



QUIRK
CLASSICS

THE
NEW YORK TIMES
BEST SELLER

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES

BY JANE AUSTEN AND SETH GRAHAME-SMITH

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies

This is where I drew my inspiration for this entire experiment. In case you thought that you had misread that title, it DOES say Pride and Prejudice and Zombies.

Yes, as in...Jane Austen's classic novel Pride and Prejudice. Plus zombies.

Author Seth Grahame-Smith actually “wrote” this book which was published by Quirk Books in 2009.

The craziest thing, besides adding undead creatures to a Jane Austen novel? It hit #3 on the New York Times Bestseller List and there is a movie in the works as well.

Not only that, but there have been both a sequel and a prequel written for the book, if you can believe it.

Public Domain Mashups

As you may have already guessed, the whole reason he was able to even do this is that Pride and Prejudice exists in the public domain. This means anyone is free to reproduce it, share it with others, even package it up and sell it themselves!

When you rework a book that is in the public domain to the extent that Seth did with Pride and Prejudice, you create what is known as a “mashup.” That's what we

will be setting out to create in this guide.

Basically, a public domain mashup makes a public domain work your own by adding enough unique content that it significantly changes or alters the story in some way.

By doing this, you create a new book that you can effectively call your own (while still giving credit to the original author, of course) and you have more or less written a book without doing most of the actual writing yourself.

You can bet that Seth is thanking Jane Austen for all her help with writing his zombie book now that it has been so successful for him!

Most of the classics are also in the public domain, which means the same rules apply to them as well.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

It is, however, important to make sure that a book **actually IS** in the public domain before you use it, edit or add to it, and especially before you try selling it anywhere. Failing to do so may get you in legal trouble for copyright infringement and you don't want that.

Now generally speaking, most books enter into the public domain **around 70**

years after the author has passed away, unless the copyright has been renewed since then.

This is the general rule of thumb in the United States, but other countries have their own rules for intellectual property and there are always exceptions to the standard which is why it's important for you to do your own research and fact checking in all instances.

Luckily for us, there are several websites that specialize in collecting public domain books and making them available to download easily and for free. We'll talk about those a little later on in this guide.

Amazon's Policies on Public Domain Books

Now, your first thought may be to find a public domain book right now and start selling it in the Kindle store on Amazon. Not so fast! Unfortunately, you'd be about the billionth person who has had that thought and tried to do the same.

But what's the problem with that? Well, there are a couple. The first one is most obvious --- if everyone else is selling the same exact public domain book then how do you expect to make any money or set yourself apart?

The second problem is Amazon. Since so many other publishers have tried to sell

public domain books in the Kindle store, they've had to buckle down on their policies regarding books that exist in the public domain.

A while back, they updated their content policies and they now require that public domain books be “differentiated” from other versions already available in the Kindle store.

They specifically give you three options for how to go about doing this. They include:

1. A minimum of ten unique illustrations added to the book
2. A unique translation of a book in another language
3. Unique annotations that include hand-crafted study guides, etc (not just adding an introduction to the beginning of the book)

As a side note, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* was released as a deluxe version which did include several full color images as well.

The idea here being that you must **add something of value** to the original book in order to distinguish it and make it worth buying, since everyone else has the same creative freedom with the book as you do.

When you go to publish a public domain book in KDP, it specifically asks you if the book is in the public domain.

If you select yes, you'll get a warning that pops up which tells you about their policies on public domain work and it also lets you know that they may request proof that the material is public domain before allowing you to publish it on their site.

Another quick note about publishing public domain books on Amazon. They don't allow you to simply use the same exact title without adding anything.

So for example, if you had added unique annotations to a book like *The Great Gatsby*, for example, you would need to make sure and enter the title in KDP as “*The Great Gatsby (Annotated)*” or something along those lines.

This helps Amazon customers identify the original version of the book from ones that have unique additions to them, such as annotated versions from other publishers.

However, I think that it's a no brainer which title sounds better of the following:

1. Pride and Prejudice (Annotated)

2. Pride and Prejudice and Zombies

Obviously the second one wins in terms of both uniqueness and appeal.

I have a couple more tips about the actual process of publishing public domain books in KDP before we move on.

ISBNs and Custom Imprints

First, you will want to make sure that you don't list your own name as the publisher or leave that field blank when you upload to KDP.

Especially with public domain books, it's important to make it look legitimate and one of the best ways to do this is to have your own custom imprint which you can list as the publisher.

Now there are basically two ways for you to do this. The first one is to publish a print-on-demand version through CreateSpace, which is owned by Amazon. This will make it easy to sell your book in both eBook and print formats through Amazon's website.

The biggest advantage to going this route is that it will only cost you \$10 to add your own custom imprint which will be listed as the publisher for your book. This is a good deal, considering that the other option is to purchase your own ISBN from

[Bowker.](#)

Normally a **single ISBN costs \$125**, but if you are only planning on doing an eBook version then you can **get one for \$99** instead. It's worth doing if you want to avoid the headache of formatting and preparing the files for a print-on-demand version of your public domain book (not that it would be particularly hard for a book that was text-only).

Or if you are experienced with publishing through CreateSpace, then definitely go with the **\$10 custom ISBN instead**.

What are my ISBN options?

You have four ISBN options: you can either use a CreateSpace-Assigned ISBN, a Custom ISBN*, a Custom Universal ISBN*, or you can use your own ISBN. Both custom ISBN options are offered through an agreement with Bowker®.

	Price	Imprint	Distributors
CreateSpace-Assigned ISBN	Free	CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform	CreateSpace
Custom ISBN*	\$10	You choose	CreateSpace
Custom Universal ISBN*	\$99	You choose	You choose
Provide Your Own ISBN	Existing ISBN Required	You choose	You choose

Make up a professional sounding name for your “publisher” and you’ll be taken far more seriously when customers are viewing your public domain book on Amazon.

Another important note to keep in mind is that all editions of a book require different ISBN numbers, which means one for both the print and ebook formats if

you plan on publishing both.

Okay, so I set out to do my own experiment with publishing a public domain book similar to how Seth went about doing *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*.

In the following section, I'm going to show you the exact process I used from start to finish.

Step #1: Choose a Public Domain Book

The first step to doing this type of experiment is to choose a book that exists in the public domain. Don't worry about whether or not you have actually read the book yourself, it won't matter.

Like I said, there are many sites that you can use to browse extensive collections of public domain works.

Here are a few of the best, in my opinion.

1. [Project Gutenberg](#) – huge collection and one of the best out there
2. [Feedbooks](#) – another good one
3. [Authorama](#) – nice selection of books here as well

4. [Mobile Read](#) – huge collection of free public domain books you can download for Kindle
5. [Many Books](#) – Another nicely organized collection

Okay so now you should have a good selection to choose from. The book I ended up deciding on was *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Step #2: Understanding The Book's Plot

The next step sounds scary, but it's not nearly as much work as you might think. Like I said previously, you don't have to read the book you choose for this experiment.

Instead of trudging through one of the classics, you simply head on over to [SparkNotes](#), where you can find chapter-by-chapter breakdowns of most books which exist in the public domain.

The site is intended for students who are required to read these books and it helps them better understand the characters, plots, chapters, themes and other literary elements of a book.

It also provides in-depth analysis for each book, which really helps you grasp the broader implications and will give you enough information to do this. In fact, you

might as well have read the book if you simply read the chapter summaries.

That's all I did for *The Scarlet Letter*. If you're not into the idea of reading the summaries, then check to see if SparkNotes has a video instead. Many of the books they include also have plot videos which give you a breakdown of the story line if you prefer.

Another option is to find a book in the public domain that has been adapted to film.

The Scarlet Letter was made into a movie in 1995 and it starred Demi Moore as the main character. It's been years since I've seen the movie and I remember it as being kind of boring, so I just chose to read the [SparkNotes](#) instead.

Don't forget that you can always outsource this task to someone else if you prefer.

Find yourself a reliable English speaking writer on a site like Freelancer.com, oDesk.com or eLance.com and assign the reading to them, then ask them to help you with the writing portion as well.

That way you can do this almost completely hands-off if you want to.

Step #3: Adding Your Own Text

Okay so now comes the part where we add some original content to the book we have chosen. The best news about this part is that it doesn't demand much writing at all. In all honesty, it is entirely up to you how much you want to add and where you want to add it.

To put things into perspective a bit, Wikipedia quotes a reviewer of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* as saying that the book was about **85% the original text** written by Austen and the **remaining 15% was new text added** by Seth.

That's not much in terms of writing, folks.

The other cool part about this is, of course, the fact that you have total creative reign when deciding what you want to do and how you want to do it. You can change the story from its original version in whatever way suits your fancy.

Want a character to die instead of making it to the end? Write a short scene where they die and then cut them out of the remaining story.

Want to explain why a character has a certain trait described in the book? Write in a quick scene or two that adds context and have some fun while doing it.

Be as goofy or as serious as you want, obviously both can work here.

So what I decided to do with *The Scarlet Letter* was add a short poem to the beginning of each chapter that helps to sum up a part of the story and make it easy to understand by just reading the poems without the rest of the book.

I chose the title "*The Scarlet Letter and The Alphabet of Sin*" because obviously the Scarlet letter is A, which stands for Adultery.

It just so happens that there are about 24 chapters in the book and if you minus the letters X and perhaps Z, then that gives you the right number for each remaining letter of the alphabet.

So before each chapter, a poem with about four lines or so will appear for each letter of the alphabet.

Chapter one has a poem that reads:

A is for Adultery

The original sin
Of our main character
Young Hester Prynne
She's just had a child
A newborn baby girl
But this girl has no known father
And will be shunned by the world

The second chapter includes a short poem for the letter B, which also relates to the story. And so I just went through the alphabet and did this for each chapter, skipping letter X and Z since they are always troublesome when it comes to finding a good word that begins with them.

Step #4: Formatting for KDP

Okay so here is how I went about formatting my new version of this book for Kindle. There are obviously tons of ways you can do this, so this is definitely not your only option. Do your own research and figure out what works best in your case.

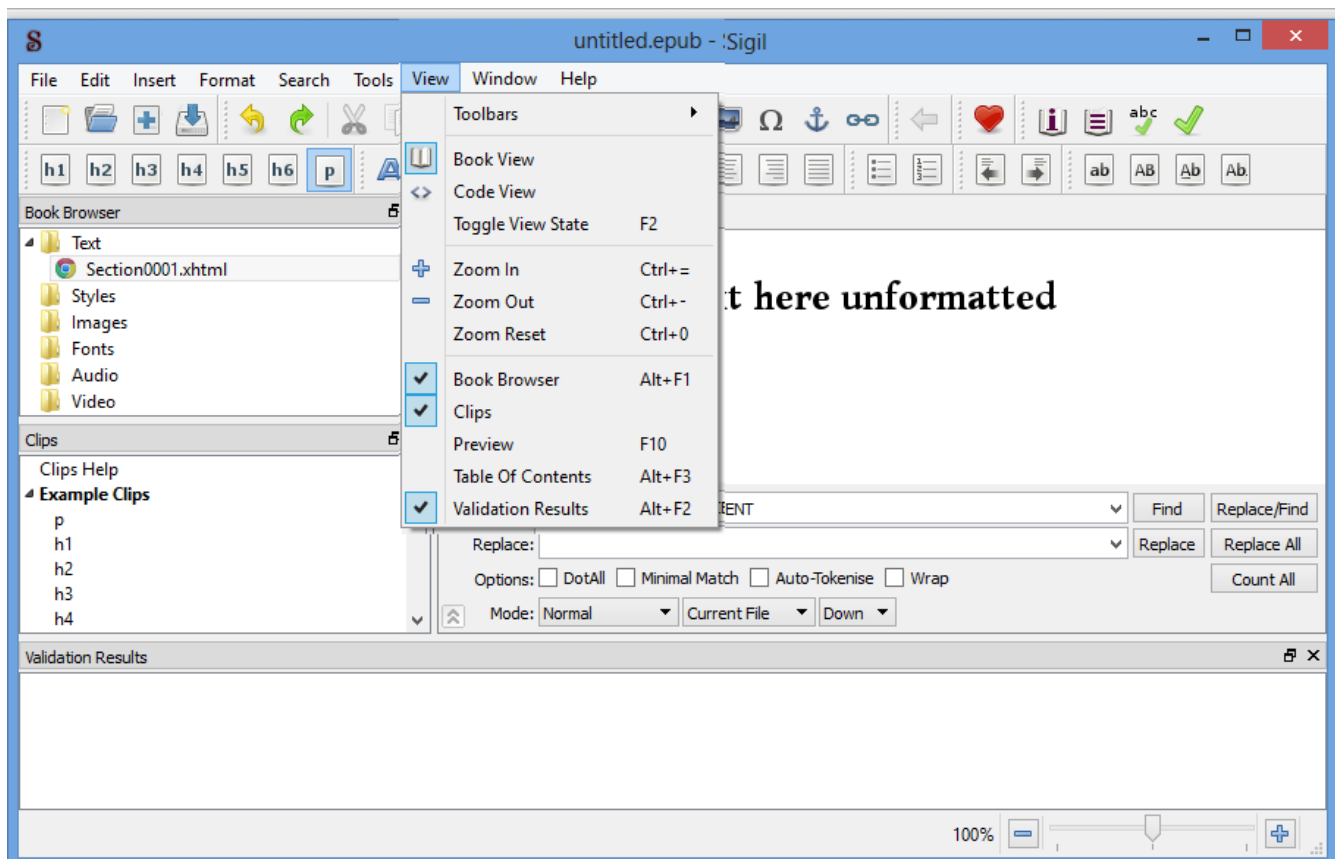
I first downloaded a plain text version of the original *Scarlet Letter* from Project Gutenberg. They offer several different formats, and I actually tried the ePub version first but something about the table of contents was funky and it listed the chapters in backward order when I previewed it in the Kindle Previewer.

Before we move on, you'll want to take a moment and download the [Kindle Previewer](#). This is what you'll be using to test the formatting of your book once you've added your text to the book.

One more software left to download and it's called [Sigil](#). It's an ePub editor that is opensource and free to download. There are various software programs out there

for creating eBooks and I've tried several of them, but Sigil is the easiest to use in my opinion.

Okay so the first step is to paste your plain text version into the software. One thing that's important to note here is that you want to make sure that you have the view set to book mode.

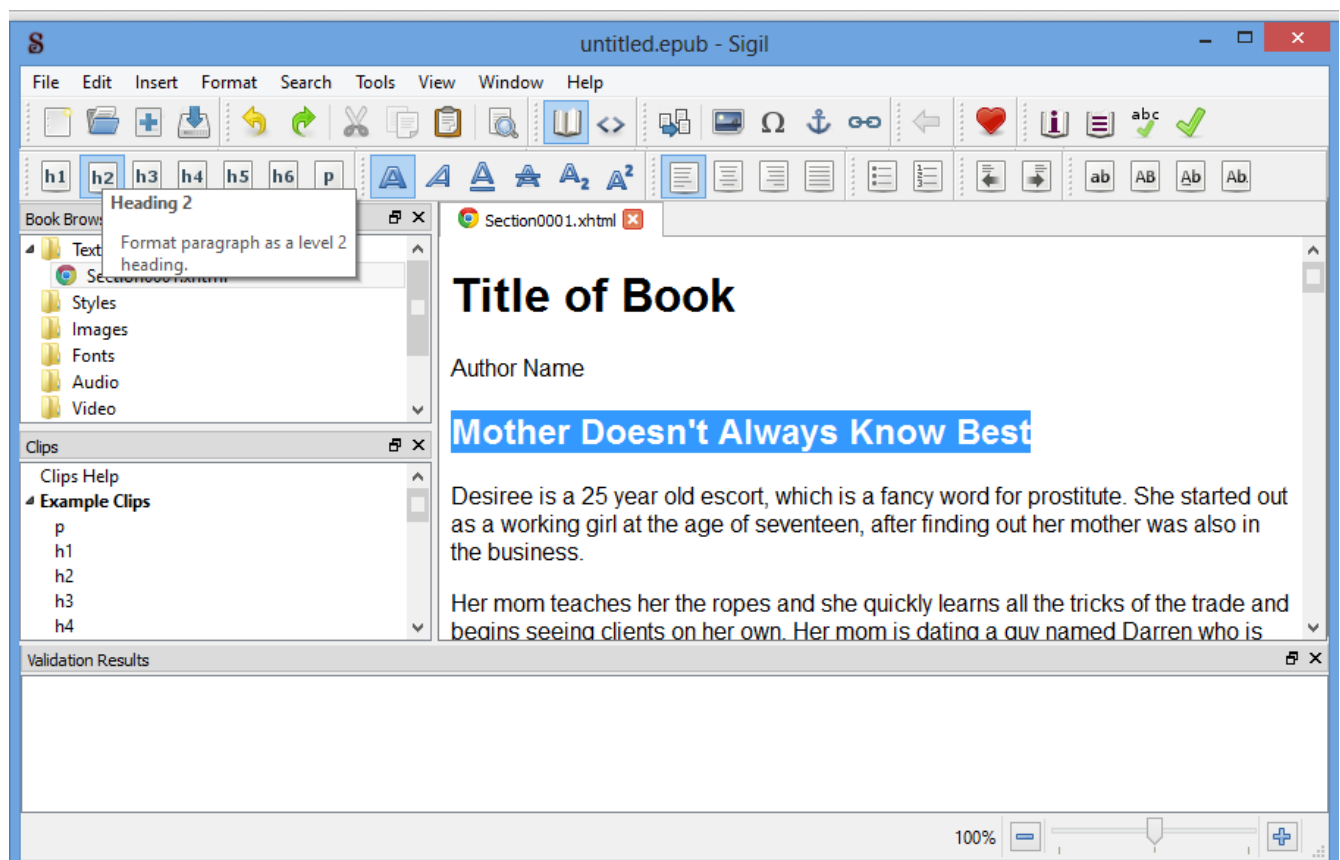


After you've pasted your books text, the program may add some extra white space between your paragraphs. Personally, I like to remove this but it's not necessary if you'd rather not mess with it.

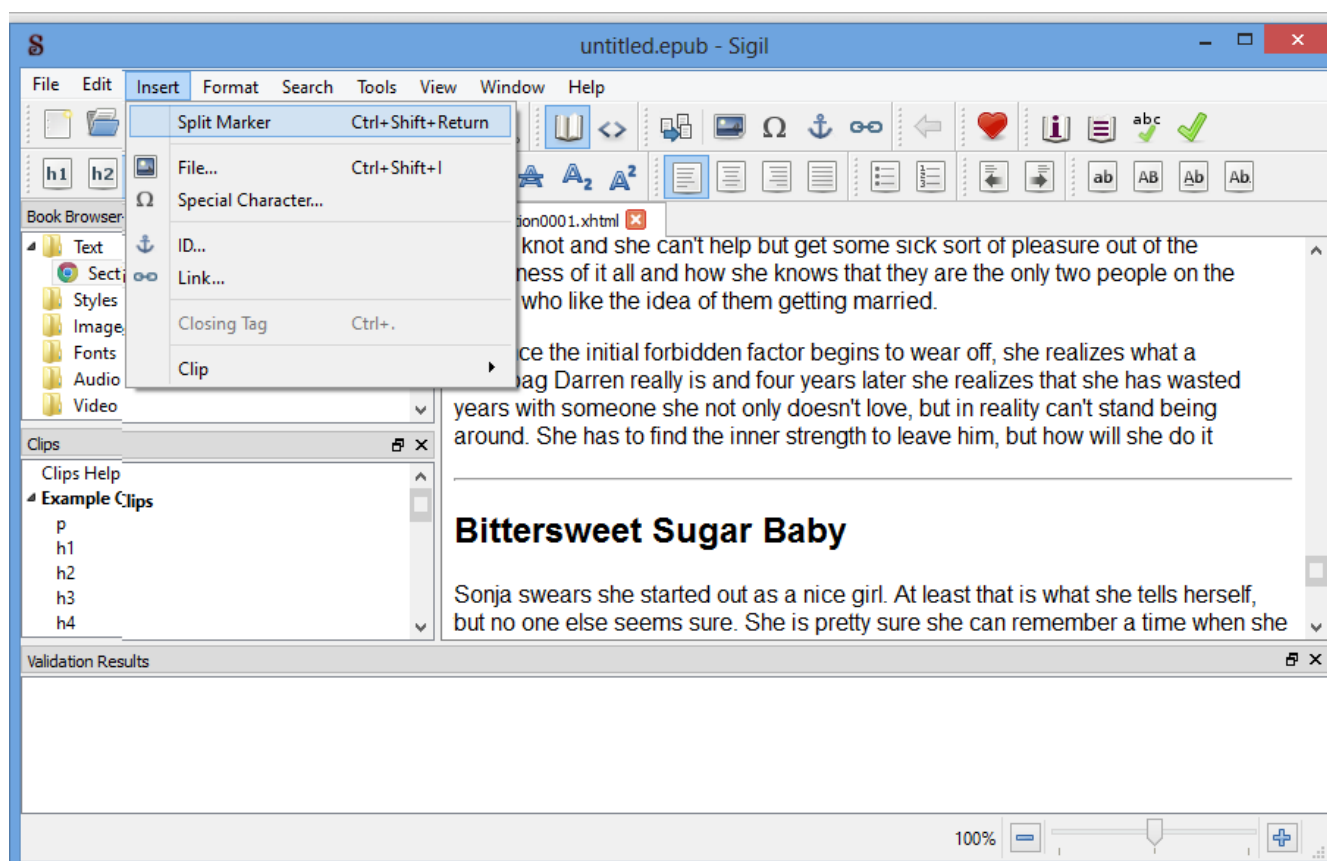
While we have the book open in the software, we want to add our original text at

this time. Grab the text and insert it in the correct places before moving on.

The next step is to go through the contents and highlight each of your chapter titles and then click on the H2 button in order to make them headings for your table of contents.

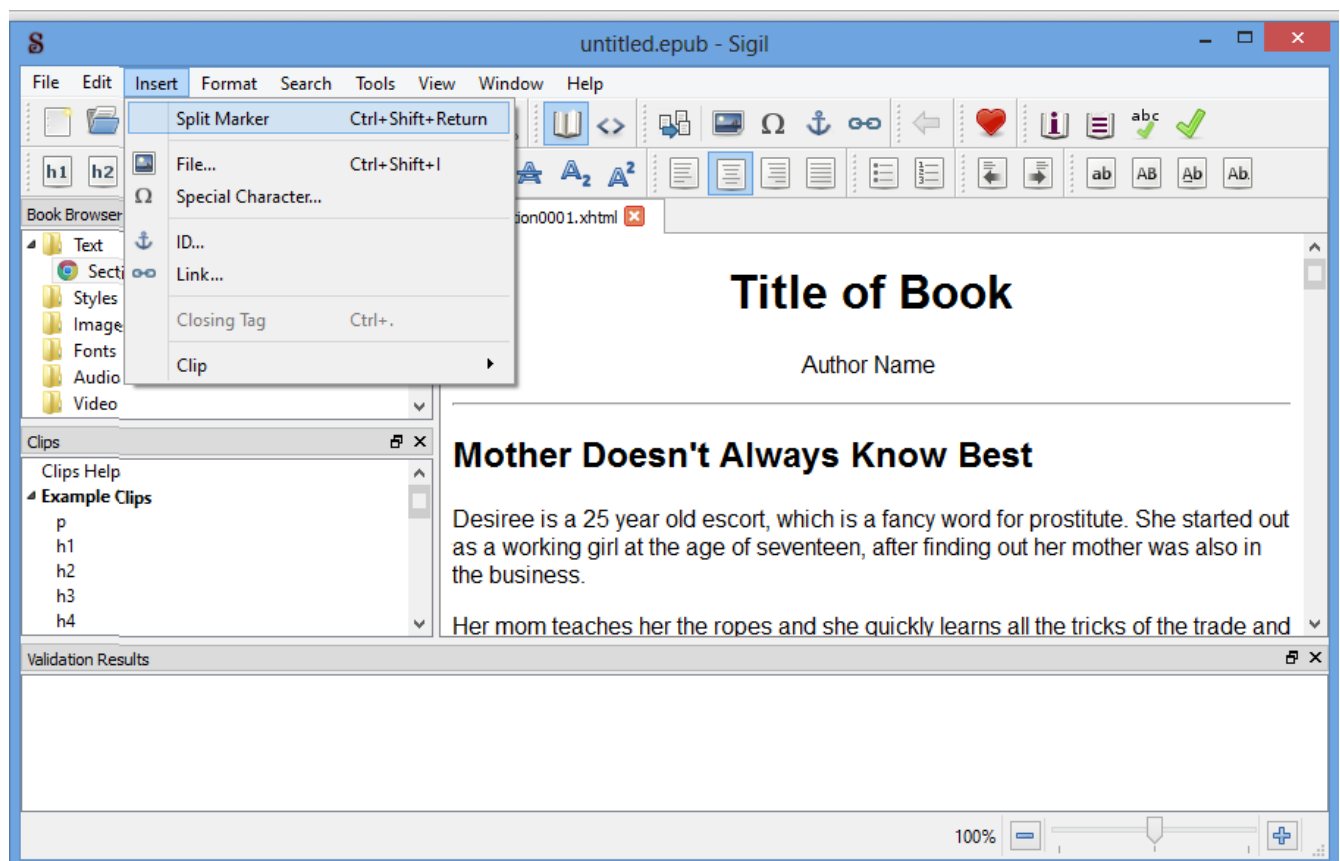


As you do this, be sure to add a single blank line immediately before each of your new chapters begins. Once you've added the H2 tag to your chapter title, return to the blank line above it then select insert from the toolbar and click on split marker.

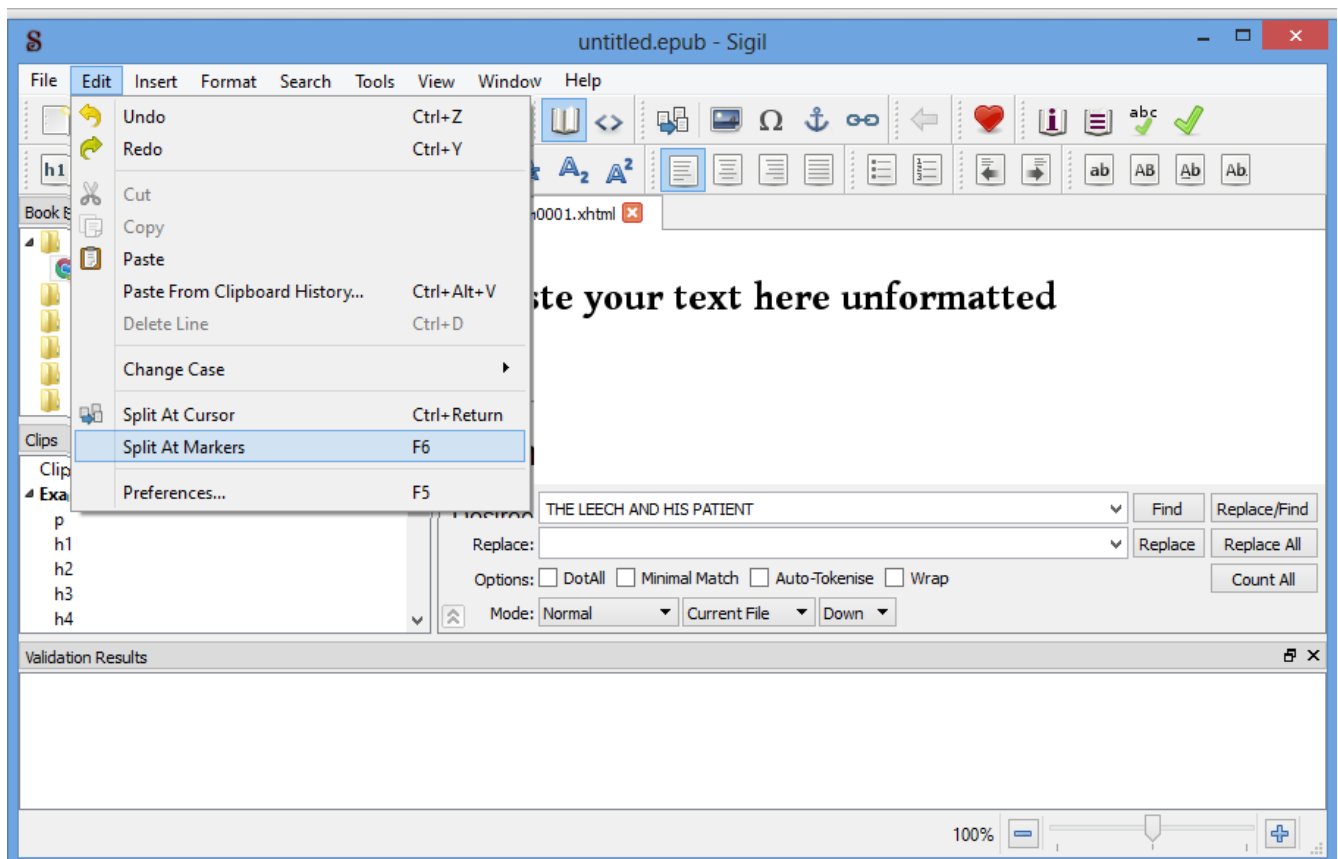


It's important to repeat these steps for each chapter included in your book. Once you've set up all your chapter titles and inserted a split marker at the beginning of each one, return to the beginning of your document and add another split marker before the text starts and add your title and author name above that line.

Highlight the title of your book and then click on the H1 tag. I personally like to center my title and my author name a few lines below it.

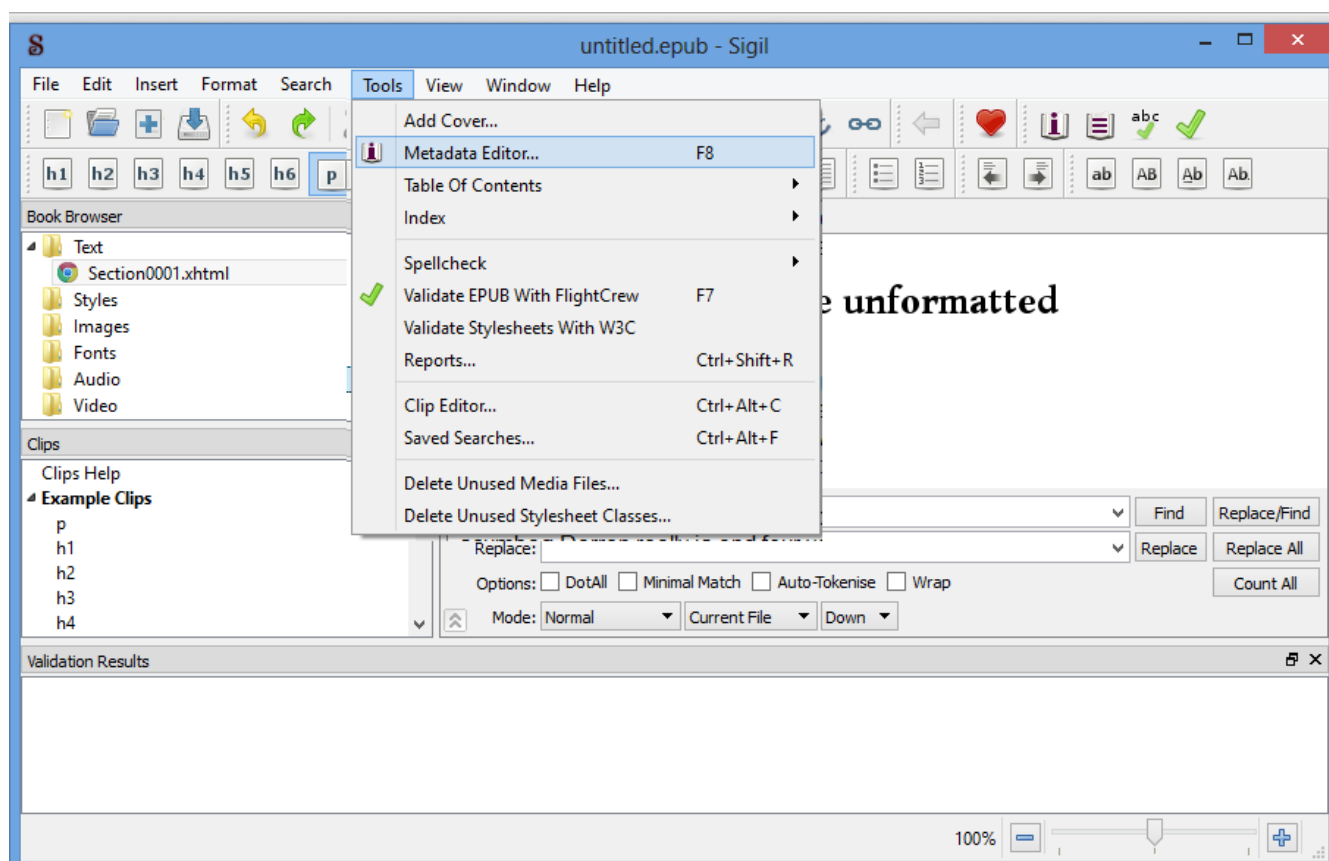


Now we need to click on the edit menu in the toolbar and click on the option that says split up markers. This is going to split up our text into several separate documents, each one representing a chapter.



Now click on tools from the toolbar and select table of contents. From the sub-menu, choose generate table of contents to set this up.

Next click on tools in the toolbar and click on meta data editor. This will bring up a screen asking for things like your book title and author name, which you should enter at this time.



The last part of this process is to check our file to make sure it's valid. Click on tools from the toolbar one more time, this time selecting validate EPUB with Flight Crew. If you get any error messages when trying to validate, you will need to correct the errors before you can save the file.

Once your file validates go ahead and save it. Now it's time to test our EPUB in the Kindle Previewer.

Using the Kindle Previewer, navigate to your EPUB file and it will convert it to the Kindle format. It may have some warnings, but don't worry too much about that. Just open the book and go through the entire thing to ensure but it's been formatted

properly.

Check your table of contents to make sure that it links to the correct location in the book for all of your chapters.

Now you can close the previewer and you should have the converted Kindle ready file saved to your hard drive. You can now use this to upload your book to KDP.

Recommended Resources for Further Reading

- [ISBN Guides: Basic Information](#)
- [ISBN Guides: Title Set Up & Registration](#)
- [Create Space: Find the Right ISBN for Your Book](#)
- [Bowker: Distribute and Sell Your eBook](#)
- [Amazon KDP: Publishing Public Domain Content](#)
- [Sigil – The ePub Editor: Download](#)
- [SparkNotes: Today's Most Popular Study Guides](#)
- [HOW TO: Use Public Domain Content](#)
- [Public Domain Blog](#)
- [Fair Use Lab](#)