

Before You Write

A Thinking Exercise

Template format courtesy of [Scribe Media](#)

Questions inspired by [Hungry Authors](#)

Exercise created by [Jessica Sherer](#)

This template will help you think through those big, lofty questions about writing a book. In doing so, you'll have a better idea of what your next steps should be.

To make a fillable copy for yourself, in the menu above, select *File* and then *Make a copy*. Type a name and choose where to save the copy, then click/tap *Make a copy*. If you don't have a Google account, you can download an MS Word document, PDF, or other file type by selecting *File*, then *Download*.

Fill this out as best as you can. It's fine if you need to leave some things blank or respond with "I don't know yet." You can come back to these later. And be honest with yourself. Respond with how things are, not how you want them to be. Otherwise, this exercise won't be all that helpful.

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The Big Picture

Your Mindset

Briefly explain **why you want to write a book**. Common reasons include to: make money on book sales, earn prestige or credibility, advance a career, secure speaking or consulting gigs, influence or help an audience, entertain or inspire an audience, leave a legacy, fulfill a dream, promote personal healing or growth, or a combination of several of these.

What do you hope **will be different for you** after writing this book? How do you want writing this book to change your life?

Are there **other ways to accomplish your “why”** (e.g., start a podcast, teach online workshops, create YouTube videos)? If so, could any of those be better than writing a book? Why or why not?

Is the **book itself your goal** (e.g., fulfill a dream of being an author) or is it a means to an end (e.g., secure speaking engagements)? How might this affect how you’ll plan, write, publish, and promote the book?

What is your **long-term plan** for writing books? Do you hope to publish many books or just this one? If the former, how does this book set the stage for more to come? If the latter, what kinds of pressure might that put on creating this book?

Your Approach

Are you hoping to **traditionally publish, self publish, or hybrid publish**? Briefly explain why. If you aren't yet sure, which kind of publishing do you think is likely to best fit your "why"?

How **open and adaptable** are you in planning, writing, publishing, and promoting your book? Are you willing to pivot if the feedback suggests you should or are you quite confident in and set on your current approach?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much are you **willing to invest** in each of the following areas to make your book the best it can be?

Money:

Time:

Effort/Work:

Focus/Energy:

If you responded with a number below 7 on any part of the previous question, how do you anticipate that will **impact your book**? Are you OK with that impact? If not, what can you change?

Your Plan

Do you **have a plan** for each of the following stages?

1. Preparing to create a book (e.g., hiring the right support):

2. Defining your audience:

3. Refining your topic and/or genre:

4. Developing your book structure:

5. Outlining your chapters:

6. Researching/gathering supporting materials:

7. Setting writing goals and rhythms:

8. Pitching to an agent or publisher (if applicable):

9. Creating a self-publishing plan (if applicable):

10. Promoting/advertising your book:

Are you **confident in your plan** for each stage? Why or why not? If you don't yet have a plan for each stage, what do you need to do to establish one?

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Do you **have a partnership** with each of the following?

1. Agent:

2. Editor:

3. Proofreader:

4. Publisher:

5. Marketer:

6. Designer/typesetter:

7. Illustrator:

8. Writing coach:

9. Peer authors:

Do you intend to **establish partnerships** you don't yet have? Why or why not?

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Questions and To-Dos

Jot down any **questions or action items** that have come up during this exercise.

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Answers and Completed Items

Make note of any **answers you've found** or **action items you've completed** from your list above.

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