



The Author Guide Course for non-fiction authors

Insight 9 – Give your work a shine

[Here's the video tutorial](#)

Editing & Proofreading

Now you've finished your first draft, you're ready for the polishing process!

Editing

It doesn't matter how good a writer you are, your book will need editing.

Traditional publishing houses do this in-house and carry the cost (which is one of the reasons they pay you such a small percentage on each sale).

Independent publishers will usually encourage you to have your book edited, and a few may offer this service – but there will almost certainly be a fee to pay.

Obviously, if you're self-publishing, the responsibility is entirely yours to get your book edited.

Professional editing is not cheap – and if you find a cheap editor, you'll be wise to ask for examples of the before and after of their work. Typically, editing a 40,000 word book will cost anything from £1,500 upwards. A decent editor will ask to see a sample of your manuscript before providing a quote as there can be huge variations in the quality of content. Editing is definitely not a 'one size fits all' situation.

Editing is not proofreading. Although there will be some of that done along the way.

Editing is about ensuring that the content is clear, concise and easy to read. It's taking your book and polishing it until it shines.

Typically, an editor will work with track changes turned on, so you can see what has been changed. They may also make comments suggesting expanding some ideas, asking for further information, or suggesting moving content to a different position in the book.

A good editor is there to make your book better, not to decimate your work, so don't take changes they make personally!

Proofreading

Proofreading is usually quicker than editing. The proofreader's job is not to comment on the quality of your content, but to pick up stray punctuation, typos, grammar errors, misspellings, etc.

Consequently, proofreading is usually nowhere near as costly as editing.

If your budget is tight, give your book to a friend or colleague who is positively pedantic about English and ask them to go through it.

A word of warning: if you have used specific styles, ensure your proofreader is aware of this. For example, if you don't punctuate the end of bullet points, or use a comma for all except the final one, tell them. It will save lots of time when you have to recorrect their changes later.

Pricing

You'll need to decide on a retail price for your book. This will depend on whether it's:

- A hardback
- A paperback
- An ebook
- An audio-book

Although a book should never be judged on its length, a longer book may be slightly more expensive.

There are no hard and fast rules. The best way to decide is to take a look at similar books (Amazon is a good point of reference for this) and what they are priced at. Use the Pricing Research Worksheet to help with this.

Usually a hardback book is more expensive than a paperback, simply because the cost of production is much higher. There is also an element of perceived value.

You may already have a price in mind. It's worth discussing this with your publisher, as they will have experience in what will work.

Publishing

Layout

If you're working with an independent publisher that doesn't offer layout services or you're self-publishing you'll need to have your book professionally laid out. There is a cost for this and you definitely want to use someone who does this for a living, not just your friendly local graphic designer – and you definitely don't want to try and do it yourself. You can see the difference - noticeably.

Whether your publisher does this or you are using a layout artist they will need:

A clean version of your final manuscript (not a pdf) in a single document including:

- The Title page

- The publishing details, including copyright etc.
- The Contents page
- The Foreword (if you're having one)
- The Introduction
- The main body of the book (the Chapters)
- Your Author Biography
- Index/Bibliography (if you want these included)
- The finished size of your book (most business books these days are A5 size, but there may be other options. Discuss with your publisher or consult the options on the self-publishing website.)

If you have any images place them where they are meant to be in the text, but also supply them as separate jpg or png files to the person doing your layout.

If you have any places in your book that references something on another page or in another chapter.

e.g. There's more about this on page 97.

Keep a spreadsheet of the page the reference is on AND the page the reference is to.

Spreadsheet:

Reference text	On page	Page referred to
There's more about this on page 97.	38	97

You'll need to provide this too, as the pages will change when the layout is being done.

What to give your publisher

If they are doing the layout, they'll need all of the above. Also:

- Your cover design
- Back cover blurb
- Anything else you want on the cover, including a short author bio and pic.

If you're self-publishing, you'll need to do all of this yourself and consult your chosen self-publishing website, which should provide you with all the information you need to upload all the elements.

Timeframes

Every publisher is different. You should have discussed this before you even started writing! However, don't expect to deliver your manuscript and get a book in your hand a week later.

The same applies if you're self-publishing, the website should give you information on how long from uploading to production. Remember, nobody will pick up any mistakes – they will publish exactly what you give them.

A good independent publisher will provide a proof copy before they press the print button. You'll get this to review – and you need to go through it carefully, to ensure it's as you want it.

Once you've signed it off – it's all systems go!

This week's assignment

If your chosen publishing option does not include editing, choose your editor and agree timelines.

Use the **Pricing worksheet** to decide your pricing for all the versions of your book you intend to publish.