Why formatting matters

1. Readers judge a book by how it feels to read.

2. Clean formatting builds trust in you as an author.

3. Messy pages are the top reason for refunds and bad reviews.

EXAMPLE

A busy mom opens Weeknight Meals on her phone. If the recipe is easy to read, she cooks tonight — and tells her friends.

YOUR TURN

Open a book you bought and name one formatting thing you love about it.

The two kinds of E-Book

1. Reflowable: text adjusts to any screen size.
2. Fixed layout: every page stays exactly where you put it.
3. Most stores sell both — your book type picks the winner.

EXAMPLE

Weeknight Meals has photos and recipe cards that must stay put, so it leans fixed layout. A novel would lean reflowable.

YOUR TURN

Decide — does your book need its pages to stay put, or flow?

Setting up your page

1. Pick your page size before you type another word.
2. Print books: 6×9 or 8.5×11 are the friendly standards.
3. Leave margins with breathing room — never edge to edge.

EXAMPLE

Weeknight Meals uses 8.5×11, so a printed copy sits open on a kitchen counter, flat and readable.

YOUR TURN

Choose your page size and write it at the top of your manuscript.

Fonts and spacing readers love

1. One easy serif font for the body — one bold font for headings.
2. Body text around 11–12 points, line spacing 1.15 to 1.5.
3. Every chapter starts on a fresh page. Every time.

EXAMPLE

Weeknight Meals sets recipe titles in the heading font, so a cook can spot "Tuesday Tacos" at a glance.

YOUR TURN

Set your body font and your heading font, and write both names down.

Your front matter

1. Title page: your title, subtitle, and your name.

2. Copyright page: your name, the year, and "all rights reserved."

3. A table of contents that tells readers the journey.

EXAMPLE

The Weeknight Meals contents list is grouped by weeknight — Monday through Friday — so parents shop the list, not just the book.

YOUR TURN

List your front matter pages in order.

Chapters and headings that behave

1. Use your software's heading styles — never just bigger bold text.
2. Heading styles build your table of contents for you.
3. Keep chapter titles in the same pattern all the way through.

EXAMPLE

Every Weeknight Meals chapter follows the same pattern: the day, the meal, the minutes it takes.

YOUR TURN

Rewrite your chapter titles in one matching pattern.

Images done right

1. Print wants sharp images — 300 dots per inch.
2. Screens want small files that load fast.
3. Caption every photo a reader might wonder about.

EXAMPLE

Each Weeknight Meals recipe gets one finished-dish photo — big, sharp, and captioned with the serving count.

YOUR TURN

Make a list of every image your book truly needs — no more.

Your back matter

1. An "About the Author" page that sounds like a person.
2. One gentle page pointing to your other books or offers.
3. A kind request for an honest review — reviews sell books.

EXAMPLE

Weeknight Meals ends with the author's photo, her website, and one line asking readers to leave a review.

YOUR TURN

Draft your About the Author page in five sentences.

The software shelf

1. Free starters: Google Docs, Kindle Create, Draft2Digital's formatter.

2. Design-heavy books: Canva shines for covers and fixed pages.

3. Pro polish: Atticus (Windows & Mac), Vellum (Mac only), Word (everywhere).

EXAMPLE

Weeknight Meals is written in Google Docs, laid out in Canva, and finished with Kindle Create for the store file.

YOUR TURN

Circle the one tool you will start with — one is enough.

Your pre-publish check

1. Preview your book on a phone, a tablet, and a computer.
2. Tap every table-of-contents link and every button.
3. Export your store file, then read page one like a stranger.

EXAMPLE

Before Weeknight Meals went live, the author cooked from her own phone preview — and caught two broken links.

YOUR TURN

Run the three-point check and fix the first thing you find.