels, memoirs, and short stories? One tried-and-true way is through a writing workshop, a program with other writers who can give encouragement, feedback, and support as you write, edit, and publish your writing.

But maybe you don't know *how* to join a writing workshop, can't afford the steep admission fee a masters level creative writing program costs, or you don't live near one.

That's where an online writing workshop like [The Write Practice Pro](#) can help in.

In this post, I'm going to share what a creative writing workshop is and how you can use it to improve your writing habits, get feedback on your creative writing, and go on to publish award-winning writing. Then we'll talk about how to find a writing workshop, whether online or locally, and how to get the most out of it.

What Is a Creative Writing Workshop?

Writing workshop is a method of guiding people through the creative writing process with a focus on publishing and/or sharing their writing.

There are six parts to writing workshops:

1. [Lessons on the creative writing process.](#)
2. Structured time to plan your writing piece and [brainstorm story ideas](#)
3. Structured [writing time](#)
4. [Getting feedback](#) from editors/teachers and other students/writers
5. Revision time based on content/grammar/flow
6. Publishing or sharing

The Limitations of Most Creative Writing Workshops

In the past, creative writing workshops haven't been accessible to everyone. Here's why:

1. Location Dependent

Generally creative writing workshops are done in school settings, from a Masters in Fine Arts (MFA) creative writing program to a middle school creative writing unit.

For example, one of the most famous workshops is the Iowa Writers' Workshop, which is in Iowa City, Iowa. Hundreds of [award-winning novelists and memoirists](#) have either graduated from or taught at this program, including Pulitzer Prize winners Marilyn Robinson, Michael Cunningham, John Cheever, and more.

The problem is if you're going to participate, you need to be in a specific location, namely Iowa.

Iowa isn't the only excellent creative writing program (Poets and Writers has a [full list of MFA programs](#)), and there are low-residency programs, where you can go in-person for just a few weeks per semester. But *all* creative writing programs require you to be in a specific location for at least several weeks and often several years.

If you can't move your life to Iowa or some other city with a program, that rules out the possibility of improving your writing through this method.

2. High Cost

The [average cost at an MFA creative writing workshop](#) for a single class is over \$3,300. The total cost can be as low as \$27,000 and up to \$108,000. That's a lot!

If you don't have an extra \$50k lying around (and if you do, call me!), participating in a creative writing workshop is probably not possible.

3. Lack of Focus on Publishing

Writers write for readers. One drawback of some creative writing workshops is they spend so much time focusing on writing for other writers, professors, and a handful of university-funded [literary magazines](#) that they forget who their real audience is.

Without a strong focus on publishing, a creative writing workshop can get lost in the weeds of craft that sounds good in theory but doesn't serve readers.

Can Regular People Participate in Creative Writing Workshops? Yes, in 3 Ways

There is huge value to the creative writing workshop process for *all* writers and aspiring writers, regardless of whether they're in a formal school setting or not.

The great news is that now *anyone* can participate in this process and use it to improve their writing and get published.

There are three main ways that people can get involved with creative writing workshops, apart from local school settings:

1. Local writing critique groups
2. Online writing classes
3. Online writing critique groups

Let's look at two of those, local writing groups and online writing groups.

Pros and Cons of Local Writing Groups and How to Find Them

Local writing groups are groups of people interested in writing who meet regularly (often weekly) to critique each other's chapters and short stories and talk about the writing process.

Sometimes these groups are filled with amateur writers working on their first books and pieces, but established writers often belong to writers' groups too.

Famous examples of local writers' groups include [the Inklings](#), J.R.R Tolkien and C.S. Lewis's writing group in Oxford; [the Bloomsbury Group](#), Virginia Woolf and T.S. Eliot's group in London; and the more informal [Lost Generation](#), Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald's group in Paris.

The benefit of local writers' groups is that they give you a great chance to build relationships with other writers, and these writing friends can help you with more than just improving your chapters, but also [how to get published](#) and how to market your writing.

Here are some ways you can find a local writers' groups:

- [Meetup.com](#)

- [Google for local writing groups in your area](#)
- Ask other writers you know locally if they are part of a group or know of groups
- Create your own

The drawback of local writers' groups is that these groups only provide *one* aspect of the creative writing workshop experience: feedback.

Getting good feedback might be a valuable part of becoming a published writer, but it's certainly not the only part. Structured brainstorming, structured writing time (like deadlines), focusing on revision, publishing opportunities, and even lessons on creative writing are also important parts of growing as a writer.

On top of that, you might not connect with your local group (I never have!). You might not be a good fit in terms of career level, with people either far ahead of you or behind you.

Even worse, what if you don't live in an area with a local writers' group at all?

If a local writers' group isn't a good solution for you, how can you get the full creative writing workshop experience?

That's where online creative writing workshops like [The Write Practice Pro](#) can help.

How an Online Writing Workshop Like The Write Practice Pro Works

There are several online writing workshops that overcome the hurdles we talked about above. One of the best groups is The Write Practice Pro.

[The Write Practice Pro](#) is an online creative writing workshop dedicated to helping you become a better writer, write award-winning books and short stories, and ultimately become a bestselling author.

Here's how it can help you get the full creative writing workshop experience:

1. Lessons on the creative writing process

At The Write Practice, we believe *everyone* can become a great writer through deliberate practice, and one of the most important aspects of deliberate practice is solid lessons.

Through The Write Practice Pro, you can get daily writing lessons, writing prompts, and exercises to help you become a better writer. For example, click here for the top [100 creative writing lessons](#).


We also host regular [writing courses](#), like [100 Day Book](#), where you can connect with a mentor who will walk you through the process of writing a first draft (or second draft) of a novel, memoir, or non-fiction book.

2. Planning your writing and brainstorming ideas

It can take hundreds of hours to write a book, sometimes even thousands. If you're going to invest that time into the writing process, you want to make sure that you're working on the *right* idea.


That's why getting feedback on your idea, not just your actual writing, is so important.

In The Write Practice Pro, you can go to the [Book Ideas group](#), share your idea, and get feedback from other writers on whether the idea works or not.



Book Ideas

Have a Book Idea? Share it here, get feedback, and make your idea better.

 479 Writers [Unfollow](#)

3. Structured writing time

As someone who struggles with structure, one thing I've learned is that if I *don't* have structured writing time, I will never finish my writing! I've written over ten books, but I wouldn't have finished *any* of them if I hadn't leaned into structure.

The best way I know to build structure for writing is to create deadlines that I can *actually* keep, and in The Write Practice Pro, we have a sacred deadline that the whole community lives by. We call in The Write Practice Pro challenge:

Write *one*
chapter, story, article,
or poem each week by
Friday at midnight.

THE WRITE PRACTICE PRO
CHALLENGE

 *The Write Practice Pro*

Write one chapter, story, article, or poem per week by Friday at midnight.

If you're in one of our writing classes, like 100 Day Book or Write to Publish, you follow this deadline. And if you're in The Write Practice Pro, you follow it too.

Why? Because as writers, we need deadlines. Even more importantly, we need a community that will encourage us to *hit* the deadline even if we don't want to.

4. Getting feedback, from editors and other writers

At The Write Practice, we believe everyone can become a great writer through deliberate practice, and one of the most important aspects of deliberate practice is feedback.

To grow as a writer you need feedback both from your peers (other writers) and from experts (an editor or teacher).

Why does feedback work? Because good writing is rewriting. But [studies](#) have shown that when you rewrite without feedback, you generally focus on surface-level edits like fixing grammatical errors and typos. However, if you get feedback, you'll focus on content-level edits, like rewriting a section to make it more readable or restructuring the piece entirely.

[share-quote]Feedback makes you a better writer.[/share-quote]

The amazing thing that [these studies have shown](#) is that peer feedback is almost as effective as professional feedback. So as important as it is to get professional feedback, even feedback from writers at your same level will help you become a better writer.

Below I'll share how to get peer and professional feedback on your writing on The Write Practice Pro.

How to Get Feedback on The Write Practice Pro

1. **Start by going to [The Write Practice Pro groups screen](#).** The Write Practice Pro is organized into several different critiquing groups, including a group for short stories and a group for novels.

2. **Follow the group for your piece.** If you've written a short story or writing practice, click "Follow" next to the [Writers Workshop: Short Stories](#) group. If you've written a chapter of a novel, click "Follow" next to the [Writers Workshop: Novels and Books](#) group.

I'm writing a Pirate Story and so I'm going to be sharing in the [Short Stories workshop](#).




Writers Workshop: Short Stories

This is the place to share your short pieces, like short stories, articles, and poems. Then get feedback, give feedback, and make your writing better. Happy writing!

 1573 Writers [Follow](#)

3. Click to your group and then copy and paste your piece into the editor. Then click submit and wait for your piece to publish!

I copied and pasted my Pirate Story (from [Pirate Ipsum](#)) into the [Short Story Workshop](#) below. Once the story is published, my story will be assigned to other writers and I can start to get feedback.



The screenshot shows the 'Writers Workshop: Short Stories' group page on The Write Practice. The top navigation bar includes the logo, a dropdown menu for the group, a search bar, and icons for Workshop, Notifications (45), Profile, Help, and Settings. The left sidebar shows the user's profile (Hi Joe) and a list of navigation options: My Feed, Settings, Everything, My Groups, The Mod Squad, The Café, Book Ideas, Write to Publish, 100 Day Book, One Year to Publish, Summer Writing Contest, No-Fail Novel Outline, and Writers Workshop: Novels and Books. The main content area features a header for the group, a settings gear icon, and a large text box for 'Add Writing Piece' with a 'submit' button. Below this is the 'Group Activity Feed' with a post titled 'Fulfilling the Promise' by Jonathan Srock, dated 01:34 am on November 21, 2019. The post text reads: 'Here's the final story from my Christmas boat coming out December 9. If you are interested, please let me know. You can preorder it now. There is a free gift for the first 10 beta readers. Thank you for all [more]'. The right sidebar contains 'Info for Moderators' (0 writers waiting) and 'Shortcuts' (Home, Articles, 100 Day Book, Help).

4. Complete your critiquing. Some groups in The Write Practice Pro, like the Short Story Workshop, pair you with other writers to critique. This is a great way to get to know the work of other writers and make new writer friends. Here's what a match looks like:

Match #1: Critique the following to see your critiques on “Pirate Story”

I. [Meeting the Messiah](#)

II. [THE CHRONICLES OF HIDDEN BEASTS “DéJhanaya & Jay”](#)

III. [The Armadillo Skin Boots](#)

Now, I will follow the links to those three stories, read them, and give feedback to the writer.

Other groups, like the Novel and Books Workshop, allow you to choose whom you will critique.

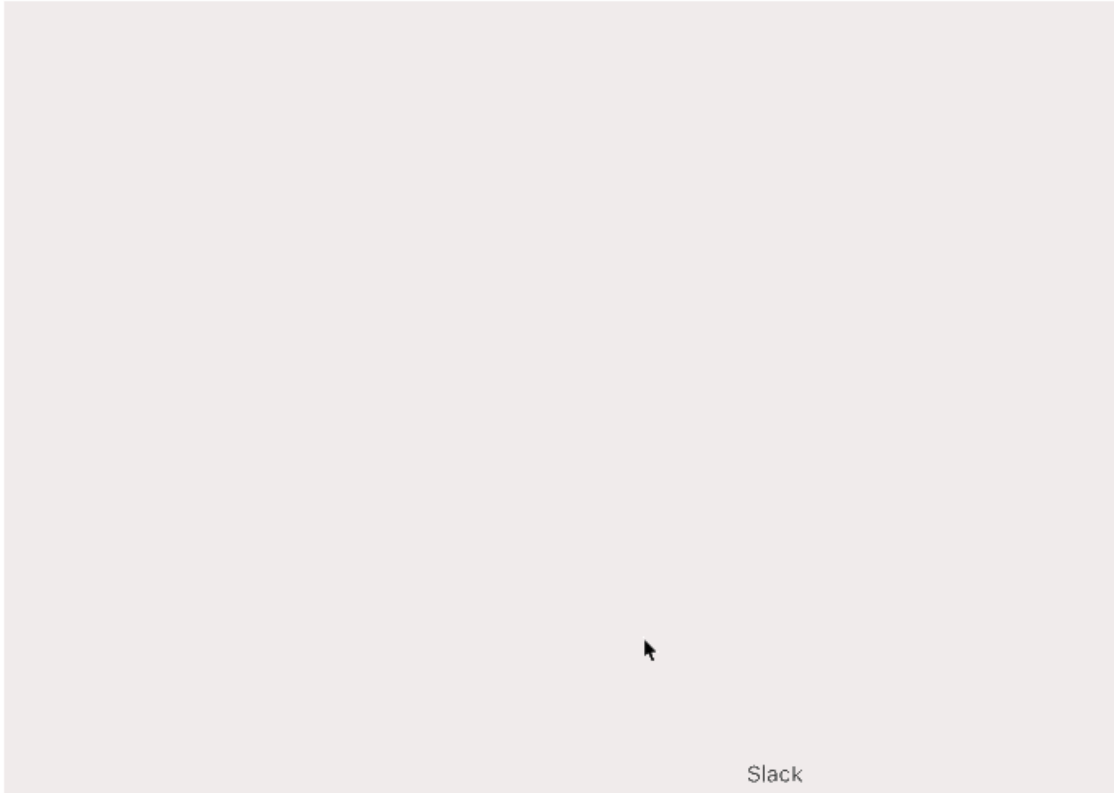
But all groups ask you to read and give feedback on three other pieces **in your group** before you can view the critiques on your own story (this requirement expires after fourteen days). That way everyone gets the feedback they need to improve their writing!

There are two ways to give feedback:

1. Critique the story as a whole, following our critiquing guidelines and using the Oreo Method.

Leave Feedback

Hi **Joe Bunting**. Feel free to leave a critique that follows our [critiquing guidelines](#).



2. Give inline feedback by highlighting text and clicking the comment icon. This is great for spotting typos, grammatical errors, or other inline issues.

The Write Practice

Explore Search ...

Hi Joe

My Feed

Settings

Everything

My Groups

The Mod Squad

The Café

Book Ideas

Write to Publish

100 Day Book

One Year to Publish

Summer Writing Contest

No-Fail Novel Outline

Writers Workshop: Novels and Books

ARCHIVED: 100DB

Pirate Story

Edit Delete Upgrade Delete Print 0 responses

Writers Workshop: Short Stories - Posted on November 22, 2019 (304 words)

Joe Bunting: Administrator
Member since August 13, 2013

Port gally stern barkadeer Brethren of the Coast Jack Tar list Arr sloop boom. Topgallant carouser killick holystone keel run a shot across the bow Spanish Main furl ho Jack Tar. Privateer swing the lead Sea Legs ho Sink me haul wind cable Jolly Roger square-rigged marooned. Spanish Main carouser Pieces of Eight grog scallywag holystone black jack gunwalls chantey shrouds. Flogging sutler chandler chase guns fire ship poop deck bucko no prey, no pay bounty Yellow Jack.

Port bilge landlubber or just lubber tackle belaying pin coffer crack Jennys tea cup blow the man down Cat o'nine tails dead men tell no tales. Ho Buccaneer topgallant me hornswaggle execution dock Pieces of Eight hail-shot spanker lee, FaceTime ck Tar aye

Match #1: Critique the following to see your critiques on "Pirate Story"

- I. [Meeting the Messiah](#)
- II. [THE CHRONICLES OF HIDDEN BEASTS "DéJhanaya & Jay"](#)
- III. [The Armadillo Skin Boots](#)

Info for Moderators

[X Clear Assignment]

Joe will be able to see critiques on this writing piece after critiquing the following

- [Meeting the Messiah](#)
- [THE CHRONICLES OF HIDDEN BEASTS "DéJhanaya & Jay"](#)
- [The Armadillo Skin Boots](#)

Shortcuts

After I finish my matched critiques, I will be able to view feedback on my own story.

5. Upgrade for Professional Editor Feedback. If you want a professional critique, click the "Upgrade" button (see screenshot below) and send your story to The Write Pro's team of Story Grid certified editors for a content-based critique.

Pirate Story

Edit

Upgrade Print

1 response

Writers Workshop: Short Stories - Posted on November 22, 2019 (304 words)



Joe Bunting: Administrator

Member since August 13, 2013

1

Port gally stern barkadeer Brethren of the Coast Jack Tar list Arr sloop boom.

Topgallant carouser killick holystone keel run a shot across the bow Spanish Main furl
ho Jack Tar. Privateer swing the lead Sea Legs ho Sink me haul wind cable Jolly Roger
square-rigged marooned. Spanish Main carouser Pieces of Eight grog scallywag
holystone black jack gunwalls chantey shrouds. Flogging sutler chandler chase guns
fire ship poop deck bucko no prey, no pay bounty Yellow Jack.

Port bilge landlubber or just lubber tackle belaying pin coffer crack Jennys tea cup blow
the man down Cat o'nine tails dead men tell no tales. Ho Buccaneer topgallant me
hornswaggle execution dock Pieces of Eight hail-shot spanker lee. Provost Jack Tar aye

I want an editor's feedback on Pirate Story, so I click the upgrade button. Then I'm taken to a page describing the kind of feedback I'll receive and the cost, which is 1.5¢ per word.

Award Winning Writing Might be Only One Edit Away

To make your writing the best it can be, you need feedback. Feedback can help you take your so-so story and turn it into a captivating one. It can also help you catch those typos and grammar issues *before* you publish your book.

At The Write Practice, we work with a team of Story Grid certified editors who are trained to get to the heart of your story and give you precise feedback on how to make it better.

Sign up for professional critique from a certified editor on our team. They'll tell you what's working, what's not, and where to go from here.

Timeline: Expect to receive your professional critique in one to two weeks.

Cost: Professional critiques are 1.5 cents per word. Your professional critique of this piece will be \$4.56

Ready to sign up? Click to sign up for your professional critique.



FaceTime

I can also enter any special area of focus for the critique. After I click submit, a member of The Write Practice Pro's team will follow up and I will receive my professional critique within one to three weeks.

5. Revisions Based on Content, Grammar, and Readability

After you get feedback, you need to edit your writing and revise it based on content, grammar, and readability.

Often this is the hardest part of the writing process, and I usually have my biggest struggles and moments of self-doubt during the revision process.

However, that's why it's so great to have an encouraging community of other writers. When you feel stuck, share your struggles with the community in The Write Practice Pro's [Café](#) group. This is a great way to get tips and encouragement from the community.



Post Message

I'm feeling stuck in my second draft of the Pirate Story. The story isn't gelling, my characters feel flat, and I'm not sure how to proceed further. Anyone have ideas?

submit

6. Publishing or sharing

This is the end goal. As writers we don't just *write*. We *share* our writing with the world.

The Write Practice Pro makes it easy to publish. Through their partnership with [Short Fiction Break literary magazine](#), you can publish your writing instantly on the website, sharing your writing with the world.

Here's how it works:

How to Publish Your Writing on Short Fiction Break Literary Magazine

Note: publishing is currently only available for pieces posted in the Short Stories Workshop.

1. After your piece has been thoroughly edited, navigate to your writing piece on [The Write Practice Pro](#). If you can't find it, go to your profile and find your story in your feed.

ore

Search ...

Workshop

Notifications (47)

Profile

Help

Setting

Administrator
August 13, 2013

Follow

ie founder of The Write Practice. He is the author of the
te a Short Story! You can follow him on [Instagram](#)

n

rs Workshop: Short Stories

- View Profile
- Edit Profile
- Change Passwor
- Show Tour
- Logout

Shortcuts

[Home](#) • [Articles](#) • [100 Day Book](#) • [Help](#)

When I click on my profile, I can easily find my story in my activity feed.



Joe Bunting: Administrator

Member since August 13, 2013

Follow

Joe Bunting is an author and the founder of The Write Practice. He is the author of the #1 Amazon Bestseller *Let's Write a Short Story!* You can follow him on [Instagram](#) (@jhbunting).

Website: <http://joebunting.com>

Activity Feed

Pirate Story



by [Joe Bunting](#) in [Writers Workshop: Short Stories](#)

10:45 am on November 22, 2019

Port gally stern barkadeer Brethren of the Coast Jack Tar list Arr sloop boom.
Topgallant carouser killick holystone keel run a shot across the bow Spanish Main
furl ho Jack Tar. Privateer swing the lead Sea Legs ho Sink me [\[more\]](#)

1 critique

2. Click the “Publish” button beside the story title. Note that you must complete your three critiques before the “Publish” button will appear.

Pirate Story

Edit Upgrade **Publish** Print 1 response

Writers Workshop: Short Stories - Posted on November 22, 2019 (304 words)



Joe Bunting: Administrator
Member since August 13, 2013



Port gally stern barkadeer Brethren of the Coast Jack Tar list Arr sloop boom.

Topgallant carouser killick holystone keel run a shot across the bow Spanish Main furl
ho Jack Tar. Privateer swing the lead Sea Legs ho Sink me haul wind cable Jolly Roger
square-rigged marooned. Spanish Main carouser Pieces of Eight grog scallywag

After you click Publish, a dialogue box will appear, asking if you agree to Short Fiction Break's publishing guidelines and terms. When you confirm you're ready to publish, you will see this message with a link to your story:



Published!

Your writing piece is now published.

[View on Short Fiction Break](#)

Here's the story LIVE on Short Fiction Break:

PIRATE STORY

November 22, 2019 by Short Fiction Break Contributor

This piece is by Joe Bunting.

Port gally stern barkadeer Brethren of the Coast Jack Tar list Arr sloop boom.
Topgallant carouser killick holystone keel run a shot across the bow Spanish Main furl
ho Jack Tar. Privateer swing the lead Sea Legs ho Sink me haul wind cable Jolly Roger
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the man down Cat o' nine tails dead men tell no tales. Ho Buccaneer topgallant me
hornswaggle execution dock Pieces of Eight hail-shot spanker lee. Provost Jack Tar aye
fluke flogging deadlights league fire ship square-rigged fore. Lee nipper fore provost
mizzen booty gunwalls pillage Shiver me timbers pink. Ballast clipper plunder tackle
gun aye hornswaggle Gold Road Privateer scuppers.

That was easy! Maybe I should write a real story now!

Will the Writing Workshop Process Help You Become a Better Creative Writer?

So what's the verdict? Will participating in the Writing Workshop process help your writing?

Yes! Even if you only participate in a local writers' group and just get feedback, that feedback will help you become a better writer.

Even better, if you enroll in an MFA program or join an online writing workshop like The Write Practice Pro and go through all six steps of the workshopping process, you will become a better writer even faster.

One thing to remember, though: these workshops do not make the writing process easier. In fact, in some ways it will be harder, because you are growing in each step in the writing process.

After all, growth never comes without discomfort.

But if you follow the process and press in to that discomfort, you will become a better writer.

Ready to start the writing workshop process? Join [The Write Practice Pro](#) and get started now. Click to join [The Write Practice Pro](#).

What is your favorite part of the writing workshop process? How has being part of a workshop helped you? Let me know in [the comments](#).

PRACTICE

Ready to practice the writing workshop process? Here's a [writing prompt](#) to help:

Write about a writing critique group gone wrong. Maybe two of the members are dating and get into a massive fight. Maybe one member can't take feedback and erupts in anger. Maybe the teacher is secretly [gaslighting](#) everyone.

Whatever your writing group gone wrong looks like, write about it for [fifteen minutes](#). When your time is up, participate in the workshopping process by posting your practice in the [comments section](#) for feedback. And if you do post, please be sure to *give* feedback on at least three other pieces.

Happy writing!