4 Steps to Choosing Your Book Title
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STEP 1: Know the Rules

Your title should be:

Short
Short titles fit in URLs, tweets and most anywhere you need to use them, plus they are easier to type and say. They will also be easier to read in e-book stores on digital devices, which can have very small display spaces and screens. Try to stick to about five words or less. If you need more words to provide needed context, consider adding a subtitle.

Easy to Enunciate
If your title is too difficult for most people to pronounce, it may cause them to not connect with your book and purchase another title, instead. It may also be harder for people to recommend your book. Plus, you could spend a lot of time correcting media and potential readers. Practice saying your title out loud. Listen to how it sounds and decide if it comes out easily, or if it sounds jumbled or clashed.

Easy to Remember
Much of book publicity is word of mouth. Make sure your title is memorable so that potential readers can remember it when they look it up or purchase it later. A few things that can make your title more memorable: originality, alliteration, contradictory phrases and provocation (this may divide your audience, but you could be successful if half of that audience is interested in your book).

Simple
Try to limit your title to one or two concepts. Trying to fit in several different or unrelated topics just makes it complicated and harder to follow. Choose the most unique concept and/or words for your title.

Caveats

One-Word Titles
In search results, one word titles can cause your book to get lost in a sea of other book titles that contain that word or even worse – results about the topic but not your book. Having only one word in your title also increases the chances of running into duplicate titles.

Duplicates
Do a search through book titles to make sure that your desired title is not already taken. If it is, but the taker is a lesser known, out-of-print book, then it’s probably not a big deal. Otherwise, you should change your title.

Punctuation
If you are planning to have a website for your book, you need to consider that not all punctuation may be allowed in a URL. If your title contains excluded symbols, you’ll have to adapt it for your website address.

Unintended Connotation
Check online to make sure that your chosen title is not also the name of a controversial event or topic. Unintentionally offending potential readers is not something you want your book title to do.

Titles that Don’t Say Anything
Make sure your title does your book justice. You don’t want readers to skip over your book (which might turn out to be one of the best things they’ll ever read!) because of a boring, meaningless title.
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Descriptive
Your book title should include keywords that describe the most important thing, person or idea in your story and demonstrate its significance.

Something You Won’t Get Burnt Out On
You are going to say the name of your book over and over, thousands of times. And type it. And read it. Make sure it is something that you can be happy about each and every time.

Indicative of Your Book’s Genre
The title of your book should give potential readers a clue to your book’s genre. You don’t want your drama to sound like a self-help or comedy title.

Funny (Sometimes)
If appropriate for your book’s genre, giving your title a humorous twist can make it more memorable and attract more readers.

A Preview, but Not a Summary
Your title should give a hint of your story, but not give everything away. Leaving something unanswered will motivate potential readers to purchase your book.

Complementary to the Cover
Your title and cover should work with each other to enhance the effect of your cover. If your title is not relevant to the imagery on your cover, it may confuse potential readers and cause them to move on to another title.
STEP 2: Make the List

Now that you have some guidelines to follow, it’s time to put together a list of possible titles for your book. Try to create a big list of title options, the bigger the better. There may be combinations or slight alterations that you discover visually that you wouldn’t think of otherwise. Staring at a blank page can be intimidating, but coming up with a long list of options doesn’t have to be stressful or mind-numbing.

Here are 10 tips to get your creativity flowing:

1. **Consider the essence of your book.** What is your book about? Is there an underlying theme? How about a universal concept or feeling?

2. **Look over your book’s text.** Are there any lines that jump out or phrases that sum up your book’s theme? Are there phrases that sum up the theme of your book? Is there a trait in the main character that runs through the storyline?

3. **Add perspective.** How do your characters see themselves? Do they have a specific flaw or quality? Does your story have a unique perspective?

4. **Consider the visual.** Is there a special setting in your story? Can you describe the uniqueness of the main setting or destination?

5. **Add some mystery.** Pique readers’ interests by teasing them a bit with your title. Create a question, mention something of meaning without explaining it or express your book’s main theme as a dilemma.

6. **Research best-selling titles in your book’s genre.** Consider the elements that draw your eye. How can you replicate that effect in your title?

7. **Search for words in the dictionary.** Flip to a random page in your dictionary and look over the words. Do any of them stand out? Add them to your list and repeat.

8. **Consider song lyrics and lines from poems and other books.** Are there lyrics that fit with your book’s genre and theme? Are there poem lines that pop out to you? Just stay mindful of copyright.

9. **Free write.** Jot down every title, word or combination of words that comes to mind.

10. **Change up your words.** Try adding an adjective or verb to the main idea of your book. Use your character’s title or role. Exchange a more commonplace word for a more powerful, descriptive, uncommon word.
Step 3: Choose Your Title

You’ve got your big list of title options and now you’re ready to narrow it down to “the one.” In addition to considering your own feelings about your title choices, it helps to get the spur-of-the-moment, unbiased opinions of others. After all, other people are the ones you want to buy your book. Here is a simple process to get feedback on your potential titles:

1. Create a bracket system.
Print out a bracket and write your titles on the first lines. When placing your titles, be sure to seed them so that the titles you feel are the best are not pitted against each other right away.

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WINNER

2. A/B Testing
A/B testing validates which title readers would most likely choose out of two options. You can use online survey tools to get feedback from hundreds of people. To get results, incorporate your bracket and enter the two titles for each section. If you don’t have enough choices to fill a bracket, simply survey your titles and plug them into the tool as you see fit.

Review the titles that the majority of poll takers are picking and decide on your final choice.

Congratulations, you now have a title for your book!
Step 4: Choose Your Subtitle

If your book is part of a series or your title needs a bit more information, then you might want to use a subtitle. Subtitles can fill in any contextual gaps, draw the attention of potential readers and increase your book's likelihood of being found online.

Here are some tips for picking the right subtitle:

- Generally speaking, don't try to just extend your book title and create one really long title.
- The subtitle should just give a little extra information for the reader, such as the series name and volume number or a hint as to the genre of the book.
- When deciding on the style for your subtitle (colon, brackets, etc.), study your book's genre to see what other subtitles use.

Once you’ve completed these four steps, your book will have a shiny, new name. Remember, your title is all that some potential readers may see before they decide whether or not to purchase your book. Make sure your title makes them want to pick it up and crack it open.