



Formatting Your Kindle Books

Purpose

As the title suggests, the purpose of this lesson is to show you how to go about formatting your Kindle Books.

Essentials

Whenever you're formatting your book, there are a few essentials that you require:

- Title – this is your title in large type with your author name below it
- Copyright Page – if you don't know what to put here, copy it from another book, being sure to change out the title and any other relevant content
- Table of Contents
- Introduction – ideally you would have written this yourself, hard hitting and high quality to impress readers that this book is going to be good to read
- Call to Action – this can be any type of action, such as getting the reader to download other Kindle books you've published, getting people to your website to sign up on a lead form, provision for other free stuff, etc.

Images

It is possible to use images in your content, but before using them you need to be aware of what the different formatting looks like from one Kindle device to another.

For example, the Kindle Fire, designed to handle color, will display your images in clear, good quality display. However, these same images will not appear as well on the regular Kindle. Knowing this may deter you from using too many images or, if you still want to, being very selective in the ones you do use.

This is not to say that you shouldn't use images. Good quality images will definitely look great on the Kindle Fire and really enhance the reader's enjoyment of reading your book. For example, you may have written a recipe book with pictures of the food the recipe makes. These pictures will definitely improve the quality of your recipe book when viewed on a Kindle Fire or Kindle for PC.

Other Color Usage

Images are not the only content that looks great on the Kindle Fire or Kindle for PC. Font coloring and formatting can be another great way of enhancing the quality of your content. For example, you might use a color font (e.g. red) for headers or chapter headings and bold for



highlighting certain text. While the red and bold may not appear as well on the regular Kindle device, adding these elements to your content is still a good idea, especially since everything is moving toward reading these books on color platforms such as Kindle Fire, iPads, iPhones, Kindle for PC, etc. So don't be afraid to use these formatting options.

Amazon's "Simplified Formatting Guide"

A great resource for learning how to format your Kindle book is Amazon's own "Simplified Formatting Guide" which can be located by either searching for "kindle format guide" or going directly [here](#).

This guide covers just about all you'll really need to know so covering it here is redundant, but there are some points that are worth noting.

To start with, when creating your book, Amazon suggests you write using Word or convert your book to Word format. Here are some highlights to consider:

- **File Format** – as mentioned, your book should be written in or converted to Word. The file extension needs to be DOC (.doc), not DOCX (.docx) or RTF (.rtf) as these do not translate well into Kindle.
Note: Further on in Amazon's guide it mentions saving the file as a filtered HTML. This is done after you've finished the book. You save your book as a DOC file on your computer, then save it again as a filtered HTML (Web Page, Filtered (*.HTM or *.HTML)). It is this filtered HTML version that you upload to Amazon.
- **Tables and Layout** – you can use tables in your book as well as various layout options such as indentations, bold characters, italics and headings. You do want to avoid bullet points, special fonts, headers and footers as these will not be transferred to your Kindle book.
- **Page Break** – you want to add one of these to the end of every chapter to avoid the text from running together.
- **Image Placement** – images need to be JPEG (.jpeg).
- **Title Page** – needs to be centered with title on top followed by author name underneath. A page break should follow the author's name.
- **Active Table of Contents(TOC)** – page numbering doesn't really apply because of differences in devices being used to read the content but you can still use an active TOC to allow people to quickly navigate to those sections of your book. People actually expect this and have given bad reviews to books that don't have this.
- **Guide Items** – by this it means navigating about your book. Kindle has the "Go To" option which essentially is the ability to go to a defined bookmark. Amazon suggests the following bookmarks:
 - **Cover Image** – click on the cover image, then click "Insert > Bookmark." Name the bookmark "cover" (without the quotes) and click "Add."



- **Beginning** – place the cursor where you want the book to start then click "Insert > Bookmark." Name the bookmark "Start" (without the quotes) and click "Add."
- **Table of Contents** – place the cursor at the beginning of the first entry then click "Insert > Bookmark." Name it "TOC" (without the quotes) and click "Add."

Tools

There are a number of tools and resources to help you with formatting your Kindle book before uploading it to Amazon. Here is a list of such tools:

- **Mobipocket Creator** - this is a tool you can download onto your PC to help you get your book into the format it needs to be in. You can download it here:
<http://www.mobipocket.com/en/DownloadSoft/ProductDetailsCreator.asp>
- **Smashwords Style Guide** – a downloadable PDF that has a lot of information on styling your e-book. It gets fairly advanced and a lot of it you won't need but it is available should you desire to read it. You can access it either by searching "Smashwords Style Guide" or via this link:
<http://www.smashwords.com/books/download/52/1/latest/0/0/smashwords-style-guide.pdf>
- **Kindle Previewer** – this is a great tool for previewing how your book will appear on a Kindle before you actually upload it to Amazon. Knowing beforehand can reduce the impact and time it takes to correct any problems that exist as well as protect your reputation with potential and existing buyers. You can download this tool here:
<http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html/?docId=1000765261>
- **Fiverr** – if you have \$5, you can visit this site and have someone convert the document to Kindle format for you. Just visit fiverr.com, enter "kindle format" in the search field, then sort by "Rating".

Conclusion

As you can see, there are a lot of things you can do with formatting your book for Kindle. You do need to pay attention to your use of images if you're writing a book requiring lots of visual representation or that can greatly benefit from it. Be sure to use high quality images so that when someone is reading your book on any device other than the old Kindle, the quality factor will be in place.

You also want be sure to use a consistent font face as otherwise it won't look good. The look can be further enhanced by using bold font type and font colors.

As you can tell, formatting for Kindle is fairly basic and there are some useful tips, tools and resources to get it done well. If, however, it doesn't look good, you can always correct and upload it again.