

# Getting started

Your first hour in Write: the name you publish under, your first book, and where everything lives.

- [Add your pen name](#)
- [Create your first book](#)
- [Find your way around the editor](#)
- [Find your way around the Library](#)
- [Write your first scene](#)

# Add your pen name

## Why this comes first

The first thing Write asks for is the name you publish under. It might seem like an odd place to start, but there's a good reason: every book and series in Write lives under a pen name, and that name is what gets printed on the title page. Until there's a name to print, the **New book** button waits.

## Adding it

1. Open the Library. The first time you arrive, you'll see a card that says **First, the name you publish under.**
2. Type the name exactly as you'd like it to appear in print—*M. D. Cooper* rather than *mdcooper*. The spacing and initials you type here are what the title page will show.
3. Click **Add pen name**.

Screenshot: The Library's first-run pen name card

*Screenshot: The Library on a first visit, showing the card that says First, the name you publish under, with the name typed in and the Add pen name button visible.*

The card disappears, and the Library is ready for your books.

## If you write under more than one name

Add the one you use most for now. You can add the others whenever you like, from the Library's **Manage** row under **Pen names**. Each pen name keeps its own series and books, and a book takes the pen name of whatever series it belongs to.

## If you only have the one

You still need to enter it—it's what the title page prints—but that's the last you'll hear of it. New books will use your one pen name without asking.

# Create your first book

## Starting a standalone book

1. In the Library, click **New book** at the top right.
2. Type the title. If you have more than one pen name, you'll be asked which one; if you've made more than one page setup, you'll be asked that too. Otherwise there's nothing more to fill in.
3. Click **Add**.

The book opens in the editor, empty, with two ways to begin: **Add the first chapter**, or bring in a manuscript you already have. If the book already exists in Word, Markdown or plain text, importing it is much quicker than starting over—see [Import a manuscript](#).

*Screenshot: A new, empty book in the editor* *Screenshot: A newly created book open in the editor, empty, showing the Add the first chapter option and the option to bring in a manuscript.*

## Starting a book in a series

Books that belong to a series are added from the series itself rather than from the top button, so they land in the right place with the right number. Find the series in the Library and click **Add book** on its row. You'll be asked for the title and its number in the series—3, say, or 2.5 for a novella that sits between books. Leave the number blank for a prequel or anything that isn't numbered. A book in a series takes the series' pen name automatically.

*Screenshot: A series row in the Library with its Add book button* *Screenshot: A series in the Library, with its books listed beneath it and the Add book button on the series row visible.*

Don't have a series yet? **New series**, beside New book, makes one. It asks for a name and the pen name, and optionally a universe—a setting this series shares with others. You can skip the universe for now; it's easy to add later.

## What a new book comes with

- A page setup—trim size, margins, fonts—inherited from the series, or your default if it's a standalone. You can change it any time from the editor, under **Book → Page setup**.
- Chapter header settings, if the series has them.
- Nothing else. No chapters, no front matter yet. Those arrive as you add them.

## Opening it again

Every book is listed in the Library, under its series or on its own row if it's a standalone. Click the title to open it. The editor remembers which scene you had open last time and takes you straight back to it.

# Find your way around the editor

## Three parts to the screen

It helps to think of the editor as three columns.

**On the left: your manuscript.** The structure of the book, top to bottom—any front matter, then the chapters with their scenes inside, then any back matter. Click a scene to open it. Every chapter and scene has a ... menu beside it for renaming, moving, archiving and adding, and **Add a chapter** sits at the bottom of the list.

**In the middle: the page.** The scene you're working on, shown the way it will look in print—the same trim size, margins and fonts as your finished book. The page number you see is this scene's own; the book's real page numbers are worked out when it's built.

**On the right: notes and review.** The **Notes** rail holds working notes for the scene and for the book as a whole. They're yours alone and are never printed. When a book has comments or suggestions on it, a review rail appears here too; you can hide it when you'd like the width back.

Screenshot: The editor's three columns *Screenshot: The whole editor with a scene open, showing the manuscript list on the left, the printed-looking page in the middle and the Notes rail on the right.*

## The toolbar

Each group of buttons has a small label, so they're easy to find again.

Screenshot: The editor toolbar *Screenshot: The editor's toolbar across the top, with its labelled groups visible—Book, Work, View, Paragraph, Images, Zoom and Mode.*

- **Book** — *Details* (title, imprint, cover), *Page setup* (trim, margins, fonts; for the book's owner) and *Publish*, which builds the PDF or EPUB.
- **Work** — switch between *Write* and *Outline* (the whole book as a list of scenes with their summaries); open *Notes*; *Find* (Ctrl+F, or Ctrl+H to replace); and *Listen*, which reads aloud from your cursor—a lovely way to catch the sentences that don't quite flow.
- **View** — guides that show the margins, a dark page if you prefer it, and the theme.
- **Paragraph** — the style of the paragraph your cursor is in (Ctrl+Shift+E centres it).
- **Images** — place a picture from your media library after the current paragraph, or open the library itself.
- **Zoom** — or hold Alt and scroll. *Fit* sizes the page to the space you have.
- **Mode** — *Writing* or *Suggesting*. In *Suggesting*, every change is marked for the author to accept or reject later. If you've been invited to a book as an editor, you may find you're

kept in this mode; that's by design.

## Saving happens by itself

There's no save button. Write saves as you type, and the little word at the bottom right—**Saved** or **Saving...**—tells you where it's at. Once it says **Saved**, you can close the tab whenever you like. Write also keeps a version every few minutes while you work, plus one before any big change, so an earlier draft of a scene is always there to go back to.

If your connection drops, or Write is briefly out of reach, it says **Not saved** and keeps trying on its own until your words get through. You don't need to do anything. Meanwhile, this browser holds on to what you've written. If the tab closes before your words reach Write, open the scene in the same browser and a note at the top offers to **Put them back**.

If you're signed out while you have words waiting—your session ran out, say—Write doesn't take you away from the page. A note says so, with **Sign in again**, which opens the sign-in in a new tab. Once you're in, come back to your tab and it saves by itself.

## If a scene was changed somewhere else

With the same scene open in two places—two windows, a laptop and a tablet—Write keeps them in step. If both have changes of their own at once, a note at the top shows exactly what differs: struck words are only in the saved copy, underlined words only in this window. **Save the struck-through copy** keeps the saved one, and is usually right, especially in a window that's been open a while; **Save the underlined copy** puts what's in this window in its place. Either way, the one you didn't choose is kept in **History**, so nothing is lost.

## Word count

The scene's count sits at the bottom of the page. The book's total is in the Library under its title, and in **Details**.

## Picking up where you left off

The editor remembers the scene you had open in each book. Come back tomorrow and you'll land right there.

# Find your way around the Library

## What the Library is for

The Library is home: every series and book you have, grouped under the pen names you publish them with. The line under the heading keeps count—series, books, words—and the search box finds a series or title by name. If you've set something aside, **Show archived** brings it back into view.

*Screenshot: The Library Screenshot: The Library with a pen name and a few series and books listed, showing the count line under the heading, the search box, the Bring in / Back up / Manage toolbar and the New series and New book buttons at the top right.*

## Reading the rows

A series appears as a heading with its books listed beneath it in order. Any omnibuses (boxed sets) made from it sit below its books, under an **Omnibuses** line. A standalone book gets a row of its own. On a series heading you'll find:

- a small arrow at the left that folds the series shut, or opens it again;
- the universe it belongs to, shown as a small tag you can click to open the universe's codex—or, if the series isn't in a universe yet but the pen name has some, a dashed + **universe** button to put it in one;
- **Add book** and **Import**, which add a new book to this series;
- a ... menu for renaming, pinning it to the top, creating an omnibus (boxed set), changing its pen name and/or universe, archiving, or deleting for good.

*Screenshot: A series heading in the Library Screenshot: One series heading in the Library with its books beneath it, showing the fold arrow, the universe tag, the Add book and Import buttons and the ... menu.*

Each book row has its own ... menu: **Open book**, **Rename book**, **Change series and/or pen name**, and **Archive book**. Clicking a title opens it in the editor.

## Pin and fold your series

With a lot of series, you can keep the ones you're working on close at hand:

- **Pin to top** (in the series' ... menu) moves it above the rest, marked with a small pin. Click the pin, or choose **Unpin from top**, to put it back. Pinned series keep their shelf order among themselves, and you can drag them to reorder.

- **Fold a series shut** with the arrow beside its name, and its books are tucked away until you open it again. A search still finds books in a folded series.

Write remembers both with your account, so the Library looks the same the next time you open it, on any device.

## The toolbar

Three groups of buttons, each with a label:

### Bring in

- *Manuscript* — a manuscript from Word, Markdown or plain text, as a new book.
- *Backup* — a book's backup zip from Write, restored just as it was: over the book it came from, or as a new book.

### Back up

- *All my books* — every book you own, each as its own backup, in one zip. A good habit before anything big.

### Manage

- *Pen names* — the names you publish under, the universes their series share, and your About the Author bios.
- *Codexes* — your universes and their codexes: the characters, places, factions and rules that a setting's series share.
- *Media library* — every picture your books print, by book, series, universe, or all of them together.
- *Book lists* — your catalogue as the back matter prints it, one list per pen name.

## New series and New book

Both are at the top right. **New book** makes a standalone. A book that belongs in a series is added from that series' row instead, so it lands in the right place with its number. **New series** asks for a name, the pen name, and—if you like—a universe.

## Archiving and deleting aren't the same thing

Archiving sets a book or series aside: it leaves the list but is kept safe, and **Restore** brings it back. Deleting for good is exactly that, and the menu will ask you to confirm before it does anything.

# Write your first scene

## Chapters and scenes

A book in Write is made of chapters, and each chapter is made of one or more scenes. The chapter is what your reader sees—the title, the number, the heading at the top of the page. Scenes are for you: a chapter with three scenes prints as one chapter with a scene break between each, but you can move, set aside or rewrite any one scene without disturbing the others. If you've always written in one long document, this takes a day or two to get used to, and then you won't want to go back.

## Starting the first chapter

1. In a new book, click **Add the first chapter**. It arrives with one empty scene, already open.
2. Click into the page and begin. Enter starts a new paragraph, and the page shows the real indent, font and spacing from your page setup, so what you see is close to what you'll print.
3. Give the chapter a title whenever you're ready: point at the chapter in the manuscript list, click the small gear beside it, and choose *Rename chapter*. Or leave it numbered—plenty of books do.

## Adding more

- **Another scene in the same chapter:** open the chapter's gear menu and choose *Add a scene*. It goes to the end; drag it, or use *Move scene up* and *Move scene down* from the scene's own menu, to put it where you want.
- **Another chapter:** click **+ Chapter** at the bottom of the manuscript list, or the **+** beside **Manuscript**. Drag it into place.
- **Parts:** if your book is divided into parts, you can turn them on and drag chapters into them. See [Organize chapters and scenes](#).

Screenshot: A chapter's menu in the manuscript list *Screenshot: The manuscript list on the left of the editor with a chapter's gear menu open, showing Rename chapter and Add a scene, and + Chapter at the bottom of the list.*

## Scene breaks take care of themselves

You don't type them. Between two scenes in a chapter, the finished book prints the scene-break ornament from your page setup; in the editor, each scene is its own page. If you'd like a break

partway through a scene, make it two scenes: put the cursor where the second should begin and choose **Split the scene here** from the **Paragraph** menu (or press Ctrl+Shift+Enter).

## Chapter numbers

A new chapter takes the next number. Moving a chapter doesn't renumber anything on its own, so you can try a chapter in a new spot without its number changing under you. When the numbers are out of order, the manuscript list says so, with a **Renumber** button to put them straight.

## Setting a scene aside

*Archive scene* takes a scene out of the book without deleting it, and nothing is lost. **Show archived**, in the ... menu beside **Manuscript**, lists your archived scenes, and *Restore scene* puts one back where it was. Only an archived scene can be deleted, with *Delete scene for good*. That can't be undone, so it asks you first.

For everything else you can do with chapters, scenes and parts, see [Organize chapters and scenes](#).