

FROM MANUSCRIPT TO PUBLISHED

A Practical Workbook for Preparing
Your Book for Publication

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LEARN: understand a decision SEE: examine Rowan's continuing fantasy-novel example

Publishing requirements, platform policies, ISBN eligibility, copyright rules and taxes can

Chapter 1: Define Your Publishing Path

LEARN

A finished draft is the beginning of a publishing process, not the end. Choose the route that suits your goals, rights, budget and timeline.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

A fantasy writer named Rowan has a completed 90,000-word manuscript. Rowan compares querying agents, submitting to small presses, and self-publishing before committing.

APPLY THE PRINCIPLE

Write down what is known, what needs verification, who owns the decision, and what would count as completion. Publishing becomes easier to manage when each decision produces a tangible next action.

INITIAL NOTES

Chapter 2: The Manuscript Audit

LEARN

Before line editing, diagnose structural problems: missing motivations, uneven pacing, unresolved threads and unclear stakes.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

Rowan discovers the second act repeats three journeys. Combining them makes the protagonist's decision at the midpoint more meaningful.

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INITIAL NOTES

What will you produce? Who will review it? When will it be ready? How will you know it is

Chapter 3: Developmental Revision

LEARN

Revise the architecture first. Strengthen character agency, cause and effect, viewpoint consistency and scene purpose before polishing sentences.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

Rowan cuts an attractive battle scene because it changes nothing, then replaces it with a quieter betrayal that causes the climax.

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Chapter 4: Beta Readers and Editorial Feedback

LEARN

Give early readers focused questions and a clear deadline. Look for patterns in feedback, not votes on every sentence.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

Three beta readers are confused by the same magical rule. Rowan revises the explanation while preserving a deliberate mystery about the villain.

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Chapter 5: Copyediting and Proofreading

LEARN

Copyediting addresses language, clarity and consistency; proofreading catches final errors after layout. These are different passes.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

Rowan's editor catches changing place-name spellings and timeline errors. A separate final proof checks the laid-out pages.

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Chapter 6: Covers, Metadata and Positioning

LEARN

Your cover and book description should signal genre and audience without promising a different story. Metadata helps readers discover the book.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

Rowan's first cover looks like romance though the novel is grim fantasy. Revised typography and imagery clarify the genre.

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INITIAL NOTES

Chapter 7: Formatting and Accessible Files

LEARN

Prepare separate print and ebook outputs when needed. Check navigation, chapter breaks, fonts, image rights and readable contrast.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

Rowan tests an EPUB on multiple screen sizes and finds a decorative chapter image blocks the heading in one reader.

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Chapter 8: ISBNs, Rights and Business Details

LEARN

Research identifiers, copyright, contracts, taxes and platform requirements in your jurisdiction. Keep written records of licenses and permissions.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

Rowan documents commissioned cover-art rights, checks the Canadian ISBN agency's current eligibility rules, and reviews each distributor's terms.

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Chapter 9: Distribution, Pricing and Launch

LEARN

Plan the release backward from a realistic date. Compare retailer fees, territories, print costs, returnability and delivery requirements.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

Rowan schedules advance-reader outreach, a product-page review, file uploads and a final proof well before announcing the date.

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Chapter 10: After Publication and the Next Book

LEARN

Publication is a milestone, not a finish line. Track results, fix defects, support readers and document what you learned.

SEE: ROWAN'S PUBLISHING JOURNEY

After launch, Rowan notices readers abandon the sample at chapter two. The next book's opening receives extra attention during revision.

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INITIAL NOTES

Include specific dates, names, estimated costs or evidence where useful. Mark unknowns for later research rather than guessing.

Master Publication Timeline

MANUSCRIPT AND STRUCTURAL REVISIONS

BETA READING AND EDITORIAL PASSES

COVER, DESCRIPTION AND METADATA

FORMATTING AND FILE VALIDATION

RIGHTS, ISBNs AND DISTRIBUTION

LAUNCH COMMUNICATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

Final Prepublication Checklist

- ☐ Structural revision complete and continuity checked
- ☐ Editorial feedback addressed and style sheet updated
- ☐ Final proofread performed after layout
- ☐ Cover and interior asset rights documented
- ☐ Book description and metadata checked
- ☐ ISBN and imprint requirements verified
- ☐ Print proof or ebook reader testing completed
- ☐ Retailer/direct-store files and links tested
- ☐ Pricing and fees reviewed
- ☐ Launch information and customer support ready
