**Parts of a Book [From Cover to Cover]**

By Dave Chesson

Last updated on April 11th, 2024

The parts of a book include the front matter, the body, and the back matter. The body is the most significant portion, containing the main narrative. The front matter and back matter are the non-story pages that come before and after the story is told.

No matter what kind of book you're writing, you need to visualize the finished product to bring it to life. There are a lot of book parts we barely think about as readers. As the writer, you need to know where all of it goes.

Understanding the book design and the basic parts of a book helps you [create a better book](https://kindlepreneur.com/book-formatting/) that contains everything readers (and publishers) expect.

What are the parts of a book called?

1. [The Front Matter](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-the-front-matter)
	* [Title Page](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-1-title-page)
	* [Copyright Page](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-2-copyright-page)
	* [Table of Contents](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-3-table-of-contents)
	* [Dedication/Acknowledgement Pages](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-4-dedication-acknowledgement-pages)
	* [Foreword](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-5-foreword)
	* [Preface or Introduction](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-6-preface)
	* [Epigraph](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-7-epigraph)
2. [The Body](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-the-body)
	* [Prologue](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-1-prologue)
	* [Chapters](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-2-chapters)
	* [Epilogue](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-3-epilogue)
3. [The Back Matter](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-the-back-matter)
	* [Afterword](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-1-afterword)
	* [Appendix or Addendum](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-2-appendix-or-addendum)
	* [Endnotes](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-3-endnotes)
	* [Bibliography](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-4-bibliography)
	* [Author Bio](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-5-author-bio)
	* [Coming Soon/Read More](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-coming-soon)
	* [Also By](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-also-by)

As I detail each of these, I’ll let you know if it’s optional or required. I’ll also provide bonus resources for you to learn more about each part of the book.

Important: Most sources do not consider the front cover and back cover of your book (including [the synopsis on the back](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-write-a-synopsis/)) to be front matter or back matter. The terms “front matter” and “back matter” are usually reserved for the book’s pages, not the outside covers.

The front matter includes all the pages that come before the story. The body is the story: the beginning, middle, and end of your plot. The back matter is all the pages after the story.

**Each area should (or should not) contain certain information.** For example, you should place the Table of Contents before the body of the book but after the title page. Putting these in reverse order would lead to a very hectic reading experience.

Now, this is an extreme example, but many similar situations are less obvious.

**What is structure in a book?** The structure of the book is how information is presented to the reader. Not to be confused with the plot (story, characters, settings, etc.), the structure (form) is how the book is physically organized.

So let's take a look at the three focus areas and explore what parts of a book go in what section.

**Why Should You Trust Me?**

I've actually been writing and formatting books for a long time. Over 10 years so far, and counting.

But that's not the real reason, because there are plenty of authors who have lots of experience, but know next to nothing about the different parts of a book, or book formatting in general.

The real reason you should trust me is because I actually created my own formatting software that solved all my problems. I called it Atticus.

But this isn't meant to be a sales pitch. I just want to make sure it's clear that I know what I'm talking about. The amount of research that went into not only formatting my own books, but also creating a formatting software is huge.

I researched everything, which led me to learn all about every. single. part. of. a. book. And there were a lot more than I realized.

So if all that makes sense, hopefully you'll come along with me as show you everything I've learned.

[](https://kindlepreneur.com/click/rocket-in-content%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

**[Book Marketing Made Simple](https://kindlepreneur.com/click/rocket-in-content)**

Over 47,000+ authors, NYT bestsellers, and publishing companies use Publisher Rocket to gain key insight to the market. **Help your book now**

**The Front Matter**

**What comes first in a book?** The front matter comes first in any book, after [the front cover](https://kindlepreneur.com/book-cover-ideas/). It consists of the first pages of your book before the story ever begins.

This area focuses on the author and publisher side of your writing. It gives you a dedicated space to credit your publishing team, anyone who inspired you, and yourself.

This part also helps you protect the intellectual property contained inside your book.

The front matter pages are often numbered with lowercase roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v, etc.) instead of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.

Below is a closer look at what makes up the front matter:

* [Title Page](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-1-title-page)
* [Copyright Page](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-2-copyright-page)
* [Table of Contents](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-3-table-of-contents)
* [Dedication/Acknowledgement Pages](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-4-dedication-acknowledgement-pages)
* [Foreword](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-5-foreword)
* [Preface or Introduction](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-6-preface)
* [Epigraph](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-7-epigraph)

**1. Title Page**

No book would be complete without a book title page. The title page should contain the author name (or [pen name](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-choose-a-pen-name/)) and [title of the book](https://kindlepreneur.com/free-book-title-generator-tools/) (including subtitles) just as it appears on your book cover. The publisher’s name may also appear on a full title page. Let's not forget that the title and cover act as the book poster for your manuscript, so it's important to get these parts right. The title page will also appear on the right hand page.

A **half title page** (also known as a bastard title page) contains only the title of the book — not the author or publisher. It may also omit the [book's subtitle](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-select-a-subtitle-that-sells/). The half title typeface often differs from the [typography of the title](https://kindlepreneur.com/book-cover-typography-font/) on the cover.

A **second half title page** may be useful if your front matter is particularly lengthy. To indicate the separation between the front matter and body of your book, an author or their designer may place a second half-title page, as if to officially announce, “Here’s where the story starts!”

A **frontispiece** is an illustration on the verso (left-hand page) facing the title page on the recto (right-hand page). This is optional but can be a nice touch, especially for [children’s books](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-write-a-childrens-book/), sci-fi, fantasy, or [memoirs/biographies](https://kindlepreneur.com/best-biography-books/)

[How to Build a Title Page](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-write-a-book-title-page/)

**2. Copyright Page**

Your book must have a copyright page. Whether you’re [traditionally publishing](https://kindlepreneur.com/book-publishing-companies/), [self-publishing](https://kindlepreneur.com/best-self-publishing-companies/), or just putting out an [ebook](https://kindlepreneur.com/epub-vs-mobi-vs-pdf/), paperback, or hardcover book on Amazon, a copyright page helps protect your writing from plagiarism.

Sometimes known as a colophon or an edition notice, the copyright page contains information that helps legally register your book and protect the intellectual property you so painstakingly generated.

The copyright page may contain:

* [Copyright notices](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-copyright-a-book/)
* Legal notices
* Book edition, with dates and versions
* Publisher information
* Library of Congress catalog number
* Disclaimers
* Typefaces
* Printer’s key
* Printing history
* ISBN

[Writing a Copyright Page](https://kindlepreneur.com/book-copyright-page-examples-ebook/)

**3. Table of Contents**

A table of contents (TOC) is a helpful tool for your readers. They are the standard for most books.

However, a TOC is optional. Not every book has one, especially a fiction book.

Some might disagree that having the TOC is optional. But when you write a Table of Contents, you may set up reader expectations to anticipate your book’s milestones. An author may not want to imply where the story is headed.

For a nonfiction book, a TOC is essential.

But for some [mysteries](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-write-a-mystery/), thrillers, sequels, and other fiction genres, a TOC may give away unintended hints about upcoming twists, pacing, and character revelations.

If you're aiming for a fast-paced read — one your reader just can't put down — maybe you should skip the TOC. Engage your readers' minds with full throttle suspense and keep them turning pages. Then they won’t need a TOC… just a bookmark.

**Resources for creating a Table of Contents**:

* [How to Make a Table of Contents](https://kindlepreneur.com/table-of-contents/)
* [Format a TOC in Word](https://kindlepreneur.com/table-of-contents-in-word/)
* [Format a TOC in Google Docs](https://kindlepreneur.com/table-of-contents-in-google-docs/)

**4. Dedication/Acknowledgement Pages**

Who do you dedicate your book to?

**The dedication page** is where you give a shout-out to the special someone in your life who made this book possible. This can be creative and lend to the author's quirks.

For instance, I could dedicate my next book, “*To the simple coffee bean, for none of this could have been accomplished without you. (I got you, my small, delicately roasted friend.)*“

An author can dedicate the book to a friend, family member, and literally anyone they want.

**The acknowledgment page** goes hand-in-hand with the dedication page. This is where you would acknowledge any special thanks for those who helped along the way.

This is an optional page in the front matter. You may also put it in the back matter.

**Resources for creating Dedication Pages:**

* [How to write a Dedication](https://kindlepreneur.com/dedication-page/)
* [How to write an Acknowledgement Page](https://kindlepreneur.com/acknowledgments-page/)

**5. Foreword**

The foreword is written by somebody other than the author. This can provide a unique perspective into the book, which may have otherwise gone unseen.

Books that frequently contain forewords are non-fiction, particularly self-help or other kinds of uplifting books. A foreword may also be used if the book’s author passed away before publication.

Just remember — a foreword is optional.

When both a foreword and preface are used in the front matter, the foreword normally comes first.

[How to Write a Foreword](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-write-a-foreword-for-a-book/)

**6. Preface or Introduction**

The [preface](https://kindlepreneur.com/preface-vs-foreword/) is an introduction that the author writes. It can orient the reader to view the forthcoming book in a way that the author intends. It can describe the writing process or the source of inspiration.

Don't get this confused with the prologue, which I will discuss later. The prologue is supposed to be part of your story. The preface, on the other hand, is part of the non-story front matter.

This is your chance to speak to your reader outside of the plot.

[How to Write a Preface](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-write-the-preface-of-a-book/)

**7. Epigraph**

You see epigraphs at the beginning of some books, movies, and even video games. It’s a quote from the author or someone else that segues from the front matter to the body of the book.

Sometimes, you don't want a lot of verbiage right before getting into your book. The best approach may be to throw your readers headfirst into your story.

The best way to do this could be a quick excerpt from your book or any book, really. Or a famous quote from a celebrity. Or a poem. Or some random thing you once heard a stranger say. Whatever feels right for your book. These are all epigraphs.

Often, they're the best way to tell your audience to buckle up because they're in for one heck of a ride.

[How to Write an Epigraph](https://kindlepreneur.com/epigraph/)

**The Body**

Between the front matter and the back matter is the body. The body is the main part of the book, and contains the plot of fiction or the valuable information for nonfiction.

Although your book’s body makes up most of the whole, it contains fewer components than the front or back matter.

Here's what makes up the Body of your work:

* [Prologue](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-1-prologue)
* [Chapters](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-2-chapters)
* [Epilogue](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-3-epilogue)

**1. Prologue**

A prologue is the first taste of storytelling your reader gets. It is optional but may be useful for your plot. (This is for fiction. The nonfiction version of a prologue is the introduction, discussed below.)

A prologue may introduce you to the maniacal ways of the antagonist or the impending threat that most people in the world don’t know is headed their way. Many authors use their prologue to tell a tale from a unique perspective or during a different time period than the main story.

The prologue allows your reader to be catapulted into the drama without wasting any time.

[How to Write a Prologue](https://kindlepreneur.com/what-is-a-prologue-how-to-write-one/)



**[Get Your Book Discovered](https://kindlepreneur.com/click/keyword-course)**

Look over my shoulder as I show you how to select the best keywords and categories so you’ll make more sales.

[Click here to Sign Up](https://kindlepreneur.com/click/keyword-course)

**2. Chapters**

Every book has chapters — though they can be called something else, like parts or sections of a book. Chapters divide the body text block into more consumable bits.

You can even subdivide your story. Some books contain 2-4 parts and several chapters in each part. Think of acts and scenes in a play.

There are a lot of creative ways to name and divide your chapters. But readers will not be happy if your book does not split up your story into smaller sections.

**How long should a chapter be?** A chapter can be really long or super short. It should be long enough to fully address the scene you’re writing, yet short enough that you don't lose the reader’s interest.

**Should chapters be uniform in length?** No, chapters do not have to be uniform in length. Trying to extend or limit word count can actually impede your storytelling potential.

**Should chapters be uniform in format?** It's a good idea to keep a consistent [format throughout your book](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-format-a-book/), so you don’t disorient the reader — unless disorienting/reorienting the reader is the specific goal of your book.

[How to Write a Book Chapter](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-write-a-book-chapter/)

**3. Epilogue**

An epilogue is the final chapter in a book or series. Whereas the prologue comes before the main body text, the epilogue comes directly after.

Some may argue whether an epilogue is a chapter, but I have never understood why.

Epilogues are for fiction. They provide a little story after the main story. Like prologues, they may be told from a unique [point of view](https://kindlepreneur.com/point-of-view/) or a different time. Epilogues are useful for plugging up a plot hole or answering a question you know your readers will have.

One of the [most famous epilogues](https://boords.com/storytelling/what-is-an-epilogue) of modern fiction is the final part of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Set 17 years after the close of the last chapter, the epilogue both offers a resolution to the original series and sets the stage for author J.K. Rowling’s stageplay, “The Cursed Child.”

If you're looking to set up a sequel or series, the epilogue is a perfect place to pique their interest.

[What is an Epilogue](https://kindlepreneur.com/epilogue/)

**The Back Matter**

Also called end matter, the back matter is placed at the end of the book, containing non-story elements, such as a glossary, an author bio, or a coming soon page. ([Marketing tip](https://kindlepreneur.com/book-marketing-101/): always have a coming soon page or something similar to tease your audience for your next work.)

We've made it to the end of the story, but that doesn't mean the book is over.

The back matter includes:

* [Afterword](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-1-afterword)
* [Appendix or Addendum](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-2-appendix-or-addendum)
* [Endnotes](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-3-endnotes)
* [Bibliography](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-4-bibliography)
* [Author Bio](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-5-author-bio)
* [Coming Soon/Read More](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-coming-soon)
* [Also By](https://kindlepreneur.com/parts-of-a-book/#h-also-by)

**1. Afterword**

Like the foreword or preface, an afterword is where the author (or another entity) reaches out to the reader — often explaining more of the process of creating the book.

It is not part of your central or post narrative but another chance to break down the author-reader wall. Even though it is not a part of the story, some sources include the afterword in the body of the text. It doesn’t really matter how you classify it, though.

**Resources for Afterwords:**

* [What is an Afterword?](https://www.diggypod.com/blog/afterword/)

**2. Appendix or Addendum**

The appendix provides extra details and information about the story or information that was covered in the body. The addendum adds new material after the first printing or first edition, such as the author correcting something from the original.

Sometimes, appendix and addendum are used interchangeably. Alternatively, an appendix is used more often in fiction, whereas an addendum is more often found in nonfiction.

Appendices and addenda (the fancy-sounding plurals) often contain figures, tables, and even photos or illustrations. They can be an elegant addition to your book — one that may even entice potential readers to buy a copy.

Appendices can also include several other parts of a book, including but not limited to:

* **Glossary:** an in-book dictionary. It defines words that have been used in the main text as an alphabetical list.
* [**Index**](https://kindlepreneur.com/index-in-a-book/)**:** a list of terms and keywords (in alphabetical order) used in the book and page numbers telling readers where to find them in the body text.
* **Chronology:** a timeline of events that have happened throughout your book or series or in the real world pertinent to your nonfiction.

**Resources for Appendices and Addenda:**

* [Difference between Appendix and Addendum](http://www.learnersdictionary.com/qa/what-s-the-difference-between-an-appendix-and-an-addendum)
* [How to make an Appendix](https://kindlepreneur.com/appendix-in-a-book/)

**3. Endnotes**

Unlike footnotes, which appear at the bottom of pages where they are important, endnotes appear after the body. Endnotes are essentially footnotes that appear in the back matter.

These are typically supplementary notes about specific excerpts from the body. Endnotes are more common in nonfiction.

**Resources for Endnotes:**

* [Formatting Endnotes](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-use-endnotes/)
* [Formatting Footnotes](https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-use-footnotes/)
* [Difference between Endnotes and Footnotes](https://kindlepreneur.com/footnotes-vs-endnotes/)

**4. Bibliography**

Also called a reference list, the bibliography is one of the most (legally) important parts of the back matter.

If you use external sources to create your book, you must include a bibliography. Cite your sources properly and give credit where credit is due. Otherwise, you may face accusations of plagiarism

Next to your Bibliography, you may also find **copyright permissions.** If you used any copyrighted material in your book, the copyright permissions page is where you show that you obtained permission to use them.

**Resources for Bibliographies:**

* [How to write a Bibliography](https://grammar.yourdictionary.com/writing/how-to-write-a-bibliography.html)
* [APA and MLA Bibliography samples](https://explorable.com/writing-a-bibliography)
* [Tips to writing a great Bibliography](https://custom-writing.org/blog/writing-bibliography)
* [12 best FREE online Bibliography writing tools](https://elearningindustry.com/12-best-free-online-bibliography-and-citation-tools)

**5. Author Bio**

Also called the “About the Author,” an author bio is all about you!

This can appear in the back matter or on the dust jacket flap of the back cover.

Questions you can answer in the author bio:

* Who are you?
* Where are you from?
* What do you do for fun?
* Who is your mentor/inspiration?
* How did you get started as a writer?
* What do you care about?

This is a great opportunity to include a coming soon page or excerpt from your book. A coming soon page tells readers what they can look forward to from the author. This is a simple marketing tool that lets happy readers know there is more they can buy from you.

This is your chance to connect with your reader on a personal level and a great way to build your all-important author brand. Nailing your author bio can help you sell more books in the future.

Some author bio pages also have a **“list of contributors”**, especially if written by multiple authors.

[How to Write an Author Bio](https://kindlepreneur.com/write-author-bio/)

Dave Chesson teaching the Writer's of the Future Award Winners on Author Branding

**6. Coming Soon/Read More**

If you have a large series, or have something else that you want to promote (such as a [reader magnet](https://kindlepreneur.com/reader-magnets/) to get someone on your mailing list), then you will want a coming soon or read more section.

This section is optional, but is frequently used by those who write long series, and by self publishers in general.

For authors, it is a critical skill to persuade readers to take action after they have read your book. In most cases, you will either want Them to buy your next book, or sign up for your newsletter. In both cases, you would do this in the Coming Soon/Read More section.

One common strategy is to provide an image or sample chapter from the next book in the series at the end of your previous book. With e-books, you can also provide links to your next book, or to your reader magnet.

In fact, though this is optional, I would almost encourage every self published author to include a call to action of some kind.

**7. Also By**

While sometimes included with your author bio, many authors have a separate “Also By” page, which simply lists out all of the books that you have written, or at least all of the books that are interesting to readers of that genre.

This is also a good place to include links to your social media, website, Patreon, and anything else that you want to mention to your readers.

Using a tool like Atticus, you can even create templates from your Also By page. What this does is it allows you create one master Also By page, then includ it on every book at the touch of a button. Additionally, if you change the Also By page for one book, you can set it to automatically update on all other books that use that same template.