



Wholesale Discount Cheat Sheet

The one setting that decides both your reach and your royalty.

REACH VS. ROYALTY, ON ONE PAGE

A desk reference for the wholesale discount you set on platforms like IngramSpark. Understand what it does, pick the right level for your goal, and see the exact dollar trade-off worked out.

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REFERENCE

What the wholesale discount means

The percentage you hand retailers – and why it cuts both ways.

Your **wholesale discount** is the share of the list price you give a retailer or distributor. If your book lists at \$16.99 and you set a 40% discount, a store can buy it for \$10.19 and keep the \$6.80 difference when it sells. The rest, minus your print cost, is your royalty.

THE CORE FORMULA

Your royalty = (List price × (1 - discount)) - print cost

A higher discount = lower royalty for you, but a stronger incentive for stores to stock and sell your book.

TIP

This setting only matters for channels that **resell** your book (bookstores, libraries, online retailers via a distributor). Your own direct sales and author copies aren't affected.

Throughout this toolkit, examples follow **Riverstone Press** and its 240-page 6×9 black-and-white paperback, *The Quiet Garden*, with a list price of **\$16.99**.

Reach vs. royalty

Every point of discount is reach you gain and royalty you give up.

The reach ↔ royalty trade-off

40%

Highest royalty to you. Fine for online-only & POD; gives bookstores little reason to stock you.

45-50%

Middle ground. Some retailer incentive while protecting your margin.

55%

Standard full trade discount. Best chance of bookstore & library orders; lowest royalty.

LIST	DISCOUNT	STORE PAYS	- PRINT	YOUR ROYALTY
\$16.99	40%	\$10.19	\$5.00	\$5.19
\$16.99	45%	\$9.34	\$5.00	\$4.34
\$16.99	50%	\$8.50	\$5.00	\$3.50
\$16.99	55%	\$7.65	\$5.00	\$2.65

Illustrative: \$5.00 print cost assumed for a 240-pp 6×9 B&W paperback. Your numbers will differ – verify with the calculator.

WATCH OUT

Most physical bookstores expect the full 55% discount and often **returnability**. At 40% you keep more per book but may never see a bookstore order at all.

Pick by goal + quick reference

Match the discount to where you actually want the book sold.

Pick your discount by goal

YOUR GOAL	SUGGESTED DISCOUNT	RETURNS
Maximize royalty, sell mostly online	40%	Off
A little retail reach, keep margin	45–50%	Usually off
Get into bookstores & libraries	55%	On (often required)
Amazon via KDP + wide via Ingram	KDP fixed; 40–55% on Ingram	Channel-dependent

Returns 'on' means stores can send back unsold copies – it wins orders but you may pay for returned/pulped stock.

WORKED EXAMPLE — RIVERSTONE PRESS

Goal: get *The Quiet Garden* into independent bookstores.

Choice: **55% discount, returns on** → royalty $\$16.99 \times 0.45 - \$5.00 = \mathbf{\$2.65/book}$

Trade-off vs. 40% (\$5.19): giving up **\$2.54/book** to become orderable by stores. Worth it only if the reach drives enough extra volume.

Quick reference

IF YOU REMEMBER NOTHING ELSE...

Online / POD only	40% keeps the most money
Want stores to stock you	55% (+ returns) is the price of entry
Unsure	Start at 40%; raise it if you actively pursue retail

GO FURTHER

Related SimpleLifeCalc Tools

Helpful companions to this resource – not required, just faster.

These let you see the royalty effect of any discount before you commit it.

Wholesale Discount Calculator

WHAT IT DOES Shows royalty per copy at any discount and print cost.

WHEN TO USE Before locking your IngramSpark discount.

WHY IT HELPS Turns the 40% vs. 55% question into exact dollars.

IngramSpark Royalty Calculator

WHAT IT DOES Combines list, discount, and print cost into earnings.

WHEN TO USE When comparing channels or discount levels.

WHY IT HELPS One screen for the whole reach-vs-royalty trade-off.

Book Pricing Calculator

WHAT IT DOES Sets a list price that survives a 55% discount.

WHEN TO USE If 55% leaves too little royalty – reprice.

WHY IT HELPS Pricing and discount have to be solved together.

KEEP THEM HANDY

Every calculator is free at SimpleLifeCalc.com – bookmark the two or three you'll use most so your numbers stay current.