

# COMPLETE YOUR BOOK IN A YEAR

## How Much Work is Needed Each Month?

\* Individuals vary and most work faster towards the end, but on average 7 hours per week i.e. about 30 hours per month. Some writing is cathartic. Many find it very satisfying to have written. Others just have fun. All procrastinate at the start.

### **Schedule So You Will Complete Your Book In A Year.**

#### **Month 1.**

1. Write yourself a letter to be opened in 12 months. List WHY you are doing this project and what you want to achieve from it. Put in a sealed envelope addressed to yourself.
2. Decide on a working title.
3. Slot writing time in your diary. Either set weekly word goal or an amount of time per day. Minimum of one chapter per month. E.g. Weekly goal of 1,000 rough words. 40,000 in ten months and then polish. Minimum 200 words per day with 2 days off.

A memoir can be any length even 20,000 words or less. Decide on final wordage and work backwards for monthly total.

Tick off daily. Re-drafting on going.

4. Read at least one book per month for technique. Who has written in the style, format or subject you want to do? Read as a writer.
5. Write a one page synopsis (this may change later).
6. Draft a table of contents with ten chapters of equal length.
7. Assess what resources you already have. Sort photos. Make interview appointments. Check legal issues.

#### **Month 2.**

1. Write a 'conversational' table of contents with chapter titles and sub-headings.
2. Write 200 words per day or 1000 words per week.
3. Decide on your structure. Chronological? Anecdotal? Other?

4. Join a workshopping group to read your drafts.
5. Read other authors' books for structure.
6. Draft a 50-word bio for your published book. Organise an author photo.
7. Practise responding to: 'What is your book about?' In one sentence.

**Month 3.**

1. Write 200 words per day. Rework earlier drafts.
2. Read for characterisation.
3. Draft a cast list. Write dossiers for major characters. List strengths and weaknesses.
4. Take part in an ancestor interview, where you become your ancestor and have to answer questions, honestly and in first person as 'I'. Then research what you don't know.
5. Use a diagram to work out relationships.
6. Make a checklist of significant dates and places.
7. Decide on viewpoint from which to write. Fact, fiction or fiction?

**Month 4.**

1. Write 200 words per day. Rework drafts. Concentrate on senses.
2. Read others for their use of setting.
3. Re-visit a significant location in your book as participant-observer. Include all senses when writing 200 words of this scene. Include in your week's quota.
4. Utilise photos. Put one as your screen saver for inspiration.

**Month 5.**

1. Write 200 words per day. Rework drafts.
2. Read others for handling of conflict, tragedy and humour.

3. Draft an extra 200 word emotional anecdote in your current writing which deals with tragedy. Use sub-text and suggest rather than overwhelm the reader. Insert later in your project.
4. In one sentence, including the book title, say what your book is about. Include conflict, character and indicate period and place. What is your major theme or idea thread?
5. Keep research going, including interviews, while you are writing. Check legal issues like copyright of letters. Keep a running sheet of interviewee contacts. Work out your own system of distinguishing fact and opinion or gossip.

**Month 6.**

1. Write 200 words per day. Rework drafts.
2. Read others about challenges mid-book.
3. Write a 500 word W.I.P. (work in progress) article on the challenges you are facing in writing this book. (This is a form of problem solving now, but also useful later when book is published). Pitch to a magazine or journal.
4. Consider whether to change the structure or chapter order.
5. Investigate other formats like audio books.
6. On graph paper, plot the tensions in your chapters and in your book. If missing, rewrite.
7. Use readers to fact -check your draft.

**Month 7.**

1. Write 200 words per day. Rework drafts. Write one scene only in dialogue and include this in quota.
2. Check movies for effective dialogue. Think about transitions if your project were to become a doco or an historical drama. Watch period movies for times you are writing about.
3. Read 3 historical children's books. How do they simplify complex issues?

**Month 8.**

1. Storyboard a 24 page children's picture book inspired from your research. Have a specific reader or listener in mind. Use

photos or sketches. Trial with child, edit and self-publish via local printer. Gift it.

2. Find reputable editing, designing and publishing options via library, professional organisations.etc.
3. Check with local genealogy society and library for recent, well produced books.

**Month 9.**

1. Complete first draft. Read through and use tracking.
2. Write back cover blurb 100 words
3. Write art brief for cover.
4. Attend book launches for research.

**Month 10.**

1. Check whole ms for continuity.
2. Print and bind a working copy

**Month 11.**

1. Editor (not you) checks.
2. Fix typos and errors.
3. Decide on traditional or 'indie' publishing.
4. Write 'pitch'.

**Month 12.**

1. Write media release.
2. Organise a mini-book launch \* Traditional will take much longer
3. Publicity
4. Celebrate.

Extract from Hazel Edwards' 'Complete Your Book in a Year' Manual.

