



Navigating Experiments *in*

Sit *Write* Share

A Workbook for Creating
Your Personal Writing Manual

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Provided by Theano Press, Chapel Hill, NC, USA

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Navigating the Experiments in Sit Write Share

Sit Write Share is a book of experiments to help you build a deliberate writing practice by adopting an experimental mindset. Each experiment has worked for at least some of the writers I've known, but none of them work for all writers all of the time.

But how do you figure out what to do next? To answer that, I propose this experiment and the supporting workbook pages that follow.

Find the Next Best Experiment

Story: A good suggestion

One of my beta readers made this comment:

There are a LOT of experiments. As a reference that I could pull out when I needed it, there's so much there. As something to read as a work of creative non-fiction, it does feel a bit overwhelming.

It made me wonder whether you could do something to help with person-activity fit. Imagine if you could guide your reader to the 10 experiments that would have the greatest impact for them. At its simplest it could be a little like the stages in a writing process guide that you have where you ask the reader to declare their preferences - then give them a bit of a 'choose your own adventure style journey' through the book.

Observations:

Different authors have different needs. Some need to focus on building confidence, others on organizing information, others on collecting stories, others on transforming a rough first draft into something clear and polished, and so on. When it comes to putting Sit Write Share to use, it's important to be able to find the experiment most relevant right now.

Selecting the next adventure is just the first step. Then there's trying it out and observing what works and what you need to alter to fit your own needs. Finally, there's keeping records of what works and what does not. Over time, those records can help you understand your own particular needs and remember your own strengths.

Before giving up on an experiment, give it a good try, perhaps for a week or two. Feel free to make adjustments, skipping steps that feel wrong or distracting. Keep track of what's already working as well as what you try and what adjustments you make to adjust the fit.

By selecting, modifying, and inventing your own experiments, you can move toward a writing practice that fits you.

The workbook is in the form of statements that you may or may not be able to make about your current writing skill and status. Each statement is then associated with one or more experiments that could help you make that statement become true. The statements are intentionally positive to help you celebrate the skills you have already built. You might as well affirm your writing strengths as you figure out what to do next.

Over time, the notes you take in this workbook can serve as a record of strengths, attempts, and progress as you figure out your writing practice. It might be a good practice to date each entry so that it becomes an ongoing log of progress.

Steps:

- 1) Read through the list of statements once. Decide whether to check, "Yes," meaning "I've got this," or "Not yet," meaning "I need more practice here."

- 2) Reading through your Yes answers, pick one and turn to the page number associated with it. Answer the Yes question at the top. No need to worry about any other eyes seeing what you've written, but make sure what you write brings back to mind what you experienced when you decided to say Yes.

- 3) Reading through the Not Yet answers, pick the one that you want to work on next. This could be your first Not Yet check, or it could be one that fits the status of your current writing project, or it could be the one that just feels most interesting to you.
- 4) Turn to the associated page. Read through the list of experiments associated with that statement to pick the one you want to try first. Put the date in the column underneath the experiment number.
- 5) Using the descriptions in Sit Write Share, give that experiment a good try. Feel free to modify any experiment to fit your particular tastes and circumstances. Then assess how well it works for you. Keep notes about the outcome and any modifications in the space provided.
- 6) If it is making writing more enjoyable and productive, celebrate. Maybe you can change the answer for that statement to Yes.
- 7) Sometimes things take a little time to take hold, so you might keep trying a questionable experiment for a few days. Drop any that seem burdensome or heighten self-blame.
- 8) When you're ready, repeat this process. Select an experiment that seems to address the skill you want to build or the obstacle you want to get past.

This is your practice and your manual. As you keep experimenting, incorporate what works into your craft.

Statement Table

Statement	Yes	Not Yet	Page
1: I have a clear idea of the purpose I want to achieve by writing.			06
2: I have a clear sense of the people who will read my writing.			07
3: I know what to include and what to leave out of my writing.			08
4: I am confident that I can write clearly.			09
5: My writing reflects my expertise.			11
6: I write regularly.			12
7: I start writing efficiently.			13
8: I find it easy to motivate myself to write.			15
9: I focus on my writing without being easily distracted.			16
10: I often feel inspired when I write.			17
11: I know what to write when I start a writing session.			19
12: I have lots of stories to support my points.			21
13: I am clear about the concepts I want to get across.			22
14: I write first drafts easily.			23

Statement Table

Statement	Yes	Not Yet	Page
15: I create clear structures that help readers navigate my writing.			25
16: I recover from lost files without panicking.			26
17: I am comfortable with the detailed work of editing.			27
18: I avoid polishing writing that I later remove.			29
19: I check my writing for clarity and readability.			30
20: I take care not to offend or make people feel left out.			32
21: I get appropriate support from other people while I am writing.			33
22: My coauthor and I know how to manage disagreements.			35
23: I tailor my writing to fit the type of publication.			36
24: I make convincing pitches for my articles.			37
25: I know how to publish my book.			38
26: I am comfortable presenting myself as an author.			40
27: I get appropriate support when preparing to publish.			41
28: I get appropriate support while preparing to launch.			42

Table 1: Purpose

Statement 1: I have a clear idea of the purpose I want to achieve by writing.		
Yes!		My purpose is:
Not Yet	Sit #4	Set an Intention.
Not Yet	Write #1	Decide what belongs.

Table 2: Audience

Statement 2: I have a clear sense of the people who will read my writing.		
Yes!		Here's what I know about my audience.
Not Yet	Share #1	Picture ideal readers
Not Yet	Sit #6	Face the "Who cares?" gremlin.

Table 3: Inclusion/exclusion

Statement 3: I know what to include and what to leave out.		
Yes!		Here are the criteria I use to decide what belongs.
Not Yet	Write #1	Decide what goes in.
Not Yet	Share #2	Find the sweet spot.

Table 4: Confidence

Statement 4: I am confident that I can write clearly.		
Yes!		Here is a story that shows my writing confidence.
Not Yet	Sit #1	Read with intention.
Not Yet	Sit #3	Recall writing successes.
Not Yet	Sit #5	Face "Never be a writer" gremlin

Statement 4: I am confident that I can write clearly.

Not Yet!	Write #2	Play with ideas.
Not Yet	Write #9	Just do it.
Not Yet	Write #10	Write about not writing.

Table 5: My expertise

Statement 5: My writing reflects my expertise.		
Yes!		Here is the expertise that I believe shines through in my writing:
Not Yet	Write #1	Decide what goes in.
Not Yet	Write #24	Go easy on quotations.
Not Yet	Share #14	Write author bio.

Table 6: Regular writing

Statement 6: I write regularly.		
Yes!		Here is the writing schedule I follow.
Not Yet	Sit #8	Build a tiny habit.
Not Yet	Sit #9	Tie context to reward.
Not Yet	Write #11	Write daily and keep records.

Table 7: Efficient starts

Statement 7: I start writing sessions efficiently.		
Yes!		Here is what I do to get right down to work in each writing session.
Not Yet	Sit #7	Start with a reset ritual.
Not Yet	Write #4	Prime intuition.

Statement 7: I start writing sessions efficiently.

Yes!	Write #16	End session by planning the next.
Not Yet	Write #7	Repurpose old writing.

Table 8: Motivation

<p>Statement 8: I find it easy to motivate myself to write.</p>		
Yes!		Here is what I do to look forward to getting to write.
Not Yet	Sit #11	Try procrastination aikido.
Not Yet	Share #1	Picture ideal readers → And how you want to affect them.

Table 9: Focus

<p>Statement 9: When I focus on writing, I am not easily distracted.</p>		
Yes!		Here is what I do to focus my mind when I sit down to write.
Not Yet	Sit #10	Practice WOOP → View distractions as an obstacle to plan around.
Not Yet	Share #4	Try coworking. → Coworkers can help each other resist distraction

Table 10: Inspiration

Statement 10: I often feel inspired as I write.		
Yes!		Here is what keeps me inspired:
Not Yet	Sit #12	Cultivate intentional inspiration.
Not Yet	Sit #13	Welcome constraints.

Statement 10: I often feel inspired as I write.

Not Yet	Write #2	Play with ideas.
Not Yet	Write #4	Prime intuition.

Table 11: Keep track of things to write about

Statement 11: I know what to write when I start a writing session.		
Yes!		Here is how I keep track of what want to write about.
Not Yet	Write #4	Prime intuition.
Not Yet	Write #5	Collect story seeds.

Statement 11: I know what to write when I start a writing session.

Not Yet	Write #6	Mine stories for concepts.
Not Yet	Write #7	Repurpose old writing.
Not Yet	Write #12	Work out structure of repeating units.
Not Yet	Write #19	Save your outtakes.

Table 12: Keep track of stories

Statement 12: I have lots of stories to support my points.		
Yes!		Here is how I keep track of the stories that will illuminate my writing.
Not Yet	Write #5	Collect story seeds.
Not Yet	Write #13	Capture fleeting moments.
Not Yet	Write #19	Save your outtakes

Table 13: Concepts

Statement 13: I have a clear idea of the concepts I want to convey.		
Yes!		Here is how I keep track of the concepts that I want to explain in my writing.
Not Yet	Write #6	Mine stories for concepts.
Not Yet	Write #7	Repurpose old content.

Table 14: First drafts

Statement 14: I write first drafts easily.		
Yes!		Here is what writing first drafts feels like to me.
Not Yet	Write #8	Draft without editing.
Not Yet	Write #9	Just do it.

Statement 14: I write first drafts easily.

Not Yet	Write #10	Write about not being able to write.
Not Yet	Write #14	Try speech-to-text.

Table 15: Clear structure

Statement 15: I create clear structures that help readers navigate my writing.		
Yes!		Here is what I do to work out structures for my writing.
Not Yet	Write #2	Play with ideas. → The post-it note exercise can help with structure.
Not Yet	Write #3	Figure out manageable chunks.
Not Yet	Write #12	Work out structure of repeating units.

Table 17: Editing

Statement 17: I am comfortable with the detailed work of editing.		
Yes!		Here is the way I organize my editing work.
Not Yet	Write #17	Edit in phases.
Not Yet	Write #18	Edit overall content.
Not Yet	Write #20	Edit for structure and order.

Statement 17: I am comfortable with the detailed work of editing.

Not Yet	Write #21	Edit paragraphs and sentences.
Not Yet	Write #22	Edit words and punctuation.
Not Yet	Write #23	Make dialogue clear.
Not Yet	Write #24	Go easy on quotations.

Table 18: Delay polishing

Statement 18: I delay polishing a section until I am sure it belongs.		
Yes!		Here is what I do to avoid getting too focused on details before the overall structure feels right.
Not Yet	Write #17	Edit in phases.

Table 19: Readability

<p>Statement 19: I check my writing for clarity and readability.</p>		
Yes!		Here is what I do to test the readability of my writing.
Not Yet	Sit #13	<p>Welcome constraints.</p> <p>➔ This one includes some discussion of reading levels.</p>
Not Yet	Write #23	Make dialogue clear.

Statement 19: I check my writing for clarity and readability.

Not Yet	Write #25	Include references deftly.
Not Yet	Write #26	Read out loud.

Table 20: Cultural sensitivity

Statement 20: I take care not to offend or make people feel left out.		
Yes!		Here is what I do to make sure my writing is not offensive or exclusive for people who are not exactly like me.
Not Yet	Share #3	Check for cultural sensitivity.

Table 21: Support while writing

Statement 21: I get appropriate support from other people while I am writing.		
Yes!		Here are things that other people that support me while I am writing.
Not Yet	Share #4	Try coworking.
Not Yet	Share #5	Consider co-creating

Statement 21: I get appropriate support from other people while I am writing.

Not Yet	Share #6 & #7	Find or run a writers' workshop.
Not Yet	Share #13	Invite beta reviewers.

Table 22: Co-author

Statement 22: My co-author and I know how to manage disagreements.		
Yes!		Here are the terms of our agreement.
Not Yet	Share #4	Consider having a co-creator. → Discusses setting up a clear agreement.

Table 23: Blog and freelance

Statement 23: I know how to write for different kinds of publications.		
Yes!		Here is what I do to match the length and style of my writing to fit different magazines or social media channels.
Not Yet	Share #8	Blog.
Not Yet	Share #9	Freelance.

Table 24: Convincing pitches

Statement 24: I know how to make convincing pitches for my writing.		
Yes!		Here are the templates I use for making freelance and book pitches to publishers.
Not Yet	Share #9	Freelance.
Not Yet	Share #11	Find a publisher.

Table 25: Publish book

Statement 25: I know how to publish my book.		
Yes!		Here is what I want to do and why it is the right choice for me.
Not Yet	Share #10	Explore book publication options.

Statement 25: I know how to publish my book.

Not Yet	Share #11	Find a publisher.
Not Yet	Share #12	Publish your own book

Table 26: Author bio

Statement 26: I am comfortable presenting myself as an author.		
Yes!		Here is the way I explain my writing:
Not Yet	Share #14	Write your author bios.

Table 27: Social support while publishing

Statement 27: I get appropriate support when I am preparing to publish.		
Yes!		Here are the things that other people do to help me get my book ready to publish.
Not Yet	Share #13	Invite beta reviewers.
Not Yet	Share #15	Gather social proof.

Table 28: Support for launch

Statement 28: I get appropriate support when launching my book.		
Yes!		Here are the things that other people do to help me spread the word about my book.
Not Yet	Share #16	Spread the word.