

A STEP-BY-STEP PUBLISHING WORKBOOK

KDP PUBLISHING CHECKLIST

Publish your first book on Amazon — without missing a step.

Created by SimpleLifeCalc.com

Made for:

First-time publishers • Low-content creators
Coloring books • Journals • Activity books

Amazon KDP's tools and policies change over time. Always confirm current details in your KDP account.

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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK (READ THIS FIRST)

You do NOT need to finish this in one sitting. Each page is one small job.

Go in order — the steps build toward your finished book.

Do a page, check the boxes, then stop. Come back when you're ready.

Feeling overwhelmed? Just do the next single unchecked box. That's all.

1. Before You Upload Checklist

Goal for this page: make sure your idea and your files are ready BEFORE you open the KDP upload screen. A little prep here saves hours of fixing later.

Your book idea

- ☐ I know what kind of book it is (coloring, journal, activity, planner, etc.).
- ☐ I know who it's for (kids, adults, a hobby, a niche).
- ☐ I checked Amazon to see similar books people already buy.
- ☐ My book has a clear theme or purpose buyers will understand.

Your two files

- ☐ My interior file is finished (all the inside pages).
- ☐ My cover file is finished (or planned).
- ☐ Both files are saved as PDF (the format KDP prefers).
- ☐ I have a quiet block of time to do the upload calmly.

Your KDP account

- ☐ I have a KDP account and I'm logged in.
- ☐ My tax and payment info is filled in (so I can get paid).

My book's working title: _____



ONE RULE FOR THIS WHOLE WORKBOOK

Done is better than perfect. Your first book will not be flawless — and that's completely normal. A published book beats a perfect book that never leaves your computer.



BEGINNER TIP

Low-content books (journals, coloring, activity) are the friendliest place to start. They're simpler to make, and finishing one teaches you the whole process for the next.

2. Interior File Checklist

Goal for this page: an inside-the-book file that's clean, correctly sized, and ready to upload. The **interior** is simply all the pages inside your book.

The basics

- ☐ Every page is the size I plan to publish at (all pages match).
- ☐ Page count is correct — nothing missing or duplicated.
- ☐ Pages are in the right order from front to back.
- ☐ The file is a PDF.

Make it look finished

- ☐ Margins leave enough space so nothing is cut off at the edges.
- ☐ Designs/lines aren't too close to where the book will be bound.
- ☐ Any text is easy to read and not pixelated.
- ☐ Images and line art are crisp, not blurry.

For low-content books

- ☐ Coloring/activity pages are spaced so they're fun to use.
- ☐ Journal/planner lines are even and consistent.
- ☐ I added simple extras if I want (title page, "this book belongs to").



BEGINNER TIP

Open your final PDF and scroll through every single page before uploading. Reading it once, start to finish, catches more mistakes than any checklist alone.



WATCH OUT

Mismatched page sizes are the most common interior problem. Make sure every page is the exact same dimensions — one odd page can cause an upload error.

3. Cover Checklist

Goal for this page: a cover that looks professional and meets KDP's requirements. Your cover is the first thing a buyer sees — it's worth getting right.

The essentials

- ☐ My cover is the correct size for my book's trim and page count.
- ☐ The title and my author name are clear and easy to read.
- ☐ Text isn't too close to the edges (it could get trimmed off).
- ☐ The file is a PDF (or the format KDP requests).

Make it appealing

- ☐ The design matches what's inside the book.
- ☐ It still looks good as a tiny thumbnail (most shoppers see it small first).
- ☐ Colors look intentional, not accidental.
- ☐ Images and text are crisp, not blurry or stretched.

Front, spine, back

- ☐ Front cover: title, author, eye-catching design.
- ☐ Spine: text only if my page count is high enough to allow it.
- ☐ Back cover: a short description or simple design.



BEGINNER TIP

Look at the top-selling books in your category and notice what their covers have in common. You're not copying — you're learning what buyers in your niche expect to see.



KEEP IT SIMPLE

A clean, readable cover beats a busy, complicated one. If you're unsure, simpler almost always wins — especially at thumbnail size.

4. Trim Size & Bleed Checklist

Goal for this page: get two technical-sounding words right. Don't worry — they're simple once explained.

TWO WORDS, EXPLAINED SIMPLY

Trim size = the finished size of your book once it's printed and cut (for example, 8.5 × 11 inches). It's just "how big is the book."

Bleed = extra space at the edges so that color or art that's meant to reach the edge of the page doesn't leave an accidental white border after trimming.

Trim size checklist

- ☐ I picked a trim size that suits my book type.
- ☐ Every interior page uses that same trim size.
- ☐ My cover was built for the same trim size.

Bleed checklist

- ☐ I decided if my book needs bleed (it does if art touches the page edge).
- ☐ If yes: my pages include the little bit of extra edge space.
- ☐ If no (art stays away from edges): I set it up without bleed.
- ☐ I kept important content away from the very edges either way.



BEGINNER TIP

Coloring and activity pages with full-page backgrounds usually need bleed. Plain lined journals usually don't. When unsure, set it up with bleed and keep your art slightly oversized at the edges.



NEED A HAND WITH THE NUMBERS?

See the KDP Bleed & Trim Guide at SimpleLifeCalc.com for simple, plain-English help choosing your trim size and setting up bleed correctly — no design degree required.



KEEP IT CURRENT

Available trim sizes and exact bleed measurements are set by KDP and can change. Confirm the current options in your KDP account before finalizing your files.

5. Metadata Checklist

Goal for this page: fill in the words that help readers FIND your book. **Metadata** just means the details you type into KDP — title, subtitle, keywords, and categories.

Title & subtitle

- ☐ My title is clear and tells buyers what the book is.
- ☐ My subtitle adds helpful detail (who it's for, what's inside).
- ☐ I avoided confusing or overly clever wording.
- ☐ Title and subtitle match the book I actually made.

Keywords (the search words)

- ☐ I listed words a buyer would type to find a book like mine.
- ☐ I used all the keyword slots KDP gives me.
- ☐ Each keyword phrase is different (not repeating the same word).
- ☐ I checked how similar books describe themselves for ideas.

Categories

- ☐ I chose categories that truly fit my book.
- ☐ I picked the most specific category I can (not just the broadest).
- ☐ My category matches what the book actually is.

3 keyword ideas to start: _____



BEGINNER TIP

Type your book idea into the Amazon search bar and watch the suggestions that pop up. Those are real phrases buyers use — a free goldmine of keyword ideas.



KEEP IT CURRENT

The number of keyword slots and how categories are chosen can change over time. Follow the current prompts in your KDP account when you fill these in.

6. Pricing Checklist

Goal for this page: set a price that buyers will pay AND that earns you something after printing costs. (KDP pays you a royalty — your share of each sale after printing.)

Understand your costs

- ☐ I know my book's printing cost depends on page count and ink (black vs. color).
- ☐ I understand my royalty is what's left after printing and Amazon's share.
- ☐ I found my printing cost estimate inside KDP.

Research the market

- ☐ I checked what similar books charge.
- ☐ My price feels fair next to the competition — not the cheapest, not the priciest.
- ☐ I considered different prices in different marketplaces if I publish widely.

Check the math with a calculator

- **KDP Royalty Calculator** — enter your price and page details to see roughly what you'd earn per sale.
- **KDP Break-Even Calculator** — shows how many copies you need to sell to cover any upfront costs (like a proof copy or design).

My planned list price: \$ _____

My estimated royalty per book: \$ _____



BEGINNER TIP

Free versions of the KDP Royalty Calculator and KDP Break-Even Calculator are at SimpleLifeCalc.com. Run your price through both before you publish — no surprises later.



KEEP IT EVERGREEN

Royalty percentages, printing costs, and pricing rules are set by KDP and change over time. Always confirm the current numbers in your KDP account and plug those into the calculator.

7. Upload Day Checklist

Goal for this page: a calm, in-order upload. Work top to bottom and check each box as KDP asks for it.

Book details

- ☐ Entered my title and subtitle exactly as planned.
- ☐ Added my author name.
- ☐ Wrote a clear book description.
- ☐ Selected my keywords and categories.

Files

- ☐ Uploaded my interior PDF.
- ☐ Uploaded my cover PDF.
- ☐ Used the online previewer to check every page.
- ☐ Fixed any warnings the previewer flagged.

Rights & pricing

- ☐ Confirmed I hold the rights to everything in my book.
- ☐ Set my price (using my numbers from page 8).
- ☐ Reviewed the printing cost and royalty estimate shown.

Before clicking publish

- ☐ Re-read my title and description for typos.
- ☐ Decided whether to order a proof copy first (recommended — see page 10).



GO ONE BOX AT A TIME

Upload day can feel like a lot. Don't read ahead — just do the box you're on, check it, and move to the next. The previewer is your friend; let it catch problems for you.

8. Proof Copy Review Checklist

Goal for this page: check a **proof copy** — a single test print of your book — before you let the world buy it. Seeing it in real life catches things screens hide.

The cover

- ☐ Colors look the way I expected.
- ☐ Title and text are sharp, not blurry.
- ☐ Nothing important is cut off at the edges.
- ☐ The front, spine, and back all line up correctly.

The interior

- ☐ Every page printed — none missing or blank by mistake.
- ☐ Pages are in the right order.
- ☐ Nothing important is cut off near the edges or the binding.
- ☐ Images and lines are crisp on paper.

The feel

- ☐ The book size feels right for its purpose.
- ☐ Paper and print quality meet my expectations.
- ☐ I'd be proud to hand this to a customer.



BEGINNER TIP

Ordering a proof copy is the single best habit a new publisher can build. A small cost up front saves you from selling a book with a mistake printed in every copy.



ALMOST THERE

If your proof looks good, you're one click from being a published author. If it doesn't, you just saved every future customer from the same problem. Either way — win.

9. Common Publishing Mistakes

Tick any that sound like you — then fix them. Every one is easy to avoid once you've seen it.

- ☐ Interior pages that aren't all the same size.
- ☐ Important art or text too close to the edges (and getting trimmed).
- ☐ Skipping bleed when full-page art needed it.
- ☐ A cover that looks unclear at thumbnail size.
- ☐ Blurry images from low-quality files.
- ☐ A vague title that doesn't say what the book is.
- ☐ Wasting keyword slots by repeating the same word.
- ☐ Choosing categories that don't really fit the book.
- ☐ Pricing without checking printing cost and royalty first.
- ☐ Skipping the proof copy and publishing a hidden mistake.
- ☐ Not reading the whole interior PDF before uploading.
- ☐ Waiting for "perfect" and never publishing at all.

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE

Never publishing because it doesn't feel ready. Your first book teaches you more than months of planning. Aim for "good and published," not "perfect and never."

PICK JUST ONE

Don't try to fix everything at once. Choose the ONE mistake most likely to trip you up and handle it next. One fix at a time is how books actually get finished.

10. First 30 Days Checklist

Goal for this page: simple things to do after publishing. You don't need to do them all at once — spread them across your first month.

Week 1

- ☐ Confirmed my book is live and the listing looks correct.
- ☐ Viewed my own book's page as a buyer would see it.
- ☐ Checked the cover thumbnail looks good in search results.
- ☐ Told a few friends or family it's available.

Weeks 2–3

- ☐ Shared my book where my audience already hangs out.
- ☐ Double-checked my description and keywords still feel right.
- ☐ Started a simple note of ideas for my next book.

Week 4

- ☐ Looked at my first sales/views in the KDP dashboard.
- ☐ Noted what I'd do the same next time, and what I'd change.
- ☐ Picked my next book idea to keep momentum going.

My next book idea: _____



BEGINNER TIP

The fastest way to grow on KDP is to publish more books, not to obsess over one. Each title is a new chance to be found. Momentum beats perfection.



CELEBRATE THIS

You published a book. Most people who say they will — never do. Take a moment to be proud before you jump to the next one.

11. Monthly KDP Review Checklist

Once a month, take 15–20 minutes to see how things are going. This is how you grow on purpose, not by guessing.

Pull your numbers

Books sold this month: _____

Rough royalties earned: \$ _____

Number of titles I have published: _____

Best-performing book this month: _____

Monthly review checklist

- ☐ Compared this month to last month.
- ☐ Noticed which book or type sells best — can I make more like it?
- ☐ Checked if any listing needs a better title, keywords, or cover.
- ☐ Confirmed nothing on my listings looks broken or wrong.
- ☐ Reviewed any KDP changes that affect my books.
- ☐ Chose ONE improvement to make this month.
- ☐ Decided whether to publish a new title.



BEGINNER TIP

Track which TYPE of book sells best for you — a certain theme, size, or niche. Then make more in that direction. Let your real sales guide your next idea.

MAKE IT A HABIT

Put a recurring “KDP Review” on your calendar for the 1st of each month. Fifteen minutes of consistency turns a single book into a growing catalog.

12. Quick Wins & Beginner Tips

Short on time or energy? These are the fastest ways to move forward. Pick ONE and do it today.

1. **Publish one more book.** More titles = more chances to be found. The simplest win there is.
2. **Improve one cover thumbnail.** Clearer at small size can mean more clicks.
3. **Sharpen one title or subtitle.** Make it instantly clear what the book is and who it's for.
4. **Refresh your keywords.** Use Amazon's search suggestions for fresh, real buyer phrases.
5. **Reuse what works.** Turn a successful book into a series or a matching set.
6. **Run your price through a calculator.** Make sure each book actually earns you something.
7. **Order a proof of your next book early.** Catch issues before launch, not after.
8. **Keep a simple idea list.** Jot every book idea so you're never stuck on "what next?"

FASTEST WIN OF ALL

Finish and upload one book using this workbook — even a simple lined journal. Your first publish removes the fear, and every book after it is easier.

ONE AT A TIME

Do ONE quick win, not all eight. Finish it, feel the win, then stop. Small completed steps build momentum far better than a giant to-do list.

13. Final Publishing Action Plan

Turn this workbook into action. Fill it in now, while it's fresh — then keep it where you'll see it.

Today

The one book I will work on first: _____

The page I'll start with (tip: page 3): _____

This week

The step I'll finish next (interior, cover, etc.):

My target day to upload: _____

This month

My goal this month (e.g., "publish my first book" or "publish 2 titles"):

Date for my first Monthly KDP Review: _____

Recommended Resources

- **KDP Royalty Calculator** — see roughly what you'll earn per sale.
- **KDP Break-Even Calculator** — know how many copies cover your upfront costs.
- **KDP Bleed & Trim Guide** — simple help with sizing your files correctly.



BEGINNER TIP

Free versions of the KDP Royalty Calculator, KDP Break-Even Calculator, and the KDP Bleed & Trim Guide are at SimpleLifeCalc.com — simple and beginner-friendly, just like this workbook.

You've got this. Publish your book — the world is waiting! 

Visit SimpleLifeCalc.com for free calculators, guides, worksheets, and creator resources.

Amazon KDP's tools and policies change — always confirm current details in your KDP account.