

# November is National Novel Writing Month

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November is National Novel Writing Month. Perhaps you know that already. Perhaps you're trying to reach word 23,338 by night's end. If you don't know NaNoWriMo, think of it as a literary marathon with nearly 200,000 mostly amateur writers. The goal? To write a 50,000-word "novel" in 30 days.

"Novel," in NaNoWriMo-speak, means "laughably awful yet lengthy prose." What began in 1999 with 21 friends has grown into a nonprofit called the Office of Letters and Light, whose purpose is to get people to throw their literary inhibitions aside, work within a communal deadline, and have fun.

This enormous coterie of writers had produced nearly a billion words as of a couple of days ago. (In 2009, the total was nearly 2.5 billion.) At the end of the month, writers upload their work for a word count. Last year, slightly more than 19 percent of NaNoWriMo writers won, which proves just how hard it is to keep up a pace of 1,667 words a day, even if they're laughably awful.

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