



Book Launch Timeline

A countdown plan that turns publish day into a launch – not a shrug.

12 WEEKS TO LAUNCH DAY

A milestone-by-milestone countdown for self-published authors. Start 12 weeks out if you can; the plan still works compressed. Check off tasks as you go and keep momentum through your first month on sale.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 12 & 8 weeks out
- 6 & 4 weeks out
- 2 & 1 weeks out
- Launch week
- First 30 days
- Launch budget
- Tracker
- Related calculators

START HERE

How to use this resource

A countdown you read once, then work backward from your date.

HOW TO USE THIS TIMELINE

1. Find today on the countdown and start at the nearest milestone — earlier is better, but late is fine.
2. Treat the dated circles as deadlines, not suggestions.
3. If you're short on time, never skip the **review copies** and **pre-order** steps — they do the most work.
4. Log results on the tracker so your next launch starts smarter.

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**. Riverstone sets launch day 12 weeks out so there's time for review copies and a pre-order window.

TIP

A launch isn't one day — it's a **ramp**. Reviews, pre-orders, and an email list built before launch matter far more than anything you do on the day itself.

12 → 6 weeks out

Quiet, unglamorous work that decides the launch.

12 WKS

Foundations

- Lock your final manuscript & files
No more content changes after this
- Confirm cover, ISBN & metadata
See the ISBN Decision Guide
- Set the official launch date
- Start (or restart) an email list
Your most reliable launch-day audience

8 WKS

Assets & audience

- Write your book description & keywords
This is your storefront
- Prepare an advance reader copy (ARC)
Digital is fine; PDF/ePub
- List 15–30 people to ask for honest reviews
Friends-of-friends count
- Draft your author bio & headshot

6 WKS

Reviews in motion

- Send ARCs to your reader list
Ask for a review on/after launch day
- Approach 5–10 relevant blogs / newsletters / bookstagrammers
Personalized, short asks
- Set up your book's landing page or link hub

4 → 1 weeks out

Everything queued so launch week runs itself.

4 WKS

Pre-order & promo

- Open pre-orders if your platform allows
Pre-orders concentrate early sales
- Schedule launch-week social posts
Batch them now so launch week is calm
- Design 3-5 graphics / quote cards
Reusable across platforms
- Finalize launch pricing (and any intro discount)

2 WKS

Dress rehearsal

- Order/approve final proof
Last chance to catch print issues
- Write your launch-day email & posts
Ready to send, not improvised
- Confirm buy links work in every store
Click every one yourself
- Line up day-one reviewers to post early

1 WK

Final prep

- Send a 'launching soon' email
Warm up the list
- Schedule launch-day posts
Morning + midday + evening
- Prepare a thank-you message for early buyers

Launch day & beyond

The ramp continues – month one matters as much as day one.

DAY 0

Launch day

- Send your launch email first thing
Email outperforms social for sales
- Post across your channels with the buy link
- Ask early readers to leave their reviews now
First reviews lift everything after
- Thank every buyer & sharer personally

WK 1

Launch week

- Post daily – vary the angle
Behind-the-scenes, a quote, a reader photo
- Follow up with reviewers who haven't posted
A gentle nudge works
- Watch your dashboard; note what drives sales

30 DAY

First month

- Refresh keywords/description with real data
Double down on what's converting
- Collect & screenshot reviews for promo
Social proof compounds
- Plan the next push
A price promo, a new channel, or a bundle
- Log final launch numbers on the tracker

Budget & tracker

Decide the spend up front; record the results to launch smarter next time.

Launch budget — plan your spend

ITEM	TYPICAL RANGE	YOUR BUDGET
ARC / proof copies	\$10 - \$60	
Cover or promo graphics	\$0 - \$150	
Review / promo service or ads	\$0 - \$200	
Email / landing-page tools	\$0 - \$30/mo	
Launch giveaway (copies + shipping)	\$0 - \$80	
TOTAL	—	

Ranges are illustrative starting points; a great launch is possible on near-zero budget with an engaged email list.

Launch tracker

METRIC	GOAL	ACTUAL
Pre-orders		
Launch-week sales		
Reviews posted (first 30 days)		
Email list growth		
Best-performing channel		

GO FURTHER

Related SimpleLifeCalc Tools

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

Use these to set the numbers behind your launch – price, royalty, and break-even – before the countdown begins.

Book Pricing Calculator

WHAT IT DOES Sets a launch list price from cost, margin, and market.

WHEN TO USE At 4 weeks out, when you finalize launch pricing.

WHY IT HELPS Lets you test an intro discount without eroding profit.

KDP Royalty Calculator

WHAT IT DOES Estimates earnings per copy at any list price.

WHEN TO USE Before setting a launch-week promo price.

WHY IT HELPS Shows what a discount really costs you per sale.

Sales Goal Calculator

WHAT IT DOES Turns a revenue goal into daily/weekly sales targets.

WHEN TO USE When setting your launch-week and 30-day goals.

WHY IT HELPS Makes 'sell a lot' into a number you can track.

KEEP THEM HANDY

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