AI & Authors

Build. Write. Publish.



A Practical Guide to help you go from Idea to Published

Created by Tilly R

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Author's Note

Thank you for choosing this handbook.

I created this guide to help aspiring and experienced authors navigate the writing and publishing process with greater confidence.

Throughout my own publishing journey, I've learned that becoming an author doesn't require perfection—it requires persistence, curiosity, and a willingness to keep learning.

My hope is that this handbook saves you time, helps you avoid common mistakes, and gives you the confidence to take the next step toward publishing your own book.

Remember: your story, your knowledge, and your voice matter.

Happy writing!

Tilly R.

Who This Guide Is For

This handbook is designed for:

- First-time authors.
- Self-publishing authors.
- Fiction and non-fiction writers.
- Children's book authors.
- Educators creating learning materials.
- Writers who want to use AI responsibly and effectively.
- Anyone looking for a simple, practical guide to writing and publishing.

No previous publishing experience is required.

What This Guide Is—and Isn't

This handbook is designed to give you the essential knowledge needed to plan, write, edit, and publish your book using AI as a helpful writing assistant.

It is *not* intended to be an exhaustive course on writing, publishing, copyright law, marketing, or artificial intelligence. Instead, it focuses on the practical "must know" information to help you get started with confidence.

Think of this guide as your roadmap—not your destination. As your writing journey grows, continue learning, practising, and building your skills.

Welcome & How to Use This Handbook
Welcome

Congratulations on taking the first step toward becoming a published author.

Whether you're writing your very first book or adding another title to your collection, this handbook is designed to help you move from idea to publication with confidence.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has changed the way authors work. It can help you brainstorm ideas, organise your thoughts, improve your writing, and save time. However, you remain the author. AI is simply a tool to support your creativity—not replace it.

This handbook focuses on the essential information every author needs to know. There is no unnecessary jargon or lengthy explanations—just practical advice you can apply immediately.

How to Use This Handbook

Each chapter covers one key stage of the writing and publishing journey.

For every chapter, you will find:
Must Know – The most important concept to understand.

Quick Explanation – A simple overview of the topic.

Example – A practical example where helpful.
Action Step – One task to complete before moving on.

You do not have to read this handbook in one sitting. Feel free to work through it chapter by chapter as you progress with your book.

What You'll Learn

By the end of this handbook, you will know how to:

- Develop a strong book idea.
- Plan your manuscript.
- Use AI responsibly and effectively.
- Edit and polish your work.
- Understand copyright and publishing basics.
- Prepare your book for publication.
- Publish with confidence.
- Market your book to readers.

Must Know

The most successful authors don't wait for perfection—they make consistent progress.

Even writing a few hundred words a day adds up over time. Focus on finishing your book before trying to make it perfect.

Action Step

Decide on one realistic writing goal for this week and write it down.

Example: "I will write for 30 minutes every evening," or "I will complete one chapter by Sunday."

Chapter 2: The Author Mindset

Must Know

You don't have to be a perfect writer to become a published author—you simply have to finish what you start.

Many aspiring authors never publish because they wait until they feel "ready." The truth is, every author learns by writing. Confidence comes through practice, not before it.

Accept that your first draft won't be perfect. That's exactly what editing is for. The goal is progress, not perfection.

Successful authors are consistent. Even writing a few hundred words each day can become an entire book over time.

Example

Instead of trying to write an entire chapter in one sitting, commit to writing for just 20–30 minutes each day. Small, consistent efforts produce lasting results.

Action Step

Write down your reason for becoming an author. Keep it somewhere visible and read it whenever your motivation begins to fade.

Chapter 3: Finding Your Book Idea

Must Know
The best book ideas solve a problem, answer a question, entertain readers, or share a meaningful story.

You don't need a completely original idea. Instead, bring your own knowledge, experiences, and perspective to a topic that matters to you or your readers.

Ask yourself:

- What do people often ask me for help with?
- What story have I always wanted to tell?
- What knowledge or experience could help someone else?

Choose an idea that genuinely interests you. Writing a book takes time, and enthusiasm will help you stay committed.

Example
A teacher might write an English workbook, while a parent could write a children's bedtime story inspired by their own family experiences.

Action Step
Write down three possible book ideas and choose the one you're most excited to develop.

Chapter 4: Planning Your Book

Must Know

A simple outline will save you time and make writing much easier.

Before you begin writing, create a basic roadmap for your book.

For non-fiction, list your main topics and arrange them into logical chapters.

For fiction, identify your main characters, setting, conflict, and ending before you start writing.

Your outline doesn't need to be detailed. Think of it as a guide rather than a strict set of rules. It's perfectly acceptable to make changes as your book develops.

Example

A non-fiction book might have an introduction followed by eight chapters and a conclusion. A novel may be divided into beginning, middle, and end with key events planned in advance.

Action Step

Create a simple chapter list or story outline before writing your first draft.

Chapter 5: Writing with AI Effectively

Must Know

AI is your assistant—not your replacement.

AI can help you brainstorm ideas, organise information, improve grammar, rewrite awkward sentences, and overcome writer's block. However, your creativity, judgement, and personal voice should always guide the final result.

Always review, edit, and fact-check AI-generated content. Never assume it is completely accurate.

Use AI to speed up your workflow while ensuring your finished book reflects your own knowledge, style, and intentions.

Example

Instead of asking AI to write an entire chapter, ask it to suggest chapter ideas, improve a paragraph, or generate questions that help you think more deeply about your topic.

Action Step

Choose one writing task this week where AI can assist you, then carefully edit the final result to make it your own.

Chapter 6: Prompt Library for Authors

Must Know

The quality of your prompt influences the quality of AI's response.

Be clear and specific when giving instructions. Tell AI exactly what you want, who the audience is, the desired tone, and the format you need.

Useful prompts include:

- "Help me brainstorm ten titles for my children's book."
- "Create a chapter outline for a beginner's guide to gardening."
- "Rewrite this paragraph to sound more professional."
- "Suggest five ways to improve this dialogue."
- "Proofread this chapter for grammar and spelling without changing my writing style."

Treat AI as a writing partner that responds to clear instructions rather than vague requests.

Action Step

Write three prompts related to your current book project and test them. Adjust your wording until you receive the type of response you need.

Chapter 7: Editing Like a Pro

Must Know

Great books are edited—not just written.

Your first draft is only the beginning. Editing improves clarity, corrects mistakes, and helps your message connect with readers.

Before publishing, check for:

- Grammar and spelling errors.
- Repeated words or phrases.
- Unclear or confusing sentences.
- Consistent formatting.
- Factual accuracy.

Reading your manuscript aloud is one of the simplest ways to identify awkward wording and missed errors. If possible, ask a trusted friend, colleague, or professional editor to review your work before publication.

Example

Instead of publishing immediately after finishing your draft, leave it for a day or two, then return with fresh eyes to review it objectively.

Action Step

Complete one full editing pass before asking someone else to review your manuscript.

Chapter 8: Copyright & Legal Essentials

Must Know

You are responsible for ensuring that everything in your book is legal to use.

Your original writing is automatically protected by copyright in most countries as soon as it is created. However, you must avoid copying someone else's work without permission.

When using AI, remember that you are responsible for reviewing, fact-checking, and editing everything before publication.

Never use copyrighted images, long quotations, lyrics, or other protected material unless you have permission or the appropriate licence.

If you include facts or advice, verify that your information is accurate and up to date.

Example

Instead of downloading an image from the internet, use licensed images or create your own original illustrations.

Action Step

Review your manuscript and confirm that all text, images, and other content have been used legally and appropriately.

Chapter 9: Book Covers & Interior Design

Must Know

People really do judge a book by its cover.

A professional-looking cover encourages readers to click on your book and learn more. Your cover should match your genre, be easy to read, and remain clear even as a small thumbnail.

The inside of your book should also be neat and consistent. Use readable fonts, appropriate spacing, and clear chapter headings.

Keep the design simple. A clean, professional layout is often more effective than an overly complicated one.

Example

A children's book will usually have colourful illustrations, while a business handbook benefits from a clean, modern, and uncluttered design.

Action Step

Research five bestselling books in your genre and note what makes their covers effective.

Chapter 10: Formatting Your Book

Must Know
Proper formatting creates a professional reading experience.

Formatting prepares your manuscript for print or digital publication. It ensures that your chapters, headings, fonts, margins, and page numbers appear consistently.

Before publishing, check that:
- Chapter titles are consistent.
- Fonts are readable.
- Images are clear and correctly positioned.
- Page breaks appear where they should.
- The table of contents works correctly, if included.

Many publishing platforms provide formatting guidelines and templates to help you prepare your manuscript.

Example
Preview your book on different devices before publishing to make sure everything displays correctly.

Action Step
Review your manuscript carefully and correct any formatting issues before uploading it for publication.

Chapter 11: ISBNs Explained

Must Know

An ISBN is a unique identification number for a specific edition of your book.

An ISBN helps booksellers, libraries, and distributors identify your book.

Depending on where and how you publish, you may choose to use a free ISBN supplied by your publishing platform or purchase your own ISBN. Owning your ISBN may provide greater publishing flexibility, depending on your goals.

Remember that different formats—such as paperback, hardcover, and eBook—may require separate ISBNs.

Example

If you publish both a paperback and a hardcover edition, each edition will normally have its own ISBN.

Action Step

Decide whether you will use a free ISBN or purchase your own based on your long-term publishing plans.

Chapter 12: Publishing on Amazon KDP

Must Know
Publishing is easier than ever, but preparation is essential.

Before uploading your manuscript, ensure that your book has been thoroughly edited, properly formatted, and includes a professional cover.

When publishing through Amazon KDP, you will typically:
- Upload your manuscript.
- Upload your cover.
- Write your book description.
- Select relevant categories and keywords.
- Set your pricing.
- Review a preview of your book.
- Publish.

Take your time during each step. Small mistakes can affect your readers' experience.

Example
Choose categories and keywords that accurately describe your book so the right readers can find it more easily.

Action Step
Create a publishing checklist and tick off each item before clicking the "Publish" button.

Chapter 13: Pricing Your Book

Must Know
Price your book based on its value, your audience, and your publishing goals—not emotion.

A price that's too high may discourage buyers, while a price that's too low can make readers question its quality.

Before setting your price, research similar books in your genre and consider:
- Your target audience.
- Your book's length and content.
- Printing costs (for print books).
- Your royalty goals.

Remember, you can always adjust your price later if needed.

Example
If similar books in your category sell for around the same price, pricing yours within that range can make it more competitive.

Action Step
Research five books similar to yours and record their prices before deciding on your own.

Chapter 14: Marketing & Selling Your Book

Must Know
Publishing your book is only the beginning—people need to know it exists.

You don't need a huge marketing budget to start promoting your book. Begin by sharing it with people who already know and trust you.

Consider using:
- Social media.
- Your website or blog.
- Email newsletters.
- Book reviews.
- Author interviews or podcasts.
- Friends, family, and professional networks.

Be consistent. Small marketing efforts repeated over time often produce better results than one large promotional campaign.

Example
Share behind-the-scenes updates about your writing journey to build interest before and after your book is published.

Action Step
Choose three ways you will promote your book during its first month after publication.

Chapter 15: Common Mistakes to Avoid

Must Know
Most publishing mistakes can be avoided with careful preparation.

Common mistakes include:
- Publishing before editing thoroughly.
- Using AI-generated content without reviewing it.
- Choosing an unprofessional cover.
- Ignoring formatting issues.
- Writing a weak book description.
- Skipping marketing after publication.
- Giving up too quickly.

Every author makes mistakes. The key is to learn from them and keep improving with each new book.

Example
A beautifully written book may still struggle if it has a poor cover or an unclear description.

Action Step
Review this list and identify one mistake you can avoid before publishing your own book.

Chapter 16: Your 30-Day Author Action Plan

Must Know
Consistency beats perfection. Small daily actions lead to completed books.

Use this simple plan as a guide:
Week 1: Choose your idea and create your outline.

Week 2: Write your first draft without worrying about perfection.

Week 3: Edit your manuscript and improve your writing.

Week 4: Finalise your formatting, prepare your cover, upload your book, and begin promoting it.

Remember, everyone's writing journey is different. Adjust the timeline to suit your schedule while continuing to make steady progress.

Action Step
Write today's date and commit to completing your next writing milestone before moving on to the next stage.

Chapter 17: Helpful Resources & Tools

Must Know
The right tools can save time, improve quality, and make the publishing process easier.

Here are a few helpful resources:
- ChatGPT – Brainstorming, outlining, editing, and idea generation.
- Canva – Book covers, worksheets, and promotional graphics.
- Amazon KDP – Self-publishing eBooks and paperbacks.
- Google Docs or Microsoft Word – Writing and editing manuscripts.
- Grammarly – Grammar and spelling assistance.
- Pexels or Pixabay – Free stock images (always check the licence before use).

Remember, tools are there to support your creativity—not replace it.

Action Step
Choose one new tool from this chapter and spend at least 15 minutes learning how it can improve your writing or publishing workflow.

Thank You

Congratulations on reaching the end of this handbook.

Writing a book is an achievement that few people ever accomplish. By investing in your skills and taking action, you've already moved one step closer to becoming a published author.

Remember, every successful author started with a single idea and a blank page. Keep learning, keep writing, and most importantly—keep going.

I wish you every success on your writing journey, and I hope this handbook has helped make that journey a little clearer and a lot more enjoyable.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of your author story.

Happy writing, and happy publishing!

— Tilly R.

Before You Click "Publish..."

Author's Final Checklist

□ My manuscript is complete.

□ I have proofread and edited my book thoroughly.

□ I have checked my grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

□ I have verified any facts, quotes, or references included in my book.

□ I have ensured that all content, images, and materials are legally permitted for use.

□ My book cover is professional and appropriate for my genre.

□ My manuscript has been formatted correctly for print and/or eBook.

□ I have written a clear and engaging book description.

□ I have selected the most relevant categories and keywords.

□ I have chosen the correct ISBN (if applicable).

□ I have reviewed my pricing strategy.

□ I have previewed my book and corrected any final errors.

□ I have prepared a simple marketing plan for my book launch.

□ I am confident that this book reflects my best work.

Final Reminder

No book is ever perfect.

Every published author has reached a point where they had to stop editing, trust their work, and click "Publish." Don't let perfection stop you from sharing your knowledge, your creativity, or your story with the world.

Done is better than perfect.

Now take a deep breath... and click Publish!

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