

Get Your Book Designed

What business owners need to know
about self-publishing their words

Designed and illustrated by Berenice Howard-Smith
hellolovely.design



Berenice Howard-Smith

MA in Graphic Design and Typography

Hello Lovely Design & Co. I design across books, print, editorial branding and websites

Courses & Workshops on Design & Self-Publishing

Certified Facilitator in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging and Carbon Literate Certified.

Experience

- 20 years in publishing houses, agencies, and my own studio
- Visiting Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University
- WhiteFox Unsung Hero of Publishing
- Finalist in Cambridge Digital Awards
- Winner of Designer of the Year Digital Women
- Partner member of the Alliance of Independent Authors
- Book design experience includes publishing from KS1 to A Level, Cambridge School Shakespeare and Cambridge School Chaucer series, National Trust, Teenage Cancer Trust, Black Flag/Coding Club, Penguin Writers Series and numerous self-publishing books including The AJR 'My Story' series and First Aid for Feelings manual.



Content Repurposing: Design One Thing, Use It Many Ways

Your book is the beginning, not the end. You can repurpose blog posts, podcast scripts, notes, guides, talks into books, which can then reward you with:

- An eBook (different file, same design language)
- A lead magnet (extract one chapter, and redesign as a short guide)
- A workbook (companion piece with the same visual identity)
- A course (your brand carries across slides, worksheets, materials)
- Social media graphics (pull quotes, cover images, launch assets)
- A speaking deck (your cover and brand on every slide).

A strong visual identity built for your book works across everything you create around it. Design can bring that together so you and your work is instantly recognisable, elevating your investment in your words and expertise.

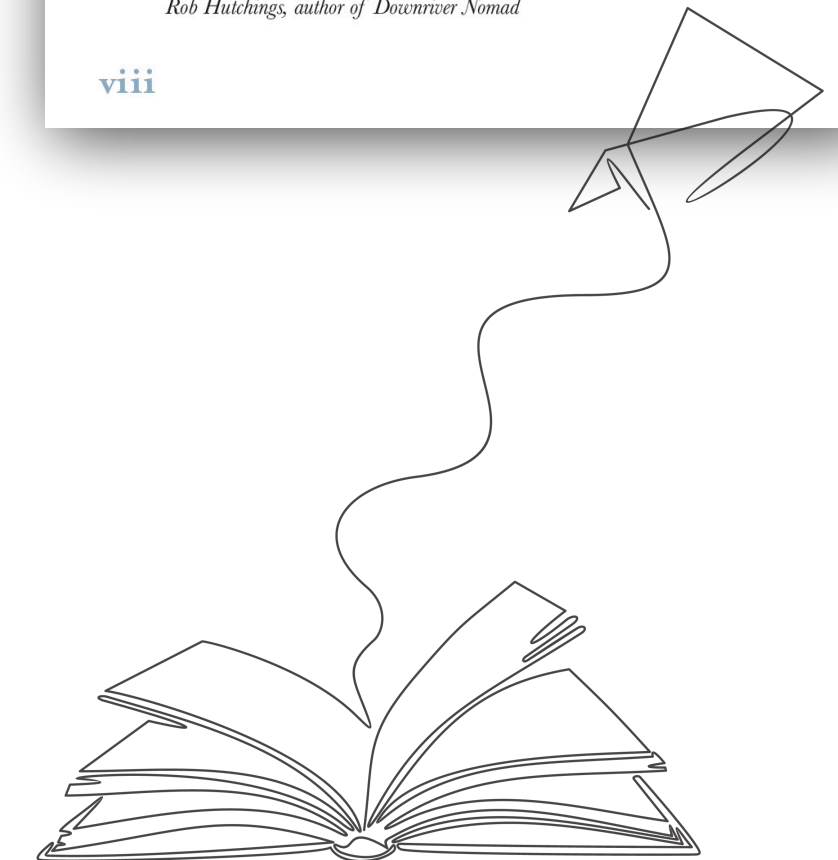
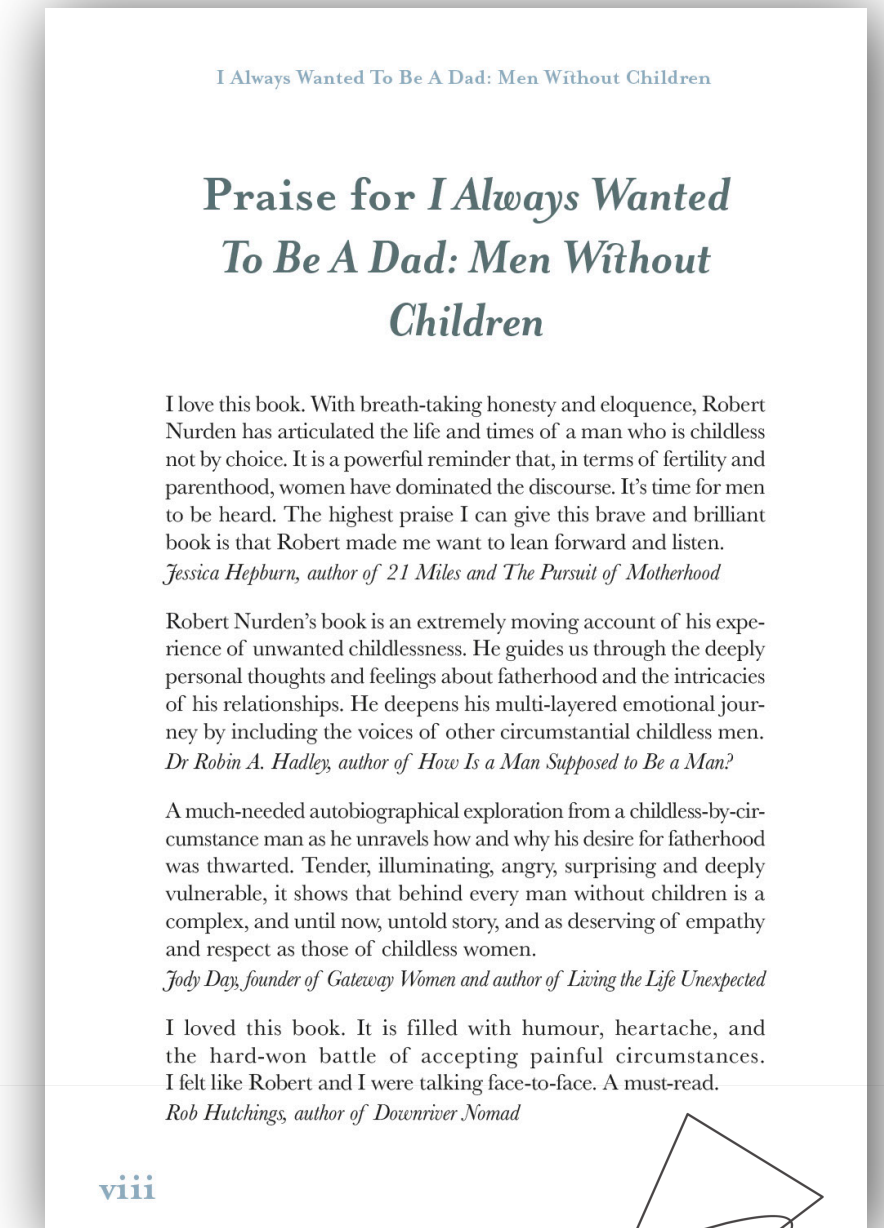


Start at the end

Before you write, ask:

1. Who will print this book, and how?
2. Where will it be sold?
3. In what format: print, eBook, or both?
4. Hardback or paperback?
5. What does the finished book feel like in someone's hands?
6. What skills do you have and who do you know?

These answers determine your trim size, your paper, your spine width, your file format, your cover template, your budget, your skills and who you need on your team.



Your self-publishing platform options

KDP (Amazon): Online bookshop via Amazon websites. Wide reach, no upfront cost, print on demand. It has a cover template specific to KDP; limited paper/trim options that may differ in size to IngramSpark and no special finishes available like spot colours.

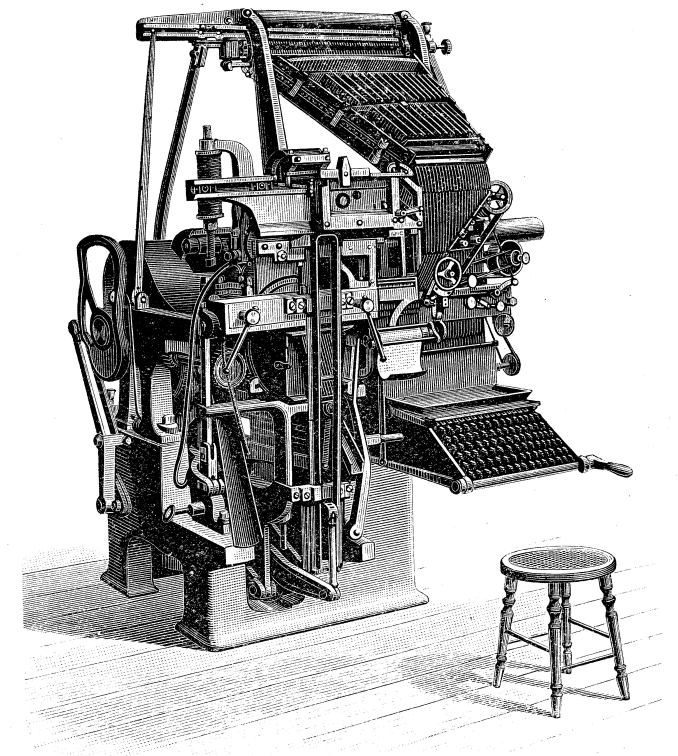
IngramSpark: Is not a bookshop, it has no storefront. Accessed by libraries, bookshops with global distribution. It has a unique cover template; more trim and paper options.

BookVault is a UK-based print-on-demand. Good quality UK printing; with their own template requirements.

Litho or Digital book printer premium quality, more paper and finishing choices with higher upfront cost with account handler, it's the only job on the printing press. Printers include Langham Press, Clays, Book Print UK, Nexus.

Draft2Digital: Ebook distribution to multiple platforms, Ebook file only; no print.

Do you really need to be in a bookshop? Is that where your audience are? The process involves an awful lot of work for your book to sit in a large store for a low profit. It's worth asking if you really need to be there at all. You may be better directing your energy into small stores, or online sales if that's where your audience are.

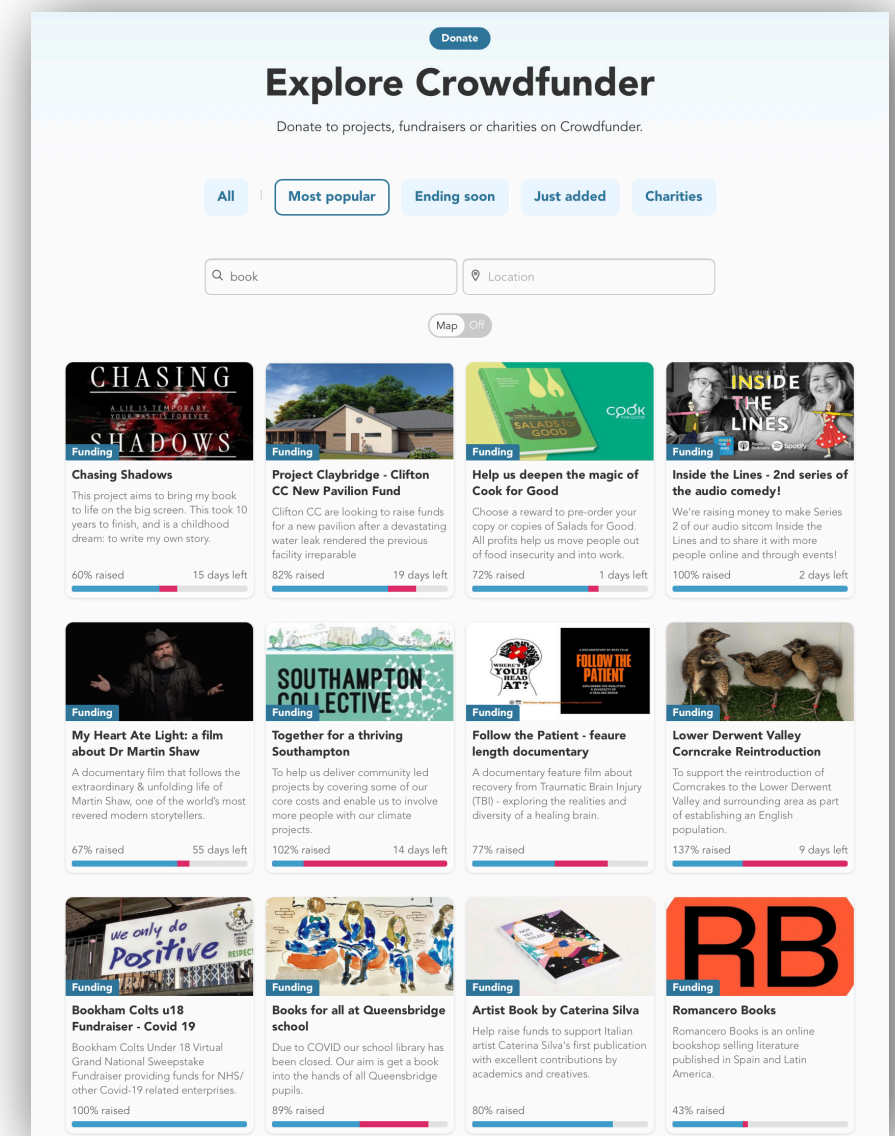


LINOTYPE

How to Fund Your Book And How Design Can Help You Raise Money

- Personal savings
- Sponsorship or partnerships
- Grant funding (see Mslexia magazine and Arts Council)
- Pre-orders via your website or email list
- Crowdfunding – your page will need a professional visual presence signals that the book will be worth backing.

Be completely honest about your skills. Being good at spelling and drawing is not the same as being an editor or a designer, but having an eye for grammar or what looks good may set you up for success.



What Does a Book Designer Do?

Book design is the art of using fonts and page 'furniture' to create a good reading experience. When done well, the reader concentrates on your words without even realising the book has been designed. It's the design sparkle. Here are a few other magic moves:

- Use appropriate fonts and designs for the genre and age group
- Provide advice on the best page size and treatment for more complicated information
- Ensure good typography by removing widows, orphans, and stray words
- Check for accessible book design so that readers aren't excluded. They may assist with cultural sensitivity
- Work with an editor on a style guide
- Design websites, social media, branding and book launch material
- Have good tech skills across print production, quality control and file delivery
- Understand copyright and ISBNs.

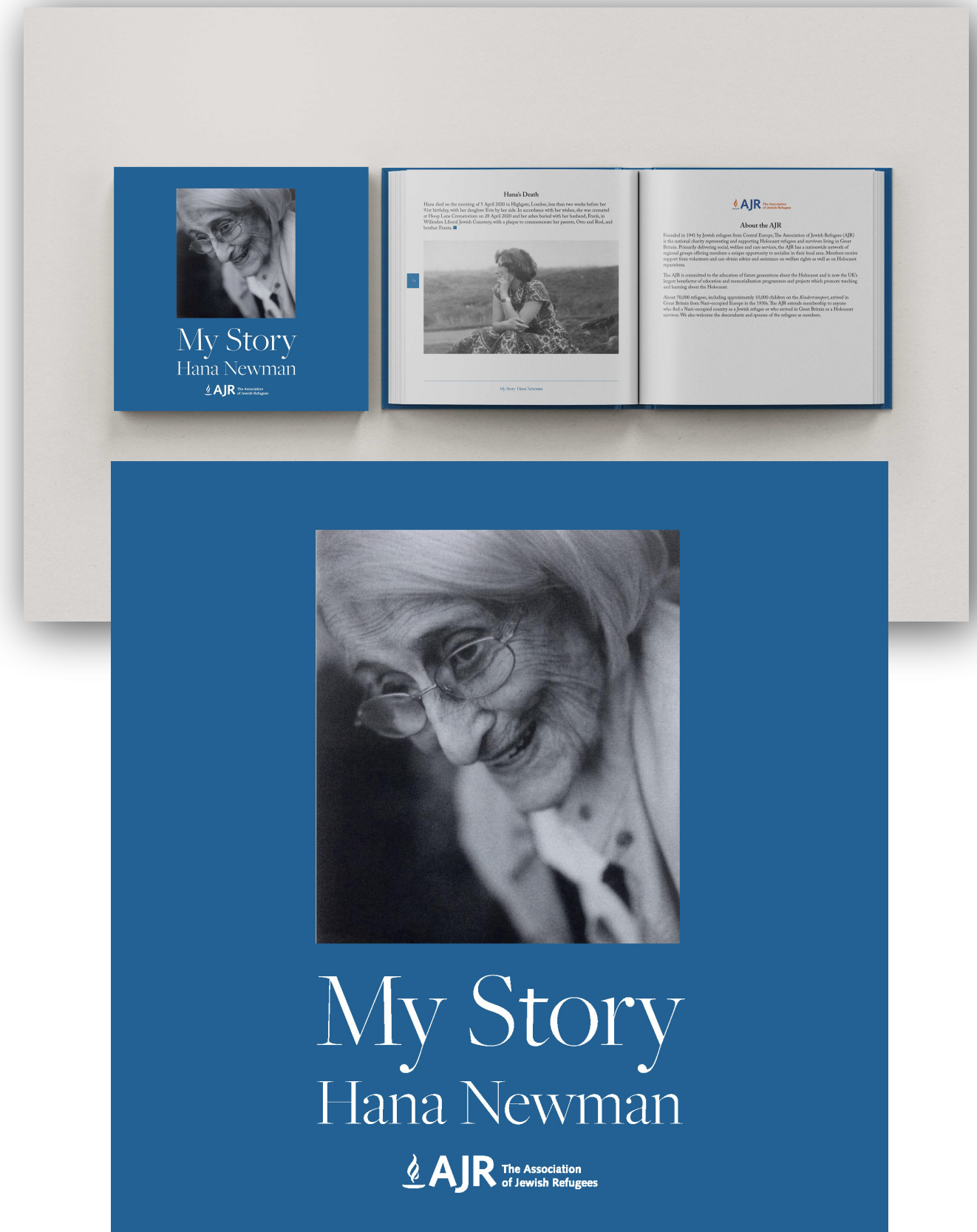


Why Your Cover Has Six Seconds

Your cover must do all of this:

- Signal the correct genre instantly
- Look professional, not homemade or produced by AI
- Compete with traditionally published books
- Be on budget (illustration is expensive, stock imagery and typography may be cost effective and often equally stylish)
- Work as a thumbnail and in marketing
- Sell the words and connect to the interior
- Have an attractive spine as necessary
- Support the back cover copy
- Work on print on demand if appropriate

A cover is not decoration. It is your book's most important marketing asset. And it is doing that work every moment it exists, in search results, on socials, on shelves and in reviews.



Finding the Right Design Model for You

In an ideal world, authors would be fully bespoke to allow them to focus on marketing, promotion, collecting reviews, budgets, proofs and the book launch - all tasks that need to happen alongside design. That isn't always possible, here's a few choices:

- Fully bespoke design means that the designer works with you from brief to print-ready files. It's best for authors who want a completely unique result and have the budget for it.
- Hybrid model works for author who are able to handle some elements (ebook formatting, distribution setup); designer handles cover, interior, and production files. This works for authors with some technical confidence who want professional quality at the critical stages.
- Design audit works by bringing in a designer to review work in progress to provide honest feedback before publishing. This may work for authors who have a design background and want a professional, independent peer review.

Whatever model you choose, the production stage almost always needs a professional. File preparation, platform uploads, and print specifications are where DIY often breaks down. Poor design will affect sales and the reader experience.

Questions I Ask My Clients



Welcome!

Thank you for choosing to work with Hello Lovely Design and Co. I'm excited to learn more about your needs. This form is designed to gather all the key details I need to create a design.

Please take your time filling it out. The more information you provide, the better I can tailor the design to your goals and audience. If something doesn't apply to you, feel free to skip it or leave a note.

Name*

Email address

About your book

What's the genre of your book?
☐ Biography/memoir ☐ Coffee table ☐ Essays or pamphlet ☐ Fiction ☐ Food Writing ☐ Instructional/How-to
☐ History ☐ Self-help ☐ Travel ☐ Something else

Target Audience. Is there a demographic you're keen to reach or currently work with?

Do you have your draft back cover copy or a brief synopsis that you can share here, to help me get a feel for your work?



How are you getting your book into readers' hands? *
☐ KDP (Amazon)
☐ IngramSpark
☐ eBook

Other format

Where are you at with your book right now? *
☐ Are you still writing?
☐ Is the manuscript copyedited?
☐ Do you know the trim size (A5, 5 × 8 etc)?
☐ Do you have ISBNs?

Your cover

What books covers inspire you? Please share the ISBNs below. This is not to copy a design, but to see what inspires you as the author who knows your readers best.

What message or feeling should your cover convey?

Are there any colours, fonts or styles to avoid?

What's the text I should use for the cover and spine?

Do you have a tagline to include? Please share it here

Your interior pages

Do you have any books that inspire you with their interior design? Feel free to list the ISBNs and titles below. This is to explore what you think your audience would like to see, rather than copy a design.

Any fonts, icons or other elements you'd like to note down?

Anything else you'd like me to know?

You can upload files here



You're all set!

Thanks so much for sharing these details. I'll review your responses carefully and reach out soon if I need any clarification. In the meantime, if you have any additional thoughts or files to share, feel free to email me directly berenice@hellolovely.design.

I'm looking forward to creating something amazing together!

More help

For free design advice, please visit the [Hello Lovely Design and Co website](https://biomedia.com). You can also receive the [fortnightly newsletter Gorgeous](#), which covers website, books, branding and general design advice created with you in mind, wherever you're at with your project. [Hello Lovely Learning](#) is the space for the *Self-Publishing Foundations* course, which takes you from manuscript to editorial, to design, print and promoting your book - perfect if you want to get to get a better idea of how self-publishing works and avoid pain points. Enter the code *GORGEOUSSPF* to save 15% off this self-study course.

The Ideal Workflow

- Write the complete manuscript, and self-edit. Assemble your editorial and design team as soon as you can (the best people can be booked up months in advance)
- Developmental edit addresses the big picture: structure, argument, and pacing
- Revise based on editorial feedback
- Appoint the designer and agree on the page size ahead of the sample design
- Copy edit the grammar, consistency, and accuracy, and sign off the text
- Send your final words to the designer, the interior layout begins on the copy-edited text
- First and second proofs arrive from the designer. The author and proofreader check the designed pages and catches layout errors as well as minor text updates
- Final corrections given to the designer who makes approved changes
- Print-ready files arrive from the designer so the author can deliver to the platform
- Check the proof before approving for distribution and print.

Design begins after copy editing. Starting earlier may mean redesigning after changes, and that costs money.

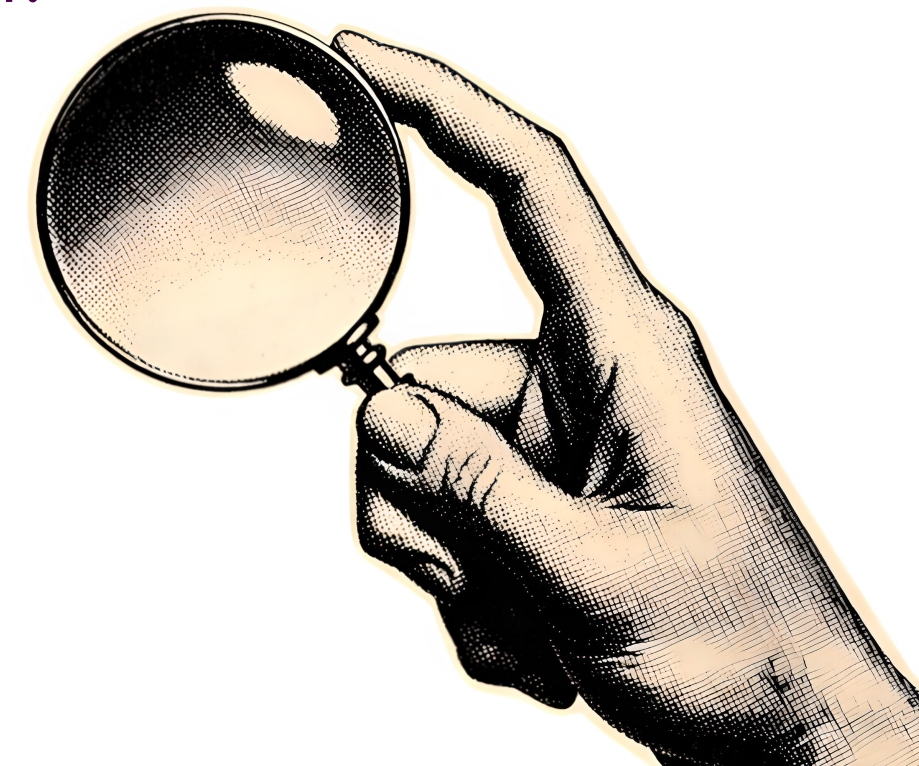
How To Find A Designer

- Alliance of Independent Authors partner directory: allianceindependentauthors.org
- Word of mouth, ask an author whose book you admire who designed it
- Check the imprint page of a book to see if the team is credited
- Social media and portfolio sites, search for designers whose style suits your genre.
- Platforms like Reedsy, Upwork and Fiverr charge commission fees and limit contact. You may find yourself having to do more work on the brief and due diligence. If the designer leaves the site you may not have the source files.

What to check before hiring:

- Do they have experience with book design specifically, and your chosen platform?
- What software do they use? Ideally they're using Adobe InDesign, or Affinity.
- Do they work with a contract?
- Do they offer a design brief process or just ask you to send a file?

Avoid pitch culture. Asking designers to work for free on the chance of being hired is not standard practice. A professional designer charges for their time. Like you.



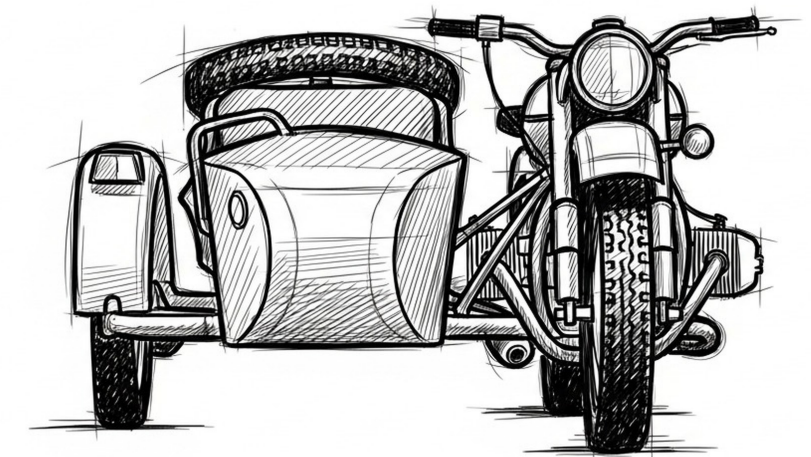
What a Designer Actually Delivers

When you work with a book designer, here's what you may receive depending on the contract (and you must have a contract too):

- Cover design comprising print-ready cover file/s (front, spine, back), ebook cover, social media versions, correct files for each platform.
- Interior design includes typeset, designed pages with running heads and page numbers, chapter openers as needed, with all prelims and end matter designed and supplied to the print specifications. Fixed or reflowable ebook file (if required).
- Ideally the source files which you don't have to open, but you may need them for future designers. Not the fonts as these are licensed to the individual user.
- Optional depending on the practice: website, logo and book launch material. I have spoken at book launches to showcase design storytelling.

Design is a professional service with a professional process.

It starts with a conversation, not a file.



Thanks!

Hello Lovely Design and Co

- Cover design • Interior typesetting • eBook design
- Author websites • Branding • Book launch materials • Design audits

Self-Publishing Foundations

A self-paced course covers the whole journey from setting up for writing success, design, production, distribution, marketing, and launch. Use code **GORGEOUSSPF** for 15% off
hellolovely.design/self-publishing-foundations

Lesson plan

Chapter 1: Writing Tools

- Is It A Book?
- Anyone Can Write
- Business of Writing
- Writing Resources
- Overcoming Fears

Chapter 2 Essential Services

- Introduction To Planning
- Editing
- Design
- Print Production
- eBook Creation

Chapter 3 Showing Up

- Distribution
- Marketing
- Promotion
- Being Visible
- Next Steps