



IngramSpark Publishing Checklist

Take a finished manuscript all the way to global distribution.

FROM FILE TO DISTRIBUTION

A step-by-step checklist for self-publishers using IngramSpark for print and wide distribution. Work top to bottom – each phase unlocks the next. Pair it with the Book Launch Timeline once your files are approved.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Account & setup
- Files & metadata
- Pricing & discount
- Proofing
- Distribution
- Post-publication
- Quick reference
- Related calculators

START HERE

How to use this resource

Six phases, in order, from blank account to live listing.

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

1. Read all six phases once before you start so nothing surprises you at upload.
2. Complete each phase fully before moving on — metadata and pricing are hard to change after distribution begins.
3. Order a printed proof *every* time, even for a tiny text fix.
4. Use the Quick Reference page as your at-a-glance spec sheet.

Figures shown are illustrative teaching examples. Printing costs, royalty rates, fees, and discount terms change over time and vary by platform, trim size, and territory — always confirm current numbers in your publishing dashboard and with the matching SimpleLifeCalc calculator.

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**.

TIP

IngramSpark reaches ~40,000 retailers, libraries, and bookstores worldwide — its real advantage over KDP-only is **bookstore and library** ordering through Ingram's catalog.

Set up & prepare your files

PHASE 1 · ACCOUNT & SETUP

- Create your IngramSpark account
Choose individual vs. publisher/company name carefully — it shows on records
- Confirm your imprint / publisher name
This is the brand buyers and stores see
- Set up banking & tax forms
W-9 / W-8BEN; payment threshold applies before payout
- Decide your title type: print only, ebook only, or both

PHASE 2 · FILES & METADATA

- Final proofread complete
Fixing text after distribution means a new proof + possible fee
- Interior PDF meets spec
Embedded fonts, correct trim size, mirrored margins, final page count
- Cover PDF built to the exact spec template
Spine width depends on page count & paper — use Ingram's cover generator
- ISBN assigned to this exact format
Each format/edition needs its own ISBN — see the ISBN Decision Guide
- Title, subtitle & contributor names final
Must match the cover exactly
- BISAC categories chosen (up to 3)
These drive where the book is shelved/searched
- Keywords & description written
Description is your storefront — write it last, write it well
- Publication date set
Set it 4–8 weeks out to allow pre-orders and review copies

Pricing & wholesale discount

The numbers that decide your per-book earnings and your reach.

SETTING	WHAT IT CONTROLS	COMMON STARTING POINT
List price (each market)	Retail price buyers pay	Set with the Book Pricing Worksheet
Wholesale discount	Margin offered to retailers	40% (POD economics) → 55% (full trade)
Returns	Whether stores can return unsold copies	Off, unless courting physical bookstores
Print specs	Paper, binding, laminate	White/cream paper, perfect bound, matte/gloss

WORKED EXAMPLE — RIVERSTONE PRESS

List **\$16.99** · IngramSpark print cost ≈ **\$5.00** (240 pp B&W, 6×9, illustrative)

At a **40%** discount: $\$16.99 \times 0.60 = \$10.19 - \$5.00 = \mathbf{\$5.19 \text{ per book}}$

At a **55%** discount: $\$16.99 \times 0.45 = \$7.65 - \$5.00 = \mathbf{\$2.65 \text{ per book}}$

- List price entered for every market (USD, GBP, EUR, CAD, AUD)
- Wholesale discount chosen
See the Wholesale Discount Cheat Sheet for the trade-off
- Returns setting decided
Returnable wins bookstore orders but risks returned/destroyed stock
- Compensation/royalty previewed in dashboard before publishing

WATCH OUT

Your discount and returns settings shape whether physical bookstores will stock you at all. Decide them on purpose, not by default.

Proof, approve & distribute

PHASE 4 · PROOF & APPROVE

- Order a physical proof copy
Screens lie about color, trim, and gutter
- Check the spine text alignment & color
Most common cover defect
- Read the first & last printed pages
Confirms front/back matter survived export
- Verify barcode & price on back cover
Scans correctly, sits in the safe zone
- Approve files for print & distribution

PHASE 5 · DISTRIBUTION & CHANNELS

- Enable global distribution
Pushes your title into the Ingram catalog
- Decide on Amazon via Ingram vs. direct KDP
Many authors print on KDP for Amazon and use Ingram for everyone else
- Confirm 'available' / on-sale status
Title should flip to active on your pub date
- Note your ISBN, SKU, and pub date in your records

TIP

A popular hybrid: publish the paperback on **KDP** for Amazon (lowest print cost there) and on **IngramSpark** for bookstores, libraries, and international retailers – without enrolling the same Amazon channel twice.

Publish & keep selling

PHASE 6 · AFTER YOU PUBLISH

- Order author copies at your discounted rate
- Confirm the listing is live & metadata is correct
Spot-check Amazon, B&N, Bookshop
- Set up pre-orders or launch promo
Hand off to the Book Launch Timeline
- Plan your first metadata refresh
Update keywords/description after 30–60 days of data
- Track sales & payouts against your budget

Quick reference — IngramSpark spec sheet

ITEM	YOUR DETAIL
Imprint / publisher name	
Trim size	
Page count	
Print ISBN	
List price (USD)	
Wholesale discount	
Returns setting	
Publication date	

Fill this in once and keep it beside your computer.

GO FURTHER

Related SimpleLifeCalc Tools

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

These calculators keep the numbers in this checklist current and let you test settings before you commit them in IngramSpark.

IngramSpark Royalty Calculator

WHAT IT DOES Estimates your per-book earnings from list price, wholesale discount, and print cost.

WHEN TO USE During Phase 3, before you lock your discount.

WHY IT HELPS Shows the exact royalty trade-off between 40% and 55% in seconds.

Book Pricing Calculator

WHAT IT DOES Works out a list price from your cost, target margin, and market.

WHEN TO USE Before you enter list prices for each market.

WHY IT HELPS Stops you from pricing too low to ever earn on wholesale terms.

Self-Publishing Profit Calculator

WHAT IT DOES Models total profit across print runs and channels.

WHEN TO USE When comparing KDP-only vs. KDP + IngramSpark.

WHY IT HELPS Turns 'wide distribution' into real dollars per copy.

KEEP THEM HANDY

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