

PAPER RAVEN BOOKS

Book Publishing

MASTER CHECKLIST

Congratulations — deciding to publish a book is a huge step! And, as you know, there are a lot of little steps between now and being a published author who has successfully launched a book.

To help organize your journey, we've created two ways of keeping track of all the things.

#1: Paper Raven's Book Publishing Roadmap, which is available at [PaperRavenBooks.com/Roadmap](https://paperravenbooks.com/Roadmap), so you can see all the phases at-a-glance, on one page.

#2: Paper Raven's Book Publishing Master Checklist, which is this document, so you can double-check each step of each phase and make sure it's all being completed fully and in the right order.

Also, you can see the overview of the Book Publishing Roadmap in our Paper Raven author community, here:

<https://paperravenbooks.circle.so/>

We hope these resources are helpful to you, as you write your manuscript, publish your book, and grow your readership!

Morgan
& the Paper Raven Books Team

THE MANUSCRIPT: WRITING & REVISING

DEVELOP THE NARRATIVE ARC

- Sketch the preliminary big picture and 5 “moments” to be considered for the book
 - Working Title
 - Genre
 - Theme
 - Expected Reader
 - Desired Impact
 - Moment #1, Why, and Anticipated Reader Experience
 - Moment #2, Why, and Anticipated Reader Experience
 - Moment #3, Why, and Anticipated Reader Experience
 - Moment #4, Why, and Anticipated Reader Experience
 - Moment #5, Why, and Anticipated Reader Experience

- Add those 5 moments on the Narrative Arc
 - External aspects of the moment
 - Internal aspects of the moment
 - Add more moments to the Narrative Arc, as needed

- Review with a peer or professional

- Review any relevant curriculum for writing in your genre or topic

- Set up your writing routine
 - Including how you’ll track your time and word count for each writing session

ORGANIZE IDEAS & SKETCH THE 1ST DRAFT

- Set up digital writing space
 - Gather notes and research into Scrivener
 - Set up Scrivener to begin writing

- Establish weekly writing rhythm

- Write 5 to 10 hours per week
- Track word count progress with every session
- Write until you've completed an estimated 90% of the first draft
 - Seek advice from peers and professionals, as you go
 - If stuck, practice free-writing exercises
- Do a reverse outline on the first draft
- Submit the full manuscript to a professional for high-level feedback

REVISE & EDIT THE DRAFT

- Review professional rubrics for your genre or topic
- Create your book's style sheet, which should include the following:
 - Capitalization choices
 - Is the title of the book in title case? (upper and lower)
 - Is the subtitle of the book in initial cap?
 - Are the chapter titles in title case?
 - Do you have any pronouns to look at for capitalization?
 - Names of countries, states, counties, cities
 - Names of departments, businesses, universities
 - Names of people and job titles
 - Unique spelling choices
 - Names of people and places
 - Terms that are coined, industry-specific, or scientific
 - Unique treatments of words
 - Any words italicized? First instance or all instances?
 - Any words hyphenated? First instance or all instances?
 - Any words in quotes? First instance or all instances?
 - Punctuation choices
 - Oxford/serial comma or journalist's comma

- Punctuation inside quotation marks or outside quotation marks
 - Write out numbers one through nine, use Arabic numbers 10, 11, and up
 - AM and PM in caps or small caps, period or no period
 - Pluralizing decades as “1980s,” no apostrophe needed
 - Items in a list end in a comma or a period or none (can vary from one list to another, if needed)
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- Check any citations or footnotes. Choose a style guide or create your own for how each citation and footnote should look so that there’s internal consistency.
 - Drop a [NOTE] into the manuscript where you want to put any images, illustrations, tables, charts, graphs, pull quotes, or design elements. Remove those visuals, for now, since visuals are usually dropped into the design software after the text is arranged.
 - Run the manuscript through an AI proofreading software
 - Check out Grammarly or Pro Writing Aid
 - Make any FINAL revisions inside the Word Doc. Try to catch everything you can in this step. It’ll be trickier once it’s formatted!
 - Store all files in a secure cloud location (eg, Google Drive or Dropbox)

FINALIZE THE MANUSCRIPT

- Finalize titles, descriptions, and author bio
 - Book main title
 - Book subtitle
 - Series title (if applicable)
 - Description for physical version of the book
 - Description for Amazon sales page (if different)
 - Author bio
 - Store all titles, descriptions, and bio in one document for future reference
- Check that your pages are in an order that makes sense. Here’s our recommendation, although you’ll see variation across books:
 - Image to the left of the Title page (optional)

- Book title page (required)**
- Series title page (optional)
- Praise page or pages (optional)
- Copyright page (required)**
 - Disclaimer can go here, if needed (optional)
- Dedication page (optional)
- Table of Contents (don't put any page numbers, yet)**
- Lists of characters, illustrations, or tables (optional)
- Epigraph (optional)
- Forward by a peer (optional)
- Preface by the author (optional)
- Introduction for nonfiction or Prologue for fiction (optional)
- Reader magnet (highly recommended for nonfiction)**
- Content (required, this is what makes it a book!)**
 - Parts (optional)
 - Chapters (optional)
 - Sections (optional)
- Conclusion for nonfiction or Epilogue for fiction (optional)
- Reader magnet (highly recommended for fiction)**
- Afterword by the author or a peer (optional)**
- Acknowledgments (optional)
- Appendix, chronology, or timeline (optional)
- Glossary (optional)
- Index (optional)
- Bibliography or Works Cited (optional)
- About the Author (highly recommended)**

THE BOOK: DESIGNING & PUBLISHING

Gather Publication Information

- Choose the full name that will be listed as the author of your book (consider any prefixes, middle name, credential abbreviations)
- Choose the title and subtitle (and series title, if applicable) of your book

- Choose the “entity” that will be listed as the publisher of your book
 - If a DBA, LLC, or similar:
 - Register your business with your Secretary of State (.gov)
 - Apply for an EIN (.gov)
 - Set up bank accounts

- Purchase ISBNs from Bowker in the United States:
 - Ebook (optional)
 - Paperback (recommended)
 - Hardback (recommended)
 - Large print (optional)
 - Audiobook (recommended)

- Decide whether you need an attorney to look over your manuscript for intellectual property, libel, or copyright infringement issues before you proceed (optional)

- Research 7 keyword phrases and 3 categories
 - Check out Publisher Rocket for help

- Store your author name, publisher name, book title and subtitle, domain name, login credentials, ISBNs, keywords, and categories in one document for easy access later

- Store all files in a secure cloud location (eg, Google Drive or Dropbox)

Design Book Cover & Interior

- Find 10 covers that fit the look and feel of what you’re going for with your book. Store screen captures or photos of the covers in your secure cloud folder (eg, Google Drive or Dropbox)
 - Ideas or images or colors you would LIKE to see designers incorporate
 - Ideas or images or colors you would NOT LIKE to see designers incorporate
 - Anything else you want us to make sure is communicated to the designers

- Create a design brief
 - Title
 - Subtitle

- Series title (if on the cover)
 - Author name
 - Headshot(s)
 - About the Author
 - Genre
 - Short description of book
 - Who would typically read the book?
 - What look and feel do you have in mind for the cover?
 - Simple or detailed?
 - Modern or retro?
 - Luxury or casual?
 - Playful or serious?
 - Loud or quiet?
 - Feminine or masculine?
 - Pop or grunge?
 - Literal or abstract?
 - What are you looking for, in more detail?
 - Is there anything the designer should avoid?
 - Do you have a budget to purchase stock imagery, if it's needed for the design?
 - Are there any other files or images for the designer to use in the cover?
-
- When evaluating a cover concept, look for:
 - One single, strong image
 - One or two main type faces
 - Three main colors
 - Title is much larger
 - All other text is smaller
 - No images on the spine (due to IngramSpark's 1/16th-inch margin for printing)
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- Keep in mind that you can always ask for the designer to try:
 - A different image or a tweak to the image
 - A different type face
 - A different color or color palette
 - A larger or smaller title size
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- Select final design concept

- Before finalizing the variations of the cover, choose the following specs:
 - Paperback
 - Size: 6x9, 5x8, or other
 - Interior Color: Black and White or Color
 - Paper Color: White or Cream
 - Paper weight: 50/55 lb or 70 lb
 - Cover Texture: Matte or Gloss
 - Hardback
 - Size: 6x9, 5x8, or other
 - Interior Color: Black and White or Color
 - Paper Color: White or Cream
 - Paper weight: 50/55 lb or 70 lb
 - Cover Texture: Matte or Gloss
 - Jacket with cloth cover? Or case laminate?
- Finalize book cover
 - Purchase stock image, if used in the cover concept
 - Format cover for Ebook as a JPG or PNG
 - Format cover for paperback as a PDF (use the templates from KDP/IngramSpark)
 - Format cover for hardback as a PDF (use the templates from KDP/IngramSpark)
- Create 3-D Mock-ups of book cover
- Store all files in a secure cloud location (eg, Google Drive or Dropbox)
- Before beginning the interior design, double-check EXACTLY which Word Doc you're formatting. Make sure it's the most recent and final version.
- Design all of the visual elements
 - Gather a folder of all the visual elements to include in the interior of the book
 - Change the title of each to easily indicate where, in the text, the element will go
 - May include:
 - Author headshot
 - Tables, charts, graphs

- Maps, drawings, illustrations
 - Photos
 - Pull quotes or boxes
 - Design elements to separate sections
-
- Create your design style sheet
 - Typeface for chapter titles
 - Typeface for section headings
 - Typeface for paragraph text
 - Typeface for footnotes
 - Typeface for captions
 - Typeface for quotations to be visually separated
 - Typeface for running heads and pagination
 - Running head on the left pages
 - Running head on the right pages
 - Should each chapter start on the same side, right or left?
 - Pagination on the top or the bottom, centered or in the corner?
 - Chapters begin with drop caps or not?
 - Indented paragraphs or non-indented with extra line space between?
 - Separator between sections inside the chapters
 - Separator between text and footnotes
 - Amount of space between text and footnotes
 - Amount of space between text and bullet lists
 - Bullet list icons
 - Amount of space between text and images
-
- Either submit all of the above to a book formatter or use a user-friendly design program, like Atticus, or a professional-grade design program, like InDesign.
-
- Layout Chapter 1
 - Export as a PDF
 - Review your design style sheet and annotate any changes
 - Request or implement changes in Chapter 1
-
- Layout full book interior
 - Go back and add the correct page numbers for each page type and chapter into the Table of Contents

- Double-check the ISBNs on the copyright page
- Export as a PDF

- Final proof
 - Conduct a page-by-page review of the entire book
 - Review your design style sheet and annotate any changes
 - Review your manuscript style sheet and annotate any changes
 - Request or implement changes in book

- Export final print file as a PDF

- Export final ebook file as an .epub or .kpf file

- Store all files in a secure cloud location (eg, Google Drive or Dropbox)

Organize Files & Accounts

- Find the document where you stored author name, publisher name, book title and subtitle, domain name, login credentials, ISBNs, keywords, and categories. We're going to add to it.

- Choose your retail locations:
 - Amazon
 - Website
 - Brick and mortar bookstore
 - Library

- Set up the relevant print-on-demand accounts:
 - KDP for ebook and print books
 - IngramSpark for print books (if selling to brick-and-mortar bookstores or libraries)
 - ACX for audiobook (optional)
 - Also consider Spotify or Findaway Voices (optional)

Now, jump to The Plan to set up the branding and marketing pieces you'll need for an optimized book launch. Then, we'll come back to Publish The Book.

THE PLAN: BRANDING & MARKETING

Author Website, Freebie, & Email List

- Choose your website domain
 - Register your website domain
 - Set up one-page author website
 - Check out Wix or Wordpress
 - The page should have a 3-D mock-up of the book, description, and author bio
 - Set up a “hidden” page on the website for the reader magnet
 - Set up an email service provider
 - Check out Mailer Lite
 - Integrate the “hidden” page with the email service provider to deliver the reader magnet to a new subscriber, automatically
 - Set up the autoresponder to send another email or two, asking for a review after the freebie has been delivered

Pre-Launch Set Up

- Choose a launch date at least 6 to 8 weeks out
- Set up lists of people to notify about the book
 - “Book Launch Team” of 20 to 100 people who agree to read, review, and share your book during the launch
 - “General List” of acquaintances or colleagues who might like to know about the book but haven’t agreed to anything, in particular
 - Create both lists inside the email service provider
 - Set up one sequence of emails for the Book Launch Team
 - Send the advance review copy (the final print PDF)
 - Set up one sequence of emails for the General List
- Set up one to three social media profiles
 - Consider the following platforms:
 - Instagram
 - TikTok
 - LinkedIn
 - Facebook

- Create five images
 - Check out Book Brush and Canva
- Choose five companion excerpts from the book
- Research hashtags, if relevant to the social media
- Schedule on your social media platform(s) of choice
 - Check out Buffer and Tailwind

**Now, jump back to Publish The Book
and get the Amazon sales page links.**

Publish the book!

- Upload paperback and hardback files to KDP (IngramSpark optional)
 - Insert keywords
 - Select categories (or closest available)
 - If also uploading to IngramSpark, Amazon must be uploaded first.
 - Paperbacks and hardbacks purchased on Amazon will be printed and fulfilled by KDP
 - Paperbacks and hardbacks ordered by brick-and-mortar bookstores or libraries will be fulfilled by IngramSpark
- Order author copies
 - Order additional copies for any members of the Book Launch Team who request a physical copy
- Wait for Amazon to create sales pages for the paperback and hardback versions
- 10 days before book launch week begins, upload ebook files to KDP
 - Insert 7 keywords
 - Insert top 3 categories
 - Enroll the ebook in the “KDP Select” program
 - After about 48 hours, check that Amazon has published the ebook and merged the sales pages so that the ebook, paperback, and hardback versions are all on the same page
 - Make sure the description looks good on the sales page
 - Bookmark the ebook Amazon sales page to share in emails, social media posts, and on the one-page website

- If uploaded books to IngramSpark, with the intent to sell books via brick-and-mortar bookstores and to libraries, set up an account on [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org). This community of booksellers will want to see that you're "playing nicely" with the (anti-Amazon) bookstore folks, and setting up a [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org) page for your book is a nice signal to the bookstore community that you're "one of them."

Amazon-Optimized Launch Promotion

Now that we have a book sales page on Amazon, with the ebook live, we can set up the launch promotion.

- Double-check that all scheduled emails or social media posts have the correct link to the ebook sales page
- Set up the free promotion of the ebook to happen during your book launch week
 - 5 days, Tuesday through Saturday
 - Ebook only, the physical books will remain the same retail price
 - Set up paid promotion for lists of readers that want to be notified of ebook details
 - Check out Crave Books for a great database of reader lists to promote to
- Track launch KPIs
 - Number of downloads daily
 - Screenshots of rankings
 - Screenshots of reviews
- Celebrate the launch of your new book!

Post-Launch & Long-Term Marketing

- Research 3 to 5 relevant book awards contests
 - Note the submission dates in your calendar
 - Create a spreadsheet to keep track of award contests and which you submit to
- Research 20 platforms that might be interested in your book
 - This list might include:
 - Podcast interview show
 - Podcast book review show
 - YouTube interview show

- YouTube book review show
- Blog book review
- TikTok book reviewer
- Create a spreadsheet to keep track of others' platforms

- Fill out the information needed for a press kit
 - Author name
 - Bio
 - Audience
 - Topics or themes from the book
 - Discussion questions related to the book's topics or themes
 - Contact information

- Design the press kit as a one-page PDF
 - Use the same typeface as the title of the book
 - Use the same color palette from the book cover
 - Include a 3-D mock-up of the book and an author headshot

- Reach out to others' platforms
 - Draft email copy to request being featured on others' platforms
 - Send email and track in spreadsheet
 - Reach out up to three times in about six weeks

- Update your Amazon sales page with any new awards, endorsements, or reviews, as needed

- Set up your next quarterly re-launch

CONTINUE LONG-TERM MARKETING UNTIL THE END OF TIME.