



A LITTLE GUIDE ON HOW YOUNG  
WRITERS CAN PUBLISH THEIR FIRST  
BOOKS.



# THE RISE OF YOUNG WRITERS

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## Foreword

As a young writer, I was more focused on my writing rather than the process of publishing. I want to publish a book one day. When I looked at possible resources for guidance, I realized there was **very little** out there for the process of publishing a book for young writers.

This document is about the different routes a young writer can take when deciding how to publish their first book. In this document there are different publishing pathways, based on research and personal interviews with noted **Vermont authors** who have gone through the publishing process themselves.

Now let's get down to business.

## Types of Publishing

Each version of publishing has its own **pros** and **cons**. These, along with your writing **experience**, will help you narrow down your choices for which publishing style works **best** for you.

## Traditional Publishing

### Old School

What is Traditional Publishing? Let's say you have finally finished writing your book, and you need a way to publish it. First things first, you will need to find an **agent** (we will explore this more later). Once you get an agent, they will reach out to a **publisher**, and that publisher -if he/she is interested- will offer you a **contract**. This contract allows the publisher to sell your book through booksellers and other retailers (each contract varies with each company). This means that the publisher essentially buys the rights to your book, but the publisher has to pay **you** along with the **agent, editors, designers, and everyone else involved in creating the book**, the money gained from each book sold. Also, you don't have to pay for the book cover/marketing/etc. In traditional publishing, the **publishing company** designs your book cover and gives you an advance before you begin the process of selling the book (this amount depends on the company, contract, or your reputation as an author). This is what traditional publishing is in a nutshell.

Due to the fact that the publishers have had many authors come to them, they are a great source of **information** on marketing, writing techniques, etc. There is also a better guarantee that the books you publish might be in the libraries. The reason is that the libraries **trust** the vetting process that the publisher gives the books. Many publishing agents say that this is a good route for a first time writer to start publishing and as your publishing world grows, you must **surround** yourself with the right people to help you continue your work.

## Self Publishing

### Great opportunity. Great responsibility

Self publishing is a different **beast**. It follows the same rules as traditional publishing, but with a few key **differences**. This publishing process can be a more profitable process, due to the fact that you reap the majority of the benefits by the gains made from the books published due to the fact that there are **no** agents or publishing companies involved.

There is also a greater **influence** you wield over the fate of your book. You decide how the book will be published from it's cover to the pages. Yet, this benefit puts a great deal of **responsibility** on you. It ultimately falls to **you** to pay for the book cover, the manuscript quality, the font your book is written in, your **ISBN** tag (a tag needed to distribute your book), and hiring an editor. Authors today who self publish often pay **\$2,000- \$4,000** to publish their book.

If you're already tired of reading, first **ouch**, and secondly here is a chart to explain the cost:



“How Much Does It Cost to Publish a Book in 2021?” *Reedsy*, [blog.reedsy.com/cost-to-self-publish-a-book/](https://blog.reedsy.com/cost-to-self-publish-a-book/).

Now, don't be intimidated by Self Publishing. Some authors like this method of publishing their books. This might be the avenue [you](#) feel comfortable in.

## **POD Publishing**

### **Print on Demand**

A print on demand is **very** small scale publishing. When you find a local printer, you can ask for a **specific** number of books copied for your customers. Also, you have a great deal of influence over what your book looks like. However, **you** have to **pay** for the books you want the printer to print. POD is **best** used for books where your audience is **limited**. Things like poetry, short stories, memoirs, etc, are good types of works to be published in the POD format.



## Vanity Publishing

### The living scam

Vanity publishing has been evolving for quite some time now. Also known as **subsidiary publishing**, Vanity publishing is when the author takes on all the risks of paying for and publishing his/her book. The company also charges much more than they claim. The publishing company receives all of the profits gained by the book with one major catch. The author loses the rights to their own book once it is published. That book is owned by the publishing company.

I can see your jaw dropping so let me explain more as to why people go to these publishing companies in the first place.

Some authors can't publish their book through traditional publishing on account that it doesn't sell. With no money to self publish or print on demand, some get caught into the scam of Vanity publishing. Betting that you don't know what to do, these companies would promise the best quality book, **inflating** your dreams of being a best selling author. Unfortunately what you get is a **poor quality book**. Vanity publishers will **not** vet your work. They don't have to. The profits they make don't come from the book, they come from **you**. Remember, **you** pay for everything your book needs. Vanity publishers capitalize on that by vastly inflating their asking prices so that you bleed yourself dry of your money.

So, it's super important to remember (and I will put in bold to make this clear if it wasn't already):

**Always check your publishing company!**

That's right. **Google** their company, **check** their ratings, **look** for any signs of scams, **educate** yourself on publishing a book, or **talk** to authors about what they use or their advice on avoiding Vanity Publishers.

I need a break. Catch you on the next section.

## The Process of Publishing a Book

Depending on **which** publishing path you choose, this is the **textbook** version for how a book gets **published**.

## **The Agent:**

### The Writers Gateway



One of the necessary steps is to find a publishing agent. This is a person who connects your product with a publisher. Now, this guide will tell you the different types of publishing agents, but it will be up to **you** to find your agent, contact them, and get their attention.

Now before you even start looking, ask yourself, what is your **genre**? The genre of your book will be the deciding factor on what agent you want to contact. Some local editors suggest that understanding your book on a **deeper** level will help you narrow your search for an agent. For example, is your book full of **mystery** and **romance**, or is it full of **action** and **adventure**? What are the morals of your story, does it convey a message? If so, what is that message?

There are so many lines that can be drawn connecting between genres. An example would be a thriller with a **cold tone**, written in a style similar to Dan Brown (ex: Angels and Demons/The Da Vinci Code/Inferno). There is a type of agent for that...especially if you're trying to write like Dan Brown. Always remember, the genre of the book you want to write will dictate what agent you must be on the lookout for.

Getting an agent's attention requires some work. You will need to produce a letter of why they should read your work. This is called a **query letter** and

normally comes after you've written and edited your story. In this letter, it's best to have:

1. A little background as to who you are.
2. What genres you like to write.
3. Your story:
  - a. What is it about?
  - b. A summary about your story.
  - c. Who is in it?
  - d. What's its genre?
  - e. Other details that you think should be included in there.
4. Be sure to include your title, number of chapters and pages.

Some agents recommend that you contact at least **20-50** agents. Don't believe me? Meet Vermont children's book author **Angela Burke Kunkel**. Her book, ***Digging for Words: Jose Alberito Gullerez and the Library he Built***, has captured the eyes of young children throughout Vermont and abroad. Kunkel had to submit 50 query letters before an agent gave her the thumbs up.

Now, it is not required that you find an agent. It is only recommended that you do. **Mathew Dickerson**, a Vermont author who has written over 18 books, managed to publish his first book without an agent. How you wish to contact your publishing company depends on how you and others have judged your writing skill. Authors like **Peter Cross**, suggest that if you have the time, and depending on your end goal for your writing career, it's best to find an agent. In summary, an agent will get your book out there for publishers to look at and judge if it is worth their time.

## The Publisher

### Getting your work out there



The agent, once he/she has agreed to **sponsor** your book, must give it to a publisher. The publishing company decides which books will sell. The publisher needs a way to bolster your book so that the book sells.

Publishers are the key for the **creation** of books, illustrations, etc. Note that the publisher will focus first on **hardcover** books and then the paperback, selling to make a higher sale. Once enough people buy the book, the book becomes **digitized**. Note: Once you become established, that hardcopy and the digital version will be available **simultaneously**.

Publishing companies rely on agents to pick writers who they feel is worth their **time** and **money**. So it's recommended to **practice** and **improve** your craft because publishers can also **reject** your book ideas. It is here where you must either look for new publishing companies or put up your “*Gone crazy, be back later*” sign and improve your craft.

## The Editors

(Plural)



Once your publisher and you decide on a contract, that publisher will send you a series of **editors**. An editor's job is to make sure that your product is **top notch** for the public. Get ready to edit your work, because your editor will mark your paper in **RED**. This is one of the great tests of an author- accepting **feedback** whether it is positive or negative. It's important not to get discouraged, or feel that you were wronged. Instead, take their critiquing of your story as an opportunity to become a better writer. Perhaps a specific edit you make might become the part that all your readers will enjoy. **Kathrine Arden**, a novelist best known for her Winter Night trilogy, had to go through 4-5 drafts of her book *The Bear and the Nightingale*, before it got published.

Always remember, it never hurts to **edit**.

Now, there are 4 different types of editors that the book goes through:

**Developmental Editors:** Are editors who look at the story on a **larger** scale. They edit the character, storyline, background, plot, etc. Their main focus is the story in general and to make sure that the story can be understood by the public.

**Copy editor:** Are editors responsible for the grammar in the story. Their job is to make sure that your story flows smoothly and grammatically.

**Proofreader:** Are editors who, like the copy editors, make sure that the punctuation and formatting are correct.

Assistant editors: Are editors responsible for the proper **delivery** and **creation** of the book. They are also responsible for what is called ‘author care,’ making sure that the author feels represented and heard. They are the ones who write the little **blurb** on the back of your book. Assistant editors will work closely with designers to write the small briefs for the book's cover design.



Lant, K. (2018, March 10). *Anatomy of a book cover*. 99designs. <https://99designs.com/blog/book-design/anatomy-of-a-book-cover/>.



## Will I ever get published?



All writers struggle with this question. Why would an agent, a publishing company, or anyone want to devote their time to read your book? The key word is *commitment*. Writing, like all things, requires a level of **devotion**, practice and patience. **Mathew Dickerson** claims that if you write just for the money, put the pen down **now**, because it won't work. You must write your story because you love writing. To some authors, writing and editing is like eating and breathing. They cannot go through the day without it. Focus more on your **style**, than what you think others will think of it. Accept advice given by others, but stay your **course**.

Every writing style is unique, and it is up to you to **create yours!**

## Afterword

Phew! That was a lot to get through!

Well, that's it for the guide. Maybe this helped you or maybe this didn't. Either way you now have some insight into the publishing world. I'm not an author (yet), but I am a writer, like you. I hope after reading this, you will be more at ease with where you wish to start. As the next **generation** of writers, our stories will catapult us into new worlds and wonders. Now if you excuse me, I'm off to get something to eat. I've been so engrossed in this guide that I blew past lunch.

Signing off,

*Nikolaos Brian Lekkas*

*2021*

# Resource Page

## Linked Resources:

- Team, AskALLi. “[Facts and Figures about Self Publishing](#): The Impact and Influence of Indie Authors.” *Self*, 23 June 2020, selfpublishingadvice.org/facts-and-figures-about-self-publishing-the-impact-and-influence-of-indie-authors/#:~:text=According%20to%20Bowker%20records%2C%20Amazon's,in%202007%20to%20just%206%25.
- Milano, S. (2021, February 16). *What Does a Book Publisher Do?* Work - Chron.Com. <https://work.chron.com/book-publisher-do-6716.html>
- Watson, C. (2019, March 8). *The Salary of a Bestselling Author*. Work - Chron.Com. <https://work.chron.com/salary-bestselling-author-7799.html>
- Doppler, J. (2020, June 10). *What Is Vanity Publishing?* Alliance of Independent Authors: Self-Publishing Advice Center. <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/what-is-vanity-publishing/>
- Allan, S. (2021, January 13). *Vanity Press: How to Dodge Scams & Self-Publishing Companies to Avoid*. Self Publishing School. <https://self-publishingschool.com/vanity-press/#avoid>
- *How Much Does It Cost to Publish a Book in 2021?* (2021). Reedsy. <https://blog.reedsy.com/cost-to-self-publish-a-book/>
- */ 686 Best Literary Agents Seeking Submissions in 2021*. (2021). Reedsy. <https://blog.reedsy.com/literary-agents/>

## Interviews:

- Interview with Mathew Dickerson, Author; 3/25/21, ([website](#))
- Interview with Kathrine Arden, Author, 3/22/21 ([website](#))
- Interview with Angela Burke Kunkel, Author, 3/17/21, ([website](#))
- Interview with Stewart Burnstein, Literary Agent, 3/24/21
- Interview with Peter Cross, Author, 4/9/21 ([website](#))