



UNIVERSAL PUBLISHING CHECKLIST



UNIVERSAL AUTHOR PUBLISHING CHECKLIST

Every step between idea and impact — and what it really costs.

Disclaimer:

This Universal Author Publishing Checklist was developed by **Era 11 Publishing Inc.** as a proprietary resource to help aspiring authors understand the publishing process from concept to completion. All timeframes, costs, and stages outlined within are based on Era 11's professional experience and research across current industry standards, freelance markets, and do-it-yourself publishing models.

Figures should be treated as general estimates, not fixed quotes. Every project is unique and may vary depending on manuscript length, creative complexity, and chosen publishing path. This document is intended as a **guide to inform and empower** you as you plan your publishing journey—not as a guarantee of specific results or expenses.

Phase 1 | Concept & Planning

Goal: *Define your message, reader, and structure before you write.*

Checklist

- Define your core message and purpose.
- Identify your target reader and book category.
- Draft your outline or table of contents.
- Set clear goals and a realistic publishing timeline.

Typical DIY/Freelance Costs:

- Book coach / concept consult: **\$300-\$1,000**
- Outline/structure guidance: **\$150- \$500**
- Market positioning research: **\$200 - \$600**

Phase Total: = \$500-\$1,500

 *This is your map before the journey begins.*

Phase 2 | Writing & Manuscript Development

Goal: Turn your outline into a complete draft.

Checklist

- Write your chapters and complete a full draft.
- Revise based on beta feedback or peer review.
- Strengthen structure and storytelling.

Typical DIY/Freelance Costs:

- Writing coach/accountability: **\$500–\$2,000**
 - Beta reader feedback: **\$100–\$300**
 - *Optional ghostwriting*: **\$0.75–\$1.50/word** (often **\$15k–\$60k+** for a full book)
- Phase Total: = \$500–\$3,000** (+ *ghostwriting if used*)

 *At this stage, you have a draft — not yet a finished book.*

Phase 3 | Editing & Revision


Goal: Elevate your draft to a professional, publish-ready manuscript.

Checklist

- Developmental edit – structure, pacing, clarity.
- Copy edit – grammar, consistency, and tone.
- Proofread – final polish before design.

Typical DIY/Freelance Costs (*assumes 30–50k words*):

- Developmental editing: **\$0.04–\$0.08/word** (**\$2,000–\$6,000**)
 - Copy editing: **\$0.03–\$0.05/word** (**\$1,500–\$3,500**)
 - Proofreading: **\$0.015–\$0.025/word** (**\$750–\$1,250**)
- Phase Total: = \$2,500 - \$7,000**

 *Skipping this step is the #1 reason self-published books fail.*

Phase 4 | Design & Formatting


Goal: Turn your manuscript into a professional book (print + eBook).

Checklist

- Custom cover design (front, spine, back).
- Interior layout for print & eBook formats.
- Back-cover copywriting and file conversion.
- Approve print or digital proofs.

Typical DIY/Freelance Costs:

- Cover design: **\$600 - \$1,200**
 - Interior layout/formatting: **\$400–\$600**
 - Back-cover copywriting: **\$150–\$400**
 - File conversions (PDF/EPUB): **\$100–\$250**
- Phase Total: = \$1,200 - \$2,500**

 *Presentation creates perception — design matters both inside and out.*

Phase 5 | Publishing Setup & Legal Essentials

Goal: Register, protect, and prepare your book for distribution.

Checklist

- Purchase and assign ISBN numbers.
- Register copyright and barcodes.
- Finalize title, subtitle, description & keywords
- Create metadata and category placement.
- Upload to Amazon KDP, IngramSpark, or similar platforms and order proofs.

Typical DIY/Freelance Costs:

- ISBN purchase: **\$125–\$175 each**
 - Copyright registration: **\$65–\$125**
 - Metadata/barcode setup: **\$75–\$150**
 - Distribution setup support: **\$200–\$400**
- Phase Total: = \$400 - \$1,000**

 *Own your ISBN to protect your publishing rights.*

Phase 6 | Launch & Marketing


Goal: *Share your book with readers and build momentum.*

Checklist

- Build a press kit and author media sheet.
- Create promotional graphics and social content.
- Plan a launch timeline with ads or events.
- Collect reviews and post-launch testimonials.
- Interviews, events, ads or PR outreach
- Track results and optimize

Typical DIY/Freelance Costs:

- Marketing assets (graphics/clip kit): **\$300–\$600**
- Press kit/media sheet: **\$200–\$400**
- Launch campaign management: **\$1,000–\$3,000**
- Author website/landing page: **\$500–\$1,000**
- Ads/PR outreach budget: **\$500–\$2,000**
- Phase Total: = \$2,000–\$6,500**

 *Visibility drives readership — launch is a campaign, not a day.*

Phase 7 | Legacy & Expansion

Goal: *Keep the book alive and leverage it into opportunities.*

Checklist

- Develop long-term marketing or ad strategy (newsletter, talks clips).
- Explore speaking, courses, or community growth.
- Create audiobooks, reprints or translated editions.
- Reinvest profits into brand and audience building.

Typical DIY/Freelance Costs:

- Ongoing marketing/ad spend: **\$250–\$1,000/mo.**

- Speaking/event collateral: **\$300–\$700**
 - Course/product build: **\$500–\$5,000**
 - Reprints/updates/audiobook: **\$400–\$2,000**
- Phase Total: = \$1,000 - \$8,000+ (goal-dependent)**

 *Publishing is the start — legacy is the goal.*

Totals (Typical Industry Range)

- **DIY with reputable freelancers (no ghostwriting): = \$8,000–\$22,000**
- **DIY including ghostwriting + launch spend: = \$27,500–\$65,000+**

A Note Before You Decide

We believe in being transparent about what it really takes to publish on your own. It's possible — many authors do it — but it often means spending months learning through trial and error.

You've already done the hard part by having the idea or the manuscript. Now it's about momentum. You can keep doing it alone, or work with trusted professionals who know how to amplify your voice, protect your vision, and bring your book to life with confidence.

If that feels right, you're ready to explore The Era11 Advantage — our publishing packages built to take you from idea to impact. We'd love to hear more about your idea. Feel free to visit us at era11publishing.com