

WRITING “ALL ABOUT” AND “WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW” BOOKS

If you want to write a general “all about” book for Kindle, the first thing you need to know is that it can’t be too general. The worst mistake you could make would be presenting a generic overview and leaving it at that.

You do want to give the reader an overview, but you also need to understand why the reader is buying your book: Simply, she is interested in your subject.

She wants to either find out about it... or know more.

Your job is to present a solid overview that gives a true and accurate snapshot of your topic... but also spice it up with truly fascinating and little-known facts; easy methods for performing tasks your topic might involve; imparting tips to make learning the subject easier.

Above all, you need to truly entertain your reader. She should put down the book feeling as if her life has been brightened or enriched.

She should feel like rushing off and sharing data from your book with friends and family. (“Did you know...”)

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR “ALL ABOUT” BOOK:

1. **Start with an anecdote** illustrating something important about the topic. Grab your reader’s attention straight away with the promise of lively writing – and more information/goodies to come.

E.G. “They laughed at Philippa Langley when she insisted King Richard III was buried in a parking lot under a space marked with the letter “R”...”
2. **Give a brief historical overview**, touching only on important or truly fascinating (and preferably little-known) facts.
3. Tell the reader within a few paragraphs **what you intend to share** about the subject

4. **Break your book down** into chapters, sub-topic by sub-topic, to fulfill this promise. The more carefully you plan your outline, the stronger and more cohesive your “all about” book will be.
5. **Keep the reader in mind** – particularly her age and level of knowledge. If your book is intended as a piece of colorful “human interest” reading, don’t devote three chapters to a scientific treatise on mitochondrial DNA, when telling her scientists managed to confirm that the skeleton in our example (Point # 1) was indeed King Richard III of England. Instead just touch on it but stretch the search for living descendants, and how one was located three thousand miles away in Canada.

A book slanted at thirty-five year old women is going to be a lot different than one meant for grade six students.

Many people start with a historical or scientific perspective, depending on the topic: But that can be a dry (and predictable) way to start your “All About” book, so do see if the anecdote variation works for you.

HOW TO WRITE A “WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...” BOOKS

You can use the tips for the “All About” books on your “What You Need to Know About...” book... with the following exceptions:

1. You need to be really clear on **the purpose** of your “what you need to know” book. Then make sure you ruthlessly exclude any material that doesn’t further that goal.

(Be especially on the alert for material that could cause confusion.)
2. “The purpose” not only includes the topic you’re dealing with, but also in broader terms **what the book is meant to do.**

For example...

- Entertain
- Educate
- Kick-start
- Solve problems

And so forth.

- 3.** Begin by telling your reader what you want to share and give any general instructions
- 4.** Finish by re-affirming that you have shared what she needed to know.