

F.A.Q.'s

On this page we address the following issues:

- PublishAmerica adheres to the **traditional** publishing concept: we assume all financial risks and all expenses, we earn our income by selling books, and books only.
- The author pays **no fees of any kind**, at any time. We want your book, not your money.
- Bookstores do **not automatically** put a book on their shelves. All stores have full access to our books, but in order to actually stock them, they must be convinced that the book will sell. Author: there is work to be done!
- PublishAmerica is proud to inform bookstores that many of its titles are **returnable!**

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Question: Is this a great millennium, or what?

Answer: Some writers tell us, incredulously, they can't believe their luck. After all, many of them have queried publisher after publisher, often without receiving any response at all, and always to no avail. So how can PublishAmerica do what other traditional publishers cannot do?

The answer is quite simple. Other publishers could do exactly the same, if only they would. Our bet is that in the next few years more than a few of them will change their mind about "unmarketable writers", now that digital printing technology enables them to save substantially on overstocking. This new century promises to be the era of the yet-unnoticed writer.

There is so much talent out there. The information and education age has left deep, positive and lasting marks on the creativity of millions. It is fascinating how many **talented people can write a good story, and turn it into a good book**. It doesn't require rocket science to predict that tens of thousands of these so far hidden talents will see their books in print in the foreseeable future.

And it's not a day too soon. Gone are the times when unknown authors had to consider vanity- or selfpublishing, the costly rough-and-tumble alternative to traditional publishing. If a book is good and well-written, traditional publishing is becoming available again. Lower hurdles, smaller obstacles. After all, it was enough of a challenge to write the book to begin with. If their talent is real, those who succeed in completing such a daunting task, deserve to find the road towards publication wide open.



Question: When will I see my book in print?

Answer: The formal answer is, within a year. The unofficial answer is, between a few months and a year. The truth is, we want to release an accepted book soon, but wisely.

At the heart of each new book is the author, particularly if it is the author's first published book. **All first books are reflections of the author's own life experiences**, more so than an author's third or fourth book. The emotions of the book's main characters are often similar to the author's own emotions, and main events are generally also similar to events that took place in the author's life. First books typically have a strongly autobiographical content, regardless whether it's fiction or nonfiction.

As a logical consequence, if a book is to create a following, it's going to be a following of the book and the author. Hence the emphasis we place on putting the initial role of local marketing front and center. The publisher knows the venues of how to inform the rest of the world. But that's going to be of little consequence if the author does not make some all-important local noise first. By definition of human nature, there is no national following without a local following first, and local precedes national, always.

Therefore, the book industry puts initial local marketing front and center, there where the author is excellently positioned to directly communicate with his audience. Because **the book is closely and often intimately linked to the author's personal life experiences, fears, hopes and dreams**, it's the author who today is designated to spearhead local promotion. Our local direct mailing campaign will help pave his road: we always inform an author's entire circle of fam, fans, and friends about the book's upcoming release, and they soon become invaluable helpers in spreading the word of mouth.

Once we feel that all necessary elements are in place, the actual book production can be a matter of weeks. After the book has gone through the editing process, it is set up in type and then forwarded as a page proof to the author for his final correction.

To most authors, correcting the page proofs is a joyous experience as it is the first time that their work is now coming to life in book form, formatted to size and all. To some, it can also be a little intimidating when they realize that this is what the public will soon see. That's why it is very important that the author makes page proof corrections with the utmost care. Once an author signs off on the proofs, that's how the book will look in print. To make sure that our editing staff has indeed incorporated those final corrections, we will forward the corrected proofs one more time for the author's inspection.

After we have received the author's corrections on the proofs, the book will soon be ready to go to press once our art department has finalized the cover design.



Question: How does my book end up in Waldenbooks or at BarnesandNoble.com?

Answer: Ever noticed that barcode on a book's cover? It contains a lot of hidden information. Most of all, it tells the bookstore cash register the book's ISBN and who its publisher is. The International Standard Book Number is like the book's fingerprint. It is issued by the publisher who, in turn, had the number issued to them by ISBN headquarters in Florida. Without an ISBN, a book gets nowhere. With it, it is recognized worldwide: it indicates title, author and publisher, even the retail price. Clearly, each ISBN is unique.

As soon as we contract a book, we issue an ISBN. At that point, we submit the book to our wholesalers and distributors, such as Ingram, Baker&Taylor, Brodart, etc., who process it in their computer systems that have direct connections to bookstore computer systems nationwide. That is how a book becomes available through **all American bookstores** from sea to shining sea.

There are also many independent bookstores, including **thousands of Christian bookstores**. By looking into the book's ISBN, they know how to order fast by ordering a book directly from the publisher or through their wholesaler (as most stores do). Finally, there is this fast-growing number of Internet bookstores, such as BarnesandNoble.com, Chapters.ca, Borders.com and many others. Some order directly from the publisher, others through a wholesaler.

Now, **a word of caution is in order**. Bookstore availability is not necessarily the same as bookstore shelf display. For a book to be stocked by a bookstore, someone high in the hierarchy must decide to order it. Typically, it's not the store manager who makes such decisions, unless he runs an independent store. Larger chains such as Waldenbooks, Barnes & Noble, and Borders have "buyers" who select which titles are to be stocked. Oftentimes, they want to see some noise happening before they move.

Local bookstores like to be able to demonstrate that there is demand for a book. If they can show demand, their superiors (those "buyers") may permit them to stock. And since a book on display helps create demand, a ripple effect begins. This is why it is so important that authors turn themselves into the center of all local attention. Face it, you're no John Grisham or Nora Roberts, not yet. So you must not only beat the drum, but be the drum major as well. All successful marketing begins at home.

Many authors are very creative at this. Just browse through our [author message board](#) to see how inventive your fellow authors are. Or click on our [What's New?](#) section. There are book signings with PublishAmerica

authors virtually every day in bookstores all over the fruited plain. Not a day goes by without one of our authors being profiled, interviewed or mentioned in newspapers, magazines, radio, or TV. Some authors become very accomplished public speakers about their book's topic, or about book writing in general. Others carry flyers and business cards around that they hand out anywhere they go. And then there are some whose efforts get a big boost when they discover that a movie star has agreed to a reading of their book as a potential movie script (among others, actors Michelle Pfeiffer and John Travolta have been reviewing some of our titles).

Today's author must be active, and he must be innovative. As is the case with all objects of art and creation, there are hurdles to be scaled: there's 190,000 other authors out there whose new book will be released by the nation's 50,000+ publishers this year, there are bookstore managers who are reluctant to stock unknown books even if they can return copies that remain unsold, and, plain and simple, there are jealous peers to deal with, folks who don't want you to be successful. So what else is new? Nothing at all, but it's good to back up words of caution with a reality check.



Question: Will a bookstore carry my book?

Answer: Many of our books are returnable. This means that a bookstore can return many unsold PublishAmerica books to his wholesaler. There are a few exceptions to this rule, such as full-color picture books, and our returnability policy is limited to U.S. bookstores only. Another word of caution: returnability will not guarantee that store managers will stock your book and put it on display. The key question is not whether a book is returnable, but whether the store manager believes that your book will actually sell. Many PublishAmerica authors will tell you about their successes with regard to having their books placed in bookstores large and small.

Bookstores cannot possibly put all new releases (more than 190,000 per year!) on their shelves. It would require them to add roughly twenty feet of additional shelf space every day, Saturdays and Sundays included, and that's not happening, understandably. Returnable or not, they will typically only put books in their store that they believe will sell. But as indicated above, this is sometimes seen as an extra challenge for authors without a celebrity status, i.e. most of us.

Regardless, bookstores order PublishAmerica books more than 400 times per day, each day, for immediate sale, for stocking, or for a specific event such as a book signing. Barnes&Noble is our largest customer, followed by Borders and Books-a-Million.



Question: What are my obligations as an author?

Answer: An author's obligations are few, since he/she already contributes the lion's part by having written the book. We are very conscious of that fact. No book was written overnight. It has cost most authors a year or longer to write it, and often many more years to let the creative process well up.

We are also conscious of the fact that seeing your book in print is a life-defining moment. It is something an author never forgets for the rest of their lives. It is something to enjoy and celebrate. Therefore, the obligations should be minimal.

The author has really only one obligation: to provide us with the completed final-version manuscript. We'll take it from there.

Does this mean that the author must sit on his/her hands after signing the contract? Not exactly. We expect the author to actively promote the book whenever and wherever possible. See [When Will I See My Book In Print](#).



Question: Do I need an agent?

Answer: Not if you decide to submit your work here. We select our authors without being preached to by agents, no matter how hard they sometimes try. There is not much an agent can do for most new authors, other than try to locate a publisher. If you have already signed up with an agent, tell them to contact us with your work, and we will gladly study their proposal. But it will be no different than when you contact us yourself.

Our book contracts are pretty uniform, although there is always room for negotiating. Most of our contracts expire after seven years, but you can make it indefinitely if you want. We will leave it up to you to sign any non-book rights over to us or not, and there's a number of other issues that you may want to test the flexibility of. Pretty straightforward stuff, something no one needs an agent for as there is really not much an agent can do that most of you can't do yourself. However, **if you are already committed to an agent, you must honor that commitment.** Most agents are very pleasant to work with for a publisher.

Some of our authors decide to hire a **publicist after being signed up by us. This can be a good decision if the publicist knows how to expose the author locally. It makes very little sense to hire an East Coast publicist if you live on the West Coast, or the other way around.** We once had a California author hire a Philadelphia media expert, only to find himself interviewed by one obscure Midwest radio station with no audience. That's money wasted.

A word of caution: do not hire a publicist if you're unwilling to do the hard work yourself. No publicist can replace you at the center of your book's success.