

# Industry Standards Checklist for a Professionally Published Book

The purpose of this checklist is to give both authors and industry professionals an at-a-glance gauge of the professional presentation of any book.

It must be acknowledged that book development is a creative process and that quality can be subjective. This list does not address editorial content except to recommend that any book be professionally edited (developmentally edited, copyedited, and proofread). To meet professional standards, any book should be grammatically accurate and free of spelling and typographical errors.

This checklist is broken into two sections: **(1) Content** and **(2) Production**.

## CONTENT

What follows are the elements all books must include.

### Half-Title Page

The half-title page is optional, but recommended. It's the very first page of the book and typically includes:

- Title and subtitle of the book
- Title type that matches the cover fonts

### Title Page

The title page is often the very first page of the book (if you don't include a half-title page) and typically includes:

- Title and subtitle of the book
- Name of the author (or editors, if an anthology)
- Name of the illustrator, when applicable
- Name of the publisher and location
- Title type that matches the cover fonts
- Design elements that might tie in to the cover (optional)

**Note:** The verso page (any left-hand page in publishing) is typically blank, or is integrated into the design of the title page. Half-title and title pages are always recto (any right-hand page in publishing).

### Copyright Page\*

The copyright page is typically a verso page following the title page, although in some illustrated books it is placed in the back matter. It must include:

- Copyright date and holder (e.g., "© [Author Name], 2016")
- Copyright notice
- Edition information
- Library of Congress CIP Data (in full) or a reference to the book's LCCN (Library of Congress Control Number, applied for via PCN, Preassigned Control Number, at [www.loc.gov/publish/pcn](http://www.loc.gov/publish/pcn))
- Printing history (if applicable)
- Country of printing (necessary especially if book is printed overseas, to clear customs; not necessary for print-on-demand books)
- Name of publishing company
- Contact information for publishing company
- Name of author
- Title of book
- 13-digit ISBN (you may include the ISBN for both

print and e-book on this page, if they are clearly identified)

- Credits for design, illustration, editing, and cover artwork, as applicable
- Any applicable waivers or disclaimers, especially for works with legal or medical content, and fiction and memoirs

### Dedication (Optional)

A dedication is customary in books but is not required. When included, it should be given its own page, typically a recto page following the copyright page.

### Table of Contents (Optional)

A table of contents is customary in books but not required. When included, it should follow the dedication (or copyright page, if no dedication is included). It should also be concise, listing the chapter titles and subtitles and no other information or descriptive content.

- Information included should take into account the reader's needs
- Page numbers noted must be correct
- Typically does not exceed one or two typeset pages
- Should be typeset in a style that matches the rest of the book

### Grammar and Copyediting\*

- Correct grammatical style should be followed faithfully and consistently throughout a book; while the industry standard for grammatical style leans toward *The Chicago Manual of Style*, authors and publishers are free to choose their own correct grammatical style, as long as they follow it consistently.
- Content should be free of grammatical and typographical errors. (While reviewers, judges, and other industry members can't be expected to read every word of every book, they will perform tests of several randomly selected passages, checking for errors.)
- Additional consideration: ARCs (Advance Reader Copies) need to be submitted so far in advance that they may be "uncorrected proofs"; typically they are not yet proofread, and therefore "Uncorrected Galley Proof" or "Advance Reader Copy" should be noted prominently on the front or back cover.

## Quality of Writing

- Content should be well written and in a style that is appropriate to the book's genre and topic
- Good writing is "inviting, direct, nicely phrased, free of clichés" (*Foreword Reviews*)
- Content, including facts presented, names, dates, and timelines, must be consistent and accurate

## Acknowledgments Page (Optional)

Sources should be credited on an acknowledgments page whenever applicable, but especially with works of nonfiction. The acknowledgments page can come at the beginning of a work or at the end (for fiction works).

- For nonfiction works, sources might be credited inline, with footnotes, or with endnotes in lieu of a formal acknowledgments page
- Photo credits should be included consistently in one of three ways: (1) on the acknowledgments page, (2) with the photos, or (3) within the captions.
- Work must be free of plagiarism (which is theft and never acceptable)

## About the Author

The about the author page belongs somewhere in the work's front matter, back matter, or jacket copy, and should include:

- A brief, informative biography, appropriate to the genre and topic of the book
- The author's credentials for writing on the topic, if the book covers a specialized topic
- Author URL and social media links (optional)

## PRODUCTION

What follows is the design protocol all books must include and follow.

### Interior\*

- Professional interior design
- Appropriate, easily readable font for the main body of the text
- Appropriate leading and kerning for the font chosen.
- Consistent running heads or running feet
- Proper and consistent treatment of special characters, such as accent marks, em dashes, hyphens, etc.
- Appropriate margins
- Carefully considered and strategic trim size

### Front Cover

- All text, especially title, subtitle, and author name, is legible on print version and when the cover is made into a digital thumbnail
- Colors translate well to both print and digital

### Spine

- Title
- Subtitle (optional)
- Author name
- Publisher name and/or logo

### Back Cover

- Price should be competitive with other books in the same category; for hardcover, price could also be placed on the flap
- Human-readable ISBN

- Human-readable BISAC subject heading
- Publisher name and/or logo
- All endorsements/blurbs included are relevant, real, and properly credited
- Industry-standard EAN bar code with price and 13-digit ISBN encoded/embedded into the barcode. Publisher must purchase and own its own ISBN(s) through Bowker at [www.myidentifiers.com](http://www.myidentifiers.com), rather than obtaining one through CreateSpace, Ingram, or another entity.

### Correct:



### Incorrect:



## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Do the title and front cover copy immediately identify the benefits of the book, the subject matter, or the category?
- Are the book's cover art and design competitive with those of other titles of a similar topic and quality?
- Are the book's interior art and design competitive with those of other titles of a similar topic and quality?
- Library of Congress policy is that it cannot promptly catalog books for publishers that release fewer than five books per year. It might take two to three years to get LOC cataloging information. This is why all publishers should apply for PCNs (Preassigned Control Numbers) and display LCCNs for all books. You may also consider obtaining Publishers Cataloging Information from a cataloging company.
- Consider paper quality. Does the text bleed through? Is readability a problem?
- Always order a proof of your final book before printing, or, if you're using an offset printer, ask the printer for multiple samples to check the binding and the way the book holds together. Check your own proof for errors but also for legibility, aesthetic, and durability.

\* For samples of industry-standard copyright pages, interior designs, and placement of elements on ARCs, visit: <http://www.ibpa-online.org/page/standardschecklist>.

\*\* Front matter is any content that falls before a book's introduction or first chapter; back matter is any content that falls after a book's final chapter; jacket copy is a book's descriptive copy, whether it falls on the back cover of a paperback book or on the inside flap of a hardcover book.

Additional resources: *Chicago Manual of Style* and IBPA's *The Language of Publishing: An A-to-Z Glossary of Book Publishing Terms*.