



Information Sheet: Launching your book

A book launch is a great opportunity for you to celebrate your publishing success and kickstart the marketing of your new book. Most often, especially when you're starting out on your publishing journey, it will fall to you (not your publisher) to organise your book launch.

We hope this information sheet will help you plan and promote a fantastic event.

What happens at a book launch?

A book launch is an event at which you will officially launch your book into the world. It can be as formal or as informal as you like, but successful book launches all have a few things in common.

A host, a bookselling table, a place to sign books, guests and the author.

Here's a suggested format for your book launch, which we recommend should run no longer than one hour.

- A host introduces the book and the author
- The author thanks the readers and supporters
- The author reads an excerpt - or the author is involved in a Q+A about the book with the host
- The author signs books
- Everyone socialises!

Where should you have it?

Your venue should be appropriate to your book and audience. It could relate to the themes of your book, or it could be your local community centre or book shop. Having a book launch at your local bookstore means that they can sell books for you, and you throw your support behind your local bookseller. (Please note: some booksellers won't sell self-published titles. Talk with them to check).

When should you hold the book launch?

Your launch should occur on or as close to the book's publication date as possible. This way, you will increase the hype around the release. Weeknights after work are a good time.

For those self publishing, it is tempting to finish writing and then release the book immediately. Before you do, make sure the editing and design is polished. Think carefully about when the best time would be to release the book. There is a lot of competition around Christmas, so this may make it harder to get people along or to sell in a crowded market. On the other hand, maybe your book has a Christmas theme? Is your book perfect for Mother's Day or Father's Day? Perhaps it's suited to an anniversary, such as the centenary of a historical event?

Who should attend?

The people attending your book launches are likely to be family, friends and writing colleagues. These are the people that want to support you. You will want to celebrate and share your success with them. It is also an opportunity to connect with readers. Invite the public, users of your local library, location-based groups on social media, and potential reviewers. Make sure you invite guests well in advance: four to six weeks is the general rule in event management. Include an RSVP on the invitation for catering purposes.

It's important to have realistic expectations of your book launch. It is unlikely media or VIPs will attend unless you have a specific connection with them. Likewise, members of the general public are unlikely to attend unless you have produced some very compelling promotion for the event.

It's also important to note that if you plan to serve alcohol, you may need a liquor licence to provide alcohol in public or commercial spaces.

How long should it go for?

One hour is a good amount of time for the formalities and book signing. Make sure speeches aren't too long - perhaps a maximum of five minutes. If you read from your book, it isn't necessary to read from the beginning of chapter one. Choose a scene which gives your guests a flavour of the book. Perhaps it's a scene you're particularly proud of. Or it's one which introduces your main character. Your reading should be something which captures the attention of guests, so that when you finish, they are left wondering: what happens next? That will translate into book sales on the night.

Advertising

If you are a Writers SA member, let us know about your launch and we'll promote it!

You can also use:

- your personal contacts
- community noticeboards/newsletters
- a letter drop
- social media groups you may be involved in
- blogging and guest blogging.



Selling books

If self-publishing, make sure you have copies of your book well in advance of the launch. The printing and publication process can sometimes be held up, and you need to account for this in your planning. Give yourself plenty of time. And ensure you have a volunteer on the night to sell books for you - you'll be busy signing!

If you have a publisher, contact your local bookstore to ask if they are interested in attending and selling books for you.

It is possible to launch an ebook, but have something for people to take away with them – perhaps a postcard or bookmark with the book's cover and purchase information on it.

Other tips

Attend the book launches of other authors and take note of what works well and what doesn't work so well. What niche promotional methods do they use and how could you adapt it to your launch? If you're still not sure, ask questions of other authors through online forums and blogs.

Your Book Launch Checklist:

- Choose a venue
- Organise a date and time with the venue
- Ensure books will be available on chosen date
- Organise someone to sell your books
- Invite a guest speaker to introduce your book
- Invite guests 4-6 weeks before the launch (include RSVP details)
- Organise liquor license if required
- Organise drinks and nibbles
- Spread the word!



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