

# Reader Magnets for List Building

How to attract real readers to your list and your writing

Stacy Sowers



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I am not an attorney, accountant, or Fairy Godmother. There is no genie-in-a-bottle solution to become a 6- or 7-figure indie-author... and anyone who promises you that... well... they might also have a bridge in Brooklyn to sell you.

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# Dedication

This book (and this entire collection!) has been a long time in the making. And I simply could not have made it through this process and (finally!) achieved this dream with my Academy and these books without some truly dear and incredible people encouraging me along the way.

Cecilla, Michelle, Amanda, Lloyd, Ann – for your endless encouragement, and yes, even a few kicks in the backside to get it done. My life is better for the simple fact I can call you friends.

Barbara – my friend and confidante – your encouragement lifts me up, and hey, maybe one day we will help solve the world's woes!

As always, to my incredible son, who puts up with all the hours of me talking to myself as I work – I hope, if nothing else, I've shown you that it's 100% okay to follow your dreams and build a life that serves others and feeds your own soul, too.

To Evan at StoryOrigin – thank you for creating such an incredible tool for us indie authors, and all the work you put into continuously improving and growing it!

To everyone in the Author's Mojo Academy – mwah! Peace, love, and hugs, always.



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# What People are Saying

"Stacy at Author's Mojo does a great job of breaking down how to get your reader magnet done with simple, actionable steps to take at every point. If you're looking for great advice on how to complete your reader magnet look no further."

Amanda Kaye

<https://www.amandakayebooks.com/>

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"Stacy, the genius behind Author's Mojo, is a true Geek Goddess. As a highly skilled techy and author herself, she is uniquely qualified to understand and manage the challenges we authors face. Besides that, she's sensitive, caring, and supportive. I am so grateful to have her in my corner! Get Stacy in your corner too, then you can devote more time to writing!"

Barbara Snow

<https://www.barbarasnow.com>

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"The Author's Mojo Academy has given me a family I never knew I was missing. I dabbled in writing most of my life but only recently decided it was time to get serious about writing and publishing. I struggle financially every single month, but I make sure the money is there so I can have the support I NEED to make my dreams come true. I belong to umpteen writer groups on Facebook, and each one of them have great folks, decent advice, and lend support when it's needed. But it's nothing like Mojo and Stacy. The weekly accountability calls and check-ins make me realize when I don't keep my commitments and make my writing a priority. Plus, the website designed by them is SO MUCH better than I'd have been able to do on my own. I can call on Stacy for any problems I have with my site and if she can't fix it she can figure out who can. Stacy's down-to-earth quirky personality and sense of humor resonates with me and always brings a smile to my face."

C. N. Mobberly

<http://www.cnmobberly.com/>





# Introduction

I won't waste your time telling you how to *use* this book – you're smarter than the average bear (as we say here in West Virginia), and really, it's a how-to book; it's not that complicated. 😊

We will quickly go over what you can expect, and you can also download a full, printable version of the workbook here:

<https://www.authorsmojo.com/reader-magnets-for-list-building/>

## What to expect

From brainstorming, planning, writing, editing, formatting, and putting your magnet into action, we'll be going through the entire process together. This is a boots-on-the-ground book, just like the corresponding course in Author's Mojo Academy. You will be working throughout each of the Unit chapters.

And yes – we'll be putting in quite a bit of work throughout this book.

We'll be starting from the beginning, (what a reader magnet is, how it can help reach the right people, different magnets for different circumstances), all the way through the finish line of adding new subscribers.

Yes, even if you have **no** budget. I've designed this entire project to be zero-cost, but if you have some budget, parts can be outsourced.

## How long will it take?

That depends 100% on you. On your schedule and the amount of work and time you are willing and able to dedicate.

If you can devote large chunks of time and get the writing part knocked out fast, you can build a quality reader magnet in a week or two.

BUT – just like with all writing projects, work at your own pace and at a level comfortable for YOU.

We will break down the entire magnet process into small, actionable chunks so you can make consistent progress and see that forward momentum.

The “Unit” chapters focus on the actionable items. Each section will have worksheet pages. The print version of this book comes with the worksheet pages included. For my eBook readers, you can also get the entire worksheet printable here:

<https://www.authorsmojo.com/reader-magnets-for-list-building/>

That being said – let’s get started!







# Understanding Reader Magnets

A reader magnet is essentially an ethical bribe:

- A freebie
- A giveaway
- An exclusive gift
- A sign-up bonus...

You can call them by many names, but at the end of the day, it boils down to one thing:

*Giving your potential fans a compelling reason to share their email address with you.*

BUT – we want to take that one step further.

We're giving them an irresistible reason to share their email address with you, AND give them a taste of your writing to start them on the path of becoming a *lifelong fan*.

People are inundated with junk email. So, it's our responsibility to not waste their time. These are people we hope to turn into raving, loyal, lifelong fans of our books. We want to treat them with respect.

Being respectful means, in part, not wasting their time. We need to ensure the first "freebie" they get from us is one that makes them want to stick around – which gives us more opportunities to build the relationship and show them we are a writer they want to rave about.

## How do we do that?

The best way to turn a potential reader into a fan is to give them a story they can’t put down – because after all, we’re authors, that’s what we do... and they’re readers, that’s what they’re after.

Reader magnets can be anything from coloring pages, a criminal’s dossier (for mysteries/thrillers), a giveaway for an Amazon gift card, a short story, novelette, novella, or even an entire novel.

Each can be effective and serves a purpose. The key is knowing which type to use to build a solid relationship with your new reader.

The type of reader magnet we will focus on here is a story that ranges somewhere between novelette and novella length.

## Why?

We are trying to foster a *new relationship* with a person who is a reader, whom we want to turn into a fan of our writing.

We’ve all heard the saying, “you only get one shot to make a great first impression”, right?

Think of this in that same light. We want our new reader to know, without a doubt, they gave up their email address for a good reason. We want to give them enough to make them **want more**. And what better way to hook a reader than with a great story, right? Think about your favorite author and that anticipation you felt when anxiously awaiting their next book. That is what we want to do for our readers with our magnet.

Offering coloring pages or a character dossier is **not** enough to do that by itself — remember, we are attracting readers who have never heard of us, our world, or our characters. So, while those are great magnets, they’re better suited as gifts for people who have already read some of our stories – not for attracting someone who has no investment in our stories.

**PRO TIP:** Other magnets (coloring pages, digital wallpapers, etc.) are fantastic bonuses to place in your book’s back matter to get a reader who may not be on your email list to sign up – or to continue building your relationship with readers already on your list.

Similarly, a giveaway that centers on swag, things like Amazon gift cards, or even a Kindle eReader is better suited for your VIP readers – meaning much later in the relationship building, not on the first contact. We’re aiming to attract more than the “freebie seekers”.

Think about it – how many times does someone enter a contest only because they want the PRIZE, not because they have any real interest in the person or company offering the prize.

***“UGH! So, I have to write a whole book, that I will never make a dime from? WTH?”***

Yep, that’s an actual question I’ve gotten when talking about this type of reader magnet.

Being an indie author is not a get-rich-quick scheme. There are rarely overnight success stories. It is a long-game.

Reader magnets are a long-game strategy that can help all of your successive book launches and releases.

Plus, if you wanted to get fancy, you could do instant upsells and cross-promotions with your other books – but the technical details of how to set that up is outside the scope of what we’ll be learning here today.

You could even put your novella for sale on Amazon and other retailers – so long as it is NOT in KDP Select, which prevents you from giving away over 10% of your eBook anywhere else.

However, it is better to make it perma-free... but more on that later, we don’t want to get ahead of ourselves.

Onward and upward!





## What About Nonfiction?

Don't worry – we haven't forgotten about you nonfiction folks! As it happens, I know a little about writing a nonfiction book. 😊

Overall, the process works the same with only minor differences, which we'll cover as we go along.

In some ways, nonfiction is easier than fiction.

- You have a single topic
- You (probably) are already well-versed on said topic
- Being an authority on the topic, you have knowledge of what your readers need
- You can use all the above to create a wonderful intro to the topic that is still beneficial for your readers

There are two main areas where your process will differ from our friends in fiction:

- Unit 1 – Your Magnet Idea
- Unit 6 – Formatting (only because nonfiction books can **sometimes** include sections, subsections, and “printable” pages that standard fiction does not)



## UNIT 1 – Your Magnet Idea

For our **fiction magnet**, we will focus on a novelette to novella length work. This allows you a great amount of flexibility, as that ranges from about 7,500 words to about 50,000 words (which is where a full-length novel begins).

For our **nonfiction magnet**, your length will vary. Some helpful nonfiction books can be as short as 30-40 pages (or around 5,000 words), while others are 200 pages.

For either fiction or nonfiction there is one simple thing to keep in mind:

*Don't over-complicate your magnet.*

In keeping with our K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple, Scribe) method, do exactly that. Keep it simple. Use the amount of words / pages you need to tell your story or provide usable, actionable help to your reader.

### Fiction Magnets Tips

**What is your genre?** Your magnet needs to be in the genre you are known for as an author.

If you are a horror writer, don't create a contemporary romance story – you'd be attracting the wrong audience.

*But, Stacy... there could be crossover and overlap, people like more than one genre!*

Sure, I like several genres of books, and I'm sure many other readers do, too. But, remember, your job is to K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple, Scribe!) Readers know what they want in a book; our job is to provide the best story we can for those readers in our genre.

By writing a magnet outside your genre, you risk misleading them about what stories they can expect from you.

You are putting in the work, effort, and time to create a reader magnet for the purpose of building an engaged list of readers looking for stories *just like yours* so you can woo them into becoming lifelong fans, right? Make the choice a no-brainer!

### **Do you already have a book / books published or about to be published?**

Consider a prequel. What story led up to the events that are, or will be, taking place in your book?

Backstory can also be a fantastic place to start. While similar to a prequel, backstory is focused more on the story of one individual from your current or upcoming book. Main characters are the most obvious choice, but consider a secondary character. Based on my own novel writing experience, the further into the story I went, the more I realized that favorite characters were not the main characters. I'm sure you can relate.

A backstory of a specific character or event in the world you've built can be a fantastic lead-in to your series. Build an incredible lead magnet prequel for a series that readers like yours want to read, and it can lead to substantial growth, not only of your list, but of sales and future launches within that series.

### **No current or upcoming book or series?**

That's okay! Go back to your base genre.

Your magnet does *not* need to be a prequel or have anything to do with your current book or series. Just make sure it is in the same genre so you are attracting the *right* people to your mailing list.

Take some time to brainstorm what your fiction reader magnet could be. Your characters

(typically) don't exist in a vacuum – what's their story beyond the book you have or are going to publish? Besides the main character, who is your favorite character? What about the antagonist? The villain has a story, too – and a well-fleshed-out bad guy is often the hero of their own story, from their perspective, at least! How did your characters meet? Did they have a fun adventure you mentioned in the story but didn't get a chance to describe?

## Nonfiction Magnet Tips

What is the nonfiction topic of your book? If you did not do this exercise before you started writing it, use the worksheet to do it: jot down notes on everything you know about your topic. Nothing is off limits. And it does not have to be covered in the book you're writing! (in fact, bonus if it's not – because that's something you could cover in your magnet!)

Think about what topics are *related* to your topic. Brainstorm or mind-map it out.

Writing a self-help book on time management? What is something that you could write a short book on that would give a reader a "quick win"? That would make a wonderful magnet and encourage them to read more in your full-length book.

**People love quick wins** – something they can do, learn, or implement easily and quickly that gives them results. The upside? They've gotten that "instant gratification" and are now more inclined to buy the rest of your information on the topic!

Generally, if a reader has picked up a nonfiction book about a specific topic, they are looking for one of several things:

- Education
- Motivation
- Inspiration
- Or sometimes all the above

Look at your current nonfiction book. Does it fall more into one of those three areas? Identify which area it relates to, then brainstorm a short read that you could build in one of the other two areas.

For example, if your book is heavy on the inspiration side (i.e., how you overcame obesity and regained your health)... your magnet could be a quick win (education & motivation) on very

easy steps your reader can implement right now to start their own inspirational journey.

You also have some additional options here that may not be as relevant for fiction readers, such as

- A free audiobook version of your magnet (with some inexpensive equipment which you may already have, and some free downloadable software, this is easy to do)
- A free video that you could put on YouTube and your website
- Checklists and worksheets

Think back to when you were a beginner in your topic (none of us start as experts!). What were some of the things you were most curious about? What are some things you know now that you wish you would have known when you started?

You're only limited by your imagination and by what you think would be beneficial to your reader.

Remember: quick wins – something that is useful and actionable for your reader.

## More Magnet Brainstorming Tips for Fiction or Nonfiction

Still not sure? Get a magnet buddy. Recruit one of your author friends to do this project with you. Brainstorm and bounce ideas off one another, then hold each other accountable for getting it done.

Or, have a beta reader that you adore? Pick their brain! Tell them you are thinking of writing a short book either based in your story world (or on your nonfiction topic) and get their ideas. As a thank you, name another character after them, or give them a special 'thank you' message in the acknowledgements.

What about all the content you may have edited out of your current / past books?

Or the hundred ideas of future stories you have jotted down in a notebook somewhere?

The main idea is to have that personal introduction to you and your writing. Get a new reader hooked on what you offer, and they are no longer a stranger. They are now – to use a marketing term – your *"warm market"*, and more predisposed to wanting what you offer in the future.



If you are reading the print version of this book, take some time and use the next page to brainstorm your own reader magnet ideas. EBook readers, refer to your workbook for your brainstorming sheet.

You can grab your copy of the entire printable workbook here:

<https://www.authorsmojo.com/reader-magnets-for-list-building/>



## UNIT 2 - Planning & Plotting

Whether you are a plotter, a pantsler, or somewhere in between (I am a die-hard pantsler myself!), you need to have a *plan* for your writing project.

Planning your book is not the same thing as working up a formal outline, though creating an outline can certainly be a part of the process.

In this unit, we'll be:

- Using planning principles to determine how quickly you can complete your project
- Factoring in your real life as an integral part of the planning process
- Getting the basic game plan for the structure of your magnet
- Taking a quick look at different outlining methods and getting it done (Plotters and Plantsers pay, listen up!)

The words planning, plotting, and outlining often conjure up images of strict formal outlines like the ones we learned about in school. You know the ones, with the Roman numerals, sub-points and all the strict rules that came along with that concept.

As creatives, (*looking at you pantsers and plantsers!*), facing a rigid structure, or even those rigid-sounding terms causes many of us to resist. We raise the drawbridge, we man the ramparts, and we prepare for battle. No formal outline for us! No sir!

Here's what to remember: for our purposes here, we are using these terms loosely. If you are a

dyed-in-the-wool plotter, then you already know your preferred method for outlining. If you are a pantsers or plantser, then just think of the terms we use here as a way to simplify the action-items we'll be working through in this Unit. I also use the simplified term "story" meaning the *thing you will be writing* – whether that is fiction or nonfiction.

I'll refer back to the Keep It Simple, Scribe method... *don't over-complicate what need not be complicated.*

## Not sure where you fall on the plotter-pantsers spectrum?

That's okay, too! Some writers just seem to fall right into what works for them, they've always had a knack for blurting out a story off the cuff, or they dearly loved taking outlined notes in school, right down to the Roman numerals, proper indentations, and the works!

But the rest of us have to figure that out as we learn and grow as writers. Each writer is unique, just as each of their writing rituals (and 'planning' methods is unique).

Two pieces of advice if you aren't sure:

- Just start writing — the more you write and the longer you are at this "indie-author career" thing, the clearer your process will become. Note what seems to work for you. Jot down the circumstances of your writing session where you were "in the groove". You'll start to see the patterns emerge over time.
- If you feel you fall more on one side or the other of the spectrum, when starting your next writing project, try the opposite planning approach. Plotter? Try skipping the formal outline and start with chapter one. Pantsers? Ask a writer friend or mentor what method they use and try it on; see how it fits. If it doesn't fit... try on a different one.

The main thing to remember here: do not allow the search for your perfect planning method to become a procrastination tool!

Now, we have a magnet to write – let's get to work.

## Planning Your Magnet

**How many words will your magnet be?** Good question. If you have written several books in your genre, and have your magnet idea thought out, you may already have a general idea of

the word count.

If not, no worries! Remember, we are aiming for a novelette to novella length. Which puts us between 7,500 words — up to 50,000 words (beyond which, you are in full-length novel territory). So, if you aren't certain, keep it simple and split the difference.

If you are splitting the difference, use the number: 28,750. (The middle ground of our novelette to novella range.) If you have a general idea based on your past writings of the length, then use that number.

***This number is not set in stone, and will change.*** The reason we are looking at this first is only for days-to-completion estimates. The final word counts will change as you get further into plotting, and writing, your story.

**The key to this is understanding one critical fact:** *Your word length needs to be exactly the amount of words it takes to tell your story, no more, no less.*

**What is my expected finish date for my first draft?** Let's look at three key pieces of info to calculate your estimated completion date. But first...

It may seem like an unnecessary step, but knowing an estimated completion date can be critical for holding yourself accountable, and for knowing there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Just as important, early in your writing career building a strong writing habit is essential for your productivity and how quickly you can achieve your goals.

**How many days per week will you carve out time for writing?** Once you decide this – mark them on your calendar. Tell your family and loved ones. Instead of telling them not to disturb you during those times, ask for their help! Have them hold you accountable to your goal for that day.

**How many words will you commit to writing on those days?** If you are familiar with how many words you can comfortably write in a day, this is easy to determine. If not, then you may want to start with a low number such as 1,000 words until you can get a more accurate estimation.

Again, remember... your plan can and will change based on many things, your daily word count is one of those.

For the sake of our example's simplicity, we will say our total word count will be 28,750. We will write every single day, and our daily word count will be 2,000 words.

$$28,750 \div 2,000 = 14.375 \text{ days}$$

If today is January 1<sup>st</sup>, and we are writing 2,000 words each day, then our magnet first-draft will be finished on January 15<sup>th</sup>.

But, that simple math is making several assumptions:

- You are *only* writing 2,000 words each day
- You have *nothing else planned* in your real life that can take time away from your writing, vacations, day-job, appointments, etc.
- You will write every day *regardless* of other life happenings

**Before you calculate the final completion date of your draft, look at your calendar.** Do you have any appointments coming up? Any travel or holidays? Any other life events that could supersede your writing time on any given day?

If you have scheduled events coming up, are you okay with it taking a little longer? Could you work to increase your daily word count instead?

Now, this seems like it's complicated for just coming up with your plan, right?

**Here's why it's important:**

One of the most important (and hardest) lessons I've learned as an indie-author is learning to be flexible... to go with the flow... to *Keep It Simple, Scribe*.

I won't proclaim to know all the brain-science behind why we beat ourselves up when we don't hit a *perceived* deadline, but we do. *Oh, boy, do we!*

So, keep in mind, this is only for planning. To give you a clear *estimation* of when you expect to be moving on to the next steps of your magnet project. The numbers – and consequently the final completion date – can, and likely will, change. *And that is okay!*

Now... enough woo-woo mindset talk... back to work, you!

## Plotting Your Story

This section of Unit 2 will vary wildly depending on your personal methods.

If you fall more on the pantsier or pantsier end of the spectrum, your plotting may look as simple as:

*My heroine finds out she has magic, learns she has to stop some big, bad evil from destroying everything she loves, learns to come to grips with her powers, and tries to save the world.*

If you are more on the plotter end of that spectrum, then you likely already have a process you love and use for your plotting method.

Given that we are after a specific goal – having a completed magnet that we can use to build our email list – if you have a method that works (or works well enough for now), then this is not the time to up-end your entire process to try out new plotting or pantsing methods.

(In fact, some might say if a writer were to choose *right now* to learn a brand new way of plotting, it may just be a procrastination method... just sayin')

That being said, if you want to learn other methods of plotting out your story, there are many options for that – and most writers, after they have been writing for a period, will take bits and pieces from several methodologies to create their own hybrid method that ***works for them***.

**Remember – the “best” plotting method is the one that works for *you*.**

So, get yourself over to the workbook planning sheet, and get to work!

<https://www.authorsmojo.com/reader-magnets-for-list-building/>



## UNIT 3 – Get to Writing!

Ironically, the Unit of our project that will take the longest to complete is also the shortest in the book. Go figure.

So far we've:

- Worked through your game plan
- Set your anticipated schedule and completion date
- And you've put in the work for plotting out your story.

Now it's time to get your story out of your head and onto the page.

Here are some tips to try on for size to help make the process smooth and efficient:

- The purpose of the first draft is to get the whole story out onto the page – save the editing and polishing for later.
- Don't get caught up on making each bit perfect – that is what the editing / revising process is for.
- If you get stuck in a specific section, do what the pros do and put in a placeholder, i.e., "*[some great battle here]*" then come back to complete that bit later. This prevents you from getting hung-up on a small piece and allows you to continue writing without breaking your flow.

Here are some additional tips to help keep you writing, not only for your reader magnet project, but to help you build a consistent writing routine you can use for years to come.

- Remove distractions. Social media, email, all of it! I don't need to explain how easy it is to get sucked down the rabbit-hole with these.
- Try different times of day – once you find the one that feels right, protect that time slot ferociously.
- Try different places. It may sound strange, but it's true – when I'm writing fiction, I prefer the couch or outside; nonfiction is only written at my desk.
- Try with music, or without. Instrumental works great for me and you can do this for free by creating a YouTube playlist. (Check out my fantasy writing playlist here: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLE-7Fu9NvN\\_gVpdUG-IKrE0X3mqq73xcO](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLE-7Fu9NvN_gVpdUG-IKrE0X3mqq73xcO) )
- Start tracking how many words you write in an hour. A spreadsheet is great, or even just a note jotted down. It won't be consistent every time, but it will show you a pattern which allows you to plan out writing projects more accurately.
- CREATE YOUR WRITING RITUAL. This acts as a trigger for your brain to switch into writing mode.
  - Are you a morning writer? Tie your writing ritual into your morning routine. Wake up, brush teeth, coffee, meditate, write. (Or whatever works for you!)
  - Are you an evening writer? Switch it to evening routine: finish dinner, get kids ready for bed, prep for next day, write.

"I only write when I am inspired. Fortunately I  
am inspired at 9 o'clock every morning."

— *William Faulkner*

Use the writing process that works for you. Writers are unique – what works for me may not work for you. Use what works, discard what doesn't.

Now, go do what you do best, writer... get that story written!





## UNIT 4 – Editing & Revising

Congratulations on finishing your first draft! Take a moment and celebrate such a huge accomplishment!

Celebrating over? You good? Okay, next up...

Editing is one of those areas you can do yourself, or you can outsource if you have the budget. Even if you are hiring an editor, you still want to do some initial editing yourself before turning it over to them. Plot holes and story inconsistencies, even basic grammar and spelling can be cleaned up before sending to your editor.

If you are outsourcing, after doing your initial self-edit, then you can sit back, relax for a minute and wait until you get the suggested edits back from your editor. Also, you can move on to the next Unit, your book cover.

**I strongly recommend using a professional editor for your work.** If you have a budget for it, I'll send ya' to my guy, Lloyd, over at LTT Editorial Services. He's thorough, efficient, and brilliant (in my opinion at least!) And, because he is so awesome, he's offering a whopping 15% discount to my readers.

You can find him here: <https://litteditorial.com/>

And mention coupon code: **MojoLife** to claim your discount.

Now, if you don't have the wiggle room in the budget for an editor right now, that's okay!

Many writers don't, especially when they are first getting started.

**PRO TIP:** Even if you are outsourcing your editing to a professional, you should always do preliminary editing of your own. It can save you time and money.

This is where tech, and some good, old-fashioned homework can help.

First, the tech.

## Using Tech for Editing

There are two big players in the editing / proofreading game:

- ProWritingAid
- Grammarly

There are others, such as the grammar and spellchecker inside the software you use, and apps like Hemingway App. But, ProWritingAid and Grammarly are the main ones writers use.

My personal software of choice is ProWritingAid. You can use their web editor software for free, the caveat is, you can only copy and paste in a certain number of words at a time, which for longer pieces, can add to the time it takes for your editing phase.

They have a paid version which is inexpensive, with both a subscription-based and lifetime price offering (which I recommend). With the paid version, you can use the web-editor without the restriction, or download their software to use directly on your computer.

The ProWritingAid software will work with all major word processing programs... AND it even works directly with your Scrivener projects – a huge bonus!

If you are interested in ProWritingAid, you can try it for free here:

<https://prowritingaid.com/freegrammarchecker?afid=4852>

They also have a Microsoft Word add-on, and a newer add-on for Google Docs, which you can learn more about here:

- Microsoft Word: <https://prowritingaid.com/en/App/Office?afid=4852>

- Google Docs: <https://prowritingaid.com/en/App/GoogleDocs?afid=4852>

FULL TRANSPARENCY DISCLAIMER: These are affiliate links to help support **Author's Mojo Academy** – but will not change your purchase price if you buy the professional version.

While I base the steps below off of ProWritingAid, Grammarly (and others) work similarly.

## 1st Pass

A fantastic way to find holes in your plot is to reverse outline your book. Yes, this works even for us pantsers and planters!

It's simple: make a super-fast bullet point outline for each chapter of your book. Not every single thing that happens, but the major events from each chapter. Review it with a critical eye to see if any glaring plot holes or problems jump out at you.

Since sometimes those pesky plot holes can spur major rewrites, it is good to do this first, before moving on to more fine-grained editing such as grammar and flow.

## 2nd Pass

The next pass of your self-editing is the tech component. This will be the spelling & grammar checker within your software, then a program such as ProWritingAid or Grammarly.

The spelling and grammar checker within your preferred writing software will catch the "big oops" items: the obvious misspellings, and a fair bit of the grammar issues.

ProWritingAid or Grammarly will find many more enhancement areas, including style issues, readability, and more fine-tuned grammar tweaks.

**PRO TIP:** Before you use any software-based checker or make any other change to your original manuscript, save an extra, backup copy. You probably won't need it, but it's (1) better to be safe than sorry, and (2) if you decide later you want to change something back (or just refer to it for fun), you'll have the unaltered copy. When you save your backup copy – remember to put "BACKUP-Date" in the file name so you won't have any questions which copy is which. Scrivener users – make friends with the snapshot feature!

## 3rd Pass

For the third pass through, read your manuscript out loud, or, even better, have it read out loud to you.

The best way to do this is to have a friend read it back to you, however, if that’s not convenient... tech to the rescue!

Windows and Mac both have built-in accessibility features designed for low-vision, and no-vision users. You can use this feature to have your computer read your manuscript out loud. In fact, some word processors, such as Microsoft Word, have built-in narrators, as well.

If you don’t like the voices in the built-in versions, there is software available, such as NaturalReaders by NaturalSoft, which offers voice alternatives. They provide a free version and paid versions.

You can learn more about NaturalReaders here: <https://www.naturalreaders.com/index.html>

Your listening attentiveness can grow weary and distracted during this phase, so I recommend working through this pass in chunks — whether that is a few pages or a chapter at a time. You can even do this while performing other tasks, but make sure you can pause the read-back and make changes or notes to come back to that location in your manuscript to fix any awkward phrasing.

## 4th Pass

If you’ve ever published a book and then smacked your head when you found a typo or other issue after the fact – you’ll know exactly why this phase is so powerful.

Put your manuscript in a different format, on a different device, or print it out.

We are all familiar with the “*how did I miss that!?*” syndrome — the one where we can overlook an obvious typo a dozen times, right?

The reason is that we are so close to our work, and because we *know* what we are trying to say, our mind doesn’t always pick up on the mistake.

But, putting your work into another medium, such as printing or putting a copy on your tablet

to review, can allow you to pinpoint issues that may have gotten overlooked inside your writing software.

Remember – you aren't concerned with formatting issues at this stage, you're still working on the story edits.

Writing software like Scrivener can compile directly to an ePub or MOBI format. Google Docs also allows you to download your manuscript as an ePub. If you use FreeOffice or LibreOffice, both will allow you to save as an ePub, as well.

At the time of this writing, Microsoft Word does not export to ePub or MOBI. But you can still do this with just a couple extra steps.

- Put your manuscript into your Google Docs – then download as ePub and sync/transfer to your tablet.
- Use a free software called Calibre to create an ePub / MOBI file from your Word document.

You can find Calibre here: <https://calibre-ebook.com/download>

**PRO TIP:** An easy way to get your “proof” ePub or MOBI onto your tablet is simply to email it to yourself. Check your email from the tablet, and retrieve the attached file from there.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Pass

Another trick for seeing your manuscript with fresh eyes, if you don't want to print or export it to your tablet, is to read it backwards.

Yes, *backwards*.

Start at the very end of your story and read each sentence individually. It works because your mind is accustomed to reading (and knowing) your story from beginning to end. Reading it in reverse breaks that familiarity and allows your brain to look at it from a different perspective.

## Revising & Editing - Summing it up

Yes, self-editing can seem like a huge amount of work... and it is. Being so close to our own work makes editing it more of a challenge; it's much more difficult to be unbiased and

objective. That is the reason having a professional editor that you mesh well with is so critical.

But, especially when authors are just getting started in their careers, having a professional editor isn't always an option – and that should *not* be an obstacle that prevents you from publishing.

In the indie-author industry (like so many others), you must pay... and that payment comes in the form of either money, or time. Can't afford an editor right now? No problem, put in the time and work yourself. Side bonus? You'll likely improve your writing skills much faster and hone your craft all the while.



## UNIT 5 – Book Cover

Just like editing, your book cover can be outsourced if you have the budget – but don't let that stop you from moving forward!

Especially for your reader magnet.

Your book cover is a critical component for visibility and the initial attention-grab (and subsequent sales) on retail sites like Amazon and others – but, you have more flexibility with your magnet.

*Are you saying I can get away with a “lesser” cover?*

*Yep – kinda... sorta. (but not exactly)*

**You still want the best cover possible for your magnet book. Period.** But do you need to drop hundreds of dollars on a custom-designed cover? No. Not unless you have that built into your author-business budget. This is where pre-made covers can truly shine — and often at a fraction of the cost.

First, let's take a quick look at what you need (and don't need) for your cover:

- Your cover does not need to match exactly to your story. It is not a visual retelling of your story — it is a marketing tool designed to grab the attention of your readers.
- Hit your genre trends. With a few minutes of research, you can learn exactly what the current trends — and consequently your reader expectations — are in your specific

genre.

- Ensure the cover is still readable in a small, thumbnail-size image.
- Choose a design that suits your genre and story, that fits with your budget, and still is a high-quality presentation of your reader magnet.

Pre-made covers are a great option if you have a small budget. Below are some of my favorite options for pre-made covers on a budget, but check the various writing groups and your author friends on social media for more suggestions.

- MoorBooks Design – [www.moorbooksdesign.com](http://www.moorbooksdesign.com)
- Book Cover 4 U – [www.bookcover4u.com](http://www.bookcover4u.com)
- Atlantis Book Design – [www.Atlantisbookdesign.com](http://www.Atlantisbookdesign.com)
- Epic Fantasy Covers – [www.epicfantasycovers.com](http://www.epicfantasycovers.com)
- Enchanted Whispers – [www.enchanted-whispers.com/](http://www.enchanted-whispers.com/)

**PRO TIP:** if you don't see what you're looking for, put out a short description of your book and what you're willing to pay in the book cover marketplaces on Facebook and let designers show you any covers they think might be a good fit.

## Canva DIY or Editable Pre-made

Another option for covers on a budget is Canva. There are a couple different options you have when using Canva for an eBook cover:

- DIY
- Canva editable pre-made

The first step in creating a DIY cover is to get the base image you will use for your cover. There are some great royalty-free images on the following websites:

- Pixabay.com
- Unsplash.com
- Pexels.com
- Freeimages.com
- Stocksnap.io



As always, make sure you are being conscientious about the images you use. I am not an attorney, but I can advise you to be very certain the images you are choosing to use are licensed for common-use, or freely available without license restrictions. You can also purchase images from other sites which offer licensed (and sometimes a bigger selection and higher quality) of images.

These can include sites such as:

- [Stock.adobe.com](https://www.adobe.com/stock)
- [Shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com)
- [DepositPhotos.com](https://www.depositphotos.com)

Once you have found your base image, follow these steps to create your new cover in Canva:

1. Go to the website [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com)
2. Sign into your Canva account, or create a new account.
3. In the search box near the top of the page, type in: "book", and select the book cover option that displays in the suggested list.
4. If you are making a DIY cover, and have already found your image, click on uploads on the left sidebar to upload the image.
5. Or, you can browse the Canva editable pre-made covers that will display near the left side of the screen. At the time of this writing you can browse them by genre.
6. The pre-made options will vary in cost from **free** to several dollars.
7. Add or change your book title and author name.
8. In the upper-right, click on the Download button.
9. Download the PDF, and the JPG / PNG versions. This way, you'll have whichever format you need for the task you're using it for later.

## Advanced DIY

Another DIY option for users who want more fine-grained control and design options for their cover is to create your cover using a graphics software such as PhotoShop or GIMP.

While Photoshop is a paid software from Adobe, GIMP is a free, open-source alternative.

We won't be going through the step-by-step of how to create an advanced cover using GIMP, because that could take an entire book, but here's a summary of how you can get started:

- Create a new file in GIMP and use the custom sizing 2560 x 1600 (the recommended size provided by Amazon for eBook covers)
- Create a layer for your chosen image.
- Create your title and author name layer.
- Save as JPG for smallest file size.

There are many tutorials on YouTube that go into more detail on creating book covers in GIMP or PhotoShop, up to and including advanced techniques such as photo-bashing, compositing, and more.

## Outsourcing a Custom Designed Cover

If your budget allows and you choose to have a custom-designed cover, contact your preferred cover designer as early in your project as possible so they have enough time to complete the project. Many in-demand designers can be booked up as far as a year in advance, and making a custom cover is not an instantaneous process.



## UNIT 6 - Formatting

The good news about formatting for a reader magnet is you don't need to worry about print-version issues like margins, gutters, page-length requirements and specifications, and spine sizes. What we have to focus on is having our book in multiple formats so that readers on various devices can access the version they prefer.

### eBook Format Versions

There are three main versions we'll be concerning ourselves with:

- ePub – for the non-Kindle tablets, devices, and apps
- MOBI – for your Kindle device or app users
- PDF – for people who want to read it on their computer (or device) that don't want to use a specific app for either ePub or MOBI

Depending on the software you write in, you may only need to do a simple compile (think of this like a different type of "save as") into each of the formats directly. Scrivener is a good example as it can export to those formats.

Or, if you have purchased book formatting software such as Vellum or Jutoh, it's just a matter of importing your document, choosing your styles, and exporting to the formats you need. Some authors even write directly inside their formatting software – though not all formatting software is designed for writing.

Many authors choose to outsource their book formatting to professional formatters since it is relatively inexpensive and eliminates the need for any of the technical work. I offer this service through Author’s Mojo (<https://www.authorsmojo.com>), as do many others you can find online.

However, many writers use Word, Google Docs, or similar software. So, let’s look at the quickest ways to get your finished files for Word and Google Docs.

But first... let’s talk about best practices that will save you (and your formatter, if you outsource) extra work later on.

## Clean It Up & Make It Pretty - Best Practices

While you don’t have to incorporate any special, fancy, or “pretty” formatting in your manuscript, many writers choose to. There are several things to keep in mind when styling your manuscript:

- Use **headers** for your chapter headers – this is incredibly helpful for creating your table of contents as your ToC can auto-generate from the headers within the document.
- Style the headers for consistency – Instead of changing the font size, font face, and weight of each chapter header individually, apply that style to the actual **header** style in your software. This will keep it consistent and make any changes later extremely easy.
- Style your **paragraphs** – just like above with the headers, set a style for your paragraphs so it stays consistent throughout your manuscript document. Do you like 1.25 line spacing but a 16 pt space after each paragraph? No problem, set that in a style to keep it the same throughout.
- ***DON’T USE TABS OR SPACES*** for your paragraph indents. Please, for the love of all that is holy – as a book formatter, this can be a headache. Best practice... use your styles like above. Set the default for the amount of space you prefer to indent a new paragraph.
- ***CRITICAL*** – in all of your books, not just your reader magnet, always include a section in the front matter and back matter to invite readers to your website to join your mailing list. Your front and back matter is “prime real estate” – don’t waste the opportunity to build that relationship with your reader.

**PRO TIP:** Don't forget the standard items to include in your manuscript once you've completed your cleanup, such as: title page, blurb, copyright, disclaimer, and of course as mentioned, the invite to join your mailing list.

## The Action Steps - Without Buying Extra Software

NOTE: if you write in a different piece of software, don't worry, most word processor programs can export to Word doc or ePub.

The first thing we'll do is download and install a free piece of software called Calibre, which you can find here: <https://calibre-ebook.com/download>

Calibre will allow us to take a document and convert it to an ePub and then to a MOBI. It's a solid piece of software, and free is a hard price to beat for software that works great!

The following sections detail how to use Calibre to create your files, but if you would like a video walkthrough, you can watch it here:

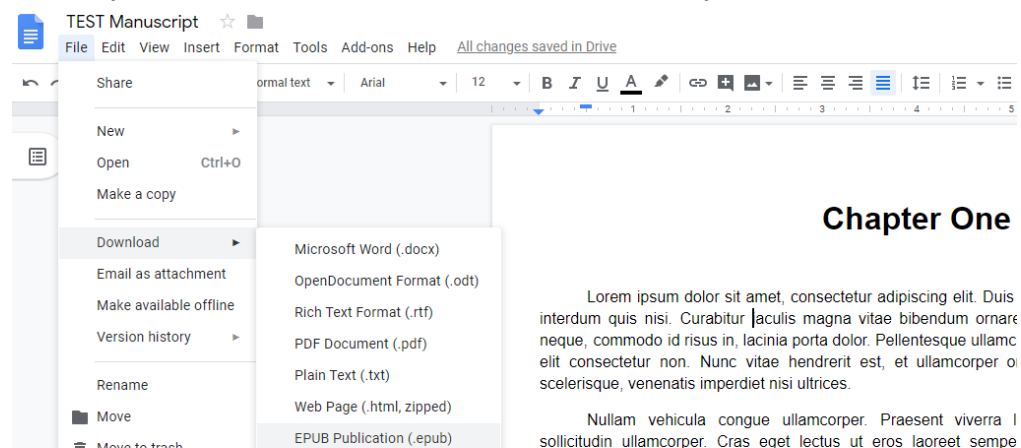
[https://www.authorsmojo.com/quick\\_bites/creating-epub-mobi-files-with-calibre/](https://www.authorsmojo.com/quick_bites/creating-epub-mobi-files-with-calibre/)

## Creating Your ePub with Google Docs

If you are using Google Docs, good news! You can export to an ePub format, saving you several steps.

From inside your Google Doc, click on File > Download > EPUB Publication.

Name your file and choose a location to save your ePub file, then click the Save button.

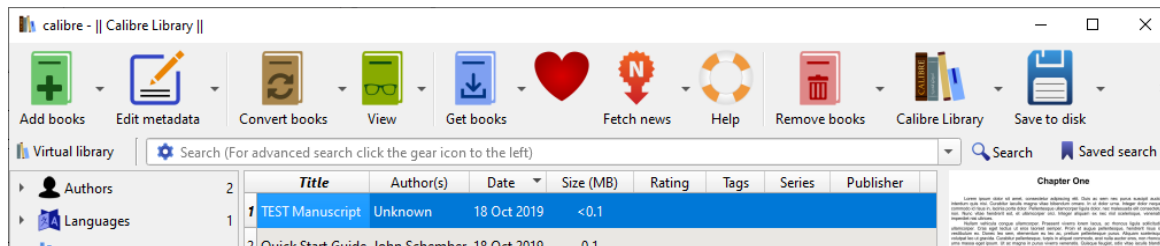


After saving your ePub file, open the Calibre software on your computer, you can use the *Create the MOBI* steps below for that version.

## Creating Your ePub From Microsoft Word (and other) with Calibre

Inside Calibre, click on the Add Books button in the menu bar.

Select your manuscript document file and click the Open button. Calibre will import your file and display it in the library window.



Ensure your book is highlighted, then click the Convert Books button on the menu bar.

### Create the ePub First

In the upper left of the window it should say Input format: docx (or whichever file format your file was in). In the upper right corner, it should say: Output format EPUB. If EPUB is not selected, choose it from the drop-down.

Directly below the Output drop-down, make sure your title, author name, and any series information (if applicable) is filled in correctly.

In the lower middle of this window, select the checkbox for “Use cover from source file” to add your saved cover image.

Click the OK button in the lower right to begin the conversion. You’ll be taken back to the main library window, and may see a Job running in the lower right corner while it is processing.

### Create the MOBI Next

Ensure your book is highlighted, then click the Convert Books button on the menu bar.

In the upper left of the window it should say input format EPUB in the drop-down, and on the

top right corner it should say Output format MOBI. If MOBI is not selected, choose it from the drop-down menu.

Directly below the Output drop-down, make sure your title, author name, and any series information (if applicable) is filled in correctly.

In the lower middle of this window, select the checkbox for "Use cover from source file" to add your saved cover image.

You can go through the other settings if you wish, but they shouldn't be needed for generating a basic MOBI file from your ePub.

Click the OK button in the lower right to begin the conversion. You'll be taken back to the main library window, and may see a Job running in the lower right corner while it is processing.

In the preview pane on the right, you'll see a snapshot of your book, and below you'll see a link for EPUB, MOBI and another link for Path: Click to open. If you click on the "click to open" link, it will take you to the directory where your ePub and MOBI files are saved.

Congratulations! You are now ready to upload these to wherever they're needed for your magnet! (Don't worry – we'll be covering that in the next chapters) But first, we'll get your mailing list ready to greet your new subscribers.

Don't forget, if you prefer a visual walk-through – you can watch the video on how to do this here: [https://www.authorsmojo.com/quick\\_bites/creating-epub-mobi-files-with-calibre/](https://www.authorsmojo.com/quick_bites/creating-epub-mobi-files-with-calibre/)



## UNIT 7 – Get Your List Prepped

*List prepped? But I already have a mailing list!*

Great – and if not, this is the time to get it done.

We have two main objectives for “prepping” your list:

- Easily differentiate new subscribers from our reader magnet (as opposed to general newsletter sign-ups).
- 1. Setting up a customized automation sequence to start building a relationship with your potential new super-fan.

The good news is, all major email list service providers can tag, group, and/or segment your subscribers. Different providers use different terminology, but can achieve the same ends.

First, let’s talk a bit about email list service providers. There are differences between each – mostly in terminology, layout, ease of use, etc., but one of the biggest considerations for authors early in their career is the price point.

Many of the list service providers offer a free tier contingent upon the number of subscribers (both active and unsubscribed), and often limit the number of emails you can send in a one-month period.



One big difference – and the most critical for our purposes – is whether the free tier service allows you to create and manage automation sequences.

I use MailerLite with great success and love their features. I've recommended MailerLite to my new customers because of the ease of use, and (more importantly) because they allow great automation abilities on their free tier – a win-win, especially for authors just starting their list building.

#### MailerLite Pros:

- Free up to 1,000 subscribers
- Automation sequences
- Easy to use drag-and-drop editor
- Landing pages, embedded forms, & pop-up forms
- Reasonable pricing beyond 1,000 subscribers
- Good support

#### MailerLite Cons:

- You must verify your domain by having your own email address, e.g., me@mydomain.com
- **NOTE:** If you don't have your own domain email address, you can set up an email forward – most domain registrars give you 1 or more free forwarding emails when you buy your domain name — check if your provider offers this.
- If you haven't bought a domain name yet, this is a good time to invest in one. Being an indie-author is a business, and it is a good practice for a business to have a website.
- The free tier doesn't offer access to additional newsletter templates
- **NOTE:** Not a major drawback, as you can create your own during your first send with their default newsletter and the drag-and-drop interface.
- The free tier doesn't show your "click maps" or "opened by location" in your reports. (again, not a huge concern for those just getting started, but a nice feature to see)
- The free tier only offers email support (not live chat)

If you are selecting an email list provider, or would like more information about MailerLite, you can visit their site to learn more: <https://www.mailerlite.com/a/dybayiza7c>

I use MailerLite in my examples, but there are many other email list service providers you could consider:

- MailChimp: <https://www.mailchimp.com>
- ConstantContact: <https://www.constantcontact.com/>
- SendLane: <https://www.sendlane.com/>
- ActiveCampaign: <https://www.activecampaign.com/>
- GetResponse: <https://www.getresponse.com/>
- Aweber: <https://www.aweber.com/>

## What Is an Automation Sequence & Why Do I Care?

An automation sequence is an email, or set of emails, *automatically* sent to a subscriber.

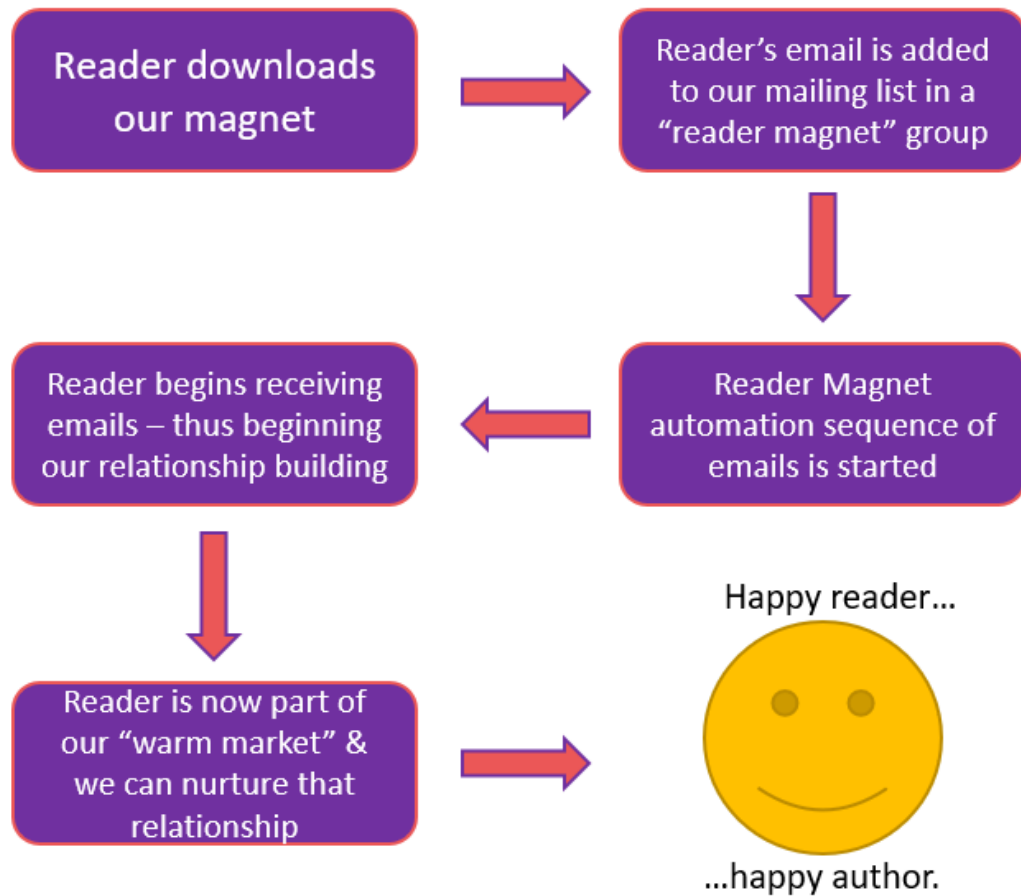
Automation sequences can be set to go to *any* new subscriber, or you can kick off an automation sequence based on some *criteria* you set, such as a group or tag.

You’re likely familiar with receiving automation sequence emails if you’ve registered for a webinar, course, or other authors’ mailing lists.

PRO TIP: start paying attention to the automation emails you receive from others – start your own “swipe file” with ideas that you can model from in your own sequences and newsletters.

For our purpose, we want a sequence of emails that will start automatically once a new reader is added to our subscriber list after downloading our reader magnet. Something that we can ‘set and forget’, knowing that it will get sent and start that relationship building with our new reader.

The flow looks a little something like this:



## Create Your Reader Magnet Group

NOTE: The steps below use terminology based around MailerLite's offerings, but will work similarly in other email list provider services.

1. Sign into MailerLite.
2. Navigate to your subscribers list.
3. Click on Groups to add a new group.
4. Create New Group called "Reader Magnet-StoryOrigin" or if you may eventually have more than one reader magnet (which is likely!), title the group something like "Magnet-Book Title-StoryOrigin".

The biggest thing to remember here is that while this name is just for you, it still needs to make sense, and it needs to be differentiated from other groups/tags you may have.

For our purpose, we are naming our group to reflect our Reader Magnet, and the source we will be using to gain new subscribers — StoryOrigin. In this way, if we later put our magnet onto sites other than StoryOrigin, we can monitor which signups come from each one.

## Create Your Reader Magnet Automation Sequence

We want to create an automation sequence that will send emails to new subscribers in the group you just created.

1. From your dashboard click the Automation menu link.
2. Click the Create a new workflow button.
3. Name your workflow. I recommend naming it the same as your group name, because this is the workflow specific to that group.
4. In the workflow trigger, select: when a subscriber joins a group – and the group will be the one you created above.
5. We'll click the + to add the next step of our workflow, which will be an email.
6. Type in the email's subject. This should reflect your author personality. Remember, we're starting a relationship with this new reader. We want them to get a sense of who we are – our author voice.
7. Click the Design email button.
8. If you have not set up your own newsletter template yet, click the Choose button under the Drag & drop editor section.
9. Update the generic newsletter form with your own header image, header titles, images, etc.

**NOTE:** No email header image? No problem! Hop over to <https://www.canva.com> and use their "Email Header" template to create a professional header for free.

10. Use an image of your reader magnet cover, and include the link to the StoryOrigin ***direct download page*** so they can download the book if they didn't download it earlier. NOTE: Don't worry — the StoryOrigin bits are coming up shortly, and you can come back here to pop in your correct link then.
11. Introduce yourself, tell them how often you'll be sending newsletters, invite them to even respond and introduce themselves (optional – but readers love interacting!)

**PRO TIP:** This is the first step to building a beautiful relationship with your potential new fan. Setting expectations right from the beginning is important so that your reader knows what to expect from you. If you are creating several emails in your sequence, let them know they'll receive another email or two, then after that, only your once-a-month (or however often) regular newsletter.

12. In the upper right, click the Actions drop-down, and choose "save as template" – this will allow you to save the design you just created as your own custom template to use again and again for future newsletters.
13. You can click the Preview and Test drop-down and Send a test email to yourself to see how it will look once it hits the inbox.
14. Then, click Done Editing to save and return to your workflow.

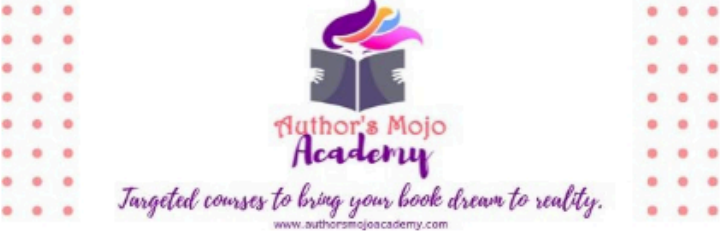
***The next steps are optional, but highly recommended. Remember, we are building a relationship with a potential fan!***

15. Click the + on your workflow and add a Delay. Set your delay for several days 3-5 days is ideal.
16. Click the + on your workflow and add another email. We will do a friendly follow-up and ask them if they've started reading the book yet... and if they like it, to reply and let you know. You'll be able to use your saved template from before and just change some of the content.

**PRO TIP:** Include the direct download link again, and some new information about yourself to continue building the relationship.

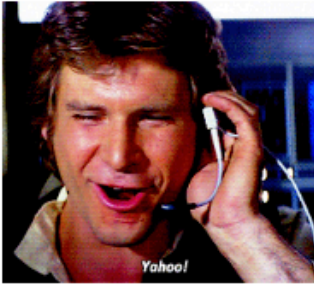
Now, you could get fancy and send a third email. You could even set a conditional statement on the email to only send it if they didn't open the first email in the automation series, just to check in with them again. But, again, those are optional – and they are things you can always come back and add in later once you are familiar with your mailing list software.

Here is an example of the emails in one of my automation sequences for reference to help get you started:




*Targeted courses to bring your book dream to reality.*  
www.authorsmojoacademy.com

***It's the beginning of a beautiful friendship...***  
(And a lot of goodies to help you publish your books!)




**You are in!**  
Welcome to the Author's Mojo Academy  
- Author Bio's Made Easy course!  
You should have received your login info in a separate email, but here's the link to your Academy courses for your safekeeping:  
<https://www.authorsmojoacademy.com/courses/enrolled/655597>


***Join the tribe...***  
Don't wait -- [come join us right now on Facebook, at this link](#), or the Facebook icon to the right over there -- that'll get ya right to the place you need to be.  
And don't forget, you can leave comments on any of the course modules with questions anytime -- I personally respond to each one!



***No junk - only solid, actionable advice and help.***  
**Who Am I?**  
I'm Stacy, founder of Author's Mojo, tech-coach for indie-authors, mom, and all-around computer geek...and, I'm an author - ***just like you.*** I can't wait to



And here's a follow-up email sent 3 days later:



**How's it coming along?**

Hey there! How's that Author Bio's Made Easy course coming along? 😊

If you've had time to work through some of the course, I'd love to hear from you - just hit reply on this email and let me know:

- What were your biggest A-Ha moments?
- Is there any deeper info you'd like to see added to the course?



*Just in case...*

Just in case you need it -- here's the link to your Academy courses for your safekeeping:

<https://www.authorsmojoacademy.com/courses/enrolled/655597>

(and don't forget to [follow us over on Facebook](#) - we're doing an ongoing Friday Live with tips, tricks, and handy info!)

**Take care & chat soon!**



As you can see, my emails are a little quirky, but still get the message, content, and value across. Quirky and yes, even goofy, are part of my personality and who I am, and I want that to come across in my messaging.

I won't resonate with everyone (and neither will you), and *that is okay!* I only want to attract people who are my ideal readers and students – and allowing my personality and coaching style to show through my content is one way to accomplish that.

“Be yourself. Everyone else is taken.”  
– *Oscar Wilde*



## UNIT 8 – Launch!

Are you excited yet? Because I'm excited for you! Let's do this!

There are three parts to our "launch" phase:

1. StoryOrigin
2. Social media
3. Perma-free listings and free promo sites.

### StoryOrigin

First, we will use a service called StoryOrigin. Much like other services (Prolific, BookFunnel, etc.) StoryOrigin allows authors to create and take part in group promos and giveaways, but it also does so much more:

- Group promos and giveaways
- Direct downloads
- ARC readers / Beta readers
- Newsletter swaps
- Audio book codes

Evan (the creator of StoryOrigin) has nailed those things us indie-authors need, and the service



he's built is phenomenal.

Even more impressive? As of the time of this writing – *it's a free service*.

If you don't have an account at StoryOrigin yet – go do that now: <https://storyoriginapp.com/>

If you choose another service, the setup options and services will be similar but may vary in availability. We'll use StoryOrigin for our examples.

This is the bread-and-butter for building your email list with actual readers who want what you offer – and gives us the best opportunity for connecting, building a relationship with them, and converting them into raving fans.

If you would like video walkthroughs of StoryOrigin's features – I leave that to the expert, Evan, over at Story Origin – they have a fantastic set of tutorials that you can find here: <https://storyoriginapp.com/tutorials>

1. Sign into your StoryOrigin (aka SO) account at: <https://storyoriginapp.com/>.
2. Go to the Author Dashboard.
3. Click on Integrations & set up your mailing list integration.
  - a. At the time of this writing, SO supports direct integration with MailChimp, MailerLite, ActiveCampaign, AWeber, and ConvertKit.
  - b. Don't worry if your mailing list provider isn't listed – you can still use SO without integrating a list – you can manually export the adds you get from SO and import them into your list via a CSV file.
4. Click on the Reader Magnets menu link.
5. Click the Create Reader Magnet Landing Page button.
6. Enter your book title, select your author profile, headline, subheader, tags, and your book's description.
7. Upload your book cover image, ePub file, MOBI file, and PDF book file (the PDF is

optional).

8. Select whether this magnet is a preview/sample – for our project it is not, we're using a full novelette / novella.
9. Choose to send reader contact info to your mailing list provider you set up.
10. If you are using Facebook Tracking Pixels, enter that code here. **NOTE:** FB tracking pixels are beyond the scope of this project, so we won't be covering it here.
11. Click the Create button to complete your reader magnet landing page.

Congratulations! You've successfully created your reader magnet landing page, and are now ready to put it into group promos, newsletter swaps, or offering direct downloads.

**REMINDER:** This is a great time to go back to your automation sequence to add in the direct download link provided by StoryOrigin. Get your link by clicking on the Direct Downloads link in your StoryOriginsApp dashboard.

## Your First Group Promo

Now, you will locate and join your first group promo. The idea behind group promos is many similar-genre authors will all put their books into the promo, and then each author in the promo shares the promo giveaway page to their list, their social media, and so on. This gets your book in front of many more eyes than your own list or social media alone.

1. In your SO Author Dashboard, click on Group Promos Joined.
2. Click the Find Group Promotion button.
3. In the tags search box, select the genre(s) tags that best fit your reader magnet – this will filter the list of promos to only the ones that are a good fit for your book.
4. In the list, check the Type – some will be only for books on sale, Kindle Unlimited only, while others are for giveaways or even for audiobooks.

**NOTE:** For authors who have their *other* books enrolled in Amazon's Kindle Select (Kindle Unlimited) program:

You are not allowed to give away more than 10% of your book digitally outside of Amazon’s KDP program. **However** — there are group promotions you can join and become a part of that are specifically for books in the KU program. This works, and is within the guidelines of Amazon’s terms of service, because when a new reader selects your book, they are “buying” it through Amazon’s Kindle Unlimited program — not downloading it directly from StoryOrigin.

5. Once you find one you are interested in joining, click the name of the promo to see the details. Here you’ll find the start and end dates, and any notes or other requirements the promo organizer has listed.
6. If you want to join this promo – click the Apply to Group Promotion button.
7. Choose your author profile in the From box, your reader magnet, and if the promo organizer has required it, any other questions listed.
  - a. **NOTE:** some group promo organizers **require** you to associate your reader magnet for their specific promo with a newsletter “swap”. To do that, you also must set up your posted mailing list, and create a campaign for your newsletters.
  - b. If it is required by the promo organizer, SO provides links to create your posted mailing list (which just uses your already-created integrated mailing list) & a link to plan your upcoming newsletter campaign.
8. Once you complete the required fields for that group promo, your reader magnet will be submitted for approval to the organizer.
9. As soon your magnet is accepted into the group promo your own unique sharing link will be created and listed in your dashboard under Group Promos Joined. Add reminders on your calendar to share the promo using your specific link.
10. Then... monitor your dashboard and mailing list during the promo period to see the new subscribers roll in!

You can review the promos you’ve joined under the Group Promos Joined link. Also, you can keep track of your campaigns on the Campaign Planner and on your Calendar within

StoryOrigin.

If you are in a high-traffic genre, such as fantasy, scifi, or romance, you'll likely find multiple group promos going. Join all of them *that are relevant* and a good fit for your book! Remember, you are wanting to attract *your ideal reader*, not just anyone looking for freebie books.

See a timeframe when there isn't a group promo listed? Create one of your own at the Group Promos Created link in your dashboard – and other authors can join yours.

## Other Ways to Promote Your Magnet

### Publishing Your Book

Since you will give away copies of this magnet, it cannot be in the KDP Select program on Amazon. (Their rules explicitly state you cannot distribute over 10% of a book in their program via any other digital source. Read more of Amazon's terms of service here: [https://kdp.amazon.com/en\\_US/help/topic/G200798990](https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G200798990))

That being said, you can publish your reader magnet as a book on Amazon, and on all the other eBook retailers – either manually or with a distribution service such as Draft2Digital.

There are two schools of thought on the best way to do this:

1. Make it a "perma-free" book – since you are giving it away on StoryOrigin (and potentially other places as well).
2. Put it up for sale on those retailers, but for a small amount, like .99.

How you do that is 100% up to you, but I will give you some food for thought on both.

As a perma-free book on all the eBook retailers, you stand to reach a **much** larger base of readers. However, they will not be required to join your mailing list to receive the book which is why it is critical to have an invite to join your mailing list inside the book's front and back-matter content.

Reality check: some of them will join your list – most will not. **BUT** the ones that have made the conscious effort to join your list from your invite inside the book... these **are your ideal**

**readers.** Meaning, they liked your work, want to stay in touch, and will be more receptive to checking out your other work.

The downside to this is you acknowledge that you are playing the long-game and using this magnet as a marketing tool that will not make you any money *on its own* – but can pay off exponentially in the long-run.

Another consideration with the perma-free option is if someone knows they can get it for free on one of the eBook retailers, why would they bother getting it from a site like StoryOrigin, Book Funnel, Prolific, or one of the others? That is a valid thought — keep in mind though, not everyone signs up for the ‘free book of the day’ emails, or will necessarily see your group promo share on social media, or happen to be on the newsletter list of another author who also happens to be in your group promo.

Publishing your book on retailers at a price-point of .99 could earn some monetary return. But this would require you ensuring it gets good visibility, which means marketing and running promotions.

The downside to this option is that if you are also giving it away for free on sites like SO, or through social media, someone who spent money on it may feel slighted.

The good news is – either choice you make you can always change it later.

## Sharing on Social Media

There are a **ton** of book groups on Facebook and other social media platforms. You can periodically share your reader magnet in these groups to help bolster getting new subscribers on your list.

On Facebook (and other platforms) search for “Genre” book groups, or free book groups. Join the ones that seem active and relevant for your book and then share! These groups often have guidelines on what is or is not allowed to be shared, so read the group’s rules carefully when you join.

**PRO TIP:** Create a spreadsheet to track the sharing groups on Facebook, when and what your allowed to share, and the link to the group. This will save you time when you’re ready to post in several groups at once.

Use a free service like Canva.com to create beautiful promo graphics for your magnet to share in the groups – and remember, you can use free graphics sites like Pixabay to find gorgeous images and backgrounds you can use. Here's an example from one of my pen names:



The main thing you want to remember when creating a promo graphic for use on social media is to **include the link address** on the image. Not all sites will make the image a link, and when it is shared by others, the original text that you put along with your image – which would include the link – may not get shared with it. You want the link to be included regardless – so put it in the image!

## Use Promotion Services

There are many promotional services for indie-published books. They range from free to a few dollars, with some of the larger and more popular services costing more. They can get your book in front of many eyes that you may not otherwise have access to – and that's what we are trying to accomplish, after all!

Dave at Kindlepreneur has compiled an awesome list of book promo sites that he recommends – I have it bookmarked and refer to it every time I'm running a sale or freebie book day. You can find his list here:

<https://kindlepreneur.com/list-sites-promote-free-amazon-books/>

Most of these only accept links to your book on one of the eBook **retailer** sites, not a giveaway site like StoryOrigin, so keep that in mind. While there are many other promotional sites, I recommend starting with this list.

## Other Reader Magnet Services

While I love StoryOrigin, and it is hands-down my favorite, there are other similar sites. Check each of them out and see if they fit into your marketing and list-building! The goal here is to build a list of engaged readers interested in your work. Once you have them on your list, your job is to keep them engaged and build that relationship... but, you can't do that until they are on your list – so maximize your list-building efforts; it will serve you well in your author career.

Some other book giveaway services include:

- Prolific (formerly Instafreebie)
- BookFunnel
- BookSprout

And there are likely more popping up as the indie-book market continues to grow.

At the time of this writing, some of these services have a free tier which does not integrate with your mailing list provider, but you can either manually import them to your list, or upgrade with their service for a nominal fee.

## Your Own Newsletter

If you already have a mailing list started, then you want to let your current subscribers know you have a freebie out there! Surprise them with a gift of a new book to read.

Also, as your list continues to thrive and grow, stick a little message in your future newsletters – not all of your subscribers are coming to you from your freebie, so they may not have seen it before.

## Your Website

Last, but not least – your website! There are many ways to build an opt-in on your author website, and this is a step you don't want to forget when promoting your new reader magnet novella. This is also something we cover more in-depth in the *Reader Magnets for List Building* course at [Author's Mojo Academy](#).

- Use the 'landing page' or forms feature included with most mailing list service providers.
  - In MailerLite, you can click on Forms
  - Create Popup
  - Create Landing page
  - Create Embedded forms
  - Create Promotions
  - Any or all of the above options in MailerLite work well to get your new reader onto your list and in the correct subscriber group, so they can receive your automation email sequence (which includes the direct download link to get their copy!)
- Create a page on your own website that includes the sign-up form from your mailing list service provider.
  - Like the landing page option above, the first email in your automation sequence for new subscribers includes the direct download link from StoryOrigin.
  - You can also create your own 'thank you page' with the links to the direct download page on StoryOrigin.
- You can copy/paste the code from the form the list provider gives you, or you can use a plugin such as Elementor to build beautiful forms which integrate with your list provider.





## Other Types of Magnets

We mentioned early some of the other types of magnets that are commonly used by writers. While this book is focusing on bringing in new readers to our work by giving them an actual example of our work, other magnets can be great incentives, and they can make excellent gifts for your growing list of subscribers.

Coloring pages are an excellent choice in several different genres, such as middle grade, fantasy, and cozy mystery. A good place to start is on free image sites such as Pixabay.com and similar, as many of these image sites offer illustrations and vector graphics (line graphics) which can be good coloring sheets, and are available to use freely.

Another option that is popular among fantasy writers is maps of your world. These can either be outsourced to artists much like covers, or there are a couple pieces of software that make map-making fun and easy.

- Inkarnate — (<https://www.inkarnate.com>) — an online map-making software that runs through your browser. It boasts plenty of assets to choose from, and offers a free version as well as an inexpensive subscription-based service.
  - NOTE: If you plan to distribute your maps either as back-matter in your books, or otherwise, in high-resolution format, you must be an Inkarnate subscriber to have the licensed right to distribute the images. All the terms and conditions are available on their website.

- Wonderdraft — (<https://www.wonderdraft.net>) — is a standalone piece of software that is available for Windows, Mac, and Linux. One of the truly standout features of Wonderdraft is its capability for massively large-scale maps at high resolution. (ever wanted a poster size of your map?) Also, it is a very inexpensive one-time fee for the software, and there are add-on packs for other asset styles, such as pirate or fantasy-based themes. Another feature that makes Wonderdraft even more compelling, is you are not restricted in your use of the maps you create.

Another fun idea is creating your own online jigsaw puzzles. Again, make sure the images you use are either royalty-free, your own artwork, or covers that you have a legal right to use.

Websites such as Jigsaw Planet — (<https://www.jigsawplanet.com?rc=createpuzzle>) — offer users the option to create online jigsaw puzzles using their own images and even customizing the difficulty and shapes

Of course, another great freebie is a short story. These can work similarly as your initial reader magnet, or can be fantastic freebies for your subscribers. Backstory of specific characters — if it isn’t necessarily grand enough to warrant its own novella, a short story is a great option. These stories can help deepen a reader’s appreciation for your world and characters, and help get them further invested in your stories.

The most important thing to remember is no matter what freebie you choose to use, they all serve different purposes — some work better than others for specific things.

Novellas, short stories — *something with your actual writing* — is best for drawing in new readers.

Coloring pages, criminal dossiers, maps, online puzzles and other types can be used to draw new readers to your list — but keep in mind, that does not give the subscriber a good sample of your writing for them to determine if you are indeed their cup of tea. So, while those definitely can work, you may see a higher unsubscribe rate if you rely on those solely.



## What's Next?

**Congratulations, you made it!** This is a huge accomplishment, so give yourself a pat on the back!

After you're done celebrating, there are a couple paths to consider.

If you did a read-through of this book without completing the tasks... now's the time to go back and put in the work. Your mailing list won't build itself unless you put your plan into action. (And for those of you who learn better visually, *Reader Magnets for List Building* is also a course within the Author's Mojo Academy.)

If you've been doing the work while reading... then you're ready to watch new subscribers join your circle of potential lifelong fans.

Meaning... you have their attention, now you have to **keep** their attention. That means relationship building and giving them stories they want to read.

Continue your reader magnet exposure. Put 30-60 minutes of time on your schedule at least 1-2 times per month to get your magnet into new StoryOrigin group promos and to connect with other authors for newsletter swaps. That will ensure a stream of new subscribers while you're working on your books.

If you aren't familiar with newsletter swaps, then getting your feet wet with them through StoryOrigin is a great way to go. Simply put, you and another author swap mentions in your newsletter for the other's book. Swaps are a good way to reach a group of readers you may

not otherwise have direct access to.

I'm proud of you... and you should be too! You're building a solid, sustainable base – without being 'salesy' or feeling icky – simply by making new friends who want what you have — great stories.

Now, it's time to keep growing your author business – *and I'd love to help.*



## An invite for you

How do you keep growing from here?

First, the thing I cannot recommend strongly enough, is *you need a circle*. You need to find your peeps.

Being an indie-author is no cake-walk. There are more days than not indies feel like they're trying to run through jelly and wonder if they should bother to keep going.

Unfortunately, many of us don't have a supportive network of people that understand what we're trying to do – and that can be disheartening, to say the least.

Second, you need to find someone who knows how to guide you in the different areas required in maintaining an indie-author career. As you know, it's a long-game and as an indie, you're responsible for every part. Your success is determined by your time, effort, and skills.

Every aspect of what we do relies to some lesser or greater extent on technology, and that is on top of all the mindset, marketing, and writing craft knowledge needed.

*It's dangerous to go alone – here, take this...*



*(Yes, I'm a geek with a terrible 'dad-joke' sense of humor... I make no apologies 😊)*

So with that, I'd like to extend an invitation...

I'd love to have you join us in the Author's Mojo Academy. You'll find courses on many topics within the indie-author industry, ranging from mindset issues, to writing craft, to how to DIY an author website on a budget.

Including the *Reader Magnets for List Building* course, where we dive **even deeper** into this topic!

Not to mention LIVE weekly office hours where you can ask *your specific questions* and get actionable, relevant answers. Study groups. Challenges. Oh and did I mention... the circle of peeps comes standard? We have an incredible tribe of indie-authors who I am honored and blessed to call friends and colleagues.

Learn more about joining our incredible group to get the support you need for your indie-author career: <https://www.authorsmojoacademy.com/p/mojo-all-access/>

I'd love to add you to that circle.

See you soon!





## Books in this Collection

Keep It Simple, Scribe – 2020 Author's Planner <https://www.authorsmojo.com/kiss/>

Reader Magnets for List Building

### Coming Soon:

- Your 30-(or 60 or 90)-Day Book Plan
- From Pancake to Soufflé – Developing Believable Characters
- Author Websites (Even for Non-Techies!)
- Email Lists for Authors – Newsletters & Automations
- Self-Editing for Non-Editors
- Blogging for Authors
- Plotting for Pantsers and Plantsers
- Conquering Writer's Block & Other Author Traps



## About the Author

Author's Mojo & Author's Mojo Academy were founded by Stacy Sowers, a native West Virginian and tech-geek.

With a career spanning over twenty years in the technology industry, Stacy worked with companies across the United States, from Fortune 500s to small local businesses and nonprofits. Much of her work was spent in website development and design along with marketing and content development. Following her heart, she cannon-balled into the deep-end, pursuing her lifelong dream of writing and publishing.



But she found a great need in the indie-author community...

*One which her background in technology, marketing, and publishing that she was uniquely qualified to help with.*

Now, Stacy spends her time writing under several pen-names and helping many in the indie-author community with bringing their books to the world.

When she's not teaching or writing, she enjoys gaming with her son, hanging out with her cats, cooking entirely too much food, and peering out at the beautiful sights around her home-state of West Virginia.