



The Author Guide Course for non-fiction authors

Book Fairs & Festivals

The Big Trade Fair (Industry-facing)

London Book Fair

March | Olympia, London

The London Book Fair is where the global publishing community unites — publishers, dealmakers, literary agents, copyright professionals, and global licensors are all represented. It includes Author HQ, Audio Village, The Writers' Summit, and over 100 sessions and seminars. [LondonbookfairFair Point](#)

Author opportunity: Primarily a trade event, so it's not about selling books to readers — but it's where you build publishing relationships, meet agents, and understand the industry landscape. If you're pitching to publishers or looking for an agent, this is the room to be in.

The Major Public Literary Festivals

These are where authors speak to audiences, sell books, and build profile. These are your best promotional opportunities.

Hay Festival (Hay-on-Wye)

May | Hay-on-Wye, Wales

Founded in 1988, Hay Festival has grown into a globally renowned celebration of literature and ideas, with over 600 events on an 11-acre site — author talks, panel discussions, debates, readings, and performances. Bill Clinton famously called it the "Woodstock of the mind." Exhibitors and participants are almost entirely authors and thinkers — it's a speaking platform, not a trade stand event. [Festival Calendar UK](#)

Edinburgh International Book Festival

August | Edinburgh

The Edinburgh International Book Festival welcomes around 900 authors and includes more than 800 events. It's one of the largest book festivals in the world, known for its depth and breadth — you can tailor your schedule from mainstream authors to niche topics.

Cheltenham Literature Festival

October | Cheltenham

The globally renowned Times and Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival runs for ten days; the 2025 programme featured 400+ events and 500 speakers. Strong for non-fiction, memoir, history, and ideas — a good fit for business authors.

Oxford Literary Festival

Spring (typically March/April) | Oxford

Described as the world's oldest literature festival — expect high-profile conversations, debates, and big-name authors across the town. Leans literary and academic, but has strong non-fiction programming.

Stratford Literary Festival

Spring (April/May) | Stratford-upon-Avon

A spring festival in Shakespeare country with big author names, topical debates, and cultural programming — well regarded on the regional circuit.

Bradford Literature Festival

July | Bradford

A wide-ranging public festival running across ten days in early July. Known for diverse voices and strong community reach.

Henley Literary Festival

October | Henley-on-Thames

Over 100 talks, performances, and conversations, with many events also available online. A well-attended regional festival with good non-fiction and memoir coverage.

Cheltenham (Spring edition)

Spring | Cheltenham

One of the most reliably brilliant dates in the regional calendar — the spring programme spans four days covering nature, history, AI, crime writing, popular culture, and emerging writers.

Winchester Readers' Festival

Summer | Winchester

A weekend-focused festival featuring author talks, Q&As, and reader events — friendly and manageable, with close-up audience experiences.

Wimbledon BookFest

Autumn | Wimbledon, London

London's leading literature festival, bringing the world's greatest writers and international literary partnerships into one of the capital's most engaged cultural communities. [The Glossary Magazine](#)

Guildford Book Festival

October

Burford Literary Festival (Cotswolds)

September

Norwich Crime Writing Festival

September | Norwich/UEA — specialist, but worth knowing if your book has any crime/thriller crossover.

Bloody Scotland

Autumn | Stirling — crime writing focus.

Borders Book Festival

Summer | Scottish Borders

A summer festival with author events and cultural programming, well suited to readers who want great talks in a scenic setting.

Essex Book Festival

Usually March, but was May/June in 2026 | Various venues across Essex

Uses a mix of venues across the county, with options to participate in a Passport to Learning scheme.

Herts Book Festival

May | weekend event, one day in Hertford, one day in Ware.

A free, family-friendly annual festival celebrating books and storytelling. The 2026 event featured a local author market with 40 local authors showcasing their work, author talks, workshops, storytelling, and a book exchange.

There's also a separate **Hertford Art and Literature Festival**, a free community event at Hertford Castle. It was held in April in 2026.

A Practical Note on Exhibitors vs Speakers

These festivals don't really work like trade shows with exhibition stands. The model is:

- **Authors are invited to speak** (often via their publisher or publicist, though self-published authors can pitch)
- **Publishers** support their authors' appearances and may have a presence
- **Literary agents** attend some events, particularly the trade ones like LBF
- **Booksellers** (often Waterstones) run on-site book sales with signing opportunities

If you're promoting a self-published or independently published business book, the most direct route to these festivals is pitching yourself as a speaker — most have a submission or contact process, and some actively seek non-fiction business and ideas authors.

Many festivals also offer workshops, masterclasses, or agent/publisher events — Oxford, Hay, and smaller ones like Farnham and Hexham are particularly noted for this.