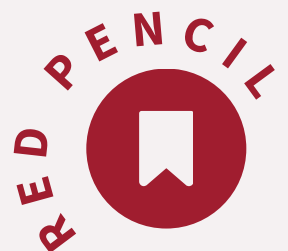


# A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: HOW TO WRITE A BOOK

*Get your idea out of your head and onto paper*



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# INTRODUCTION

Hi, I'm Leanne. My mission with Red Pencil is to **make every word count**. Whether you're an author or business owner, my book coaching, editing and proofreading services have you covered. Together we'll make your writing clear, concise and captivating!



## DISCLAIMER

This guide will serve as a blueprint to help you get your book out of your head and onto paper. However, the time it takes to complete your book will depend on the word count goal and how much time you have to dedicate to writing.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide shares my personal opinions and what I have used for my clients writing a book. Everyone has their own approach to writing a book so rather than specific rules I will share tips that I use with my authors to help with your writing.



# CHAPTER ONE: DECIDE ON YOUR IDEA



Something I ask authors at the beginning of their project is to tell me the answers to the following questions:

- **WHY** do you want to write a book?
- **WHO** is your ideal reader?
- **WHAT** do you hope the reader will get out of it?
- **WHAT** is the genre of your book?
- **WHAT** is the plot of your book in less than 50 words?

*These questions not only help you to refine your idea, they will also uncover your niche so you can start marketing towards those people as you're writing.*

# CHAPTER TWO:

## CREATE AN OUTLINE

**Before you start writing a book, it's important that you have a clear vision of what you are creating.**

Your outline should be a one-page document (minimum) that includes every major point. This should include the beginning and ending of your book. Then you can fill in the middle with the conflicts and twists. But don't forget this is a fluid document that you can expand on and change throughout the writing process.



your roadmap for writing sessions



provides structure for your book



ensures you accomplish the goal of your book



# CHAPTER THREE: START WITH RESEARCH

Research is an essential part of the process whether you are writing fiction or nonfiction.



## FICTION

**For your novel to be believable, your technical and historical details must be correct.**

Research enables you to provide helpful context for the time period or character archetypes you're writing about.



## NONFICTION

**Getting the facts right leads to a polished book.**

It is crucial that you avoid making errors that might impact your reader's trust or damage your credibility as an author and expert.

# CHAPTER FOUR: BOOK COACHING

Once you have an *idea* for a manuscript, the *genre* of your book and a *goal* for your book, you can begin working with a book coach.

As a book coach, I guide authors through the book writing process, helping them stay organised, brainstorm ideas and get their book ready for publishing.

## THE GOAL:

- to prevent issues from creeping into the manuscript to begin with
- collaborative process with regular check-ins
- provide feedback and guidance as the writing progresses



*You can learn more about working with me as a [book coach here.](#)*

# CHAPTER FIVE:

## WRITE THE FIRST DRAFT

Once you've completed all of the necessary preparation, it's time to begin writing your rough draft. **This requires committing to consistent routines and productive writing habits.**

### TIPS TO HELP YOU START WRITING

- **Set aside time to work on it each day** – this consistency and daily practice is necessary to make it happen.
- **Write in the same place** – create a place where you sit down with the sole intention of working on your book.
- **Give yourself a daily word count** – this gives you something to aim for. Make it small and achievable.
- **Ask a friend or fellow writer to hold you accountable** by sending them updates on how much you've written that day.



*The way a book comes together is by first writing a word, then a sentence, then a paragraph.*



# CHAPTER SIX:

## LOOK FOR AN EDITOR

**You need an editor who will preserve your voice while making changes to your book that will help get it published.**

### QUALITIES TO CONSIDER:

- **Experience.** Ask for an example of their work. Many editors have books they have worked on and testimonials on their website.
- **Genre.** Find an editor who has experience in the same genre as your book.
- **Editing speciality.** Determine what level of professional editing services you need. You might want to start with developmental editing.
- **Price.** The cost of book editing varies depending on the editor and what type of editing they provide. Determine your budget and the amount of help you really need with your book.
- **Sample edit.** If you want to test your compatibility with an editor, ask if they provide a sample edit. Send them five or 10 pages of your book and see what suggestions and revisions they come back with.

# EDITING WITH RED PENCIL...



**I'm here to help you, not destroy you.** I look at your writing objectively and provide suggestions to improve it. I come alongside you as a fresh set of eyes to help make your work as good as it can be!



I prefer to give my clients the opportunity to make changes I recommend. Of course, I'll use my skills and experience to share my best recommendations but ultimately, **it's your work and your choice.** You can take it or leave it, I promise I won't be offended!



I work hard to ensure I treat all of my clients as an equal. There is no me vs you. **We're on the same team and we have the same goal.**

*You can learn more about my editing services [here](#).*

# CHAPTER SEVEN:

## BEGIN MARKETING YOURSELF

**It is never too early to start marketing yourself and get people excited about your upcoming book.**

Here are three ways you can start promoting yourself:

### BUILD AN ONLINE PRESENCE

- **Author website:** to showcase your books, provide information about you as an author and offer ways for readers to connect with you.
- **Blog:** update with content related to your books, writing process, and topics of interest to your readers. This will help increase your visibility, website traffic and reader interest.
- **Social media:** share engaging content regularly. This could include snippets from your book, a behind-the-scenes look at your writing process or posts that encourage readers to engage and share their opinions.



## ENGAGE WITH READERS

Once you've started building your online presence, it's important to respond to all comments and messages on social media and your website. **This helps to foster a sense of community and connection with your readers.**

You can also engage with readers by joining discussion groups on Goodreads. Or you could host a virtual book club, Q&A session or giveaway.



## EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing offers a direct and personal way to connect with readers, build relationships and promote your books.

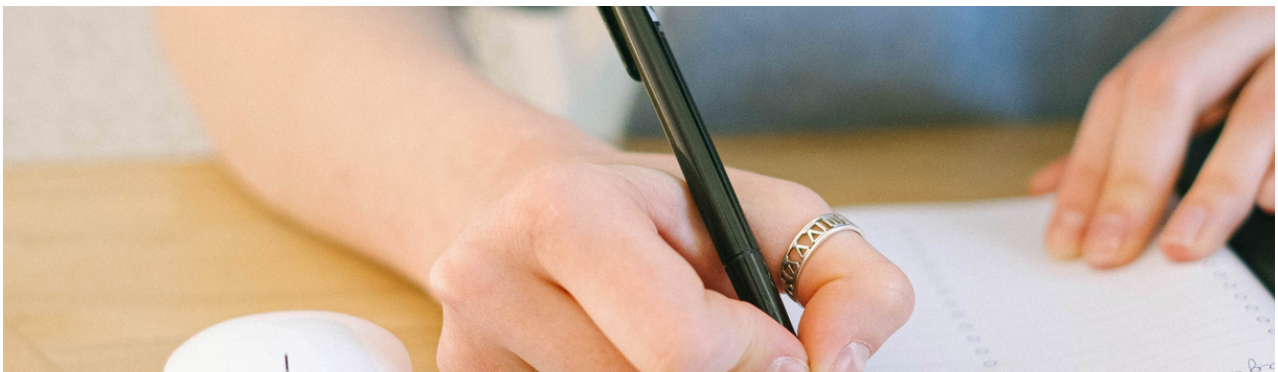
**You can start building your list by offering a free sample chapter, exclusive content or a newsletter subscription.**

Once you have your list, you should send regular emails with updates about your writing journey, new releases and special offers.

# CHAPTER EIGHT:

## REVISE WHAT YOU'VE WRITTEN

**Every book worth reading goes through many rounds of revisions.** You need to have an honest, ruthless eye on your writing so that you can know what needs reworking.



### SELF-EDITING TIPS:

- **Use spell check** – it's easy to ignore the red squiggly lines but it does encourage you to go back and edit or ignore each error.
- **Double-check your work** – simply reading what you've written a second time can help you catch mistakes.
- **Read it again later** – immediately after completing your work it's still familiar to you. Come back later with fresh eyes to be more aware of errors.
- **Read it aloud** – reading forces your brain to pay attention to each word.



# CHAPTER NINE:

## DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING

**A developmental edit is how you take your book from a rough draft to a polished, well-structured and engaging piece of writing.**

It focuses on the “big picture”.

An editor will outline the strengths and weaknesses in the manuscript and suggest improvements on things like:

- Story structure
- Character development
- Plot
- Pacing
- Theme
- Tone

*The main benefit of developmental editing is perspective. It can be difficult as a writer to step back from your work and assess it. When you are so close to what's written, it's inevitable that you'll miss things.*

*You can learn more about my developmental editing service [here](#).*

# CHAPTER TEN: WRITE YOUR SECOND DRAFT

This is when you can apply your revisions and edits.

## QUESTIONS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR WRITING:

- Does your book have a consistent tone?
- Is there an overarching theme that can be developed?
- Are there weak parts of the book that can be removed?
- Does the book have a strong opening hook?
- Does it have an impactful conclusion?

## COPY EDITING



Copy editing is a process of revision, which **focuses on eliminating grammatical and factual errors, ensuring consistency and improved readability.**

This means its content should already be well organised, well written, and easy to understand.

*You can learn more about my [copy editing service here.](#)*

**“You want people to notice you for your ideas, not your mistakes.”**

## **PROOFREADING**

Proofreading focuses on eliminating mistakes in grammar, punctuation, spelling and formatting. It also picks up instances of inconsistent terminology, formatting and referencing.

It tends to result in minor, aesthetic adjustments to text rather than big changes.

**Proofreading is the last step between you and the reader.**

It is the final check that ensures your writing is professionally written, precise and easy to read.

*You can learn more about my [proofreading service here.](#)*



# CHAPTER ELEVEN: PUBLISH YOUR WORK

Once you've completed your final draft, it's time to publish.

**You have the option to self-publish or go the traditional route and submit a book proposal to a publishing house with the help of a literary agent.**

One thing you might not know about publishing a book is that getting a traditional publishing deal isn't that easy! Unless you are royal, famous or have millions of followers on Instagram or BookTok, getting a book deal won't be easy.





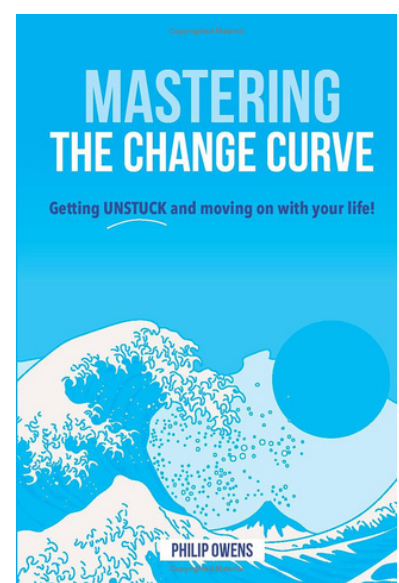
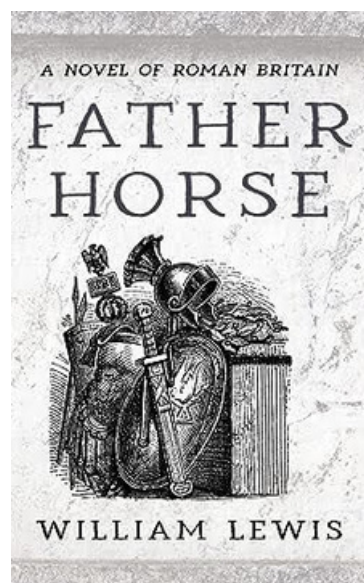
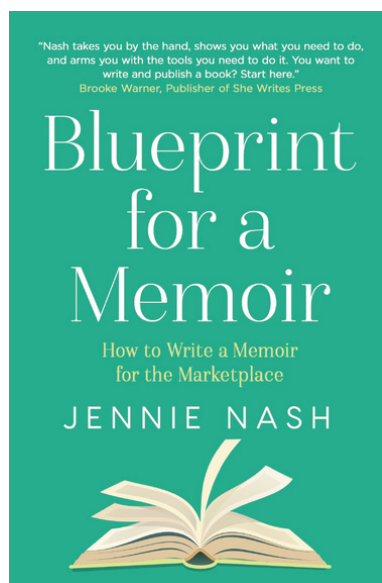
# CHAPTER TWELVE: GET PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT YOUR BOOK

Without excellent marketing, nobody will know you've written a book.

## CREATE A COMPELLING COVER AND DESCRIPTION

What people see first is the cover and description. The job of both of these is to hook the reader and entice them to continue reading.

It's a good idea to invest in a professionally designed book cover that visually represents your book's genre and themes. And to craft a captivating book description that entices potential readers and gives them a clear idea of what to expect.





# BOOK LAUNCH STRATEGY

A successful book launch strategy involves careful planning and execution to generate buzz, attract readers and maximise sales.



## THREE PHASES OF LAUNCHING YOUR BOOK:

- **Pre-launch prep:** Pick the right time to launch considering major holidays and world events. Set up pre-orders to generate early interest and build anticipation. And put together a launch team who is excited to support you in promoting your book.
- **The launch event:** This could include a physical or virtual launch party where you read excerpts, answer questions and interact with readers.
- **Post launch:** Keep the momentum by continuing to promote your book after the launch. Engage with readers, participate in online discussions and leverage your author platform.

## UTILISE PAID ADVERTISING

Consider running targeted online ads on platforms like Facebook, Instagram or Amazon.

### **Ads require careful planning, monitoring and optimisation.**

Understanding your target audience, selecting the right ad platform and creating compelling creatives are crucial elements of a successful paid advertising campaign for book promotion.



## LOCAL OUTREACH & NETWORKING

You can partner with local bookstores, libraries and community groups to host book signings, workshops or readings.

Lastly, you can focus on networking and building relationships with other authors. These connections can lead to collaborations that introduce your work to a wider audience like joint promotions, blog tours or cross-promotion on social media.

# LET'S CONNECT

Here's how I can help you get your book out of your head and onto paper.

- Connect with me on **Facebook** and **LinkedIn** where I share lots of free editing tips.
- Take a look at my **book coaching service** – I'll be your biggest cheerleader and sounding board to help you achieve your writing goals.
- Ask me about my **copyediting services** – You'll walk away with a polished and professional manuscript.
- Check out my **proofreading service** – I'll make sure we catch any mistakes before your reader does!
- Let's have a chat about your project – **Book a call** with me here.

*I can't wait to hear about what you're working on!*

RED PENCIL LTD



***Make every word count.***

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