Write That Book!
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There are five main stages to writing and publishing a book:

Planning
Writing
Editing
Formatting
Promoting

This workbook will help you crack the first stage - planning - and will give you some useful advice and tips to guide you through the remaining stages.

How to use this book

The book contains lots of exercises that will help you to find a topic, plan your content and write your book. However, I would suggest that you read it all the way through once before you begin to fill it in.

The later chapters include useful information on the writing and publishing process that’s worth knowing before you begin.

Workbook produced by Alison Thompson AKA The Proof Fairy.
For help with book coaching, proofreading, formatting & cover design go to:

www.theprooffairy.com
So you want to write a book!

Writing a book is a fascinating process. Depending on the subject matter you may find it cathartic, illuminating, frustrating, emotional or exciting - or a mix of emotions!

Before you begin writing your book it’s important you think about WHY you want to write it. Writing a book can take many months (or even years!) so knowing why you’re doing it and what you want to achieve can make all the difference to how motivated you feel during the writing process.

There are many reasons why you might want to write a book, from the prestige of being an author to creating a source of income. Here are five big benefits of writing a book.

1. Share your story
   We are all unique beings with our own unique stories to tell. Whether it’s an unusual hobby, a challenge you’ve overcome or an imaginary world you inhabit, you have a story worth telling ... so why not do just that?

2. Share your expertise
   You have a huge library of knowledge in your head that deserves sharing with a wider audience.

3. Pass on advice
   Take the most important things you’ve learned in life and turn them into a book that will help other people.

4. Raise your profile
   Sharing your knowledge, expertise and experience, whether achieved through life or business, raises your profile. In short, writing a book makes you the expert.

5. Open the door to new opportunities
   Media appearances, invitations to run workshops, speaking gigs, commissions ... the list goes on. Don’t dismiss the idea that writing a book will change your life completely!

A word of warning
   DON’T write a book simply to make money! It can be a good source of secondary income, but unless you have something equivalent to the Harry Potter series you’re unlikely to make your fortune being a writer! Look on any income as a bonus and focus on the benefits above - and you will be well on your way to being a successful author!
I want to write a book because ...

There are lots of reasons why people write books - and your reasons might make a difference to the style you choose to write in, the publishing route you choose or the marketing you do. Tick below all the reasons you want to write a book - or add anything missing from the list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I want to write a book because:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to share my story, experience or knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to make a difference to people’s lives / the wider community</td>
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<td>I want to raise the profile of me / my business</td>
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<td>I have always dreamt of being an author</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to share some advice or a message with a wider audience</td>
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<td>I want to be famous!</td>
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<td>I want to leave a lasting reminder of who I was</td>
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<td>I want a new career</td>
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<td>I want to make money</td>
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<td>I want to win awards and prestige</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to help other people</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to be a best selling writer</td>
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<td>I want to be a full time author - travelling, writing, visiting book fairs and conferences and signings</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to have a book published by a famous publishing house</td>
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<td>I want to win critical acclaim</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to have a book to give to my friends and family</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to be able to say “I am an author” or “I have written a book”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other reasons:</td>
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What Will You Write About?

The key to writing a book is to choose a topic that:

• You are passionate about (or at least have a strong interest in)
• You already know something about
• Other people will be interested in

Use the exercises below to find topics that you could write about.

Note: If you already have a topic in mind it’s still worth doing the following exercises - you may be surprised what comes out, and you may discover your second (or third, or fourth) book topic!

**Topics I am passionate about include:**

**Topics I am knowledgeable about include:**

**Life experiences I’ve had include:**
Things I enjoy doing are:

Some lessons I've learned from life are:

People often ask me about / ask me for advice on:

I love reading books about and learning more about:
Now look at all your answers and pick out the recurring themes and topics - the things that you have an interest in, enjoy and are knowledgeable about.

Choose ONE of the topics above - the one that appeals to you most - and write down as many broad sub-topics as you can. You might find it useful to do some mind mapping around your topic.

**My topic is:**

**Sub-topics are:**

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*If you’re struggling you might find the following resources useful. Simply type in your topic to see suggestions for sub-topics and related topics.*

- Ezine Articles: [http://ezinearticles.com/](http://ezinearticles.com/)
- All Top: [http://alltop.com/](http://alltop.com/)
Look for common themes in the ideas you wrote down and group them together. Try to come up with twelve general themes .... These won’t necessarily be your chapter headings but they are a good place to start!

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10. 

11. 

12. 
Take a sheet of paper for each theme and write down as many ideas as you can within that theme.

Don’t worry about how weird or wonderful or crazy they might seem - just use this exercise as a brain dump for all your knowledge on the subject!

You should end up with 12 pages covered in topics. Again, you may find mind mapping is a useful tool.

Finally, pick out between 3 and 6 ideas for each theme.

Using index cards (or separate pieces of paper), write each of the 12 broad themes on a card, and then write each of the sub-topics on separate cards.

Use the index cards as your main resource for your book. Expand on each sub-topic, write down vital information, key points to include and details you need to do further research on.

Once you’ve got as much information as you need on the cards, you can use them as your main resource for structuring and writing your book.

Sort the themes and sub-topics as much as you want until the structure feels like it will work.

Use the cards as reminders of what you want to cover in each theme area.

Keep them with you and add ideas as you think of them!

You can also use mind mapping for this exercise ... However, you’ll find it’s much easier to rearrange index cards than mind mapping bubbles.
Who Is Your Book For?

By now you should have chosen a topic and broken it down into 12 themes, with 3-5 ideas for each one. You’ll have written everything down on index cards and sorted them into an order that makes sense.

Next you need to think about who is likely to read your book - who is your ideal reader? Try answering the following questions:

Who will buy my book?

What problems or fears are they dealing with?

What will they get from reading my book?

What will the outcome be? How would I like their life to improve after reading my book?
Write a short biography of your ideal reader - gender, age, home, occupation, family, beliefs, likes and dislikes etc - and keep this in mind when you write your book.

Why are you the ideal person to write this book? Why should people listen to you?

Are there any other books you could write that are related to this one?
When and Where to Write Your Book

Once you have discovered your topic, found your sub topics and defined your ideal reader you’re ready to start writing!

Every author is different and there are no hard and fast rules to when or where or how you should write, but here are some tips to help you find the time, place and pace that works for you.

Write regularly

While some people can write a little bit here and there, the most successful authors are those who find a writing “groove” and stick with it. Your own personal “groove” will depend on your lifestyle and work/family commitments but some of the following might work for you:

• Write every day for an hour, first thing in the morning or in the evening.
• Set a word goal - for example, 500 words - and make sure you hit it every day.
• Block out two afternoons a week for writing.
• Write every Saturday (or any other day that suits you).
• Go away for a few days on a “writing retreat” and get the first half of your book written!

Find the perfect writing place

Some people can write at their desk; others find they are too easily distracted by work/Facebook etc. Consider creating a special place that you only use for writing - perhaps a corner of the dining room or bedroom, or the conservatory - and your brain will soon start to associate that place with the act of writing.

Alternatively many writers find they do their best work in a coffee shop.

Try different locations and see what works best for you.
Overcoming Writer’s Block

Writers suffer from writer’s block for many reasons, but often it’s because:

• You don’t know if anyone will be interested in what you have to say
• You haven’t made a plan and don’t know what to write
• You are worried about making spelling mistakes

If you’ve followed the steps in this book you should have a solid plan written by now, so you know exactly what to include in every chapter.

Here are some other tips to help you overcome writer’s block.

**Stick to the writing schedule you have planned.** (You have planned one, haven’t you?) Just write something - anything. Sometimes even writing the lyrics to your favourite song or the same line over and over can overcome that fear of the blank page and get your creativity flowing.

**Try freewriting.** Write continuously for ten minutes - about whatever comes to mind. Again, the act of writing something - even if it’s not related to your book - can overcome the blockage. And you never know what nuggets the freewriting might reveal - a plan for book number two, perhaps?!

**Be kind to yourself.** So long as you are writing, your book is progressing. Even if you think it’s rubbish now, you could get a pleasant surprise when you read it back later ... and there’s plenty of time for editing!

**If the writing is not flowing, use the time to make notes.** You can fill in the gaps another day.

**Don’t worry about grammar or spelling.** That can all be fixed later on! Just take pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard), relax and let the words flow. The best books are written when the writers are in full flow and not worrying about the detail!

**Set a deadline.** Sometimes setting a deadline of when you want to finish - or even publish - the book can help the writing process. If you’re really brave, set a realistic date for a book launch - virtual or physical - organise an event and invite your friends. There’s nothing quite like the idea of letting people down to motivate you!
So You’ve Finished Writing … Congratulations! Now What?

Congratulations, you’ve completed the first two stages of publishing a book - planning and writing!

Here is an outline of the remaining three stages.

**Editing**

Editing is the process of taking your raw material and turning it into a book that people will want to read. The editing process can be as long as you want - but beware getting stuck in an “editing cycle”. In some ways your book will never quite be perfect … so go for “as good as it gets”!

The editing process looks something like this:

**First edit** - Do this a couple of weeks after you start writing, so you come to it with fresh eyes. Read through and look for issues with continuity (Does a main character’s name change from Tracey to Stacey partway through?) and clarity (Will someone with no knowledge of the topic understand what you mean?). Look for sections you want to expand, delete or rewrite.

**Second edit** - Read through again, looking for clunky phrasing, spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

**Send to “beta readers”** - Beta readers are people who have volunteered to read an early draft of your book and give you feedback. Choose people who are likely to be your target readers. Warn them there may be typos and ask them to comment on content - what they want more of, what they want less of and what makes no sense!

**Respond to feedback** - This could mean a few tweaks here and there or a complete rewrite! Of course you can disregard everything the beta readers say - but remember, they are your target market!

**Read again** - By now you should have a manuscript that you are happy with. Read it through one more time to spot any errors that have crept in during the editing process.

**Send to a proofreader** - This stage is vital. No matter how good you are at spotting errors, it is actually impossible to proofread your own work so do invest in the services of a professional proofreader to ensure your book is published without any typos.
Formatting

Formatting is quite simply getting your book into the right format for publication, whether in print or digitally. How you format your book depends a lot on how you plan to publish.

Traditional Publisher
If you have been lucky enough to land a contract with a publisher then they are likely to manage the formatting process for you.

Short Run Printing/Print on Demand
Every printer will have their own requirements for your manuscript so check with them how they want it formatted. Print books can usually be formatted in word processing programmes and supplied as raw text or a PDF. However, you need to know page size and trim size and be aware of things like page numbering. You also need to choose suitable fonts for your printed book - Comic Sans is rarely likely to make a good impression!

Kindle ebook
If you are publishing your ebook with Kindle then there are very specific rules on how the document needs to be formatted. The free Kindle book “Building Your Book for Kindle”, available from Amazon, is well worth reading and referring to.

Smashwords ebook (for Nook, iBooks, Sony etc)
Smashwords has even more restrictive rules on formatting and it’s a completely different format to that of a Kindle book. Again there is a free ebook available from Amazon or Smashwords, “Smashwords Style Book”, which will help you here.

Cover Design
Proofreading is one vital expenditure; cover design is another. It’s easy to spot DIY covers so unless you are a graphic designer don’t try to do it yourself!

Book covers are available to suit every budget, from pre-made designs with your cover added to customised covers that cost from very little to a huge amount! Work out what your budget is and then see what’s available for the price.

Also bear in mind that digital books only require front cover artwork, whereas print books need the back cover and spine too.

Spot the professionally-designed cover!
Promoting Your Book

So you’ve planned your book, written the content, edited and formatted it and you have a killer cover. You’re ready to upload it to your printer/digital ebook distributor and wait for the money to roll in, yes?

Not quite … because your book will be lost amongst the millions of other books out there if you don’t promote it. Marketing deserves a whole book to itself but here are just a few ideas to get you started.

We’ve now reached the end of this workbook. I hope you found it both interesting and useful, and you’re now all ready to get started and write that book!

However, writing a book isn’t easy and there may be areas that you would like some help with. On the next few pages you’ll find a checklist to help you navigate your way through the writing and publishing process. I’ll also explain a little about how I help authors realise their dream of writing and publishing a book.
Write That Book! Checklist

There’s a lot involved in writing a book - probably a lot more than you anticipate right now. Use this checklist to help you through the process.

☐ Identify your motivation for writing a book

☐ Identify a topic and subtopics

☐ Define who your ideal reader is

☐ Research what other books are out there on the same topic

☐ Find a writing coach, mentor or writing buddy to support you

☐ Plan your content

☐ Set a writing schedule

☐ Write that book!

☐ Choose a title (and subtitle)

☐ Check no one else has used that title!

☐ Decide whether to use your own name or a pen name

☐ Check whether there are other authors using that name
☐ Do a first edit

☐ Choose some beta readers

☐ Send the first edit to beta readers

☐ Make changes based on feedback

☐ Write acknowledgements, disclaimer, dedication, etc.

☐ Write an author bio

☐ Write back cover sales copy

☐ Find a copyright notice

☐ Find any quotes or images you want to use

☐ Do a final edit

☐ Send the book to a reputable proofreader

☐ Research publishing options - traditional, short run, POD, digital

☐ Choose your ideal publishing route

☐ Send finished book to relevant people/organisations for reviews
☐ Format book for your chosen publishing route

☐ Arrange cover design

☐ Upload/send book to printer/publisher

☐ Buy ISBN number, if required

☐ Create an author platform using social media, a website etc

☐ Write press release

☐ Send press release to relevant local/national media and organisations

☐ Promote, promote, promote!

☐ Order copy of book

☐ Hold book in hand (or on Kindle) and let the celebrations begin!

This checklist is not exhaustive but it will give you an idea of everything that’s involved. Depending on the publishing route you take not all steps will be necessary - for example, if you get a traditional publishing contract the publisher is likely to do a lot of the work for you. If you self-publish you will be responsible for every element - though of course there are plenty of people out there who are able to help you.

Please don’t be put off by the list!

Writing a book is an amazing experience and a massive achievement … and help is at hand.

Whether you want someone to help you find a topic, set goals and get the book written or you need more practical help with proofreading, formatting and marketing, I am on the end of the phone … just call me on 01367 888229 or email me at alison@theprooffairy.com for a no-obligation chat!
The Proof Fairy’s Services for Authors

I offer the following services for authors - visit www.theprooffairy.com, email me at alison@theprooffairy.com or call me on 01367 888229 for further information.

Book Coaching

If you need someone to help you with the planning and writing stage of your project then I can help. As a book coach, I help people find a topic, set goals and overcome obstacles so they can turn their dreams of being a published author into reality.

I offer two coaching packages:

Ad Hoc Coaching

Pick up the phone and talk ... whenever you want. Calls via phone or Skype are £60 per half hour.

Book Coaching Package

Unlimited telephone or Skype coaching so you can work on your idea, structure and content, overcome writer’s block, discuss the best publication route for you and more. Plus unlimited email support and access to a Facebook group where you can meet other writers.

More details about the coaching programmes, including prices, can be found on my website: www.theprooffairy.com/book-coaching-programmes

Proofreading • Formatting - for Print and Kindle • Cover Design

For details on all the above services please visit www.theprooffairy.com/services-for-authors

You can also email me at alison@theprooffairy.com or call me on 01367 888229 for more information or a quote.
Everyone has a book in them - what's your story?

www.theprooffairy.com