

Importing and backups

Bringing a manuscript in from Word, backing up a book or all of them, and restoring from a backup.

- [Import a manuscript](#)
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Import a manuscript

If you've already written some (or all) of a book somewhere else, you don't have to retype it or paste it in a scene at a time. Write can read the whole file, split it into chapters and scenes for you, and show you what it found before anything is saved.

What you can bring in

- **Word files (.docx).** This includes Word files saved out of Scrivener, Vellum, Google Docs and Pages—if your writing app can export to Word, Write can read it. If you have an older .doc file, open it in Word and save it as .docx first.
- **Markdown (.md)** and **plain text (.txt).**

Where to start

There are three ways in, and they all open the same window.

- **A new book, from the Library.** In the bar near the bottom of the Library, under **Bring in**, click **Manuscript**. Give the book a title, choose the pen name it's published under, and Write makes the book and opens the import window.
- **A new book in a series.** On the series' row in the Library, choose **Import...** The new book joins that series.
- **A book you've already made but haven't written in yet.** Open it, and in the middle of the page you'll see *Nothing written here yet* with an **Import a manuscript...** button. On a phone, it's in the **More** menu.

Screenshot: Bring in, in the Library's bottom bar *Screenshot: the Library with the bar near the bottom in view, showing Manuscript under Bring in.*

A book that already has chapters can't take an import—Write won't mix an imported manuscript into chapters you've started. Import into a new book instead; you can always move scenes across afterward.

Choose your file and look it over

Click **Choose a file** and pick your manuscript. Write reads it straight away and fills in **What it found** on the right:

Screenshot: the Import a manuscript window *Screenshot: the Import a manuscript window after choosing a file, with How it splits on the left and What it found on the right.*

- every chapter it found, with its number, its title, how many scenes and words it has, and the first line of its first scene, so you can tell at a glance whether the split is right;
- any **front and back matter** it recognized—a dedication, an acknowledgments page, an afterword—each with a checkbox, ticked to bring it in;
- anything it's set aside, crossed out, with the reason beside it;
- a note if your chapters have lines under their titles (a date, a place, whose point of view), which Write turns into your chapter header fields.

Nothing has been saved yet. Take as long as you like.

If the chapters or scenes look wrong

Write makes a sensible guess, but every manuscript is formatted a little differently. Under **How it splits** you can tell it what to look for, and the preview updates as soon as you change it.

Chapters

- **Auto** tries, in order: a Word style you've named for chapters, then **Heading 1**, then lines that read like "Chapter 12" or "CHAPTER TWELVE," and finally page breaks. It's usually right.
- **Heading 1** if your chapter titles use Word's Heading 1 style.
- **Chapter lines** if each chapter starts with a line like "Chapter 3."
- **Page breaks** if all you did was start each chapter on a new page.

Scenes

- *** * * lines** splits wherever there's a line with nothing on it but asterisks, pound signs, tildes or similar marks—the usual scene break.
- **Blank lines** splits wherever there are two or more empty lines in a row.
- **One scene** keeps each chapter whole, if you'd rather divide scenes yourself later.

Chapter numbers sets how your chapter numbers will print—*4 · Title, Chapter Four* over the title, roman numerals, or none. Write suggests the style your file already uses. You can change it later from the chapter header setup, so don't worry about getting it perfect here.

If you have more than one page setup, there's also a **Page setup** choice, so the book opens at the right trim size and fonts the first time. That can be changed later too.

Bring it in

When the preview looks right, click **Import** (the button tells you how many chapters it will bring in). Write saves everything exactly as the preview showed it and opens the book at the first scene.

What comes through, and what doesn't

Write keeps the writing and lets go of the old formatting, since your page setup decides how the book looks from here on.

Kept: paragraphs, *italics*, **bold**, line breaks within a paragraph, scene breaks, links, and centered lines (like *THE END*).

Left behind: fonts, type sizes, indents and colors. **Tables and pictures** are left out too, with a warning in the preview so you know where they were; you can add pictures back from the media library afterward.

Set aside on purpose: a title page, a copyright page, a table of contents and an "Also by" list. Write makes these for you from your book's details, so they stay up to date—you'll find them under front and back matter once the book is in.

If something goes wrong

- **The preview shows one giant chapter.** Write couldn't find chapter breaks with the current setting. Try **Chapter lines** or **Page breaks** under **How it splits**.
- **Every paragraph became its own scene.** Your file probably has blank lines between paragraphs. Switch **Scenes** to *** * * lines**.
- **It says the book already has chapters.** Import into a new book instead (see *Where to start*, above).

Back up your books

Your books are saved as you write, and Write keeps them safe on its side. A backup is something extra: a copy of your own, on your own computer, that you can open without Write and restore from if you ever need to. It's worth making one now and then—before a big revision, say, or at the end of a draft.

What's in a backup

A backup is a single .zip file. Inside are two things:

- **Plain files anyone can read.** Every scene as its own text file, in folders by chapter, and the whole manuscript in one file, in reading order. Your front and back matter is there too. They're written in Markdown, which is ordinary text with a few marks—**italics**, ****bold****—so any text editor or word processor can open them, today or in twenty years.
- **The exact record**, in a folder called *write*. This is everything Write needs to put the book back exactly as it was: scenes, sections, notes, pictures, comments and suggestions, and who you'd shared it with. You don't need to open this part; it's there so a restore can be complete.

If a scene has suggested changes that haven't been accepted yet, the readable files show the text as though they had been—the same way a build does. The exact record keeps the suggestions as suggestions.

Back up one book

1. Open the book and choose **Publish** (in the **Book** menu, or the **Publish** button in the toolbar).
2. Near the bottom, in the **Backup** card, click **Download a backup**.
3. It appears in the **Files** list beside your other builds after a moment. Click **Download** to save it.

Screenshot: the Backup card in the Publish window *Screenshot: the Publish window scrolled near the bottom, showing the Backup card with its Download a backup button and the Files list where the backup appears.*

Back up all your books at once

1. In the Library, in the bar near the bottom, under **Back up**, click **All my books**.
2. Click **Back up everything now**.

3. Write makes a backup of each of your books, in the background, and puts them all in one .zip. You can close the window and carry on writing; when it says **Ready**, click **Download**.

The window keeps a list of your recent library backups, so you can download one again later.

Screenshot: the All my books backup window *Screenshot: the backup window opened from All my books in the Library, showing the Back up everything now button, a backup marked Ready with its Download button, and the list of recent library backups.*

This covers the books you own. Books other people have shared with you are theirs to back up.

Your codex is backed up separately

A codex belongs to a universe rather than to any one book, so it isn't inside a book's backup. When you back up all your books, the window lists each of your codexes with a link—**Back up the ... codex**—that downloads it on its own: a readable page for each entry, the pictures, and the exact record. You can also download one from the codex itself, with its **Back up** button.

Where to keep them

Anywhere you keep other important files: a folder on your computer that's backed up, a cloud drive, an external disk. A backup holds the whole book, so treat it the way you'd treat the manuscript itself.

To bring a backup back in, see [Restore from a backup](#).

Restore from a backup

This page is for bringing a book back from a backup you made in Write—to undo a revision that went wrong, to recover something you deleted, or to move a book into another Author Tools account. Write always reads the backup first and tells you what's in it; nothing changes until you choose.

Where to start

- **From the Library.** In the bar near the bottom, under **Bring in**, click **Backup**.
- **From inside a book.** Choose **Publish**, and in the **Backup** card click **Restore from a backup....** Starting here is handy when the backup is of the book you have open.

Either way, click **Choose a backup zip** and pick the .zip file you downloaded. Write reads it and shows you which book it's of and when it was made.

Screenshot: the Restore from a backup window *Screenshot: the Restore from a backup window after reading a book's backup, showing the two choices.*

Your two choices

Bring it in as a new book. Write makes a fresh copy of the book in your Library, in its series if you have one of the same name. The book it was backed up from is left exactly as it is. This is the safe choice whenever you're unsure—you can compare the two, keep what you want, and archive the other.

Restore over the book. Write puts the book back exactly as the backup holds it: chapters, scenes, front and back matter, notes, pictures, comments, and suggestions. Whatever the book holds now is replaced. The people it was shared with are invited back rather than let straight in: each gets an invitation in **Shared with you** in their Library, and is on the book again once they accept (see [Share a book](#)). This is offered only when the book is in your Library and you're allowed to change it.

Because restoring over a book can't be undone, Write asks you to confirm first. If there's anything in the book now that you might want, click **Keep it**, make a fresh backup of the book as it is (see [Back up your books](#)), and then restore. That way both versions are safe.

Restoring from a whole-library backup

If you pick a backup made with **Back up all my books**, Write lists every book inside it, and you choose for each one: **Over**, **New**, or **Skip**. There are shortcuts at the top to set them all at once. Write then restores them one at a time, and each row tells you how it went. Nothing is restored that you didn't choose.

Good to know

- **The codex isn't part of a book's backup.** It belongs to a universe and is backed up on its own (see [Back up your books](#)).
- **A book someone shared with you** can be brought in as a new book of your own, but can't be restored over—the original belongs to its owner.
- **A very old backup** made before Write kept the exact record can't be restored as it was. Its *manuscript.md* file still has all your words, though, and you can bring that in with [Import a manuscript](#).