



*Book Covers  
Designed by Kim*

Before hiring a cover designer you should be able to answer the majority of these. The more you can narrow down what you need, the quicker the design process will go, the less costly revisions will need to be made, and you will likely feel happier with the final results. <http://design.kimberlymaxwell.com/>

To start the process please take a moment to answer these questions, and gather your ideas on a Pinterest board before we talk.

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Contact info:

Website:

Book Title (including sub title if you have one):

Author's Name:

Titles of previously published books:

## General questions for all covers

5 W's—who, what, where, when, why.

What is your budget?

For any budget it's very important to know what you want to avoid costly changes. Does the price require you use stock images or can you spend more for custom?

What is your "elevator pitch" - with the least amount of words tell me what your book is about.

Have you seen my work and do you like my designs?

Are you open to suggestions or allowing room for creative freedom or are you set on an idea?

Do you have an idea of what you would like that you can show me? Pinterest boards are great for this.

Realistic, formal, casual, artistic, bright, cheerful, dark, mysterious, something from a scene in the book

Is this for use only online or is it for physical print books also?

Do you prefer certain colors (for or against)?

Do you need a certain typeface or font on the cover (keeping with a theme)?

Is this book part of a series that you want to carry a theme or brand across?

Colors, fonts, and logos can be recreated more easily than coming up with a new concept for each book so if you let me know ahead of time if your book will be part of a series it will make the following books after the first one go quicker and thus save time and cost.

What genre is your book?

Who is your reader base? What age and demographic is your book geared toward? Note— “everyone” is not an answer here.

What is the title and author name for this book?

Do you want ‘a novel’ or ‘a thriller’ etc. etc. written on your cover? How about a teaser line?

Do you have sketches or other covers and images you admire?

Remember your image will be viewed as a thumbnail size until someone clicks on it. Again, Pinterest boards are helpful here.

What type (pdf, jpg, tiff) files will you need?

Do you know what size file you need?

What size minimum /maximum (pixels) and file size (kb, mb) do you need?

Depending on the printer being used different file formats are needed. For example Create Space only offers a few templates that let you supply your own fully formatted front cover, or fully formatted front and back cover. For a full flat you’ll need to know your page count and paper color. If you do not have your own account set up with the printer you need to tell the person uploading the cover designs that changes to my work can not be made. I make each of my designs, illustrations and photos to the color destinations, ink limits, size and proportions provided by each printer or from what you’ve told me you need. For print books the platform is typically a pdf, for ebooks and audiobooks jpegs are often required. Just a side note here—it is wise for you to have your own account with companies like Createspace, Ingram Spark, or LSI so you are in control of uploading changes to your title and keeping up with your own sales and tax info.

## Images

Do you already have an image you want to use, and permission to use it?

Typically an uncluttered image has the most impact.

Does this image need editing? Do you have the rights to edit the image?

If you would like me to shoot the image do you know what you’re looking for?

## Print books, back covers and full flats

Are you doing a hardback, paperback, audiobook or ebook?

Do you know the color profile and color destination your printer needs?

For example most printers want total ink limits less than 240% for the best quality and it should be CMYK for print and RGB for screen.

Do you have your ISBN image from the printer, publisher or Bowker?

Do you want a price printed on the back cover?

Tip- check into the pros and cons of choosing to have a price printed and a price in your barcode.

Do you already have blurbs (testimonial praise endorsements) from names recognizable in your field that you can use for the back cover?

For the back cover– what is your headline, description/sales statement, facts, benefits, testimonials, unique author qualifications that set you apart in the field your book is about, and what is your call to action to make people want to buy this book over others?

This should be short enough it's easily legible. Less is more. This is your chance to grab a potential readers interest to purchase your book. I can't stress enough, the importance of your choice of words and their legibility.

Do you have an author photo you want on the back cover?

Do you know what size cover including bleed specs you need?

Most printers will give you the dimensions and bleed sizes and some even provide templates of what they require. Also HB or PB, the total number of pages and paper type changes the spine thickness. See [LSI](#) or [Create Space](#) spine calculators if you can't get the exact specs from your printer.

Do you have a subtitle or publisher logo that you want that on the spine?

Books with under 130 pages typically don't have room for text on the spine. Most printers have minimum space requirements.

Are you using white or cream paper and what is your finished page count?

This number is for your total page count, not just the numbered pages, as this affects your spine width, formatting and design.

Have you looked up your BISAC categories and do you want that listed on the back cover?

This comes into play if you have an LCCN to help librarians place your book in the correct category. Libraries often have a relatively current version of this or you can go to a bookstore and look at the categories other books in your field have used. <https://www.bisg.org/>

## Will you need?

A logo or brand image

A publisher imprint

Social media banners and headers

Bookmarks, business cards, postcards?