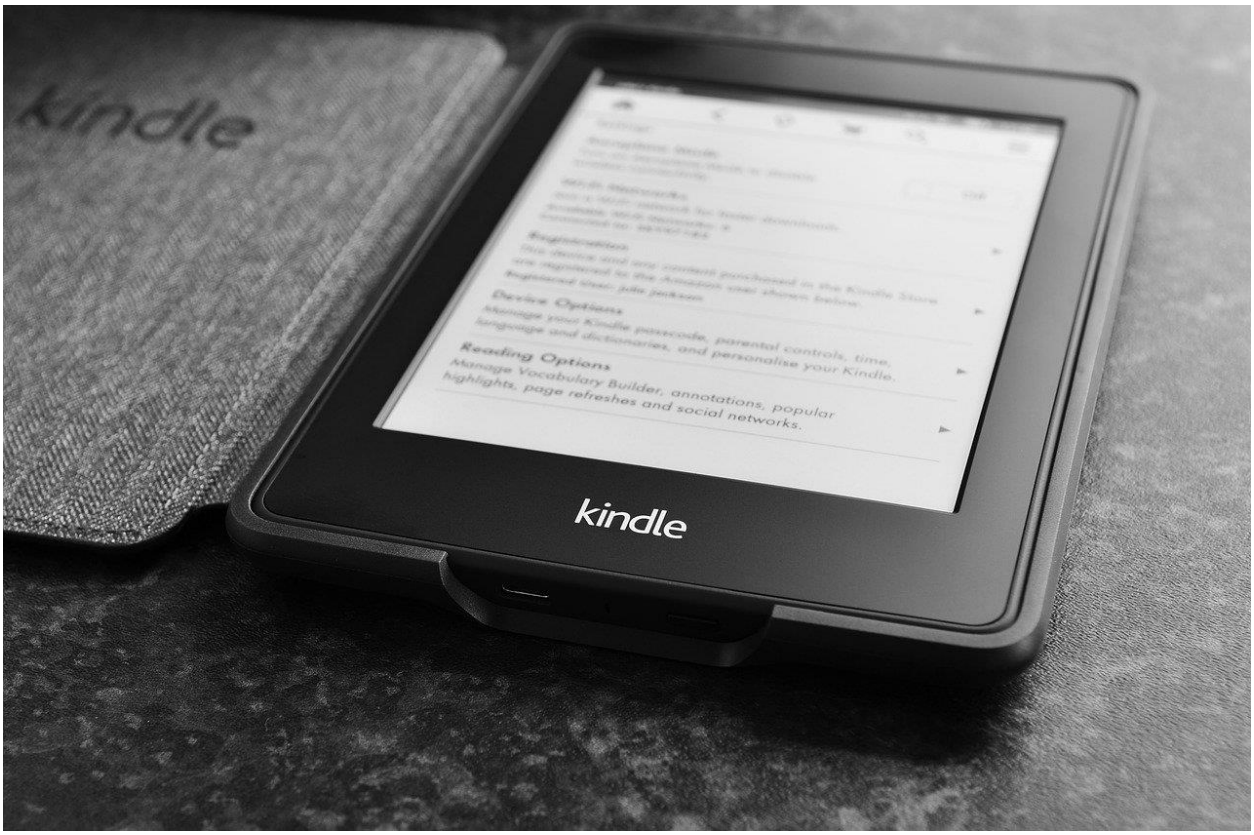

How to Write for Kindle

A User's Guide

Version 1.0

March 2022

Copyright

Title: How to Write for Kindle: A User's Guide

Author: Renzo Villaflor

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Table 1. Revision History

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7 March 2022	n/a	1	Renzo Villaflor

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1 Introduction

Getting a book out into the world can be an intimidating task. You may have heard of the traditional publishing route: drafting and revising your manuscript; finding an agent to represent you and an editor to work with; negotiating a deal with a publishing house and selling your book. Unfortunately, the route has many drawbacks:

- Slow process – nine months to two years can pass between signing your book contract and actually having your book in publication
- Deadline stress –you have to meet deadlines and might experience author burnout as a result
- Loss of rights – you surrender some creative control over your work
- Less royalties – you might not earn as much due to both lower rates and infrequent pay days
- Legalese – you have to navigate complex publisher contracts
- Rejection – you can be turned down by many publishing houses and might not be able to publish the book you want

Luckily, Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) allows you to work around all these drawbacks:

- Fast process – publication is instantaneous
- Minimal deadline stress – much like freelancing, you set your own schedule
- Maintenance of rights - you keep creative control over your work and own all the rights
- More royalties - you earn more due to both higher rates and more frequent pay days
- Lack of legalese - you don't have to navigate complex publisher contracts
- Lack of rejection – you can publish what you want; every book can get published

Moreover, the benefits of Kindle go beyond simply addressing the drawbacks of traditional publishing houses. Additional benefits include:

- Amazon is the world's largest bookstore (responsible for selling over 70% of books)
- Algorithms help potential readers find your book (helpful to indie authors)
- You're not limited to selling eBooks (you can print books from your account)
- You have a variety of marketing tools at your disposal (not only various in-house programs such as sample chapters, but also third-party services if necessary)

Kindle has also opened up the publishing arena, providing greater opportunity for people of different backgrounds. No matter who you are, Kindle can get your book out into the world. Consider the following new authors who have sold millions of eBooks on the Amazon Kindle platform:

- Mike Omer, a 39-year-old Israeli computer engineer, was able to quit his job and go full-time as a self-published author off the sales of his first eBook *Spider's Web* and its sequels. He makes more money now than he did as a computer engineer.
- Nandini Kumar has been writing since she was 16 and now publishes stories on Kindle in both English and Hindi. Her book *Neeli* won the Kindle Direct Publishing Award.
- Sudha Nair took a break from her eight-year software engineer career upon having children. After a stint as a technical writer, she wrote a novel called *The Wedding Tamasha* but didn't hear back from traditional publishers. So, she self-published on Kindle and not only gained a devoted reader base, but also won Kindle's Pen-to-Publish Contest Award.

Naturally, these success stories aren't a guarantee. Many factors go into the making of a smash hit, including the unpredictable factor of luck. However, you can ensure that you put yourself in the best position to reach such levels of success. You can study your genre. You can follow market trends. And of course, you can use this guide to learn how to use the various features of Kindle and familiarize yourself with the eBook creation process. This guide will assume you already have the content of your manuscript written, and will focus on the technical side of the process.

Let's begin!

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2 Selecting a Title

Now that you've written your manuscript, you need a title. Your title is the first thing your readers see. Therefore, your title must hook your target audience and hint at your book's plot and tone. A good title can be the difference between your reader choosing to give your book a chance or passing it up altogether.

Follow the steps below to select a title for your eBook.

1. Ensure that your title:
    a. is the ideal length by shortening it to two to five words.
    b. is genre-appropriate by going to websites like Amazon or Goodreads, searching for the genre you want to write, and noting patterns or trends in title construction.
    c. has not been used already by searching up your title on Amazon.

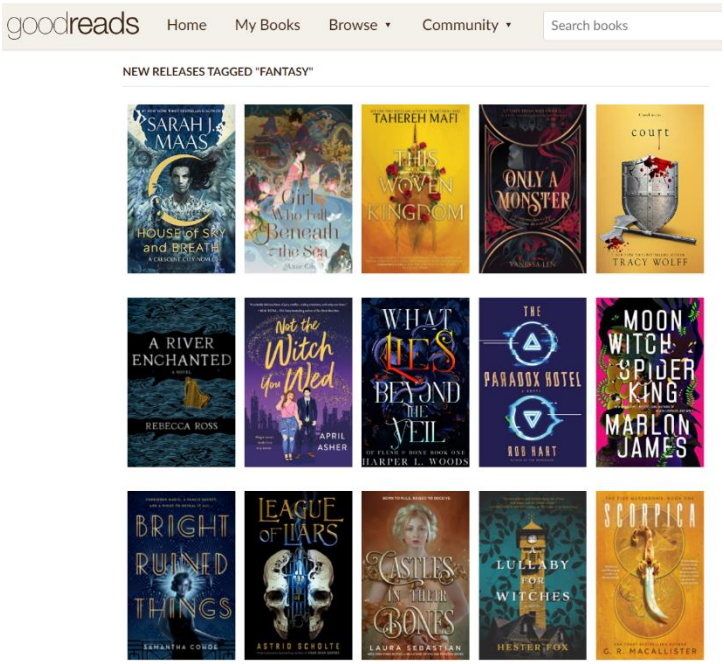

Figure 1. Sample Goodreads Search

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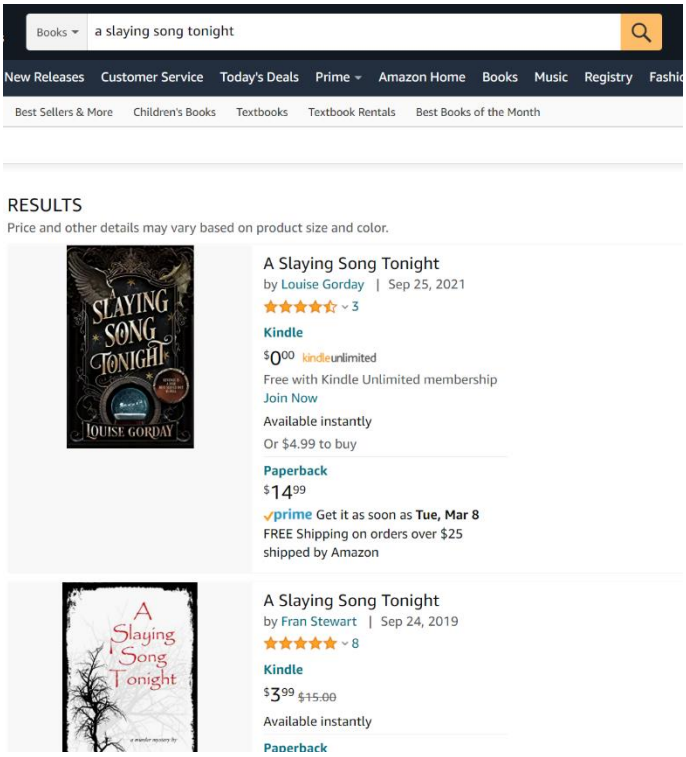

Figure 2. Sample Amazon Search

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3 Importing Your Manuscript Using Kindle Create

3.1 Downloading and Installing Kindle Create

Now that you've written your manuscript and selected a title, you can create your eBook. Before you create an eBook, however, you first need to download and install eBook creation software. Luckily, you won't have to look very far to find the software you need. Kindle offers in-house software in Kindle Create, a free and beginner-friendly option.

NOTE: You can use other eBook creation software, of course. For the purposes of this guide, we will use Kindle Create.

You will need:

- RAM
  - Minimum – 4 GB
  - Recommended – 8 GB
- Processor
  - Minimum – 1.2 GHz
  - Recommended – 2 GHz
- Operating system
  - If Windows – 8.1 (64-bit) or later for PC (64-bit) running on Intel or AMD CPUs
  - If macOS – 10.14 (64-bit) or later for Mac

Follow the steps below to download and install Kindle Create.

1. Go to the following link: https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/GUGQ4WDZ92F733GC#download.
2. Locate the **Download Kindle Create** heading.

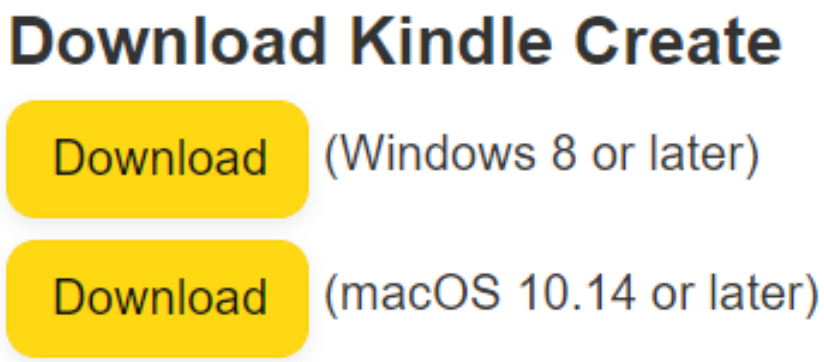

Figure 3. Kindle Create Download

3. Click the **Download** button that matches the operating system you're running. A file called *KindleCreateInstaller.exe* will appear in your downloads.

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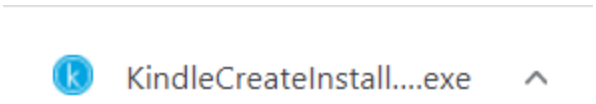

Figure 4. Kindle Create Installer Executable File

4. Click *KindleCreateInstaller.exe* to open the file. The **Kindle Create Installation** wizard opens to the **License Agreement** dialog.

Figure 5. Kindle Create License Agreement

5. Once you have read the **License Agreement**, click **I Agree** to accept. The **Choose Install Location** dialog opens.

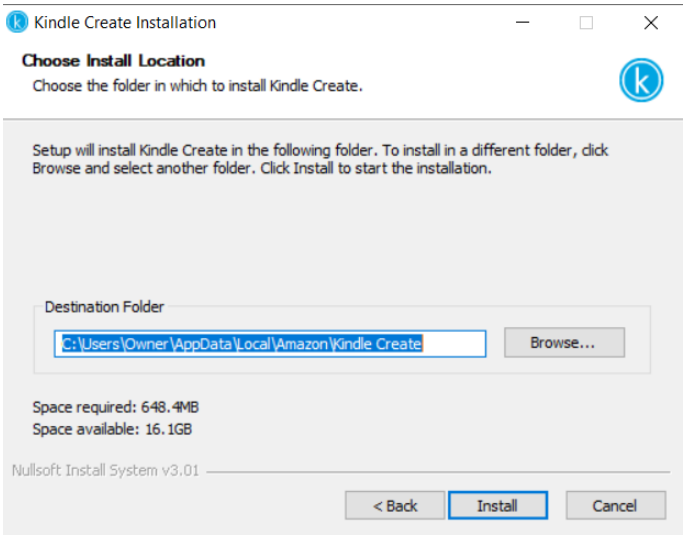

Figure 6. Kindle Create Choose Install Location

6. Once you have chosen a folder in which to install Kindle Create, click **Install**. The wizard begins installing Kindle Create.

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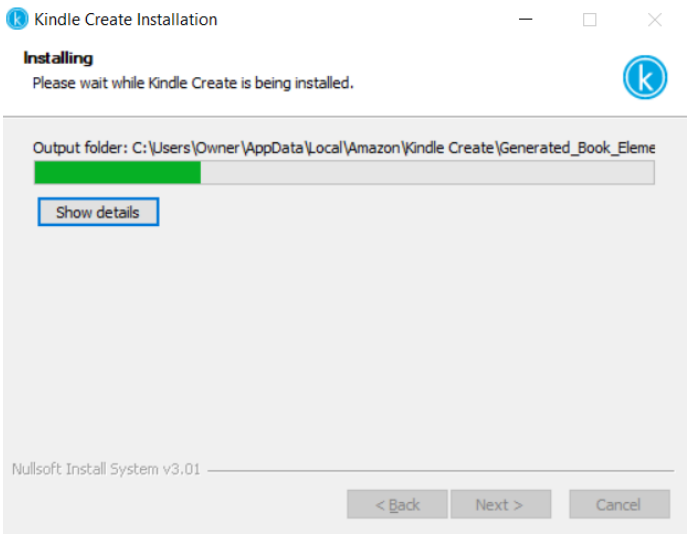


Figure 7. Kindle Create Installing

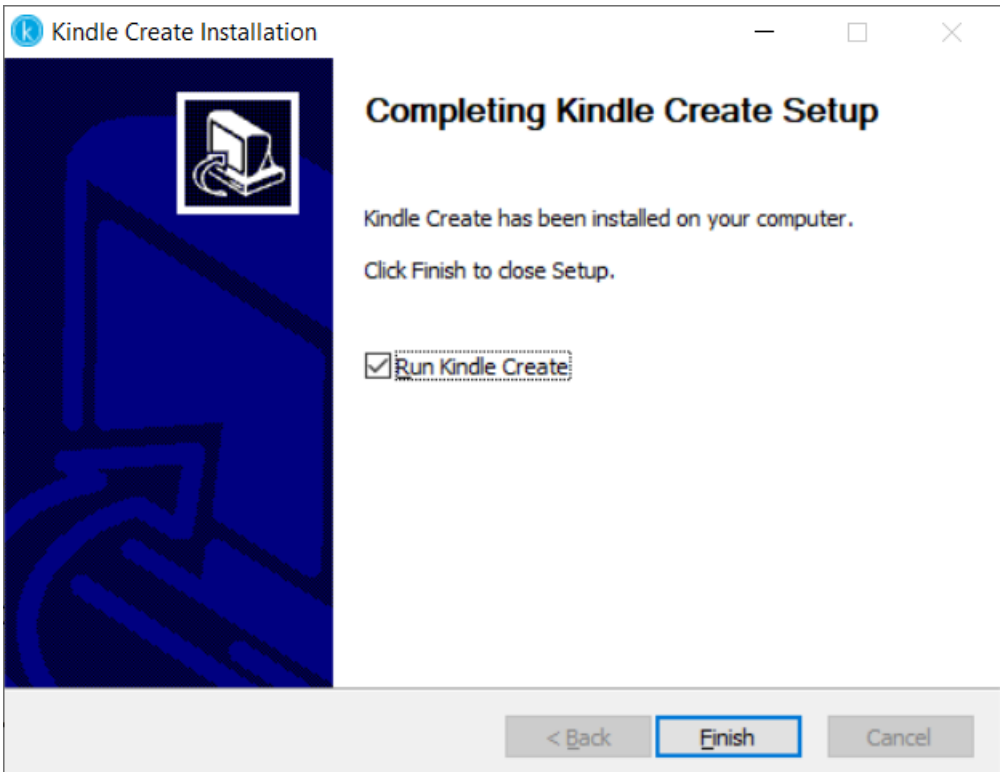
1. Once installation is complete, the **Completing Kindle Create Setup** dialog opens. Click **Finish** to close the wizard.
2. 

Figure 8. Completing Kindle Create Setup

3.2 Preparing Your Manuscript for Import

Now that you've written your manuscript, selected your title, and installed Kindle Create, you can import your manuscript into Kindle Create. Before you import, however, you first need to make sure your manuscript follows Kindle Create's formatting guidelines.

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You will need:

- Microsoft Word
- Your manuscript

Follow the steps below to prepare your manuscript for import.

1. Open your manuscript in Microsoft Word.
2. Remove or modify the following elements from your manuscript as needed:
    - Headers, footers, and page numbers (eBooks are reflowable, adaptable to different layouts)
    - Tab-spaced paragraphs, double-spaced lines, and hard returns
    - Cover image (remove from the manuscript but save it elsewhere for later)
    - Track changes (a feature in Word that allows you to see changes made – set to Off)
    - Drop caps (the oversized capital letters or words at the start of a chapter)
    - Shapes and text boxes
3. Apply the Heading 1 style to your chapter titles. Center your titles.

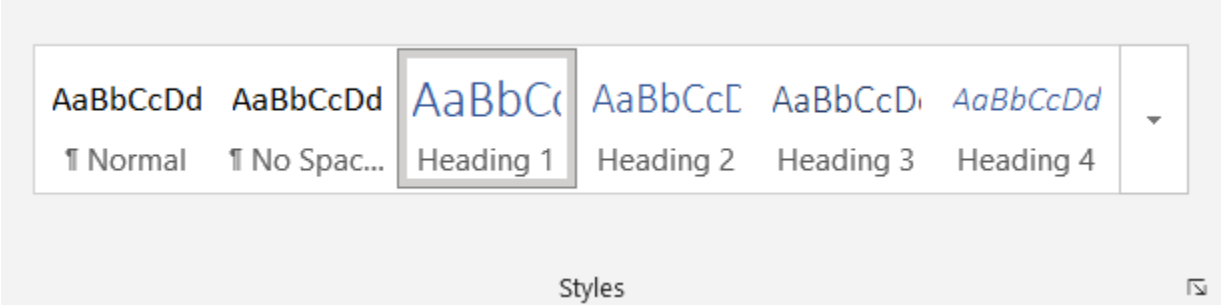

Figure 9. Heading 1 Style

4. Insert page breaks to let Kindle Create know where to separate your content.

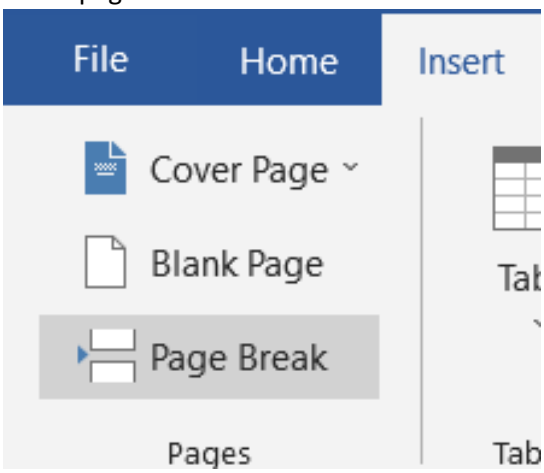

Figure 10. Page Break

5. Include the following elements in your manuscript as needed:
    a. Footnotes
    b. Hyperlinks (links to webpages or other external references)
    c. Images

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d. Front and back matter (the information before and after your manuscript's actual content such as title pages or appendices)

3.3 Importing Your Manuscript

Now that your manuscript meets Kindle Create's formatting guidelines, you're ready to import.

You will need:

- Kindle Create
- Your manuscript

Follow the steps below to import your manuscript.

1. Open Kindle Create.

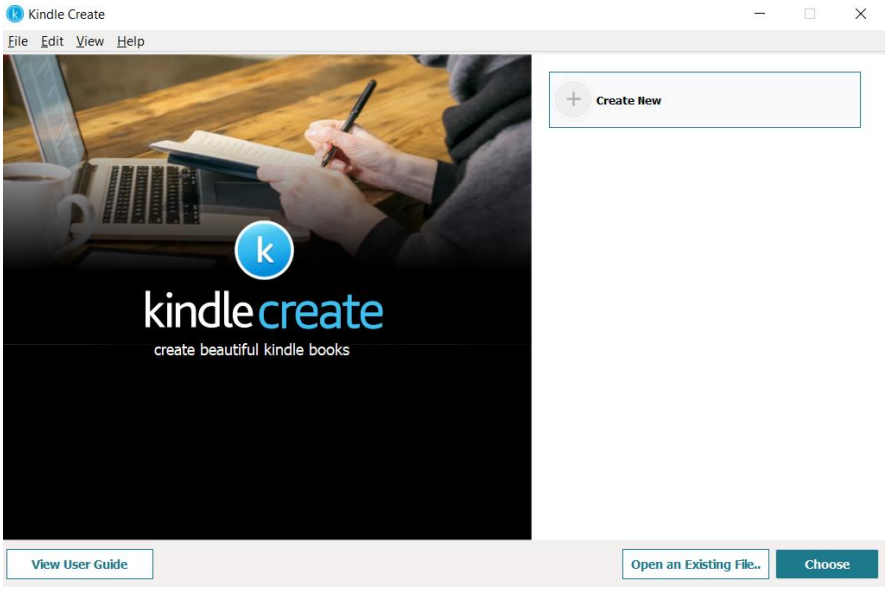

Figure 11. Kindle Create Start

2. Click **Create New>Choose**. You can also click **File>New Project**. The **Choose File** dialog opens.

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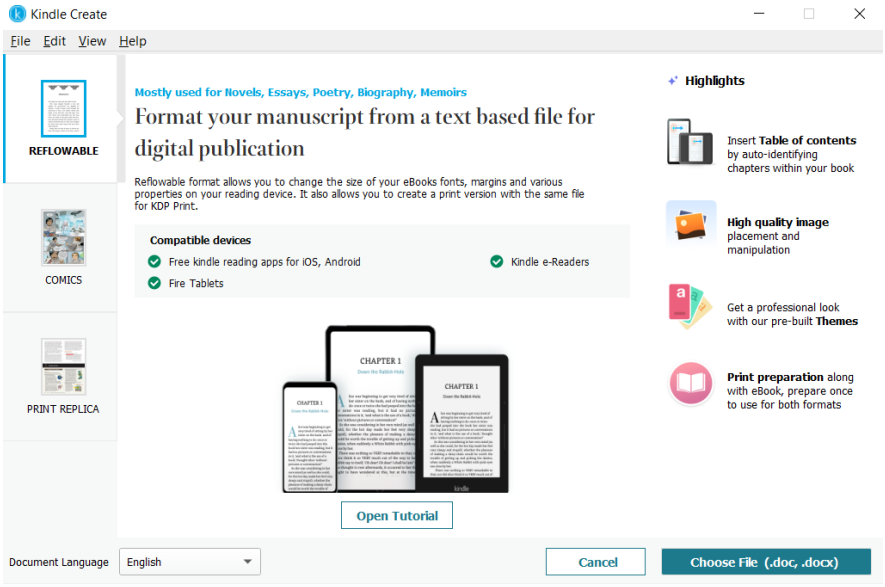

Figure 12. Kindle Create Choose File

3. Click **Reflowable**.
4. Click your book's language in the **Document Language** dropdown.

Figure 13. Kindle Create Document Language

5. Click **Choose File**. The **Import from File** dialog opens.

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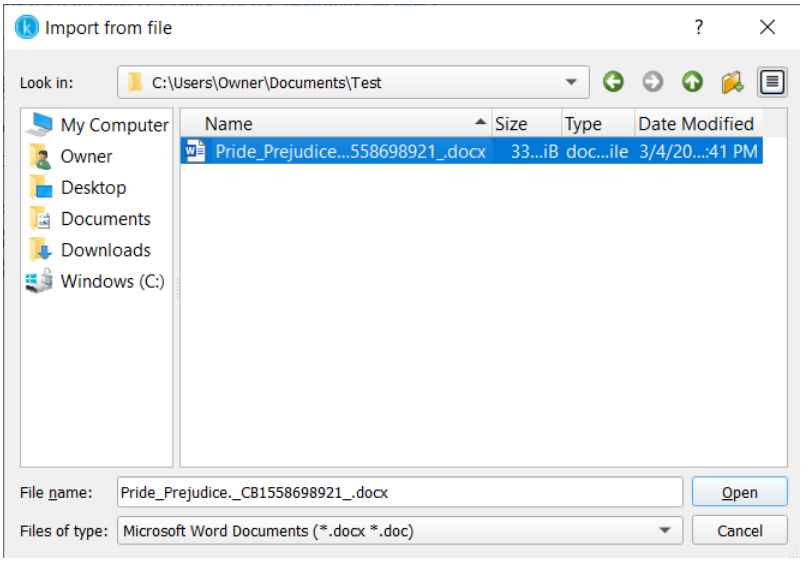

Figure 14. Kindle Create Import from File

6. Locate your manuscript on your local hard drive, click your manuscript, and click **Open**. Kindle Create begins importing and converting your manuscript to an eBook.

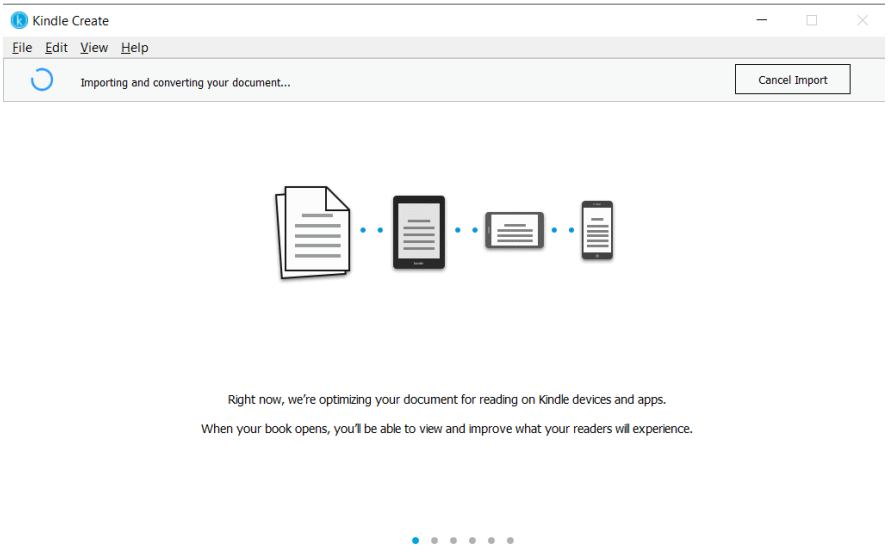

Figure 15. Kindle Create Importing and Converting Your Document

7. Once import and conversion are complete, the **Import Successful** dialog opens. Click **Continue**.

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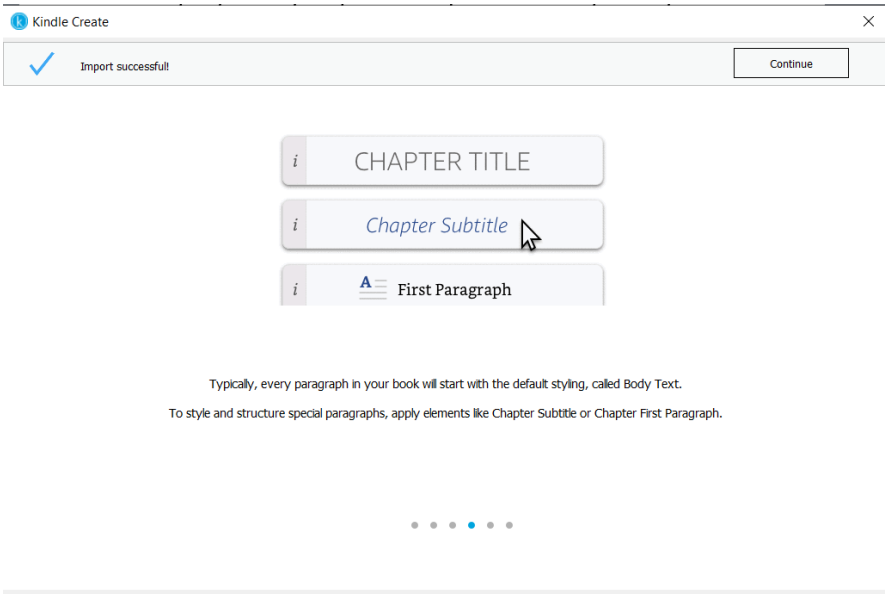

Figure 16. Kindle Create Import Successful

8. The **Automatic Chapter Titles** dialog opens. Click **Get Started**.

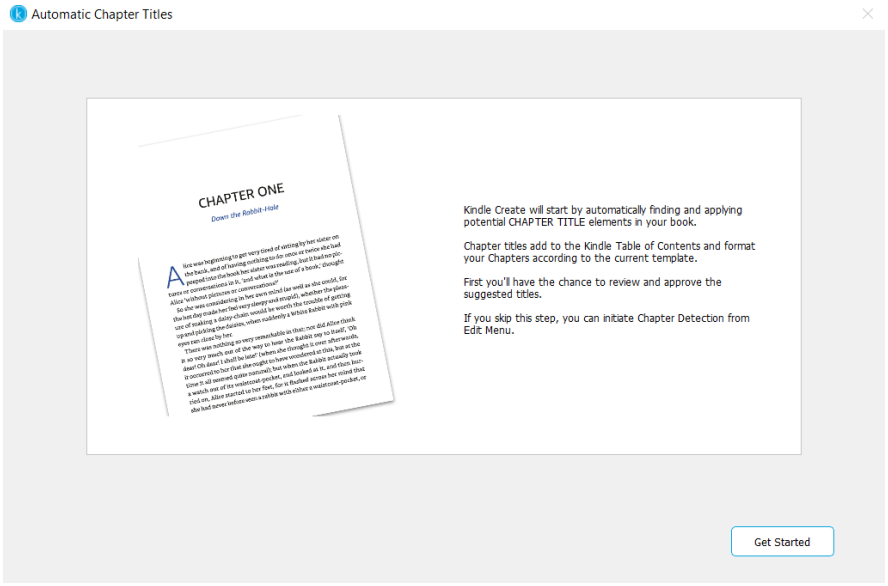

Figure 17. Kindle Create Automatic Chapter Titles

9. The **Suggested Chapter Titles** dialog opens. Uncheck any non-chapter headings. Click **Accept Selected**.

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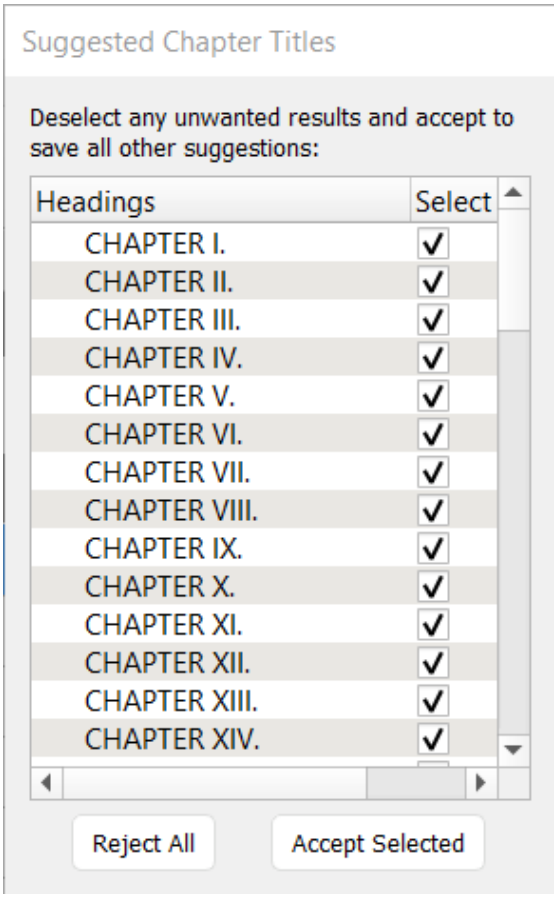

Figure 18. Kindle Create Suggested Chapter Titles

10. Click **File>Save Project**. The **Save Your Project** dialog opens.

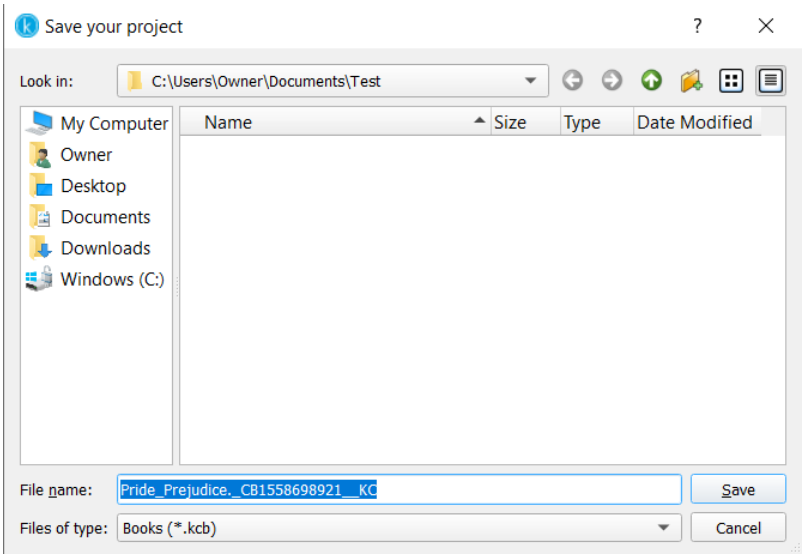

Figure 19. Kindle Create Save Your Project

11. Accept or change the file location and name. Click **Save**.

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4 Preparing Your eBook for Publishing

4.1 Creating a Table of Contents (TOC)

Now that you've created your eBook and accepted your selected chapter titles, you can create a TOC. A TOC is a must for any eBook, helping your readers navigate between chapters.

You will need:

- Kindle Create
- Your eBook

Follow the steps below to create a TOC.

1. Open your eBook in Kindle Create.
2. Locate **Contents**.

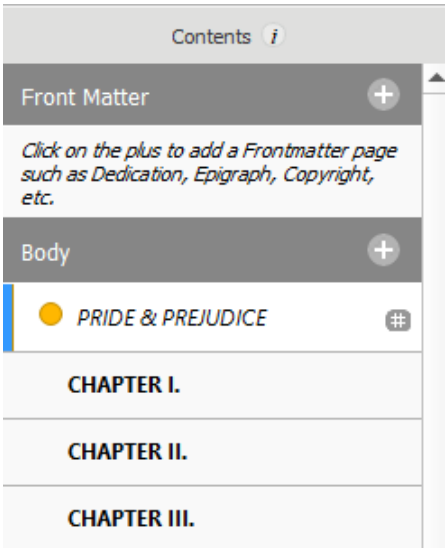

Figure 20. Kindle Create Contents

3. Click your first chapter.

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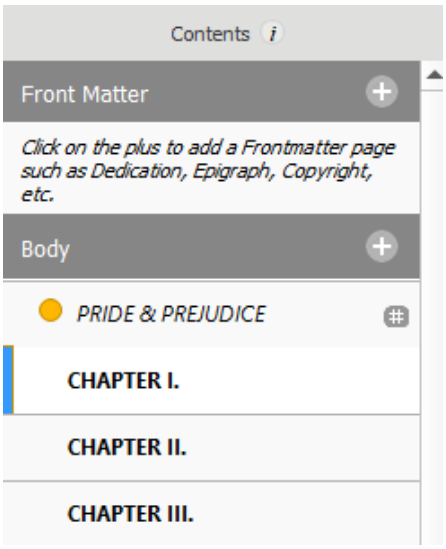

Figure 21. Kindle Create First Chapter Clicked

4. Click **Insert>Table of Contents**.

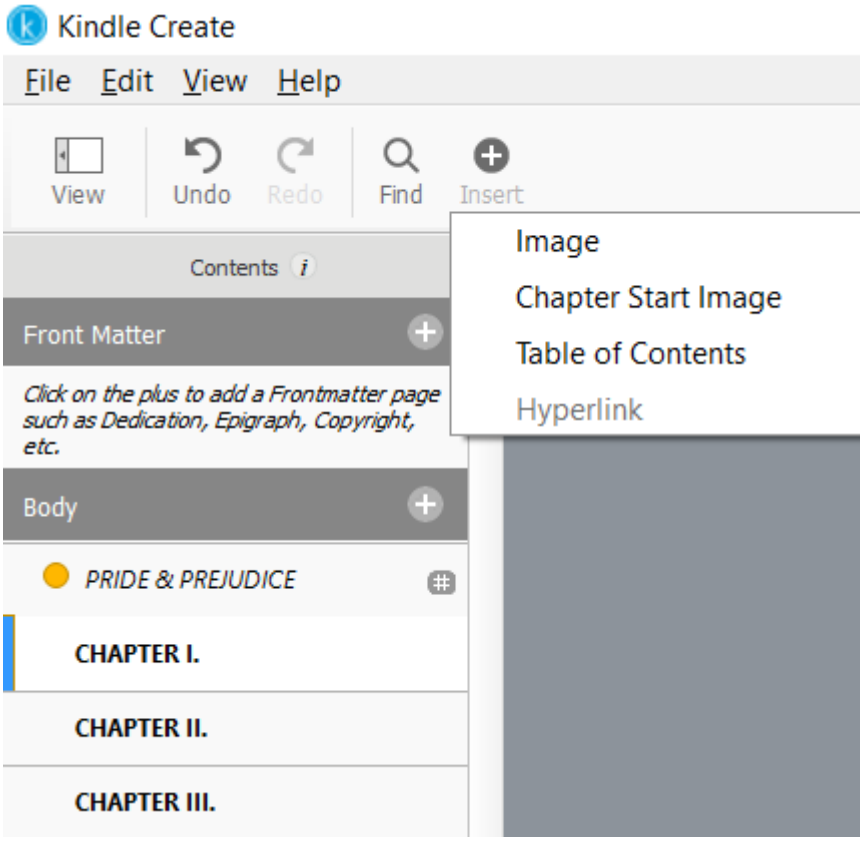

Figure 22. Kindle Create Insert Table of Contents

5. Click **OK**.

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4.2 Styling Your eBook

Now that you've created your eBook and created a TOC, you can update the look and feel of your content. Luckily, Kindle has prebuilt themes that streamline the process for you.

You will need:

- Kindle Create
- Your eBook

Follow the steps below to add a theme.

1. Open your eBook in Kindle Create.
2. Click **Theme**.

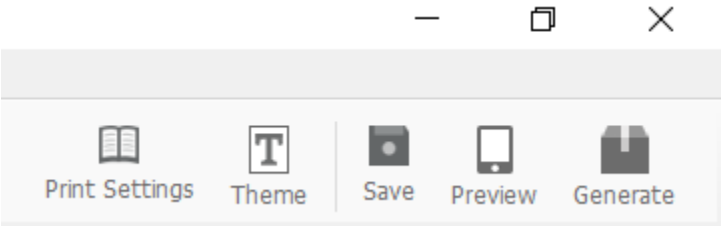

Figure 23. Kindle Create Theme Icon

1. The **Theme** dialog opens. Click your desired theme from the options.

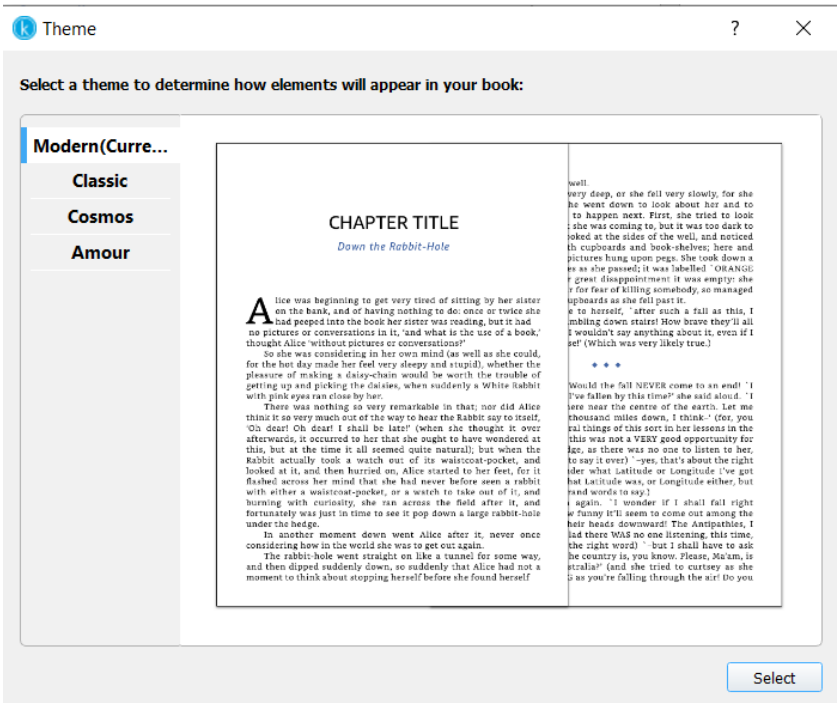

Figure 24. Kindle Create Theme

2. Click **Select**.

4.3 Previewing Your eBook

Now that you've styled your eBook, you can preview it to see how your content will look on different devices.

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You will need:

- Kindle Create
- Your eBook

Follow the steps below to preview your eBook.

1. Open your eBook in Kindle Create.
2. Click **Preview**.

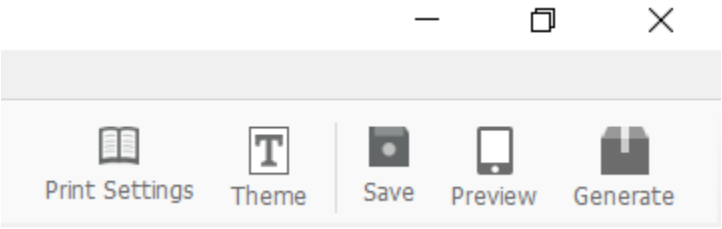

Figure 25. Kindle Create Preview Icon

3. The **Preview** dialog opens. Check for any changes you need to make.

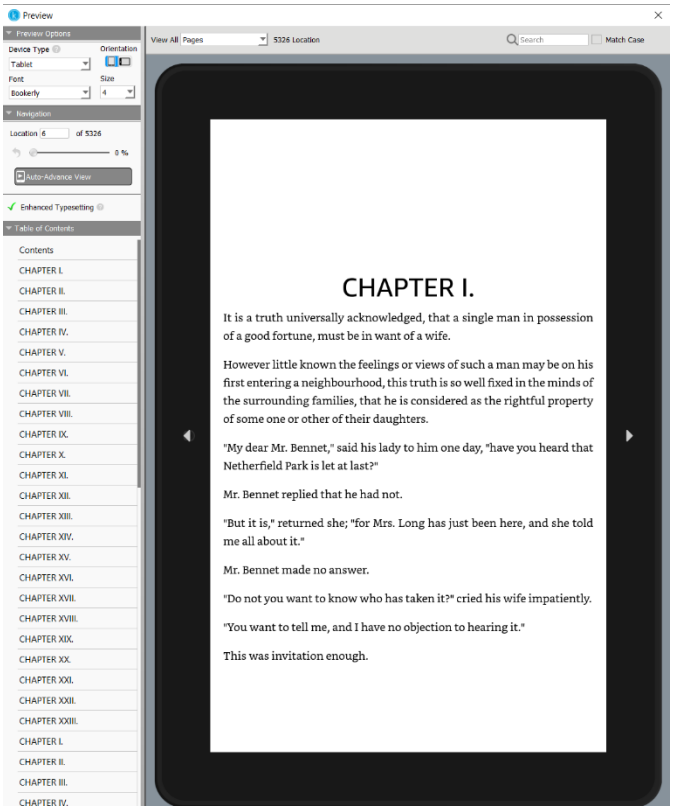

Figure 26. Kindle Create Preview

4.4 Generating a Publishable File (.kpf file)

Now that you've previewed your eBook, you can generate a .kpf file for Kindle.

You will need:

- Kindle Create

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- Your eBook

Follow the steps below to preview your eBook.

1. Open your eBook in Kindle Create.
2. Click **Generate**.

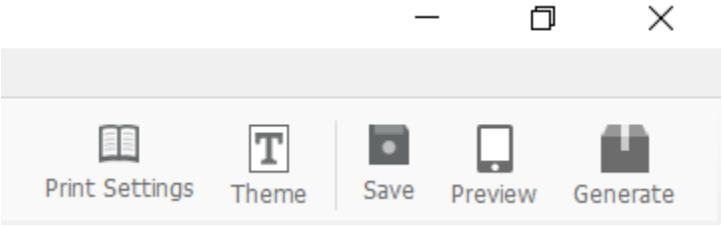

Figure 27. Kindle Create Generate Icon

3. The **Save File for Publication** dialog opens. Accept or change the file location and name.

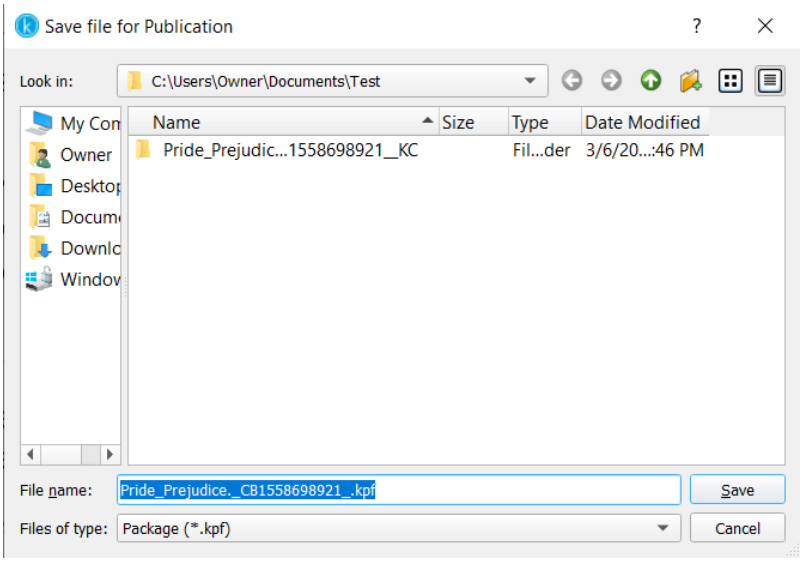

Figure 28. Kindle Create Save File for Publication

4. Click **Save**.
5. Click **OK**.

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5 Publishing to Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP)

5.1 Creating a Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) Account

Now that you've generated a .kpf file, you're ready to upload to Kindle. Before you upload, however, you first need to create a KDP account.

You will need:

- Your Amazon account or e-mail address
- Your mobile number
- Your mobile device
- Your address
- Your bank information
- Your tax information

Follow the steps below to create a KDP account.

1. Go to the following link: https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/
2. Locate the **Sign in with Your Amazon Account** heading.

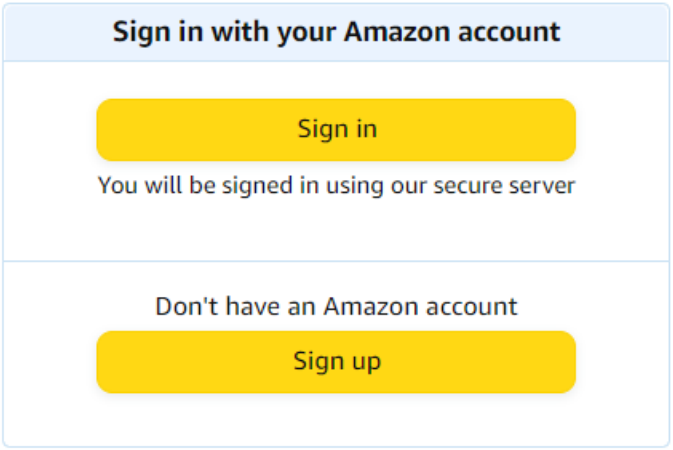

Figure 29. KDP Sign In

3. Click **Sign In** if you have an existing Amazon account. Otherwise, click **Sign Up**.

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4. Once you have completed the **Sign In** or **Sign Up**, you are taken to the **Terms and Conditions**. Click **Agree**.

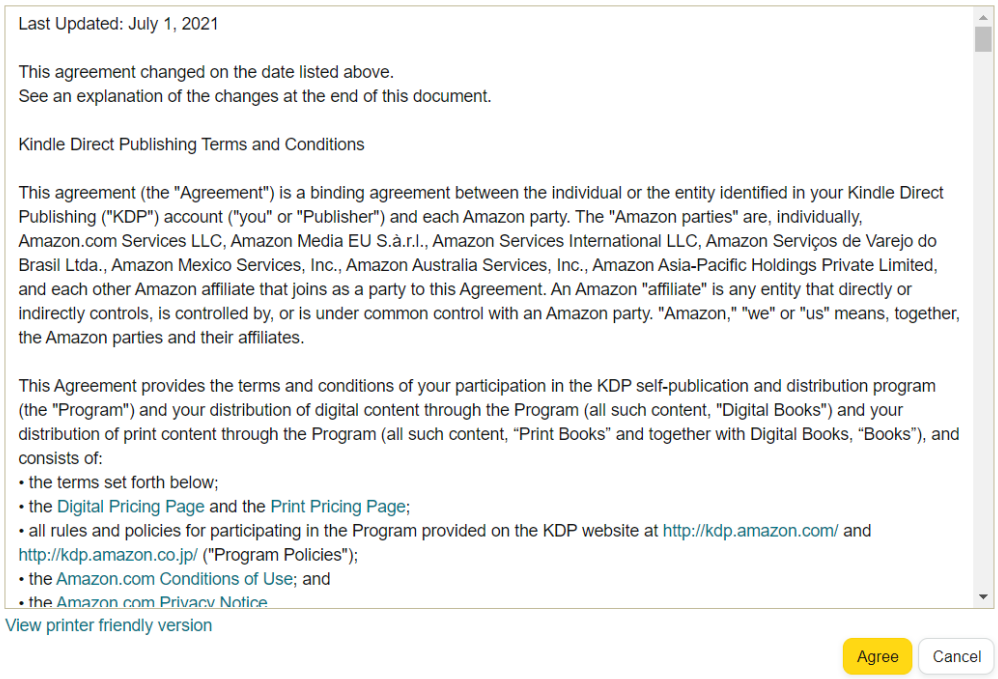

Figure 30. KDP Terms and Conditions

5. Locate the **Your Account Information Is Incomplete** warning. Click **Update Now**.

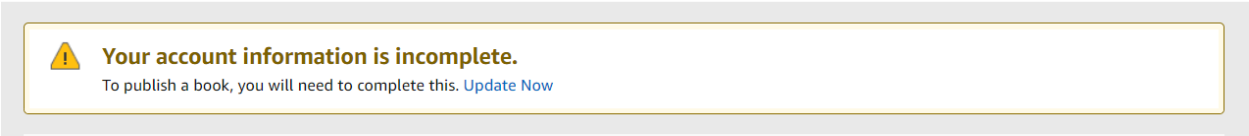

Figure 31. KDP Incomplete Account Information

6. You are taken to the **Two-Step Verification**. Enter the phone number where you would like to receive the One Time Password (OTP) and click **Send OTP**.

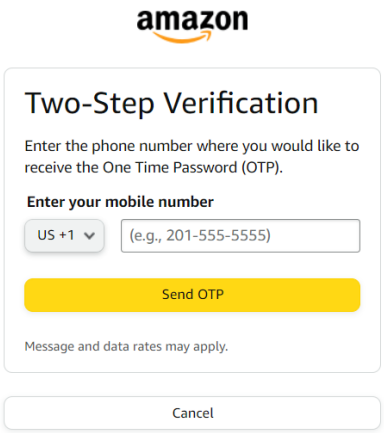

Figure 32. KDP Two-Step Verification

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7. Enter the OTP.
8. Once you have completed the **Two-Step Verification**, you are taken to **My Account**. Locate the **Which Country/Region Do You Live In?** heading.
9. Select your country or region from the **Country or Region** dropdown and enter your address.
10. Locate the **Getting Paid** heading.
11. Enter your bank information.
12. Locate the **Tax Information** heading.
13. Enter your tax information.
14. Click **Finished**.

5.2 Uploading Your Publishable File (.kpf) to Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP)

Now that you've generated a .kpf file and set up a KDP account, you can upload your .kpf file to KDP.

You will need:

- Your .kpf file

Follow the steps below to upload your .kpf file to KDP.

1. Go to your KDP account.
2. Click **Bookshelf**.
3. Locate the **Create a New Title** heading.

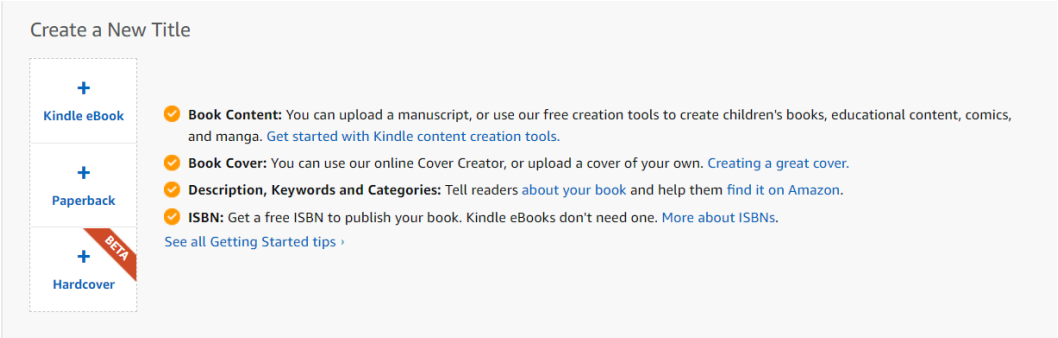

Figure 33. KDP Create a New Title

4. Click **Kindle eBook**.
5. You are taken to a page called **Edit eBook Details**. Enter your eBook details.
6. Click **Save and Continue**.
7. You are taken to a page called **Edit eBook Content**. Under the **Manuscript** heading click **Upload eBook Manuscript**.

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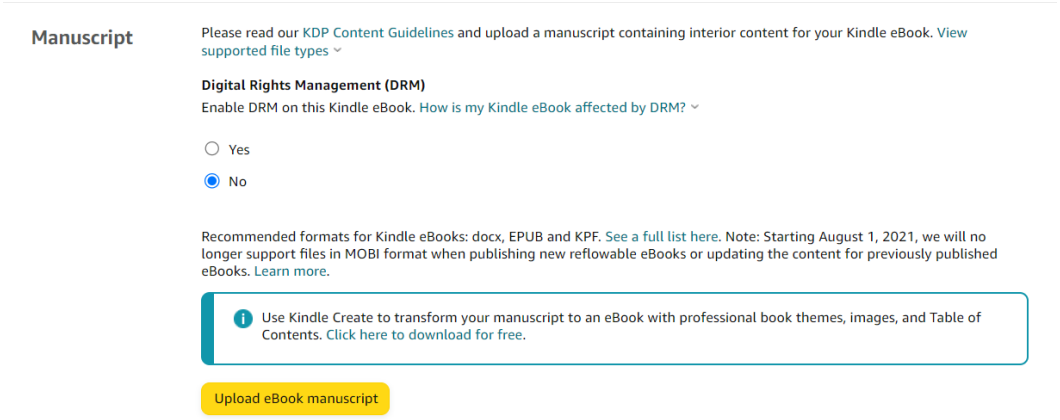

Figure 34. KDP Manuscript

8. Locate your .kpf file on your local hard drive, click your .kpf file, and click **Open.**
9. Under the **Kindle eBook Cover** heading, click **Launch Cover Creator** or **Upload a Cover You Already Have**.

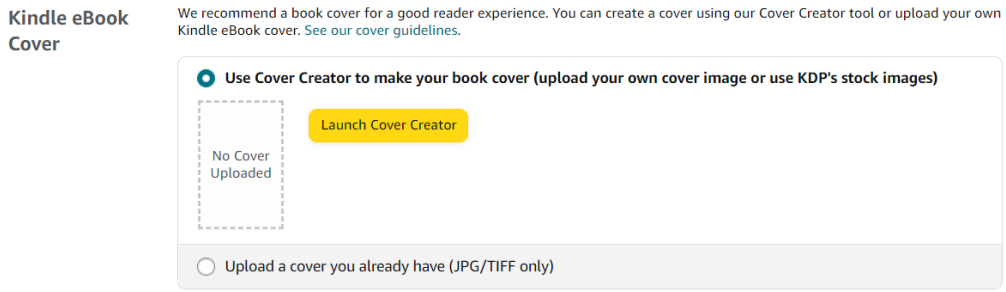

Figure 35. KDP Cover

10. Locate your cover image file on your local hard drive, click your cover image file, and click **Open.**
11. Click **Save and Continue**.
12. You are taken to a page called **edit eBook Pricing**. Enter your desired pricing information.
13. Click **Publish Your Kindle eBook.** Your book can take up to 72 hours to be available for purchase on Amazon.
14. You've done it! You're a published author!

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Glossary

This is a list of the terms, acronyms, and abbreviations used in this document.

Table 2. Terms, Acronyms, and Abbreviations

CPU	computer
eBook	electronic book
GB	gigabyte
GHz	gigahertz
KDP	Kindle Direct Publishing
OTP	one time password
PC	personal computer
RAM	random access memory
reflowable	adaptable to different layouts
TOC	table of contents

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