

THE INDIE AUTHOR ROADMAP

YOUR *step-by-step guide*

FROM FIRST DRAFT



TO PUBLISHED BOOK

www.rlapublishing.com

WELCOME TO YOUR AUTHOR JOURNEY

You have a story inside you—an idea that keeps whispering, “It’s time.” But turning that idea into a published book can feel overwhelming. Where do you even start? What comes first?

That’s why I created The Indie Author Roadmap.

This guide breaks down the self-publishing process into clear, manageable stages—from the first spark of an idea to holding your finished book in your hands.

Whether you’re just beginning or midway through your manuscript, you’ll find the structure, confidence, and clarity to move forward.

At RLA Publishing, we believe every author deserves personalized support. Consider this your map—and when you’re ready for a guide, we’ll walk beside you.



Raynie Andrews-Taylor

Indie Author, Editor, Writing Coach
Owner, RLA Publishing

Stage ONE

Turn your inspiration
into a focused,
purposeful project.



Develop Your Book Idea

Every great book starts with clarity. Before you write, take time to define what your story is really about and why you're writing it.



Ask yourself:

- Why does this story matter to me?
- Who am I writing it for?
- What do I want my readers to feel or learn?

Your answers will shape everything that follows—your tone, structure, and even your marketing later on.

Book Vision Snapshot

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- My book is about:

- My goal with this book:

- My readers will feel:



Pro Tip: The clearer your “why,” the easier every decision becomes.

Stage TWO

Get your story down
—without worrying
about perfection.



Write the First Draft

Most writers get stuck because they expect their first draft to be flawless. It won't be—and that's okay. Your first draft's only job is to exist.



Set yourself up for success:

- Create a writing schedule that fits your life
- Write in short, consistent bursts (30–60 minutes)
- Silence your inner critic until revision time
- Keep a “note dump” file for ideas to revisit later

Drafting Milestones

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- ☐ Outline completed
- ☐ Writing schedule set
- ☐ First draft completed
- ☐ Backup saved



Pro Tip: Progress is measured in pages written, not perfect sentences.

Stage THREE

Strengthen your story before professional editing.



Revise & Self-Edit

Once your draft is complete, take a breath—and a short break. When you return, read it like a stranger.



Look for:

- *Clarity and flow.* Does each scene connect naturally?
- *Consistency.* Do characters, tone, and timelines align?
- *Emotion.* Are readers feeling what you want them to feel?
- *Word clutter.* Can you tighten long sentences or repetitive phrasing?

Self-Edit Snapshot

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- One scene I absolutely love:

- One scene that feels weak or confusing:

- A recurring issue I notice (pacing, tone, dialogue, etc.):



Pro Tip: Read your manuscript aloud. It reveals awkward pacing and missing beats faster than silent reading.

Stage FOUR

Transform your
manuscript from
good to great.



Professional Editing

A skilled editor doesn't just fix grammar—they help your story shine. Professional editing ensures your book reads smoothly, maintains consistency, and connects emotionally with readers.

Types of editing:

- *Developmental Editing*: Story structure, pacing, and content clarity
- *Line Editing*: Flow, tone, and reader engagement
- *Copyediting*: Grammar, punctuation, and technical accuracy



Why Editing Matters



Readers can forgive many things—but not a sloppy read. Investing in editing is the most important decision you'll make for your book's success.



Learn More: Learn more about our editing packages:
<https://www.rlapublishing.com/services/book-editing/>

Stage FIVE

Turn your polished manuscript into a beautiful, professional book.



Design, Format & Publish

Readers do judge a book by its cover—so make yours worth picking up. Professional design and formatting make your book visually appealing and easy to read on every device.

Design & Publishing Checklist

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- ☐ Custom cover design completed
- ☐ Interior formatted for print and eBook
- ☐ ISBN and copyright page created
- ☐ Uploaded to KDP or IngramSpark
- ☐ Proof copy ordered and reviewed
- ☐ Competitive Pricing Set

You're an Author!



Pro Tip: Always review a printed proof before approving final publication. It's the best way to spot layout errors or tweak the design before launch day.

Stage SIX

Build excitement
before, during, and
after your launch.



Market & Launch

A successful launch doesn't start on release day—it starts weeks (or months) before. Create buzz early so your book doesn't debut to silence.

Pre-Launch Plan



- Announce your book with cover reveals & teasers
- Offer ARC (Advanced Reader Copy) downloads for early reviews
- Build an email list and send behind-the-scenes updates

Launch Week Tasks:



- *Schedule social media posts across platforms*
- *Reach out to book bloggers & podcasts*
- *Encourage friends and readers to leave reviews*

After Launch:

- *Celebrate your success—then keep going.*
- *Continue posting quotes, fan reactions, or excerpts.*
- *Build your next project while maintaining visibility.*



Stage SEVEN

Build a lasting
author brand.



Keep Momentum

Publishing is just the beginning. True success comes from staying visible and nurturing your audience.

Keep Up Your Momentum

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Start a newsletter to share
updates or insights

Engage with readers
authentically on social media



Collaborate with other authors
or local bookstores

Keep writing—your next book is
your best marketing tool



Pro Tip: Every reader who connects with your story is proof that your voice matters.

Helping Voices Find Their Readers

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Book your free consultation or explore our
editing and publishing services at:
www.rlapublishing.com

