

# Self-Publishing Your Picture Book

## Questions to Ask, Steps to Take

Why do you want to self-publish a picture book? (How motivated are you?)

Why would a child want to read your book? (Know your target audience—today's children. Can they relate to the premise of the book? (No preaching!)

Why will your book stand out in the crowded field of children's publishing? (**Spend time studying picture books.** Know your competition. Make a list of what you like best of those books. How much do they sell for?)

Why choose self-publishing?

- Faster than traditional
- Gives you full control/responsibility
- Higher royalty

The downsides of self-publishing

- Learning curve – understanding the dos and don'ts of picture books (page count, pacing, etc.), standard layout, choices in publishing
- Willingness and ability to spend money for professional help for a professional product: editing, artwork, layout, printing, marketing

What kind of person is best suited for self-publishing?

- One with an open mind and ability to learn
- **Networker. Get to know other authors and support their work. Learn from them.**
- Disciplined and dedicated. You are the project manager.
- Organized. Keep track of the budget, deadlines, and schedules
- Willingness to learn marketing and to follow through

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Steps to publish:

1. Choose the books age range.
2. Create a budget: How much will it cost for an illustrator? The layout? An editor? Other professional help? What will it cost to produce each book (compare producers)? What will I charge per book? How and where am I going to sell my finished book? How many books will I need to sell to break even? How many books will I need to sell to make a profit? Can I afford to take the risk?
3. Title your book (Keywords help your book get noticed. Do a keyword search.)

4. Write your book. (Using a template mock-up is helpful. What style - rhyme, past or present tense, first or third person?)
5. Rethink your title (Writing your book may have revealed a different main theme.)
6. Use Beta readers and have your book edited. (Use a professional editor.)
7. Determine your book type: size, font, number and kind of illustrations, color palette, spine (large enough for title and author?), end pages, etc.
8. Find an illustrator. What style and medium do you want? How will the text and illustrations work together? Will your illustrator and cover artist be the same?
9. Have the book formatted (layout.)
10. Decide if your book will be published as a print on demand (POD) or offset (You order several copies at a time)
11. Will you ship the books yourself or will they be delivered by the printer?
12. Create your files: PDF? Atticus?
13. Get ISBN, LCCN numbers and a GR code
14. Upload files
15. Approve your e-proofs
16. Order a sample and approve
17. Hit publish

Some self-publishers: Amazon KDP, Ingram Spark, Barnes & Noble Press, Lulu, BookBaby, local printers, and hybrid publishers

## Resources

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO PUBLISHING FOR CHILDREN

Alliance of Independent Authors

Evi Jones: [https://www.evijones.com/ILLUSTRATOR CONTRACTS for Children's Books](https://www.evijones.com/ILLUSTRATOR_CONTRACTS_for_Children's_Books)

(Note: There are hundreds of resources online and many self-publishing Facebook groups to explore.)

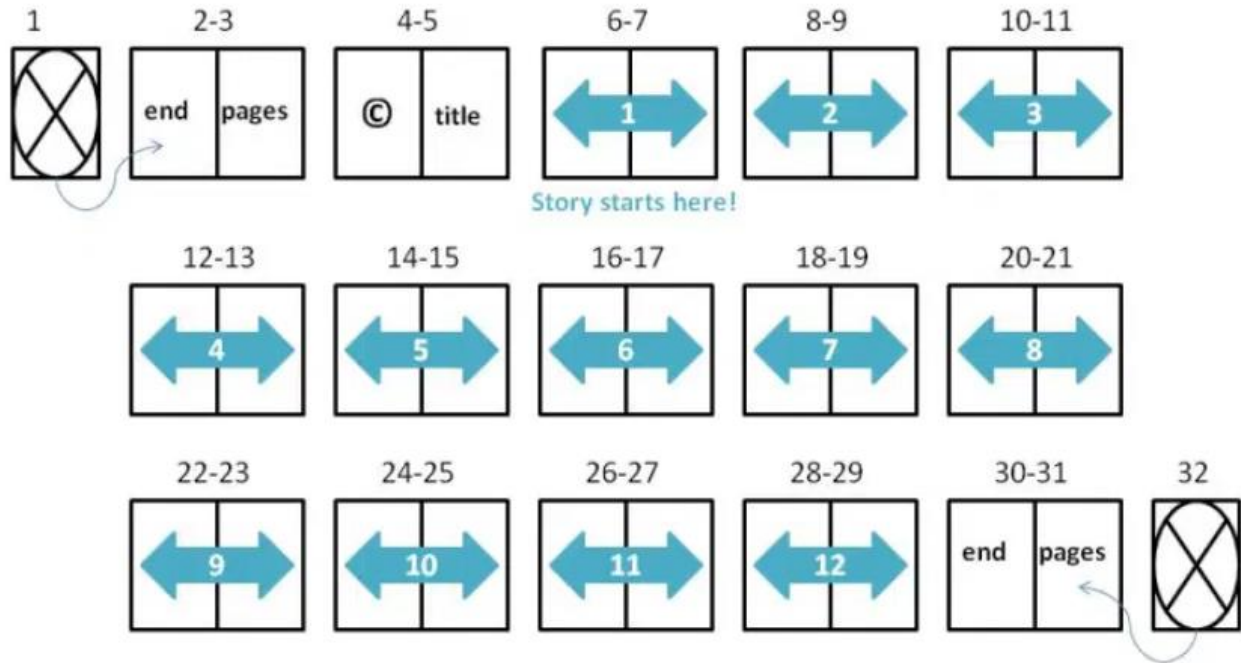
## Self-Publishing Expenses

Activity	Comments	Low	Mid	High	Select
<b>Book Production</b>					x
Professional Editing	Must-have for a high quality book	\$50	\$300	\$600	x
Illustrations	Unless author is also an illustrator	\$1,260	\$3,360	\$15,000	x
Cover Design		\$100	\$250	\$500	x
Design / Formatting	If you are not knowledgeable - hire someone	\$0	\$150	\$300	x
Project Management / Coaching	Recommended for new authors	\$300	\$600	\$900	x
<b>Identifiers</b>					x
ISBNs	Pack of 10 (US). Other countries may vary	\$0	\$295	\$295	x
Copyright	Protect your intellectual property	\$65	\$65	\$65	x
Library of Congress Control # (LCCN)	Needed for copyright page	\$0	\$0	\$0	x
CIP Block	Needed for copyright page	\$75	\$75	\$75	x
<b>Companion Products</b>					x
Coloring Book	Depends on #pages, and if activities included	\$0	\$500	\$1,000	x
Merchandise (T-Shirts, Hats)	Get quotes to determine pricing.				x
Plush	No standard cost. Requires research and quotes.				x
<b>Promotional</b>	These items are optional				x
Video Trailer	Get the word out	\$40	\$80	\$120	x
Video Read-Aloud	Full read-aloud of your book	\$40	\$80	\$120	x
Promotional Items	Bookmarks, Stickers, Brochures, Banners, Magnets, Table Runners, etc.	\$20	\$250	\$500	x
Logo / Other Branding	Creation of logo / branding content, graphics	\$50	\$500	\$1,000	x
<b>Web Site</b>					
Domain Registration		\$20	\$60	\$200	x
Web Site Hosting		\$0	\$120	\$1,200	x
Web Site Design		\$0			x
<b>Printing</b>					x
Print on Demand	KDP, Ingram Spark, Lulu, BookBaby				x
Offset Printing	Varies based on size, volume, location, printer				x
<b>Advertising</b>					x
Ads (FB, Amazon, BookBub)					x
Other Advertising					x
<b>TOTALS:</b>		<b>\$2,020</b>	<b>\$6,685</b>	<b>\$21,875</b>	

Courtesy April Cox, <https://www.selfpubmadesimple.com/>

# Self-Ended Picture Book Layout

32-page book yields 24 pages for story  
24 pages is 12 spreads



\*Pages 1 and 32 are pasted face-down onto the book cover and aren't seen.

Graphic by taralazar.wordpress.com