

CHAPTER 1 Getting Started

Sit at your desk for three hours each morning. Don't allow yourself to read, answer phone calls, tidy up, or anything else. You sit there. If you are not writing, you still sit there. Eventually, you will write.

—Flannery O'Connor

WriteItNow makes Flannery O'Connor's mandate to sit and write less intimidating. It helps bring the fun back into writing. If you know what you want to write, WriteItNow helps you stay organized. If you're not sure what to write, WriteItNow inspires your creativity. When you've finished writing, WriteItNow gives you the tools you need to prepare and export your manuscript.

To help you make the most of WriteItNow, we'll walk you through the many WriteItNow features that can improve your writing experience.

About this Book

Although we can all benefit from a weekend writing workshop, most of us are too busy or can't afford to attend. But we can afford to buy or borrow a book. Think of this book as your surrogate WriteItNow Weekend Warrior Workshop. Ravenshead Services has supplied

the software for your writing adventures, and we'll help you make the most of it.

We'll show you how to use WriteItNow to write your story or novel, from your first idea to final manuscript. We won't teach you how to write *per se* (that's your business), but we will show you how to use WriteItNow to develop your story, step by step.

Stories grow from inspiration, ideas, and notes. You create and develop characters that live in your story. As your story becomes more complex, WriteItNow becomes invaluable—making it easy for you to organize your work and visualize your progress. When you've finished writing, you can seamlessly export your story to a printer or to book design software. You can even transfer stories that you started in other word processors such as Microsoft Word into WriteItNow. Almost anything is possible.

Many of the WriteItNow features we cover are optional or advanced, and you might not have noticed them yet. For example, suppose you're having a morning of writer's block and need an idea to get you jump started. The Idea Generator can help. Or suppose you can't seem to find anything interesting to say about a character. WriteItNow's Create a Character from a Prompt can inspire you.

WriteItNow is really two programs: (1) a sophisticated word processor and story organizer and (2) a set of tools to help you improve your

writing. We suggest you use this book as a step by step guide to using WriteItNow as well as a reference for the features in WriteItNow.

It's worth your while to thumb through this book before you get too far into your story. It will help you know what's available in WriteItNow and what's to come as your story gains momentum. Use the table of contents, the index at the end of this book, and the shaded page topics to locate information quickly.

We begin by describing essential knowledge you need to use WriteItNow (Chapters 1-2). We describe the structure of WriteItNow and how to move around the interface. We show you the basics of creating, saving, and loading WriteItNow story files (.wnw files).

Then in Chapters 3-6, we describe how WriteItNow contributes to sequential stages of the writing process: beginning, expanding, and enhancing your story. We show you, example by example, how to use WriteItNow tools and features. We apply those tools in an example story that we're writing, called "A Vision."

The very first thing I tell my new students on the first day of a workshop is that good writing is about telling the truth. We are a species that needs and wants to understand who we are.

—Anne Lamott

We're not going to write "A Vision" in this book (that would be two books in one). But we are going to show you how we started that story, by researching, taking notes, creating a topic sentence and synopsis, and developing characters, events, and locations for the action. Not surprisingly, these basic story components are also the components that WriteItNow provides for you to create your story. Apply our examples of how to use these components to your own stories. And write.

You can use the tools we discuss in this section at any stage of your writing. We present them in a logical order that you might use them in, but use them in any order. WriteItNow was designed to suit *your* personal writing style.



Figure 1.1 Making the Most of WriteItNow 4 book structure.

In the last section (Chapter 7), we arrive at the *grand finale*: preparing your book for print!

Why WriteItNow?

WriteItNow is powerful and affordable. It allows you to Customize, Organize, Visualize, and Realize your writing adventure.

Why use writing software at all? Outlining scenes with pen and paper works and has worked well for centuries. Many great writers wrote before typewriters were in common use. And even today, some writers prefer to sit quietly at a desk without a computer.

But eventually, almost all modern writers will need to get their stories into printable format. That means getting them into a computer. If you're the kind of writer that organizes, plots, and writes without revision and needs only pen or pencil notes, then you might think you don't need some of WriteItNow's features. Yet.

We also write with pen and paper, and usually we begin our stories that way, by jotting notes and ideas and sketching out scenes in our notebooks. If you're like us, you'll find that WriteItNow can simplify your note taking and help you organize those preliminary ideas. After all, some of our first thoughts and inspirations are the ones worth pursuing. Once you've started writing your scenes in detail, WriteItNow shines as your writing assistant. For example, changing your mind about the location of a chapter or

scene is simply a matter of dragging and dropping the chapter or scene to a new location.

WriteItNow is both a text or word processor as well as your story manager. If you're someone who has always wanted to write a story but couldn't make yourself write in a conventional word processor such as Word, then WriteItNow, is an excellent alternative. If you want to write, WriteItNow will help you write.

WriteItNow Software & Updates

WriteItNow was created by the good folks at Ravenshead Services in Scotland. The software is compatible with PCs (Windows 7, Vista, and XP) and Mac OSX. You can download the software or purchase a CD. To test whether this is the right writing software for you, download a free trial version of WriteItNow at the Ravenshead Services website:

www.ravensheadservices.com

If you have an older registered version (*e.g.*, WriteItNow 3), you can upgrade to WriteItNow 4 for a small fee at the Ravenshead website.

If you purchase a download version of WriteItNow 4, Ravenshead Services will email you the unlock codes to activate your copy. These codes convert the trial demonstration versions to fully registered versions of WriteItNow 4, which can save and use WriteItNow's special features, such as Add-Ons.

If you prefer a “hard copy” (*i.e.*, a WriteItNow CD), you can purchase it at Amazon (www.amazon.com), Pinyon Publishing (www.pinyon-publishing.com), or Ravenshead Services (www.ravensheadservices.com).

Ravenshead Services continually adds prompts, appearance options, name sets, background add-ons, and databases (for personality generators, appearance generators, and timelines). To check for feature updates, from WriteItNow’s main menu, select File > Downloads and choose the type of update you’re looking for. (Figure 1.2).

WriteItNow revisions are summarized at www.ravensheadservices.com/revisions.php.

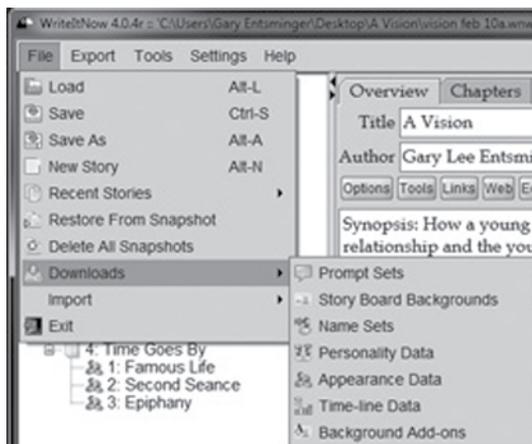


Figure 1.2 WriteItNow feature updates.

WHY WRITEITNOW?

CUSTOMIZE—Customize WriteItNow’s display to work best for you. Show as many story components as you need. Show and hide views. Change fonts. Change your mind. No problem.

ORGANIZE—Organize the details and information about the characters and events in your story. Easily access that information, no matter where you are in your writing. Your initial notes are as accessible as your most recently inspired chapters and scenes. Moving scenes from one chapter to another is simply drag and drop. Moving a scene into your story from another program is simply cut and paste or through a menu-driven text or file import.

VISUALIZE—Use the Story Board to see your story as if it were a set of note cards laid out on a table. Your story comes alive card by card. You can shuffle and move them around. You can also view and rearrange your story with Tree View. Visualize character relationships and events with Graph features. Sometimes this visual take on your story’s structure can help you see where your story needs to go.

REALIZE—When your story is ready to be shared with others, you have numerous formatting and export options.