

PUBLISHING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

UNDERSTAND YOUR OPTIONS TO BECOME HAPPILY PUBLISHED

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What is the difference between Traditional, Hybrid/Subsidy, and Self-Publishing? What might be right for you? This course reviews the positives and negatives of each type of publishing, includes checklists to help you decide on your publishing preference, and discusses some important criteria to determine your next steps. Whether it's finding a literary agent and publisher, or organizing tasks to prepare your book yourself, this online class has you covered. If your manuscript is ready to go, don't miss this one!

THIS IS AN EDUCATIONAL GUIDE!

THE INFORMATION PRESENTED HERE IS INTENDED TO BE FOR YOUR EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY. PLEASE PERFORM YOUR OWN DUE DILIGENCE BEFORE EMBARKING ON ANY COURSE OF ACTION. DO THE RESEARCH AND FOLLOW THE ADVICE OF YOUR PERSONAL QUALIFIED ADVISERS. THERE ARE RISKS IN ANY ENDEAVOR THAT ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR EVERYONE. IF YOU USE CAPITAL, ONLY "RISK" CAPITAL SHOULD BE USED.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Traditional Publishing.....	4
Positives for Traditional Publishing.....	5
Negatives for Traditional Publishing.....	6
Checklist for Traditional Publishing.....	7
Hybrid/Subsidy Publishing.....	8
Be Careful When Publishing with a Hybrid/Subsidy Company.....	9
How Do You Find a Good Hybrid/Subsidy Publishing Company?	9
Positives for Hybrid/Subsidy Publishing.....	10
Negatives for Hybrid/Subsidy Publishing.....	10
Checklist for Hybrid/Subsidy Publishing.....	10
Self-Publishing.....	11
Positives for Self-Publishing.....	13
Negatives for Self-Publishing.....	13
Checklist for Self-Publishing.....	14
Comparison Between Traditional, Hybrid/Subsidy, and Self-Publishing.....	15
Bonus Material: Editing Before You Publish.....	18
Self-Editing.....	19
Writing Groups.....	20
Editor.....	21
About the Author.....	23

Maybe you've already finished your manuscript. Maybe you're still writing, but you're looking ahead to the next step. Either way, congratulations!

Publishing your work to get it in front of readers is your obvious next step. There's a lot of conflicting advice out there... hopefully this online course will clarify things for you.

There are three general types of publishing. By understanding these types before you jump into the publishing pool, you will save yourself a lot of grief.

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

Traditional publishing is the type of publishing most people think of.

The traditional publisher is a house that publishes many books for profit. Some names of well-known publishing houses are Tyndale, Thomas Nelson, and Zondervan.

Once you've finished your manuscript you will probably want to find a **LITERARY AGENT** who will represent your manuscript to the publishing houses, rather than contacting these houses directly. The literary agent acts similarly to a realtor in the real estate market—he or she takes responsibility for selling your manuscript and negotiates a favorable contract for you with the publisher, and in return charges a small commission usually 15%. By the way this commission is well-deserved.

The **ACQUIRING EDITOR** of these houses is usually approached through your agent. Occasionally you may be able to make a direct sale to a publishing house, either after meeting the acquiring editor at a writer's conference, being referred by a writer, or through a cold query letter. Some smaller houses don't require agented submissions so you can contact them directly.

The acquiring editor who likes your manuscript must bring it to the publishing house's **COMMITTEE** in which the various departments discuss manuscript and author platform. Your acquiring editor is your advocate in this process (although you will not be present but hear about it later). The committee decides whether your manuscript is suitable for their house to take.

When the traditional publishing house agrees to take your manuscript, the house purchases the rights to the manuscript (so that you no longer own it) and edits, produces, and helps with marketing. You must make required revisions on a schedule and generally work

with your agent and the acquiring editor to have your manuscript ready to go to meet the company's deadlines. In exchange you are paid an **ADVANCE**, often roughly calculated to be the amount projected for your book's first year earnings. You are allotted a percentage from the book sales, which is called a **ROYALTY**. Once you have accumulated enough royalty funds so that the advance is paid off (your book has **EARNED OUT**), you will start receiving a check from the company.

Many books don't earn out their advance. If you want a long career as a traditionally-published writer you don't necessarily want a super-high advance since that makes it harder for your book to be profitable to the publishing house. While other factors for your book such as reviews and popularity are also weighed when considering a contract for a new book, P&L statements (profit and loss) for each author are scrutinized with a microscope.

Traditional publishing is considered the most prestigious way to publish, especially if you are able to hook a big-name publishing house like Harper Collins. The traditional publishing houses typically have powerful marketing machines behind them that generate wide sales.

On the downside this route is long and uncertain. Finding a literary agent is an enormous job that may take a year or more. The agent's shopping of traditional publishers and the publishing process once the book is accepted also take place at glacial speed. Most writers are not successful in completing this process. They have the choice of continuing the effort, improving their writing skills, and/or publishing themselves.

POSITIVES FOR TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

Traditional publishing is prestigious. Publishing with a traditional publisher means that your book is well-written and has been professionally edited and produced to yield an excellent product. *Everyone* such as book sellers, librarians, talk show programs, and so forth know this as well. You will not have to pay a penny to have your book published; on the contrary, you will be paid money up front as an advance. And if your book is a good seller, you will continue to receive a royalty check from the traditional publisher for book sales. Traditional publishers usually have a strong marketing machine behind them, allowing the author's book to find a home in many places. When the traditional house decides your book is no longer profitable, they often return the rights to you so that you in turn can self-publish the book and thereby maintain your back list.

NEGATIVES FOR TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

Becoming a traditionally published author is challenging because there are so many writers out there, and convincing a literary agent to take you on as a client usually requires long research and many queries. (If you are brave enough to enter the literary agent game, I recommend you first read Noah Lukeman's *How to Land (and Keep) a Literary Agent* for some tips from a literary agent). Even if you have an outstanding manuscript it may be perceived as being a poor prospect if the genre isn't "hot" or there is a lot of competition. Finding a publisher is another usually long process. You sell all rights to your book. You may not have final control of your book's wording or cover. The time from sale to published book is also long, often on the order of about 18 months. Your selling statistics are carefully tracked, and if not up to snuff you will find it difficult to get your next book published.

CHECKLIST FOR TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

	Y	N
Do you have an incredible personal story that you've written about in your book?		
Have you written in a broadly popular genre with a unique twist? Think <i>Twilight</i> or <i>Seven Habits of Highly Effective People</i> .		
Have you already traditionally published one or more books that were popular and made money for the publisher?		
If you indie-published first do you have an impressive sales record? Think <i>The Christmas Box</i> or <i>The Shack</i> .		
Do you have a platform? For example are you a celebrity or well-known expert in your field? Do you speak often on your topic? Do you have many followers on social media?		
Do you already have an agent and/or know successful authors and other people in your field who can help you get traction?		
Are you patient enough to wait two years or more to have your book published?		
Are you willing to tolerate loss of control of your book such as changing the title or significant portions of the manuscript, or not choosing a book cover? Note: your agent may be able to ameliorate these things.		
Can you write a book every year about a similar topic?		
Are you willing to spend time and money to learn how to market and to work hard at it? Are you willing to coordinate strategies with your publisher?		
Do you have a website and social media presence? Do you have a mailing list, giveaway for people to sign up, and a newsletter you put out on a regular basis?		
Do you appear attractive and well-spoken when interacting with people online and in person? When answering questions or emails can you be timely, friendly, and diligent?		

HYBRID/SUBSIDY PUBLISHING

Traditional publishing has always been a tough road to travel when publishing your book. There are many authors who, even if they've written a fabulous book, for one reason or another will not be taken on by a traditional publishing house. Entrepreneurs in addressing this need for unpublished authors have created one-stop publishing houses that you can pay for them to edit, produce, and publish your book for you. This type of publishing is known by many names including:

- Hybrid Publishing
- Subsidy Publishing
- Author-Assisted Publishing
- Independent Publishing
- Partnership Publishing
- Co-Publishing
- Entrepreneurial Publishing
- Vanity Publishing
- Etc. Etc.

Many people think of this type of company as self-publishing, but ***it is not self-publishing even if the company calls it that.*** You are paying the company to edit, produce, and publish your book under that company's imprint rather than your own company.

Hybrid/Subsidy Publishing = publish under that company.
Self-publishing = publish under your own company or name.

BE CAREFUL WHEN PUBLISHING WITH A HYBRID/SUBSIDY COMPANY

Paying to publish with a company is dangerous because they are usually expensive and can leave your published book in a worse place market-wise than when you started with an unpublished manuscript.

Some of these companies work like a traditional publishing house to create a wonderful book, while others simply take your money and create a book that you can't sell.

Make sure you do careful research before signing with any company. I always recommend reading this article by Better Business Bureau about subsidy publishers:

<https://www.bbb.org/new-york-city/get-consumer-help/articles/vanity-or-subsidy-publishing1/>

If you're considering a particular company, check out Mark Levine's most recent edition of *The Fine Print of Self-Publishing: A Primer on Contracts, Printing Costs, Royalties, Distribution, E-Books, and Marketing*.

WARNING

Ask yourself why so many so-called self-publishing companies advertise so aggressively to unpublished authors. Are they making their money from book sales or from authors?

Don't get fooled by big names such as traditional publishing houses that offer a "self-publishing" branch. Do the research. Don't forget to ask the company for references of people who have used them, *and then contact them*.

HOW DO YOU FIND A GOOD HYBRID/SUBSIDY PUBLISHING COMPANY?

All that being said, there are excellent companies out there. I know the owners of a few of these and am impressed with their care of the author and commitment to quality. To start in finding a good company I recommend you read this article by the Independent Book Publishers Association that lists nine criteria of a reputable hybrid publisher: <https://publishingperspectives.com/2018/02/nine-criteria-reputable-hybrid-publishing-ibpa/>. If you want a second opinion on a company feel free to write to me on the contact form of ebooklistingservices.com/contact to take a quick look—I hate to see writers get snookered. I promise I won't try to sell you anything.

POSITIVES FOR HYBRID/SUBSIDY PUBLISHING

These companies stress ease of process: you don't have to worry about what to do to get your book published because they take care of the entire process. Most hybrid/subsidy companies produce a beautiful book. Also, they often list your book on Amazon and other online sites.

NEGATIVES FOR HYBRID/SUBSIDY PUBLISHING

Hybrid/subsidy companies charge a lot to produce your book, and manage sales money in perpetuity by paying you "royalties." Some hybrid/subsidies choose your retail price that can be higher than current market comparables. Some hybrid/subsidy companies produce books by offset printing rather than print-on-demand (POD) technology, requiring you to purchase a large number of books to store in your basement. Some subsidy companies take the rights of your book so that you cannot publish it in different formats (e-book, audible etc.), and/or they will charge a high price for your cancellation if you want to leave the company to publish somewhere else. If you want to leave they often will not give you your formatted files that you paid them to create. While some hybrid companies offer marketing help, they are paid by you-the-author rather than money received from book sales. *If the company DOES offer marketing help *for a price* make sure to ask how many sales these tactics generate before paying even more money.*

CHECKLIST FOR HYBRID/SUBSIDY PUBLISHING

	Y	N
Have you written a memoir or a book on a specialized topic that probably won't have a wide readership?		
Do you plan to write only one or perhaps two books in your lifetime?		
Are you interested in delivering your book especially to a small group such as a church or for a family reunion? You are not particularly interested in writing a book that lots of people will buy and read.		
Do you have enough money so that spending a few thousand dollars won't hurt you?		
Are you able to purchase and store a large number of books?		
Would you rather not fuss with the mechanics of publishing your book?		

SELF-PUBLISHING

In contrast to hybrid/subsidy publishing, self-publishing means that you, the author, are also the publisher in charge of getting your book to market. While the idea may sound intimidating, the tasks themselves are straightforward. To self-publish a book/e-book/audible book the general tasks you need to complete are:

- **Edit**: Create the best manuscript that you can. See the bonus section of this handout (page 18) for editing tips.
- **Interior**: Format the print book and e-book interiors.
- **Record**: Find a studio and voice actor to read your audio book, or record it yourself.
- **Cover**: Find a cover designer.
- **ISBN**: Get ISBN(s) to identify your work.
- **Printer and Distribution**: Find your printer(s) and distributor(s) that will make your book/e-book/audio book available to buyers.
- **Upload**: Format your book/e-book/audio interior or MP3 and cover files into standard formats and upload to your distribution network.
- **Market**: Market the heck out of everything.

As a self-publisher you will direct the publishing process and pay all the costs to publish your book, but costs can be low if you know what you're doing. There's a lot of good information on the net and books on Amazon that can point you in the right direction. You're always welcome to email me with questions on the contact form of ebooklistingservices.com/contact And as an FYI, if you're interested in delving deeper into this topic I just published a two-book series:

[*Self-Publish for Less Than \\$100: Step-by-Step Guide to Format Your Book and E-Book, Get a Cover and ISBN, and Publish to Sell*](#)

[*Special Effects for Your E-Book: Use HTML Templates Without Knowing HTML to Professionally Format Your E-Book*](#)

The good news is that you don't have to do all the tasks necessary for self-publishing. You can find an editor, a formatter, a voice artist, a cover designer, and even someone who

will pull everything together for you on a work-for-hire basis such as [EBook Listing Services](#). However, *if you are looking for contractors be cautious that you don't sign with a hybrid/subsidy company rather than an independent contractor.*

Marketing an indie book is challenging especially if you haven't yet built much of a platform. Traditional publishers have a plethora of marketing tactics, including a wide network of endorsers, reviewers, media interviewers, and book outlet sites that can aggressively promote a title. Indie marketing cannot compete head to head with these methods, and so must work on sideways ideas. Keep learning and implementing strategies. A few marketing ideas that you might want to consider when marketing your indie book include:

- Find endorsers. Anyone will do—you don't need letters after the name although of course these don't hurt.
- Find reviewers including a process in which you cull the Amazon reviewers of similar books ("scraping").
- Niche your book using key words and search terms to make it easily found and rise to the top of its Amazon categories.
- Contact clubs, churches, schools, and organizations to see if they would like to purchase your book in bulk.
- Imagine unconventional outlets. For example if your main character is a hairdresser, you may be able to talk hair salons into carrying your book.
- Create a great online presence—website and social media.
- Create a mailing list and occasional newsletter of information helpful to the reader, NOT self-promotion.
- Investigate book distributors so that your book may be available widely.
- Arrange speaking and book signing engagements wherever you can.
- Register your book in the Library of Congress so that libraries may consider carrying your book.

POSITIVES FOR SELF-PUBLISHING

Self-publishing allows you to control all aspects of producing your book—wording, format, cover, pricing, distributor, and additional sales. You can publish in weeks or months rather than years. Once you know what you're doing you can publish your book for minimal cost or even for free. You can buy as many or few books as you want at the lowest "printer's price." You can create a home business publishing multiple short books and e-books, for example fiction series (romance, fantasy, and science fiction work well) or one problem how-to-solve books.

NEGATIVES FOR SELF-PUBLISHING

You don't have anyone approving your manuscript before it's published so you could potentially be putting out less than your best work. There is a significant learning curve to self-publishing, although you can do this in stages by hiring independent contractors to help with different aspects. Self-publishing requires attention to detail that may border on tedious at times. You need courage to self-publish since it's an untraditional way to go. Marketing is tough since it's just you.

CHECKLIST FOR SELF-PUBLISHING

	Y	N
Have you written a memoir or a book on a specialized topic that probably won't have a wide readership or has a lot of heavyweight competition?		
Do you write multiple "consumable" or series types of books such as romance or science fiction rather than ground-breaking highly intense ideas?		
Do you have many ideas and/or write many short manuscripts, some as short as five or ten pages? Do you want to turn out many books?		
Conversely, do you plan to write only one or perhaps two books in your lifetime?		
Do you have a platform? For example are you a celebrity or well-known expert in your field? Do you speak often on your topic? Do you have many followers on social media?		
Do you know successful authors and other people in your field who can help you get traction?		
Do you have a website and social media presence? Do you have a mailing list, giveaway for people to sign up, and a newsletter you put out on a regular basis?		
Are you willing to spend time and/or money to learn the process of putting together and marketing a book? Are you OK not selling a lot of books especially at first?		
Do you want to completely control the wording, cover, formatting, pricing, and distribution of your book? Do you like the option of fixing mistakes or adding a section to an already-published book without interrupting sales?		
Are you anxious to see your book in print within weeks or months, not years?		
Do you want to create a home business publishing many short books, especially things like short fiction series or one problem how-to-solve solution books?		
Do you appear attractive and well-spoken when interacting with people online and in person? When answering questions or emails can you be timely, friendly, and diligent?		

COMPARISON BETWEEN TRADITIONAL, HYBRID/SUBSIDY, AND SELF-PUBLISHING

	TRADITIONAL	HYBRID/SUBSIDY	SELF
CONVENIENCE	Major effort, time, and frustration to enter the gate. Once you are accepted, the publisher develops your book.	Ultra-convenient. Sign your contract, send a check, and you're good to go.	Requires research to learn tasks yourself and/or find contractors who can do the work for you.
COST TO PUBLISH	Author is <i>paid</i> book advance and royalties.	High.	Little or no money if you do it yourself. Hiring out tasks may raise costs but generally not as much as a hybrid/subsidy publisher.
PUBLISHING DECISIONS	Publisher purchases manuscript and makes final decisions for editing, cover, pricing etc.	Variable depending on contract.	Author always makes all decisions.
EDITING	Publisher takes care of editing.	Publisher usually offers editing as an option.	Author must find an editor. See page 17 for tips to do this happily.
TYPOS, COVER CHANGES, OR OTHER BOOK CHANGES ONCE BOOK IS TYPESET	Up to publisher. Usually not done after galleys are approved.	Once files are approved it's costly to change anything.	Author can easily change both print and e-books, even after publication.

	TRADITIONAL	HYBRID/SUBSIDY	SELF
BOOK COVER	Professional and attractive.	Usually professional and attractive.	Many independent contractors available to create professional and attractive cover as good as traditional cover.
RETAIL BOOK PRICE	Publisher sets price based on years of experience.	Hybrid/subsidy company and/or author determine retail price, depending on contract. If hybrid/subsidy company sets the price it may be too high for average customers to purchase.	You balance print costs, vendor discounts, and market norms to calculate retail book price. You can easily change retail price for both print book and e-books even after publication.
E-BOOK VERSION	Publisher takes care of this and sells under their company.	Variable. Some companies charge extra to create an e-book version, and other companies don't do one.	Easy peasy to do yourself or hire an independent contractor.
AUTHOR PURCHASES PRINT BOOKS	Based on publisher contract, often something like 50% off retail.	Often must be bought in bulk. Often expensive.	Bought directly from printer at printer price. You can buy as many or few copies as you want at any time and have books delivered within a week or two.

	TRADITIONAL	HYBRID/SUBSIDY	SELF
MARKETING	Publisher usually has a strong marketing arm and employs an effective marketing campaign. Author is wise to assist.	Usually up to author. Sometimes hybrid/subsidy companies sell marketing packages of things like "book blasts," "listing sites," or "review sites" but ask how many sales result from these efforts before purchasing.	You are in charge and wise to develop website and blog, build a good e-mail list, use social media to get book reviews, and do homework. You should expect to spend time marketing since competition is fierce.
EARNED PROFITS FROM BOOK SALES	Royalties. Agent will work out a better deal for you when he/she negotiates your contract.	Royalties.	100% of all profits.
ABILITY TO GENERATE INCOME AND SALES	Publisher usually has good resources to sell. Author is wise to contribute marketing efforts.	Variable but almost always a poor likelihood to generate commercial success.	If your book is good, then you have a good chance to successfully sell. Many short books means more income.

BONUS MATERIAL

EDITING BEFORE YOU PUBLISH



Just because you've finished your draft, don't think you're ready to publish until you edit your words. This is just a quick review of the editing process.

There are three main ways to edit your work: self-editing, writing groups, and hiring an editor. Preferably you'll use at least two or all three methods.

SELF-EDITING

YOU CANNOT WRITE AND SELF EDIT AT THE SAME TIME. FINISH YOUR WRITING AND THEN WORK ON THE EDITING. RINSE AND REPEAT UNTIL YOUR DRAFT IS AS GOOD AS YOU CAN MAKE IT.

The more times you read your manuscript, the "colder" you will become to it. Read word-for-word as little as possible—use the computer search function to bring you to correctable places, then move on. After each read-through, let your mind rest from it as long as possible before starting again.

Some common problems include:

PROBLEM #1: OVERUSED WORDS

You can find words and phrases that you overuse by going to www.wordcounter.com or a similar website that counts the incidence of words in a sample of text. Get rid of most of these repeats.

PROBLEM #2: MODIFIERS

Use the computer word search function to eliminate "very," "quite," "began to," "started to," "somewhat," "rather," and other nothing qualifiers. Remove words that end in -ly and other modifiers and adverbs/adverbial phrases, and replace the core verbs and nouns with stronger ones. An occasional modifier is fine, but concentrate to use NOUNS AND VERBS rather than ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS.

PROBLEM #3: REPEATS

Watch for place where you say the same thing twice, whether words, phrases, sentences, or even paragraphs. Choose the stronger and cut the other.

PROBLEM #4: PASSIVE VOICE

To eliminate passive voice, use the computer grammar checker and/or the word search function to find "was," "were," "have," and similar words. Rewrite these sentences in active construction.

PROBLEM #5: GENERAL WORDS

Make sure you use specific words and descriptions rather than general terms. For example, when something is BRIGHT is it SHIMMERING or FLASHING or BLAZING or INCANDESCENT? Use a thesaurus to help you tighten words.

HELPFUL TRICK: TEXT-TO-SPEECH (TTS)

Use Word's Text-to-Speech (TTS) feature to read your manuscript back to you. You may be surprised when listening to hear awkward passages and troublesome phrases appear. Look up on Google how to install and use this feature.

WRITING GROUPS

Writing groups vary in approach and what they do. Some are mostly supportive, while others take critiquing to a serious level. It may take some time to find what you like, but keep at it.

ONLINE GROUPS

Online groups offer a wide variety of writing subspecialties. These tend toward trading critiques of members' manuscripts. You can search under facebook groups, yahoo groups, other internet groups, or form your own. And of course, don't forget ACFW's critique group!

IN-PERSON GROUPS

In-person groups can also be helpful. To find a group that meets in your area, check with libraries, bookstores, religious places like churches and synagogues, schools, and other places where writers might be expected to congregate. And as always, check the internet for possible leads.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

When your work is critiqued and given back to you, you may be surprised to learn that others do not find your work as compelling and perfectly written as you do. Receiving criticism is tough but essential if you want to improve. The best way to respond to criticism is to say, "Thank you." Period. Don't defend yourself since you won't change someone's opinion. Take the critiquer's words back with you and study them. Maintain an objective stance (it may take a little time to get there). If the words are pointing out something true, then internalize the message and learn from it. If the words aren't relevant, discard them. This may be difficult, of course, but is the best way to go.

Remember that *just because a true problem is identified, the critiquer may not correctly identify the solution to that problem.* It is up to you to determine how to solve the problem.

GIVING FEEDBACK

Writing groups will usually require you to give feedback on others' work as well as receive feedback on yours. When giving criticism, remember that the best critiques balance problems with good qualities when suggesting changes. Too-harsh comments may squash a writer's fragile desire to write. Please remember this and be careful. You wield power with your words.

EDITOR

Many writers want to hire an editor before they are ready. An editor is not a magician—don't hire an editor until you and your critique group have thoroughly buffed your manuscript and it is as good as it's going to be.

Editing is not cheap. A full-length manuscript can be hundreds or even a few thousand dollars, depending on the length and degree of edit. Editors may be paid by the hour, by the

word or page, or with a flat fee. Because you'll be investing so much, make sure you buy only what you need. If you are having problems with story structure or flow, you may want to hire a book coach or ghostwriter rather than an editor.

There are three general types of editing: substantive, copyediting, and proofing. Substantive is intense and reworks the structure of the words you use. Copyediting employs a comprehensive survey of your grammar, word usage, style, and punctuation. Proofreading just ensures that your grammar is correct.

If you wish to hire an editor, you will probably want to hire a copyeditor.

How do you find an editor? A good resource is referrals. Don't forget to ask on the ACFW email loop and check out the ACFW's list of resources. If you don't know anyone who has used an editor, you can check out the Editorial Freelancers Association at www.the-efa.org/ for a list of editorial freelancers.

Since editing is an art, editors have different approaches. Talk to at least a few editors before choosing one. For each editor, ask for contact information of previous clients (and contact them!), or minimally look at writing samples that the editor has done. Before you sign a contract, work on a sample chapter with the editor to make sure that your styles match.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Amy Deardon had a literary agent before she discovered self-publishing. Later she founded a company that helps authors self-publish, and has published more than fifty books for clients and a few of her own as well. She now speaks regularly on story structure, writing habits, and ways to publish. Write to her on the contact form of ebooklistingservices.com.

