

SENIOR NOVELIST BADGE

Badge Purpose: When you've earned this badge, you'll know what it takes to write a great novel and will have written at least 20 pages of your own.

Activity	Materials Needed
Good Reads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deconstruct the emotional arc of a book. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Book <input type="checkbox"/> Pen and paper or computer
Cast of Characters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create the characters for your story. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Pen and paper or computer
The Plot Thickens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plot for your story. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Pen and paper or computer
The Write Stuff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline and write 20 pages of your story. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Sticky notes (two different colors) <input type="checkbox"/> Pen and paper or computer
Edit, Edit, Edit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-edit your 20 pages, then share your work with two friends. 	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 pages of your story from Activity #4

Getting Started

- As you work through this badge, keep a notebook with you when you're out and about. This way, you can jot down ideas or inspiration throughout the day to use later in your writing.

Activity #1: Good Reads

Badge Connection: Step 1 – Deconstruct a novel

Materials Needed: Book (your choice); pen and paper or computer

- Think about a story you've read that you can really, vividly remember. Why did it make such an impact on you?
- A lot of the most memorable books are ones that strike an emotional chord in us. After all, emotions are universal, right? Good art should have some sort of emotional pay-off and make you feel something.
- Choose a novel that's at least 200 pages long. As you're reading, make a note of the emotional arc of the plot. Think of an emotional arc as a journey of the characters' emotions. Write down the times when the character(s) experience emotional highs, emotional lows, and moments of decision, or pivotal points. What are they feeling throughout the book—what do they begin the story believing, and what do they believe as the story ends?

Activity #2: Cast of Characters



Badge Connection: Step 2 – Create great characters

Materials Needed: Pen and paper or computer

1. Stories are nothing without their characters. They're the people you relate to, root for (or against!), and travel with as the story unfolds.
2. Now it's time to create your own characters. There are a few characters that are present in every novel:
 - Protagonist: The main character and the one who drives the plot. Example: Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games*
 - Antagonist: Usually the character who tries to get in the protagonist's way. Example: President Snow in *The Hunger Games*
 - Sidekick: Usually the protagonist's best friend, family member, or accomplice who helps the protagonist reach their goal(s). Example: Rue in *The Hunger Games*
3. Use these examples to build your characters. As you're writing, keep in mind the term **GMC** to make sure your characters are well-rounded.
 - **G:** Goal. What's your character's goal? What do they want? What's going to happen if they don't achieve their goal?
 - **M:** Motivation. Why does your character want what they want? What's their motivation?
 - **C:** Conflict. What obstacles does your character run into as they work towards their goal?

Activity #3: The Plot Thickens

Badge Connection: Step 3 – Develop a plot

Materials Needed: Pen and paper or computer

1. All stories have a plot—it's not just *what* happens, but also *why* these things happen.
2. You might already have a plot in mind that you're itching to write. But if you don't, try this brainstorming technique.
3. Think about a book that you read that you just couldn't put down. What was it about the book that drew you in? Many books follow a formula that makes them super successful (and impulsively readable!):
 - Familiar: What gives the story mass audience appeal. The story is usually universal and something most people can connect with.
 - Unique: A twist that makes the story special and not like something you've seen before.
 - Hook: A question or reason someone will be "reeled in" by your story.
4. Brainstorm some plot ideas and use the "Familiar, Unique, and Hook" exercise to make it truly special.

Activity #4: The Write Stuff

Badge Connection: Step 4 – Write at least 20 pages

Materials Needed: Sticky notes (two different colors); pen and paper or computer

1. Now that you have your characters and your plot, it's time to put pen to paper. But before you start to write, it's a good idea to figure out how your story is going to unfold.



2. Grab two sets of sticky notes (they should be different colors). On one color sticky note, jot down some scenes or dialogue for your story. Then, using a different color sticky note, write down the emotion you want to convey in that scene. For example:

Scene: *Abigail's mom tells her their family is moving the summer before her freshman year of high school*

Emotion:
Sadness

3. Remember, don't worry if the scenes and dialogue that pop into your head don't seem like they go in order. You can always rearrange your sticky notes to figure out which scenes will come first, which will go in the middle, and which will go at the end.
4. Now that you've outlined your story, start writing! You can start at the beginning, flesh out a specific scene, or work on the ending.

Activity #5: Edit, Edit, Edit

Badge Connection: Step 5 – Edit your pages

Materials Needed: 20 pages of your story from Activity #4

1. Remember a book or movie that you read or watched that just seemed a little bit too long or had scenes that were clunky? Editing is when you read over your draft and take out parts that don't work, and revise parts that are good to make them great.
2. After you've written your 20 pages, set it aside for a day or two. Then, do a self-edit. Read your story like someone who's reading it for the first time. A few questions to ask yourself as you edit:
 - Are there any plot holes?
 - How is the pacing of the story? Are any scenes too fast or too slow?
 - Is there too much telling rather than showing? (Example: "She was furious." vs. "She pounded her fists on the table.")
3. After you've done your self-edit, share your pages with two friends. Ask them to keep in mind the questions above as well as:
 - If they bought this book on Amazon, how would they rate it? Would they recommend it to their friends?
 - Did the story pull them in?
 - Were the characters interesting?

