

IngramSpark Cover & Interior File Preflight Checklist

Check your print interior, cover files, upload and proof before you move into distribution.

INTERIOR FILE

COVER FILE

EPROOF + PRINT

A calm, file-by-file preflight for one real print book.

This checklist belongs to: _____

Book: _____

Started: _____

How to Use This Checklist

- ☐ Use it for one print book at a time.
- ☐ Start with the final book specifications, then check the interior, then the cover built from those same specifications.
- ☐ Review the eproof before you approve it.
- ☐ After approval, review a print copy before ordering quantities or adding distribution, following current IngramSpark guidance.
- ☐ This checklist helps you inspect your files. It cannot guarantee how every physical copy will print.

SCOPE

This checklist covers print interiors and print covers. For ebooks, use IngramSpark's current ebook file guidance instead.

A NOTE ON NAMES

IngramSpark's File Creation Guide sometimes uses the name Lightning Source for the manufacturing workflow. This checklist says IngramSpark unless the source wording matters.

FOUR WORDS YOU WILL SEE THROUGHOUT

- TRIM SIZE** the final cut size of your book.
- BLEED** artwork that extends beyond the cut edge so no white strip appears after trimming.
- SAFETY AREA** space where important text and artwork stay clear of trim or folds.
- BIND SIDE / GUTTER** the inside edge of the page, nearest the spine.

HOW THE LABELS WORK

REQUIRED	IngramSpark requires this.	RECOMMENDED	IngramSpark recommends it for better print results.
CHECK CURRENT	a platform-side value that can change.	MY BOOK	your own specification goes here.

Notes

My Book Specification

Fill this in from your IngramSpark title setup, not from memory. Every later page is checked against these.

SPECIFICATION	MY BOOK	AFFECTS
Book title		-
ISBN		Cover
Format (print)		Both
Binding		Cover
Trim size		Both
Interior type		Both
Paper		Cover
Bleed / no bleed		Interior
Final page count		Cover
Cover type		Cover
Region / account (context only)		-
Date I checked these		-

Interior type: Black & White / Standard Color / Premium Color / Ultra-Premium Color

DID ANY OF THESE CHANGE AFTER MY FILES WERE BUILT?

☐ No

☐ Yes - what changed:

IF A SPEC CHANGED

If trim size, page count, paper, binding, interior type, bleed choice or ISBN changed, check which file needs rebuilding before you go on. Region/account is context only; rebuild only when an actual production specification changes.

Interior Document Setup

Start here: does your interior use bleed? Bleed means artwork that runs off the edge of the page - a full-page image, background color or decorative border.

IF NO BLEED

- ☐ My PDF page size matches my final trim size exactly. REQUIRED

IF WITH BLEED

- ☐ My file adds 0.125 in / 3 mm to the top, bottom and outside edges. REQUIRED
- ☐ I did not add bleed on the bind side. REQUIRED
- ☐ Artwork meant to reach the edge extends through the bleed area. REQUIRED

Example only: a 6 x 9 in interior with bleed becomes 6.125 x 9.25 in.

MARGINS AND SAFETY

- ☐ Text, headers, footers, page numbers and non-bleed images sit at least 0.5 in / 13 mm inside the trim. RECOMMENDED
- ☐ Color interior on a perfect bound or hardcover book: I left a 0.125 in / 3 mm white strip inside the trim on the bind side, in addition to the margin. RECOMMENDED
- ☐ Perforated interior, where the product supports it: inside margin at least 1 in / 25 mm and outer three edges at least 0.5 in / 13 mm. RECOMMENDED

WHY MARGINS MATTER

IngramSpark allows a 1/16 in (0.0625 in / 2 mm) printing variance, so anything close to the trim edge can be cut.

My interior page size: _____

Notes

Interior Text and Images

Work through the group that matches the interior type you recorded in P1. The two paths have different rules - do not do both.

A. BLACK & WHITE INTERIOR

- ☐ Images are grayscale. REQUIRED
- ☐ 1-bit line art is 600 ppi. SPECIFICATION
- ☐ Photographs / continuous-tone images are 300 ppi, 8-bit grayscale. SPECIFICATION
- ☐ No spot colors remain in the file or placed artwork. REQUIRED
- ☐ No ICC profiles remain. REQUIRED
- ☐ Rule and stroke lines are at least 0.125 pt at 100% black. RECOMMENDED

RGB or CMYK images in a black-and-white interior are converted to grayscale when printing, and the result can shift.

B. COLOR INTERIOR - STANDARD / PREMIUM / ULTRA-PREMIUM

- ☐ All images and color artwork are CMYK. REQUIRED
- ☐ Images are 300 ppi. SPECIFICATION
- ☐ No image is under 72 ppi - below that threshold it is rejected. REQUIRED
- ☐ Spot colors are converted to CMYK, including placed files. REQUIRED
- ☐ No ICC profiles remain. REQUIRED
- ☐ Total ink coverage stays within 240% CMYK. RECOMMENDED
- ☐ Rich black uses 60C / 40M / 40Y / 100K; nothing is in registration. RECOMMENDED
- ☐ Text at 24 pt and below is 100% black only. RECOMMENDED
- ☐ Rule / stroke lines are at least 0.125 pt at 100% black. RECOMMENDED

C. WHICHEVER PATH YOU TOOK

- ☐ I checked image resolution at the size the image actually prints, not the original-file size.
- ☐ I looked for artwork that changed appearance when the PDF was exported.

ppi = pixels per inch at print size. Enlarging a small image does not add detail.

Interior PDF Preflight

- ☐ My interior is one complete PDF. Multiple-file submissions are rejected. REQUIRED
- ☐ Pages are single pages, not 2-up spreads. REQUIRED
- ☐ Crop, printer and registration marks are switched off. REQUIRED
- ☐ Every font is embedded. Unembedded fonts are rejected. REQUIRED
- ☐ The PDF meets PDF/X-1a:2001 or PDF/X-3:2002. REQUIRED
- ☐ I paged through the entire exported PDF.
- ☐ My filename follows IngramSpark guidance, with no special characters. RECOMMENDED
- ☐ My file is within the current web upload limit of 1.5 GB. CHECK CURRENT

PDF/X

PDF/X is the print-PDF standard IngramSpark asks the file to meet. Current accepted versions: PDF/X-1a:2001 or PDF/X-3:2002.

HOW TO CHECK YOUR FONTS

In Acrobat: File -> Properties -> Fonts. Every listed font should say Embedded or Embedded Subset. Acrobat's default Standard setting may leave base 14 fonts unembedded.

Filename note. Current IngramSpark guidance warns that special characters, including an ampersand or hyphen, can contribute to corrupt-file errors.

Page count. You do not need to pad an ordinary LTR PDF to an even count. IngramSpark reserves the final production page for manufacturing information and adds pages as needed.

My interior filename: _____

Cover Template and Dimensions

THE TEMPLATE GOVERNS THE COVER

IngramSpark generates the cover template from your book specifications. It already contains spine width, safety areas and barcode placement. Build inside it rather than recreating it.

- ☐ I generated a cover template for this title.
- ☐ It matches my trim size.
- ☐ It matches my binding.
- ☐ It matches my interior type.
- ☐ It matches my paper.
- ☐ It matches my current final page count.
- ☐ It carries the correct ISBN.
- ☐ My design document is exactly the size shown on the generated template. REQUIRED
- ☐ I added no extra canvas or crop marks. REQUIRED
- ☐ I moved nothing on the template except the barcode position where allowed. REQUIRED
- ☐ If using a PDF/EPS template, the pink and blue guide areas are covered or removed. REQUIRED

REGENERATE THE TEMPLATE IF ANY OF THESE CHANGED

- ☐ PAGE COUNT
- ☐ TRIM SIZE
- ☐ PAPER
- ☐ BINDING
- ☐ ISBN
- ☐ OTHER PROD. SPEC

Spine width depends on page count and paper. If page count changes, regenerate the cover template from the final specifications.

Template generated on: _____

Template document size: _____

Cover Artwork, Spine and Barcode

CHOOSE YOUR PATH

Perfect-bound paperback: complete the artwork and spine checks below, then the barcode block. Hardcover: skip the paperback artwork/spine block, complete the shared barcode block, then continue to page 9.

PERFECT-BOUND ARTWORK AND SAFETY

- ☐ Background art/color extends 0.125 in / 3 mm past the trim on all four sides. REQUIRED
- ☐ Text and important artwork sit at least 0.25 in / 6 mm inside the trim. RECOMMENDED - templates allow down to 0.125 in / 3 mm.
- ☐ If I used a border, straight edges sit an extra 0.125 in / 3 mm inside the safety area. RECOMMENDED

PERFECT-BOUND SPINE

- ☐ Spine text sits inside the template's spine safety box. REQUIRED

Current safety: 0.0625 in / 2 mm each side when the spine is 0.35 in / 9 mm or wider; 0.03125 in / 1 mm each side when narrower. The generated template shows the correct box.

- ☐ Perfect bound only: if the book is under 48 pages, there is no spine text. REQUIRED

SHARED BARCODE CHECKS - ALL COVER TYPES

- ☐ A barcode is present and scannable at printed size. REQUIRED
- ☐ Using the template barcode: I did not resize it; if moved, it remains inside the back-cover safety area.
- ☐ Supplying my own barcode: it is 100% black on white and large enough to scan. About 1.75 x 1 in is currently recommended.
- ☐ Leaving placement to IngramSpark: I left at least 1.75 x 1 in clear on the back cover. REQUIRED

IngramSpark may add or replace an incorrect or unscannable barcode, and may not notify you.

If This Is a Hardcover

If this book is not a hardcover, skip to P7 on page 10. Hardcovers use different cover workflows. Work only through the block that matches your current title setup; the generated template governs.

A. CASE LAMINATE / PRINTED CASE

- ☐ I generated the correct case template for this title.
- ☐ Background artwork extends through the template wrap/fold area. REQUIRED
- ☐ Important text/art stays clear of hinge areas beside the spine. REQUIRED
- ☐ My final case-cover PDF is exactly the generated-template size. REQUIRED

Current dated reference: about 0.625 in / 16 mm wrap/fold area and about 0.5 in / 13 mm hinge areas. Use the template guides rather than measuring.

B. DIGITAL CLOTH

- ☐ I followed the cover and spine options shown in my current IngramSpark title setup rather than applying the printed-case workflow automatically.
- ☐ If my setup offers Digital Cloth spine text options, I set them there and checked how they read.
Digital Cloth is its own hardcover option. Do not build a printed case PDF unless the current setup asks for one.

C. DUST JACKET

- ☐ I generated the correct jacket template for this title.
- ☐ Artwork respects flap, fold, bleed and safety areas. REQUIRED
- ☐ Flap copy stays inside the flap safety area. REQUIRED
- ☐ My final jacket PDF is exactly the template size. REQUIRED

Current dated reference: jacket flaps are about 3.25 in / 83 mm. The generated template governs.

- ☐ If my current setup requires both a case-cover file and a dust-jacket file, I preflighted each against its own generated template.

HARDCOVER SPINE TEXT

- ☐ If my hardcover has spine text, the book has at least 18 pages under current guidance. REQUIRED
- ☐ Spine text stays inside the generated template safety area. REQUIRED

Cover PDF Preflight

USE THIS PAGE FOR EACH COVER PDF YOU ACTUALLY UPLOAD

If your Digital Cloth setup does not ask you to upload a cover PDF, skip the PDF-specific checks and continue to P8. If your setup asks for separate case and jacket PDFs, run this page against each file.

- ☐ My cover file is separate from the interior. REQUIRED
- ☐ It meets PDF/X-1a:2001 or PDF/X-3:2002. REQUIRED
- ☐ All cover images and color artwork are CMYK. REQUIRED
- ☐ Any spot colors are converted to CMYK, including placed files. REQUIRED
- ☐ Images are 300 ppi. SPECIFICATION - images under 200 ppi may be rejected.
- ☐ The final PDF is exactly the size of the generated template. REQUIRED
- ☐ No extra crop marks or canvas were added. REQUIRED
- ☐ Template guide areas will not print. REQUIRED
- ☐ The barcode is present and correct. REQUIRED
- ☐ Front, spine and back are arranged correctly. REQUIRED
- ☐ The filename follows current IngramSpark guidance. RECOMMENDED

HOW MANY PAGES SHOULD THIS COVER PDF HAVE?

- ☐ Outside cover only - 1-page PDF (usual case).
- ☐ Outside + inside cover - 2-page PDF where the product/setup offers it.
- ☐ If printing the inside cover, the spine area plus 0.0625 in / 2 mm each side is white/no ink. REQUIRED

RGB artwork is not necessarily rejected outright; IngramSpark may convert it to CMYK, which can shift color.

Cover filename 1: _____

Cover filename 2 (if any): _____

Upload and Eproof Review

VALIDATION IS NOT FILE CORRECTION

IngramSpark validates submitted files, but it does not fix your production file for you. Preflight your own PDFs first - that is what pages 4 to 10 were for.

UPLOAD

- ☐ My interior went into the interior slot.
- ☐ Every cover file went into the cover slot required by my current setup.
- ☐ Title specifications in setup match the files - trim, binding, interior type and page count.
- ☐ I read any validation or file-review message before continuing.

REVIEWING THE EPROOF

An eproof is the flattened on-screen proof IngramSpark provides before approval.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I opened the eproof before approving it. | ☐ Page order is right. |
| ☐ Blank pages are where expected. | ☐ Chapter openings start on the right pages. |
| ☐ Headers, footers and page numbers are consistent. | ☐ Images appear where intended. |
| ☐ Nothing important is clipped. | ☐ Fonts look right with no substitutions. |
| ☐ Front, spine and back are arranged correctly. | ☐ Barcode is present. |
| ☐ Title and author are spelled correctly. | ☐ No template guide areas appear. |
| ☐ I checked whether proof pages were omitted because of eproof size. | ☐ I understand proof-only omission does not automatically mean printed pages are missing. |
| ☐ I made every correction I already know about before approving. | |

Things to fix before approving

BEFORE YOU APPROVE

Current guidance allows revisions at no cost until eproof approval. After approval, check the current revision/resubmission policy and pricing before replacing files.

Eproof approved on: _____

Print Copy Review + My File Record

P9 - AFTER EPROOF APPROVAL

IngramSpark recommends reviewing a print copy before publisher-direct quantity orders or adding distribution. A screen proof cannot settle how ink, paper, folds and manufacturing feel in hand.

- ☐ Printed color looks acceptable.
- ☐ Paper shade is what I expected.
- ☐ Show-through is acceptable.
- ☐ Heavy-ink pages look acceptable.
- ☐ Text near the gutter is comfortable to read.
- ☐ Trim position is acceptable within normal production variation.
- ☐ Cover lamination/folds look acceptable.
- ☐ Spine alignment looks acceptable.
- ☐ Barcode looks correct and scans.
- ☐ Overall book handling and feel are acceptable.

Current IngramSpark guidance recognizes about 1/16 in (0.0625 in / 2 mm) normal printing variance. One copy shows how that copy came out; it does not guarantee every future copy will be identical.

P10 - MY FILE RECORD (SIMPLELIFECALC ORGANIZATION TOOL)

Interior final filename:	_____	Cover final filename:	_____
ISBN:	_____	Trim:	_____
Binding:	_____	Paper:	_____
Interior type:	_____	Final page count:	_____
Template generated:	_____	Files uploaded:	_____
Eproof approved:	_____	Print copy reviewed: Yes / Not yet	_____
Print review date:	_____		
Revision notes	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____		

Quick Reference

IF THIS CHANGED, RECHECK THIS

IF THIS CHANGED	RECHECK
Trim size	Interior page geometry + cover template
Page count	Spine width + cover template
Paper	Spine width + cover template
Binding	Cover structure + cover template
Interior type	Interior requirements + template/product spec
Bleed choice	Interior page geometry
ISBN	Cover template + barcode identity

Changing region/account options is not a rebuild trigger by itself. Rebuild when an actual production specification changes.

COMMON FILE PROBLEMS

A CORRECTED FILE IS USUALLY REQUIRED

Fonts not embedded; spreads instead of single pages; multiple interior PDFs; color-interior image below 72 ppi; cover dimensions not matching the template; wrong file in the wrong slot; corrupt PDF.

MAY BE REJECTED OR NEED CORRECTION

Cover images under 200 ppi; total ink over 240%; partial revision instead of the complete replacement file.

MAY PRINT / CONVERT / LOOK WRONG

Crop or printer marks; visible template guides; bleed on the wrong edge; important content outside safety; RGB color shift; borders too close to trim/folds; barcode added/replaced because supplied barcode is incorrect or unscannable.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

IngramSpark Seller Hub

ISBN Decision Guide

IngramSpark Publishing Checklist

Publishing with IngramSpark

The course lesson Prepare an IngramSpark Title for Distribution teaches the process. This checklist is what you keep beside your files while checking one real book.

Specs verified 17 September 2026 against the current IngramSpark File Creation Guide and User Guide. Platform requirements change - check the current guide before upload. Passing file review does not guarantee a perfect physical book.

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