

BOOK FORMATTING CHECKLIST

Prepare Your Manuscript for Professional Publication

A Boshers Publishing Author Resource

Introduction

You've written the book.

You've revised it.

You've edited it.

Now it's time to prepare it for publication.

Formatting is one of the most overlooked parts of publishing, yet it's one of the first things readers notice. Poor formatting can make even a great book look unprofessional.

This checklist will help you prepare your manuscript for a smooth publishing process and a polished final product.

BEFORE YOU FORMAT

Finish Editing First

Formatting should be one of the last steps before publication.

Many authors waste hours formatting only to make major edits later.

Confirm These First:

- ☐ Developmental edits complete
- ☐ Line edits complete
- ☐ Copyediting complete

- ☐ Proofreading complete
 - ☐ Final manuscript approved
-

MANUSCRIPT BASICS

Font

For manuscript submission:

- ✓ Times New Roman
- ✓ 12-point font
- ✓ Black text

Avoid:

- ✗ Fancy fonts
 - ✗ Colored text
 - ✗ Multiple font styles
-

Spacing

- ☐ Double-spaced manuscript for editing
 - ☐ Single space after periods
 - ☐ Consistent paragraph spacing
-

Alignment

- ☐ Left-aligned manuscript
- ☐ No full justification during editing phase

(Justification is applied during book formatting.)

Paragraphs

- ☐ First-line indents used consistently
 - ☐ No tabs for alignment
 - ☐ No multiple spaces for formatting
-

CHAPTER FORMATTING

Chapter Titles

- ☐ Consistent style throughout book

Example:

Chapter One

The Storm

or

Chapter 1

The Storm

Choose one style and stay consistent.

Chapter Openings

- ☐ New chapter starts on a new page

- ☐ Consistent spacing before chapter title
 - ☐ Consistent spacing after title
-

Chapter Breaks

- ☐ Scene breaks clearly marked

Options:

or

• • •

or

simple line divider

Use one style consistently.

FRONT MATTER CHECKLIST

Front matter appears before Chapter One.

Title Page

- ☐ Book title
 - ☐ Subtitle (if applicable)
 - ☐ Author name
-

Copyright Page

- ☐ Copyright notice
 - ☐ Publication year
 - ☐ Publisher name
 - ☐ ISBN
 - ☐ Rights statement
 - ☐ Disclaimer (if needed)
-

Optional Front Matter

- ☐ Dedication
 - ☐ Acknowledgments
 - ☐ Foreword
 - ☐ Preface
 - ☐ Introduction
 - ☐ Table of Contents (nonfiction)
-

BACK MATTER CHECKLIST

Appears after the story ends.

Author Bio

- ☐ Professional author bio
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Social media links

About the Publisher

- ☐ Publisher information
 - ☐ Contact information
-

Other Books

- ☐ Related titles
 - ☐ Series information
-

Reader Invitation

- ☐ Join newsletter
 - ☐ Leave a review
 - ☐ Visit website
-

INTERIOR DESIGN CHECKLIST

Margins

Ensure margins allow comfortable reading.

Typical paperback margins:

- ☐ Outside margins balanced
 - ☐ Inside margins adjusted for binding
 - ☐ Top and bottom margins consistent
-

Headers and Footers

- ☐ Consistent page numbering
 - ☐ Author name included (optional)
 - ☐ Book title included (optional)
 - ☐ No header on chapter opening pages
-

Page Numbers

- ☐ Consecutive numbering
 - ☐ Correct placement
 - ☐ Front matter numbering reviewed
-

TYPOGRAPHY CHECKLIST

Font Selection

Recommended body fonts:

- ✓ Garamond
 - ✓ Baskerville
 - ✓ Palatino
 - ✓ Georgia
 - ✓ Caslon
-

Avoid:

- ✗ Script fonts

X Decorative fonts

X Hard-to-read fonts

Font Size

Typical print book:

☐ 10 pt

☐ 11 pt

☐ 12 pt

Depending on font choice and trim size.

Line Spacing

☐ Comfortable reading experience

☐ No crowded text

☐ No excessive white space

EBOOK FORMATTING CHECKLIST

Ebooks require special considerations.

Remove

☐ Manual tabs

☐ Extra spaces

☐ Fixed positioning

- ☐ Text boxes (when possible)
-

Verify

- ☐ Clickable Table of Contents
 - ☐ Functional hyperlinks
 - ☐ Consistent chapter breaks
 - ☐ Proper image placement
-

Test On

- ☐ Kindle
 - ☐ Tablet
 - ☐ Phone
 - ☐ E-reader software
-

COVER FILE CHECKLIST

Before uploading:

Verify

- ☐ Final title
- ☐ Final subtitle
- ☐ Correct author name
- ☐ Correct spine text

- ☐ Barcode included if needed
 - ☐ Proper trim size
 - ☐ Correct page count
 - ☐ Bleed settings verified
-

ISBN CHECKLIST

Each format generally requires its own ISBN.

Paperback

- ☐ ISBN assigned
-

Hardcover

- ☐ ISBN assigned
-

Ebook

- ☐ ISBN assigned (optional depending on platform)
-

METADATA CHECKLIST

Metadata helps readers discover your book.

Confirm

- ☐ Title

- ☐ Subtitle
 - ☐ Author name
 - ☐ Categories
 - ☐ Keywords
 - ☐ Book description
 - ☐ BISAC categories
 - ☐ Pricing
-

FINAL PRE-UPLOAD CHECK

Before uploading to Amazon KDP, IngramSpark, or another platform:

Interior

- ☐ No blank pages
 - ☐ No missing pages
 - ☐ No formatting errors
 - ☐ No strange page breaks
 - ☐ No orphaned chapter titles
 - ☐ No missing scene breaks
-

Cover

- ☐ Correct dimensions
- ☐ Proper spine width

- ☐ Readable title
 - ☐ High-resolution file
-

Book Information

- ☐ ISBN verified
 - ☐ Description finalized
 - ☐ Keywords selected
 - ☐ Categories selected
 - ☐ Price determined
-

PRINT PROOF CHECKLIST

Always review a printed proof.

Check

- ☐ Cover colors
 - ☐ Spine alignment
 - ☐ Margin spacing
 - ☐ Page numbers
 - ☐ Typography
 - ☐ Image quality
 - ☐ Chapter openings
-

Read Several Chapters

Mistakes often appear in print that were missed on screen.

COMMON FORMATTING MISTAKES

Using Tabs Instead of Indents

Can create ebook problems.

Inconsistent Scene Breaks

Looks unprofessional.

Overly Fancy Fonts

Reduce readability.

Ignoring Print Proofs

A costly mistake.

Crowded Pages

Readers need breathing room.

Missing Front Matter

Creates an incomplete book.

QUICK FORMATTING MASTER CHECKLIST

Manuscript

- ☐ Edited
 - ☐ Proofread
 - ☐ Finalized
-

Front Matter

- ☐ Title Page
 - ☐ Copyright Page
 - ☐ Dedication (optional)
-

Interior

- ☐ Chapter Formatting
 - ☐ Scene Breaks
 - ☐ Page Numbers
 - ☐ Margins
-

Back Matter

- ☐ Author Bio
- ☐ Other Books
- ☐ Newsletter Invitation

Distribution

- ☐ ISBN
- ☐ Metadata
- ☐ Pricing
- ☐ Categories

Final Review

- ☐ Digital proof reviewed
- ☐ Print proof reviewed
- ☐ Ready to publish

BONUS TIP

Readers rarely notice excellent formatting.

They immediately notice poor formatting.

Professional formatting creates a smooth reading experience that allows your story to shine without distractions.

Need Help Formatting Your Book?

Boshers Publishing offers professional formatting services for:

 Fiction

 Nonfiction

 Paperbacks

 Hardcover

 Ebooks

We help authors create polished, professional books ready for publication and distribution.

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Helping Authors Write, Publish, and Thrive

A professionally formatted book doesn't just look better. It builds reader confidence from the very first page.  