

THE INDIE PUBLISHER'S GUIDE  
TO HIRING  
(AND WORKING WITH)  
AN ILLUSTRATOR



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## SO YOU'VE WRITTEN A CHILDREN'S BOOK

Your manuscript is complete, and it is begging to go out into the world and be read by kids. You've put your time and your heart into this story, but now what?

There are two roads diverging in your writing world at this point. You can choose the route of traditional publication, and begin submitting your manuscript to agents and editors. Or, you can choose to skip that process and publish your story yourself. Both paths have their difficulties, and both have rewards.

In terms of illustration, what you need to know is that if you are submitting your manuscript to traditional publishers or to literary agents, you are better off submitting it *without illustrations*. Publishers like to have control over the choice of illustrator. Having an illustrator partner with you before submission will actually decrease your chances of having a traditional publisher accept your work.

If you chose to self-publish your children's book, you will need to find and hire your own illustrator. Unless you happen to have a lot of friends who are children's book illustrators, this can be a daunting task. I belong to several online children's book groups, and I see authors trying to figure out how to navigate the illustration process all the time.

Top 3 questions authors ask about hiring an illustrator:

1. How do I find someone to illustrate my text?
2. How much will it cost?
3. How long will it take?

These are good questions to ask. Unfortunately the answers are:

1. It depends
2. It depends
3. It depends

What, wait? You bought this book looking for a simple, straightforward method of getting your book illustrated! And instead you get "it depends"?

Unfortunately, yes.

Imagine that you want to build a house. You are not a home builder, so you approach one and ask how much it will cost. The builder says “It depends. What are you looking to build?”

The same goes for hiring an illustrator and getting your book into print. The costs and timeline depend on the length of the book, the quality of the printing, and the expertise of the illustrator and any other professionals you hire. It may also vary on other factors, like timeline, illustration style, and number of changes made to the project. Most importantly, illustration is priced on rights and usages – the more places and ways in which you want to use an illustration, and the longer the time frame, the higher its cost.

## THE RIGHT ILLUSTRATOR

Despite the title, this book isn’t about hiring an illustrator for your book. It’s about hiring the *right* illustrator for your book. And being able to work with him or her. The right illustrator is the right fit for your book project, and is also a person whom you want to collaborate with on a project that can take a year to complete.

This book is designed with worksheets and checklists to help you define your book project and communicate your unique needs to potential illustrators. By the end of this book, you will know how to find and hire an illustrator who is the right fit for your project, and what to expect in terms of cost and timeline. You will have an understanding of the many steps that a manuscript needs to take to go from words on a page to a book in the hand, and the people you will need to help you with the process.

This book will also help you find a book designer, decide how you want to print your book, and write a workable project schedule and contract. It will help you think about how your book fits into the children’s book market. Working through this book will give you the knowledge and tools you need to make your book publishing dream a reality.

## THE PUBLISHING PROCESS

The process of bringing a children's book from manuscript to print can take two to three years in traditional publishing. Self-publishing is much faster, but you should still expect it to be a long process – six to twelve months is average.

Enjoy the process. You've written a fantastic book, and now you get to see it come to life. That is a magical process that is wonderful to witness.

When you send your book out into the world, it stops being completely yours, and begins to be a little part of every person who reads it. Illustration is the first step in sending your book into the world. Your book will be read, reread, imagined, and dreamed upon by your illustrator. Your words plus the illustrator's pictures will create a new whole that is more than the sum of its parts.

### PUBLISHING TAKES A VILLAGE

In a large publishing company, there are many people who work to take a manuscript from text on a page to a finished product of a book on a shelf. One of the great things about self-publishing is that you can have more personal control over the process and the end product.

#### *BUSINESS OWNER*

As a self-publisher, (or micro-publisher) you own your own publishing company. Once your book is in print, it is a product that can be bought and sold. Depending on the laws of your state, you may need to register your business with your town and apply for a state permit to make retail sales. You will need to keep accounts and file business taxes.

Like all small business owners, self-publishers wear many hats. This book will help you figure out which roles to fill yourself, and for which to hire a professional.

#### *EDITOR*

Copyeditor: It's or its? Ensure or insure? A copyeditor proofreads for spelling, grammar, and conformity with a particular style guide, if needed.

Developmental editor: A developmental editor digs a little deeper, giving you feedback on the flow and clarity of your writing.

#### *ART DIRECTOR*

An art director is a visual editor. Art directors generally have many years of art school and have highly trained eyes. When an art director looks over page proofs, they are analyzing things like the balance of color and white space, the movement of their eyes across the page, and the consistency of characters from page to page.

As a self-publisher, you are the Art Director for your project. Perhaps you don't have an art degree or experience editing visual work. If so, follow the suggestions of your illustrator, and use our handy "Be Your Own Art Director" checklist.

### *ILLUSTRATOR*

At the most basic level, an illustrator draws or paints pictures inspired by the text and delivers them to art director. The process of illustration involves building a visual world for the text of the manuscript, designing characters, and determining the page turns and flow of the text in pace with the illustrations. Great illustration goes beyond the words of the story and creates a rich interplay of text and visual storytelling.

### *BOOK DESIGNER*

The book designer combines the illustrations and text, lays out pages, and chooses typeface that fits the story. The most common program for page layout and design is Adobe InDesign. The book designer often has a graphic design degree, and understands the technical aspects of page layout and color specifications required by different publishers.

Sometimes the book designer will also design the cover, using art requested from the illustrator, and their own graphic design skills with text and layout.

At times you may find an illustrator who comes from a graphic design background and has the technical training to do book design and create a print-ready file for you. However, many illustrators do not have these skills. You will probably get better results, more quickly by hiring a separate professional book designer. It may even be less expensive than having your illustrator do the book design.

### *PUBLISHING PROJECT MANAGER*

A publishing project manager coordinates the work of all of the people involved in the publishing process. They also assist with the administrative parts of moving a book to print: assigning an ISBN, writing metadata, communicating with the publishing company, and making the book available for sale.

### *MARKETING DEPARTMENT*

Increasingly, authors do much of their own marketing work even for traditional publishers. Marketing may involve building an online author platform, sending out mailings, giving away free books to reviewers, attending book fairs, going on school visits, or using social media.

## INDEPENDENT EDITORS

Should you hire an independent editor for your book? The short answer is yes. The longer answer is yes, most definitely, but be sure you are hiring a reputable professional. SCBWI and the website Predators and Editors ([www.pred-ed.com](http://www.pred-ed.com)) are good sources for locating a reputable independent editor.

Often independent editors will offer different levels of service, from simple proofreading to more complex work. Editing pricing depends on the length of your manuscript and the complexity of the editing that you are requesting.

Sometimes authors think that the cost of professional editing isn't worth the cost, and think they can just run spell check on their manuscript and all will be well. If you look at it from a big-picture perspective, a professional editor will actually save you money on illustration revision ("change fees") or fees for multiple uploads to your publisher.

## A NOTE ABOUT STAGE DIRECTIONS

A special note on editing for picture book authors: Picture book storytelling is done within the interaction of verbal and visual storytelling. Because so much of the action is shown visually, picture books do not need the type of "stage directions" that a short story text might need. Sentences that describe the movements of characters from place to place end up being redundant in the storytelling within a book, and can bog a story down. Stage directions are phrases like "She walked over to Mary and said..." or "Joe left the swings and ran to the slide."

If there is a visual action that is necessary to the story, but not evident in the text of your picture book manuscript, the standard is to put the action into an illustration note. You don't need an illustration note for the general action of a story. If two characters are talking to each other, it is evident to the reader, and the illustrator, that they are both in the scene being depicted.

You do need an illustration note if something in the visual action of the story contradicts what is happening in the dialogue.

For example:

Smelly Squirrel had the biggest acorn ever. He walked over to his friend Prickles and said, "Look! An apple!"

Prickles took a big bite. "Ouch!" he yelped.

Becomes:

“Look! An apple!” shouted Smelly Squirrel. *[Illustration: Smelly hands a giant acorn to Prickles.]*

Crunch!

“Ouch!” yelped Prickles.

Note the phrases removed from the first text selection:

- “...had the biggest acorn ever.” – The illustration will show that the acorn is huge, and will show Smelly finding it.
- “He walked over to his friend...” The illustrator will depict Smelly and Pickles together, it will make sense to the reader that Smelly moved to wherever Pickles was. The act of walking isn’t an important part of the story.
- “...Took a big bite.” Instead of describing the action, the illustration can show the big bite in action, with just the word “Crunch!” to emphasize what is happening. You could put another illustration note after “crunch,” but it isn’t really necessary since it is clear from the context that Prickles is trying to bite the acorn. Less is more when it comes to illustration notes.



## THE ILLUSTRATION PROCESS

### *EXACTLY HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ILLUSTRATE A CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK?*

I polled a group of professional illustrators on this question. Every respondent said “It depends.” When pushed, there was general agreement that it takes at least 3-4 months of full-time work (or 500+ hours) to illustrate a 32-page picture book. If the book is done in a very time-intensive medium, like embroidery, or is done in an intricately detailed style, a just one double page spread can take up 100 hours to complete.

How this translates into your project schedule depends on how busy your illustrator is and what your own schedule looks like. When you write out a project schedule, you illustrator will have deadlines for each stage of the project, but you will also need to return editorial comments to the illustrator by a set deadline in order for the project to stay on schedule.

Allowing at least 6 months for the illustration process is a reasonable time frame that gives room for each people to balance other work and family obligations, and stick to the schedule. If you absolutely must have your book complete and published in a shorter time frame, be prepared to pay more and hunt harder for an illustrator who is able to postpone all other projects and devote all of their time to your book.

### ILLUSTRATION STEP-BY-STEP

Illustration, like all art, is individual. Over time, each artist develops their own way of working, the same way you have developed your own writing process. I'm going to walk you through my personal process for illustrating a picture book. Other illustrators may mix these elements around differently, but the basic steps remain the same.

#### *RESEARCH*

Research may be as simple as going into my back yard to find exactly what tomatoes look like when growing on a vine, or it may be as complex as searching the Library of Congress online catalog for original documents.

Before an illustrator can draw something, they need to know what it looks like. This may seem obvious, but illustrators are often asked to draw things they have never encountered before.

To portray something accurately, I need to draw it from life, or if that is impossible, from a photograph. When working on a project that involved ocean animal characters, I spent several days at the aquarium with my sketchbook, observing, sketching, and taking photographs. The final book characters were more humorous than realistic, but I wanted them to move and act in ways that felt true to life.

Even if a human character is completely fiction, I will draw from a model who is around the right age before beginning my character design. Not all illustrators do – some draw completely invented people straight from their imaginations. Others have live models come to their studio and take detailed photographs for every scene in the book to use as reference.

During the research phase, I will read the book manuscript dozens of times, taking notes on my mental image of the characters and settings in the book. I will search online for reference photos, check books out of the library about the book topic, and search for similar picture books to make sure what I am designing is different from what is already in publication.

Research takes a lot of time, and there are not many deliverables to show for the work that is put in at this stage. At the end of the research stage I have a folder on my hard drive full of reference photos, and a bunch of rough sketches that wouldn't mean much to anyone other than myself. In my head is a detailed mental map of the landscape of the book, thoughts on colors, and a rough idea of how I want the characters to look.

The next stage is getting those ideas onto paper.

### *CHARACTER DESIGN*

I don't always follow the same pathway through the book illustration process. Sometimes I lay out the whole book in a rough storyboard and then start in on character details. Sometimes I start with the main character, who inspires how the rest of the book looks and feels.

Designing a character involves reading a text closely and determining the age, physical characteristics, and personality of the character. I should also add species - some children's books are illustrated with anthropomorphic animals, or it may be a book explicitly about animals.

In traditional publishing, authors and illustrators are kept apart. The reason is to allow the illustrator the space to visually interpret the text without being tied too closely to the author's vision. Usually authors are happily surprised by the artwork when it is revealed.

As a self-publisher, you can take the same road, allowing your illustrator complete artistic freedom, or you can be more involved in the illustration process. You are commissioning a custom piece of art. If you would like your book to be set in a particular location – one that isn't obvious in the text – or you would like a character to look like a certain person, you can ask your illustrator to create something that fits your concept.

A couple of cautionary notes about asking for specifics in your illustrations:

1. Keep it light. The more creative space you allow your illustrator, the better the illustrations will turn out. I illustrated one book in which so many objects and

colors were specified that putting together an image became a giant logic puzzle, and the art suffered. Focus your specifications on the most important things, and let your illustrator use their highly trained imagination for the rest.

2. Ask upfront. If you know you want the main character of your book to look like your grandson, or you know you want a character to have a particular ethnic identify, ask your illustrator upfront. Before you hire someone, make sure they are willing and able to customize the illustrations for your book in the way you would like. Not everyone has the same skill set. For example, some people draw adorable animal characters but would not want to try to make a character look like a particular person.
3. Share research. If you have written a book about science or history, and you know that the illustrations will need to be based on accurate research, share your sources and your requirements with your illustrator. For example, if you have written a book about Lewis and Clark, and you know that they used a particular design of canoe, tell your illustrator upfront that the canoe will need to be historically accurate and based on whatever source you have found with the design.

#### *STORYBOARD/BOOK DUMMY*

A storyboard is a one-page overview, or map, of the entire book. Individual pages are sketched out in small rectangles. These are called thumbnail sketches or thumbnails. Their purpose is to get an overall layout of the page down on paper – rough shapes, perhaps a rough idea of light and dark. You can use the **Storyboard Worksheet** at the end of this document as a writing tool as well as for the first steps of illustration.

A book dummy is a mockup of a book, often made by cutting and folding 8 sheets of paper to make a 32-page booklet that is  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a piece of paper. Both book dummies and storyboards are used to plan out what text will go on what page, and how the story will flow through the book.

A book dummy or storyboard usually goes through several revisions. I usually make several versions of a storyboard, finalize it, and then make a slightly more finished version of my sketches in a book dummy. The book dummy will sometimes go through a few revision processes as well. Some people only use one tool or the other. Others will draw full-size sketches and tape them onto a wall to create a storyboard.

Storyboards and book dummies are great tools for writers as well as for illustrators. If you create a book dummy yourself, and cut and paste your text onto the pages, you will get a sense of how many pages long your book needs to be, and where the page breaks need to happen.

### **Some notes about pagination of picture books:**

Page 1 is always a right-hand side page. Usually, page 1 is a title page. It may have a simple illustration, and will also contain the book title, and the author and illustrator's names.

Page 2-3 are usually reserved for copyright and printing information in a traditionally published book. You may choose to fit everything onto page 1, or place your copyright information elsewhere.

A traditional picture book will end on page 32, a left-hand side page. Some self-publishing companies, in particular, some print on demand printers, require that the very last page of the book be left blank for a bar code. This leaves you with two options: ending your book on a double-page spread, or having an extra page, blank on both sides, at the end of the book. You could choose to use the second-to-last page for your copyright information.

As a self-publisher, you are not tied to the 32-page format. Your book can be as long or as short as it needs to be. Keep in mind that you will need to have a target length in mind before hiring an illustrator, because the book length and number of illustrations needed will determine the cost of your project.

#### *LINE ART*

After finalizing the storyboard or book dummy, the illustrator will move on to line art. Things start to get real at this point. The pictures on paper will start looking like actual art, or at least the beginnings of art. This is an exciting stage.

Some illustrators will draw very detailed, finished, black and white drawings, others will be more sketchy. It depends on the illustrator's style and the way they plan to finish the artwork.

The approval of the line art is an important stage in your illustration contract. The illustrations are half way done at this point. Take your time and make sure that you and the illustrator are both happy with the line art and are ready to move on. It is much easier (and cheaper) to make changes at this point than it will be later!

#### *COLOR PALETTE*

A color palette is a selection of colors that the illustrator intends to use in the final color art. Your illustrator may or may not show you a color palette before beginning the color art. Some illustrators may use all the colors. Others may pick particular tones as they go along.

You are most likely to notice and/or be asked to approve a color palette if your illustrator has decided to use a limited palette. A "limited palette" refers to the artistic choice to use a small selection of colors to create a particular effect. For example, *Loiuse Loves Art* by Kelly J Light uses mainly black, white, and red so that the red elements in the pictures stand out. *The Arrival*,

by Shaun Tan, uses muted neutral tones – browns and blacks – to create an otherworldly, silent-movie feel.

### *FINAL COLOR ART*

Finally, the illustrator is at the final color art stage! Your illustrator will break out the paintbrushes, collage papers, or their digital tools and start to play with color. You will finally start to see images that look like book illustrations. This is an exciting time.

I like to think of the final color art as the tip of the iceberg that is visible above the water. Whatever bit of work that is visible to the viewer is supported by all of the invisible work that comes before it.

### *COVER DESIGN AND ART*

Last of all is the cover design. Usually the book designer is in charge of the cover and will choose fonts for the title and placement of the text, and will tell the illustrator the type of image that is needed for the front and back covers. The custom is for the book or cover designer to produce two or three concept sketches. You will get to choose one, which will then be developed into the final cover design. The fee for the cover design includes the use of only the one design that is chosen.

Cover art is designed in two formats – it may be a front cover only, or it may be an image that wraps from front to back. Having only the front cover illustrated is less expensive, but wrapping the illustration around to the back can make your reader have a reason to turn the book over and look at the blurb on the back cover. It can be a tool to draw the reader in.

If you have commissioned a cover for your YA or MG novel with no interior illustrations, the process of creating the cover will be a miniature version of the picture book illustration process above. The fee for illustrating a stand-alone cover includes the time necessary to read the book (or enough of the book) to get a sense of the setting and characters and to choose a scene to represent on the cover.

If you haven't already done so, you will need to write a blurb for the back cover of your book, and a little bio for yourself if you wish to include that. You will also need to provide your book designer with the name of your micropublishing business and the ISBN number and bar code before work can be completed.

## THE BOOK DESIGN PROCESS

After the illustration are complete, there is still more work to be done to get your book into a print-ready state. If your illustrations have been completed in hard copy form –paintings, collages, or drawings – they will need to be digitally scanned by a high quality scanner. You will need to have the images scanned at 300 dpi or higher, and saved as .jpg files. (If you have received your illustrations digitally, you can skip this step.)

Once you have your digital files in your digital hand, it is time for the book designer to combine the text and images together to create a print-ready file. A book designer can take anywhere from a couple of days to a few weeks to design and lay out your book in a desktop publishing program. Once again, the time it takes depends on the length of your book and the complexity of the design.

Authors often wonder if they can do their own book design. If you are familiar with Adobe InDesign, then you may be able to do the book design yourself. That said, book design is a specialty, so even if you have produced brochures or business cards using InDesign in the past, you may still want to hire a professional book designer.

You will need to be able to read and following the printing guidelines and file setup requirements of your publishing company. The most difficult part is navigating color settings. You have spent a lot of time and money writing your book, finding and hiring an illustrator, and it can be heartbreaking to have your book come off the press looking bad because the color was not set correctly.

If you are reading this section and wondering what “dpi” means, or what a color setting is, then hire a professional book designer. You will be much happier with the results!

### *SPECIAL BOOK DESIGN CIRCUMSTANCES*

If you have written a how-to book, such as a step-by-step cookbook, or a science book that has text boxes and diagrams as well as illustration, you will need to reverse the process of illustration and book design.

For example, if you have written a book of fun science activities for kids to do at home, and you intend to combine illustrations, charts, and photographs, your book designer will play a crucial role in the look of the overall book. Instead of your illustrator determining what text will go on what page, your book designer would determine what text goes where, and how many, how big, and exactly what illustrations you will need. You would work with the book designer to come up with a specific list of illustrations that the book would need, and the exactly size each one needs to be, and you would send that list to the illustrator.

Books with complex design elements are a lot more work to design, so expect to pay more. Depending on the needs of your book, it may make more sense for you to hire a graphic designer who has the capacity to design graphics and do your book layout. The graphic designer can tell you if you need an illustrator for specific pages of the book.

## PRINT-READY

The last part of the process is uploading the print-ready files to your printing company, and waiting for your proofs to arrive in the mail. If you will be selling your book on Amazon, there is a lag time of a few days between uploading all of the book data and the book going live for sale.

The printing timeline is very different depending on whether you choose a print-on-demand service or a offset printing service. Several options are covered in the next chapter.

All together, this is what you can expect for your book's gestation and birth process:

- Editing: 1 – 2 weeks, unless your editor has a long waitlist
- Illustration: 3 months – 1 year
- Book design: 4-5 weeks, unless your designer has a long waitlist
- Publishing process: About 2 weeks for POD;, 1-2 months for traditional printing
- Total: Between 5 and 15 months

## PRINTING COMPANIES

The number of options for self-publishing is bewildering when you begin looking. I will outline three general routes that you can take, the pros and cons of each, and their general cost range.

### **#1: Print on Demand (POD) company**

Print on demand self-publishing companies are springing up like mushrooms after a spring rain. Some serve a niche – only photo books, only business manuals, only memoirs, etc. Others are set up as “one stop shopping” for self-publishers, offering editing, book design, ISBN numbers, and sometimes illustration (more on that later). It is difficult to compare prices between these companies, because each has its own way of aggregating prices.

In order to get a rough sense of the costs of several self-publishing companies, I tried to compare the costs of printing an 8x10, 32-page, hardcover picture book.

- BookBaby: 100 copies of a 32-page hardcover picture book costs \$2,390, including book design (not illustration), ISBN number, and making book available POD.
- Lulu – 120 copies of a 32-page hardcover picture book costs \$1830, or you can pay \$2,200 to have Lulu do your book design and editing, assign one of their



ISBN numbers, and make the book available as POD. You will also receive 3 paperback copies of your book.

- Ingram Spark: 100 copies of a 32-page hardcover picture book with costs \$640, and the book would be available POD. Printing in premium color on 70 pound paper would raise the price to \$780. Everything at Ingram is DIY. You would need to purchase and supply your own ISBN and print-ready file. (BookBaby and Lulu are both resellers of Ingram (aka Lightning Source) printing, with add-on services and more user-friendly websites.)
- CreateSpace: Many self-publishing experts believe CreateSpace is the best platform for POD sales on Amazon. The down side is that CreateSpace only publishes in paperback, and the color quality control is not as good as Ingram. 100 paperback 32-page picture books cost \$365. For \$700, you can purchase interior book design and cover design.

POD pros:

- Lower upfront costs
- No need to store boxes of books
- Color quality is good (Ingram Spark has the best color quality if you choose Premium Color – and the largest selection of book sizes and bindings)
- Can list books on Amazon

POD cons:

- May be more difficult to get books into local bookstores
- Lower profit margin per book
- Books are sold directly to readers so you lose complete control over quality
- Printing is done with high-end inkjet printers, in CMYK, and some colors can not be reproduced.
- Color quality is only good, not great.

## #2 Offset Press

Offset printing is an older technology than the digital inkjet printing that Ingram and Createspace use. It has higher-quality color, and greater flexibility on book size. Offset printing is what most mainstream magazines and trade publishers use.

There are local printing companies that print on offset presses that you may be able to meet with in person to talk about your project. You may even be able to see your physical books come off the press and check them for quality. Printing locally can be a selling point for your book if you have written about a regional topic and intend to market your book locally.

Offset pros:

- Better color quality, many offset printers specialize in art books
- More control over finished product, since you receive books before reselling them.
- More options of paper and formats
- You connect directly with readers when selling books directly to them
- There are local options in most towns

Offset cons:

- You must purchase all of the books upfront and re-sell them
- You will need a safe place to store the books
- Offset printing may be more expensive per book, depending on the number of books you order

A few offset printing companies with online quote and ordering are: PrintNinja ([www.printninja.com](http://www.printninja.com)); Friesens ([www.books.friesens.com/childrens-books](http://www.books.friesens.com/childrens-books)); Hemlock ([www.hemlock.com](http://www.hemlock.com)); and Transcontinental ([www.tctranscontinental.com](http://www.tctranscontinental.com)). Most offset printers use a custom quote system for pricing. You will need to contact them with the specifications of your job to find out the cost of their services.

There are literally thousands of choices of printing and one-stop author services companies. Some of them provide solid services for reasonable fees. Others are not reputable. You can see from the price ranges above that prices vary widely, and they are not always related

to quality. Some printing companies have actually been sued by authors. Before you choose a printer, do your research.

A note about illustration services offered by printing companies: Some of these companies are acting as miniature publishing houses. They are coordinating the work of book designers, illustrators, and printing press operators. They may have a “stable” of illustrators that you can choose from, at pricing similar to the cost of hiring an illustrator yourself. Others are offering “illustration” services that are actually clip art services. For an unbelievably low fee, they say they will illustrate your book – but what they will actually do is assign some of their stock illustrations to your text. Check out their stock before purchasing their services.

If you are considering a one-stop author service company, ask for samples of previous work and references. You don’t want to get to the print stage, having signed a contract and invested money, and discover that you are unhappy with the quality of what they have created for you.

### **ISBN numbers**

If you would like to be able to sell your book through bookstores or see it placed in libraries, you will need to purchase an ISBN number. “ISBN” stands for “International Standard Book Number,” and is a unique identifier for your book. Some one-stop author services websites offer ISBN numbers as part of their package. If you use their ISBN, be aware that it will identify your book as being published by them. If you intend to set up a micropublishing business and market your books under your own micro-publisher business name, it is better to purchase your own ISBN numbers.

Bowker is the seller of ISBN numbers in the United States. (Bowker.com). It is a good idea to buy a package of 10 numbers, because each edition of your book will need a separate number – hardcover, paperback, or ebook. One ISBN costs \$125, a bundle of ten is \$295, so if you plan to print a hardcover and paperback version of your book, it makes sense to buy ten.

If you publish through CreateSpace, you can use a CreateSpace-assigned ISBN for free.

## HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

At the beginning of this book, I compared hiring an illustrator to hiring a custom home builder. That analogy works up to a point, but it breaks down on pricing. In the creative marketplace, illustration is priced like professional photography, based on rights and usage. What you are buying when you contract with an illustrator is not actually the art, or the illustrator's time – you are purchasing the rights to reproduce the illustrations in various formats and media.

Pricing on illustration also varies based on the people involved, the project specifics, geographic location, and the project timeline. There are so many variables that it can be difficult to even set a range. A top illustrator doing illustration for a national magazine can command prices far above the ceilings given in this book. The ranges of prices I have listed here are based on Internet searches of various online providers.

### COST OF EDITING

Editors rarely list prices upfront, because every project has different needs. Editors charge either by word or by page, and may have different rates for different levels of editing. Basic copyediting would be the least expensive, and may cost as little as \$100 - \$200 for a children's book. A more involved editor, who might act more like a writing coach, helping you to develop your manuscript, would charge more. The more experienced and more in demand an editor is, the higher rate he or she is able to charge. Some may be quite expensive and still have long waitlists, because they are known for the manuscripts they have helped shepherd into the world. All editors should be willing to give you a price quote after viewing a sample of your manuscript.

### COST OF ILLUSTRATING A PICTURE BOOK

Illustrators hired by traditional publishing houses are paid with royalties on sales of the book. Royalties range from 3-5% of sales, depending on the prominence of the illustrator. Publishers give illustrators an advance on the royalties. Like everything else in publishing, advances vary widely. Picture book advances average \$7,000 - \$15,000, but can go much higher for well-known illustrators. Generally, the more books a publisher thinks they will be able to sell, the higher the advance.

Traditional publishing contracts will also contain payments for reprints of the book into different formats or languages, movie options, and licensing of characters.

### PRICING FOR SELF-PUBLISHERS

Most self-publishers are not in business as publishers, and aren't set up to track and pay royalties to an illustrator for decades into the future. Illustrators of self-published books are usually paid up front in full.

The cost of hiring an illustrator for your self-published book is function of these factors:

- Your illustrator’s experience and level of fame
- The number and complexity of illustrations needed
- Multiple uses of the illustrations in different formats

A casual survey of children’s book illustration services with pricing listed online came up with the price range of \$100 - \$600 per picture book page. This puts a 32-page picture book with front and back cover illustrations into the range of \$3,400 - \$20,400. I have seen online illustration services offering to illustrate books for as little as \$1,500, but they limited the number of illustrations, so they weren’t really comparable.

### COST OF ILLUSTRATIONS FOR A CHAPTER BOOK

Picture book illustrations are generally priced for an entire book. For other types of children’s books, illustrations are priced per illustration.

- A spot illustration is a small illustration, usually  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a page or less, that has white space around it. It may be black and white or color. Spot illustrations vary from around \$50 to \$400 each.
- A full page illustration is exactly what it sounds like – an illustration that takes up an entire page of a book. It may “bleed” off the edges of the paper or have a white margin around it. Full page illustrations are generally priced between \$100 - \$600 each.
- A double-page spread illustration covers both the left and right pages of a spread. The cost may range from \$200 - \$1200 each.

A middle-grade novel with a full color cover and black and white spot illustrations sprinkled throughout the book would be priced by adding together the per-illustration cost of each illustration and the cost of a full color cover design.

### COST OF GRAPHIC NOVEL ILLUSTRATION

Graphic novels are growing genre, and are increasingly getting the recognition they deserve by educators, librarians, and literary award committees. Graphic novels are by definition illustration-intensive. The manuscripts that are best adapted to the graphic novel format are screenplays – or a manuscript that was written with the intention of it becoming a graphic novel.

Comic book/graphic novel illustration is a separate field of illustration from children’s book illustration, with its own artistic standards and pricing structures. Mainstream comic books

are usually 24 pages long, graphic novels are as long as they need to be. Prices range from \$100 - \$750 per page.

#### *COST OF BOOK DESIGN*

Book designers price based on page count, illustration count, and complexity of layout. Book design costs may range from \$800 - \$4,000. A science book with tables, text boxes, and many figures will be more expensive than a middle grade novel with no interior images.

Book design for print is very different from ebook design. Because the text in an ebook is designed to flow into different font sizes and ereader sizes, designing an illustrated manuscript can be very challenging. If you would like to make your book available as an ebook, expect to pay separately for the ebook design. It is not a simple matter of saving into a different format.

#### *COST OF COVER DESIGN*

The cost to design a stand-alone cover ranges from \$250 - \$1200. Illustration fees range from \$500 - \$3,000. Additional fees may be charged for extra concept sketches, or for the use of the cover image in different media or on different editions of a book. The cover designer may source photography or illustrations needed to design the cover, or you may need to do so.

#### *COST OF PUBLISHING FEES*

Self-publishing fees vary depending on the company you are using, the method of printing, the cover type, and the number of copies you order. In general, the more copies you order of a book, the cheaper the per-book price.

Startup fees for POD will run you around \$500 for the business permits, ISBN numbers, and publishing fees. In addition, you may wish to place a bulk order of your own books that you can sell in person, the cost of which would depend on the format, length, cover, and color printing of you book as well as the number of copies you order.

Startup fees for brick-and-mortar publishing are much harder to estimate, but you should expect to pay at least a couple thousand dollars for your first order of books, in addition to the cost of your ISBN number.

#### *THE BOTTOM LINE*

So, how much can you expect to pay to get your book illustrated, designed, and into print? The answer is in the range of five to thirty thousand dollars. The final price will depend on

the people involved, the complexity of your project, the geographic location, and how quickly you want things done.

- Editor: \$100 - \$2,000
- Illustrator: \$3,400 - \$20,000
- Book Designer: \$800 - \$4,000
- Publishing Fees: \$500 - \$3,000
- Total: \$4,800 - \$30,000

#### A NOTE ABOUT MONEY

No one goes into the children's book industry to get rich. Editors, illustrators, and book designers do this work because they are passionate about art and literature.

Why did you write your book? I'm guessing that it wasn't money. (If it was, you may be disappointed.) You had a reason for writing this particular story and for wanting to share it with children. That reason is your passion. It is what drives you read this book, to research publishers, and to do all those other not-so-fun but necessary tasks to get your book in print.

The process of having your manuscript illustrated, and designed, and printed, and finally turned into a book you can hold is the process of shepherding a new work of art into the world. There is a reason people call publishing dates "book birthdays." It takes a time, patience, hard work, money, and a great deal of creative energy to get a book into print. But the moment you hold your real, live book in your hand, it is all worth it.

## WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY?

If you don't have the funds to hire an illustrator and book designer up front, do not despair! There are ways to raise money for your project.

Some ideas for raising funds for your book project:

### CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding is transforming the creative marketplace. Instead of seeking one or two private donors to back their work, inventors and creators are using the power of social media to find many people willing to give a small amount of money to see an idea they like become a reality. Crowdfunding is not only a wonderful way to fund your book publishing, it is a way of building an author platform, networking with readers and other writers, and beginning the marketing process of your book before it is even in print.

Crowdfunding an illustrated book works best if you have some sort of visual to draw people in to your project. This is where things get tricky. You need an illustrator to create some sketches or a finished cover to post on your crowdfunding site, but you can not ask an illustrator to work "on spec" for your book, with the possibility of payment if the project gets funded. Unless you have three million Facebook followers like George Takei, the answer will be no.

The solution is to pay your illustrator upfront for a cover image or some sketches to be used in your crowdfunding campaign, with a written agreement to hire them for the whole book once the project is fully funded. Not all illustrators are willing to do this. You may have to hunt a little harder for someone who is passionate enough about your project to take on the uncertainty.

There are many crowdfunding companies, but not all are set up for book publishing projects. Of those, some only do particular genres of books (romance, self-help, etc.) All crowdfunding sites take a percentage of the money you raise, most also subtract a credit card processing fee. Before you commit to a particular crowdfunding platform, do your research. Here are three crowdfunding sites that work with children's book authors:

**Kickstarter:** [www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com) Perhaps the best-known website for raising money for creative projects, Kickstarter makes it easy to use your personal networks to raise money for your book with the promise of deliverables in the future.

**Inkshares:** [www.inkshares.com](http://www.inkshares.com) Inkshares is a newer crowdfunding site designed just for self-publishers. You upload a sample chapter and a book pitch, and then connect with potential readers. If you reach your goal (250 pre-ordered copies), Inkshares will work with you and provide the editing, design, publishing, and distribution of your book.



**Unbound:** [www.unbound.co.uk](http://www.unbound.co.uk) Unbound is a UK-based company that works much like Kickstarter, but is focused on publishing books. Authors pitch a project, people subscribe to the project and pledge funding, and then if it is funded, people are given the rewards at the level for which they pledged.

## ORGANIZATIONAL FUNDING

Have you written a book about adoption that would be an amazing resource for adoptive families? Maybe there is an adoption agency that would pay part or all of the costs of illustration in exchange for getting copies of the published book to give to their clients. Have you written a book aimed at children with a particular medical condition? Maybe there is a foundation that would be interested in giving you a grant to get your book in print. Think creatively about who is interested in your book, and who might be willing to fund it. Some ideas:

- Local charitable foundations related to your topic
- State arts and humanities councils
- Religious or social organizations to which you belong
- For-profit companies that would give you money in exchange for their logo on the book. (Be sure their mission matches that of your book!)

## PRIVATE DONORS

Perhaps there are one or more people you know who would be interested in seeing your manuscript become a book. They may share a passion for your topic, or they may just believe in you and your dream. If private donors do fund your book illustration and publishing fees, be sure to thank them profusely in your acknowledgements, and give them as many copies of the book as they would like once it is published.

## FINDING SOMEONE WHO WILL WORK FOR LESS

While illustrators may be motivated more by love than money, they do still need to pay the rent on the studio, the babysitter, and those pesky self-employment taxes. This is why paying your illustrator a living wage is so important. You want them to still be there for you when your next book is ready. You don't want them to have to drop your project midway and get a job slinging burgers because they can't pay their rent.

There are freelance websites such as Fiverr ([www.fiverr.com](http://www.fiverr.com)) and Elance ([www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com)) that appear on the surface to offer cheaper rates for illustration and book design. There are some very talented people freelancing through these websites. If you do a little

research on these sites, you will find that \$5.00 may get you a cut-and-paste generic illustration, but good work takes time and costs money. If you use freelancer websites to search for professionals to collaborate with you on your work, take into account their experience, references, sample art, and ability to communicate with you in your language.

Please, don't ask your cousin's next-door neighbor's high school son who likes to draw manga characters to illustrate your book for "exposure" (aka free). The poor high school student has no idea how much work it is to illustrate an entire book.

You put time, thought, expertise, and passion into writing your book. It deserves an equal level of time, thought, expertise, and passion for its illustration and design, and it is worth the work it will take to get it funded.

### DIY OR DIWH (DO IT WITH HELPERS)

There are a few special people in the world who may illustrate your book for love – or perhaps for love and cookies. If you have written a book that you intend to be a family heirloom, one way to make it even more special is to have family members draw the illustrations. It can be a wonderful cross-generational project to work on together at a family gathering, or a way to stay in touch when separated.

My experience with working on a project like this – my father's story, my children's illustrations – is to keep your story as short as possible. 32 pages of illustrations is a lot to ask of a child, or even of several children. Most children will happily do one or two drawings and then want to move on to a new project. Keep the length of your book tailored to the number of people you have involved, and be prepared to fill in the gaps yourself with photographs if your illustrators go on strike. Make sure you include photos of yourself and the artists who helped you with your heirloom project. Years from now they will treasure the book they helped you create.

You can hire a book designer to do a simple layout of your text across the number of pages you plan to have in your book. The designer can then print out the pages with the text, and you can hand them out to your family members to illustrate page by page. When everyone is finished with their drawings, you can return the illustrated pages and whatever photos you want to include to your book designer, who will then scan in the art and create a professional-quality book for you.

An even less expensive alternative is to use the photo book online design programs on sites such as Snapfish or Shutterfly. You will need to decide what text goes on each page and hand out paper with a note attached about the text for that page. When the drawings are complete, you can take them to a copy shop to have them scanned on a high-quality scanner and saved to a CD or flash drive. You can then use one of the templates provided by the site that has

a white background and allows full-page art and text to be placed on each page. These photo sites allow you to use their online layout programs for free.

Books vary in price based on format and number of books ordered, but you can expect to pay between \$20 - \$50 per book. If you plan to order only a handful of books, photo printing sites can actually be a good option. They tend to have high-quality color printing and the option to choose high-quality paper and bindings.

## HOW TO HIRE THE RIGHT ILLUSTRATOR

Before you begin your search for the right illustrator for your book, it helps to define your project in the language illustrators use when talking about their work. It may seem backward, but before hiring an illustrator, it's helpful to think about how your book fits into the children's book marketplace.

While reading this chapter, work through the Project Definition Worksheet.

### CHILDREN'S BOOK GENRES

Like adult books, the children's book market is divided into genres. Understanding what genre your book fits into will ultimately help you market your book and connect with readers. But it will also help you define what you need from an illustrator and book designer and help you find the right fit for your project.

#### *PICTURE BOOKS*

For ages 3-8, the traditional picture book is 32 pages long. Word counts are generally up to about 600 words, sometimes longer for nonfiction. There is usually an illustration on each page or spread. Books vary in size and shape but tend to be at least 8" x 8". (*Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems, *The Mitten* by Jan Brett)

#### *LEVELED READERS*

Designed for beginning readers (age 4-8) to read independently, these books are between 32-64 pages long, with 200-1500 words of text. Books may have only one or two simple sentences per page at the lower levels. There is usually an illustration on each page or spread, but books are usually formatted more like a chapter book, often in a 6" x 9" size. (*Elephant and Piggie series* by Mo Willems, *Frog and Toad All Year* by Arnold Lobel)

#### *CHAPTER BOOKS*

For ages 7-10, these books are 4,000 – 10,000 words, broken into short chapters. Chapter books may have an illustration every couple of pages, usually in black and white. These books

tend to be smaller, around 5” x 7”. (*Magic Tree House Series* by Mary Pope Osborne, *Judy Moody series* by Megan McDonald)

### GRAPHIC NOVELS

Graphic novels span a huge age range from wordless storytelling for pre-readers to books intended for adults. Words and images are intertwined in graphic novels. Dialogue is usually in speech bubbles, and pages are formatted into strips or cells like a comic book. (*Lunch Lady series* by Jarrett Krosoczka, *Babymouse series* by Jennifer L. Holm and Matthew Holm)

### MIDDLE GRADE

For ages 8 – 12, these books are between 20,000 – 50,000 words and are for more advanced readers. Many middle grade books have an illustration at the beginning of each chapter. These books tend to be sized like adult novels in paperback and hardcover. (*Harry Potter & the Sorcerer's Stone* by JK Rowling, *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson)

### YOUNG ADULT

Young adult novels are generally between 55-80,000 words. Usually the only illustration in a YA novel is the cover. (*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, *The Beginning of Everything* by Robyn Schneider)

### CHILDREN’S REFERENCE/HOW TO/EDUCATIONAL

This category included books such as cookbooks, craft or activity books, books of facts, or workbooks. They may be aimed at the lower or upper end of the preschool – elementary school years. Depending on the type of book, they may need step-by-step instructional illustrations, scientific diagrams, or fun sidebar cartoon for a math worksheet. These books tend to be larger and have more of a size range. Workbooks tend to be the size of a standard sheet of 8.5” x 11” paper. (*Honest Pretzels* by Molly Katzen, *Brain Games* by Jennifer Swanson and Hank Green, *The Human Anatomy Coloring Book* by Margaret Matt and Joe Ziemian)

### SUB-GENRES

Within each reading level and children’s book genre books are further divided between fiction and nonfiction and types of each. Like adult novels, children’s fiction may be fantasy, mystery, contemporary realism, thriller, etc.

As a self-publisher, you have the freedom to color outside the lines a little with your book genre. You can have a 10,000 word middle grade book that is heavily illustrated if you desire. You can create a novel cookbook or a cookbook/novel. But, knowing you will be marketing this

unique book to 8-12 year olds, you will want to format the book so it looks like other books aimed at that age range.

## STYLE

Style is the difficult-to-define thing that makes the work of one illustrator different from others. Mo Willem's simple, flat, cartoony characters fit his silly stories perfectly. Jan Brett's detailed, realistic, folk patterned illustration fit her retellings of classic folk tales perfectly. If we mixed them up the results would be disappointing for everyone involved.

You want the style of illustrations and the style of the book design to fit the story you are telling. A wonderful example of picture book text, illustration, and book design all building upon each other in a delicious mashup is *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. A great nonfiction example is *See How They Run: Campaign Dreams, Election Schemes, and the Race to the White House* by Susan E. Goodman, with quirky cartoons that complement the tone of the text by Elwood Smith.

## UNIQUE NEEDS

Your book may have illustration needs that not all illustrators can fulfill. Does your illustrator need to understand and be able to draw technical drawings of engines? Are you looking for an illustrator that shares an ethnic background with your main characters? Have you written a science book about the human body?

Illustrators specialize in different types of illustration. For example, medical illustration is a separate field that requires graduate-level human anatomy study as well as art training. Architectural illustrators usually have originally trained as architects. Graphic novel illustrators have different training than picture book illustrators.

You may not need an illustrator with specific technical skills. If you've written a book about a baby dinosaur who is afraid of the dark, and her mother comforts her with a lullaby, then you don't need someone with a specialty in paleontology, you need someone who can draw cute and cuddly characters. However, if you've written a science book about different dinosaur species, you will need someone willing and able to do the biology research necessary to produce scientific illustrations.

## MEDIA

The medium an artist uses – paints, pencil, pen, computer design program – affects the look and feel of the final art. Go to the library or bookstore and pull books with covers or illustrations that appeal to you off the shelves. See if you can tell in what media they were created. Sometimes it can be difficult. There is sometimes an illustration note found near the copyright and library of congress information in the front or back of the book.

You may discover you like all sorts of media. That is OK! It is equally OK if the books in your stack turn out to all be watercolors. The important thing is recognizing if you love one particular media or if it is not a factor for you, because this will help you in your search for the right illustrator.

Some media used in picture book illustrations, with sample books for you to look up:

- Watercolor (*Lost and Found*, by Oliver Jeffers)
- Acrylic (*Close Your Eyes* by Kate Banks)
- Oil (*New Shoes*, illustrated by Eric Velasquez)
- Scratchboard (*The House in the Night* by Susan Marie Swanson)
- Pen and Ink (*My First Kafka*, illustrated by Rohan Daniel Eason)
- Digital (*The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend* by Dan Santat)
- Color pencil (*The Snowman*, by Raymond Briggs)
- Cut paper (*You are Stardust* by Soyeon Kim)
- Mixed media/collage (*Leaf Man* by Lois Elhert, anything by Eric Carle)
- Photography (*I Spy* series by Walter Wick)
- Pencil (*The Arrival* by Shaun Tan)

Some media used in chapter books

- Watercolor and ink (*Ivy and Bean*, illustrated by Sophie Blackall)
- Pencil (*Wonderstruck* and *The Invention of Huge Cabret* by Brian Selznick)
- Ink – line and gray wash (*Marty McGuire* series, illustrated by Brian Floca)
- Ink – line (*Fortunately, the Milk* by Neil Gaiman)

Some media used in graphic novels

- Brush and ink with spot color (*Lunch Lady* series by Jarrett Krosoczka)
- Watercolor (*The Odyssey* by Gareth Hind)
- Digital art (*Sidekicks* by Dan Santat)

## SEARCHING FOR AN ILLUSTRATOR

Once you begin looking for an illustrator, you will realize how many talented people there are out there. It can be overwhelming. A few things to keep in mind are that not all illustrators do children's books, and not all children's books illustrators are right for your book. When you look at an illustrator's online portfolio, focus on the pictures of children and animals. Those will show you if the illustrator's style and medium are right for your project.

## *SCBWI*

SCBWI's website hosts an online illustrator gallery ([www.scbwi.org/illustrator-gallery](http://www.scbwi.org/illustrator-gallery)) that is searchable by illustrator style, location, and medium. Additionally, if you attend an SCBWI conference, there is always a portfolio showcase night where you can look at dozens of portfolios and take home postcards. Best of all, every single illustrator is a children's book illustrator.

## *ONLINE PORTFOLIO SITES*

Behance ([www.behance.net](http://www.behance.net)) is probably the largest online portfolio website, and has a fairly easy to navigate search. However, when you search on "children" within "illustration" you will end up with lots of images that aren't children's book illustration. You will need to scroll through a lot of art if searching this way.

DeviantArt ([www.deviantart.com](http://www.deviantart.com)) may be a better site to search if you are looking for an illustrator for a graphic novel. There is a lot of comic art and fan art on this site. Some of the art found on this site is adults-only.

There are many, many group blogs and smaller websites where illustrators showcase their work. Slogging through them may be overwhelming, especially since it will not be obvious which illustrators take on self-publishing work and which do not.

## *SOCIAL MEDIA*

If you are on social media, joining a children's book writer's group will offer you support through the process of publishing your book, and may also lead to finding an illustrator. Word of mouth is always the most powerful advertising tool. A few groups:

Facebook: I think the best Facebook group out there is run by the Kidlit411 writing website: [www.facebook.com/groups/KIDLIT411](http://www.facebook.com/groups/KIDLIT411) People will sometimes advertise on the Facebook group that they are looking for an illustrator, and they get lots of responses.

Pinterest: Many illustrators have Pinterest "boards" where they place images that interest them. Others may use Pinterest as personal portfolio showcase. The search features in Pinterest are really good and can help you find very specific types of illustration. After finding a list of illustrations you like, you can then look at the illustrators' websites to see if you think they will work for your project.

Instagram: As the most visual of the major social media apps, Instagram can be a way to network with illustrators and find work that you like. If you search on the hashtags #childrensillustration and #childrensbookillustration you will find thousands of illustrations, including many process photos, which can give you insight into how an illustrator works.

### *LOCAL ART SCHOOLS*

I often see the advice to contact a local art school and place an ad for a student to illustrate your book. This might work out great for you, but I do not know anyone for whom it has. Art school has a heavy workload and students may or may not be able to complete your project on a timeline that makes you happy. I remember back when I was in art school that someone contacted the school to see if a student was interested in painting a mural in their kids' room – and no one took the job, even though it paid well, because none of us had the time to complete it.

That said, if you can time you ad with graduation, or seek out the continuing studies program, you may be able to find a great local illustrator this way. Being able to meet in person with your illustrator can be very helpful.

### *WHAT IF THEY SAY NO?*

Some of the illustrators you approach for quotes will just say no. Some illustrators have made a personal policy to only work for traditional publishers. Other illustrators may look at your story and decide they are not the right fit, or may even give you a quote but then later tell you that they don't have room in their schedule or that they have a long waitlist. This is life in the publishing business. There is a lot of rejection.

Luckily there are also a lot of talented illustrators and book designers out there. The publishing world is changing, and self-publishing has lost the stigma that it used to have. Authors like Hugh Howey are bestsellers and are changing the media image of self-publishers.

At the same time, the publishing world still isn't quite sure how it's going to handle ebooks, let alone indie publishing. It's an old industry, and it moves slowly. Most publishing awards still exclude indie published books. Things are changing, but slowly.

In this publishing environment, some illustrators with traditionally published books are wary of taking on a self-published project. Note I said some, not all. Illustrators are approached

### **Top 5 Reasons Illustrators Give for Not Working with Self-Publishers**

5. Authors' budgets are too small
4. Authors don't understand the illustration process (and educating them will take too much time)
3. Illustrator has been burned by a self-publisher not paying in the past
2. Self-publishers manuscripts are not in publishable state (as in, they need editing)
1. Rarely stated explicitly: "I want to (win a Caldecott/ hit the NYT Bestseller List/etc) and I don't think self-publishing will get me there."



all the time by people who want their work for free. It's pretty common for illustrations to receive emails that say: "Hew, I have this great idea for a book! How about you write and illustrate it, and then we'll split the profits?" Enough of those emails will drive illustrators to start sending form letters rejecting all self-publishing projects., assuming that none of them have actual budgets.

A more complicated issue than budget is an illustrator's lifetime career trajectory. The way to "arrive" in illustration is to win a big award, such as the Caldecott medal, the Coretta Scott King award, or the Giesel award. Winning one of these awards means instant prominence for that particular book on a bookstore shelf, but it also transforms careers. Suddenly the illustrator is "the award-winning illustrator." Award-winning illustrators get asked to speak at conferences, get requests for school visits, and get pursued for their work. Illustrators have noticed that Indie published books are excluded from the biggest awards in children's publishing, and some aren't willing to spend a year working on a project, no matter how highly paid, that won't get them any closer to the award they covet.

So, what do you do if you love an illustrator's work and they decline to work on your project? Shrug and move on. There is so much talent out there. You may find someone you like even more, who perhaps isn't as well known, but who is wonderful to work with and creates stunning illustrations. Remember, the right illustrator is someone who *wants* to work on your book, and who is passionate about your project.

## WORKING WITH YOUR ILLUSTRATOR

The magic of a picture book – or any illustrated book – is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Together, author and illustrator create a bond with a reader’s imagination in a way that neither the text or the images alone can do. Collaboration is amazing.

Which is not to say that working together is all skipping through fields of daisies. There are inevitably some groundhog holes hidden beneath the flowers. They tend to have names like “payment” and “schedules.”

### THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTRACTS

Ah, paperwork. No one loves it, we all wish we could skip it and get to the good stuff. But, I can not stress this enough: YOU NEED A CONTRACT. Before any work starts, you and your illustrator need to set down in writing who is doing what, when. How much money is changing hands, for what, and when. Having it all written down and signed will save many future headaches, and will hopefully prevent anyone from ever needing to call a lawyer.

There is a Letter of Agreement worksheet at the end of this document that you can use to write a simple, plain-English agreement between you and your illustrator. It is informed by the Graphic Artists’ Guild writings on copyright law and freelance agreements, with children’s book illustration specifics written into it. If you want, you can take this worksheet to a lawyer and have them write you a contract specific to your state. Or you can use it to write up your own, plain-English agreement.

### UNDERSTANDING COPYRIGHT LAW

I’m not a lawyer. I don’t even play one on TV. But I did spend a few years working as a community educator for Indiana Legal Services, so I do have this tiny little slice of expertise, which is taking complicated legal mumbo-jumbo and translating it into plain English.

Copyright law is both very simple and very complex, so here is the simple:

**If you made it, then you get the copyright.**

#### *SLIGHTLY COMPLEX*

The “it” you made has to exist as something tangible in the world. If you wrote it down or drew it, then it’s copyrightable. If you blew soap bubbles into the wind and no one recorded it, and all the soap bubbles popped, that is not copyrightable.

#### *MORE COMPLEX*

Copyright is actually a collection of rights, including:

- the right to display (or perform or publish) a work;

- the right to make copies of a work;
- the right to distribute copies of a work; and
- the right to make “derivative” works of the original (a new work based on the original, like a screenplay based on a book).

An illustrator can sell or license one of these rights, a part of one of these rights, or groups of these rights, in any combination. When you hire an illustrator to create illustrations for your book, you are not buying the rights to do anything you want, at any time, with the art – unless (there’s always a caveat!) you are explicitly doing a full rights buyout. Usually, you are buying the right to use the illustrations for your book and promotional materials.

#### *WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?*

The most important thing to understand is that you, as an indie publisher, need to make sure you have the right to print the illustrations you want to print. You also need to make sure you have the right to use the illustrations in any other forms that you intend to use them. This should be spelled out in a written contract with your illustrator.

#### **BE YOUR OWN PROJECT MANAGER**

As Project Manager, you are the one responsible for coordinating everyone and everything necessary to get your book in print. It can be helpful to set up a timeline for yourself. Even if you don’t accomplish everything at the exact time that you have planned, having a detailed projection of the entire project will help you think about what stage is coming next and what your next steps need to be. The more detailed your plan, the more likely it is to be completed on schedule.

*SAMPLE PROJECT TIMELINE PROJECTION*

Date	Task
August	Work through worksheets in this book to define my project Go to library and research styles I like Join SCBWI Check out Predator and Editors and choose a couple reputable independents editors to solicit quotes from
September	Send manuscript to independent editor Research illustrators on SCBWI website Research publishing companies and one-stop shopping options
October	Get manuscript back from editor, make edits Send emails to 3 illustrators whose work I like
November	Finalize publisher, set up account Hire illustrator Begin search for book designer
Jan - July	Illustrator timeline
February	Begin marketing plan
May	Set up my business and purchase permits Purchase ISBN Hire book designer and schedule to start mid-July
July - August	Book designer timeline
August	Upload print-ready file and metadata to publisher Order proof and proofread Finalize book launch party plans
September	Upload book files and metadata to Amazon Order printed copies of book
November	Book launch party! Send copies of book to illustrator, reviewers, bloggers, and others

*ILLUSTRATION SCHEDULE*

You will need to sit down (literally or figuratively) and figure out a project schedule with your illustrator. Block out everyone's planned vacations. Think about other due dates in both of your lives. Consider how much time is reasonable for you to turn around editorial comments. Don't make your schedule so tight that it is impossible to keep on track. Don't schedule an

editorial comment due date for the middle of your vacation or the same week you have a big project due at work.

This example 6-month schedule allows two weeks for author editorial comment turnaround and two weeks for illustrator to turn around edits. It is a sample only. Your illustrator may need more or less time at any particular stage of work than what is shown below.

Plan your schedule and include it in your contract. Both you and your illustrator will need to refer back to your agreement throughout the project.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Deliverable from illustrator</b>	<b>Deliverable from author</b>
Jan 1		30% of total paid as down payment before project can begin
Feb 1	Character design Storyboard or book dummy	
Feb 15		Editorial comments on character design and storyboard
Feb 29	Revisions of character design and storyboard, if needed	
March 28	Line art	
April 11		Editorial comments on line art
April 25	Revisions of line art, if needed	Payment due - 30% of total
June 6	Color art	Payment due - 30% of total
	Note: ARTIST ON VACATION June 10 - 18	
June 20		Editorial comments on color art
	Revisions of color art, if needed	
July 4	Final color art	Payment due - 10% of total
Dec 1		10 hardcover copies of book mailed to illustrator

### *BOOK DESIGN SCHEDULE*

The book design schedule has fewer steps than the illustration schedule, so it is a little simpler. You still need to allow time for review, editorial comments, and revisions in your timeline.

If you plan to self-publish as an indie publisher, before you begin the book design process you should have your business paperwork completed and have purchased your ISBN number (and bar code, if needed.)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Deliverable from book designer</b>	<b>Deliverable from Author</b>
July 5		Original art mailed to book designer Deposit mailed ISBN number and bar code emailed to book designer
Jul 11		Payment due - 50% of total due as deposit
July 20	Color proof delivered via Dropbox	
July 27		Editorial comments due on proofs (illustrator needs to check proof as well)
August 3	Final proof with edits made, if any delivered via Dropbox and hard copy mailed	Final 50% of total due before final high-resolution file is released for printing
August 10	High-resolution print-ready file delivered via dropbox	

Life happens. If your schedule needs to change, change it in writing. Write out a new detailed schedule with deliverables and due dates and have both people sign it. Clear expectations and open communication about difficulties can help you avoid conflict.

### *COMMUNICATION*

Setting expectations for communication from the beginning can help avoid misunderstandings and interruptions in the flow of your project. The simplest and best thing you can do is tell your illustrator your preferred method of communication and set of regular check-in times using that method in your project schedule. That way, communication isn't limited to

times there are problems, and you know more about what is happening with the project as it goes through different stages. You will develop a closer collaboration with your illustrator and designer.

### **Communication styles**

Illustrators are businesspeople, and are used to dealing with schedules, and specs, and juggling clients. The romantic image of an artist living in their attic studio, paintbrush in one hand and bottle of red wine in the other, isn't reality. (Sadly.)

At the same time, Illustrators are also visual thinkers. That is what led them to their career choice, and why they are good at it. Illustrators think in pictures, especially if they are talking about illustration. They then translate their thoughts into words to communicate with you.

You may have trouble visualizing what your illustrator describes verbally. They may have trouble visualizing what you describe verbally as well. Sometimes the best way to communicate about something visual is to be able to point and gesture. When that isn't possible, drawing and sharing sketches is a decent substitute.

I have drawn quick sketches while on the phone with a client, taken a photo with my phone and texted it to them with a note "is this what you mean?" It has always helped the conversation. This method may not work for you, but it is important to come up with some way that is quick and easy to share visual communications with your illustrator. A shared Dropbox folder, or email exchanges also work.

I once had a client who wanted a character's eyes to be bigger than I had designed them. I tried to describe in words why bigger eyes weren't going to look good, but my client could not visualize what I was describing over the phone. Finally, I drew a little diagram of the eyes sized as-is, compared to the eyes as large as my client was requesting. It was immediately obvious to all that the larger eyes obscured the character's nose, which was disturbing to look at.

Almost all sticky communication problems about art can be solved with a visual.

### *FINANCES*

You are the person financing your book project, so it almost goes without saying that you are in charge of managing the finances of the project. Yet I'm going to say it anyway. Keep up with your project schedule and your due dates on payments to avoid delaying the project.

If something catastrophic happens and you will be unable to complete a project that is already underway, tell your illustrator or book designer as soon as possible. Your contract will have a cancellation fee written into it, so even if the project is terminated, you will still owe some

amount of payment. Don't wait until the last minute to communicate your situation, or you will owe the total amount.

## BE YOUR OWN ART DIRECTOR

### *UNDERSTANDING PRINTING REQUIREMENTS*

Most printing done these days is digital, but printers still have different requirements for how digital files need to be set up for them to print from.

Almost all hardcopy printing is done at 300dpi (dots per inch), which gives a magazine-quality image. Some printers may require higher dpi for black and white line art. Artwork must be scanned by a high-quality scanner that can capture 300 dpi or higher, and that can be color calibrated.

Color profiles are most finicky, technical aspect of preparing a print-ready file. Every aspect of the process of getting a piece of art into digital format from scanner, to desktop publishing software, to viewing art on a monitor, to finally printing has to have color managed to conform with the print setting that the publisher uses to avoid nasty surprises with your proof.

To make color more complicated, computer screens show color with a mix of three colors: red, green, and blue (RGB). Printers create color with a mix of four colors: cyan, magenta, yellow, and black (CMYK). Converting from RGB to CMYK is not completely exact. There are colors that our eyes can see on a monitor, such as intense blues or bright oranges, that cannot be printed using CMYK inks. This is why an offset printing press will sometimes add a "spot" color in addition to CMYK – the printing will print in full four-color inks, and then add in an intense red-orange, or other color necessary to the artwork that CMYK can not reproduce.

Each spot color adds to the cost of printing, and color printing is already expensive. In addition, if you are using POD technology, you are limited to a particular profile of CMYK. This is why it is important to know who you will use as a publisher from the start of the project, so that your illustrator can avoid using colors that your printing company will be unable to reproduce.

If the last two paragraphs gave you a headache, here is the important bit to understand: color is easy to screw up. Professional book designers know how to handle it, but you have to know how and where your book will be printed at the beginning of the process.

### *HOW TO TALK ABOUT ART*

People are sometimes intimidated about talking about art. Do I have to use fancy words? What if I just like (or don't like) it but I can't explain why? You don't need a special vocabulary to talk about what works and what doesn't for you in a piece of art any more than you need it for



a piece of writing. However, knowing the terminology of book creation will help you to communicate clearly and specifically with your illustrator and book designer.

If you are anxious about talking with your illustrator, remember it is difficult for everyone to talk about a visual object without pointing. It's not just you. Also remember that as a writer, you are skilled with words, and probably think in words, while your illustrator probably thinks in pictures.

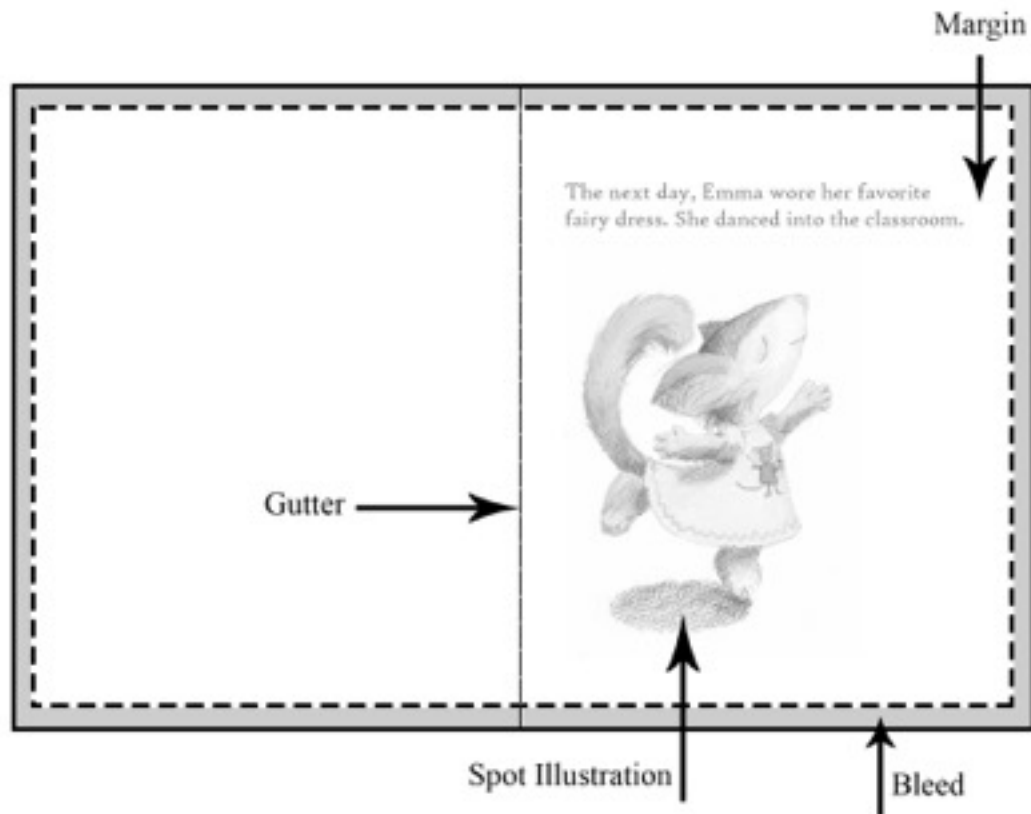
The two of you are collaborating on this project that will be more than the sum of its parts when it is complete. But, since everyone involved is a human being, there are bound to be bumps along the way. Here are some tips for communicating about visual problems without being about to point:

1. Always identify the page number accurately! Many an email miscommunication has taken place because two people are literally not on the same page.
2. If you can't point at the issue, try to identify the area of the page that is the problem. Upper, lower, right, left, center, gutter, margin -- concrete terms are better than subjective descriptions like "background" or "that ugly, messed-up part."
3. Use concrete examples of what is and is not working for you in an image. Sometimes it can be difficult to put a visual problem into words. Do your best. It is really difficult to make edits from "I just don't like it." If you aren't sure what exactly is wrong, say so! Saying "I'm not sure what is bugging me about Grandma on page 10, but she feels a little creepy to me," is concrete. Even the fact that you aren't sure what is creeping you out about Grandma is important information for you illustrator.
4. Last of all, and most important: be willing to listen. You have hired professionals for a reason. They have insights that you may not have thought about that can make your book even better.

Humans are highly attuned to facial expressions. The tiniest quirk of an eyebrow can move an expression from kindness and love to evil-yet-pretending-to-be-kind. If Grandma is unsettling, but you can't put your finger on why, the problem is most likely a tiny slip of the pencil or brush on the facial features. Don't worry about figuring out exactly what the problem is. That is why you hired a pro.

## *BOOK VOCABULARY*

- **Bleed:** An image that goes to the edge of the page will actually have a little extra that is intended to be trimmed off by the printer. The ink “bleeds” off the edge of the final page.
- **Color Profile:** The color settings required by the printer.
- **Double-page spread:** An illustration that fills both the left and right hand sides of an open book, also known as a “spread.”
- **Full-page Illustration:** An illustration that fills an entire page, either left or right, and goes to at least one edge (has a bleed).
- **Gutter:** The place where the pages join together in the binding of the book.
- **Margin:** The area between printed elements – text or image – and the edge of the page. Printers require that text is kept a particular amount of space away from the edge.
- **Perfect bound:** A paperback book that the pages are glued into a binding.
- **Saddle stitch:** A paperback book in which the pages are stapled together in the center.
- **Spine:** The flat edge of the book where pages are glued into the binding. There is usually a title printed on the spine.
- **Spot illustration:** An illustration that has white space around it on all sides, and does not bleed off the page in any direction.



### *COLOR VOCABULARY*

- **Hue:** The name of a color – red, orange, green, etc.
- **Warm Colors:** Red, orange, yellow, and some greens are warm colors, although there can be warm versions of other colors. Warm color tend to come forward when looking at a two dimensional image.
- **Cool Colors:** Blue, purple and some greens are cool colors. Cool colors tend to recede.
- **Tint:** A hue plus white. (ex: pink is a tint of red)
- **Shade:** A hue plus black. (ex: Navy blue is a shade of blue)
- **Value:** The lightness or darkness of a color. If you changed the image to black and white, the value of the color would show as how dark gray it is.
- **Intensity :** The purity of a hue. A hue at its highest intensity has no other color mixed with it. Sometimes called “brightness” in casual speech, as in “Wow, that sweater is a really bright orange.”

## A NOTE ABOUT MARKETING

This isn't a marketing book, and I am not a marketing expert. There are good books out there written by actual marketing experts about how to successfully self-publish your book and sell lots of copies, if that is your goal. You can find some of these listed in the Resources section at the back of the book.

Despite my non-expert status, I have a couple of pieces of advice. The first is to think outside of the box when marketing your children's book. Your book may not stand out on a crowded bookstore shelf, but it might in the right museum gift shop, or at a farmer's market, or a local festival. Think about where your readers might be hanging out and go there, even if it isn't a place books are traditionally sold.

The second is to join SCBWI, if you haven't already. SCBWI is an excellent resource for authors, and provides information on how to book and run school visits, networking for new authors, and the ability to place your book into SCBWI's online bookstore. In addition, SCBWI runs the only existing award specifically for self-published children's literature, the Spark Award. You must be a SCBWI member to apply. ([www.scbwi.org/awards/spark-award/](http://www.scbwi.org/awards/spark-award/))

## WORKSHEETS

Following are several worksheets that will help you define, organize, and manage your book project. You are free to copy and use these for your personal use. Please do not reproduce them on your blog or website, or in any other media.

# STORYBOARD WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to help lay out what text will go on what page of your book.

	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	32		Cover back	Cover front

## PROJECT DEFINITION WORKSHEET

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Word count: \_\_\_\_\_

Where do I want my book to end up?

- A family heirloom, not intended for sale
- A resource for \_\_\_\_\_ community
- Published and marketed. How? \_\_\_\_\_

My book is for ages:

- 3-8 (intended to be read aloud by an adult)
- 4-8 (to be read independently)
- 7-10
- 8-12

I consider my book to be a:

- Picture book
- Leveled reader
- Chapter book
- Middle grade novel
- Young adult novel
- Graphic novel

My book is:

- Fiction
- Non-fiction
- Reference or how-to book

It belongs to this subgenre:

- Concept book (ABCs, counting, etc)
- Poetry
- Contemporary realistic fiction
- Historical fiction
- Fantasy/ Science fiction/ Fractured fairy tale
- Humor
- Biography
- STEM (Specify:\_\_\_\_\_)
- Traditional literature/ folk tale retelling
- Comics/ Graphic novels
- Issue book/ bibliotherapy
- Informational/ how-to
- Reference

Below is a list of adjectives than can be used to describe the style of illustrations. Circle the ones that you think might best fit your manuscript. There may be multiple styles of illustration that will fit your book.

- |                                       |                                    |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bold         | <input type="checkbox"/> Delicate  | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bright       | <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed  | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cartoony     | <input type="checkbox"/> Diverse   | <input type="checkbox"/> Humorous    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classic      | <input type="checkbox"/> Earthy    | <input type="checkbox"/> Informal    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean        | <input type="checkbox"/> Flowing   | <input type="checkbox"/> Informative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complex      | <input type="checkbox"/> Formal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Loose       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contemporary | <input type="checkbox"/> Gentle    | <input type="checkbox"/> Lyrical     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dark         | <input type="checkbox"/> Geometric | <input type="checkbox"/> Modern      |



- |                                     |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mysterious | <input type="checkbox"/> Quirky     | <input type="checkbox"/> Subtle  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Natural    | <input type="checkbox"/> Realistic  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pastel     | <input type="checkbox"/> Retro      | <input type="checkbox"/> Vibrant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patterned  | <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playful    | <input type="checkbox"/> Simple     |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poetic     | <input type="checkbox"/> Stylized   |                                  |

Take a few minutes to think about any unique needs that your book may have.

The illustrator of this book will need to:

- Understand and be able to portray \_\_\_\_\_ culture accurately and sensitively
- Have technical drawing skills (Be able to draw scientific diagrams, mechanical schematics, or architectural drawings)
- Have medical illustration skills
- Be able perform historical research and portray historically accurate costumes, tools, and locations
- Be able to illustrate specific characters as portraits of real people (from life or photographs)
- Be willing to be flown to Italy and spend two weeks drawing from classical art and architecture (an illustrator can dream....)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## ILLUSTRATION EMAIL GENERATOR

Insert your answers into this email template, and you will have a tool that will help you find the right illustrator for your project.

Dear Illustrator,

I saw your work \_\_\_\_\_ and I liked \_\_\_\_\_.  
(where you saw it) (specific piece if any)

I am looking for an illustrator for my \_\_\_\_\_-word \_\_\_\_\_ book  
(word count) (genre)

This book is intended to be \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a family heirloom/ marketed in X way)

I intend to publish this using \_\_\_\_\_.  
(publishing company name)

My projected timeline for this project is: \_\_\_\_\_.  
(reasonable end date)

My budget is: \_\_\_\_\_.  
(budget range to show you are serious and understand professional illustration)

*NOTE: If you intend to crowd-fund your book project, you will need to explicitly state how you intend to crowd-fund, what you intend to pay the illustrator upfront for sample art to be used in the campaign, and what your final budget will be.*

If you are interested and available, please contact me so that we can discuss the project further.

[Your contact information]

Thank you,

## BE YOUR OWN ART DIRECTOR WORKSHEET

Follow this simple checklist when reviewing artwork with your illustrator. Remember: You hired a pro for a reason. They have years of schooling and experience and are experts at what they do!

That said, sometimes it is possible to be so closely involved in a piece of art that you lack the distance to notice inconsistencies or visual gaffes.

### STORYBOARD OR SKETCH DUMMY

- Do the page turns give the story an appropriate pace?
- Does the point of view vary?
- Is everything important out of the gutter?

### CHARACTER DESIGN

- Are the characters appealing?
- Do they look like their descriptions in the text?
- Are they unique?

**Now is the time to make changes** if you don't like the way a character looks!

### LINE ART

- Are the characters a consistent size and appearance from page to page? (Unless they are supposed to be shrinking and growing like Alice in Wonderland)
- Are there trees, lampposts, or other objects growing out of the heads of any characters? (You laugh, but it happens!)
- Are there any unintentionally inappropriate images? Check to make sure there isn't anything that will end up in one of those online lists of children's books with blush-worthy illustrations.
- Is the composition visually readable? If you looked at this image without knowing the story, would you be able to tell what was happening in the image? (Not the whole story, or even just the text on that particular page. An illustration may be just showing one slice of the text. Can you tell that that slice is? For example, can you look at the page and say: "There is a child with a cat. The cat is wearing doll clothes and doesn't look happy.")
- Is there enough space for the text left on each page?

### COLOR ART:

- Is there a consistent feel to the colors throughout the whole book? (color palette)
- Does the color palette evoke the right mood for your book?
- Turn the art into a thumbnail sized image. Does it still look good? This is a good way of assessing the balance of light and dark and readability of the image.

### FINAL ART:

- Were all edits that were needed completed?
- Is the art print-ready?

### BOOK DESIGN:

- Is the text easy to read? If the text goes over an image, make sure the image isn't too dark or heavily patterned in that area.
- If black text is over a dark area, can text be change to white?
- Is everything there in the right order? Spelled correctly?

EDITORIAL TRACKING FOR \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT STAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

Page Number	Area of page	Editorial comment	Completed?

## ILLUSTRATION LETTER OF AGREEMENT WORKSHEET

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Client/Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Invoice/Job Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The illustration of the Author's manuscript, titled \_\_\_\_\_, for the total payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Illustrations will be completed to the following specifications:

- Cover:  Full color  Front Only  Front to back wrap
- Interior:  Full color  Black and white  Grayscale
- Number of interior illustrations: \_\_\_\_\_
- Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_
- Final book size: \_\_\_\_\_
- Binding:  Hardcover  Paperback  ePUB  Kindle
- If paperback:  Saddle stitch  Perfect bound
- Number of pages: \_\_\_\_\_ (note Ingram requires a blank final page)

### ADD-ON SERVICES PROVIDED BY ILLUSTRATOR

- Scan and optimize artwork to book designer's or publisher's requirements
- Sell original art to author
- Attend book launch or other event: \_\_\_\_\_

### PROJECT SCHEDULE

Schedule is dependent on both parties meeting each deadline. (See attached schedule.) The Author will have \_\_\_\_\_ days/weeks after receipt of art to review art and return editorial comments. Any time after that will alter the remaining project schedule.

## DELIVERABLES

Final illustrations will be delivered in ( hard copy /  electronic} format. If hard copy, original illustrations must be sent via FedEx and insured for their total value (project cost plus value of original artwork.)

If electronic, publisher color requirements are: \_\_\_\_\_

Deliverables will be sent back and forth from Illustrator to Author via:

- A shared Dropbox folder
- US Mail (Costs will be billed to Author , requires an extra week for each stage of the project)
- FedEx (Costs will be billed to Author)
- In person meetings (Illustrator's mileage or other transportation costs will be billed to Author)

## COMMUNICATION

Author's preferred form of communication is:

- Phone (voice): \_\_\_\_\_
- Text: \_\_\_\_\_
- Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## COPYRIGHT USAGE

### 1. Reservation of Rights

All rights not expressly granted in this contract are retained by the Illustrator. Any additional use of the artwork requires payment of a separate fee.

2. **Rights transferred:** Author has permission to:

- Print the illustrations in book form.
- Publish the illustrations in ebook form.
- Use the illustrations to promote and market the final product, online and in print.
- Use illustrations to promote \_\_\_\_\_.
- Create products such as stuffed animals, posters, calendars, or t-shirts based on the illustrations.  with licensing payments of \_\_\_\_% of wholesale price.

3. **Payment**

Author agrees to pay Illustrator a total of \_\_\_\_\_, on this schedule:

Amount due	Due Date	Stage
\$		30% deposit need before work can begin
\$		30% upon acceptance of line art
\$		30% upon acceptance of color art
\$		10% - Final Payment* needed before release of high-resolution images for printing
\$		Project Total

*(\*Note that the Final Payment may be altered if further charges are incurred due to revisions or an increase in number of illustrations needed to finish the book.)*



#### 4. Revisions/ Change fees:

- Preliminary Work/Sketches: Artist agrees to submit up to \_\_\_\_\_ sketches for approval. After approval, additional fees of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per page will be charged to Author for any revisions.
- Finished Line or Color Art: After approval of final art, additional fees, of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per page will be charged to Author for any revisions.

#### 5. Cancellation Fees : Cancellation (or “kill”) fees are due based on the amount of work completed.

- **Before completion of line art:** If job is cancelled or postponed up to completion of line art, 50% of the Project Total is due within 30 days.
- **After completion of line art:** If the job is canceled or postponed after completion of line art, 100% of the Project Total is due within 30 days. If project is cancelled at any time, all rights to the art revert to the Illustrator.

#### 6. Late payment: Payment is due within 30 days of delivery of artwork to Author at each stage of the project. A late fee of 3% per month will be charged for all payments past due.

#### 7. Credits: Illustrator will be credited for all images. Author will be credited for all text. Both names will appear on book cover and any promotional materials.

#### 8. Copies: Author will provide illustration with \_\_\_\_\_ copies of final printed book.

#### 9. Original Art

- Original art remains the property of the Illustrator.
- Purchase of the original art at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is included in the Project Total.

#### 10. Permissions and Releases

The Client agrees to indemnify and hold the Artist harmless against any and all claims, costs, and expenses, including attorney’s fees, due to materials included in the Work at the request of the Client for which no copyright permission or privacy release was requested, or for which uses exceed the uses allowed pursuant to a permission or release.

#### 11. Licensing

*If illustrations will be used to create other objects for sale – such as t-shirts, stuffed animals, or games, then you will need to create a licensing agreement and pricing structure.*

**Agreed to by:**

**Author,** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Illustrator,** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## BOOK DESIGN LETTER OF AGREEMENT WORKSHEET

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Client/Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone/FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Invoice/Job Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The book design of Author's manuscript, titled \_\_\_\_\_, for the total payment of \$\_\_\_\_\_. Book designer will provide a print-ready file that can be sent to self-publishing company

- Cover:  Full color  Front Only  Front to back wrap
- Interior:  Full color  Black and white  Grayscale
- Number of interior illustrations: \_\_\_\_\_
- Publisher: \_\_\_\_\_
- Final book size: \_\_\_\_\_
- Binding:  Hardcover  Paperback  ePUB  Kindle
- If paperback:  Saddle stitch  Perfect bound
- Number of pages: \_\_\_\_\_ (note Ingram requires a blank final page)

Book designer will also:

- Scan and optimize artwork to publisher's requirements
- Design promotional poster of book cover
- Design bookmarks or other promotional items: \_\_\_\_\_

### PROJECT SCHEDULE

Schedule is dependent on both parties meeting each deadline. (See attached schedule.)  
 The Author will have \_\_\_\_\_ days/weeks after receipt of proofs to review and return with editorial comments. Any time after that will alter the remaining project schedule.

**DELIVERABLES**

Final print-ready file will be delivered in electronic format.

Publisher color requirements are: \_\_\_\_\_

If designer is scanning original art, original art must be sent via FedEx and insured for their total value.

Deliverables will be sent back and forth from designer to Author via:

- A shared Dropbox folder
- Mailed CD or thumb drive

**COMMUNICATION**

Author’s preferred form of communication is:

- Phone (voice): \_\_\_\_\_
- Text: \_\_\_\_\_
- Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT**

Author agrees to pay designer a total of \_\_\_\_\_, on this schedule:

Amount due	Due Date	Stage
\$		50% deposit need before work can begin
\$		50% upon acceptance of final proofs
\$		Project Total

## RESOURCES

### SOCIETY OF CHILDREN’S BOOK WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS (SCBWI)

The go-to organization for all things kidlit. If you aren’t already a member, you should be! ([www.scbwi.org](http://www.scbwi.org))

### GRAPHIC ARTISTS’ GUILD GUIDES

The standard source that illustrators consult for pricing questions is the *Graphic Artist's Guild Handbook of Pricing and Ethical Guidelines*, nicknamed “the GAG guide.” You can purchase the book from the Graphic Artist’s Guild ([www.graphicartistsguild.org](http://www.graphicartistsguild.org)), or download one of the newer digital Primer Series, titled *Trade Customs & Pricing Guidelines for Graphic Artists*.

### AARON SHEPARD’S WEBSITE

Aaron Shepard’s website and blog ([www.newselfpublishing.com](http://www.newselfpublishing.com)) hold a wealth of information about the technical aspects of publishing books for sale on Amazon. He has also written and self-published several books on the topic.

### HAROLD UNDERDOWN’S WEBSITE

Harold Underdown is an independent children’s book editor and has compiled an incredible amount of information about writing and publishing children’s books on his website *The Purple Crayon*. ([www.underdown.org](http://www.underdown.org))