

FREE AUTHOR RESOURCE

Book Planning Workbook

Turn your book idea into a clear, workable plan before you start writing.

IDEA	READER	STRUCTURE	PLAN
1	2	3	4

Use this workbook to clarify what you are writing, who it is for, what promise it makes to the reader and how the book will be structured. You do not need perfect answers - the goal is to create enough clarity to move forward.

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How to Use This Workbook

A strong book plan gives you direction without locking you into every detail. Work through the pages in order, write quickly rather than perfectly, and revisit earlier answers as your idea develops.

A useful rule

Clarity beats complexity. If you can explain your book, its reader and its promise in simple language, you are far more likely to write a focused manuscript.

By the end, you should have:

- A clear one-sentence book concept
- A defined ideal reader
- A specific reader promise or outcome
- A preliminary title and subtitle direction
- A logical structure for the book
- A chapter-by-chapter plan
- A realistic writing goal and next action

My target date to complete this plan:

Clarify the Book You Want to Create

Start with the core idea. Avoid worrying about the perfect title, cover or marketing strategy yet. First, make sure you know what the book is fundamentally about.

In one sentence, what is your book about?

Why do you want to write this book?

What experience, expertise, story or perspective will you bring to it?

What type of book are you planning?

- ☐ Non-fiction guide / how-to
- ☐ Memoir / personal experience
- ☐ Fiction
- ☐ Workbook / journal
- ☐ Other: _____

Know Who You Are Writing For

Trying to write for everyone usually produces a less useful book. Picture one primary reader and write as though you are helping, entertaining or speaking directly to them.

My ideal reader is:

What is happening in their life when they discover this book?

What problem, desire, question or interest brings them to this book?

What have they already tried, read or experienced?

What would make them say, "This book is exactly what I need"?

Define What the Reader Will Gain

Your reader promise is the reason someone chooses your book. For non-fiction it may be a transformation, solution or skill. For fiction it may be the emotional experience, genre promise or type of story the reader expects.

Simple formula

This book helps [reader] to [desired outcome] by [your approach / subject / story].

Complete the sentence:

This book helps...

What are the three most important things the reader should gain?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What is outside the scope of this book?

Give Your Book a Clear Place in the Market

You do not need a completely original topic. You need a clear reason your version of the book deserves to exist: a particular reader, angle, voice, method, format or combination.

List 3-5 books, authors or resources your reader may also know:

What do you like about those books?

What will your book do differently or particularly well?

My book's distinctive angle is:

Explore Title Directions

Treat this as brainstorming, not a final decision. Strong titles are usually clear, memorable and appropriate for the audience. A subtitle can add specificity, keywords or the reader benefit.

Title ideas

Subtitle ideas

My strongest working combination:

Choose the Journey Through the Book

Structure determines the order in which the reader experiences your ideas or story. Choose the simplest structure that naturally supports the book's purpose.

Which structure best fits?

- ☐ Step-by-step / sequential
- ☐ Problem → understanding → solution
- ☐ Part-based / thematic
- ☐ Chronological
- ☐ Question-and-answer
- ☐ Story / narrative arc
- ☐ Reference / modular
- ☐ Other: _____

If the book has parts, what are they?

Describe the reader's journey from the beginning to the end:

Build Your Chapter-by-Chapter Plan

Give each chapter one primary job. You can combine, split or reorder chapters later. For now, focus on creating a logical progression.

#	Working chapter title	Purpose / key takeaway
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

Plan an Individual Chapter

Use this page for each chapter as you draft. Duplicate it digitally or use the prompts as a repeatable planning framework.

Chapter number

Working title

What is the main purpose of this chapter?

Key points, scenes or ideas to include:

Examples, stories, research or exercises to include:

What should the reader know, feel or be able to do by the end?

Decide How the Book Should Feel

Consistency of voice helps readers trust the book. Choose a small number of qualities that should guide your writing and editing decisions.

I want my writing to feel:

- ☐ Warm and conversational
- ☐ Practical and direct
- ☐ Encouraging and supportive
- ☐ Authoritative and expert
- ☐ Reflective and thoughtful
- ☐ Energetic and motivating
- ☐ Humorous / light
- ☐ Other: _____

Words or phrases that describe my ideal tone:

What should I avoid in the writing?

Books/authors whose reader experience I admire:

Turn the Plan Into Progress

A modest writing routine you can maintain is more valuable than an ambitious plan you abandon. Choose targets that fit your actual life and responsibilities.

Target manuscript length

Target completion date

Writing days per week

Typical session length

Where and when am I most likely to write consistently?

What could get in the way, and how will I respond?

My minimum viable writing goal:

Bring Everything Together

Complete this page last. It becomes the quick-reference plan you can return to whenever you need to check whether a chapter, idea or decision belongs in the book.

Working title + subtitle

One-sentence concept

Ideal reader

Reader promise

Distinctive angle

Structure / major parts

My next three actions

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

YOU HAVE A PLAN

Now Start Writing

Your plan does not need to be perfect before you begin. Its job is to give you enough direction to write the next page, then the next. Let the manuscript teach you what the book needs to become.

Your next step

Choose one small action you can complete today: outline Chapter 1, schedule your first writing session, research one unanswered question or write your opening 300 words.

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