



Instant Authority

Harness The Power of Writing Your First Book

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Introduction

Writing a book about what you know in business or your career path is a known way to establish credibility and instant authority about a subject. If you have achieved business or technical acumen while working at your job or career, you have the basis of a good book that can help others in their journeys.

You'll be able to establish your own credibility and sell books while your own business efforts soar in popularity because you've established well-earned authority in a niche.

This guide, "Instant Authority: Writing Your Own Book," provides you with a step-by-step learning experience for writing a book from concept to publishing. You'll learn what it takes most writers years – and many books in the "slush pile" to learn and with that knowledge, you can begin and end your book knowing that you've done it right.

Chapter 1: What to Write About will teach you how to turn a concept into a mind-mapping excursion that will lead you to researching the facts and areas you'll want to discuss within the book.

After establishing the concept from a business you've learned, hobby you have or other means, you'll be ready to turn your mind-mapping experience into an outline (Chapter 2: An Outline in a Week) that will take you through the outline process step-by-step and at the end, you'll have a rough draft of your very first book.

The remaining chapters in "Instant Authority: Writing Your First Book" will teach you how to fill in the blanks of the rough draft, review and revise what you've written and how to know the moment you actually ARE a writer.

Writing a book is likely the most challenging tasks you can undertake, but it also brings with it mountains of rewards. It doesn't take talent as much as it takes persistence and patience. So, sharpen your pencils and get ready to begin. At the end of this guide, you'll have tools you need to write your own book.

What to Write About

If you're thinking about writing a book, you probably already have a concept in mind. You may have an area of expertise that relates to your business and that many people would be interested to know about.

An idea doesn't have to be about your business. It may be about a hobby or an idea you have that could change the world – or at least make life easier. The concept for your book can take many forms, but whatever form it takes, you should immerse yourself in it as much as you can when you decide on the subject.

You may have thought of a concept for a book that only includes the bare skeleton of what it will become. To gather the information you'll need, branch out and gather all the data you can before you begin the writing process.

Research is important to developing your concept. You'll get many ideas from your research and can condense and formulate them to fit your specific audience. You're way ahead if you're planning to write about something you already know, but it still takes research to fill in the blanks about what you don't know and to make the book flow easily.

Brainstorm Book Ideas

Even if you're thinking about writing a book along your line of expertise, you may not know how to structure it or which audience is the best for your knowledge and style of writing.

You'll write your best if you're interested in the subject matter, so be sure to choose something that appeals to you. When you're excited or really interested in what you're writing it will be plain to the audience and they'll want to keep reading.

Here are some areas you may have the knowledge to write about – or get ideas from:

- **Your Job** – Even an ordinary job can produce a mountain of ideas. For example, Scott Adams turned his boring job in mid-management into the comic strip, “Dilbert,” which is about ordinary days in an office setting. The twist Adams put on the comic strip helped it to become one of the most popular in history.
- **Experience** – Many people have made millions from chronicling their experiences. Some of the best known books have been ones that involved those who worked near a president, leader or celebrity. These are often called “tell all” books. But not everyone has an experience like that. You may want to tell about what happened when you hiked through Europe or about rescuing dogs.
- **Passion** – If you’ve had a passion that has immersed you totally for quite some time, you may have the basis for a book idea. You may have a passion for the business that you’ve built and developed online. Telling others about your experience each step of the way is a good concept for a book that people who have the same or similar passion will want to read.
- **Hobby** – Whatever hobby you have is sure to be shared by others. You may have turned a hobby into a lucrative business – that’s fascinating stuff for some people and you might be an inspiration to others if you write a book about your experience.

As times and technology evolves, new opportunities to fill a need arise. You may have a book idea that can fill a need for someone who wants to know what you know or have experienced. Brainstorm your areas of expertise and then write a book about it.

Researching Your Book

No matter how much you think you know about the subject you're going to write about, you'll need to do some heavy and meaningful research before you sit down to write.

Since the advent of the Internet, there are as many ways to research a subject as there are subjects to write about. But, you don't have to use the "search" button exclusively for all your research needs. Here are a few methods you might not have thought of for researching your book:

- **Libraries** – Your local library or college and university libraries are great places to search for information. The archives of some libraries may have information that you can't easily find on the Internet. But, you can use the outstanding databases within the library to locate what you need.
- **Books and Magazines** – Local bookstores (and those online) likely harbor a wealth of information about the subject you want to write about. You might find some great ideas and new information in monthly magazines and many books that present a different slant on your chosen subject.
- **Interviews** – When you're writing a non-fiction book, it's especially helpful to have interviews or quotes from experts other than yourself. You may also be able to clarify some of your own thoughts on a subject. Interviews and quotes from others give your book much more credibility.
- **Blogs** – There is a blog site for just about any subject that you can think of. Blogs on the Internet are great places to learn new things and get ideas. It's a way for people all over the world, with the same interests, to get together and talk about what they love.

- **Social Media Sites** – You may think these sites are frivolous and won't do you much good when researching your book. But, just as there are blog sites about many subjects, there are also groups on social media sites who boast members with the same interests. Find and join one that might provide some insight into your subject.
- **Government Agencies** – The government distributes thousands of documents about thousands of subjects. If you're writing a book that might need research involving rules and regulations set forth by the government, these agencies might be just the place to do some research.

One main rule of thumb you should remember when collecting your research data is to be sure – very sure – that your information is factual. Nothing turns off a reader than to come across a blatant error in a book. The author and the book immediately lose all the credibility they may have built.

Main Learning Points of Chapter 1: What to Write About

In Chapter 1: What to Write About, you learned how to brainstorm ideas to turn your passion, experience or expertise into a book that you can be proud of and that many will want to read. It's been said that no idea is new, but if you have a different slant on a subject or can write from your own experience, the reader will appreciate the book. Here are some main learning points of Chapter 1:

- You may already have a concept for a book, but it will take some brainstorming and research to expand and gather the information you'll need to actually write one.
- Brainstorming your book idea is a way to know how much knowledge and expertise you have to write a book on the concept you've chosen. You may choose to brainstorm ideas from a passion you have, expertise in a certain field or a passion that has led you to accomplish a goal or dream.
- Researching your book can help you structure it and add details that you may not be aware of.
- Don't be limited to the Internet for researching your book. Other methods might include the library, books and magazines and government agencies.
- The search button isn't the only way to research your subject on the Internet. Use the power of blogs, social media sites and websites to gather data on a daily basis.
- Be sure your research is accurate. Double check if you have to – but never present inaccurate or sloppy information to your reader.

An Outline in a Week

An outline can help any author – fiction or non-fiction – to organize your thoughts and keep the concept of the book flowing as you write. Chapter 2 of “Instant Authority: Writing Your First Book,” will help you break down your thoughts in an organized and manageable fashion and create the outline for your book in only a week’s time.

By using methods such as mind-mapping to construct a table-of-contents type of outline for your book, you’ll be diagramming a core concept where other ideas and thoughts can branch out and eventually become the entire picture.

When you see that finished picture and have it clear in your mind, you can then fill in the blanks of each chapter until you’ve created the entire book – ready for publishing.

What is Mind Mapping?

Mind mapping has been used for decades to visually organize ideas and thoughts, create a plan of action and arrange them in a clear and concise manner. You can use a blank sheet of paper or yellow pad and write it down by pencil, white board or use one of the mapping applications that are available online for your computer or mobile device.

When an artist begins to paint, he or she usually starts with sketches on a canvas. Then, he goes back and begins to fill in with color and other details. It’s the same concept for using mind mapping to help you write a book.

You may want to begin mind mapping with the following simplistic way to begin organizing your ideas:

1. Draw a large circle in the middle of a piece of paper. Label it with your book title or concept.
2. Draw several smaller clouds around the larger ones to represent chapters in your book. You don't have to title them now.
3. Next to the "Chapter 1" circle, jot down ideas you've planned for that chapter and continue to each of the other chapters.

Now you can see your entire project at a glance. Continue the mind mapping process by adding, removing or moving chapters and ideas until the entire map fits together perfectly.

Mind mapping software for your computer or mobile device uses the "drag-drop" method to move chapters and ideas to different locations in the book, so it's a much better way to quickly organize, add and remove the content.

The mind mapping way of organizing your thoughts for your future book helps you to visually see how the entire book is going to fit together by the beginning concept and the "branches" that show other ideas by using images, words or rough notes.

Today, the mind mapping method is called a "spider diagram," whereas a few years back, it was known as "idea sunbursting." Mind maps are also useful in structuring and generating ideas and are extremely useful in business and educational endeavors.

Task List to Complete Your Outline in a Week

With mind mapping in place, it will be easy to complete the outline for your book in a week's time. Here is a basic, day-by-day task list that you can use to map out your book and have a finished outline that you can turn into a rough draft.

- **Day One:** Outline your entire book from start to finish using a mind map. You don't have to be detailed. That will come later as the outline increases in ideas.
- **Day Two:** Use mind map to make a rough draft of your entire table of contents, including chapters and sub-chapters if desired.
- **Day Three:** Add a few sentences to each chapter in your table of contents to flesh it out and make it.
- **Day Four:** Add ideas for two stories/anecdotes to each chapter in your table of contents. They can be simply a couple of notes and you can add to them later.
- **Day Five:** Double check to make sure you didn't miss anything in your outline. Start from the core of the book and work your way out within the mind map, checking each portion and adding or taking away if needed.
- **Day Six:** Make sure your outline flows logically from chapter to chapter and point to point. There's nothing that turns a reader off more than trying to read a book that doesn't easily flow from thought to thought.
- **Day Seven:** You now have an outline! It's time to write your book!

You've successfully passed the first hurdle of writing a book. Now, the fun begins – the actual writing of your book. The next chapter – “Write!” of this guide, “Instant Authority: Writing Your First Book,” is about the actual writing process and turning your outline into a rough draft.

Main Learning Points of Chapter 2: An Outline in a Week

Producing an outline provides a roadmap that will take you through the complete writing process of your book. You'll have organized your thoughts so that whenever you feel like writing or have the time to write, you can easily pick up where you left off. Here are some takeaway points you should have learned in Chapter 2: An Outline in a Week:

- An outline should be so complete that it's almost like filling in the blanks when you begin the finishing touches.
- Mind-mapping is a visual way to organize your thoughts and ideas so that it ends up looking like a "sunburst" or spider diagram that you can build on later. There are online applications that can help you with the mind-mapping process.
- After you understand the mind-mapping process, you're ready to begin work on the outline.
- Use the task list provided in this chapter to plot out your book's outline on a day-by-day basis. At the end of the week, you'll have the entire outline in place and be ready to begin the actual writing process.

Write!

You've overcome the first hurdle of writing a book – the outline. Now it's time to turn your hard work into a first (rough) draft. The first draft of your book will likely be far different than the finished version, but going through this process will help you weed out what doesn't belong in your masterpiece – and more important, what does belong and makes it flow.

This process will have you turning your outline into real sentences and paragraphs. It's like painting a picture. In the outline you actually outlined the vision you wanted to create by sketches. Now, you're ready to fill in the colors and more detail and make that picture come alive.

Here are 10 basic tips for turning your outline into a first draft:

1. **Simply write!** The bones of your first draft will become the flesh and sinew of a real book. Most great writers begin the rough draft of their books by simply writing what first comes to mind. You can always revise and fix problems later. For now, simply write down the bones.
2. **Glance at the outline for guidance.** If you become stuck while you're writing, glance at the outline to keep on track. You may want to keep on writing without looking at the outline – and that's okay too. Whatever works.
3. **Before you sit down to write, follow a routine.** Routines are meant to set up our minds before doing something. Drinking a cup of tea, meditating or listening to music may be just the routine you need to get the creative juices flowing.

4. **It's okay to leave gaps.** The purpose of the rough draft is to get your thoughts down when you have time to write. There will be words you can't think of and sentences that don't work. Leave them alone, knowing you'll revisit them later and have the answers.
5. **Don't stress about writing.** You'll write much better and your information will flow smoothly if you're not stressed about the writing process. Focus on the ideas, not the grammar or structure of your sentences.
6. **Begin anywhere each time you write.** If you're not feeling the urge to write about the subject matter in the first chapter of your book, begin with another chapter you do feel like writing about. Your writing will be much stronger and you'll make more progress.
7. **Keep on writing.** Similar to the first tip, keep on writing means that you continue with the writing process without stopping to go back over what you've already written. It's so tempting to correct and revise your rough draft as you go, but that's not the purpose of the rough draft, and that can keep you from progressing.
8. **Don't procrastinate.** Procrastination is a bad habit that has no place in a writer's world. When you begin to put off the writing process of your book, you're choosing to view it as work, rather than a task to be cherished. If you don't enjoy writing your book, you may have chosen the wrong subject.
9. **Don't edit yourself.** Your first attempt at a rough draft may look like it was written by a first grader. Don't worry about it. If you make a habit of going back to read and edit or rewrite before you finish the draft, you'll never make it to the end.

10. Leave gaps for later. You may not have all the facts for your first draft – nor be able to think of words you want to say, but just keep writing. Later, there will be a chance to review and revise. You may want to make an “informational” note to yourself on the draft as a reminder to get the fact or to rephrase the wording.

Enjoy the Writing Process

Sometimes you have to stop and remember why you wanted to write a book in the first place. You have a story to tell or you wouldn't have thought of writing a book, so keep that in mind during the entire writing process.

The rough draft should be fun, because you're not worried about semantics of how the book should look or read at this time. Write as if you're telling a story to someone who wants to hear it and keep in mind what you're trying to get across.

Most writers keep files or journals full of notes, clippings, references and other memory jogging helps that will help to keep the book interesting and real. When you get an idea during the time you're not at your desk writing, be sure to have a pencil and paper on hand to jot it down. (Of course, many now use the help of an iPhone or iPad for that purpose.)

Main Learning Points of Chapter 3: Write!

After the rough draft, the most exciting part of writing a book begins – the writing process. This is where you can really shine with your knowledge and desire to write a book that will help people understand something a little better or get to know about something they never thought possible. Chapter 3: Write!, delved in to the process of adding sentences and facts to make your book real – and to stand out from the others in the best way possible. Some learning points of this chapter include:

- 10 basic tips for transforming your outline into a first (rough) draft, including a metaphor about how an artist sketches to begin a masterpiece before it's complete.
- Never edit yourself as you go along. The rough draft is just that – rough. It will be full of gaps, notes, bad grammar and spelling mistakes. You will go back many times before it's finished. Right now, simply write.
- Make up a routine to follow before you settle down to write. This tip engages your mind and sets you up to be open and alert when you're writing.
- Don't look back. Continue writing down the bones of your book without re-thinking or revising what you've already accomplished.
- Enjoy the writing process. You should enjoy every minute of writing a book – from developing a concept, to flushing out an outline to the rough draft and even the final editing process. If you don't enjoy it – writing probably isn't for you.

Review and Revise

This is the polishing phase of your book. After the rough draft is complete in its sketchy form, you need to go back, reread, review and revise what you've got so far.

During the revision phase, you'll be fixing more than simple misspellings and commas in your draft. You'll be taking a fresh look from a critical viewpoint and honing your book so that it will be transformed from crude grammar and gaping holes to a refined and well-thought-out book to present for publishing.

You'll be scrutinizing your draft to see if what you've done so far is exactly what you wanted to say and in the method you want to say it (for example, with enough humor and detailed) and targeted to the proper audience.

The process of reviewing and revising your rough draft into a final product is important and if you've never done it before, there are some things you should know that will make the task easier, faster and more productive.

The Process of Review and Revision

After you finish the rough draft of your book, you should walk away from it for a time. You've likely immersed yourself in mind-mapping the outline and transforming that into a rough draft with notes, reminders and thoughts you want to incorporate.

Stepping back for awhile will give you a fresh new perspective on what you've accomplished so far and make the revision process much easier. It's up to you how long you wait before tackling review and revision. For some, a few hours are enough and for others, it could take a day, week or even a month.

Here are some ideas that you'll want to incorporate in the various stages of the revision process:

- **Read from a hard copy in the beginning.** Most professional writers find that errors or problems tend to be seen on paper more clearly than the computer screen.
- **Read the rough draft straight through.** Don't begin making corrections until you've read the entire book through to refresh your memory about the big issues that you want the book to address.
- **Focus on the big picture at first.** Forget about the commas and spelling during the first few runs through the draft. Right now, focus on whether your book addresses the questions and viewpoints you want your reader to come away with.
- **Make the prose flow.** Are there areas of the book where your thoughts wander or you're confused? If you're experiencing that, your reader will also. Be sure your text flows seamlessly throughout the book.
- **Does your book deliver what it promises?** The purchaser and reader of your book had a reason for choosing it over the other offerings. Perhaps it was a blurb on the front or back cover that promised information about a subject or process that interested them. Be sure your book covers what you claim it will.
- **Are your facts accurate?** Check and recheck the facts that you present in the book to ensure their accuracy. Nothing can ruin your book for the reader than inaccuracy in the content.

- **Does the book end properly?** Your conclusion should tie everything in the book together and leave the reader happy that he or she bought and read what you had to say.
- **Does it make sense?** Finally, your book should make complete sense to the audience you're targeting. At this point, you may want to have another person who knows something of what you're writing about to look over the book and ask questions or comment.

You may go through several draft processes before you announce that your book is ready for a final review and edit. Some writers claim they can write a book in only one draft, but for most of us, it takes several.

Editing and Proofreading

You're approaching the finish line of completing your book when you reach the editing and proofreading stage. Editing your draft includes looking for phrases you can make more forceful and avoiding repetition within the book.

Proofreading is looking for commas and other grammar faux paux that can make a difference in how your readers comprehend what you're trying to say. At this level of book polishing, it's best to read the manuscript aloud so you can get the full impact of the words and the punctuation choices you've made.

Time to Hire a Professional Editor

After you're as sure as you can be that your book is polished and finished, think about hiring a professional editor to pronounce it "finished." You can try to get a recommendation for an editor through another writer or a professional publisher.

Before you choose an editor, be sure she can provide samples of her work and that she has references. Although the editor likely won't be savvy enough to know

all the facts you're writing about, she can make recommendations on glaring mistakes and style.

Remember that you don't have to take everyone's feedback as law. Make your own decisions on some feedback issues, but take every one of them seriously so that you can feel confident as you progress to the publishing stage of your masterpiece.

Main Learning Points of Chapter 4: Review and Revise

This part of the writing process may seem tedious to some, but it's an important part of putting the finishing touches on your manuscript and making sure it's as perfect as can be before releasing it to the world. Rather than look at the big picture and be overwhelmed, you can review and revise in small parts until you're sure you've done everything you can to correct errors and make the prose flow properly. Here are some main takeaways you should have gathered from Chapter 4: Review and Revise:

- Take a vacation from the book for awhile. It helps to review and revise when you can have a fresh perspective on what you've written so far. Some writers only take a few hours, while others need a week or a month.
- Take a critical viewpoint of your book. At first, you'll want to read through and understand what you've written in your first draft. Don't bother with grammar and punctuation, but instead, focus on filling in gaps and making sure you've got your facts straight.
- Be sure your book delivers what you promised the reader. The purchaser and reader of your book bought it for a specific reason. Whatever is promised on the cover or introduction of the book should lie within it.
- You'll likely go through several drafts before you have a finished manuscript. Revising and reviewing your book's draft is a process where you should take your time to get it right. Don't rush through any of the revision process.
- Hire a professional editor if you can. Choose your editor from recommendations and samples of her writing style. She can provide valuable feedback before you're finally ready to submit the book for publishing.

You ARE a Writer!

Congratulations! You've put the final touches on your book and it's ready for publishing. You can call yourself a writer – and be proud of the long (and sometimes excruciating) process you went through to write a book. Now it's time to find a publisher.

There are so many options available to get your book published and you should research them all to find one that's best for your needs. The Internet has opened up a whole new world of publishing that you can take advantage of immediately, without waiting for an agent or brick and mortar publisher to accept and publish your work.

Digital Self-Publishing Methods

Many new authors are making their marks on the book publishing world that would never have been “discovered” before the Internet gave us such self-publishing options as Createspace and Kindle (KDP) – two of the most popular digital self-publishing methods. Here are some features of each that you might want to consider:

- **CreateSpace** – This Independent Publishing site can get you published right away and start the royalties coming in rather than waiting for an agent to find the right publishing house for your book.
With the free download, you get such tools as a cover creator, reviewer and an image gallery from which to choose images for your book. CreateSpace also offers services such as editing, design and marketing.
Unlike brick and mortar publishing houses, your work is published to meet the demand with CreateSpace, so your title is always available and there's no inventory cost.

You may also reach other readers through Amazon, Kindle and other distribution options that CreateSpace makes available – plus, you can create your own eStore easily and quickly.

- **Kindle** – Kindle Direct Publishing has turned the publishing world upside down with its ability to reach millions of readers with instant access and a publishing process that takes less than 5 minutes and that has your book on the “shelves” within 24 to 48 hours.

When you choose Amazon’s Kindle for your publishing and distribution needs, you’ll earn up to 70% royalty on each and every sale and they also offer KDP Select that lets you earn even more through the lending library and Kindle Unlimited.

You’ll also keep control of your own rights and are able to set your own prices. You may also make changes to your book as many times and as often as you like.

Physical Self-Publishing

You may choose to publish your book without involving a third-party. These are usually print-on-demand methods and the author is in control of the process, including the cover design, format, and distribution and marketing attempts. You can choose to outsource some of these details or all of them.

Advances in technology have made this form of publishing popular and now, more books are self-published than those that were published in the traditional method.

If you choose the route of self-publishing, you can select to create your book as an electronic download, a print-on-demand version or through “vanity” publishing, where it veers off from the self-publishing concept because the author doesn’t have control of the print run or the distribution.

It's extremely important that you research each publishing method thoroughly before you decide on the best one for you. Each method has distinct advantages – and disadvantages, so choose carefully.

Advantages of Being a Published Author

Authors are respected and revered by just about everyone. Their books are proof that they accomplished something that most people never will – a feat akin to reaching the top of Mount Everest. But, aside from the respect and adoration people hold for authors, there are a multitude of other benefits a published author can expect. Among them are:

- **Extra Income** – Royalties for books you sell can help increase your income and set you up for writing and selling more books.
- **Credibility** – By publishing a book, you're establishing yourself as an expert on the subject you wrote about and now have the authority to speak about the subject.
- **Value to your career path** – You can add more value to your employment possibilities when you write a book about your experiences or knowledge in a career field.
- **Increase business** – If you have an online business or any type of business, writing a book can make people want to do business with you.
- **Respect** – The ability to say you are a published author will gain respect from others for what you've gone through and accomplished.

Perhaps the most wonderful benefit you get from writing and publishing a book is the huge boost of self-confidence and pride you experience from actually accomplishing what you set out to do.

You'll gain a sense of belief in yourself that few people have when you see your book as a finished product. Surely, you'll want to begin another book right away and you'll be enthused about the process – because now you know what writing is all about.

Perhaps Enid Bagnold, a highly successful writer of plays and movies in the 1940s (National Velvet and The Chalk Garden were just two of her works) said it best about becoming a writer:

“Who wants to become a writer? And why? Because it's the answer to everything...it's the streaming reason for living. To note, to pin down, to build up, to create, to be astonished at nothing, to cherish the oddities, to let nothing go down to drain, to make something, to make a great flower out of life, even if it's a cactus.”

Main Learning Points of Chapter 5: You ARE a Writer!

After you finish the entire process of writing a book, from concept to polishing the manuscript, you may consider yourself a writer. Most people don't get past the concept stage of creating a book, and if you've followed the guide, "Instant Authority: Writing Your First Book," and have a book ready for publishing, you have every right to call say, "I'm a writer."

Chapter 5: You ARE a Writer!, reaffirms why you are a writer, lets you in on some publishing paths you might want to take and lists a few benefits you can expect, such as:

- Choose from digital or physical self-publishing methods. Digital methods include CreateSpace and Kindle Direct Publishing. They each have features that are easy to use and that offer great options and royalties.
- Physical self-publishing involves publishing a book through a vanity, print-on-demand or electronic methods. There's no third party involved and you retain all rights as a writer. You have to take care of the marketing and other details involved in publishing a book.
- Advantages of being a published author are many and include the extra income you'll receive from royalties, respect and admiration from others, credibility in your chosen field or career and an increase in business if your book is about what you've learned from owning and running a vital business concern.
- Belief in yourself. Writing a book can instill belief and confidence in yourself like no other achievement can. Many have likened finishing and getting a book published as winning an Olympic gold medal.