



Book Prep Work

5 Things to Know Before You Write

I promise that if you get clear on these five things *before* you start to write (or if you are in the middle of your manuscript, do them now), you'll enhance your writing craft and increase your productivity.

#1. Know Your Why

Knowing “Why” you’re writing your book serves as both a guide and a motivation as you write. Your “Why” is about you.

SO HOW DO YOU FIND YOUR WHY? SIT DOWN IN A QUIET PLACE AND ASK YOURSELF...

- What am I hoping to do with this book or hoping this book will do for me?
- Write out your answer until it feels spot on.

#2. Know Your Book’s Point

Your WHY is about you. Your book’s POINT is about your reader.

The POINT gets to the heart of why a reader would want to read this book. What are they going to find out? What are you telling them and why would they want to know it?

TO GET TO YOUR BOOK’S POINT, ASK YOURSELF:

1. What is my book trying to say to the reader? What is it telling them that they don’t already know?
2. Why am I telling them this? Why should they care?
3. What will readers know when they reach the end of my book?

4. What problem does the book solve?

5. What argument does it make?

Write out your answers. Formulate them into one coherent sentence. Then make sure everything you write works to help make this point to your reader.

#3. Know Your Ideal Reader

Your ideal reader is the person who is hungry for your book's point. The person so attracted to your book, they read the title, pick it up, and buy it.

WHO IS YOUR IDEAL READER? ASK YOURSELF...

1. Physical characteristic: Age, gender, etc.

2. Socio-economic characteristics: Rich/poor? Professional? Creative? Corporate? Industrial? Academic? Entrepreneur? Caregiver?

3. What does your ideal reader care about?

4. What worries them? What are their challenges? And what would calm their worry or solve their problem?

5. What does your reader want? Does this book speak to or maybe satisfy that desire?

6. What drove your reader to pick up your book? What do they think it's going to tell them? How do they think it's going to help them?

Write out your answers. Create a little paragraph that describes your ideal reader.

#4. Know Your Book's Place in the Market

A book genre is category that tells publishers, retailers, and readers where your book belongs in the marketplace and what they can expect from it.

EXAMPLES OF GENRE

In nonfiction: Business, Self-Help, How-To, Health & Fitness, Travel, Sports, Memoir, Biography, History, Journalism, Academic, Philosophy, Humor—and lots more

In fiction: Romance, Sci-Fi, Literary, Mystery, Thriller, Fantasy, Children, Young Adult, Horror—and lots more

SO HOW DO YOU DETERMINE YOUR BOOK'S GENRE?

- Go to Amazon, Goodreads, or a store
- Find books similar to yours and see what categories they're listed under or sold under
- Then do some research on that genre or category. Learn the conventions and expectations.

#5. Know Where You're Headed

Create a detailed outline. Having a strong outline will propel you as you write. You will write faster and better.

As you outline make sure:

- Every chapter has one subject
- You know how each chapter serves the book's point

Your outline isn't written in stone. You can revise it if need be as you write. But it is an immensely helpful guide and keeps you on track.

Prep makes the writing flow! Which makes the writing fun!