

# Lists, Lists, and Lists of Lists

*“When walking into Boris’ bedroom, you might think the guy had more guitars than Jimi Hendrix. He had every Fender, Epiphone, Gibson, Gretch, Yamaha, Ibanez, Washburn, Takamine, Ovation, Martin, Guild, and off-brand guitar you could think of. He had beautiful, hand-made acoustic guitars, rock-your-socks-off electric guitars, and everything in between.*

*In the corner of his bedroom, there was a shrine built around a very special guitar. The first one he had ever owned. The day he finally saved enough money to buy it was the best day of his life so far.”*

Oh hey, we were just doing one of our favorite noveling activities—taking the items from a list we made called "All the Guitars in Boris’ Bedroom" and putting them right into our novel.



**Lists are great because they do a lot of things at once:**

1. They help us discover new things about our characters.
2. They reveal plot twists.
2. They help boost word counts (always a plus!).

**You can use the suggested list topics below in many different ways. Here are a few ideas:**

1. You can write out the lists in your notebook to see if you discover anything interesting to add to your novel. You may discover something new about your characters or plot that will take your novel in a new direction.
2. You can take the items from your lists and write them into your novel as full sentences just like we’ve done in the example above.
3. You can just read the list of suggested lists below and see if any of them spur new ideas and write from there.

Whichever way you choose to do it, make sure to let your brain loose and just write. You may discover something totally unexpected, like a portal to the fourth dimension in a character’s closet, or more about the best day of your protagonist’s life.

**Write as many of the following lists in your notebook. You can apply these list prompts to *any* or *all* of your characters. The more characters you apply them to, the more you might discover.**



## A List of Lists

Things about this character that no one knows  
Things in this character's room  
Hidden things in this character's room  
Undiscovered places in this character's town  
Things this character collects  
Things that fascinate this character  
Things that embarrass this character  
Things that disgust this character  
Things in this character's refrigerator right now  
This character's bad habits  
What this character daydreams about  
What other people say about this character behind his or her back  
Things that make this character nostalgic  
Things this character might include in a time capsule  
Things this character dreams about while sleeping  
Things this character carries in his or her pockets or purse  
Things this character obsesses over  
Things this character plans to do in his or her lifetime

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### Bonus Exercise

If you like lists and you finish with these, come up with your own list of lists. Anytime you get stuck during NaNoWriMo, take out your list of lists and get writing. A list prompt like “Things my protagonist wants to eat this very moment” may help you get out of a rut and get your story moving again. . . to the taco truck!