

# 101

# BEST WEBSITES FOR WRITERS

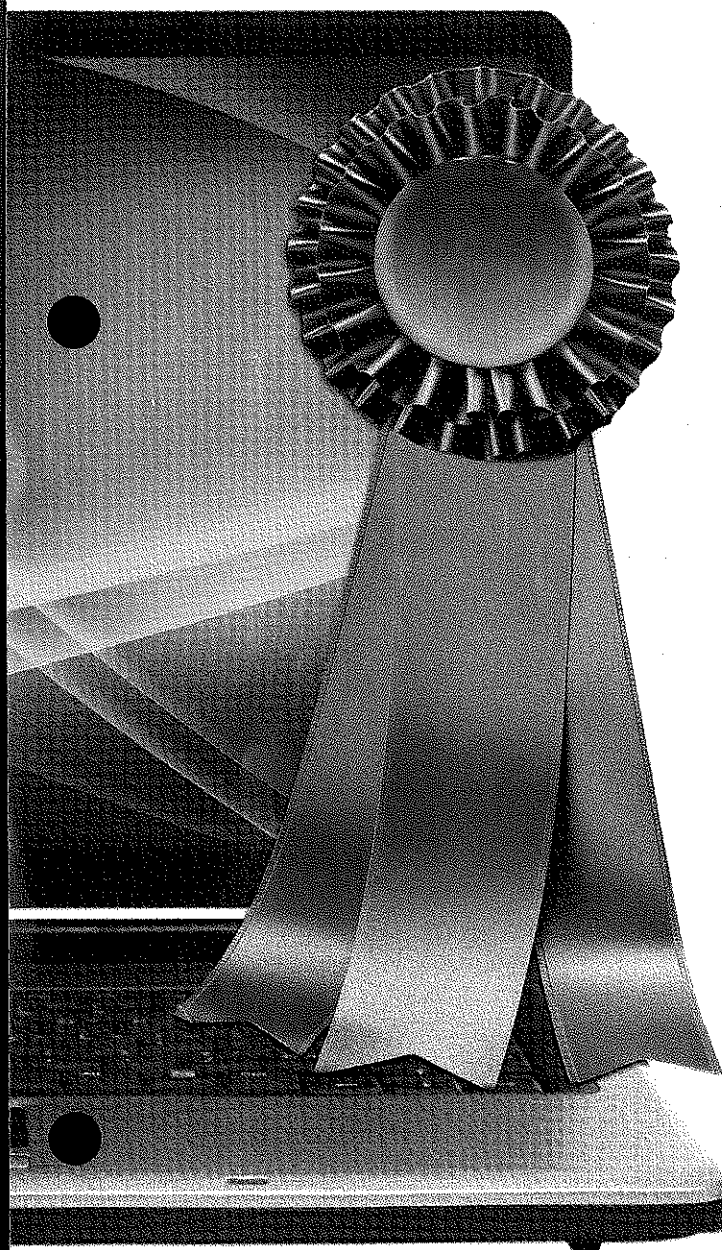
FROM WORD CHALLENGES TO  
CRITIQUE GROUPS TO HOT  
MARKETS, OUR ANNUAL LIST  
OF BEST WRITING WEBSITES  
IS A ONE-STOP SHOP FOR ALL  
THE FREE RESOURCES YOU'LL  
NEED TO FIND SUCCESS.

by Brian A. Klems

**M**ost writers prefer to spend their time ... well, writing. Here, we've attempted to make that job a little easier.

Introducing our 11th annual 101 Best Websites for Writers. This year we sifted through more than 2,700 nominations and pulled the best of the bunch. The list, which features more blogs and free market listings than in years past, has been divided into eight sections: challenges/creativity, general resources, agent blogs, publishing resources, jobs and markets, writing communities, genres/niches and fun for writers. We've also included symbols (see the key on the opposite page) with each listing so you can quickly scan to see if the site offers what you're seeking: blogs, chatting, critiques, classes/workshops, contests, forums, jobs, markets, e-newsletters, podcasts and content for young writers.

Don't see your favorite site? Send comments and nominations for next year's list to [writersdigest@fwmedia.com](mailto:writersdigest@fwmedia.com) with "101 Websites" in the subject line (deadline is Jan. 1, 2010).



## CHALLENGES/CREATIVITY

[canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html](http://canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html)

Want to dig deep into your inner psyche? Try these personal writing prompts.

[jc-schools.net/write/create.htm](http://jc-schools.net/write/create.htm) **YW**

Check out this writing prompt generator, which is accompanied by a dancing pencil. Yes, you read that correctly.

[nanowrimo.org](http://nanowrimo.org) **B**  **F**  **YW**

Clear your November calendar and join fellow writers on this month-long challenge to write 50,000 words in 30 days.

[ourecho.com](http://ourecho.com) **F**

Everyone has a story, and users of this site want to read yours. Founder Scott R. Lupó's goal is to document stories so future generations can enjoy them.

[seventhsanctum.com/generate.php?](http://seventhsanctum.com/generate.php?genname=writechallenge)

[genname=writechallenge](http://seventhsanctum.com/generate.php?genname=writechallenge)

Step 1: Decide how many writing challenges you want. Step 2: Select the number of predetermined elements you'd like to incorporate. Step 3: Write. The challenges are tough, but fun.

[sixsentences.blogspot.com](http://sixsentences.blogspot.com) **B**  

Can you write a story in six sentences? Submit your brief masterpiece for consideration here.

[smithmag.net/sixwords](http://smithmag.net/sixwords)

Never mind six whole sentences: This site challenges you to write your memoir in six *words*. The best of the bunch are compiled in book form.

[writingfix.com](http://writingfix.com) **YW**

Filled with useful lessons and tips for adults and kids, WritingFix also offers a fun writing prompt generator.

## GENERAL RESOURCES

[www.askoxford.com](http://www.askoxford.com)  **YW**

We love this site's Word of the Day e-mail function. Without it, we wouldn't know what a "sudatorium" is. (By the way, it's a room, especially in ancient Roman times, used for hot-air or steam baths.)

[babynameworld.com](http://babynameworld.com)

Having trouble naming your characters? Find names of all origins in one handy place.

[bartleby.com](http://bartleby.com)

"The preeminent Internet publisher of literature, reference and verse providing students, researchers and the intellectually curious with unlimited access to books and information on the Web, free of charge." Couldn't have said it better ourselves.

## Symbols and Abbreviations

<b>B</b>	BLOG		E-NEWSLETTERS
	CHAT	<b>F</b>	FORUMS
	CLASSES/ WORKSHOPS	<b>\$</b>	JOBS
	CONTESTS	<b>M</b>	MARKETS
	CRITIQUES		PODCASTS
		<b>YW</b>	YOUNG WRITERS

[copyright.gov](http://copyright.gov)



Everything you need to know about copyright law is right here. We highly recommend the FAQ section.

[facebook.com](http://facebook.com)

If you aren't a part of the world's largest social networking site, you need to be. (See Page 40 to learn why.) Just don't "poke" too many people.

[flashlightworthybooks.com](http://flashlightworthybooks.com)

This site shares topic-based lists of handpicked book recommendations. Its motto: "Recommending books so good, they'll keep you up past your bedtime."

[grammarbook.com](http://grammarbook.com) **B**  

In addition to a breakdown of basic grammar and punctuation rules, this site offers fun interactive quizzes with answer keys and explanations.

[ipl.org/div/farq](http://ipl.org/div/farq) **YW**

The Internet Public Library's Q&A section contains tons of great info, including a list of the 10 top-selling books of all time. Don't see an answer to your question? It's interactive: Just ask an IPL librarian.

[sfwa.org/beware](http://sfwa.org/beware)

No best-of-writing-websites list would be complete without Writer Beware, which is devoted to helping newbie writers and seasoned authors alike avoid getting scammed.

[twitter.com](http://twitter.com)

This free marketing tool allows you communicate with your family, friends, fans and potential fans in seconds with posts of 140 characters or less. (See Page 41 to learn more.)


[wordcentral.com](http://wordcentral.com) **YW**

All lovers of the English language can thank Merriam-Webster for this great time waster. There are games, daily buzzwords and trivia. Your kids will like it, too.

writing.shawguides.com

Looking for a conference near you? Search this extensive database by date, topic or region.

#### AGENT BLOGS

blogqueryshark.blogspot.com **B** 


Here agent Janet Reid dissects queries, posting lots of examples of what writers are doing right—and wrong. Send your query in. She just might critique it.

cba-ramblings.blogspot.com **B**

Rachelle Gardner specializes in Christian/inspirational writing and has a great knack for blogging about practical, useful topics, such as query tips or book proposal advice.

jetreidliterary.blogspot.com **B**

This second Janet Reid blog warrants a separate mention. Writers may love or hate her in-your-face style, but they all agree on one thing: She's a wealth of resources—and she shares them all.

nathanbransford.blogspot.com **B** 

Nathan Bransford knows a lot about publishing, and his blog is wide in scope. He's quick to host small contests, post pertinent industry news and blog the whole night through. It also doesn't hurt that he's likeable and funny.

pubrants.blogspot.com **B**

Denver-based agent Kristin Nelson's Agenting 101 series is a must-read for every author about to send out a query.


#### PUBLISHING RESOURCES

aaronline.org

Search the Association of Authors' Representatives database to find vetted agents and their contact info. Check out the FAQs for a wonderful breakdown on what an agent can (and can't) do for you.

abookinside.blogspot.com **B**



Author Carol Denbow shares excellent writing, publishing and marketing tips on her blog. If we have one complaint, it's that she squeezes too much info on one page.

agentresearch.com/agent\_ver.html **B** 

Looking into a new agent? Log on to check agents' public records for any negative reports.

agentquery.com **F**

Spend less time looking for an agent and more time writing with this free searchable database.

anotherrealm.com/preditors   **F** **\$**

Preditors & Editors provides writers with information and contacts, as well as warnings about potential scams.

### The Writer's Digest Family of Sites

#### WRITERSDIGEST.COM

Visit for tips and articles for writers of all genres and to interact with more than 20,000 writers. Plus, find writing prompts, contests, blogs from the editors at *Writer's Digest* and *Writer's Market*, and more.

#### WRITERSMARKET.COM

The *Writer's Market* site provides more than 6,000 market listings, updated daily to give subscribers the most current information available.

#### WRITERSONLINEWORKSHOPS.COM

Come here for one-on-one instruction from professional authors. New classes start throughout the year and cover everything from basic grammar to novel writing to marketing your work.

#### On MySpace

- myspace.com/writersdigest
- myspace.com/writersmarket
- myspace.com/wdbooks
- myspace.com/alice\_cwim

To see where you can find WD on other social networks, check out Page 41.

authormba.com



This site discusses the business side of writing and offers free downloads on marketing, research and career planning.

booksandtales.com/pod/index.php

This chart comparison of print-on-demand publishers helps you learn the basics about each company. (Remember, prices and services change, so don't rely on this exclusively. Just use it as a starting point.)

carolkluz.homestead.com/index1.html  **M**

Are 101 resources not enough for you? Swing by Carol Kluz's site for a few dozen more.

easywaytowrite.com/articles.htm **B**  **F** **M** 

The pop-up ads are a bit aggravating, but worth putting up with for the valuable info on this site. "Becoming a Better Writer: A 10-Step Guide" is a perfect place to start browsing.

editorunleashed.com **B**  **F** 

Former WD Editor Maria Schneider helps writers by sharing her expertise and writing tips, as well as providing interviews with high-profile authors.

fictionwriting.about.com **B**

Updated in blog fashion, this site has great advice on fiction writing. Be sure to take its Figurative Language Quiz.

meredithsuewillis.com/writingexercises.html

This author offers more than 100 free writing exercises.

misssnarksfirstvictim.blogspot.com **B**

Miss Snark may be gone, but her victims live on. And this victim—the first of many—returns the favor by passing along (not-so-snarky, but useful) advice in her Secret Agent contest.

newpagesblog.blogspot.com **B**

This invaluable free blog provides news, information and guides to literary magazines, alternative media and more.

oncewritten.com **B** **F**

Need more content on your blog or website? OnceWritten.com offers free, self-updating “sticky content” graphs.

pageonelit.com

Page ONE is a one-stop shop for author interviews, contest news, inspirational quotes and writing resources.

plotwhisperer.blogspot.com **B**

We love this blog's name. We also think it offers great plot tips for writers.

querytracker.net **B** **F**

In one place, you can search for agents, view example query letters and schedule e-mail reminders to follow up on queries and submissions. What else do you need?

vsgrenier.com/newsletter.aspx **YW**

Sign up for VS Grenier's SFC Newsletter for Writers. It contains writing success stories (and trial-and-tribulation stories), tips, contests and markets. Plus, all the newsletters are archived so you can go back and catch up.

winningwriters.com

Gain access to 150 poetry contests just by subscribing to Winning Writers' free e-newsletter. Of course, we would be remiss if we didn't mention the Wergle Flomp Humor Poetry Contest (for the “best humor poem that has been sent to a ‘vanity poetry contest’ as a joke”).

writenews.com **B**

Read up-to-the-minute news for writers about the publishing industry.

writerschatroom.com **B**

Jump at the chance to connect with authors—bestsellers and up-and-comers alike—during live chats. And don't miss Celebrity Sundays.

writersweekly.com **F** **\$** **M**

A great place for self-publishing resources and new writer

tips, this site also offers a substantial bank of reprinted articles on writing.

writingcontests.wordpress.com **B**

Often updated multiple times a day, this site hosts info about any and every writing contest its editor can find.

## **JOBS AND MARKETS**

absolutewrite.com **B** **F** **\$** **M**

This site contains more than 1,000 pages of useful content, including international market listings.

duotrope.com **M**

Duotrope's Digest is a free database of more than 2,300 markets for short fiction, poetry and novels/collections.

ed2010.com **B** **F** **\$**

Track down a new magazine gig through the Whisper-Jobs postings—job listings, some public and some, well, whispered on the sly. After sending off a résumé, peruse the salary reports and soak up the advice section.

fundsforwriters.com **\$** **M** **YW**

Editor C. Hope Clark delivers the inside scoop on grants, markets, contests and fellowships. Sign up for her free e-newsletter—you'll be glad you did.

fwointl.com **B** **F** **\$** **M**

Freelance Writing Organization-International is a free online database with thousands of job listings and freelance opportunities.

helium.com **\$** **M**

Search Helium's marketplace for freelance gigs.

journalismjobs.com **\$**

This site is updated daily with job listings for journalists, editors, online media and more.

marketlist.com **B** **M**

This database of markets and contests that pay has been going strong for more than a decade.



mediabistro.com **B** **F** **\$** **M**

Every freelancer should bookmark this site and frequent it often for the latest industry news and the great section dedicated to job listings.

mediajobmarket.com **\$**




Calling itself “the most powerful media job search engine online,” Media Job Market houses hundreds of job postings along with several must-read articles on job hunting in the writing industry.




writergazette.com  **F \$ M** 

Visit Writer Gazette regularly for weekly submission calls to paying markets.


## WRITING COMMUNITIES

alongstoryshort.net   **F** 

Celebrating their sixth anniversary this year, the editors of this e-zine pride themselves on their accessibility: They reply personally to every author who queries and offer suggestions on how to improve work.

bksp.org **F** 

Backspace features articles, columns and news from industry insiders. For access to the forum—which hosts literary agents, editors and authors—you'll have to cough up a \$30 annual fee.

bookglutton.com   **YW**

BookGlutton lets you share your manuscripts (in full, or chapter-by-chapter) with others, right in your browser, complete with built-in annotation and chat functions.

critiquecircle.com  **F**


Writers of all genres are welcome to give and receive reader feedback at Critique Circle. The site is free, but donations to support it are welcome.

editred.com  **F**

Give and receive peer critiques, and hone your skills with Edit Red's weekly writing challenges.

librarything.com **F**

Upload your personal library and network with others who love the same books you do.

mywriterscircle.com  **F \$**

Boasting nearly 8,000 members, this forum has a Q&A section, a job thread and a critique section (for novels, nonfiction and scripts).

ning.com  **F YW**

Sure, you can create fan groups on Facebook or MySpace, but Ning allows you to create your very own social network page. Highlight your brand, add your own members, customize it to look exactly as you want and more.

rallystorm.com **F**

Need an online destination for your writing group? Create your own forum here. Setup is easy and relatively painless.

spawn.org 

The Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network helps you research sources, publishers, printers and the media.

writersbbs.com  **F YW**

On more than 50 active forums, members post daily writing challenges to keep you on your toes. Kids are welcome.

writerunboxed.com **B**

Learn about the craft and business of genre fiction through this site. The many author interviews are a plus.

writing.com **B**   **F**

This community offers free e-mail accounts, online writing portfolios and more.

writingforward.com **B**

Writing Forward shares a wealth of writing information. "Are You Cut Out for Freelance Writing?" in particular is a real gut-checking article.



## Set Your Sites

We're looking for the writer with the best personal website (or blog), one that was created and is maintained without outside design help. Sites will be judged on presentation, ease of use and marketing effectiveness. Send your nominations—and don't be shy, you can nominate your own site—to [writersdigest@fwmedia.com](mailto:writersdigest@fwmedia.com) with "Best Writer's Site" as the subject line. The deadline to enter is June 10, 2009.

Sites will be judged by the editors of *Writer's Digest*. The top 10 will be listed in our October issue, as well as our e-newsletter and on [writersdigest.com](http://writersdigest.com). The writer with the best site will receive up to \$250; the nine runners-up will receive one-year subscriptions to *WritersMarket.com*.


## GENRES/NICHES

### CHILDREN'S WRITING

kidmagwriters.com  **M** 




Get a better understanding of the ins and outs of writing for children's magazines.

### FANTASY/SCIENCE FICTION

sfwa.org  **F**

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America's website houses news, notes and writing tips for all who love these genres. Just be aware that some of its functions (including the forum) are for members only.

### FICTION

fictionfactor.com   **F M** 

Everything you want to know about fiction—how to write better fiction, how to get your fiction published, how to promote and market your fiction—is here on this fun and useful website. You'll also find genre-specific links.

## FREELANCE

**freelance-zone.com** **B**

Two editors share freelance tips and post frequently on topics such as career resources, media and getaways for writers.

## HORROR




**horror.org/writetips.htm**

Mort Castle, Tim Waggoner and others chime in on the art, craft and business of writing horror.


## POETRY

**jpgicforum.info** **B**  **F**

Give and receive feedback on your poetry. Be aware that The Poetry in Color forum is a "non-censoring community"—meaning there are some R-rated posts.




**moontowncafe.com** **B**   **F**  **YW**

This site wears several hats, including social networker and publisher. We also like MoonTown's YouTube channel, where you can upload videos of your poetry readings.

**wildpoetryforum.com**  **F**

"Wild Poetry Forum is an online, interactive community of writers and poets striving to improve their writing skills and to share their creative thoughts with others." Yes it is.



## ROMANCE

**coffeetimeromance.com** **B**   **F** 

These romance writers feature live chats and interviews with authors and maintain an active forum.



**romancedivas.com** **B**   **F** 

For the fifth year in a row, the Romance Divas make the list. The site is useful, inspiring and easy to navigate.

**romancejunkies.com**  

Get a romance-writing fix of interviews, contests and chats.

## SCRIPTWRITING



**moviebytes.com**  **\$** **M** 

Find screenwriting contests, markets or software that suits your needs in this site's giant database.


**scriptwritersnetwork.org**  

Check out this nonprofit's articles on feature script and TV script formatting, as well as its lengthy free newsletter.

## SPIRITUAL

**christianstoryteller.com**  

While a little hard to navigate, this nonprofit site is dedicated to showcasing Christian authors, helping them to network, support and market their books.

**host-a-jewish-book-author.com** 

Need a Jewish book author to speak at your conference or to your writing group? This site has all the info you need, along with author interviews and podcasts.

**muslimwriters.blogspot.com** **B**



Read up on items of interest to Muslim writers, including scholarships, writing competitions, jobs and more.

## THRILLER



**murderby4.blogspot.com** **B**

Murder by 4 follows four thriller/suspense authors who share their unique styles and diverse experiences, along with articles, author interviews and reviews.



## WOMEN'S WRITING

**literarymama.com** **B**  

This site publishes fiction, poetry, nonfiction and so on—all centered around mothers writing about motherhood.



**momwriterslitmag.com** **B**  

Paula Schmitt's literary magazine for moms is a great read. We really enjoy the "Ideas that Spark" section.

**wow-womenonwriting.com** **B**  

WOW! Women on Writing is designed to support women throughout all stages of the writing process.


## FUN FOR WRITERS

**armchairinterviews.com** **B**  

Plug in your headphones and let these author interviews inspire you as you write.

**bookmooch.com**

Earn points on this site for giving away your books, and redeem them to get books you want.

**coolstuff4writers.com**  


CoolStuff4Writers.com is home to the Book Doctor, who offers tips on book titles, word choices and ghostwriting.

**ninthmoon.com**

OK, so this site doesn't technically offer anything for free, but it does offer a great listing of gifts for writers, including books, journals, necklaces, coasters, t-shirts and more.

**online-stopwatch.com**

Have trouble getting motivated? Use this free online countdown clock to get your rear in gear.

**thesource4ym.com/teenlingo**  **YW**

Are your teenage characters authentic? Dig into this teen-lingo dictionary to bring their slang up to speed.

**thinkexist.com/quotations/writing**

Enjoy hundreds of inspirational quotes on writing. [WD]

**BRIAN A. KLEMS** (blog.writersdigest.com/qq) is the online managing editor of *Writer's Digest*.