



Formatting - Print And Ebook

Once your manuscript is edited and ready, the next step is preparing it for publication. Print and Ebook formats have different requirements, but the goal is the same: a clean, readable book that looks professional on every device or page. You don't need specialist skills, just a clear understanding of what each format expects.

A Quick Prompt to Get You Started

Ask yourself: *How do I want the reader to experience this book, on a page, on a screen, or both?*

Your answer will guide the formatting choices you make.

Print Formatting

Print books need structure and stability. What you see on the page is exactly what the reader will see.

Key Things to Check

- **Page size**
Choose your trim size early (e.g., 5x8", 6x9"). It affects everything else.
- **Margins and gutters**
Print books need wider inner margins so text doesn't disappear into the spine.
- **Chapter headings**
Keep them consistent in style, size, and placement.
- **Page numbers**
Start numbering from the first chapter, not the title page.
- **Widows and orphans**
Avoid single lines stranded at the top or bottom of a page.
- **Scene breaks**
Use a clear, consistent marker (***) or a blank line).

Print formatting is about clarity and predictability, nothing should shift unexpectedly.

Ebook Formatting

Ebooks behave differently. Readers can change font size, line spacing, and even the font itself. Your job is to make sure the text flows cleanly no matter what.

Key Things to Check

- **Reflowable text**
Avoid fixed layouts unless your book is image-heavy.
- **Simple, clean styles**
Use basic formatting, bold, italics, headings, and avoid complex fonts.
- **Linked table of contents**
Essential for navigation on Kindle and other devices.
- **Consistent chapter breaks**
Ebook platforms rely on proper heading styles to create clean jumps.
- **No double spaces or manual tabs**
These can create odd gaps on different devices.
- **Images**
Keep them small in file size and centred.

Ebook formatting is about flexibility, the book should adapt gracefully to any screen.

Formatting Tools and Options

You can format your book using:

- built-in tools on platforms like KDP or Kobo
- word processors with export options
- specialist software (e.g., Vellum, Atticus)
- professional formatters

A Simple Exercise

Export one chapter as both a print PDF and an Ebook file. Look at them side by side.

What looks clean? What looks odd? What needs adjusting?

A Final Thought

Formatting isn't about perfection. It's about readability. If the book looks clean, consistent, and easy to navigate, you're ready for the next step.