Book-Writing Checklist

Use this checklist to guide your book-writing process. For best results, input these list items into project planning software to track progress and stay motivated.

First draft
- o Finalize outline
- o Write Introduction (if including)
- o Write Chapter 1
- o Write Chapter 2
- o Write Chapter 3
- o Write Chapter 4
- o Write Chapter 5
- o Write Chapter 6
- o Write Chapter 7
- o Write Chapter 8 (add more chapters if needed)
- o Write appendices (if including)

Title and back cover copy
- o Finalize title and subtitle (use research, survey/poll, etc.)
- o Write back cover copy (if hard cover with a dust jacket, also write interior flap content)
- o Send back cover copy to editor
- o Marketing pages (if including)

Cover design
- o Hire cover designer
- o Initial concept discussion
- o Initial mock-up, cover (spine, back cover; if hard cover with jacket, flaps)
- o Fill in additional dates and specifics per contract

Editing
- o Hire editor and proofreaders (substantive editor, copy editor, three proofreaders)
- o Send draft to editor
- o Manuscript with substantive editor (date–date)
- o My revisions (date–date); add in final manuscript elements (see manuscript checklist)
- o Copyediting (date–date; plus endnote formatting, if applicable)
- o Proofreading round 1 (pre-design) (date–date)
- o Proofreading round 2 (pre-design) (date–date)
- o Fill in dates and specifics per editorial contracts

Manuscript checklist
(pre-design)
- o Publication page
- o Title page
- o Dedication page
- o Acknowledgments
- o Table of contents
- o Chapter content
- o Author bio (if including)

Interior design
- o Hire interior designer (print + e-book)
- o Hire illustrator (if including illustrations)
- o Send chapter 1 to designer for mock-up (after copy editing or proofreading round 1)
- o Review design and request changes
- o Approve final design mock-up
- o Interior design (date–date)
- o Review design file, request changes
- o Receive revised file from designer, send to proofreader
- o Proofreading round 3 (post-design, integrity edit, proofread) (date–date)
- o Proofreading error review
- o Send final to indexer; send index to designer (if applicable); send new designed pages to proofreader
- o Final author review
- o Fill in additional dates and specifics per contract