

# Printing Considerations

*For Writers and Those Who Want to  
Support Them*



# Guidelines for New Authors: How to Choose a Printer and Evaluate Print Quality

Choosing the right printer and ensuring the quality of your book are critical steps in the publishing process. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you navigate these decisions:

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## 1. Select the Right Printer

When selecting the right printer for your book, first evaluate:

### a. Types of Printing Services

- **Print-on-Demand (POD):** Best for self-published authors with small or variable print runs. Examples include Amazon KDP and/ or IngramSpark.
- **Offset Printing:** Ideal for large print runs and higher quality. Often more cost-effective per unit for 500+ copies.

### b. Key Factors of Consideration

- **Reputation and Reviews:** Look for established printers with positive feedback from authors.
- **Services Offered:** Check if they offer:
  - POD or offset options.
  - Assistance with formatting or file conversion.
  - Worldwide distribution and fulfilment.
- **Cost:** Compare prices for setup fees, per-book costs, shipping, and extras like premium paper or colour.
- **Printing Purpose:** Are you printing a few for local distribution, or to send to book distributors? Do you want to hand out books at a launch party and to friends, family and reviewers? Are you going to keep stock and sell at talks or events? It is recommended to find a local print-on-demand service linked to a payment platform. Amazon does this for you internationally as do other book sales platforms. In RSA you will need to source this and set it up. It is NEVER recommended to print in bulk and keep books in your home – they can deteriorate, get dusty/mouldy and the cost/time involved in taking orders and posting is a big consideration.

- **Customer Support:** Ensure they are responsive and willing to guide you through the process.

### c. Additional Points of Interest

- **Bulk Discounts:** If you're using offset printing or ordering in bulk, ask about volume discounts.
  - **Sustainability:** Inquire if the printer offers eco-friendly materials or processes.
  - **Shipping Costs and Timeline:** Confirm shipping costs for proof and bulk orders, as well as delivery timelines.
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## 2. Request a Proof Copy

- A proof copy is a sample of your book, printed exactly as it will appear to customers. Always order one before approving the final print run.
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## 3. Go Over Print Quality Considerations

When reviewing your proof, evaluate these areas:

### a. Cover

- **Colour Accuracy:** Does the cover match your design file (colour vibrancy and tones)?
- **Alignment:** Are the text and images properly aligned? Check for misaligned spines or shifted artwork.
- **Durability:** Examine the sturdiness of the cover material and the lamination finish (e.g., matte or gloss).

### b. Paper and Binding

- **Paper Type:** Review paper thickness and texture. Common options:
  - *Standard:* 50–70 lb white or cream for text.
  - *Premium:* Thicker or coated stock for photo-heavy or full-colour books.

- **Binding:** Check the binding type:
  - *Perfect-Bound (Softcover):* Ensure glue is strong and pages turn smoothly.
  - *Hardcover:* Look for durable covers, strong hinges, and crisp dust jackets.
- **Bleed Issues:** Ensure no important content is cut off by the trim.

### c. Interior Content

- **Text Quality:** Is the text sharp and legible? Check font size, style, and spacing.
  - **Margins:** Ensure there's enough space near the edges for readability and no content is too close to the gutter (spine).
  - **Images and Graphics:** Inspect image clarity, colour quality, and resolution (300 DPI recommended).
  - **Consistency:** Check that page numbers, headers, and footers are consistent.
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## 4. Perform Functional Checks

- **Page Turning:** Pages should turn smoothly and not fall out.
  - **Durability:** Bend the book slightly to ensure the spine doesn't crack, and the pages don't detach.
  - **Ink Quality:** For black-and-white interiors, check that the ink provides a deep, even black with no streaking, smudging when you rub with a finger, or unevenness. For colour printing, look for accurate colour reproduction, crisp details, and saturation that aligns with your design.
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## 5. Check to See if Revisions Are Needed Before Approving

- **Make Adjustments:** Note any issues with the proof copy and revise your files accordingly.
- **Reorder Proofs if Needed:** After corrections, always review another proof before approving the final print run.