



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ProWritingAid Survey Finds 1 in 3 Americans Want to Write a Book, But Many Get Stuck Before “The End”

Survey of 2,500+ U.S. adults finds one in three aspire to write a book, but time constraints, motivation, and self doubt remain the biggest barriers.

- 35% of Americans have either considered writing a book, or have already written or started writing a book, but the biggest barriers are time, momentum, and confidence.
- Many writers stall in the "messy middle" of writing, with 19% reporting they get stuck mid-draft; more worry about finding a literary agent or editor (21%).
- Writing a novel is the most common literary ambition (37%), with adults under the age of 34 more likely to have started or be actively working on a book.

London/New York – February 24, 2026 — [ProWritingAid](#), a writing and editing platform for writers at every stage of the creative process, today announced results from a national survey of over 2,588 U.S. adults, revealing that while many aspire to write a novel, finishing one is where many struggle.

The survey found that 35% of U.S. adults have considered writing a book or have already started one. Among those respondents, writing a novel was the most common goal, with 37% naming fiction as their top literary ambition. But while the aspiration is widespread, the path from idea to finished manuscript is where many writers begin to stall. When asked what prevents them from writing more, respondents cited:

- Lack of motivation (24%)
- Time restrictions (19%)
- Difficulty sustaining momentum beyond a few days (11%)
- Struggling with plot development (11%)
- Fear of judgment (7%)

Only 1% pointed to uncertainty about software to use, reinforcing that the primary barriers are rarely technical, but emotional and practical.

“Right now, so much of the conversation about the future of writing centers on AI and technology,” said Hayley Milliman, Director of Community at ProWritingAid. “But what these findings show is that the biggest challenges writers face today are still deeply human: finding the time, maintaining momentum, and pushing through self-doubt once the draft gets hard. We’re here to help them push through that messy middle, strengthening their craft from first draft to final revision.”

For those who do begin writing a novel, the survey found that the hardest part often comes in the middle, where early excitement fades and doubt creeps in. When asked what makes it difficult to finish a book, respondents cited:

- Fear of finding a literary agent (21%)
- Getting stuck partway through (19%)
- Self-doubt (15%)
- Uncertainty about how to self-publish (11%)

The survey also revealed demographic differences in writing habits. Adults under 34 (24%) are more likely to have started or be actively writing a book, while those over 55 (63%) often say they'll never write one. Men cite lack of time as a barrier, whereas women more often report hesitation to share ideas and struggles with inspiration or confidence.

"We built ProWritingAid to support fiction writers not just with the right tools, but with sustained guidance throughout the creative process," said Chris Banks, CEO of ProWritingAid. "Millions of people carry stories they want to tell and our goal is to help them keep writing, building the confidence and momentum to see those stories through."

To help more writers move from idea to finished manuscript, ProWritingAid is now accepting submissions for its Novel Beginnings writing contest, open through Tuesday, March 31, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. GMT. For full contest details and to register, visit:

prowritingaid.com/novel-beginnings.

To learn more about ProWritingAid, visit prowritingaid.com.

About ProWritingAid

ProWritingAid is a writing and editing platform built to help people who want to keep writing. The company serves a broad, overlooked community of aspiring and active writers who are balancing creative ambition alongside careers, families, and other responsibilities. Grounded in empathy for the realities of writing – hesitation, self-doubt, and loss of momentum – the company pairs technology with structure, feedback, and support. In the age of generative AI, ProWritingAid focuses on assisting writers without replacing them and helping lower barriers to sustained creative practice. In 2025, ProWritingAid's robust community of writers rallied more than 70,000 participants around a shared goal: drafting 50,000 words during Novel November. Learn more at ProWritingAid.com.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2588 US adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 2nd - 6th October 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all US adults (aged 18+).

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