



Getting Started with 12 x 12

Welcome back to 12 x 12! This group is run by Julie Hedlund with the help of her faithful assistant Kelli Panique. We are so glad you've joined us again and we look forward to seeing how you continue grow in your writing career over the next year. Here's how to get the most out of your membership.

First Things First

1. Watch this video tutorial on how to create your 12 x 12 forum account [HERE](#).
2. Register to join the 12 x 12 forum [HERE](#).
3. Request to join the 12 x 12 in 2022 Facebook Group [HERE](#).
4. We will manually approve you for forum and the Facebook group. This should happen within 24-48 hours of your registration.
5. Bookmark the 12 x 12 blog [HERE](#).
6. Start writing! The main goal of 12 x 12 is to get you writing 12 picture book drafts in 12 months. Our first check-in is January 31st.

Email Messages

The primary way we communicate with 12 x 12 members is through email. Take a moment to add kelli@juliehedlund.com to your list of contacts and/or safe senders. If you are using Gmail, please look for our messages in your Promotions folder. Drag the message to your Primary folder so Gmail will (hopefully) filter it there in the future. If you are using another email provider and you find our messages in spam, please mark them as "not spam" and help your system learn you do want our messages.

If your registration was purchased under a different name or email address than you want to use in 12 x 12, scroll to the bottom of the welcome email and click "Change Subscriber Options". A window will open that will allow you to change the information in our system. If that doesn't work, email your PayPal receipt to Kelli at kelli@juliehedlund.com along with the old contact information and the correct contact information and we'll make the change manually. You need to do this every year that you register.

If you unsubscribe, you will not get any 12 x 12 messages. So please do not unsubscribe.

The Challenge

The challenge of 12 x 12 is to write 12 new picture book drafts in 12 months. That's it! They don't have to (and probably won't) be perfect. These are those really bad first drafts that get your ideas out of your head and on to the page where you can actually work on them and make them come to life.

Here's a few things to note:

- Keep track of your new drafts in the way that works best for you. We've created tracking sheets to get you started. Download them from the Important Announcements section of the forum [here](#).
- You don't have to turn anything in or post a draft on the forum for it to count.
- Some people find posting a draft on the forum each month keeps them accountable (and gives them usable feedback), but it's not required.
- If you scribbled a draft in crayon on a napkin in your car while waiting in the fast-food drive thru line, it counts!
- Each month that you complete a draft, you can earn a badge on the forum. (You'll find the instructions for requesting a badge below.)
- At the end of each month, we'll have a check-in post on the blog where you can report your progress and enter to win a prize from our Featured Author. (Details below.)
- While one draft a month sounds great, we know some months are busier than others. So, if you write 12 drafts or more throughout the year, not necessarily one per month, you'll still be able to claim your spot on the Winners Wall at the end of the year.
- There's a Winners Wall? YES! If you write 12 or more drafts this year, you'll have the opportunity to send us your draft total and picture to be included in our Winners Wall video. See our past winners [here](#)!

The Forum

The video on the [Welcome page](#) will show you how to register for the forum. Your username should be your first name and last name with no space: FirstnameLastname. This makes it easy for fellow members to find you on the forum and makes the approval process move more quickly.

Once you create an account on the forum, your registration will need to be approved. This is a manual process, but we will do our best to get you approved as soon as possible, usually within 24-48 hours on weekdays. (**NOTE:** If you are using a different name or email than the one you used to make your purchase, please list that in the comments of your registration or email us at kelli@juliehedlund.com so we can easily find you.)

Once you're approved, you will be able to see the sections of the forum available at your membership level. If you haven't spent a lot of time in the forum, we **HIGHLY** suggest starting in the [Nuts and Bolts](#) section to get the lay of the land.

Please watch the [video tutorials](#). They will show you how to set up your profile, navigate the forum, start a discussion, comment on a discussion, post your manuscript for critique, get monthly badges, and much, much more. These videos were created to answer our most frequently asked questions about how to use the forum, so please look for answers in these videos before posting or sending questions to Julie or Kelli.

The forum is the place to find critique partners, discussions on the craft of writing, feedback on your manuscripts and queries, help promoting your published book, and support from other picture book writers. The forum is what the members make of it. The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it. It is also a place you can use as a resource and easily refer to information you find useful.

There is a LOT going on in the forum. It has developed, grown, and changed as our membership has developed, grown, and changed. Pick one place you want to start and focus there (writing, submitting, promoting your book, etc.). Then you can branch out from there. Take your time and don't be afraid to ask questions on the forum or in the Facebook group. We were all new at one time and are happy to help you learn. The more you participate, the more comfortable you'll get using the forum.

The Badges

You can earn badges on the Forum for participation and writing & revising your monthly drafts. To get a draft or revision badges:

- Go to the [Important Announcements](#) section
- Click on the post related to the monthly badge you are looking for, i.e. "January Badges"
- Click on the link to the badge you've earned.
- Click "Request Badge" in the upper right corner.
- Put the name of the manuscript in the box.
- Click "Send Request."
- Wait for approval.
- All badges requests are approved manually and can take a few days to be approved. We approve all requests that come through. If you haven't received your badge after a week, please request it again.

NOTE: Monthly draft and revision badges are not awarded automatically. Posting your manuscript on the forum will not automatically get you your monthly badges. Checking in at the monthly check-in will not automatically get you your monthly badges. You will need to request each badge manually following the process above. Here's [a tutorial](#) on how to request badges.

The forum only allows us to award each monthly badge once no matter how many drafts or revisions you accomplish in one month. (But we are super impressed by your hard work!)

You can request badges throughout the year. So, if you get to July and realize you never requested your March badges, go to the Important Announcements section of the forum and find the badge you need.

The Webinars

The 12 x 12 Webinar Series is a highlight of membership. Don't miss your chance to learn from industry experts live. We will send save-the-date emails about a week before each webinar. Login instructions are sent the morning of the event. If you can't attend live, replays of each webinar will be available for one month after they are posted. The link to the replay will be sent to the email address associated with your membership.

If you'd like lifetime access to a webinar, you'll have a limited-time opportunity to purchase that webinar for a discounted rate before it's available to the public on our Teachable site. See past webinars on our Teachable site [here](#).

Requesting help

If you need help on the forum, you can tag the elf for that section. Use the "@" symbol and the elf's name to notify them you need assistance. You can find the Elf Directory [here](#). It will show you which elves oversee which sections. Elf names can also be found in the description of each category. We aren't in the forum 24/7 but we will be happy to assist you as soon as we can.

If you need assistance with your 12 x 12 membership, please contact Kelli at kelli@juliehedlund.com.

Full Manuscript Section and Member Critiques

Post your manuscript in the [Full Manuscript](#) section of the forum to get feedback from your fellow 12 x 12 members. You may post as many manuscripts as you'd like but we ask that you **critique at least three manuscripts for every one that you post.** (Spread the love! Look for manuscripts that don't have any comments yet!)

Tutorial on how to post a manuscript [HERE](#).

Tips for giving and receiving critiques [HERE](#).

Critique Groups

Some of the most valuable resources in 12 x 12 are other 12 x 12 members! If you are interested in joining a critique group, please go to [Critique Connect](#) in the 12 x 12 Member Forum section. Read the

reference post in this section to learn how to start a discussion about what you are looking for in a critique group or you can read & respond to others who are looking for partners. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there!

Critique Ninjas

Critique Ninjas will roam the Forum each month and provide critiques on manuscripts posted in the Full Manuscript section of the Forum. All the Ninjas are agented and/or multi-published authors. Stealthy as these Ninjas are, they will not be able to critique each and every manuscript posted. However, you will learn LOTS from reading their critiques of your colleagues' manuscripts too. You are guaranteed to get at least one Ninja critique on one of your manuscripts posted in the [Full Manuscript](#) section in 2022, if you want one.

Please read the full section on the forum explaining how Critique Ninjas work [HERE](#).

It is our policy that members do not request or approach a Critique Ninja about getting a critique. Occasionally, Ninjas may post in the forum or Facebook group that they are looking for manuscripts to critique. In this case, you may post a link to your manuscript on the forum in response to the Ninja's request.

To find manuscripts already critiqued by Ninjas, look for the code NV in the title of manuscripts in the Full Manuscript. Do not add NV to your manuscript title or a Ninja will think that manuscript has already been critiqued. For tips from the Ninjas how to give (and receive) critiques, watch this video on the forum [HERE](#).

Ninja critiques will be available January - October. Meet the Ninjas, find out how to find Critique Ninja critiques, and tips on critiquing in the All About Critique Ninjas section of the forum [HERE](#).

The Facebook Group

The [Facebook Group](#) is a social place for 12 x 12 members to gather online. It is a wonderful place to post about your successes or get quick help to find just the right word or phrase. It is a very friendly atmosphere and the place to go for quick interactions. We're a chatty group, so don't be afraid to jump right in. We also post announcements and reminders in the Facebook group.

You can join the 12 x 12 in 2021 Facebook group [HERE](#). If your Facebook name is different than the name you used during the payment process, please indicate this in the answers to the questions when you make your request to join. (Please note: The group only accepts profiles, not pages, for membership.) This is also a manual approval process. We will get you in the group as quickly as we can usually within 12-24 hours on weekdays.

If you need assistance with your 12 x 12 membership, please do not message Julie or Kelli on Facebook. Instant messages are easily lost if we're not at our desks when we get them. Please email Kelli directly at kelli@juliehedlund.com to get the most efficient service.

The Blog

Here are some of the features you will find on the [12 x 12 blog](#):

* **Monthly Featured Author** – On the 1st of each month, we will host a guest post from our featured author. These posts are chock full of useable advice and tips you can use in your writing today. Each month our Featured Author offers a prize to the 12 x 12 group during that month's check-in.

* **Monthly Check-In** – On the last day of each month, we will post the Monthly Check-In post for that month. There will be a Rafflecopter where you can enter yourself into that month's prize drawing by commenting on the Featured Author Post for that month (1 point), writing a new picture book draft (1 point) and/or revising a picture book draft (1 point). This is how you tell us that you completed your draft for the month. It's all on the honor system. We trust you! Unless otherwise noted, the Rafflecopter is open until midnight US Eastern on the 5th of each month. You are welcome to comment on the blog post, but you will not be eligible for a prize unless you enter the Rafflecopter.

NOTE: You do NOT need to send us any drafts or post your monthly draft on the forum for it to count. However you keep track of your drafts is up to you! (Find our 12 x 12 Tracking Sheets [here](#).)

* **Monthly Check-In Winner** – The day after the Rafflecopter closes, we will post the winner of the previous month's check-in post along with instructions on how to claim your prize.

* **Agent Profile Post** – During the last week of the month, we will post a profile about the Featured Agents for the following month. Two agents will be profiled, and GOLD members may choose ONE to submit to that month. We fill these posts with as much information as we can find about our agents including input straight from them. While only GOLD members may submit to agents during the 12 x 12 submission period, following these posts can be beneficial to any 12 x 12 members who are researching agents. [Click here](#) for ways to use these profiles, no matter your membership level.

* **How I Got My Agent** – Over the course of 12 x 12, we have celebrated with dozens of our members who have obtained agent representation! This continuing series allows us to brag on our fellow 12 x 12 writers and lets them tell us about their journey. Not all the agents are 12 x 12 Featured Agents, but all of the writers will agree that taking the time to focus on writing new drafts, revising existing ones, and working with a critique group within the context of 12 x 12 helped tremendously in landing their agent.

* **Good News** – Who doesn't need a little good news? This is a monthly series where we celebrate with our members who have book birthdays, agent signings, new book deals, and awards! All members who have news in these categories are eligible to be in the Good News post. Just fill out the Good News Form by the 1st of the month to be included in that month's post. (i.e. Submit by February 1st for inclusion in the February Good News Post.) The form can be found on the forum [here](#).

12 x 12 Bookshop! NEW!

We have a new 12 x 12 bookstore at Bookshop.org! You can find 12 x 12 member books in a variety of genres. A portion of the proceeds from the bookstore will go to the 12 x 12 Scholarship Fund. Find your next favorite book here: <https://bookshop.org/shop/12x12>

If you'd like your book to be added to the 12 x 12 Bookshop, please fill out the form linked in the Important Announcements section of the forum [HERE](#).

FAQs

How do I (fill in the blank) on the forum?

Please check out the video tutorials in the Nuts & Bolts section of the forum [HERE](#). If your question is not answered, please post in the Technical Support thread or email Kelli at kelli@juliehedlund.com

I didn't get an email from you about...(this month's webinar, the latest special announcement, etc.)

Please check your spam or Promotions folder. Our emails come from an automated system to the email associated with your registration payment and are sometimes filtered to spam. Please add kelli@juliehedlund.com to your list of contacts and/or safe senders. If you need to change your email address, click on "Change Subscriber Options" at the bottom of any of our messages.

Where do I submit my monthly draft?

Congrats on getting your draft done! You do not need to submit your draft to us or post it on the forum for it to "count" toward your yearly total. On the last day of each month there will be a check-in post on the 12 x 12 BLOG where you can enter the Rafflecopter and let us know you've written your draft and be entered for that month's prize. You can also request a badge on the forum to celebrate your accomplishment. Keep track of your drafts throughout the year so you can send your total at the end of the challenge. Tracking sheets are available on the forum [here](#).

How do I get a badge for writing and/or revising my drafts?

You can get a badge by following these steps:

- Go to the "Important Announcements" section of the forum.
- Find the discussion for the monthly badge you're looking for and click on it.
- Click on the link to the badge you'd like to request. (Draft and/or revision)
- Click on "Request Badge" in the upper right corner.
- Put the name of the manuscript in the box.
- Click "Send Request."
- We will approve your request within a few days.
- Once approved, your badge will show up under your picture on your profile page. Just click your name in the top menu to get to your profile page.
- If your request isn't approved within a week, please send the request again.
- Please note: We can only award each month's draft or revision badge to you once, no matter how many drafts you have written or revised during that month. (But we are super impressed with your overachieving superpowers!)

You must request a badge in order to receive one. It is not automatic. Entering the Rafflecopter does NOT automatically get you a badge. Posting your manuscript in the forum does NOT automatically get you a badge. Badges must be requested using the above steps.

Badges can be awarded at any time throughout the year. If you realize in March you forgot to request a January badge, you can still request it by going to the January Badges post in the Important Announcements section of the forum.

Where do I check in for the month?

On last day of each month, you will find the check-in post on the 12 x 12 blog [HERE](#). You will check in by using the Rafflecopter at the end of the post. Be sure to check in even if you haven't written or revised a draft to be eligible for that month's prize. Prizes are awarded the day after the Rafflecopter ends.

The forum says my manuscript has too many characters, even though it is way below the limit, and it won't let me post it.

If you are copying your manuscript from a word processing program like Word or Pages, all of your formatting is being copied too. There are three ways to solve this problem:

- To remove the formatting, copy from your word processing program to a text editor program (Text Editor for MAC or Notepad for PC). Then copy from your text editor into the forum.
- If your computer allows, copy from your word processing program. Right click in the forum and select "Paste as Plain Text."
- Type your manuscript directly in the forum.