

A Writers' Day Celebration!

A guide to planning your own
Kentucky Writers' Day event



#KyArts
#KyWriters

WHO celebrates Kentucky Writers' Day?

Kentucky Writers' Day is celebrated by schools, libraries, writers' groups, businesses, book discussion groups, senior citizens' centers, community centers, 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.

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.

WHEN should Kentucky Writers' Day be celebrated?

April 24 is the birthdate of Robert Penn Warren and the official date of Kentucky Writers' Day. However, celebrating Kentucky Writers' Day at any time in April (which is also National Poetry Month) or even early May is acceptable. Select the date that works best in your community.

WHERE should Kentucky Writers' Day be celebrated?

Celebrate Kentucky Writers' Day where ever people can safely join together to enjoy poetry and other literary arts. The library, school, place of business, government agency, park, jail or prison, etc., all can be excellent locations for a celebration. The only caveat—make sure you have all necessary permissions in place.

WHY celebrate Kentucky Writers' Day?

Kentucky Writers' Day is an opportunity to honor and acknowledge Kentucky writers. Use Writers' day to draw attention to the literary arts and to pay homage to writers from the local community or from across the commonwealth. Celebrate Kentucky's Poet Laureate or student writers from a local school. Make a fuss about writers from the community or senior citizens centers. Build an audience for your own writing or local writing groups. Pay tribute to your local library or a local teacher. The reasons to celebrate are endless—the important thing is to celebrate!

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/archives/new-books-for-new-readers>).
- Ask parents 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 that 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 dressed 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 their own book or that of their favorite Kentucky writer.
- Read and discuss a book by a Kentucky writer.
- Make this the year of Kentucky writers and select a book by a Kentucky writer for each meeting.

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.
- Ask students, faculty and staff to create promotional videos or fun facts about local authors to promote Kentucky Writers’ Day and their own local events.
- 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 church members or local youth of their favorite or original writings.
- Create a display featuring your church or community members who are writers. Include photos of the writers and short pieces of their writing.
- Sponsor a coffee house for community and church members to share their writing.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- Encourage staff to share their writing or the writing of their favorite Kentucky author on a bulletin board, in an inner-agency newsletter or at a lunchtime reading.
- 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 or a PowerPoint featuring Kentucky authors to run on a monitor throughout the day. If the library has a TV, create a PowerPoint slide of the different Kentucky writers.
- Host children's readings with books by Kentucky writers.
- Invite Kentucky writers to read their own books at readings aimed at children, teens and adults. If possible, have the writer that wrote the book read.
- 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.

SCHOOLS

- Have language arts and reading classes read a book by a Kentucky author and then write stories of their own.
- Invite the state's poet laureate or a local writer to visit your school or classroom to read and talk to students about writing.
- Assign students a project to include creating bulletin boards featuring Kentucky authors. Have them include short biographies, book jackets, author photos, etc., and present the assignment on Kentucky Writers' Day, April 24, or at the end of the month.
- 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 Book 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

- Invite a local writer to lead a writing workshop or conduct a reading at the center.
- 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.
- Create a collaborative event with your clients and a local classroom to read their original or favorite pieces of writing.
- Stage a write-in! 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 three-minute excerpts from their favorite Kentucky authors to air throughout the week leading up to Kentucky Writers' Day.
- Interview local writers or the Kentucky Poet Laureate for the news to air during the week of Kentucky Writers' Day.
- Invite local writers to be interviewed and to read short passages of their work on-air.
- Invite the public to donate new or gently used books for readers of all ages to be donated to an appropriate local charity.

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 the Kentucky Poet Laureate to read at your April group meeting.
- Invite your family and friends to join your writers' group meeting and write with you.
- Post about a Kentucky writer on social media at least once a week. Use the posts to engage the community and spread the word about Kentucky Writers' Day events.

Promote Your Event

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

- Create a webpage or event page for your event. Include images, event details, links to video readings, etc. Provide a contact number and email address for questions.
- Create a social media presence with information about your event. Invite readers to share their own writing by posting video of themselves reading their original work.
- Invite local writers to blog or participate in a podcase about the literary arts. Encourage them to share their original writing and their favorite Kentucky writers.
- Compile a media list of local radio and television stations, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, discussion boards, etc. Include the name, email address and phone number of the person who handles announcements.
- Develop promotional 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. Offer to arrange for local authors for interviews. Invite them to attend your event. Thank them for their support.
- 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 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 and their book covers.
- Share your event. Use Instagram, Facebook and other social media to send images or video as it happens and after.

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

Kentucky Arts Council

500 Mero Street, Fifth Floor

Frankfort, KY 40601

<http://artscouncil.ky.gov>

Contact:

Tamara Coffey, Arts Program Branch Manager

tamara.coffey@ky.gov

502-892-3121