MY PUBLISHING PLAN *for*

Title: _____

STEPS:	DATES:
OUTLINE	
FIRST DRAFT	
BREAK	
SELF-EDIT (FAST READ THROUGH)	
SELF-EDIT (DEVELOPMENTAL/OTHER)	
REQUEST BETA READERS	
EDIT FOR BETAS	
BETA READERS	
EDIT BASED ON BETA FEEDBACK	
EDIT FOR EDITOR	
EDITOR – SEND & WAIT	
COMPLETE EDITORS NOTES	
PROOFREAD (SELF & OTHERS)	
FORMATTING	
ORDER PROOF(S)	
HIRE/WORK W/ COVER DESIGNER	
HIRE/WORK W/ EDITOR	
BACK BLURB (ROUGH / FINAL)	
UPLOAD TO P.O.D. COMPANY	
REVEAL COVER / RELEASE DATE / PRE-ORDERS	
REQUEST / SEND ARC COPIES	
MARKETING GOALS/DEADLINES	
BUFFER TIME	
PROJECTED RELEASE DATE:	

MY PUBLISHING PLAN *for*

Title: _____

STEPS:	Book 1:	Book 2:	Book 3:
OUTLINE			
FIRST DRAFT			
BREAK			
SELF-EDIT (FAST READ THROUGH)			
SELF-EDIT (DEVELOPMENTAL/OTHER)			
REQUEST BETA READERS			
EDIT FOR BETAS			
BETA READERS			
EDIT BASED ON BETA FEEDBACK			
EDIT FOR EDITOR			
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HIRE/WORK W/ COVER DESIGNER			
HIRE/WORK W/ EDITOR			
BACK BLURB (ROUGH / FINAL)			
UPLOAD TO P.O.D. COMPANY			
REVEAL COVER / RELEASE DATE / PRE-ORDERS			
REQUEST / SEND ARC COPIES			
MARKETING GOALS/DEADLINES			
BUFFER TIME			
PROJECTED RELEASE DATE:			

HOW TO USE THIS TEMPLATE:

Print out the option for a standalone book—or the second option for a series, which can help you plot the release for up to three books—fill in your working title for your WIP, and let's get started!

STEP 1: OUTLINING

I like to outline using the beat sheet in Save the Cat Writes a Novel. This stage can take as much or as little time as you want, but generally I'd say you'd only need 1-2 weeks (or less), depending on how much time you put into it. Note: sometimes I will wait to chart out the rest of this publishing schedule until I have finished the outlining stage.

STEP 2: THE FIRST DRAFT

It's important to choose a timeline for your first draft so that you're working towards a goal. More people finish their novels during NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) than during any other time because it gives them a clear, defined goal for each day as well as a firm, clear deadline to aim for.

So the first thing you're going to do with this step is plot out how long it will take you to write your first draft and set that deadline for yourself.

Some questions to ask yourself:
- What is the average word count for a novel in my genre?
- Google your genre to get an idea of the word count range
- Choose a target word count for your story
- Keep in mind this will not be exact, it's just giving you something to aim for.
- How many days are you planning to write the first draft (i.e. one month? Two?)
- And during this time frame, will you need any days off (i.e. for the weekend, holidays, other events, etc.?)
- Divide your total word count goal by the number of days you're planning to work to find your DAILY word count to aim for
- What is your current average daily word count? (And is it close to your target daily word count goal?)
- How far can you stretch yourself (without stretching too far)?

Another way you could determine your goals and deadlines could be to divide your novel's target word count by your average daily word count to find how many days you need to write before finishing your first draft (for example: a 70,000 word novel divided by 1,000 words a day = 70 days to finish the first draft).

Keep in mind that as you grow as a writer, your daily word count will also grow, but it's wise to start smaller in the beginning. Don't set a 5,000 words a day goal, if your average is 500 words a day, because this will just lead to disappointment and frustration, instead of achievements and excitement about your story.

Finally, use a calendar to track how many days you will need, *including* non-writing days. For example: I don't write on Sundays, so I won't count any Sundays. I also like to give myself a catch up day every so often, so I will make Saturdays my catch up day. Which leaves five days out of the week for my regular daily word count goal.

EXAMPLE:

OCTOBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1 FIRST DAY: 1,500 WORDS	2 1,500 WORDS	3 1,500 WORDS	4 1,500 WORDS	5 1,500 WORDS	6 CATCH UP DAY	7 DAY OFF
8 1,500 WORDS	9 1,500 WORDS	10 1,500 WORDS	11 1,500 WORDS	12 1,500 WORDS	13 CATCH UP DAY	14 DAY OFF
15 1,500 WORDS	16 1,500 WORDS	17 1,500 WORDS	18 1,500 WORDS	19 1,500 WORDS	20 CATCH UP DAY	21 DAY OFF
22 1,500 WORDS	23 1,500 WORDS	24 1,500 WORDS	25 1,500 WORDS	26 1,500 WORDS	27 CATCH UP DAY	28 DAY OFF
29 1,500 WORDS	30 1,500 WORDS	31 1,500 WORDS	1	2 (34,500 WORDS SO FAR)	3	4

NOVEMBER

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
29	30	31 (34,500 WORDS SO FAR)	1 1,500 WORDS	2 1,500 WORDS	3 CATCH UP DAY	4 DAY OFF
5 1,500 WORDS	6 1,500 WORDS	7 1,500 WORDS	8 1,500 WORDS	9 1,500 WORDS	10 CATCH UP DAY	11 DAY OFF
12 1,500 WORDS	13 1,500 WORDS	14 1,500 WORDS	15 1,500 WORDS	16 1,500 WORDS	17 CATCH UP DAY	18 DAY OFF
19 1,500 WORDS	20 1,500 WORDS	21 1,500 WORDS	22 1,500 WORDS	23 1,500 WORDS	24 CATCH UP DAY	25 DAY OFF
26 1,500 WORDS	27 1,500 WORDS	28 1,500 WORDS	29 1,500 WORDS	30 1,500 WORDS	1	2
3 1,500 WORDS	4 1,500 WORDS	5	6	7	8	9

HIT OVER 70K BY DECEMBER 4TH

IN THIS EXAMPLE IT WILL TAKE FROM
OCTOBER 1ST - DECEMBER 4TH
TO WRITE A FIRST DRAFT

For more tips on writing a novel, check out my video on
Fast Drafting a Novel here: **https://youtu.be/AK7wXULAdRA**
Or my entire YouTube Writing Playlist here:
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRyoM7lsV9uOa7Jd2TiZXF1a2

STEP 3: SCHEDULE A BREAK

This is when you step away from your story. The exact amount of time that you step away will be different for every writer, but the idea is to get rid of "writer's blindness." This is a common occurrence when you've spent so much time on a story that you've stopped being able to see the errors because you're too close to it.

I prefer to err on the longer side, rather than not wait long enough, but the exact time frame changes a bit with each book, and you also may not need as much time as me. A good break could be anywhere between two to six weeks (or more).

NOTE: this does NOT mean you're not working on something! This is a great time to look

into your Print-On-Demand company options, consider researching / hiring a cover designer, research and interview different editors, and even consider placing your novel into a formatted template if you're like me and prefer to do this near the beginning. Or, you could even plot and begin writing another novel while you're taking a break!

STEP 4: SELF EDITS (THE FAST READ THROUGH)

Generally, I like to start by reading through the entire novel as fast as possible. This helps me see it as one cohesive book, the way a reader will see it, and helps me spot the most obvious, glaring errors. This is the first of many self-edits, and our goal is to stay BIG picture (such as plot holes, character issues, inconsistencies, etc.) and worry about the smaller details (such as sentence structure, typos, grammar, etc.) later.

To do a fast read through, I print my entire document to have a physical copy. This extra step is an additional way to combat "writer's blindness" because seeing the novel in a different format can make issues that you missed before suddenly pop off the page! I also prefer a physical copy so that I can make notes on the pages as I read. And the third reason I prefer this physical format is that it helps me avoid making too many in-depth changes or detailed re-writes—since that will slow me down and defeat the purpose of the fast read through edit. But, of course, there are always exceptions to the rule, so I do allow myself to make notes about some smaller changes as well when needed, to make sure that I will remember what I want to re-write/change later.

Last, but not least, I also keep a notebook handy in case I need to make more extensive notes than will fit on the page.

While everyone reads at a different pace, like the name says, the goal is to read as fast as you can. This will help you get a big picture perspective of what your readers will see and will make a lot of edits very obvious. Depending on how fast you read this could take a week or two, or possibly three, but much longer than that and you'll no longer be getting that condensed, fresh impression of the full novel that is so valuable in this step.

STEP 5: SELF-EDITS (DEVELOPMENTAL)

This is the next stage of self-edits that I like to implement. Developmental edits mean focusing on the story itself (such as those plot holes, character issues, inconsistencies, etc.) versus line and copy edits (which are smaller edits like spelling errors, weird grammar, strange sentence structure, etc.).

In this step, you will go back over all your notes from the fast read through and complete each

edit, one at a time, starting with the biggest changes, and working your way down to the smallest.

The idea is to *try* to focus on all the bigger picture "developmental" edits first. This way you don't waste your time editing the grammar on a page you may end up deleting altogether.

Edits are going to look very different for every author, so this stage might mean one long pass through the novel, or as many as a dozen editing passes that focus on different things, or even jumping around in the manuscript as you complete different edits, but whatever you decide to do, it's extremely helpful to set a deadline. I personally like to aim for one month of focused developmental edits, but if you ever find the novel needs more, you can always add another month or two as needed.

For more tips on editing the first draft, you can watch this video: **https://youtu.be/a1kF3JyhfSI**

And for more info on my personal editing process, here: **https://youtu.be/u_INviuHs3k**

STEP 6: SELF-EDITS (OTHER)

Again, every writer is going to edit differently. So at this point, you may have a fairly clean manuscript, or you may have many rounds of self-edits to go. As you resolve bigger picture issues, you will begin to move from developmental edits (big picture) to line edits (sentence structure level) and copy edits (grammar and typo level), and continue to address any issues that you find. This step could merge with the previous or it could be a fresh month of edits, depending on what works best for you.

Check out my Editing playlist on YouTube for more video tips on editing specifically here: Novel Editing Playlist:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRypNRMVsRrxXTqxoG2hNqwv3

STEP 7: REQUEST BETA READERS

Beta readers are simply a group of people who read the story prior to publishing and give you feedback on what is and what isn't working. At some point during self-edits, you're going to find that you've addressed most, if not all, of the issues you can see, and that the "writer's blindness" has returned. This is when you bring in outside perspectives = the beta reader group.

There are no set requirements for betas, beyond being readers who are willing and interested in reading your rough draft and giving you feedback. While positive feedback at this stage is encouraging, the most helpful feedback will actually be constructive criticism. Because your ultimate goal when working with beta readers is to find more issues that you can address *before*

publication, so that those issues won't frustrate readers and lead to bad reviews *after* publication.

When you're trying to figure out a good time to start asking people if they'd like to beta read, I'd suggest anywhere between 2-4 weeks before you'd like to start working with them. This way you have time to share several reminders on social media, as well as give potential readers enough advance notice to check their schedule and make sure they have time to read.

I have an entire series on YouTube about my beta reader process—how to find them, how many beta readers is a good number, how to work with them, how to address feedback, and more.

If you'd like to watch the beat reader series to learn about this process in-depth, check out my **Beta Reader Playlist** here:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRyqamqUdk8eV4n5YO813X61g

STEP 8: EDIT FOR BETAS

This step is very similar to my other self-edits. I like to work from big picture issues to the small stuff, crossing each fix off my list as I go.

The difference here is that I'm no longer looking at the manuscript through the lens of "What would I enjoy?" or "What do I think is best?"

Now, I'm editing with my readers in mind. What will they think of this scene? How will they react to this conversation or that choice? It's surprising how much I change when I think of readers (usually a lot of cheesy sections get deleted…)

Other than this consideration of your upcoming readers though, the edits are very similar to previous self-edits, so you could include this in the previous self-editing time-frame, or give yourself another couple weeks or a month, depending on what you feel your novel needs.

STEP 9: SEND CHAPTERS TO BETA READERS

This step can vary depending on the author. You might send your whole manuscript to the beta readers at once, or you might send it in smaller chunks. I like to send out roughly 30-40 pages once a week, along with a short set of questions every few chapters to get their feedback. When they return that feedback to me, they are given the next round of chapters. Depending on the size of the novel, this process could take anywhere from a couple weeks to a couple months.

The amount of time you work with beta readers will depend heavily on a few factors, such as (1) how long your novel is, (2) if you've worked with beta readers before/have a streamlined process, and (3) how fast your betas are able to read. So keep these factors in mind, but the most common time frame I've encountered when working with beta readers was about a month. This is

a happy medium because it allows them enough time to read even if they're busy, but it's not *too* long that they start to forget the story and have trouble giving feedback either.

Again, I have multiple video tutorials on this step as well, and recommend checking out my playlist above for more information.

On the template, this step is in bold because it depends on OTHERS. This means that it's a bit out of your control compared to the other steps. You may want to plan a bit of buffer time simply because people do tend to have situations come up that interfere with reading. It's completely normal. It will help your stress level if you give them a little extra time, even if you're the only one who knows about it. ;)

STEP 10: EDIT BASED ON BETA FEEDBACK

Editing with beta reader feedback can be overwhelming! Take it one section at a time. Use the Rule of 3—which is that if three or more people say the same thing, then you should take the suggestion seriously, but if only 1 or 2 people say something than it's okay to see it as more of an outlier opinion than a general reader consensus.

There are many ways you can gather up everyone's info to find this general consensus. The method I most enjoy is using google forms. I will make multiple questionnaires in google forms, and then put a link to each questionnaire in the manuscript for the reader to fill out when they reach it.

Once the beta readers are done, I can transfer all of their answers into a Google spreadsheet with the click of a button, and have all their answers organized by question, which saves me a lot of time and effort trying to compile all their feedback myself.

Again, make sure to check out my beta reader playlist above for more details on this step as well, but editing with feedback from beta readers can be extremely time intensive, because you have edits from multiple people to juggle, consider, and find a way to implement. Often I need more time than planned, but I like to aim for 1-2 months in this stage, depending on how much time I'm able to devote to edits.

STEP 11: EDIT FOR EDITOR

This edit is going to be extremely similar to your other self-edits. Just like before, you're going to address developmental edits (big picture issues), line edits (sentence structure level issues), and copy edits (the smallest issues such as typos). But in this case, instead of editing for yourself or for beta readers, you're editing with your professional editor in mind. The goal is to make the

manuscript as close to done as you possibly can.

Why? First, because a good editor is not going to rewrite your story for you. Their job is to help you polish and shine the work you've already done. This is much easier to do if you hand them a beautiful, nearly finished product, than if you hand them a convoluted, confusing, messy draft. And the second reason is closely connected—if they're working on an extremely rough draft, they will only be able to take it so far, and it will undoubtedly need more professional help down the road. So unless you want to pay for another full round of edits with a second editor, I'd suggest making it as much of a final product as you can!

You might merge this step with editing for beta readers, or you may find you want to take one more editing pass at the novel after you're done with beta reader feedback for this step. Personally, I like to consider it a second step because I often need more time than expected, and building in this second round of edits gives me buffer time before my editor deadline.

STEP 12: SEND TO EDITOR AND WAIT

Once you've found and hired an editor, and sent them your best attempt at a final draft, it's important to step away from the story. I repeat, it's extremely important to *leave your manuscript alone!* Don't edit the manuscript at the same time as your professional editor!

If you edit on your own and then try to line up the changes you've made with the changes your editor makes, it'll not only give you a huge headache, but will also be a huge waste of *their* time and *your* money. Better to give your brain a break and give it a chance to get rid of the writer's blindness again.

Every single editor is different, so the time frame for this step will vary, depending on their schedule, their process, and also the length of your novel. I've had editors who only took only a few weeks to complete edits, but have also had editors who took over two months. The most common time frame that I've run into is one month. Ultimately, you're going to need to talk to your editor during the hiring process to find out an expected time frame.

STEP 13: COMPLETE EDITOR'S NOTES

Once you receive your manuscript back, you can usually make the editor's suggested changes in one to two weeks, depending on how much time you're prepared to set aside for this project. (Less time if they are very basic edits, or longer if they are bigger picture developmental edits.)

Usually after so much time off, you're dying to get back to the story. You will follow your editor's suggestions for the most part, but keep in mind that you're never required to make the

changes if you strongly disagree. That said, hopefully you've hired a professional that you trust and you value their opinion, so even if you know their suggested change isn't the right fit, you will still consider their edit note carefully. It may still need to be addressed, just in a different way.

STEP 14: PROOFREADING

You're almost done! The final editing step is proofreading! This is exactly what it sounds like: it is a final pass to proofread the novel for any last minute tiny errors that may have been missed during the other edits. Often, a separate type of editor who specializes in proofreading is hired for this step, but I also always recommend that you also do a proofread of the novel yourself.

Just like the first self-edit when you did the fast read through, I find it extremely valuable to have a physical print out of the book at this stage as well. Often though, instead of printing on regular 8x11 paper, I will print the actual book through a print on demand company, and read a "proof copy" of the book itself at this point. (And we'll talk more about proof copies shortly.) Once again, this helps combat "writer's blindness" and you will very likely discover typos that have somehow made their way through all the previous drafts into this one!

However, if you are working with a professional formatter, you may find they want you to proofread the novel *before* you format and order a proof copy, so the time frame will depend on some other factors at this stage as well.

Once you do begin proofreading, the exact time frame will depend on how fast you read. You shouldn't need to be making any big changes, just smaller fixes to the manuscript, so this will be a similar time frame to your fast read through in the beginning, depending on how long it took you to read then. I typically allow for a week or so (and hopefully less, if there aren't too many changes).

If you're interested, I have a video on YouTube where I share my own personal proofreading process here: https://youtu.be/YrL_L1yykdM

STEP 15: FORMATTING

If you are planning to do your own formatting "DIY" style, then this step can actually be started at any point in the process! I enjoy writing in a formatted template personally, because it makes the manuscript feel more like a book, which inspires me. Near the end of completing your novel, though, you will begin to implement more detailed and specific formatting to finalize it.

I have an entire video series on YouTube on how to format your novel from scratch for self-published authors if you're interested in learning more here:

On the other hand, if you're hiring a professional to format your novel, then you will usually need to wait until **all** other edits have been made, and you have your absolute final draft, because once your formatter hands the draft back to you, you can't make any further changes without requesting their help again and paying them extra.

If you format yourself, make time for a learning curve, because it will likely take a few weeks to get comfortable with the process. Or if you've decided to hire a professional to help, then you obviously need to factor in the amount of time they require for this step.

STEP 16: ORDER PROOFS

You can order proof copies of your book from whichever print on demand company you work with, although the quality and style of proofs will be different depending on each company. Like I recommended in the proofreading step, I would highly recommend doing this at the same time as proofreading (if possible), so that you can review every last detail of your book—both the interior and exterior!

If you'd like to see my comparison video on the top three companies I have used to order proof copies (Kindle Direct Publishing, Ingramspark, and Barnes & Noble) I have a video on YouTube about that here: **https://youtu.be/CQCuNyLwZmY**

Typically, whichever company you use will need some time to approve a manuscript after it is submitted. Each company is different, so it may take a day or so (on KDP) or up to a week or more (on Ingramspark and Barnes & Noble).

Once your proof copy is approved (which it should be as long as there are no errors, although you could also plan in time to fix errors and re-submit if you're concerned), you can then order a proof copy of your book.

Once again this depends on the company, but the rough time frame that I give myself is about 10 days for printing, processing, and shipping. (KDP tends to be even faster than that, while Ingramspark often takes as long as three to four weeks, so keep in mind that every company will be different.)

This means that between the submission process, ordering the book, and having it printed and shipped to you, each proof copy could take roughly 11-12 days.

Note: you may also need to order more than one proof, if for example, you find an error in the first proof that you need to fix, and then you need to order a proof copy again to confirm that everything is resolved. For each proof copy, you will want to estimate roughly 12 days to be safe,

so if you think you might need to do this step twice, you could schedule 24-30 days for proof copies.

STEP 17: BUFFER TIME

I have also learned the hard way that things often go wrong in publishing. Because of this, I have started to give myself a one to two months of buffer time between when I expect to finish my novel and my actual projected release date, to handle any issues that come up and to avoid stress!

Just a few examples of things that can happen (and have happened to me) during publishing:

- Your cover design could take longer than expected (or your cover designer could even stop answering and go MIA, which has happened to me in the past!)
- Your editor might need more time because you have a higher word count than you did when you booked them
- You might find you need to do a massive re-write, which could add a few more weeks to your writing and editing stages
- The beta reader process could end up taking longer due to holidays, emergencies, betas needing more time, etc.
- You could run into issues with your print on demand company taking longer than expected to approve, print, and/or ship the books to you (this frequently happens to me with Ingramspark, which is why I always add extra buffer time for any interactions with them)

Honestly every single stage of writing, editing, and publishing can take longer than expected. It's extremely normal to run into little things along the way, since this is only an "estimate" of how long you expect things to take you. Not only is every writer different, but every story is different.

Be flexible! Up until you announce your release date, this schedule can be very fluid. (After you announce your release date, I encourage you to stick to it and honor your commitment for your readers, but you know that!)

PUBLISHING AND MARKETING STEPS:

We've covered all the writing and editing steps that lead to a finished story! Now, you could set a projected release date based on this info and it'd be pretty solid, but in this template we're also going to factor in a few publishing and marketing steps that might influence your projected release date as well.

STEP 18: HIRE A COVER DESIGNER

Cover designers are incredibly important because your cover design is your book's number one marketing tool and makes an enormous impact on sales! But when you're hiring help, there's a lot of research you'll need to do and factors you'll need to consider, such as what kind of covers are in their portfolio? Do they do a good job with covers in your genre? How much do they charge for covers? And how long is their wait list? If they're an in-demand cover designer, they may be booked for months in advance, so it's good to do some research early on while you're still editing your book, and even reach out to a few designers to find out when they have openings and any other details you need to know.

It's likely you will have to book a cover designer a few months in advance, and it could also take them anywhere between a couple weeks to a couple months to complete the cover, which you will need to upload your final book, as well as for any marketing, such as a cover reveal.

So how do you decide when is the right time to hire a cover designer? What is too early and what is too late? I would always recommend waiting until you have at least written a full first draft. A cover designer will want to know what your story is about, and while you might feel like you know the gist of it from what you're imagining, stories often have a mind of their own and change quite a bit once written down.

The more you're able to edit the story before hiring a cover designer though, the better. My happy medium is to hire a cover designer somewhere around the 2nd or 3rd draft, and then actually work with them on the cover sometime near the end of my beta reader process or shortly after. That way I have the peace of mind knowing I've booked a designer, but I still have time to flesh out the story a lot more before we actually begin working on the cover.

Note: this is one of the many benefits of having all the deadlines in your publishing timeline mapped out—you will be able to guesstimate exactly when your book should be nearing this stage and be able to request to work with your cover designer that specific month!

If you want to know more about cover design, I have a playlist all about book covers here: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRyqUB8NzkkVIF2-dP1ccVmg6

STEP 19: HIRE AN EDITOR (OR MULTIPLE EDITORS)

We talked about editors a bit already back in the writing and editing steps, but a professional editor is also extremely important for making sure your book is the highest quality it can be. Just like with cover designers, a good editor could be booked for months, so I always try to hire

someone as soon as I feel confident that I'm meeting my writing and editing deadlines (usually around the 2nd or 3rd draft as well).

Since editors usually price their services based on word count, you will definitely need to have at *least* a completed first draft to be able to tell them a true word count estimate. But don't worry, your word count can and will most likely change quite a bit throughout the process and a good editor understands and expects that. (For example, I was an over-writer for my first novel and deleted over 20,000 words, but for my second novel I was an under-writer and ended up adding almost 36,000 words!)

When you begin researching editors, take your time and do thorough interviews to make sure they're the best fit for you. You can ask other author friends you trust for recommendations, google to find small businesses, use forums such as the Editor forum on Goodreads, or you could research editors on a third party company like Reedsy.com that connects professional editors (and other publishing industry professionals) with authors.

STEP 20: WRITE SYNOPSIS/BACK BLURB

The back blurb / synopsis is the description of your book that your reader sees when they check out the book in an online store or flip it over to read the back of the physical book. It's your second most important marketing tool, after the cover, because once a reader is intrigued by the cover, the next thing they do is see if the blurb interests them. Knowing this, you can see why writing a catchy blurb is so important! If you're taking the time to write multiple drafts of your novel, then obviously you also want to write multiple drafts of your blurb as well.

I like to write the rough draft of my synopsis prior to beta readers so I can use it when I ask them if they want to read. This helps them know if they'd be interested in the story or not.

But you will also need a *final* draft of your blurb for your cover designer to create the cover, which means you'll need it when you start working with them at the very latest.

Knowing this, I try to finish my final blurb at least two weeks before my cover designer will need it. I have a video all about how to write an Amazing Book Blurb if you're interested here: https://youtu.be/YvzWOy0a5Gg

STEP 21: UPLOADING TO THE PRINT ON DEMAND COMPANY

Once you have your book edited, a back blurb ready to go, and a final cover design, the next step will be uploading your book to the print on demand company (or companies) of your choice, so that you can set up pre-orders and begin your official book launch and marketing campaign.

Do your research on what is the best fit for you. Every author is different. Personally, I have tried working with Kindle Direct Publishing, Ingramspark, Draft2Digital, and also experimented a little bit with the print on demand options at Barnes and Noble Press. I have a video about where I publish, how I chose these companies for printing, and why, if you'd like to know more: **https://youtu.be/s2yPx_E-6lU**

And if you'd like to know more about those first three companies specifically, I have a video tutorial on how to upload to each of them here:

How to Upload to Kindle Direct Publishing: **https://youtu.be/whcjFfAtcJI**

How to Upload to Ingramspark: **https://youtu.be/Te3C9d45E6A**

How to Upload to Draft2Digital: **https://youtu.be/Uz1YC6_EAC8**

STEP 22: COVER REVEAL & ANNOUNCING RELEASE DATE (AND BLURB)

Revealing your cover and making a big deal out of it is a fantastic marketing tool to take advantage of. I often see it paired with the reveal of a release date, the blurb, and the pre-order link (or links) to buy (although you can also reveal these things earlier if you'd rather, or later if necessary).

As far as when is a good time to reveal the cover, it can be as soon as the moment you receive your final design, or the day you publish, or any day in-between.

My personal favorite time frame for the cover reveal (along with the pre-order and release date reveal so that readers can start buying right away) is between 2-3 months before the release date (or sooner). That gives me enough time to market with the beautiful cover and build up pre-orders.

Here's my video tutorial all about how I do cover reveals if you want to know more: **https://youtu.be/YrL_L1yykdM**

STEP 23: SEND ARC COPIES

ARC copies (which stands for Advanced Reader Copies or Advance Review Copies) are 100% optional, but one of the most fantastic marketing tools an author can utilize. Just like they sound, their purpose is to send a free copy of the book to a reader in advance (aka prior to publication) in exchange for an honest review. This strategy helps you build reviews, and therefore credibility, prior to your release.

You will need to have your final manuscript, your final cover, and your final blurb, as well as a plan for how many ARC readers you'd like to have and how to invite them to apply for an ARC

copy. Some authors do this entire process manually (which is my personal preference), while other authors use platforms like StoryOrigin, BookFunnel, or NetGalley to find and work with ARC readers.

- You can send just ebook ARCs, or only paperbacks, or a mix of both
- Ebooks can be sent for free as a .Mobi file to a readers Kindle (check out this video for my tips on how to create and send ebook ARCs: **https://youtu.be/VraN183asdU**)
- Physical books would obviously be sent by mail (If you choose to do physical ARCs, make sure you budget carefully, because they can get expensive fast!)

I share my full strategy on how I send ARCs to readers in this video, if you'd like to know more: **https://youtu.be/Aub6Ep56p78**

STEP 24: MARKET GOALS AND DEADLINES

Marketing is an enormous topic and you may need to make a separate marketing timeline to include everything you'd like to do, but some of the most common marketing tactics (besides the cover reveal and ARCs that I already mentioned above) are:

- Newsletters
- Social Media Posts
- Website updates / announcements
- Book Trailer
- Etc.

I have a Marketing Playlist on my YouTube channel here:
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRyoYX09ck9wOjzUDzIoG6Cng

If you'd like to know even more about marketing your book, I also have a five book series called the **Marketing for Authors Series**, which is FREE on Kindle Unlimited, can be read in any order, and covers the following:

Book 1, *How Your Book Sells Itself*, talks about ten crucial aspects of your book that can make or break book sales, and how to improve your book to enhance sales. This book is specifically designed for self-publishing authors who have control over these aspects of their book.

Book 2, *Grow Your Author Platform*, is about building up a well-rounded platform where readers can find you, including your website, your author newsletter, your content marketing, and more. The content here applies to all authors, regardless of whether you're published or not, and whether you're pursuing self-publishing or traditional publishing.

Book 3, *Book Sales That Multiply,* is about paid advertising, whether on a platform like Facebook, Amazon, Instagram, Goodreads, or even email advertisements. This book is targeted to authors who are already published. And because self-published authors typically have more access to these options than traditionally published authors, it has a strong emphasis on the self-publishing side, but a traditionally published author could apply most of this book if they wanted to as well.

Book 4, *Secrets to Selling Books on Social Media*, is focused on how to sell your book organically on social media, no matter what platform, and increase your book sales. It applies to both self-published and traditionally published authors equally, but it is also intended for authors who are not yet published, but want to begin building relationships with their target readers early on, set up a strong social media platform, and learn how to market their books effectively from the start.

And Book 5, *Plan a Profitable Book Launch*, walks you through the entire book release marketing process—from cover reveals, to sending out advanced reader copies, to having a successful release day, and every marketing step in between. This book is intended for authors about to publish, and is most applicable for self-publishing authors, although some of these marketing tactics can also be done by traditionally publishing authors.

If you want to know more, definitely check out **the whole series**, but now let's move on to the final step—determining your projected release date!

PROJECTED RELEASE DATE:
Congratulations! This is what everything in this tutorial so far has been leading up to!

If you've filled in each box of the template you printed out with your expected time frame, then your projected release date should actually be very easy to see—right at the end of your buffer period! The exact date can still be a little tricky to determine though, so let's talk about that a bit more...

In the publishing world, it's very common to publish on a Tuesday. This is for a few reasons, but the biggest one being an attempt to make some of the bestsellers lists, such as NYTimes and USA Today. For an indie author, this won't usually be a factor in the beginning of your career, but you might still want to do a Tuesday simply because readers are used to seeing releases on this date.

The second best days would be Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. There are some factors that play a role in this, such as which days of the week people are most likely to be online and noticing your launch day excitement, as well as which days might be so busy that your book gets lost in the shuffle, but of course, in the end it's completely up to you!

If you find that there is a significant day in your life right around the end of your buffer period (that wouldn't cause too much added stress to add a release to), you could consider that date. Or you could simply go with the next closest Tuesday.

A couple dates I recommend AVOIDING:
- Saturdays/Sundays... people aren't online as much on the weekends, and unfortunately this could result in far fewer people seeing your release and purchasing it on your big day
- ANY holidays... for the exact same reason
- Any CURRENT significant events (such as weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, vacations - basically anything where your attention would be divided and you would have other duties that would pull you away from your author duties.)

Phew! That's everything!

If you'd like, you can click here to see a video demonstration where I fill out this template with my own personal examples and walk you through it here (**https://youtu.be/6diVd9bzu4E**), and you can follow along as you create your own publishing plan.

I'm SO excited for you to nail down these deadlines! Good luck!

<3 Bethany

FULL LIST OF LINKS MENTIONED:

VIDEOS:
- Fast Drafting a Novel: https://youtu.be/AK7wXULAdRA
- How to Make a Physical Proof Copy: https://youtu.be/CQCuNyLwZmY
- How I Proofread my Books: https://youtu.be/YrL_L1yykdM
- How to Write a Back Blurb: https://youtu.be/YvzWOy0a5Gg
- Where I Publish My Books, Why, and How: https://youtu.be/s2yPx_E-6lU
- Uploading to KDP: https://youtu.be/whcjFfAtcJI
- Uploading to Ingramspark: https://youtu.be/Te3C9d45E6A
- Uploading to Draft2Digital: https://youtu.be/Uz1YC6_EAC8
- How to Do a Cover Reveal: https://youtu.be/YrL_L1yykdM
- How to Send ARC Copies to Kindle: https://youtu.be/VraN183asdU
- All about ARC Copies: https://youtu.be/Aub6Ep56p78

PLAYLISTS:
- Writing Tips:
  https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRyoM7lsV9uOa7Jd2TiZXF1a2
- Novel Editing:
  https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRypNRMVsRrxXTqxoG2hNqwv3
- Beta Readers (Playlist):
  https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRyqamqUdk8eV4n5YO813X61g
- Formatting a Novel from Scratch:
  https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRypIBssmfDTmyFi68zmk5l-L
- All About Cover Design:
  https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRyqUB8NzkkVIF2-dP1ccVmg6
- Marketing Playlist:
  https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3IFBPbxQRyoYX09ck9wOjzUDzIoG6Cng

OTHER RESOURCES:
- NaNoWriMo: https://nanowrimo.org/
- Marketing for Authors Series:
  https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09CY8PCYK?binding=kindle_edition&qid=1629227708&sr=1-2&ref=dbs_dp_rwt_sb_tukn