How to Write a High-Quality eBook in 30 Days

Are you thinking about writing an eBook for your big banana opt-in offer? Here's a great guest post by Ali Luke on Copyblogger that will walk you through how to do it in 30 days or less.

 It was published in October 2012, right before the yearly National Novel Writing Month, so you can ignore the NaNoWriMo-specific references. ☺ You can read the original article here: www.copyblogger.com/ebook-in-30-day.

How to Write a High-Quality eBook in 30 Days

What if, 30 days from now, you had a finished, well-crafted eBook sitting on your hard drive, ready to distribute and sell?

That might sound next-to-impossible to you, but it's not.

Every November, over 200,000 people worldwide take part in NaNoWriMo — "(inter)National Novel Writing Month".

NaNoWriMo participants aim to write *50,000 words* during the month, and tens of thousands of them manage to do it.

If those writers can do that, *you can write a 20,000 word ebook in a month*. Right?

And I am absolutely not talking about some scrappy, thrown-together document. You'll have more than enough time to properly plan, organize, and edit your eBook as well.

Think I'm pulling your leg?

Here's how to do it:

Pick your topic (Days 1–2)

Maybe you've got an idea in mind already: a book you'd really love to write.

Go ahead and write that idea down, and then store it in a safe place.

Leave it there for the next 30 days.

Yep, seriously. You'd probably have a great time writing it … but chances are, it's not [what your audience is looking for](), so it's not going to sell.

A great ebook idea needs to be:

- **Specific.** Don't try to write the definitive guide to your topic: it's overwhelming for your readers, and it doesn't leave you much room for your next eBook.
- **Useful.** If you do consulting or coaching, what problems come up again and again? Do your blog readers always ask for posts dealing with a particular issue?

Ask your audience what they want, and give them a few possibilities to choose from.

You've only got two days here, so you won't have time for a full-blown survey — but you can tweet out a question, or put up a thread on your Facebook page.

Be prepared to be surprised!

Once you've got a solid idea, you can …

Create an outline (Days 3–4)

Your outline is your roadmap.

It lays out the territory ahead, and lets you spot any tricky patches before you're half-way through the first draft.

There's no one "right" way to outline, but one or more of these might work well for you:

#1: Draw a mindmap. Put your topic or ebook title in the centre and start adding ideas to it as they occur to you. Use lines or arrows to create connections. At this stage, put everything down, however big or small — you can tidy the entire thing up later.

#2: Work backwards. Start at the end: what do you want your reader to be able to accomplish once they've finished your ebook? Then take a step back — what will they need to know before they can do that? And what about before *that*?

#3: Write a list. If you're already extremely familiar with your topic, you've probably got an outline in your head. Start writing a list: what chapters or major sections will your ebook need? Once you've got the big pieces in place, write a list of 3–5 key points for each chapter/section.

#4: Examine other eBooks and books. Look through several chapter lists to see what topics appear in almost every book. Is there anything that you're missing from your outline?

At this stage, it's worth considering whether each chapter (or each section) could have a consistent structure.

This will make the writing process much easier and faster: you'll have fewer decisions to make.

For instance, your chapters could follow a simple pattern like this:

- Quotation at the start
- An example mid-way through
- Practical exercise at the end

Once you have a clear outline and, if possible, a structure in place, it's time to …

Start writing (Days 5–25)

This is where the bulk of your time will be spent: 20 of your 30 days.

If you're aiming for a 20,000 word ebook (around 80-100 pages, assuming you're including a few images) then that breaks down to writing 1,000 words a day.

Yep, that's a sizeable commitment –– but, the trade-off is, *you're going to get your ebook done within a month*, instead of having it drag on for a year or more.

Here's a few tips to speed up your writing and get to 1000 words a day:

- **Work on your ebook at the right time of day.** If you're focused and motivated in the mornings, write in the morning. If you're at your best at 10pm, do your writing then.
- **Turn off distractions when you're writing.** You might want to switch off your internet connection entirely, or use a program that blocks it for a certain period of time.
- **Use a timer.** Set a timer for 30 minutes, then write until the time is up. Having the minutes ticking away is a real help when you need to stay on-task.
- **Don't stop writing.** If you need to check a quick fact, look up a link or add a screenshot, mark the place with yellow highlighter or something else highly visible — and come back to it later.
- **Don't edit while you write.** Maybe you just can't get the first paragraph right: it doesn't matter. Leave it and move on. You can come back to it at the editing stage (and you may find that it works fine after all).

Aim to write every day for these 20 days — even if you only manage a couple of hundred words on some days.

The more you make writing a habit, the easier it becomes.

But you're not done yet. You still need to …

Redraft your eBook (Days 26–28)

Ideally, you'd put your eBook aside for a while before revising it — but you've only got a few days left.

So, to see your eBook with fresh eyes, print it out — or transfer it onto your e-reader.

Read through the whole thing in one go, and make a note of:

- Any material that you've covered in more than one place

- Any missing information that you left out during the writing

- Chapters that would flow better in a different order

At this stage, don't agonize over every word.

Obviously, fix any glaring typos or mistakes that you spot, but avoid getting too bogged down.

[Spend these three days focusing on cuts, re-ordering and additions](#).

This might mean cutting out unnecessary tangents, juggling sections or paragraphs around, and adding in any hyperlinks and quotes that you didn't have time to look up earlier.

At this point, your ebook might look finished.

But there are two days left, and you've still got time to …

Make final changes (Days 29–30)

These two final days can turn your eBook into a professionally finished piece.

Print out the ebook again, or view it as a PDF.

Read through slowly, checking every sentence and word.

Particularly, look out for:

- Clumsy or confusing sentences

- Misspellings (especially commonly confused words like "its" and "it's")

- Missing words — surprisingly common, and often hard to spot when you're reading at a normal pace

And now …

Hurrah! You're the proud author of a finished eBook!

Well, you *will be* that proud author.

Which means it's time to get out your calendar and write "EBOOK" onto every page of every day for the next month.

Yes, writing an ebook takes time, effort and energy. Yes, the next month looks incredibly busy already: *but every month looks incredibly busy, right*?

If you write a small, free eBook, you'll have a great piece of promotional content.

Or, if you write an eBook to sell, you'll be able to make money for months, even years, from just one month of work.

[Right now is the best time to write](#).

One of the quickest and simplest ways to give yourself a motivational boost is to make a public commitment to your goal — so, write a comment below and tell us to look out for your *finished* ebook next month!

Source: www.copyblogger.com/ebook-in-30-day