



International Author-Illustrator Information Packet

Congratulations on the upcoming publication of your book! The following is an overview of practices for reaching the US market while living abroad. This is not a comprehensive guide, and we do encourage you to conduct research to best leverage the market for your particular title.

Author Portal

Please browse the online Lerner Author Portal, which gathers helpful documents and resources. Interview tips, book trailer guidelines, and much more can be found here:

<https://lernerbooks.com/lerner-author-portal> Please sign in with this password **WeLoveAuthors**

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Standard US Timeline of Key Promotional Events

- 6-9 months before publication date: title presented to national chains, wholesalers, and indie stores as well as specialty retailers
- 6 months before publication date: marketing plans finalized
- 5-6 months before publication date: books sent to reviewers for industry journals
- 2-3 months before publication date: outreach to national or long-lead media
- 2-3 months before publication date: outreach to bookstores, libraries, and other event locations to pitch/schedule events
- 1-2 months before publication: Ads run in industry publications
- 1-2 months before publication: outreach to short-lead media
- 1-2 months before publication: begin wholesaler promotions
- Bound book date – book ships from the printer to our warehouse.
- Release Date – book ships from the warehouse to wholesalers and stores (about 2-3 weeks before publication date)
- Publication Date/On Sale Date – book goes on sale wherever books are sold
- **During the month of publication and one month after: publicity, online, social media, and consumer marketing as appropriate**

What You Can Do to Promote and Sell Your Book

Any successful marketing and publicity plan relies heavily on author involvement. Here are ways you can help promote your book:

This is a great primer: <http://www.24carrotwriting.com/-blog/josh-funk-shares-powerhouse-marketing-strategies>.

Ordering Author Copies or Books for Events

If you are setting up a virtual author event with a US location or if you are visiting the US, our Customer Service Department will be more than happy to help with making books available to sell at events that you set up. Please ask bookstores, libraries, gift shops, etc., to contact Customer Service at 800-328-4929 or custserve@lernerbooks.com to place orders.

Amazon Author Tips

For trade titles, Amazon offers authors a number of ways to establish an online presence, interact with their readers, and gain additional exposure for their books. Using Amazon's tools well can have a positive effect on sales! Amazon's program called Author Central is designed for authors, illustrators, photographers and artists whose titles are sold on Amazon.com.

<https://authorcentral.amazon.com/>

- Add your bio and make sure your book's description is accurate.
- Make sure all your books are claimed under your author page.
- Add RSS feeds if you have them for a blog.
- Explore and take advantage of other Author Central tools.
- Sign up to be an Amazon Affiliate (<https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/>) so that when someone clicks on your Amazon links, you earn money on anything they buy while they are there – not just on your own book!
- Post your Amazon buy links on your website, blog, and social media. On your website/blog, you can also link to other book retailers. Barnes & Noble, for example, has a similar Affiliate program (<http://affiliates.barnesandnoble.com/>) as does [Bookshop.org](#).

You can also see sales data for your books on Amazon Author Central, provided by BookScan. Publishers and agents pay for this information, but Amazon provides it for free to registered authors on Author Central. Please note that BookScan doesn't include information on every book sold, so it will not be an accurate reflection of your overall sales.

About Amazon reviews: Amazon has strict requirements about solicitation of reviews and disclosures in reviews left by people who personally know the author of the book they are reviewing. Reviews are great, but please do not offer free books to anyone in exchange for a review. If friends and family want to review your book, please ask them to disclose their relationship to you in the review. You can read Amazon's community guidelines [here](#).

Awards

The US has several children's book awards that do not require citizenship or residency. Please read all eligibility requirements and review previous award winners to see if your book is a good fit. If you have information on an award for which your book is eligible/appropriate, please send the information to your publisher so they can work with Lerner to review the criteria and consider submitting to the award.

Biography

Put together a biography about yourself, including a full list of the books you've published, your interests, your educational and career background, and ordering/publisher contact information. Your biography should be circulated among all the contacts you make (booksellers, children's librarians, media editors, etc.) and be included in any correspondence you send—people will appreciate knowing more about you. If you haven't already, have a headshot taken for use on social media, websites, guest blog posts, and more. It doesn't have to be professionally taken (a nice smartphone photo will do the trick) but ask a friend to take one specifically for this purpose rather than cropping a photo that has other people in it.

Email signature & Online Bios

Include your book's title and a buy link in your email signature. Add information about your book to any digital biographies on other websites, LinkedIn and other social media profiles, and on your résumé and business cards.

Elevator Pitch

Write a snappy, 250 word synopsis of your book to use as your “elevator pitch.” Practice giving this pitch and then use it in a variety of contexts to talk about your book (friends, colleagues, the media, etc.).

Events

Bookstore, library, and school visits are a great way to help promote your books. Virtual visits and webinars are also a great way to encourage sales that involve less travel and resources. Start reaching out about these possibilities 2-3 months ahead of your pub date. You may choose to offer a protected digital review copy of your book to increase interest. Be conscientious and targeted with whom you approach for a virtual visit. If they have a connection to a book in subject matter, geography, etc., they will be more likely to accept a pitch. During the event, try to engage the audience while providing an educational experience. If you’re an author, offer to read and discuss with the children how and why you became a writer and what inspired you, or describe the process of changing an unedited manuscript into a bound book. If you’re an illustrator or photographer, offer to read and discuss your process from thumbnail sketches and photo ideas to the bound book. Also consider an interactive exercise you can do with the children. Perhaps you can write a story together or show how you create your artwork.

- **Tips for setting up events:** <https://nonfictionauthorsassociation.com/how-to-locate-speaking-engagements-free-and-paid/>
- **Author Info Sheet:** Lerner has designed a customizable info sheet for your events! Complete the template with the relevant information for your upcoming book and distribute to parties interested in requesting a visit. To access this template, [click here](#). You can also find the link to the template in the [Author Portal](#), password: **WeLoveAuthors**.

Please let your publisher and Lerner know of any book signings or speaking engagements you have arranged so we can help promote.

Promotional Pieces

If you want to create your own promotional pieces such as bookmarks or flyers, please send your final design to the your publisher for approval prior to printing. You may use the cover of your book for promotional purposes, but use of photos and artwork inside the book requires express permission from Lerner Publishing Group to ensure copyright compliance. If approved, your publisher will provide appropriate logos and a permission statement for inclusion with your promotional materials.

Media Pitching

Look at related media for publicity opportunities. This includes newspapers, magazines, and websites; radio and television stations, and bloggers and podcasters. You can reach out to book reviewers and/or feature editors at those outlets with a brief email that includes a description of your book and a short bio that emphasizes the connection between your book and their platform.

You can also reach out to bloggers in your target genre wherever they are located. Reedsy (<https://blog.reedsy.com/book-review-blogs>) has a book blog directory where you can find bloggers who might be interested in reviewing your book or having you write a guest post.

Interviews

Interviews are wonderful publicity opportunities that can lead to great exposure for both you and your book. For tips on how to prepare and ideas on what to mention in your interview please sign into the author portal and download “Interview Tips for Radio, TV, Podcasts, and Virtual Events.”

We recommend writing a brief “self-interview” of 5-10 questions that you can use to pitch certain outlets. Some media outlets will want to write their own questions, but having a prepared interview may be attractive to some outlets that have a faster timetable. These questions can include, but are not limited to: *What is the most surprising thing you discovered while researching or writing the book? What do you hope readers will learn or discover from reading your book? What was your inspiration for the book?*

SCBWI (Society of Children’s Book Writers & Illustrators)

Become involved with your local chapter of the SCBWI. They have several conferences a year and sharing ideas with other authors, illustrators, and photographers can be very beneficial. In addition, being a part of a panel discussion is excellent exposure.

When to Publicize and Promote Online

Please do not post any images or detailed information about your book more than six months prior to your publication date without consulting your publisher. There may be instances when earlier publicity is beneficial to creating buzz about your book, but disclosing too much information too early can impact the timing of sales and marketing plans for your upcoming title.

Blogging

Consider including a blog on your website where you can keep readers posted about book news. By reading other blogs with a critical eye, you can learn a lot about the trends in your genre or niche. It’s helpful to comment on well-trafficked blogs at least as much as you are posting on your own site.

- Blogging for Writers <https://janefriedman.com/blogging-for-writers/>

Website

Put your book on your website. If you don’t have a website, create one now!

Here are some resources for creating a simple website:

- <http://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/step-step-guide-build-author-website>
- <http://www.wix.com/>
- <https://www.squarespace.com/>
- <https://wordpress.org/>
- Aer.io

We recommend your website be your name or a variation thereof (such as NameAuthor.com or NameBooks.com) rather than the title of your book.

Include your book’s cover, description, and links to buy the book at Amazon, bn.com, bookshop.org, and other online retailers.

Please include a “Contact Me” page with a form or email address with which educators and librarians can request virtual visit. This page is the easiest way for educators to book you. If you

create a page like this, please send the link to Katie O'Neel at koneel@lernerbooks.com and we will feature it on the Lerner website!

Whether you have your own website or not, you can still promote yourself online at www.lernerbooks.com. We will create an author or illustrator page for you that includes your photo, a brief bio, cover images, your personal website or social media contact information, and more. This page will be available 3-6 months before your book is on sale.

Social Media

If you are active on social media, mention your book there! Your big promotional push should occur no sooner than four weeks before your book's publication date, and ideally after books are available in stores. It's very exciting to talk about your book six months ahead of time, but you don't want to wear out your followers before they can buy it!

There are many different ways to promote your book online. Here are a few tips on getting the word out without burning yourself out!

- Add an announcement to your email signature.
- Update your Facebook, BlueSky, Instagram or other social media profiles with your book's title and publication date. You can change it to "out now!" once the book is out.
- Add your status as an author to LinkedIn.
- Visit and follow Lerner online so that we can connect with you.
 - o Facebook: [lernerbooks](https://www.facebook.com/lernerbooks)
 - o Bluesky: lernerbooks.bsky.social
 - o Instagram: [lernerbooks](https://www.instagram.com/lernerbooks)
 - o Tik Tok: [lernerbooks](https://www.tiktok.com/@lernerbooks)
 - o Pinterest: [LernerBooks](https://www.pinterest.com/LernerBooks)
 - o LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/lerner-publishing-group>
- Please be sure to tag us on social media accounts when posting about your book, so we can like and share your posts!

If you are not active on social media and it doesn't feel like a natural fit for you, don't do it. Social media is most useful if you truly enjoy it and will keep it up.

If you are not active on social media and are interested in building a social media presence, here are some resources to help you do that. You should start building a following 4-6 months before your publication date.

- Facebook for Authors <https://janefriedman.com/facebook-for-authors/>
- Pinterest for Authors <https://janefriedman.com/how-authors-can-use-pinterest/>
- Instagram for Authors: <https://gatekeeperpress.com/instagram-for-authors/>
- BookTok for Authors: <https://www.literaryladiesguide.com/resources-for-writers/how-to-use-booktok-a-guide-for-authors-and-publishers/>

This is a great guide to Social Media Best Practices: <http://www.writehacked.com/social-media/>

Special Sales

A reminder that we strongly encourage you to seek out special sales to institutions or businesses for your book. If you have a promising idea, please send Katie O'Neel (koneel@lernerbooks.com) the idea and relevant contact information. She will pass it along to our sales department.

Additional Promotional Sites

There are several sites that promote author/illustrators, and that serve as resources for educators and consumers. Adding your name to these sites will help readers, educators, and influencers find you and your work. We request that you add your name to both organizations listed below.

TeachingBooks.net

[TeachingBooks.net](https://www.teachingbooks.net) is a website that provides teachers with classroom resources and has the largest [author & illustrator name pronunciation](#) guide available online. If you have not already, please add your name to this resource by visiting this [instruction page](#). On this page you'll find examples and detailed instructions. Please also submit a headshot [here](#).

Shepherd.com

[Shepherd.com](https://www.shepherd.com) is an online database project that asks authors to share their favorite books around topics and themes they are passionate about. This is a fun and easy way to connect with readers, and it is completely free for authors to sign up. Visit the [For Authors](#) page to find out more information.

Author To-Do List

- ☐ 12-18 months before publication date:
 - Submit all materials requested by your editor
 - Build or spruce up your author website to mention your book and create a "Contact Me" page for in-person/virtual visit requests.
- ☐ 5-6 months before publication date:
 - Follow Lerner on social media.
 - Set up your Amazon Author Central account.
 - Set up a Google Alert for your name and book title.
 - Write and memorize an elevator pitch about your book.
 - Launch or build your social media following.
 - Send headshot, bio, and website information to Katie O'Neel.
 - Write a pre-publication "self-interview" to use in pitching.
- ☐ 2-3 months before publication date:
 - Research schools, libraries, and bookstores that would have a connection to your book to pitch for events
 - Begin reaching out to bookstores/libraries to set up events
 - Add your book title and pre-order or buy links to your online bios, social media accounts, and email signature.
- ☐ 1-2 Months before publication date:
 - Create a list of related media that you can pitch about your book – begin pitching once you have bound books.
 - Research bloggers in your genre that you can pitch about the book – begin pitching when you have a protected digital review copy.
 - Record your name pronunciation guide with [TeachingBooks.net](https://www.teachingbooks.net) and submit a [headshot](#).
 - Create an author page and booklist on [Shepherd.com](https://www.shepherd.com).
 - Start preorder campaigns on social media.
- ☐ Ongoing:

- Let publicity team know about any marketing, publicity, or event plans you are making to promote your book.
- Continue to promote your book, reviews, articles, awards and recognition on your author website and social media accounts.

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 - [Horn Book Magazine's enewsletters](#)
 - [Shelf Awareness](#)
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 - [Lambda Literary](#)
 - [Comics Beat \(graphic novels\)](#)
- *Feel free to sign up for [Lerner's enewsletters](#) to see what's happening here!*