

Kentucky Writers' Day Planning Guide



#KyArts
#KyWriters

What is Kentucky Writers' Day?

The Kentucky General Assembly established Kentucky Writers' Day in 1990 to honor Kentucky's strong literary tradition and to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Kentucky native Robert Penn Warren, the first poet laureate of the United States and winner of three Pulitzer prizes. The Kentucky Arts Council celebrates Kentucky Writers' Day on April 24, unless that date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or state holiday. On those occasions, the Kentucky Arts Council will celebrate on the Friday before April 24 or the Monday after April 24.

Who celebrates Kentucky Writers' Day?

Kentucky Writers' Day is celebrated by schools, libraries, writers' groups, businesses, book discussion groups, senior citizens' centers, community centers and faith-based organizations, colleges and universities, adult learners, jails and prisons, social service and nonprofit agencies, television and radio stations, newspapers and magazines, group homes and day programs for adults, government agencies and others across the Commonwealth.

Sample Activities

ADULT LEARNERS (including ESL, GED and literacy programs)

- Use one of the Kentucky Humanities “New Books for New Readers” series with your readers (<https://www.kyhumanities.org/programs/new-books-for-new-readers>).
- Ask your students to select a book written by a Kentucky writer and read it to their children. Encourage them to explore children’s books, too; ask them to have their children share in the reading.
- Have your students write a story about an event or person in their own lives they can share with their family.
- Ask ESL students to share writing from their home countries. Teachers can share a favorite Kentucky story; follow up with a discussion about the writings.

BUSINESSES

- Circulate information about books by Kentucky writers to your employees.
- Invite your employees to come to work as their favorite Kentucky writer and share their favorite Kentucky writings.
- Host a brown bag lunch and invite a local writer to read and talk with your employees about writing.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS

- Schedule your regular discussion to coincide with Kentucky Writers’ Day.
- Invite a local writer to lead a discussion on her own book or that of her favorite Kentucky writer.
- Read and discuss a book by a Kentucky writer.

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- Host a public reading by students and faculty.
- Create a writing contest for students and faculty; publish the winning pieces or host a reading by the winners.
- Invite the public to a panel discussion on Kentucky writers; involve faculty, students and local writers.
- Sponsor a coffee house with an open mic; invite students, faculty and the community to participate.

COMMUNITY CENTERS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- Invite a local writer to read and lead a writing workshop.
- Present a reading by the church youth of their favorite or original writings.
- Create a display featuring your church members who are writers—include photos of the writers and short pieces of their writing.
- Sponsor a coffee house for church and other community members to share their writing.

Sample Activities (continued)

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- Encourage staff to share their writing or the writing of their favorite Kentucky author at a lunch-time reading, on a bulletin board or in an inner-agency newsletter.
- Host a discussion of a book by a Kentucky writer during a brown bag lunch.
- Sponsor a book drive to collect new and gently used books to distribute to your clients.
- Invite agency staff to bring their children to a special lunchtime children's story hour; encourage staff and their children to share their favorite stories.

GROUP HOMES AND DAY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

- Invite a local writer to lead a writing workshop; have volunteers on hand to collect oral stories as needed. Plan a reading of all the writings and invite your clients' families and friends.
- Sponsor a book drive to collect new and gently used books to distribute to your clients or to create an in-house library.
- Schedule a field trip to the public library or a local bookstore for your clients; arrange for the trip to include a reading and discussion.

JAILS AND PRISONS

- Invite a local writer to read and lead a writing workshop.
- Hold an open mic period for inmates to share their writing during recreation time.
- Sponsor a writing contest and plan a special dinner with a local writer for the winners.

LIBRARIES

- Create a display of books by Kentucky writers.
- Host children's readings with books by Kentucky writers.
- Invite local writers to participate in a reading for the community.
- Host a writing workshop.

NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES AND ONLINE COMMUNITIES

- Host a writing contest and publish the winning entries the week of Kentucky Writers' Day.
- Run listings, press releases and other information about local Kentucky Writers' Day events.
- Publish a feature story about local writers.
- Ask a poet to write an editorial in poem form for Kentucky Writers' Day.
- Follow up on Writers' Day events in your area with an article about what happened and who was involved; include photos.

Sample Activities (continued)

SCHOOLS

- Have language arts and reading classes read a book by a Kentucky author and then write stories of their own.
- Invite a local writer to visit your school or classroom to read and talk to students about writing.
- Create a bulletin board featuring Kentucky authors; include short biographies, book jackets, author photos, etc.
- Host a Readers and Writers Café with students sharing an open mic. (Do this up right with rugs and pillows on the floor, low tables, lamps instead of the overhead light and refreshments.)
- Host a Kentucky Writers' Day Fair for the community; invite local authors and students to participate through readings, book signings and other activities.
- Create a book of original writing by students and host a launch party for other classes and the community.

SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTERS

- Host a writing workshop led by a local writer.
- Invite writing students from a local school to share their original writing.
- Create a display featuring your clients who are writers. Include photos of the writers and short pieces of their writing; invite them to read at a special lunch event.
- Stage a write-in and invite your clients to write about their lives and then share their work.

SOCIAL SERVICE AND NONPROFIT AGENCIES

- Create a display or bulletin board featuring local writers; include photos and short pieces of their writing.
- Have a book drive to collect books to distribute to your clients; ask for all reading levels.
- Ask your clients and staff to share their original writing at a reading or by posting on a bulletin board; include some in your monthly newsletter.
- Host a children's story hour once a week in April. Ask the children to invite their families; ask community members to volunteer to read.

TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS

- Invite local writers to read and be interviewed on local programming.
- Ask news anchors to share excerpts from their favorite Kentucky writers at the end of newscasts throughout the week leading up to Kentucky Writers' Day.
- Run Public Service Announcements for local Kentucky Writers' Day events.
- Ask community members to read 1–3 minute excerpts from their favorite Kentucky authors to air throughout the week leading up to Kentucky Writers' Day.

Sample Activities (continued)

TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS

- Interview local writers and the Kentucky Poet Laureate for the news during the week of Kentucky Writers' Day.
- Invite local writers to be interviewed and to read a short passage of their work on-air.

WRITERS' GROUPS

- Schedule your regular meeting to coincide with Kentucky Writers' Day.
- Invite a Kentucky writer from another community to speak or read to your group.
- Plan an activity in which group members work with the local senior citizens center or schools to read and write together.
- Invite your family and friends to join your writers' group meeting and write with you.

Publicize Your Event

Following is a list of ways to publicize your local Kentucky Writers' Day activity. Don't stop with these—be creative! You know best how to spread the word in your community.

- Compile a media list of all local radio and TV stations, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, discussion boards, etc. Include the name, email address and phone number of the person who handles announcements.
- Develop your own publicity materials that include the details of your event. Include the name, email address and phone number of your event's contact person and the contact information for local writers who are willing to be interviewed about Kentucky Writers' Day and your event.
- Deliver your materials by hand, introduce yourself and talk about your upcoming event. Email and mail information as appropriate. With newspaper, television and radio, ask for a piece about the event as well as a listing in the events calendar.
- Follow up with a phone call to the person to whom you delivered or sent the material. Ask if they need further information. Explain that this is a statewide event celebrating Kentucky writers, including local writers. Thank them for their support and invite them to attend the event.
- Collect ads, calendar listings, articles, copies of web pages and stories from participants. Keep a log of information and when it appeared online or on radio and television to use when creating your promotional plan for next year.
- Create a social media presence with information about your event and invite viewers to share their own writing.
- Include information about your event on your website; add a blog and invite others to share their original writing and thoughts on Kentucky writers.
- Create a hashtag (or use the arts council's #KyWriters) and invite others to tweet or post information and snippets of their writing.
- Start a Pinterest board or Instagram posts with images of your favorite Kentucky writers or their book covers.
- Share your event. Use Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and other social media to send images or video as it happens and after.

Event Check List

- Contact local writers, workshop leaders and presenters as early as possible to confirm participation. Include students, local journalists and business people – anyone who might not be thought of as a typical Kentucky writer.
- Create publicity materials. Don't forget to make good use of social media!
- As soon as it's available (at least one month in advance), send event information to the Kentucky Arts Council so that it can be included on the Kentucky Writers' Day webpage and elsewhere.
- Confirm use of space and any other site-specific needs. Make sure the space can accommodate any special needs of your audience. Don't forget to include audio reinforcement so everyone can hear.
- Compile a list of all event participants, including readers, discussion or workshop leaders, hosts and anyone else who helps make your event a success. You'll want to be able to reach them easily next year, too!
- Ask a local café, restaurant or grocery to provide refreshments for a reception at your event. Remember to thank them publicly. Use the reception to encourage writers and attendees to talk together about Kentucky writers.
- Ask volunteers to act as hosts by assisting readers and presenters as needed, helping attendees with seating and setting up/tearing down the space.
- Talk to the attendees at your event about the significance of the day and its connection to Kentucky Writers' Day. Let them know they are a part of making the statewide Writers' Day celebration happen.
- Take pictures of the event and jot down comments from participants and attendees. Post copies of photographs and notes on social media and website and in your newsletter.
- Enjoy the day! You've worked hard; don't forget to have a good time.

Thank you for being a part of Kentucky Writers' Day!

Contact the arts council with any questions or concerns.

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