

The Writer's Go Bag

Dear Writer, whether we end up working together in the future or never meet again, I want to give you this. Think of it as a packing list and use it to prepare for your travels as you write your book.

Articulate your purpose

The first thing to do is to write down your deep purpose.

What drives you to finish your book? You may have some knowledge or insight to offer other people, but it isn't quite enough to say, "My knowledge is valuable. Therefore, I need to share it." You will have defined your deep purpose when you can say *why* someone needs to read your book. What do you intend to happen when they close the covers?

Meet your reader

Many writers fail to complete their book because they are writing to the page, rather than to the real people who will read their book. It is important to know who you are writing for even before you start the first chapter. You may not personally know anyone who will want to read your book but that does not need to stop you from meeting and making friends with your ideal reader. You are a writer; therefore, you have imagination! Use this free exercise to help your imagination roam free and to meet your reader:

<https://ruthbullivant.com/find-your-reader>

Writing the book

The single most valuable book I urge you to read is **Blueprint for a Nonfiction Book: Plan and Pitch Your Big Idea** by Jennie Nash (who taught me). It's lean and punchy. As she says, "it's a step-by-step process for defining your big idea, developing a compelling book proposal, and making the pitch to the industry professionals who can bring it to life." The book is available on Amazon at: <https://amzn.eu/d/3mqmG70>

Publishing

Have you thought about whether you want to publish your book yourself or to seek a contract from a ("traditional") publishing house? For more information on the current publishing world, see my article at: <https://ruthbullivant.com/introduction-to-publishing/>

If you feel confused about your options, it boils down to this: self-publishing gives you control of your timetable and your creative decisions. You pay for your own book cover, formatting, editing, and, indirectly, your time in doing all this. Your net profit per book sale is higher than traditional publishing. The electronic platforms (such as Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing) enable you to distribute your book to readers aware of those platforms. The traditional publishing route takes longer (years, not months) and you surrender control of the process, but you pay nothing. The publisher might pay an upfront sum, which doesn't happen with self-publishing; they will take a higher share of any royalties. In either case, you must do the marketing yourself.

The agent and publishing world is dealt with in all the detail you could ever need in the **Writers' & Artists' Yearbook 2026: The best advice on how to write and get published** (<https://amzn.eu/d/gJob6KP>)

There are further resources on the **Alliance of Independent Authors** website

(<https://www.allianceindependentauthors.org/>)

Marketing

Raising awareness of your book is hard work. There is a writer, **Dan Blank**, a former marketer, who understands how important it is to make connections with the people who need to read your book, and how exactly you go about doing that. Please get onto his free weekly newsletter list, and take a look at his book **Be the Gateway**: <https://amzn.eu/d/0Lo2L6X>

You may like to explore the necessity for having a website to promote the book, and Debbie Emmitt's **Improve your Author Website** is helpful.

Bon voyage

Writer, I wish you all the very best with your book and with reaching the audience who needs it. Remember, you can send me an email if you need to consult me about your book, or my editing service:

<https://ruthbullivant.com/message-me>

I hope that some of what I have offered here will be helpful.¹

¹ Do you think this piece was written by ChatGPT? That may say something significant about my writing style (hey! I'm a lawyer) but if you do, **that breaks my heart**. This guidance is the distilled result of years of experience of coaching writers and of publishing my own books.

I have not used artificial intelligence in any form whatsoever to source this information.