

# The Essential Steps of the Fiction-Writing Process

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If you are curious what the writing and publishing process looks like from a 10,000 foot view, this overview will show you the general pace of fiction and non-fiction book projects. If you ever want future guidance on writing and publishing your book, check out our 16-week program and coaching. Email [connect@westsky.studio](mailto:connect@westsky.studio) for more information.

## 1. Ideation & Brainstorming

Simply put: Pay attention. The experiences you have, whether good or bad, can be the greatest source of insight and inspiration when it comes to writing fiction. Brainstorm and explore your big ideas, characters, and plot twists. Keep a notebook or digital file to jot down inspirations as they come.

## 3. Drafting

Start writing your first draft! Don't worry about perfection - focus on getting your story onto the page. Some authors write multiple drafts, while others prefer a single, more polished first draft. **Remember: tell the story to yourself first, then refine it for your audience.**

To the right are popular methods for drafting your first manuscript.

## 2. Research & Planning

This phase of any book writing process is as unique as the person writing. Research relevant topics, plan your scenes, and outline your plot (if your brain works that way). Create character profiles and world-building details. This stage helps organize your thoughts and makes the writing process smoother.

### *The Snowflake Method*

Start with a one-sentence summary and gradually expand it into paragraphs, character descriptions, and scene outlines.

### *The Three-Act Structure*

Organize your story into setup, confrontation, and resolution phases.

### *The "Pantser" Approach*

Write without a detailed outline, letting the story unfold organically.

### *The "Plotter" Approach*

Mix writing methods and set daily targets. With consistent effort, you could complete a first draft in a month.

## 4.

# Revising & Editing

Polish your work through multiple rounds of editing. Hiring a professional editor can really make a difference in turning a manuscript to a publish-ready document.

### *Self-editing*

Review and revise your work

### *Content editing*

Address plot holes and story structure

### *Line editing*

Improve sentence structure and pacing

### *Copy editing*

Fix grammar, punctuation, and spelling

### *Proofreading*

Final check for any remaining errors

## *Typesetting interior “looks”*

## 5.

# Formatting & Design

This is when you take your finalized manuscript and design print-ready files.

### *Typesetting*

Format your manuscript for print and/or ebook. The interior “look”.

### *Cover design*

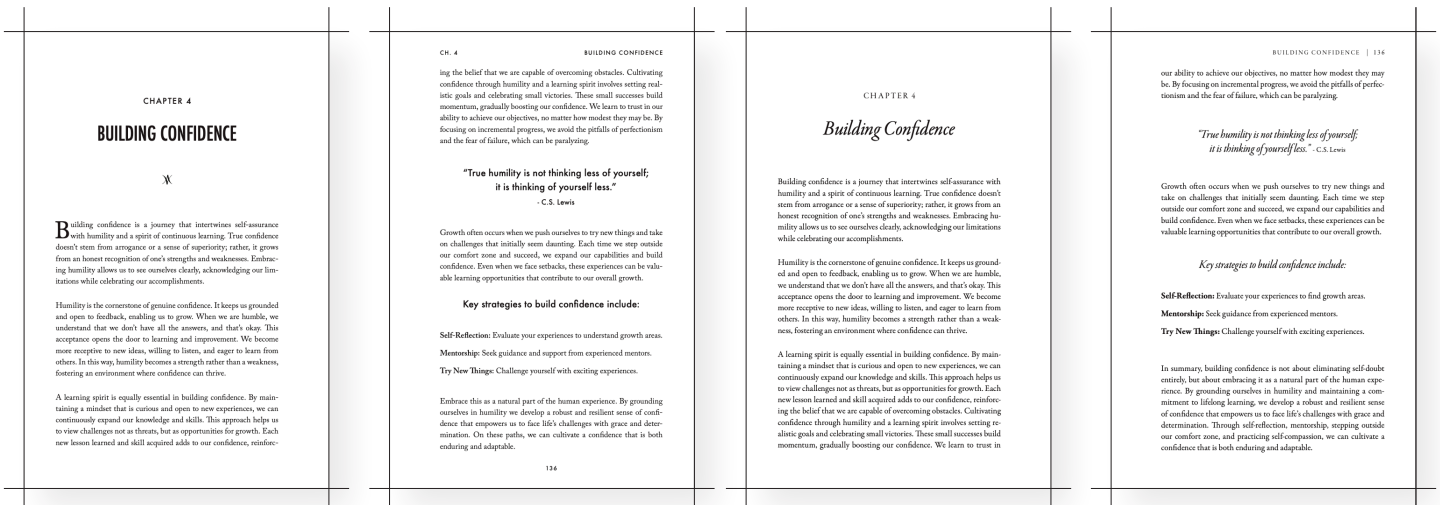
Create a cover that will sell your book to the right readers. Thorough market research is crucial for designing a book cover that engages potential readers..

### *Back cover and book description*

Write a compelling summary or preview that will attract the right readers.

### *Note:*

We highly recommend hiring an editor who understands Chicago Manual of Style and a typesetter who works in InDesign or similar tools. Always ask for the project files alongside the final printable files.



## 6.

### Beta Reading & ARCs

Share your polished manuscript with beta readers for feedback. Then, distribute Advance Reader Copies (ARCs) to get early reviews. This feedback can help you make final improvements and generate buzz for your book!

## 8.

### Publishing Platform

Research and choose the best self-publishing platform that suits your audience and distribution needs. Consider factors like royalties, distribution reach, and printing options.

At Westsky Studio, we set our authors up with a combination of KDP and Ingram in a special order that gives you the biggest reach and makes yourself available to the most readers.

#### *Print-on-demand distribution channels:*

**Amazon KDP:** Ideal for authors seeking easy access to Amazon's vast customer base, KDP offers high royalty rates and user-friendly publishing tools.

**IngramSpark:** Known for its extensive distribution network, IngramSpark enables authors to reach bookstores and libraries worldwide with flexible pricing and lower printing costs.

**Draft2Digital:** A no-cost platform for authors seeking wide eBook distribution, they simplify the process with easy formatting tools and real-time sales tracking.

## 7.

### Final Revisions

Make any last adjustments based on feedback from beta readers and ARC reviewers. This is your final opportunity to refine your work before publication.

## 9.

### Legal Considerations

Obtain an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) and barcode for your book. This is a unique set of numbers that allows stores to keep track of book sales. A library of congress control number (or PCN) and copyright registration are important to consider getting as well.

If you need help navigating this, email us at [connect@westsky.studio](mailto:connect@westsky.studio).

#### *ISBN & Barcode*

[www.myidentifiers.com](http://www.myidentifiers.com)

#### *Library of Congress Control Number (PCN)*

[www.loc.gov/programs/preassigned-control-number/about-this-program/](http://www.loc.gov/programs/preassigned-control-number/about-this-program/)

#### *Copyright Registration*

[www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)

#### *ISBN & barcode*

ISBN 978-0-99-702549-1



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*10.*

## Marketing & Promotion

Developing a marketing strategy is critical for a successful book launch. This may include:

1. Build an author website and strong social media presence.
2. Create a mailing list for fans
3. Plan a book launch event (virtual or in-person)
4. Reach out to book bloggers and reviewers with your book.

*12.*

## Post-Publication

Continue marketing efforts, engage with readers, and start thinking about your next book! Leveraging the buzz from your launch is critical if you want to stay top-of-mind with your new audience. Posting on social media and starting a newsletter are great ways to do this.

*11.*

## Publication & Launch

Upload your files to your chosen platform and hit publish. This is the moment your hard work pays off!

Depending on your platform, you can order copies to keep in storage while keeping your book “Print on Demand” online.

*Enjoy the journey!*

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Remember, self-publishing is a journey. Stay patient, persistent, and open to learning throughout the process. If you're interested in walking through this journey with a coach, feel free to reach out to us at [connect@westsky.studio](mailto:connect@westsky.studio) or online at [www.westsky.studio/publishing](http://www.westsky.studio/publishing).