

Printing Terms

Back matter—The pages after the main text of the book that contain the reference material, including: Appendix(es), Notes, Glossary, Bibliography, List of Contributors, Index(es) and Order Form (most often in that order).

Barcode—A book barcode uses a sequence of vertical bars and spaces to represent the numbers of your ISBN and can set the price.

Bleed—A printed image that extends “off the page” is known as a bleed.

Body text—The main text body of the book, separate from the display type such as headlines, subheadlines, chapter openings, etc.

CMYK—Initials designating Cyan (C), Magenta (M), Yellow (Y) and Black (K). Also known as the four process colors.

Color separations—For offset printing, the four ink colors must be separated out into Cyan, Yellow, Magenta and Black plates.

Copyright—A book is copyrighted when the author’s name, date of copyright and the copyright symbol (©) or the word “copyright” appear on the copyright page (usually the first left-hand page after the title page).

Cover—Front and Back. The front cover of your book the first thing that a consumer looks at when considering a purchase. The back cover is where you would place the barcode information about the book and reviews.

Crop marks—Small lines on the outer edges of a book cover that indicate the final trim size after it is bound.

Font—The typeface used when typesetting the book.

Footer—at the bottom of some or all pages can contain author name, book name and page number

Formatting—The process of importing a raw text file into a page-layout program and designing the final book pages.

Four-color process (full color) printing— The process of using four colors to print a single image, resulting in an image that looks full color to the naked eye. The ink colors used are: Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black.

Front matter—The pages before the main text of the book that contain the Title page, Copyright page, Dedication, Foreword, Contents, Preface, Acknowledgment and Introduction (most often in that order.)

Gutter—The inside of the text pages where they are glued. Most times the gutter is about 1/8. To avoid your pages looking off center when printed add 1/8 more margin to the Gutter.

Halftone—A process whereby a photograph is broken up into a pattern of dots of varying size. When printed, the dots of the image merge to the naked eye to give the impression of shades of gray.

Header—Headers appear at the top of each page in the book (except chapter openings) and contain either the author name, book name or chapter name. They are designed to help the reader navigate around the book.

Imposition—Proper sequence and position of pages in a signature, dependent on specific printing and bindery requirements.

ISBN—International Standard Book Number. A registration number obtained from R. R. Bowker that is used by bookstores to track and obtain titles.

Leading—The space between lines of type.

Library of Congress Control number— A registration number obtained from the Library of Congress that is used to distribute books intended for libraries.

Mass market paperback—A small, non-illustrated, cheaper version of a book, typically printed on newsprint.

niche market—A focused, targetable portion of a market.

Openback Binding—The process used to bind books which allows the book to stay open.

Perfectbound—The process where the entire book is printed in signatures then glued together.

Publishing (traditional)—Books that are printed, marketed and distributed by a publisher are said to be published. Writers receive a share of the profits. See self-publishing.

PUR binding—Polyurethane Reactive (PUR) is a bookbinding adhesive. Although it has a relatively slow curing time, it is more flexible than conventional adhesives and is well-suited for coated paper.

Registration—To print an image in correct relation to other images already printed on the same sheet.

Resolution—The quality of a digital output, as defined by the number of dots (pixels) per inch. The higher the number, the higher the quality.

Saddle Stitched—The process where all printed signatures of the book are folded and stapled to the cover.

Sans-serif—A typeface without serifs (the short lines projecting from the top or bottom of the main stroke of a letter).

See serif.

Self-publishing—When the author chooses to print, market and distribute a book, paying all costs and keeping all rights and profits.

Serif—The short lines that project from the top or bottom of the main stroke of a letter. See sans-serif.

Signature—Folded book pages that are usually in groups of 16 or 32. In the case of a 16–page signature, 8 pages are printed on each side of a large sheet of paper. The sheet is then folded into a signature. The signatures are bound together at the spine.

Smyth sewn—A binding with threads sewn through the back fold of the signature, with threads carried also from signature to signature, linking them together, while permitting complete opening of the book to the back.

Spine—The back of the book where the bound pages come together. Also the part of the book that is visible on bookshelves.

Trim size—The dimensions of the finished book, after it is printed, bound and trimmed on three sides.