

Choose your publishing path

Start with who pays, who runs production, and who keeps the rights.

PATH	UPFRONT	TIME	RIGHTS AND CONTROL
Traditional trade Writers wanting reach, bookshops, prestige, and a team, who can wait	£0 / \$0 (they pay)	2-4 years after signing, plus querying	Publisher holds a bundle of rights. Production: the publisher.
Independent / small press Literary, regional, niche, or mission-driven books	£0 / \$0 (they pay)	1-2 years	Publisher holds rights, often fewer than a Big Five deal. Production: the publisher.
Self-publishing Control, speed, higher per-sale share, and willingness to run the business	~\$0 to \$8,000+ (you pay)	3-8 months	You keep all rights. Production: you.
Hybrid Writers who want a managed process and can fund it, and who vet carefully	Thousands to tens of thousands	6-12 months (~9 typical)	You keep more rights than trad, terms negotiable. Production: the publisher, you pay.
Specialised / institutional Academic, scholarly, professional, policy, association, or nonprofit-linked books	Usually £0 / \$0	1-2 years+	Press holds rights. Production: the press.

01 · MONEY

Who pays?

A legitimate publisher funds production. Self and hybrid routes ask the author to fund some or all of it.

02 · WORK

Who produces?

Self-publishing makes you responsible for every stage. Other routes divide the work in different ways.

03 · CONTROL

Who keeps the rights?

Price is only one term. Check the rights granted, duration, territories, formats, accounting, and exit clauses.