

SELF-PUBLISHING CHECKLIST

An Expanded Step-by-Step Guide to Publishing Your First Book

FINISH YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Complete your book, revise thoroughly, and ensure it's the best it can be before handing it off to an editor.

- Complete the first draft of your manuscript
- Run spell check and basic grammar fixes
- Get feedback from beta readers or critique partners

INVEST IN EDITING

Hire a professional editor or use editing tools like Grammarly and AutoCrit. Don't skip this step—it's key to a polished book.

- Choose between developmental, line, and copy editing
- Get a quote and schedule your editing window
- Incorporate editor feedback and finalize edits

FORMAT FOR EBOOK AND PRINT

Use online tools or programs to format your ebook and print files. Kindle Create is a good place to start. Ensure your file meets platform requirements.

- Use formatting tools like Vellum, Atticus, or Kindle Create
- Ensure fonts, spacing, and margins are consistent
- Add front matter (title, copyright) and back matter (author bio, CTA)

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DESIGN YOUR COVER

Research your genre's cover trends. Work with a professional designer or use Canva to create something that stands out.

- Research genre-specific cover trends
- Hire a designer or use a trusted template
- Export final files in correct dimensions for print and ebook

SET UP YOUR ISBN AND COPYRIGHT

Secure your ISBN and copyright to protect your work and make it officially ready for publishing and global distribution.

- Buy ISBNs from Bowker or your local agency
- Register your ISBN and assign to formats
- Add copyright and acknowledgements to your book

CHOOSE A PRINT-ON-DEMAND PLATFORM

Amazon KDP is great for beginners. IngramSpark and Barnes & Noble Press offer broader reach. Decide what fits your goals.

- Set up Amazon KDP, IngramSpark, and/or Barnes & Noble Press
- Upload files and preview for errors
- Set pricing, distribution, and royalty preferences

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PLAN YOUR LAUNCH

Start building buzz early. Share sneak peeks, build an email list, and post consistently across social platforms.

- Pick a realistic publication date
- Plan teaser posts, newsletter announcements, and countdowns
- Line up early reviewers and launch team

BUILD YOUR AUTHOR PLATFORM

Start building buzz early. Share sneak peeks, build an email list, and post consistently across social platforms.

- Set up your author website and bio page
- Build an email list using lead magnets like checklists or samples
- Stay active on 1–2 social media platforms

CELEBRATE AND KEEP GOING

Hit publish and take a moment to be proud. Then, start planning your next book or marketing push.

- Do a final proofread
- Order a proof copy for review
- Hit publish and celebrate!

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PROMOTE YOUR BOOK POST-LAUNCH

Keep momentum going with a solid post-launch strategy—email updates, social posts, and continued engagement to grow your readership.

- Schedule launch week content across platforms
- Reach out to book bloggers and podcasts
- Run paid ads or promotions as budget allows