

The Children's Book Formatting Starter Kit

A quick reference and checklist to format your children's book for print-on-demand
(KDP + IngramSpark)

by Allie Compeau | WhistlePig Publishing

Common Trim Sizes



Picture Books (Portrait): 7x9,
7.5x9.25, 8x10, 8.5x11
Picture Books (Square): 8x8,
8.5x8.5, 9x9, 10x10
Early Readers: 6x9
Chapter Books: 5.25x7.75,
5.5x8.25, 6x9
Middle Grade: 5.25x7.5,
5.25x7.75

Paper & Binding Tips

White paper = vibrant
illustrations
Cream paper = warm tone for
older readers
Glossy finish for picture books
Matte finish for chapter or
middle grade
0.125" bleed for artwork, 0.25"
inner margin

Recommended Font Sizes



Picture Books: 18–24 pt
Early Readers: 14–16 pt
Chapter Books: 11–13 pt

Keep fonts clean & readable:
Garamond • Palatino • Andika •
Baskerville

Print-on-Demand Notes

Amazon KDP: Portrait &
Square only

IngramSpark: Portrait, Square,
and one Landscape (11.5x8)

Always confirm trim size
before designing your layout.

Formatting Checklist for Indie Authors

A step-by-step walkthrough to finalize your children's book files

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Section 1 – Before You Begin

- ☐ Choose orientation (portrait / square / landscape)
- ☐ Verify trim size availability on KDP and IngramSpark
- ☐ Set up your document dimensions in inches (not pixels)
- ☐ Confirm page count within printer minimum and maximum



Section 2 – Interior Setup

- ☐ Add 0.125 inch bleed for full-page art
- ☐ Keep text inside safe margins (0.5 inch from edges)
- ☐ Embed fonts before exporting your PDF
- ☐ Use CMYK colors for print accuracy
- ☐ Ensure images are 300 DPI minimum
- ☐ Export as PDF (Print) with fonts embedded



Section 3 – Final Steps

- ☐ Order a printed proof copy before publishing
- ☐ Check colors, alignment, and binding edge
- ☐ Update metadata (title, keywords, description)
- ☐ Upload and review on KDP or IngramSpark previewer
- ☐ Celebrate — you made a real children's book! 🎉