

THE COMPLETE KDP PUBLISHING GUIDE 2025

From Idea to Amazon Bestseller — Step by Step

WHAT'S INSIDE

- ✓ Manuscript formatting & KDP upload
- ✓ Cover design rules that drive sales
- ✓ Amazon keyword & category strategy
- ✓ Pricing, royalties & revenue math
- ✓ Launch checklist & ongoing marketing

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FREE RESOURCE | KDPWithAI.com

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01. Setting Up Your KDP Account

Amazon KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing) is the world's largest self-publishing platform. Setting up correctly from day one saves you headaches and maximises your royalty payments.

Step-by-Step Account Setup

- **Go to kdp.amazon.com:** Sign in with your existing Amazon account or create a new one.
- **Complete your author profile:** Add your pen name or real name. This appears on your book's Amazon page.
- **Tax interview:** Required for all authors. US authors use SSN/EIN; non-US authors select 'Individual' and claim treaty benefits where applicable. Indian authors: select India, choose W-8BEN form.
- **Bank & payment details:** Add your bank account for direct deposit. USD wire transfers are available for Indian accounts via KDP's royalty payment system.
- **Select royalty marketplace:** Choose which Amazon stores you want to sell on (US, UK, IN, CA, AU, etc.).

■ **Pro Tip: Use a dedicated business email for your KDP account. This keeps author communications separate from personal mail and looks professional.**

KDP Account Types

Individual	Best for solo authors. Tax filed as self-employed income.
Business / LLC	Use if publishing under a company name (e.g. GPU Publishing Services).
KDP Select	Optional program — enroll for 90-day exclusive on Kindle. Enables KENP (page reads) revenue via Kindle Unlimited.
Wide publishing	Distribute via KDP + Draft2Digital for Kobo, Apple Books, B&N; simultaneously.

02. Manuscript Formatting for KDP

Proper formatting is the difference between a professional-looking book and one that gets 1-star reviews for 'terrible formatting'. Amazon is strict about file quality.

eBook Formatting (Kindle)

Recommended format	DOCX (Word) or EPUB
Font	Kindle overrides fonts — don't hard-code fancy fonts
Headings	Use Word Heading styles (H1, H2) — they become Kindle chapters
Images	Min 300 DPI, embedded in document; JPEG or PNG
Table of Contents	Insert a linked TOC using Word's References tab
Page breaks	Insert a page break before every new chapter
File size limit	650 MB (compressed)

Paperback Formatting

Trim size	6x9 inch (most popular for fiction & non-fiction)
Interior margins	Inside: 0.75", Outside: 0.5", Top/Bottom: 0.75"
Bleed setting	0.125" bleed on all sides for full-bleed images
Font size	11–12pt body text; 10pt minimum
Font choice	Garamond, Georgia, or Palatino for readability
Chapter headers	Bold, 16–18pt, start on a right-hand (recto) page
Page numbers	Exclude from cover, TOC, and first chapter page
File format	PDF (Press-quality, embedded fonts)

■ **Free tool:** Use the KDP Word template (downloadable from your KDP dashboard under 'Paperback') as your starting manuscript base.

03. Cover Design That Converts

Your cover is your #1 marketing asset. Readers judge books by their covers — especially on Amazon where thumbnails are tiny. A weak cover = lost sales, no matter how good the content.

KDP Cover Specifications

eBook cover size	2,560 × 1,600 px (ideal ratio 1.6:1)
Min resolution	72 DPI (300 DPI recommended)
File format	JPEG or TIFF
Max file size	50 MB
Paperback cover	Full wrap = front + spine + back (calculated by KDP Cover Calculator)
Spine width	Depends on page count & paper type — use KDP's cover calculator
Safe zone	Keep all text/logos 0.125" from edge

Design Principles That Sell

- **Genre-match visually:** Cozy mystery covers look different from thriller covers. Study the Top 100 in your genre and match the visual language.
- **Thumbnail test:** Shrink your design to 160×256 px. If the title is unreadable, the font is too small.
- **Limit fonts to 2:** One for the title, one for the author name. Never use Comic Sans or decorative fonts that blur at small sizes.
- **High contrast:** Dark backgrounds with light text (or vice versa) catch attention in Amazon search results.
- **Professional photography/illustration:** Stock photos from Shutterstock, Adobe Stock, or Midjourney AI images work well.
- **Author name placement:** Bottom third. Readers buy the concept first, the author second.

■ **GPU Tip:** GPU Publishing Services offers professional KDP cover design as part of our publishing packages. Your cover is too important to DIY. Contact us at t.me/kindlereader

04. Keyword & Category Strategy

Amazon's search algorithm (A9) decides who sees your book. Keywords and categories are how you tell Amazon what your book is about — and who to show it to.

The 7 Keyword Slots

KDP gives you 7 keyword fields. Each field can hold up to 50 characters. Use multi-word keyword phrases (long-tail), not single words.

Single word (bad)	mystery
Long-tail phrase (good)	cozy mystery small town bakery female sleuth
Include	Series name, tropes, setting, sub-genre, reader mood
Avoid	Author names, other book titles, subjective claims like 'best'
Research tool	Publisher Rocket, KDP Rocket, or Amazon's autocomplete bar
Update frequency	Review every 3–6 months based on sales data

Category Selection

You get 2 categories during upload, but you can request up to 10 categories by emailing KDP support after publishing.

- Choose one broad + one niche category for maximum visibility.
- Check the #1 BSR (Best Seller Rank) in niche categories — some have fewer than 100 books, making it easier to hit #1.
- A #1 bestseller badge, even in a small category, drives social proof and click-through.
- Use BISAC codes when emailing KDP support for additional categories.
- Don't pick categories your book doesn't belong to — Amazon can suppress listings for miscategorisation.

■ Amazon A+ Content: Once your book is live, add A+ Content (formerly Enhanced Brand Content) to your book page — it includes comparison charts, author bio images, and additional copy that increases conversions.

05. Book Pricing & Royalty Calculator

KDP's royalty structure is straightforward. Understanding it helps you price your book for maximum earnings, not just maximum sales.

eBook Royalty Tiers

35% royalty tier	Books priced \$0.99–\$2.98 or above \$9.99
70% royalty tier	Books priced \$2.99–\$9.99 (most popular range)
KDP Select bonus	70% tier also applies to Kindle Unlimited page reads (KENP rate ~\$0.0045 per page)
Delivery fee	At 70%, Amazon deducts ~\$0.15/MB for file size. Keep ebooks lean.
Currency conversion	Amazon auto-converts USD prices to GBP, EUR, INR etc.

Paperback Royalties

Paperback royalty = 60% of list price minus Amazon's printing cost.

Formula	Royalty = (List Price × 0.60) – Printing Cost
Example: 300-page 6×9 B&W; (US)	Printing cost = \$3.99. At \$14.99: (14.99 × 0.60) – 3.99 = \$5.00/copy
Expanded Distribution	40% royalty rate when sold through non-Amazon channels
Minimum price	KDP enforces a minimum list price based on page count
Hardcover	Available via KDP since 2021; 60% royalty, higher printing cost

Pricing Strategy by Goal

- **\$0.99 — Lead magnet / series starter:** Maximise downloads for book 1. Use read-through to books 2–5 for real revenue.
- **\$2.99 — Sweet spot for new authors:** 70% royalty, affordable for readers, still profitable.
- **\$4.99–\$6.99 — Established author:** Signals quality. Works after you have reviews and a readership.
- **\$9.99 — Premium / nonfiction:** Works for high-value how-to books where readers expect to pay more.

- **Free / Countdown Deals:** KDP Select tools for periodic promotions to spike rankings.

06. Publishing Checklist — Go Live

Use this checklist every time you publish. Missing even one item can mean lost sales or a rejected submission.

Before You Upload

- Manuscript proofread (Grammarly + human editor)
- Chapter headings use Word Heading styles
- Linked Table of Contents created
- Front matter complete: title page, copyright page, dedication
- Back matter complete: author bio, other books, call-to-action
- File saved as DOCX or EPUB (for ebook) / PDF (for paperback)

KDP Metadata (Book Details Page)

- Book title + subtitle entered (include primary keyword in subtitle)
- Series name and number filled in (if applicable)
- Author name consistent with all other books
- Book description written (600–700 words, keyword-rich, HTML formatted)
- Contributors (editors, illustrators) listed if applicable
- Publisher name entered (your publishing company name)
- ISBN: KDP free ISBN accepted, or your own ISBN added

Keywords & Categories

- All 7 keyword slots filled (multi-word phrases)
- 2 best-fit categories selected
- Age/grade range set (for children's books)

Cover & Files

- Cover meets KDP specs (2560×1600 px minimum)
- Cover reviewed at thumbnail size
- Interior file uploaded and previewed in KDP Previewer
- Print preview checked on desktop AND mobile

Pricing & Rights

- Worldwide rights owned (confirm no plagiarism or unauthorised content)
- eBook price set in \$2.99–\$9.99 range for 70% royalty
- KDP Select decision made (enroll vs. wide)
- All Amazon marketplaces enabled

After Publishing

- Claim Author Central page (authorcentral.amazon.com)
- Add author bio, photo, and blog feed to Author Central
- Request additional categories via KDP support email
- Set up A+ Content on book page
- Share launch links across Telegram, social media, email list

07. Marketing Your Book After Launch

Publishing is day one, not the finish line. Sustainable KDP income requires consistent, multi-channel marketing.

Launch Week Strategy

Day 1–2	Announce to your email list, Telegram community, and social media. Ask for honest reviews from ARC readers.
Day 3–4	Run a price promotion (\$0.99) to spike downloads and BSR. Submit to free/discount book sites.
Day 5–7	Turn on Amazon Sponsored Ads (AMS). Start with auto-targeting campaign at \$5–10/day budget.
Week 2+	Shift to manual keyword campaigns. Pause underperforming keywords. Scale winners.

Ongoing Marketing Channels

- **Amazon Ads (AMS):** Sponsored Product ads directly on Amazon. Highest ROI for KDP authors. Target competitor keywords and your own genre keywords.
- **BookBub:** Premium book promotion platform. Featured Deals drive massive downloads. Apply for features in your genre.
- **Email list:** Your most valuable long-term asset. Offer a reader magnet (free short story or guide) to build your list.
- **Telegram / Communities:** GPU Publishing Services manages the KDP Authors and Readers Hub at t.me/kindlereader — ideal for cross-promotion.
- **Social media content:** LinkedIn for non-fiction authority building. Facebook/Instagram for fiction readers. Post consistently.
- **Review generation:** Email your existing readers asking for honest reviews. Never pay for reviews (violates Amazon TOS).
- **Series strategy:** Nothing markets book 1 better than publishing book 2. Series authors earn 3–5x more than standalone authors.

■ **The 10-Book Rule: Most KDP authors don't see consistent income until they have 10+ books in their catalogue. Focus on volume + quality.**

08. Common Mistakes to Avoid

These mistakes cost authors thousands in lost royalties and wasted time. Learn from others' expensive lessons.

#1 Publishing too fast

Unedited books kill your reputation. One 1-star review mentioning 'typos everywhere' tanks conversion for months.

#2 Weak book description

Your blurb is your sales copy. Most authors write a summary. Write a hook that creates desire instead.

#3 Ignoring keywords

Most authors pick keywords in 5 minutes. Spend 2 hours researching. It's the highest-ROI time investment in publishing.

#4 Wrong categories

Picking broad categories means competing against 50,000 books. Go niche to win the #1 badge.

#5 No series strategy

Standalone books are hard to build income on. Even a 3-book series dramatically increases reader lifetime value.

#6 Giving up after 1 book

Most first books don't earn much. Publishing is a long game. Authors who quit after book 1 never find out what they could have earned by book 5.

#7 Skipping A+ Content

A+ Content is free and increases conversion by up to 20%. Not using it is leaving money on the table.

#8 Not enrolling in KDP Select strategically

If you're just starting out, KDP Select's Kindle Unlimited reach often outweighs the distribution benefits of going wide.

#9 Ignoring backmatter

Your book's last pages are prime marketing real estate. Add your other books, a newsletter signup, and a review request.

#10 No reviews plan

Amazon needs 15–25 reviews before the algorithm starts recommending your book. Have a review strategy before launch day.

09. Resources & Next Steps

You now have everything you need to publish your first — or next — book on Amazon KDP. Here are the resources to keep you moving forward.

Essential Free Tools

KDP Cover Calculator	kdp.amazon.com/en_US/cover-calc
KDP Templates	kdp.amazon.com — Manuscript Templates section
KDP Previewer	Available inside the KDP dashboard during upload
Author Central	authorcentral.amazon.com
Publisher Rocket (paid)	Best keyword research tool for KDP authors
Canva Pro	Quick cover mockups and social media graphics
ProWritingAid / Grammarly	Grammar and style checking before submission
Draft2Digital	For wide distribution beyond Amazon

GPU Publishing Services — We Do It For You

If you want professional support at any stage, GPU Publishing Services offers end-to-end KDP publishing packages:

- **Ghostwriting:** Full manuscript writing in your voice and niche
- **Cover Design:** Professional Amazon-optimised covers that convert
- **KDP Setup & Upload:** Formatting, metadata, keywords, category strategy
- **Amazon SEO:** Keyword research, description copywriting, A+ Content
- **Publishing Strategy:** Series planning, pricing, launch planning, ads setup
- **Full Publishing Package:** From concept to published book — done for you

Ready to publish your book?

Join 1,000+ authors in our free Telegram community:

t.me/kindlereader

Read more KDP strategies and AI publishing tips:

KDPWithAI.com

Work with us directly:

GPU Publishing Services — Lucknow, India

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