IngramSpark®

The Ultimate Guide to Master Your Book Design: Expanded Edition

The Ultimate Guide to Master Your Book Design

Books *are* judged by their covers! If you're ready to learn how to make your book design stand out, you've come to the right place.

Congratulations! You made it through the hardest part—you wrote a book! Now, it's time to design it.

Too many authors let their manuscripts sit and collect dust because they're not sure where to start, but book design should never stand in the way of publishing your book. There are many resources and tools available online to help you design your book, and ultimately, share your story with the world.

Whether you plan to design a book yourself or hire a professional, this expanded guide covers everything you need to know about the book design process, including:

Let's Get Started!

Book Printing Options with IngramSpark

Changes in technology have allowed for self-publishers to have more book printing options today than ever before. Let's look at the **book printing and binding** options available for IngramSpark authors!

Outside the Book

Book Cover Options

Paperback - Full-color laminated cover with perfect-bound binding

Hardcover - Available with or without dust jacket

Book Textures

Matte Cover - Soft feel, no glare, polished

Gloss Cover - High shine, smooth finish

Digital Cloth™ Cover - Subtle, cloth-like look (available with or without dust jacket. Textured feel available for hardcover books printed in the U.S. and U.K. only)

Book Binding

Perfect Bound - Pages and paperback cover glued together at spine.

Case Laminate - Pages glued to hardcover at ends

Jacketed Case Laminate - Pages glued to hardcover at ends with the option to design what prints on the cover beneath the jacket.

Inside the Book

Ink Qualities

Black-and-White Printing - Most economical, printed on 50 lb / 74 gsm paper in crème or white

Standard Color Printing - Standard color quality, printed on 50 lb / 74 gsm or 70 lb / 104 gsm white paper

Premium Color Printing - Highest color quality with more vivid color, printed on 70 lb / 104 gsm white paper

Paper Color and Weights

Groundwood 38 lb / 56 gsm – Available in black-and-white printing and select, small-format trim sizes in the U.S. and U.K

Crème 50 lb / 74 gsm – Available in black-and-white printing

White 50 lb / 74 gsm – Available in black-and-white printing and standard color printing

White 70 lb / 104 gsm – Available in standard and premium color printing options

IngramSpark is dedicated to expanding book printing options for indie authors! As of early 2020, authors can take advantage of the new digital cloth and jacketed case laminate options for hardcover book printing. Check out the videos below for more details and to find out how publishers reacted to the **new book design options**.

Book Formats: Ebook, Paperback, and Hardcover

We highly recommend that you publish in all formats–ebook, paperback, and hardcover. In this section, we'll talk about print books vs. ebooks, the difference between paperback and hardcover, and the pros of publishing hardcover books.

Ebooks vs. Print Books

Ah, the age-old question: **ebooks vs. print books**. One of the best ways to maximize your book's potential success is to offer it in multiple formats. If a reader exclusively looks for books to read on their Kindle, they won't find your book if there is no ebook version. On the other hand, if a reader exclusively shops for books in their local independent bookstore, they won't find your book is there is no print version.

In addition, studies have shown that the majority of consistent ebook readers also regularly purchase print books. These hybrid readers seem to make buying choices situationally; for instance, an avid reader might enjoy a physical paperback while relaxing at home, then switch to an e-reader while traveling with limited luggage space

Ebooks can be less expensive to produce, so some authors use them as free digital giveaways to build their author platform before producing print copies.

Many authors publish their books in a single format only, and while this approach might also work for your book, the prevailing philosophy supports publishing your book in as many different formats as possible—with the goal of making your book accessible to as many different readers as possible.

Difference Between Hardcover and Paperback

Alright, let's talk print books. You're probably wondering—besides the obvious—what's the **difference between hardcover and paperback** books?

In traditional publishing, debut books are typically released in hardcover several months before the paperback. This capitalizes on the readership who's willing to pay more for the hardcover edition of a book and those who don't want to wait. IngramSpark is one of few print-on-demand services that offers hardcover book printing in a variety of sizes, with or without a dust jacket.

That being said, the perfect-bound trade paperback is the most commonly printed book in the self-publishing industry. Many readers prefer the ease of a paperback, and for indie authors on a budget, it's less expensive to produce and ship, something you can test for yourself with IngramSpark's **Print and Ship Calculator**.

Pros of Hardcover Books

So why should indie authors consider publishing a hardcover book? There are three main reasons.

1 **Higher Margin**

Some readers are willing to pay for the durability and prestige associated with a hardcover book. Since they're more expensive to produce, the list price of a hardcover book is typically higher than a paperback. IngramSpark authors can calculate the compensation of a paperback vs hardcover book with IngramSpark's **Publisher Compensation Calculator**.

Try the Compensation Calculator
Find out how much you'll earn per print book sale!

Calculate Earnings

② Libraries Prefer Hardcovers

Did you know that libraries prefer to stock hardcover books? That's because hardcover books stand up better to repeated use. Since library books are shared between various members of a community, authors can also price a book higher for the library market than the retail market—which means more money for your bottom line.

③ Maximize Sales Potential

Different readers prefer to consume content in different ways. By having your book available in multiple formats (hardcover, paperback, and ebook), and enabling it for global distribution, you're maximizing the opportunity to make a sale.

In addition, certain genres are more likely to be published in hardcover, including cookbooks, some nonfiction, and most young adult fantasy and dystopian books. If your target reader has an expectation, you want to be sure to fulfill it.

IngramSpark author, Savannah J. Goins, shared her experience **publishing a hardcover book** with IngramSpark's Jacketed Case Laminate.

IngramSpark's Jacketed Case Laminate + COVER REVEAL!

with Savannah J. Goins

Picking Your Book's Trim Size

This might seem like a last-minute decision, but your trim size impacts the page count, weight, and overall look and feel of your book—and before you begin your book layout design, you'll want to choose your **book's trim size**.
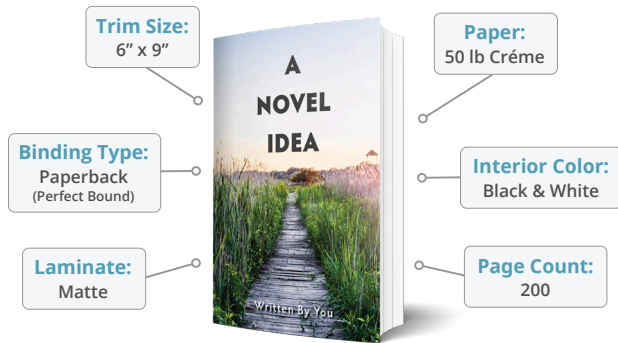

So how do you know what trim size to choose?

A good rule of thumb is to stick to industry standards. Go to your local bookstore or search online to see what trim sizes are most commonly used on popular books in your genre.

Most Commonly Used Specifications for Books Published through IngramSpark
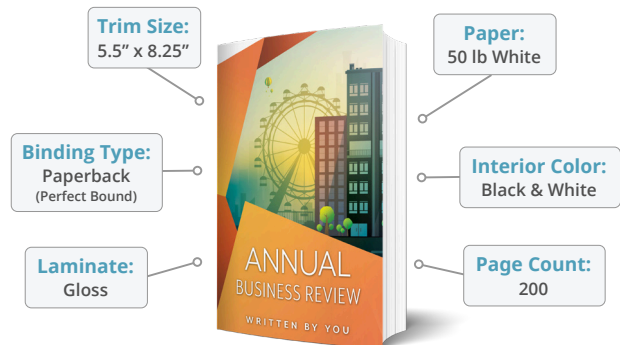
Novels & Poetry Books

Trim Size: 6" x 9"

Binding Type: Paperback (Perfect Bound)

Laminate: Matte

Paper: 50 lb Créme

Interior Color: Black & White

Page Count: 200

Children's & Cookbooks

Trim Size: 8.5" x 8.5"

Binding Type: Hardback (Case Laminate)

Laminate: Gloss

Paper: 70 lb White

Interior Color: Standard Color

Page Count: 25

Graphic Novels

Trim Size: 6.625" x 10.25"

Binding Type: Paperback (Perfect Bound)

Laminate: Gloss

Paper: 70 lb White

Interior Color: Standard Color

Page Count: 120

Business & Health Books

Trim Size: 5.5" x 8.25"

Binding Type: Paperback (Perfect Bound)

Laminate: Gloss

Paper: 50 lb White

Interior Color: Black & White

Page Count: 200

Once you have an idea of your book's trim size, use **IngramSpark's Print and Ship Calculator** to determine how much you'll pay to print and ship orders directly to yourself or your customers!
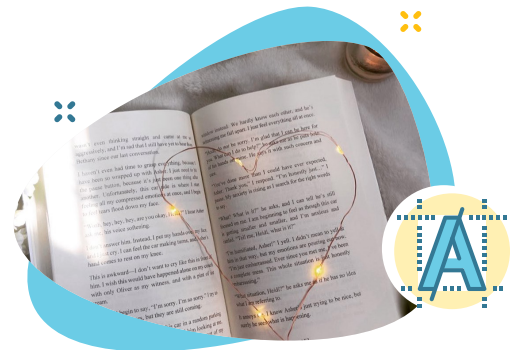
Try the Print and Ship Calculator

Find out how much you'll pay to print and ship orders based on your book's binding and trim size!

Calculate Costs

The Best Font for Books

Now that you've made some key decisions about your book's binding and trim size—let's move on to the inside of the book! One of the most common questions indie authors ask is "What is the **best font for books**?"

Generally speaking, there are two main reasons for caring about the best fonts for books. They are:

- **Readability:** Readability refers to the degree of visual comfort a person experiences when reading lengthy passages or reading for a long period of time. Readability is dependent on legibility, which is how easily one letter can be distinguished from another.

- **Being "On Message":** What message is your book trying to send? What do you want the reader to feel? In addition to being readable, the author wants the text to look inviting and welcoming. Depending on the book's genre and topic, there may be other messages, such as mysterious, romantic, cheerful, transformative, business-like, and more.

Factors that determine the readability of a typeface include the spacing between letters, the height and thickness of letters, and the size of the serifs.

Serif Fonts

Serif fonts help with readability and are therefore preferable in the body of a book. The "serif" is the decorative stroke that finishes each end of a letter (think Times Roman). Serif fonts are easier on the reader's eye than sans-serif fonts; the stroke leads the reader's eye from one letter to the next. Serifs help pull the text together, making it easier for the eye to move and recognize one letter from another, helping the eye to speed through long passages of text.

Sans Serif Fonts

As the name "sans serif" indicates, these are fonts without the decorative flourish (think Helvetica or Arial). Reading a line of text printed in sans serif is more tiring. For this reason, sans-serif fonts should be reserved for headings or other limited uses.

Best Fonts for Body Text

1106 Design polled their book designers, and one of the top choices for the body of a book is the friendly and warm "Caslon."

Adobe Caslon Pro Regular

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Caslon is one of the most popular fonts today, with multiple offshoots, versions, and interpretations. When used in body text, this font conveys an inviting and readable feeling. It gives the feeling of a human touch, with warmth and familiarity.

Other good font choices are:

Garamond

Developed in the 16th cntury by Parisian engraver Claude Garamond, it is a popular font for books.

Minion

Likewise, Minion was created in 1990 for Adobe Systems, and like other readable fonts, is based on a classical style of typeface.

Jenson

A more recent addition to the world of fonts, Jenson was developed specially for Adobe Systems, but is based on a text face cut by Nicolas Jenson in Venice around 1470. Jenson is considered a highly readable typeface.

Palatino

This font, released in 1949, was intended mainly for headings and short lines of text, such as ads, invitations, and the like. However, it became popular for book text and was tweaked to improve readability.

Best Fonts for Headings, Chapter Titles, and Other Uses

For headings, you can choose from an array of sans-serif fonts; sometimes a serif font has a complementary sans-serif font. Alternatively, you could choose a bolder version of the serif font used for the body text.

The sky is the limit for chapter titles, as long as the title is readable and on-message. Script fonts are not always best for chapter titles, as many are too decorative to be readable. You'll also want a font that is at least semi-bold so that it stands out on the page.

A crisp, clean sans-serif font is best for figure, table, and illustration numbers and titles.

Sidebars and call-outs should be in a different font than the body—a version of the same sans-serif font used for the figure titles can be a good choice. Set aside call-outs and sidebars with a line, decorative quote marks, or flourishes, and be sure to leave lots of white space.

How to Choose a Font

With all of these choices, how do you choose the best fonts for your book?

Think like a book designer and consider the message and tone of your book. Then, produce a few sample pages, each using a different font. If you'd like to compare fonts online, try using a website like **MyFonts.com** to test fonts before purchasing them.

One more word about choosing fonts: don't choose too many!

Stick with one font family (i.e., the main font you are using for the body, plus a bold or semi-bold version and an italics version) and a sans-serif font for titles. You could choose a corresponding font for chapter titles, but that should be it! Using too many fonts, along with overuse of bolding, italics and underlines, screams "amateur!" Keep it simple; keep it professional.

How to Purchase Fonts

Fonts can be expensive! One way to avoid this expense is to work with a book designer who has an array of fonts at their fingertips. However, if you're formatting your book yourself, here are a couple of tips:

- **Avoid downloading free fonts.** Not only could you expose your computer to viruses, it's also illegal. Legitimately free fonts, such as those available through Google, are meant for websites and other digital applications. These are called web fonts, and their quality is not optimum for printing. You won't find any of the best fonts for books on Google!

- **Purchase the entire family of fonts to access bold and italics.** In Word, you can bold and underline any line of text at will; in software used especially for print design, such as Adobe InDesign, it's a different story. Each version of the font—for example, light, regular, semi-bold, bold and black—is a physically different font. If you don't purchase the bold version of a font, you won't be able to bold anything!

Most designers don't recommend using Microsoft Word to typeset a book, as the program does not lend itself well to the rules of typesetting—but for writers on a budget, Word is a great option if you follow the basic rules of choosing a serif font for the body and a sans-serif font for headings and titles.

Just remember that choosing your fonts wisely will improve the readability of your book and help ensure your message is received loud and clear.

Book Layout Design

Now that we've covered fonts, let's talk about the additional components that make up the interior of a book—starting with the basics.

What is Typesetting?

A good place to start is answering the question, **what is typesetting**?

According to **Merriam-Webster**, typesetting is "the process of setting material in type or into a form to be used in printing." Book layout design, interior design, typesetting, formatting—sometimes, these terms are used interchangeably.

In today's world, print quality has increased dramatically, and even a Word document comes out looking pretty good—at least to the untrained eye. Software such as Adobe InDesign and Microsoft Publisher allow anyone to become would-be book designers.

However, typesetting is more than just the tools; it's also about the rules.

Book Layout Design Basics

Let's take a closer look at some of the rules of **book layout design**.
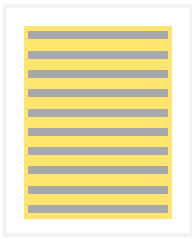
The book block

In a book, the text is confined to a tightly defined area on the page called the book block, where facing pages usually end on the same line. The exception may be the last page of a chapter.

Margins

The white space around the entire book block. White space is important and generous margins around the book block allow the eye to move comfortably from one line to the next.

Alignment

Text must line up across the page. Book designers spend a lot of time adjusting the line spacing to make sure this happens, especially if there are headings and subheads, lists and illustrations.

Line spacing

Lines of text that are too close to each other (or too far apart) are difficult to read.

Paragraph spacing: In most cases, there should NOT be a line of space between paragraphs. Indicate the beginning of a new paragraph by indenting the first line. Space above a paragraph can be used sparingly to indicate a scene change or a new section. Whenever there is a blank line above a paragraph, eliminate the first-line indent on that paragraph.

Widows and orphans: The first line of a paragraph shouldn't fall on the last line of a page, and the last line of a paragraph should not go over to the top of the next page. Widowed and orphaned lines make the reader pause, thus impeding reading comprehension.

Lines after a subhead: When a subhead appears at the bottom of a page, it should be followed by at least two lines of text while still maintaining the book block. Like widows and orphans, leaving orphaned headings is a no-no.

Word stacks: When the same word appears in the same position in three or more consecutive lines, this creates what's known as a word stack. These are fixed by adjusting word spacing or rewriting the text.

Book layout involves many other rules, including proper use of special characters such as em and en dashes, hyphenation, kerning, true quotation marks, alignment, justification, and much more. Attention to these details will make your book look attractive and unique, ensuring a pleasant reading experience for your audience.

Why It Matters

It may sound silly to worry about hyphens, widows, orphans, tight and loose lines, and all the other "rules" of typesetting, but they have one thing in common: these aspects of book page composition exist to minimize nanosecond-long pauses that distract the reader.

The Basics of Book Cover Design

There are several things to consider when you design the cover of your book. Let's start with some **book cover design basics**!

Book cover design is one of the most fun parts of the publishing process! It's an opportunity to take your manuscript—the story you've poured your heart and soul into—and give the words a visual representation. Ask yourself: *If I was only given a split second to grab a potential reader's attention, what's the best way to do that?*

Answer: a compelling book cover design.

There are three things to consider in book cover design: the front cover, back cover, and spine. Let's look at each of them individually.
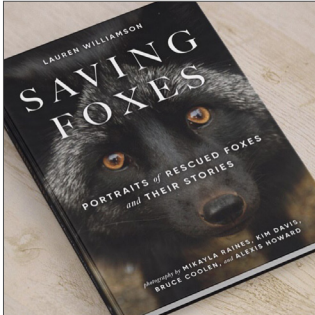
Front Cover

Your front cover is arguably the most important element of book cover design. There are two main parts of your front cover: imagery and typography.

Book Cover Imagery

Your imagery could be a photograph, an illustration, geometric shapes, an interesting play on color, or more!

Book Cover Typography

The typography should include your book's title, subtitle, and author name. Keep in mind that the book's title should always be the most prominent (unless you're a New York Times-bestselling author).

Your cover will likely be designed to stand out on a bookshelf, but you should also ask yourself: what does my book cover look like on a small screen? Your front book cover design should be appealing (and readable) to both a reader browsing in a bookstore and a reader looking at a thumbnail image of your book online.

Back Cover

When people think about book design, they're often picturing the front cover alone. However, a book cover is an entire package—front, back, and spine. Your back cover is your chance to build on the excitement you created with the front cover, and ultimately hook the reader into buying your book.

The back cover typically includes a book description, book reviews, author bio, ISBN, and barcode. The book description and reviews are your main selling points, and should come above the bio, ISBN, and barcode.

Keep in mind that if you're publishing a hardcover, you can place some of this information on the interior flaps of a dust jacket. Similarly, if you're publishing an ebook, this information can go on your ebook's description page.

Spine

The spine of a book is often overlooked by new authors–but take a moment to think about how books are shelved at bookstores and libraries. In most scenarios, the spine is the first thing readers will see as they scan the shelves.

The title should be the most prominent text on the spine, followed by the author name, and the logo of your publisher imprint. As you're designing your book, keep in mind that the spine is directly affected by your book's page count. You'll want to make sure that your interior file is complete before beginning the book cover design process to ensure that the spine width does not change.

You can use IngramSpark's **Weight and Spine Width Calculator** to calculate the width of your spine before you begin your book cover design.

8 Book Cover Design Tips

Now that we've nailed the basics of book cover design, let's discuss how to design a book cover with IngramSpark's top eight **book design tips**!

8 Tips for Book Cover Design

1. Give readers a sneak peek of what's to come.
2. Indicate the book's genre.
3. Understand your audience.
4. Set the appropriate tone.

5. Pay attention to the details.
6. Follow the rules of design.
7. Have a distinct style.
8. Consider working with a professional.

1 Give readers a sneak peek of what's to come.
Your book cover design should give readers an idea of the plot/theme, without giving away any major spoilers. Not too much, not too little, but just enough to get them interested.

2 Indicate the book's genre.
Many readers can tell a book's genre simply by glancing at the cover. For example, a thriller will look different from a collection of humorous essays, and many genres even differ by trim size.

3 Understand your audience.
Oftentimes, books could fit into several genre categories. If you've written a combination of historical fiction and romance, your cover can help the reader understand whether your book is focused more on the history or the romance. Make sure your front cover accurately conveys what your book is about, so readers know what they're getting into.

4 Set the appropriate tone.
All books have a dominant tone. In order to attract the right readers, your book cover design needs to match the tone of your book. What do we mean by that? Well, if you've written a mostly humorous book, you might stay away from darker imagery. If you've written a tear-jerker, you will likely want to refrain from using bright colors and cartoonish illustrations.

⑤ Pay attention to the details.

Lighting, shading, image treatment, text hierarchy, layering...these are just a few of the details that can take your book cover design from mediocre to eye-catching.

> *"Your book cover design isn't a place to cut corners. You want to make sure every detail of your cover positions you as the capable and professional author you are."*
>
> **—Chris Payne**, **99designs**

The subtle (and not-so-subtle) details are what will make people want to buy your book.

⑥ Follow the rules of design.

Design is a creative field, but there are still several rules in place that can help grab your readers' attention. Text hierarchy can emphasize important text (like your title) and contrasting colors can make certain text pop on the page. In addition, color psychology can be leveraged to create a specific emotional response.

⑦ Have a distinct style.

Yes, we just told you to follow the rules...but you still want your book to stand out on the shelves! Creating your own distinct visual style can help grab your readers' attention and build your author brand at the same time.

⑧ Consider working with a professional.

If the above sounds daunting, that's okay—we can't all be good at everything! Consider collaborating with a design professional to bring your vision to life. Your book cover is a reader's first impression of your book and paying a professional can be treated as an investment towards future book sales!

If you don't know where to start with the "rules" for book cover design, you can try IngramSpark's **free online book design course** or consider **hiring an expert** to design your book cover.

FREE Book Design Course

Learn how to design a book cover and interior with expert tips to help your book reach more readers.
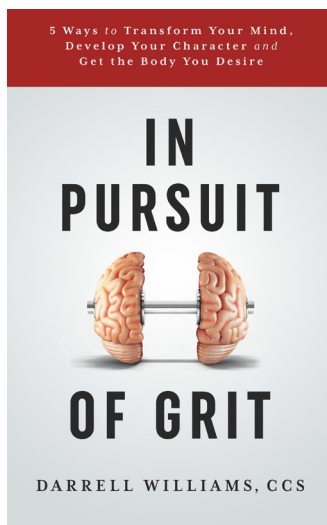
Start Course

Book Cover Design Ideas

Book cover design is constantly evolving, but there are several key trends and themes that appear in popular book covers. Let's take a look at some of the **top book cover ideas**.

Six Book Cover Design Ideas

1 Minimalism

A popular design approach is minimalism, distinguishable by clean and straightforward designs.

2 Botanicals

Flowers are finding their way onto the covers of books written by both men and women and across many different genres.
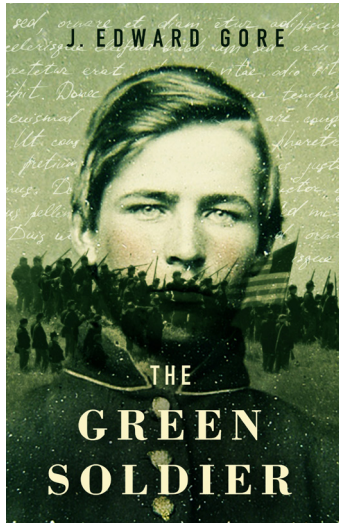
3 Intertwining Text

These days, more covers are laying images or drawings over and between the title text—making the imagery part of the font itself.

④ Real Photos

Real-life photos are a great option for cover art. They range from historical to modern, from black and white to sepia toned to vibrantly colored.

⑤ Double Exposure

A double-exposure cover offers an outline within the backdrop of a bigger picture. The overall effect is really impactful and can be interpreted as surreal or even frightful.

⑥ Big & Bold Typography

A theme across modern book covers is big, bold typography. The newest book fonts being used are blocky and clean with long lines—Lydian and sans serif are two popular options.
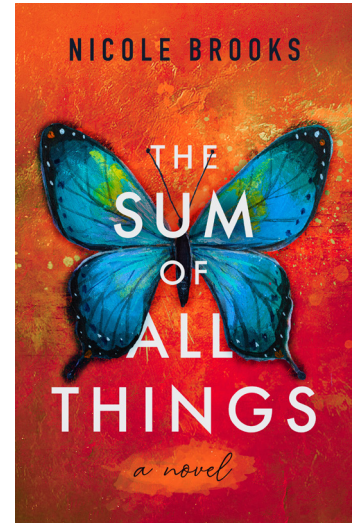
All six cover designs by **Ebook Launch**

For more book cover design ideas, check out our blog post:
Top 10 Book Cover Ideas (and Examples!)

DIY Book Design

We've covered the basic elements of a book cover, the top book design tips, and the top book cover ideas. Now it's time to talk about how to make a book cover yourself!

> *"The beauty of technology is that it helps you craft, finalize, publish, print, and distribute your book. Book publishing and self-publishing is a business, and when time and budget are limited, it's helpful for independent publishers to enlist technology and industry experts for help."*
>
> **—Julie-Ann Harper, Founder of**
> **Pick-a-WooWoo Publishing Group**

Educational Book Design Resources

At IngramSpark, we believe knowledge is power, and indie authors deserve access to it! Over the years, we've created several FREE resources to help you learn more about how to make your own book online.

Book Design Online Course

Learn **how to design a book cover** and interior with design tips that will help your book reach more readers. This IngramSpark Academy course reveals important publishing industry standards to keep in mind for your book design, whether you create your cover and interior yourself or work with a professional book designer.

Start Course

Book Design Blog Posts

Over the years, several well-respected industry experts have shared their expertise with the IngramSpark author community, and we have an entire section of the blog dedicated to **book design** posts.

Read More

There are several tools to help you with a **DIY book design**—let's look at a few.

Tools to Create a Book Interior

These unique tools make interior book design achievable for the DIY author. The professional guidance built into these programs will help you create a book that looks as though it was created by an experienced designer.

IngramSpark's Book-Building Tool

IngramSpark's **Book-Building Tool** allows you to format and upload a Word document, or type your book directly into the tool, which has predesigned interior templates and engaging chapter openers to choose from.
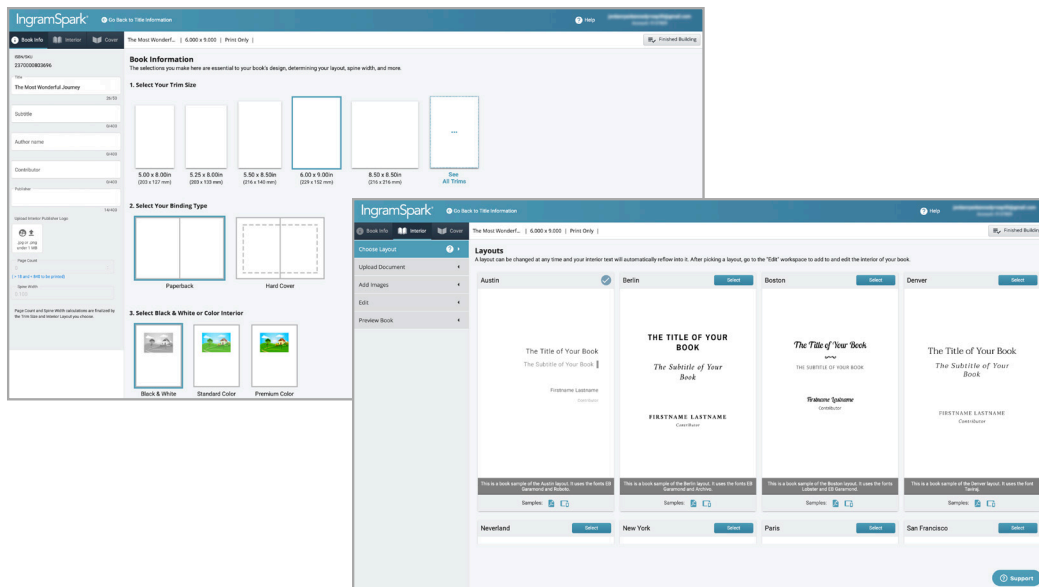
The Reedsy Book Editor

The Reedsy Book Editor is a beautiful production tool that takes care of EPUB and print-ready PDF file formatting and conversion, before you've even finished writing.

Bookow

Bookow not only formats, but it reduces those errors often found in Word docs. You can choose from various book templates for a professional look. We love the simplicity of this tool. It's very affordable and offers great customer service.

Pressbooks

Pressbooks is a robust, fully featured publishing tool—if you can use WordPress websites and blogs, you can use this platform. It outputs your books into PDF and EPUB formats and lives in the cloud, so contributors or editors can also work on your book.

Tools to Create a Book Cover

IngramSpark's Book-Building Tool

IngramSpark's **Book-Building Tool** allows you to create your own book online from your IngramSpark account. At no extra cost, you can choose from pre-designed book layouts or customize your own front book cover design and interior design—automatically formatted to meet IngramSpark's file requirements.

Canva

Canva offers a free, simple design program that enables you to become a book designer. It contains **templates** and predesigned drag-and-drop elements in an easy-to-use interface for designers and non-designers alike.

DIY Book Covers

DIY Book Covers saves you from having to learn graphic design from scratch. You are able to design the cover you have in mind, if you take the time to familiarize yourself with the actual set up. Making use of this resource is a significantly cheaper option than most.

Premade Book Cover Templates

There are several companies that offer premade book cover templates that are sold once and then removed from the website. These book cover templates are a great way for indie authors to affordably self-publish their work!

- **Joel Friedlander's Book Design Templates** let you quickly choose a professionally designed cover at an affordable price.

- **SelfPubBookCovers** offers thousands of premade, quality-vetted book covers created by designers all over the world. The book covers are ready to customize and download instantly.

- **The Book Cover Designer** has over 14,000 covers in their database.

Before purchasing a premade book cover template, make sure to double-check that you'll be receiving a file that suits your needs–whether that's a print book, ebook, or both!

Uploading a Book with IngramSpark

The following list contains basic guidelines to help you avoid what we've found to be the most common causes of file rejection and delays with IngramSpark.
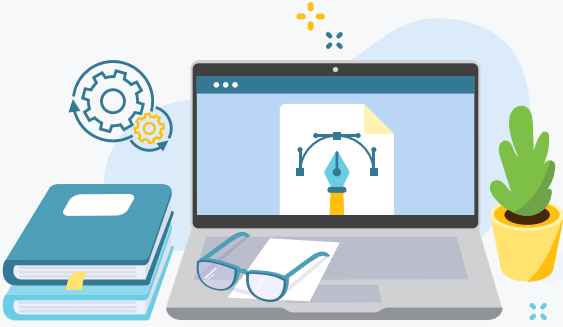
Interior Files:

☐ Must be uploaded as a separate file from the cover

☐ Use single-page format (1-up per page)

☐ Do not include crop, registration, or printer marks

☐ All fonts must be embedded

☐ The final page should be blank. If there is no blank page, we'll add one for you.

☐ Margins must be a minimum of 0.5" (13mm) from final trim size on all sides. This includes page numbers and non-bleeding text and art. We allow for a 1/16" (0.0625 in / 2 mm) variance in printing. If text/images are too close to the trim edges, they could be cut in the printing and binding process.

☐ **Gutter Margin** (no ink area):
- 0.125" (3mm) is recommended on the bind side of interior
- Saddle stitch books (anything less than 48 pgs) do not require gutter margins

☐ **Bleed:**
B&W and Color interior – Full 0.125" (3mm) past final trim size, except on bind/spine side

☐ **Spot Colors:**
B&W interior – Do not include spot colors or ICC profiles and all images should be converted to grayscale

☐ Color interior – Must include CMYK images at/72ppi or higher. 300ppi is recommended. CMYK value should not exceed 240%. Elements should not be built in "Registration". All spot colors with/without transparencies must be converted to CMYK.

☐ For revisions, the entire file must be re-uploaded. Partial pages cannot be accepted.

Cover Files:

- ☐ To ensure accuracy, use our custom template generator tool—located under the "Tools" section of the web site. Simply fill in the required fields and a custom template will be emailed to you.

- ☐ Must be uploaded as a separate PDF from the interior.

- ☐ Barcodes are mandatory on all covers. 100% black only and placed on a white box/background.

- ☐ **Resolution:** 300ppi
  Printed Line Screen: 175 visual equivalent
  Color Space: CMYK

- ☐ **Bleed:** 0.125" (3mm) on all four sides except hardcover files, which require a 0.625" (16mm) wrap

- ☐ **Type safety:** 0.25" (6mm) minimum on all sides

- ☐ **Spine Type Safety:**
  • For page counts below 48, spine text is not available
  • Spines 0.35" and larger – 0.0625" (2mm) left/right sides
  • Spines smaller than 0.35" – 0.03125" (1mm) left/right sides

- ☐ Text that is 24 pt. or below, please use 100% black only

- ☐ All spot colors with/without transparencies must be converted to CMYK

Check out the **File Creation Guide** for complete information on files accepted within IngramSpark. All the information on the front cover, back cover, spine, and flaps (if you have a dust jacket) needs to be assembled into a single PDF. To ensure accuracy, we recommend that you use our **cover template generator**. Simply fill in the required fields and a custom template (barcode included) will be emailed to you!

Cover Template Generator

Create a template for your book cover design, complete with support files, barcode, email instructions, and more useful info.

Generate Cover

The beauty of self-publishing is that you have full control over your creative decisions. You can be the writer, editor, designer, publisher, and ultimately—the owner of your work! However, time is money, and your book design is an essential piece of discoverability and sales—and a lot of self-publishers still opt to enlist the help of professionals. If you're interested in hiring an expert to assist you with book cover design, we'll cover everything you need to know in the next section.

Hiring a Book Designer

Often, the best way to design the book of your dreams is to hire a book designer! IngramSpark has a list of several recommended experts to help you with the book design process. They're located on our **Experts** page under "Book Cover Design," "Interior Book Design," and "Full Service."

Here are a few of our highly recommended experts:

- **1106 Design** offers custom cover and book layout design, researching your book's specific genre and voice, and creating unique covers and interiors for you to choose from. Their design team works with you to go through however many rounds of designs it takes until you're 100% satisfied.

- **Ebook Launch** offers exclusive book cover design packages to all IngramSpark authors as well as professional print book formatting services, providing files guaranteed to be approved by KDP Print and IngramSpark.

- **Pick-a-Woo-Woo Publishing** is an Australian author services company that provides original, customized, and professional book design. They take into account the author's style, genre, and expectations—delivering files guaranteed to meet IngramSpark's file specifications.

- **Reedsy** is an online marketplace that lets you browse through thousands of vetted book service professionals, including award-winning book designers.

- **The Book Cover Whisperer** commits to creating visually stunning cover and interior designs your readers will love. Researched, quality production, with unlimited changes until you're 100% satisfied.

Questions to Keep in Mind

There are several things to keep in mind when you **hire a book cover designer**. Before hiring someone, you should always ask to see his or her previous work. If a book designer's portfolio of cover designs isn't interesting or appealing to you, explore other options!

We highly recommend publishing a book in multiple formats (both print and digital), so it's important to consider your publishing goals before you hire a book cover designer. If you'd like to publish in both formats, you'll save money by having a designer create the print and ebook cover files at the same time.

If you have a strong concept for your book cover design, it's important that you communicate this with your cover designer. Also, make sure to discuss what the feedback process looks like:

- If you don't like the first concept, are they willing to go back to the drawing board?
- How many rounds of revisions are allowed?
- Will revisions cost you extra money?

Be sure to overcommunicate on the front end so that the design process goes as smoothly as possible, and you don't end up with unexpected costs along the way!

If you've made it this far in the publishing process, congratulations! You're one step closer to publishing the book of your dreams.

Once you've published your work, be sure to tag us in your #SparkUnboxing on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram for a chance to be featured—and check out some of the best #SparkUnboxing moments below!

Ready to share your story with the world?

Start Publishing Today