



Front and Back Matter, Description

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Front and Back Matter, Description

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Getting Ready

There are a number of things that go into a book beyond the manuscript. There is content that makes up the front matter, content for the back matter, the interior graphics, the cover image, and the description on the back of the paperback. The interior bits and pieces will need to be assembled into a single file, so you will need to have more than just the interior manuscript ready.

Below is a comprehensive list of things that *can* go into the front and back of your book (known as the front matter and the back matter). Most books published include only a few of the items listed.

Front Matter

Front matter (also called Preliminaries or Prelims) is all the content/pages that go in front of your story. Let's take a look at what these are before we discuss what's necessary and what is common practise.

Half Title

It is the first page of the book. Traditionally it has the title only, no subtitle or author name, but current trends now include the subtitle, author, publisher imprint and sometimes a single copyright line. This page is used to be for print books only. With some distributors like Smashwords requiring it for world-wide distribution, it is becoming common practise to include it for ebooks as well.

Copyright

This page has the strictest requirements. It should include the full copyright notice for your written material as well as any scripture copyrights, the ISBN, information on the edition, information on the publisher, and an "all rights reserved" statement. It may also include disclaimers, warranties, and safety notices.

Promotional Links

These are hyperlinks to your digital platform (website, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.). Generally these appear on the title page or copyright page.

Frontpiece

Have you seen an illustration or artwork at the front of a book? It's quite traditional. Generally it's on the back of the half title page for print books. It is not the cover. For ebooks, if you have a good illustration it can go after the title page as well.

Blurb

Some marketing text about the book, generally one or two paragraphs. It can be beneficial up front to remind readers what the book is about.



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Also by the Author/Other Books

If you want this in the front matter, limit it to titles only. Include descriptions in the back matter.

Reviews/Praise/Endorsements

It's a page of rave reviews by other authors, bloggers, journals, newspapers and fans.

Dedication

This is a short (one sentence) note written from the heart to someone important in the author's life – someone who played a significant role in the writing of the book, or in the life of the author.

Table of Contents

This is a list of headings and subheadings for the reader to understand the structure of the book and navigate through it. While optional for print fiction, it is recommended for print non-fiction, and required for all ebooks, fiction and non-fiction. For awhile, authors moved this to the back of the ebook, but Amazon used the table of contents in the front matter as a quality control to deal with scammers and in 2016 there was quite a mix-up with Amazon removing legitimate titles because the table of contents was at the back. While they say this is no longer an issue, best to stay under their radar.

Acknowledgments

This is a note of gratitude for the people who helped make the book possible. Commonly people mention their editor, beta readers, promotional team, publishers, coworkers, agents, managers, contributors,

Foreward (for non-fiction)

Note the e in foreward. This is written by someone other than the author, and is usually a few pages of comments about the book. It should end with the person's name and credentials.

Preface (for non-fiction)

This is written by the author, in first person. It is comments about the book, often includes how it came to be written. A neat finishing touch is a signature at the bottom.

Epigraph

This is a quote that directly relates to the book, perhaps in an entertaining or clever way. It's generally from a famous person, living or dead, or a well-known body of work. It's important to ensure you are not violating copyright by including the quote, and yes, lyrics are copyrighted.

Introduction

This is generally for non-fiction and lists the goals and purposes for the book.



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Prologue

This is the opening of your story. It provides details of the background and setting.

Chapter 1

And now you start your book.

This can all add up to a significant amount of front matter. One consideration in how much you want up front is the impact it has on the “Look Inside” experience on retailer sites like Amazon. This is meant to hook the readers into your story. If all they see is front matter, they may lose interest before getting to your actual content. Amazon generally shows about 10% of your book. If it’s a full novel, then there is some room for front matter, but if it’s a short story or novella, too much front matter may mean they don’t see much of the book’s content. In ebooks, some authors are moving the full copyright and acknowledgments pages to the back. A short copyright line can be included on the title page for readers viewing via Look Inside.

If you want to keep it really lean up front for your ebook, include the title page and table of contents only. If you want to not be quite so lean, include the book blurb, dedication and other books (the list of titles only). If your copyright page is not too long, then include it up front as well.

If you wish to include a praise page, keep in mind you will lose space for the content of your book. Make it just enough to convince a reader they will enjoy your book. Don’t go overboard or the reader may think you’re over-selling it.

When quoting on the cost to get the files for publishing generated, I like to have a look at your manuscript. If you’re not sure what to include, once I see your manuscript we can talk about the options.

Back Matter

When *The End* is not the end? You’ve read about what can go up front. Let’s take a look at what might go in the back of your book.

Epilogue (opposite of prologue)

This is a part of the story that brings it closure beyond the final chapter. It tells of the fate of various characters and ties up loose ends.

Afterward (opposite of foreward)

This is the story of how the author got the idea for the book or how it came to be written

Conclusion (mostly used in non-fiction)

Reviews or restates the initial premise of the book, summarizes the main points made and tie everything together-



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er. It can include lessons learned, what's next, and the bigger picture content.

Postscript

Like in a letter, this is thoughts added after the book was written. They are somewhat rare.

List of Figures, Illustrations, Tables (used in non-fiction)

This is most often a numbered list of all the figures, illustrations and tables in a large reference-type book

Appendices or Addendums (used in non-fiction)

The appendix is used for supplemental or reference information that is related to the contents of the book. The addendum can be used to update, correct errors or explain inconsistencies.

Glossary

A set of definitions for important words and abbreviations used in the book. For fiction, it may contain a list of characters or places.

Bibliography (used in non-fiction)

A list of other works cited in the book, mostly found in non-fiction or research books.

Index (used in reference books)

A list of terms used in the book with a page reference of where it can be found. Mostly use in reference-type books.

Thank you

This page is generally found immediately after the book concludes and thanks the reader. Many authors use this opportunity to encourage the reader to leave a review with their favourite retailer.

Copyright page

For ebooks, if the copyright page is long, it is moved to the back of the book, and a single line copyright is placed in the front matter.

List of Contributors

A list of all the people who aided with research or writing your book.

Postface (opposite of preface)

This presents information that, while relevant, is not essential. It may include a comment, explanation or warning to the reader.



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Other Books

This is a backlist of other books with either their description or the first part of the story and a call to action. Don't get too crazy with content in this section as the reader may resent using a lot of memory on their reading device for the extras, and may perceive the extra pages in a print book as extra cost.

About the Author

This page includes a brief description and often a photo of the author. Include a link to your website and other social media.

The advantage of the back matter is that you have an interested and engaged audience. This is a person who bought your book and read it through. Who could be more interested in buying another book than this person? It is considered entrepreneurial to leverage this space for advertising. You can include links to your other works...but there are a few limitations. If this book was purchased on Amazon, they will only permit links to other Amazon books. Most retailers apply the same rule – no links to the competition. So your Amazon ebook only has links to Amazon books, and your Smashwords book only has Smashwords links. In fact, if they detect links to the competition, they will reject your book. One note, iPads and iPhones will block any link to any competition to iBooks, even when it is an Amazon book viewed on their Kindle app.

For the typical book, back matter necessities are the thank you and call to review page, the other books list, and about the author including how to connect with you. If the copyright page is not in the front, then it must be included in the back matter as well.

Back of Book Description

This can be simply a paragraph or two about your book, often it is the same content used as a description with the online retailer.

For non-fiction, some authors move the About the Author section from the back matter to the back cover of the book. Please note, there is no back cover with an ebook, so the About the Author will be a part of the interior.

Some books also include one or two endorsements on the back cover.