

Preparing to write: A checklist



by **Jana Lynch** 

Preparation is an essential part of writing a book. Whether you're writing fiction or nonfiction, eBook or traditional book, you need to prepare yourself. A good place to start is answering these 15 questions and once you do, it's time to create a checklist of tasks for getting your book finished.

But what should you include on the list? Here's some suggestions:

- **Begin with the end in mind.** Stephen Covey was definitely on to something when he added this to the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Starting with your end goal makes it easy to work backwards. So, for this item, decide if you're going to go the self-publishing or traditional publishing route. Then, once the manuscript is finished, you know what to do next.
- **Decide your audience and ideal reader.** We'll talk about this more another day but it's important to remember that no book is a good fit for every person. Given that, who do you want reading and recommending your book? Conjure up an image of that person and keep them in mind throughout the process.
- **Establish a word count guideline.** How long do you want your book to be? What's a good length to convey your message? This will vary based on topic and type of book but it's helpful to set a rough idea. Then you can break up how you write by words per day or amount of time per day.
- **Find beta readers.** Especially beta readers who will be honest. You need people who will give you feedback and suggestions on your book to make it better not people who will simply feed your ego.
- **Research.** Fiction or nonfiction, you'll need to do research on your book. Whether it's on subject matter or gathering interviews or creating characters and realistic places, you'll need dive a little deeper into your topic. Even if you're using first hand accounts. You'll also want to do some research on what other types of books in your niche are being sold (knowing your competition is a good thing!).
- **Organize and develop a system.** Systems are essential for keeping yourself organized and motivated during your book writing process.

Have a central place for your outlines, notes, research, citations, interviews...anything that's going to help you complete your book. Create a method for how you're going to write your book and worth through writer's block (we'll talk about that another day, too).

- **Establish a platform.** While you can still be successful without huge numbers of followers, you do need to have a profile on social media. You don't need to use every single one (there's just too many) but it helps to pick one or two and focus your efforts there. A platform gives you fans and supporters and, when the time is ready, an audience who already likes and trusts you and to whom you can sell your book. Followers and fans are also great beta readers and can give wonderful feedback for marketing and selling your book. Hint: if you use Facebook, even if it's just for personal reasons, you have platform.

Your list might look slightly different based on your goals and priorities but these items are a great foundation.

Writing a book is hard work but if you're organized, motivated, and know where you're going, you definitely can get it done!

Still Struggling?

Great Writing Takes ~~Two~~ Two People.

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Jana Can
help me!

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