



Front And Back

Your cover is the first thing a reader sees whether they're browsing online or picking up a physical copy. A good cover doesn't just look attractive. It signals genre, tone, and professionalism. The front draws the reader in. The back gives them a reason to stay.

A Quick Prompt to Get You Started

Pick three books in your genre and look at their covers.

Ask yourself: *What do these books promise, and how do they communicate that promise at a glance?*

The Front Cover

The front cover is your book's handshake. It needs to be clear, confident, and instantly recognisable to the right audience.

Key Elements

- **Title**
Clear, readable, and prominent. Avoid overly decorative fonts.
- **Author name**
Consistent with your other books (if you have them).
- **Imagery**
Should reflect the genre and tone. Readers rely on visual cues.
- **Colour palette**
Genre-appropriate and easy on the eye.
- **Simplicity**
A strong cover usually has one focal point, not five.

What the Front Cover Should Do

- signal the genre immediately
- look good at thumbnail size (crucial for online stores)
- feel professional and intentional
- make the reader curious enough to turn the book over

The Back Cover

The back cover is where you persuade the reader to open the book. It's not a summary of the entire story, it's an invitation.

Key Elements

- **Blurb**
A short, engaging description that sets up the premise without spoilers.
- **Tone match**
The blurb should sound like the book, light, dark, funny, tense.
- **Author bio**
Optional, but helpful for non-fiction or series authors.
- **Endorsements**
Only include them if they're genuine and add value.
- **Barcode and pricing**
Required for print; placed discreetly at the bottom.

What the Back Cover Should Do

- give the reader a reason to open the book
- create intrigue, not explain everything
- reassure them that this book is "for them"
- feel clean and uncluttered

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- too many fonts
- unreadable text over busy images
- covers that don't match the genre
- blurbs that explain the whole plot
- bios longer than the blurb
- cluttered layouts

A good cover looks effortless, even though it isn't.

A Simple Exercise

Write two things:

1. What the front cover should make the reader feel
2. What the back cover should make the reader want to do

If you can answer those clearly, your design choices will fall into place.

A Final Thought

Your cover doesn't need to be flashy. It needs to be clear, confident, and true to the book you've written. When the front invites and the back persuades, you've done the job well.

Postscript – A Note on Using AI Images

AI image tools can be helpful for early cover concepts, mood boards, or exploring visual directions, but be cautious if you think you may pursue conventional publishing in the future. Many traditional publishers are wary of AI-generated artwork, and some will not consider covers or promotional materials that rely on it. If you want to keep that door open, treat AI images as a drafting tool, not a final product.

AI can be useful, but it comes with responsibilities. Always check the licensing terms, make sure the image is genuinely cleared for commercial use, and confirm it doesn't resemble existing copyrighted artwork. Ethical use matters too: avoid images that mimic specific artists or styles too closely, and be transparent with designers if you hand over AI-generated concepts.

AI is best used as a way to explore possibilities, not as a shortcut to a finished cover. The final design should be something you can publish, and defend, with confidence