

WriteBoard™

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TM

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Many thanks to Forrest Leeson, whose NoteBox Disorganizer software provided the inspiration for WriteBoard and got me through many a writing project:

<https://archive.org/details/notebox-disorganizer>

Contents

WriteBoard	3
Brainstorm, Organize, Write.....	3
Welcome to WriteBoard!	4
WriteBoard	8
Hyperlink.....	10
Export	12
Metadata	14
Size	16
Cursor	18
Cells.....	19
Writing with WriteBoard	20
Brainstorm	20
Organize	20
Write	20
Export	20
Of Planners and “Pantsers”	21
Keyboard Shortcuts	22
Navigate > Cursor.....	22
Organize	23
File > Hyperlink.....	25
View > Size	25
General Guidelines	26
Resources.....	27
Registration	28
Getting a Password	28
Using Your Password	29
Questions?.....	30
Terms of Agreement	31

WriteBoard

High school English class. Freshman year. The teacher explained how to:

1. Write a thesis statement.
2. Create an outline of arguments supporting your thesis statement.
3. Write a paper based on that outline.

That's actually a terrible way to write! It requires you to *organize* your thoughts *before you know what those thoughts actually are*. But there is a better way.

Brainstorm, Organize, Write

Before you can organize your thoughts, you need to know what they are. In the days before computers, you'd find out like this:

1. Get a package of index cards.
2. On each card, write an idea related to your thesis (the fancy word for whatever it is you want to write about). Do *not* try to do this in any kind of order; you're *brainstorming* here: good ideas, bad ideas, *any* ideas—they all go down on the cards. When your brain is empty, stop.
3. On a big desk or table, spread the cards out in front of you. Keep them messy.
4. Read the cards and stack those on a certain subject together until you have several stacks. Discard (pardon the pun) those that don't belong anywhere or that now seem irrelevant or stupid.
5. Put the cards in each stack in some kind of order. Importance? Chronology? You choose.
6. Put the stacks in some kind of order. Each stack represents a section of your paper.
7. Write your paper, starting with the first card and ending with the last. Each stack gets a subheading. Each card gets a paragraph.
8. Edit your paper as needed.

Again, that was in the days before computers. Now we have much better ways of doing what I've just described, with new card-based writing programs popping up all the time. Some of my favorites are:

- [Notebox Disorganizer](#)
- [Milanote](#)
- [Spear](#)
- [SuperNotecard](#)

"But," you say, "I'm used to working in Microsoft Word. Isn't there a way to do card-based writing in Word?" Yes, there is!

Welcome to WriteBoard!

WriteBoard is like a giant whiteboard on which you place sticky notes while constructing your literary masterpiece, allowing you to see your whole novel (or other work) laid out in front of you. For example, here's a bit of J. K. Rowling's planning sheet for *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*:

NO	TIME	TITLE	Plot	PROPHECY	Hall of Prophecy	Cho/Ginny	D.A.	O.G.P	Snape/Harry + father	Hagrid + Gramp
13	OCT	Plots and Resistance	<p>Harry, Ron, and Hermione go to Hogsmeade. Meet Tonks and Lupin. Talk about the Death Eaters and the Order of the Phoenix. Hagrid is still being injured.</p>	<p>Harry sees the Hall of Prophecy (in a dream). Voldemort is still formulating his plans; none of his Death Eaters are able to get in, so he sends his snake Nagini on a recon mission.</p>	Cho is in Hogsmeade - wants to join Dumbledore's Army.	Tonks + Lupin	recruiting	Harry skips his lesson to recruit for Dumbledore's Army.	Hagrid's still being injured and has blood stains - "he's feeding something that's not his blood."	
14	NOV	The Order of the Phoenix	First meeting of the Order of the Phoenix.	Nagini attacks Mr. Weasley.	Cho + Ginny both present.	Umbridge is now reading their mail.	First meeting	Harry's still skipping his lessons.		
15	NOV	The Dirtiest Tackle	<p>Harry is suspended from Quidditch after he attacks Malfoy because Malfoy taunted him about Cedric. That night, Harry is restless and unable to sleep; he worries about Umbridge, Cho, and his scar. Harry sees Nagini attack Mr. Weasley (in a dream).</p>		Cho is now madly in love.	Firehead				
16	NOV	Black Marks	<p>Harry rows about skipping his lessons with Snape; Harry is in the doghouse and he's angry. An overview of Christmas. Hermione contacts Rita. Another lesson with Snape.</p>	<p>Nagini gets into the Hall of Prophecy. Voldemort has confirmation of Bode's story - that only he and Harry can touch the prophecy.</p>	<p>Cho kiss? Ginny is concerned about her father.</p>	<p>Ron + the rest of the Weasleys are told about their father's injury.</p>	<p>Reactions - another meeting? an overview?</p>	<p>A row about Harry not going to his lessons.</p>	<p>Hagrid's still getting injured.</p>	
17	DEC	Rita Returns	<p>Harry, Ron and Hermione go to Hogsmeade for their Christmas shopping and meet with Rita.</p>	Rita supplies information.	<p>Harry is now avoiding Cho a bit. Ginny is with someone else?</p>			Another lesson	Hagrid's in the hospital wing.	

It did the job, but it's not easy to read. In WriteBoard, it could look like this:

No.	Time	Title	Plot	Prophecy	Cho / Ginny	Order of the Phoenix	Dumbledore's Army	Snape / Harry + Father	Hagrid + Gramp
13	Oct	Plots and Resistance	Harry has a lesson scheduled with Snape, but he skips it to go to Hogsmeade with Ron and Hermione. They meet Lupin and Tonks but can't talk because Umbridge is talking them, so they pass a note. Harry, Ron, and Hermione are recruiting for Dumbledore's Army. Hagrid has fresh injuries.	Harry sees the Hall of Prophecy (in a dream). Voldemort is still formulating his plans; none of his Death Eaters are able to get in, so he sends his snake Nagini on a recon mission.	Cho is in Hogsmeade and wants to join Dumbledore's Army.	Tonks and Lupin	Recruiting	Harry skips his lesson to recruit for Dumbledore's Army.	Hagrid's still being injured and has blood stains. ("He's feeding something that's not his blood.")
14	Nov	Dumbledore's Army	First meeting of Dumbledore's Army		Cho and Ginny are both present.	Umbridge is now reading their mail.	First meeting	Harry's still skipping his lessons.	
15	Nov	The Dirtiest Tackle	Harry is suspended from Quidditch after he attacks Malfoy because Malfoy taunted him about Cedric. That night Harry is restless and unable to sleep; he worries about Umbridge, Cho, and his scar. Harry sees Nagini attack Mr. Weasley (in a dream).	Nagini attacks Mr. Weasley.	Cho is now madly in love.	Firehead			
16	Nov	Black Marks	Harry rows about skipping his lessons with Snape; Harry is in the doghouse and he's angry. An overview of Christmas. Hermione contacts Rita. Another lesson with Snape.	Nagini gets into the Hall of Prophecy. Voldemort has confirmation of Bode's story - that only he and Harry can touch the prophecy.	Cho kiss? Ginny is concerned about her father.	Ron and the rest of the Weasleys are told about their father's injury.	Reactions to the attack - another meeting and an overview?	A row about Harry not going to his lessons	Hagrid's still getting injured.
17	Dec	Rita Returns	Harry, Ron and Hermione go to Hogsmeade for their Christmas shopping and meet with Rita.	Rita supplies information.	Harry is now avoiding Cho a bit. Ginny is with someone else?			Another lesson	Hagrid's in the hospital wing.

You might use each WriteBoard column to plan a chapter, with each cell in the column representing a scene. Then if you want to move a scene in chapter 1 over to chapter 4, you can do so with a couple of keystrokes. You can move, insert, or delete cells, rows, and columns until everything is arranged exactly the way you want it, then export your work as a single document. WriteBoard makes it easy.

You can use WriteBoard to plan and keep track of all kinds of things. For example, you can use it as a kanban (look it up) to keep track of your projects and where they are in production:

Possible projects	In progress	Finished	Final review	Submitted
Great American Novel				
				Crossword puzzle for the NY Times
			Paper on nuclear fusion	
Article on chimps for Atlantic magazine				
	Try out WriteBoard			

You can insert graphics and use it for storyboarding:



Try using an AI engine like [Microsoft Designer](#) to generate images for your story. If you have Microsoft Copilot, you can do that directly in Word.

You can use WriteBoard to plan your week, especially useful if you're into time stacking:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Do laundry	Outline novel	Sleep in	Write chapter introducing ancient castle	Clean garage
Finish article for <i>Rolling Stone</i>		Lunch with Marie		Wash car
	Dr. visit, 3:00	Research for screenplay		Clean up hard drive
	Outline novel		Call potential clients	
	Call Mom			Date night

For planning your chapters, consider something like this (fill in the blanks):

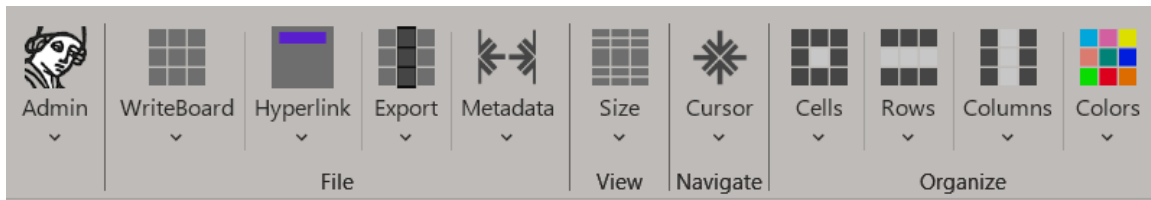
Chapter	Striking beginning	Setting	Characters	Action	Cliffhanger ending
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

You can also use it to keep track of characters in your novel:

Character	Appearance	Personality	Background	Goal
Brad the Impaler	Ugly little spud. Red hair, yellow eyes, long scar on left cheek.	Nasty. Hurts people just for fun.	Orphaned. Grew up in a camp of robbers.	Kill his enemy, the Duke of Castille.
Duke of Castille	Tall, thin, black hair, dark eyes.	Aloof and demanding.	Wealth and privilege. Son of royalty.	Become king of Castille.
Belinda the Fair	Blond, blue eyes. Fairly beautiful.	Kind to all. Especially loves animals.	Daughter of peasants. Lives in the village of Fitzroy. Works as a baker.	Marry her true love, Norman the Normal, and raise little Belindas.
Norman the Normal	Chubby, nondescript. Brown eyes and hair.	Timid and kind, always hopeful.	Son of peasants. Lives in the village of Fitzroy. Works in the stables.	Become the owner of his favorite horse, Sparky.
Sparky	Black horse with white stripe on face.	Skittish, energetic.	Raised in the stables of Fitzroy.	Escape from Fitzroy.

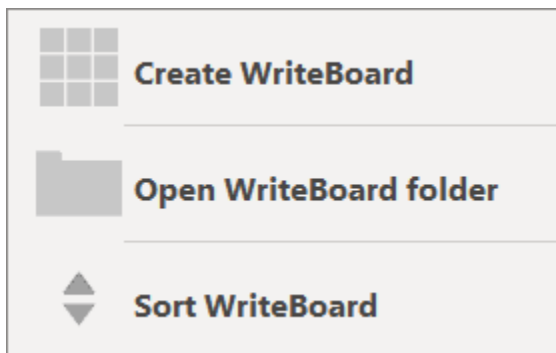
WriteBoard provides a great way to see the big picture of almost anything.

WriteBoard's ribbon interface looks like this:



Most of the items under each tab on the ribbon are self-explanatory (for example, “Move cell right”), but a few of them need explanation.

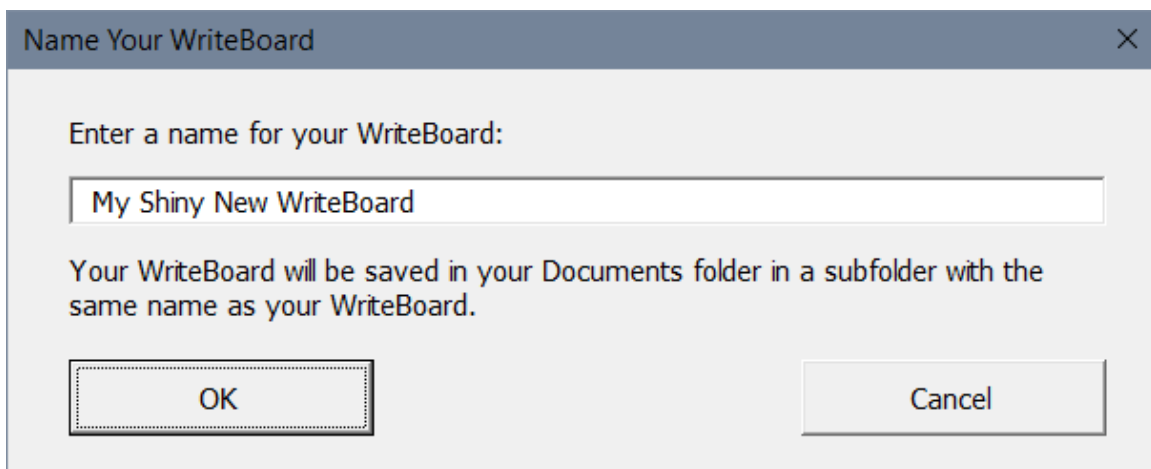
WriteBoard



CREATE WRITEBOARD

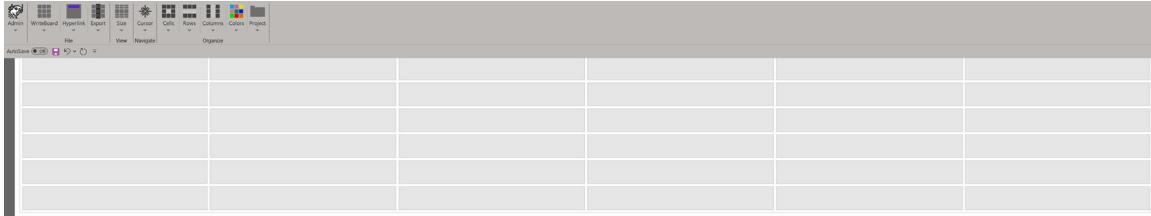
Create WriteBoard creates a new WriteBoard document, which is really just an enormous Microsoft Word document (22 by 22 inches) containing a specially formatted table.

When you create a WriteBoard, the program will ask you to name it:



The program will create and save your new WriteBoard in your Documents folder in a subfolder with the *same name* as the WriteBoard. You'll soon see why that is important.

A new WriteBoard looks like this:

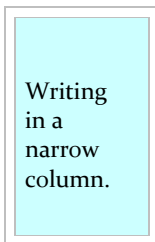


Each cell in the table is the equivalent of an index card or a sticky note, and you can type in the cells and arrange them at will.

You can do anything with this table that you can with a regular table, using Word's usual features. And, of course, you can use it with all of the special features included in the WriteBoard program.

When you create a WriteBoard, the program will ask how many columns and rows you want to include in the WriteBoard table. You can have up to 100 rows, but WriteBoard initially creates a maximum of 30 columns. I recommend starting with a more reasonable number, such as 8 or 10. You can always add more columns and rows if you need them, up to whatever maximum Word supports.

The more columns you specify, the more WriteBoard reduces the point size in those columns, ensuring that your text is legible and doesn't look like this:



To make up for the reduction in point size, it automatically enlarges the zoom percentage so your text is always easy to see.

OPEN WRITEBOARD FOLDER

Open WriteBoard Folder opens the folder containing your WriteBoard in case you need to access the linked documents that are stored there.

SORT WRITEBOARD

Sort WriteBoard displays Word's standard Sort dialog, which you can use to sort the cells in your WriteBoard table:

Sort

Sort by
 [Dropdown] Type: Text [Dropdown] ☒ Ascending
 Using: Paragraphs [Dropdown] ☐ Descending

Then by
 [Dropdown] Type: Text [Dropdown] ☒ Ascending
 Using: Paragraphs [Dropdown] ☐ Descending

Then by
 [Dropdown] Type: Text [Dropdown] ☐ Ascending
 Using: Paragraphs [Dropdown] ☐ Descending

My list has
☒ Header row ☐ No header row

Options... OK Cancel

The WriteBoard table includes a header row, so you can sort by that if you need to.

Hyperlink

Add cell heading | Ctrl Alt H

Open hyperlink | Ctrl Alt O

Create hyperlinked document | Ctrl Alt N

Create hyperlinked WriteBoard | Ctrl Alt M

Remove hyperlink | Ctrl Alt L

ADD CELL HEADING

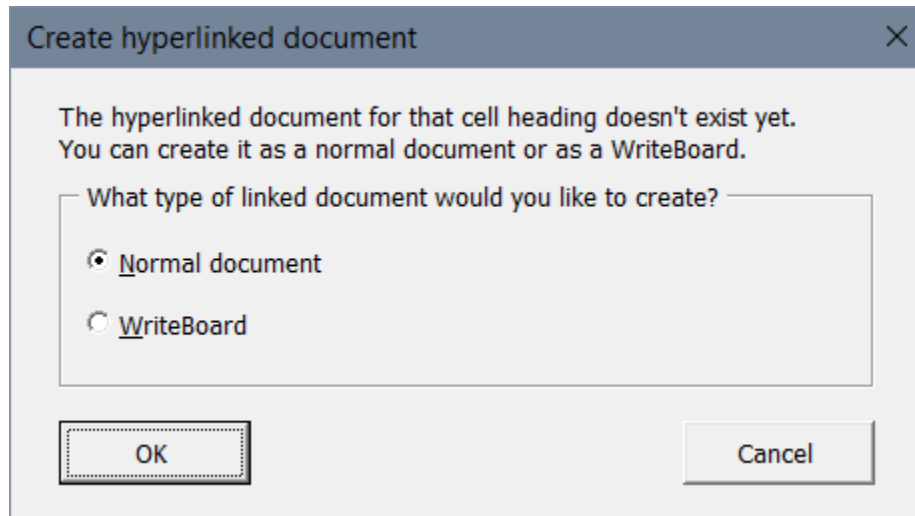
Add cell heading styles the first paragraph in a cell as a heading. If the cell is at the top of the column, its first paragraph is styled as Heading 2. (Think of this as a chapter heading.) If the cell is anywhere else, its first paragraph is styled as Heading 3. (Think of this as a subheading within the chapter.) This works no

matter where your cursor is in the cell; it doesn't have to be in the first paragraph. If the cell is empty, this adds a paragraph break and styles it, ready for you to type.

You don't need to add a heading to every cell, but doing so to some of them will help you better organize your writing.

OPEN HYPERLINK

If a cell includes a heading, *Open hyperlink* opens the document that is linked to the heading. If the heading is not linked to a document, the program offers to create one:



You can create a normal document or another WriteBoard. That's right—a WriteBoard can include links to other WriteBoards as well as normal documents. *Open hyperlink* opens either one.

CREATE HYPERLINKED DOCUMENT

If a cell includes a heading, *Create hyperlinked document* creates a normal document that is linked to the heading, using the heading as its filename. For example, if a cell has a heading of "Chapter 1," *Create hyperlinked document* creates a document named "Chapter 1." You're given the option of including the cell's text in the document. If you select the linked cell and cells below it in the same column, the program gives you the option of including the text from the selected cells in that column.

The point is to *plan* your project in WriteBoard but do your actual *writing* in separate documents that are linked to the corresponding cells in your WriteBoard. NOTE: *The documents are kept in the same folder as your WriteBoard*, so they're all in the same place and not just scattered about.

Most writers will prefer working in this way, as it means writing in regular Word documents, one for each hyperlink. An alternative is to write in the WriteBoard table itself, chapter after chapter, scene after scene.

CREATE HYPERLINKED WRITEBOARD

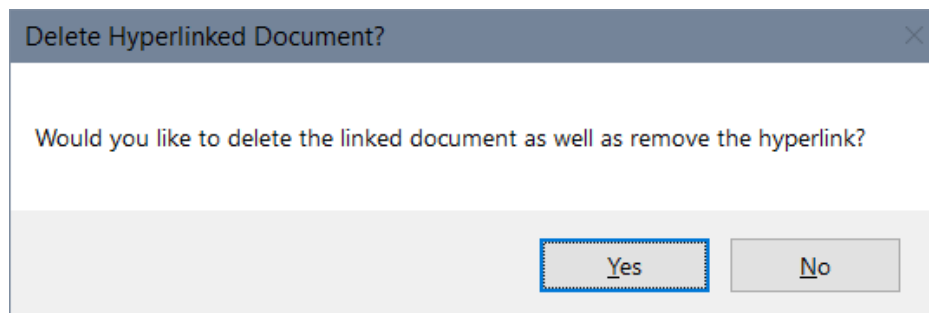
If a cell includes a heading, *Create hyperlinked WriteBoard* creates a WriteBoard that is linked to the heading, using the heading as its filename. For example, if a cell has a heading of “WriteBoard 2,” *Create hyperlinked WriteBoard* creates a WriteBoard named “WriteBoard 2” and saves it in the folder associated with your original WriteBoard.

You might plan your overall fantasy trilogy on your main WriteBoard with links to other WriteBoards for volume 1, volume 2, and volume 3. Then, in the WriteBoard for volume 1, you can include links to separate documents for chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3, and so on.

NOTE: Any linked WriteBoard in your WriteBoard’s folder can include links to any documents in that folder, even those already linked to a different WriteBoard. For example, you could link your “Plot” document to three different WriteBoards.

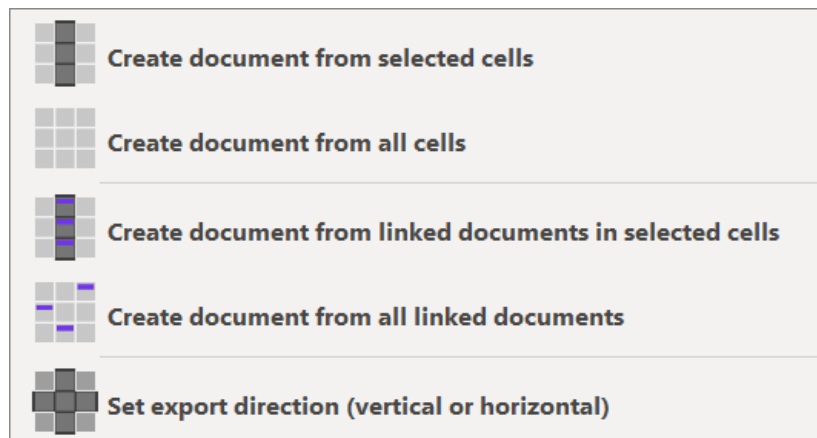
REMOVE HYPERLINK

Remove Hyperlink removes the hyperlink from a cell’s heading but leaves the heading intact. It also offers to delete the document linked to the heading:



Export

After you’ve finished writing, either in separate documents or in the WriteBoard table, you’ll want to export your masterpiece as a single document.



CREATE DOCUMENT FROM SELECTED CELLS

Create document from selected cells creates a new document containing the text from the cells you've selected. If you've written in the cells themselves, this feature exports parts of your writing (such as a chapter or section) into a new document.

Your selection can be arbitrary, even spanning columns, but the selected cells must be contiguous. For example, if you select cell 3 in column 6 and cell 4 in faraway column 12, only the text in cell 3 is exported. But if you select cells 3 and 4 in both the adjoining columns 6 and 7, the export includes the text from all the selected cells.

CREATE DOCUMENT FROM ALL CELLS

Create document from all cells creates a document with the text from *all* of the WriteBoard cells, selected or not. Use this to compile your master plan into one document as the basis for your working manuscript.

CREATE DOCUMENT FROM LINKED DOCUMENTS IN SELECTED CELLS

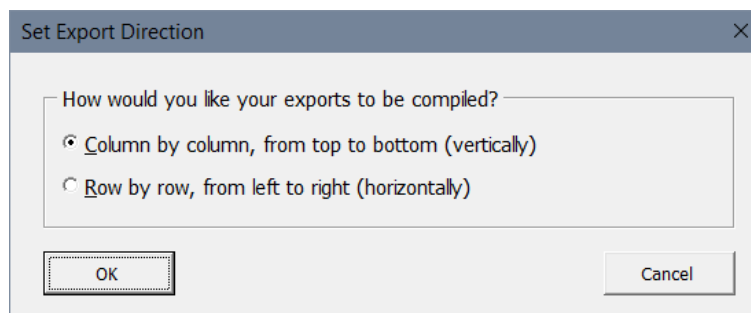
Create document from linked documents in selected cells creates a new document containing the text from the hyperlinked *documents* in the cells you've selected. For example, if you want a document that includes the linked documents for chapters 1 through 3, you could select columns 1, 2, and 3 and then use this feature. Again, selected cells must be contiguous. NOTE: Linked WriteBoards are *not* included in the created document—only normal documents are included.

CREATE DOCUMENT FROM ALL LINKED DOCUMENTS

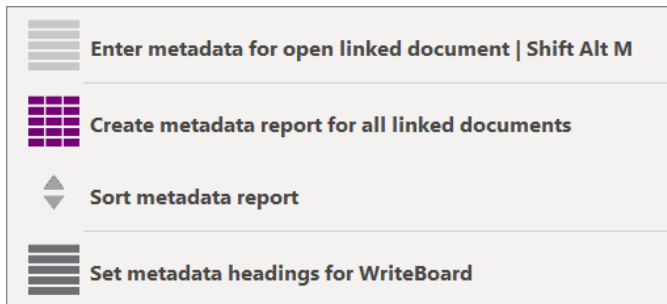
Create document from all linked documents creates a new document containing the text from *all* of the documents that are linked in the WriteBoard table, whether selected or not. Again, only normal documents are included.

SET EXPORT DIRECTION (VERTICAL OR HORIZONTAL)

Set export direction allows you to set the direction in which exporting works, allowing for great flexibility in how you put your WriteBoard together. For example, if your book has 50 chapters, you may find it easier to plan each chapter in its own row rather than its own extremely narrow column. Then you can export your plan row by row (horizontally) rather than column by column (vertically).



Metadata




A screenshot of a software menu titled "Enter metadata for open linked document | Shift Alt M". The menu contains four items, each with a corresponding icon: a document icon for "Enter metadata for open linked document | Shift Alt M", a grid icon for "Create metadata report for all linked documents", a double-headed arrow icon for "Sort metadata report", and a document icon for "Set metadata headings for WriteBoard".

The metadata features let you enter and save information about the documents linked to your WriteBoard. Then you can generate a report showing that information for all of them. You don't *have* to use these features, of course, but you may find them helpful, especially while writing that gigantic fantasy trilogy.

ENTER METADATA FOR OPEN LINKED DOCUMENT

Let's say you want to keep track of which characters appear in each scene. When you open a linked document to work on a scene, click *Enter metadata for open linked document* (or press SHIFT ALT M). You'll get a dialog that looks like this:



A screenshot of a dialog box titled "Enter metadata for open linked document". The dialog contains several text input fields for entering information about a document. The fields are labeled: "Setting", "Characters", "Point of view", "Date", "Time", "Purpose", "Other 1", "Other 2", and "Status". At the bottom of the dialog are four buttons: "OK", "Use Previous Entries", "Clear All", and "Cancel".

Enter the names of the characters in the scene. You can enter other information as well: setting, point of view, status (in progress, finished), and so on—whatever you want to track. When you're through, click OK. Be sure to save your document so your information doesn't get lost.

NOTE: Again, the keyboard shortcut to open this dialog is SHIFT ALT M (for "Metadata").

If you get tired of repeatedly entering the same information ("Setting: Castle," "Setting: Castle," "Setting: Castle"), click "Use Previous Entries" to populate the dialog with the entries you made in an earlier document. Then modify the entries as needed. To remove all the current entries from the dialog, click "Clear All."

CREATE METADATA REPORT FOR ALL LINKED DOCUMENTS

After you've entered metadata in your linked documents, you can create a report that summarizes that metadata for all the linked documents in your WriteBoard. The report is useful for seeing which scenes include which characters, in which settings, and so on. The report also shows the number, name, and word count for each document.






SORT METADATA REPORT

If you like, you can sort the metadata report in various ways. Want to see all the scenes that are still in progress? Sort the table by "Status." Want to see all the scenes that take place in the scary castle? Sort the table by "Setting."

SET METADATA HEADINGS FOR WRITEBOARD

The default metadata headings are *Setting*, *Characters*, *Point of View*, *Date*, *Time*, *Purpose*, *Other 1*, *Other 2*, and *Status*. If you're writing a novel, those headings work fine, but what if you're writing a personal history or a treatise on poetry? In such cases, you may need to use custom metadata headings rather than the defaults. This feature makes that possible. Enter your custom headings and click OK. Be sure to save your WriteBoard so your headings don't get lost.

Size

	Toggle height all rows Ctrl Alt Page Up
	Toggle height current row Ctrl Alt Page Down
	Fit columns in window Ctrl Alt 9
	Zoom in Ctrl Alt +
	Zoom out Ctrl Alt -
	Reset zoom Ctrl Alt 0

The “Toggle height” features let you see all of your text in all of the rows at once, or all of the text in one row at a time, making it easier to understand the big picture or focus on a single detail. The purpose of the other features is obvious.

NOTE: Remember to “Reset zoom” to your default settings when you’ve finished using WriteBoard.

TOGGLE HEIGHT ALL ROWS

The height *compressed* for all the rows looks like this:

Character
Brad the Impaler
Duke of Castille
Belinda the Fair

And the height *expanded* for all the rows looks like this:

Character
Brad the Impaler This sentence shows what happens when you toggle the height of all rows.
Duke of Castille This sentence shows what happens when you toggle the height of all rows.
Belinda the Fair This sentence shows what happens when you toggle the height of all rows.

TOGGLE HEIGHT ONE ROW








The height *compressed* for a single row looks like this:

Character
Brad the Impaler This sentence shows what happens when you toggle the height of one row.
Duke of Castille This sentence shows what happens when you toggle the height of one row.
Belinda the Fair

And the height *expanded* for a single row looks like this:

Character
Brad the Impaler
Duke of Castille
Belinda the Fair This sentence shows what happens when you toggle the height of one row.

Cursor

	Move cursor one cell left Ctrl Alt Left
	Move cursor one cell right Ctrl Alt Right
	Move cursor one cell up Ctrl Alt Up
	Move cursor one cell down Ctrl Alt Down
	Move cursor to cell top Ctrl Alt Home
	Move cursor to cell bottom Ctrl Alt End
	Insert time stamp Ctrl Alt Insert

You can, of course, move your cursor from cell to cell using Word's defaults of TAB, SHIFT TAB, and the up and down arrow keys. But the advantage of moving around with WriteBoard's shortcut keys is that they all *select the text* of the cell you move to, so you can easily see where your selection is, and you can press an arrow key to move to the beginning or end of the selection, ready to type.

The only other feature here that needs explaining is *Insert time stamp*. It inserts the current date and time in this format:

year.month.day hour.minute.second (using a 24-hour clock)

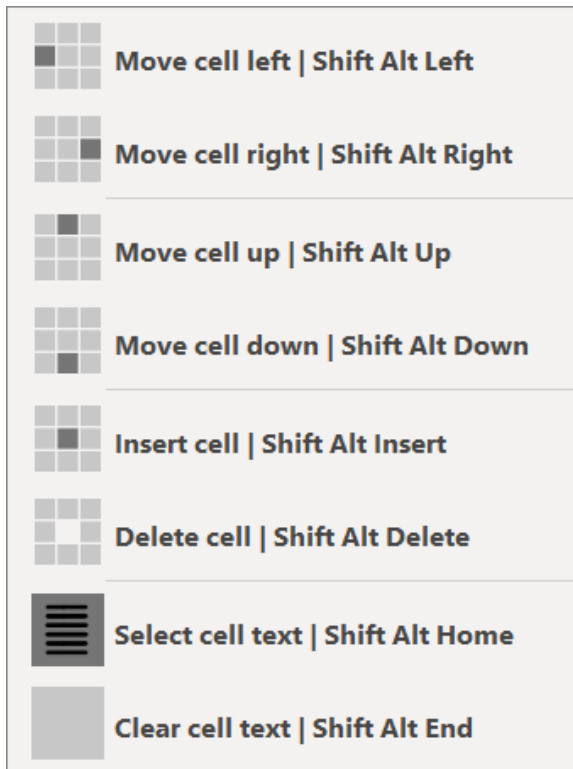
For example, here is the time stamp as I write this:

2024.03.28 13.12.52

That's March 28, 2024, at 1:12 (and 52 seconds) in the afternoon.

Time stamps are useful for tracking when you've worked on a particular item or if you're keeping journal entries. If you use a time stamp at the top of your cells, you can later sort the cells by time stamp. You can also use this feature to create Zettelkasten entries. (Look it up.)

Cells



What these features do is obvious but they still need a little explanation.

MOVE CELLS UP OR DOWN

If you move a cell up or down, it swaps places with the cell above or below it in the same column. For example, let's say you have Cell A and Cell B in the same column. If you move Cell A down, it moves *below* Cell B, and Cell B is now *above* Cell A.

MOVE CELLS LEFT OR RIGHT

However, if you move a cell left or right, it does *not* swap places with the cell to its left or right. Instead, the cell moves left or right into the adjoining column, and the cells around it move up or down to accommodate its new position. For example, let's say you have Cell A in Column 1 and Cell B next to it in Column 2. If you move Cell A to the right, the cells that were below Cell A move *up*, and Cell B and the cells below it move *down*, leaving Cell A above Cell B, with the other cells still in their original columns.

Why not just swap cells in adjacent columns? Because usually each column represents a chapter, with each cell representing a section or a scene. If you want to move a scene from chapter 3 to chapter 4, you probably *don't* want to also move the adjacent scene from chapter 4 to chapter 3. You simply want to move the scene from one chapter to another, leaving the other scenes in place.

Writing with WriteBoard

There are lots of ways to write with WriteBoard. One way is to follow the basic steps you'd use when planning your writing with index cards, using the cells in the WriteBoard table. When you're finished, export your work. Then do your actual writing in the exported document, following the plan described therein. Another way is to write in the individual documents that you've linked to the headings in your plan. When you're finished, export all of those documents as a single document ready for editing and review. Whatever your preference, the following steps work well.

Brainstorm

In each cell, write an idea you want to include in your paper or book. Do *not* try to do this in any kind of order; you're *brainstorming* here: good ideas, bad ideas, *any* ideas—they all go into the cells. When your brain is empty, stop.

WriteBoard includes a special keyboard shortcut to make brainstorming faster: SHIFT ENTER. Using that shortcut, you can quickly move your cursor to the next cell down without moving your fingers from the home row on your keyboard. Brainstorm an idea, type it in, and instantly move to the next cell, ready to type some more.

Organize

Move the cells around, grouping those on a certain subject together, with one subject per column. Give each column a heading, and delete any ideas that now seem unnecessary.

Put the cells in each column in some kind of order, with each cell representing a scene or a section.

Put the columns in some kind of order, with each column representing a chapter.

Write

Write your paper or book. You can write in the documents that are hyperlinked to cell headings (recommended) or in the cells themselves.

Export

However you write, you can export your masterpiece as a single document after you've finished. Your text will be exported in the order set with the *Set export direction (vertical or horizontal)* feature.

Of Planners and “Pantsers”

As you may know, many writers see themselves as either planners or “pantsers” (those who write “by the seat of their pants”). The planners work out their plots ahead of time, character by character, scene by scene, chapter by chapter. Then they write their novel according to their plan.

“Pantsers” believe that all of that planning gets in the way of creativity and spontaneity, and if the planning is too detailed, they may be right. It’s important to leave room for the plot to go in a slightly different direction or for a character to do something unexpected. It’s amazing what riches the mind can reveal if given free reign.

On the other hand, writing without some kind of plan may result in folders full of partially finished novels, potential masterpieces that never got past the first fifty pages. I know whereof I speak.

One of the beauties of card-based writing, as with WriteBoard, is that you get the best of both planning and “pantsing.” You know your novel’s structure ahead of time so you don’t get stuck after chapter 5, but you also have plenty of room within that structure for creativity, for serendipity, for inspiration. “Pantsers” suddenly know where they’re going; planners find they can go off the path without losing sight of the destination.

It’s a wonderful thing. I urge you to try it, and I’ll wager that you find yourself writing more creatively and with greater ease and productivity than ever before.

Thanks for using WriteBoard!





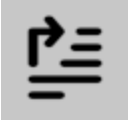
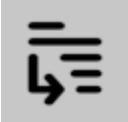

Keyboard Shortcuts

WriteBoard is best used with its keyboard shortcuts, which are well organized and systematic. You can learn to use them quickly and easily by opening the document named “Keyboard Practice.docx” included with WriteBoard.

Start with your left ring finger on the CTRL key and your left thumb on the ALT key, which is where they’ll often be when using WriteBoard’s features. Then put your right index finger on the LEFT arrow key. Now try some of the shortcuts listed below. You’ll get the hang of things in no time.

Navigate > Cursor

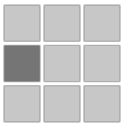
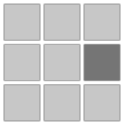
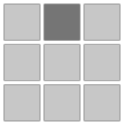
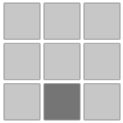
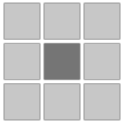
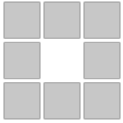


CTRL ALT. With an ARROW key, moves your *cursor* from cell to cell. With HOME and END, moves your cursor to the cell’s top or bottom. With INSERT, inserts a time stamp.

	CTRL ALT LEFT moves your cursor one cell to the left.
	CTRL ALT RIGHT moves your cursor one cell to the right.
	CTRL ALT UP moves your cursor up a cell.
	CTRL ALT DOWN moves your cursor down a cell. SHIFT ENTER does the same thing, without moving your fingers from the home row on your keyboard. Great for fast brainstorming.
	CTRL ALT HOME moves your cursor to the top of the cell.
	CTRL ALT END moves your cursor to the bottom of the cell.
	CTRL ALT INSERT inserts a time stamp.

Organize

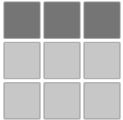
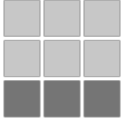


CELLS

SHIFT ALT. With an ARROW key, moves a *cell* to a new location. With INSERT and DELETE, inserts or deletes cells. With HOME and END, selects or clears a cell's text.

	SHIFT ALT LEFT moves a cell left, then adjusts the position of adjoining cells.
	SHIFT ALT RIGHT moves a cell right, then adjusts the position of adjoining cells.
	SHIFT ALT UP moves a cell up.
	SHIFT ALT DOWN moves a cell down.
	SHIFT ALT INSERT inserts a cell below the current cell, shifting the cells below it down.
	SHIFT ALT DELETE deletes the current cell, shifting the cells below it up.
	SHIFT ALT HOME selects a cell's text.
	SHIFT ALT END clears (deletes) a cell's text.

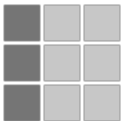
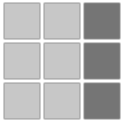
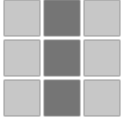
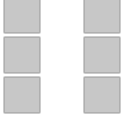
Rows

CTRL SHIFT ALT. With an ARROW key, moves a row up or down. With HOME and END, inserts or deletes rows.




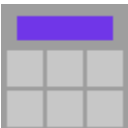

	CTRL SHIFT ALT UP moves a row up.
	CTRL SHIFT ALT DOWN moves a row down.
	CTRL SHIFT ALT HOME inserts a row, shifting the following rows down.
	CTRL SHIFT ALT END deletes a row, shifting the following rows up.

COLUMNS



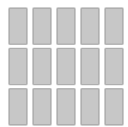

CTRL SHIFT ALT. With an ARROW key, moves a column left or right. With PAGE UP and PAGE DOWN, inserts or deletes columns.



	CTRL SHIFT ALT LEFT moves a column left.
	CTRL SHIFT ALT RIGHT moves a column right.
	CTRL SHIFT ALT PAGE UP inserts a column, shifting the following columns to the right.
	CTRL SHIFT ALT PAGE DOWN deletes a column, shifting the following columns to the left.

File > Hyperlink

	CTRL ALT H adds a cell heading.
	CTRL ALT O opens a document or WriteBoard hyperlinked to a cell's heading.
	CTRL ALT N creates a normal hyperlinked document named for a cell's heading.
	CTRL ALT M creates a hyperlinked WriteBoard named for a cell's heading.
	CTRL ALT L removes the link from a cell's heading but leaves the heading intact. It then gives you the option of deleting the document or WriteBoard associated with the link.

View > Size

	CTRL ALT PAGE UP toggles the height of all rows.
	CTRL ALT PAGE DOWN toggles the height of the current row.
	CTRL ALT 9 fits all of your WriteBoard columns into your Word window.
	CTRL ALT + zooms in.

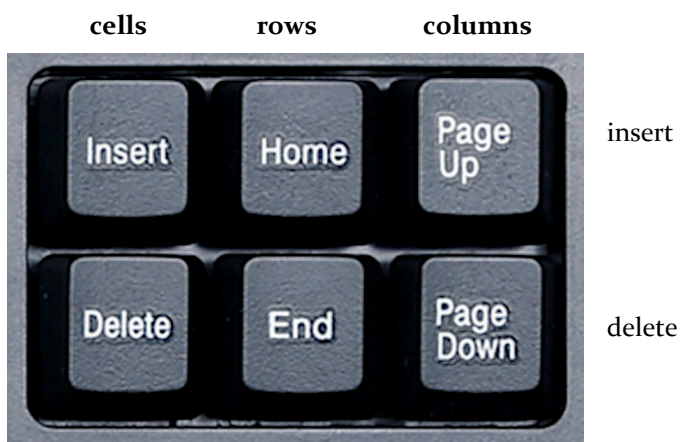
	CTRL ALT – zooms out.
	CTRL ALT 0 resets the zoom to your default settings, as they were before you used WriteBoard.

General Guidelines

- CTRL ALT is used with your *cursor* (also hyperlinks, zoom, and time stamps).
- SHIFT ALT is used with *cells*.
- CTRL SHIFT ALT is used with *rows* and *columns*.



- INSERT and DELETE (with SHIFT ALT) insert and delete *cells*.
- HOME and END (with CTRL SHIFT ALT) insert and delete *rows*.
- PAGE UP and PAGE DOWN (with CTRL SHIFT ALT) insert and delete *columns*.



Resources

You can find lots of articles about card-based writing online. Here are some good ones:

[The Note Card System](#)

[Organize & Plan Your Book Using Index Cards](#)

[Writing With Index Cards: A Low-Tech Way To Plan Your Book or Novel](#)

[The Amazing Index Card Technique](#)

[How to Outline a Story with Index Cards](#)

[Create Structure in Your Fiction Using Index Cards](#)

[Build Your Plot – My Index Card Method](#)

[The 60 Index Card Method: How To Outline Your Novel In 3 Simple Steps](#)

[Zero Draft Thirty: Story Prep Fun With Index Cards!](#)

Registration

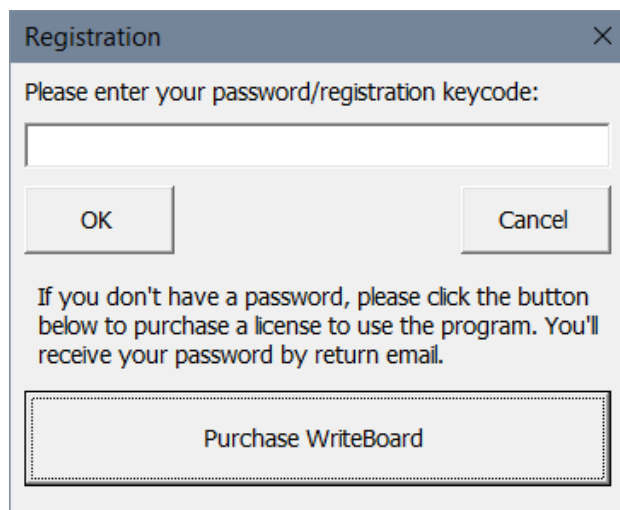
If you like WriteBoard and plan to continue using it, you must purchase a license to do so. If you don't, your copy of the program is for evaluation purposes only, and it will stop working after 45 days. After you purchase a license to use the program, you'll automatically receive a password (by email) that unlocks the program to run without limitation on time or use.

The terms of your license prohibit you from giving your program password to someone else or using it on someone else's computer. However, you may use the password on up to *three* of your own computers. For example, you could install WriteBoard and use your password on your computer at work, your computer at home, and your laptop. However, you may run the program on only one of your computers at a time. If you need to run the program on more than one computer at a time (for example, for use by a family member or employee), you must purchase another license and get another password for the program. This is the honest and legal thing to do. Besides that, the Editorium is a very small business that needs your support. Thanks for your cooperation.

Getting a Password

Here's how to purchase a program license so you can get your password:

1. Go to <http://www.editorium.com/register.htm> and click *WriteBoard*. Or, in Word, just click *WriteBoard > Register WriteBoard > Purchase WriteBoard*.

A screenshot of a Windows-style dialog box titled "Registration" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The dialog contains the text "Please enter your password/registration keycode:" followed by a single-line text input field. Below the input field are two buttons: "OK" on the left and "Cancel" on the right. At the bottom of the dialog, there is a paragraph of text: "If you don't have a password, please click the button below to purchase a license to use the program. You'll receive your password by return email." Below this text is a large, rectangular button with a dotted border, labeled "Purchase WriteBoard".

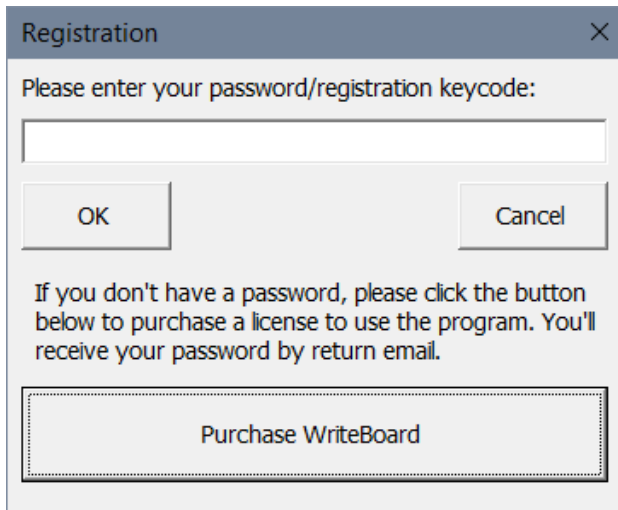
2. Follow the online instructions.

You'll receive your password automatically by return email as soon as your payment is processed. If you're paying by credit card, you'll receive your password

almost immediately. Just check your email as soon as your online registration is complete.

Using Your Password

Once you've received your password from the Editorium, you'll need to enter it into the WriteBoard program. To do so, click *WriteBoard > Register WriteBoard*. The Registration dialog will appear on your screen:

A screenshot of a 'Registration' dialog box. The title bar says 'Registration' with a close button (X). The main text says 'Please enter your password/registration keycode:'. Below this is a text input field. At the bottom left is an 'OK' button, and at the bottom right is a 'Cancel' button. Below these buttons, there is a paragraph of text: 'If you don't have a password, please click the button below to purchase a license to use the program. You'll receive your password by return email.' At the very bottom is a button labeled 'Purchase WriteBoard'.

Carefully type (or, better, paste) the password into the box labeled “Please enter your password/registration code.” Then click the *OK* button.

If you have a valid password and enter it correctly, the program will tell you that your registration was successful. After that, the program will run without limitation on time or use.

Questions?

I hope you find WriteBoard to be immensely useful. If you have questions, comments, or thoughts about how it could be improved, please let me know.

support@editorium.com

www.editorium.com

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