

The KDP Readiness Checklist

47 things to check before you upload to Amazon KDP. Run by publishing.co.uk on every book before delivery — the same checks our automated score uses, the same checks Amazon's review system runs on every file. Tick them off as you go. If something fails, fix it before you click Publish.

How to use this

Print this PDF, or keep it open on a second screen. Walk through each section while looking at your final PDF or EPUB. Anything you can't tick is a likely cause of rejection. Total — about 30 minutes for a typical 250-page book.

File format & export

01. Interior file exported as PDF (single pages, NOT spreads).
02. Ebook exported as EPUB 3.0 — not EPUB 2.0, never MOBI (deprecated by Amazon).
03. Print PDF is PDF/X-1a:2001 compliant (or PDF/A) — forces colour profile + font embedding.
04. Every font embedded in the PDF — verify in Acrobat: File → Properties → Fonts → “Embedded” on every line.
05. File size under KDP's limit: 650MB for print PDF, 650MB for EPUB.

Trim size & page setup

06. Trim size matches one of Amazon's 17 KDP-accepted sizes (5×8, 5.06×7.81, 5.25×8, 5.5×8.5, 6×9...).
07. The trim in your file matches the trim you select in KDP setup — a 0.01” mismatch is rejected.
08. Page count: 24 minimum, 828 maximum for B&W white (or 72–600 for standard colour).
09. Page count is EVEN. KDP rejects odd page counts — add a final blank page if needed.
10. Whole book is one continuous PDF — not separate files for front-matter, body, back-matter.

Margins & gutter

11. Top, bottom and outside margins are at least 0.25” (0.5” strongly recommended).
12. Gutter (inside margin) scales with page count: 0.375” (24–150pp), 0.5” (151–300), 0.625” (301–500), 0.75” (501–700), 0.875” (701–828).
13. If ANY content runs to the edge, bleed is 0.125” added to top, bottom and outside (NOT inside / gutter).
14. If NO bleed content, the bleed setting is OFF — KDP rejects “has bleed” documents with no bleed content.

Front matter

15. Half-title page (page 1, recto / right side) — just the book title in display type.
16. Title page matches Amazon metadata EXACTLY — title, subtitle, author byline, case and punctuation included.

17. Copyright page includes: © year, author name, paperback ISBN (or “Independently published”), edition statement, “All rights reserved”.
18. Dedication or epigraph (optional but raises perceived professionalism).
19. Table of Contents is auto-generated (not manually typed) with working anchor links to each chapter.

Body layout

20. Each chapter starts on a new RECTO (right-hand) page — industry standard for trade paperbacks.
21. Blank versos (left pages) are intentionally blank — no page number, no running header.
22. Drop caps, if used, are consistent in style and sized to 3–4 lines of body text.
23. First paragraph of each chapter is NOT indented — every other paragraph is.
24. Indents are first-line only (0.2–0.3”) — never use a blank line + flush-left paragraph.

Typography

25. Body text is a serif font (Garamond, Caslon, Minion, Sabon, Adobe Caslon Pro) at 10–12pt.
26. Body leading (line spacing) is 1.15–1.4× — typically 14–16pt leading for 11pt body.
27. Justified alignment with hyphenation enabled — prevents wide gaps in lines.
28. No more than 3 consecutive hyphenated line-ends (the “ladder” rule).
29. No widow / orphan lines — no single line stranded at the top or bottom of a page.

Special characters

30. Em-dashes (—) for breaks in thought — never two hyphens or a single hyphen.
31. Smart/curly quotes (“ ”) everywhere — never straight (" "). Search-and-destroy before export.
32. Ellipses (...) as a single character — not three dots, not space-dot-space-dot-space-dot.

Images & graphics

33. Every interior image is at LEAST 300 DPI at the final print size — not 72 or 96 DPI “upscaled.”
34. Print images are in CMYK colour space — RGB images print muddy and unpredictably.
35. Full-page / cover images extend INTO the bleed zone if bleed is enabled.
36. Text inside images stays 0.25” clear of the trim edge — the “safe zone.”

Cover specs

37. Cover is a single PDF containing back, spine and front — NOT three separate files.
38. Spine width calculated from final page count: 444pp/inch B&W white, 426pp/inch B&W cream, 370pp/inch standard colour.
39. Cover bleed is 0.125” on all four outer edges of the full wrap.
40. Barcode placeholder: a 2” × 1.2” white rectangle in the lower-right corner of the back cover (KDP auto-fills).

Metadata match

41. Title on cover = title on title page = title in KDP metadata. Identical case, punctuation, spacing.
42. Subtitle (if any) matches in all three places. “A Novel” counts — either include everywhere or nowhere.
43. Author name matches in all three places. No “By [name]” on the cover unless it’s in the metadata that way too.
44. ISBN on the copyright page matches the ISBN you assigned in KDP — or both say “Independently published.”

EPUB-specific

45. EPUB passes EPUBCheck 5.x with zero ERRORS (warnings are OK).
46. EPUB is reflowable layout — not fixed-layout, unless it’s a picture book or cookbook.
47. EPUB includes accessibility metadata (`<meta property="schema:accessibilitySummary">`) — KDP’s 2026 requirement.

Skip the manual pass — score your file in 60 seconds

Upload your PDF and we’ll run all 47 checks (plus 20+ more) automatically. You get a /100 score with rejection risks flagged, plus a full PDF report by email.

publishing.co.uk/audit/kdp-readiness/

*publishing.co.uk — done-for-you book formatting + free Amazon diagnostics. Backed by Love Reading since 2018.
UK-based, GDPR-compliant.*