



LITERARY INSPIRED · A FREE FIELD GUIDE

The Amazon Listing Field Guide

Titles, subtitles, blurbs, keywords, categories. How readers find your book, and how to stay on the right side of Amazon's rules.

For authors who want to be found without getting flagged.

literaryinspired.com

What's inside

01	The premise	Why your listing is a storefront, and what Amazon reads.
02	Titles	What belongs in the title field, and what gets a book rejected.
03	Subtitles	How the subtitle field works, and what KDP allows.
04	Blurbs	The part written for the reader, and where your tropes belong.
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06	Categories	Three slots. Choosing the rooms where your book can rank.
07	Do's & don'ts	The optimization summary, and the red flags that get a listing pulled.
08	The glossary	ASIN, BSR, KENP, KU. The shorthand, decoded.

Skip to Chapter 03 for how the subtitle field works.

Your listing is your storefront

A reader never meets your book the way you wrote it. They meet a product page: a cover, a title, a blurb, and whatever Amazon decided to show them.

Everything else on that page is metadata: the words you type into KDP that tell Amazon what your book is and who it's for. Get it right and the right readers find you. Get it wrong and you either disappear, or you get flagged.

This guide walks the fields one at a time, in the order KDP asks for them.

200

characters is the hard limit for your title and subtitle combined.

7

keyword fields, plus 3 browse categories. These are the main discovery fields you control.

1

blurb. Your main block of sales copy on the page.

Search and the reader need different things.

Trouble starts when one field is asked to do both.

GET FOUND

Title, subtitle, keywords, categories. These are read by Amazon's search, and they help decide which searches your book can appear in.

GET CHOSEN

The blurb. This is read by people. It helps the reader decide whether to sample or buy.

Keyword stuffing is a get-found trick shoved into a get-chosen field.

What goes in the title field

1 Match your cover, exactly.

The title you type must be the title printed on the book. Same words, same order. Amazon checks.

2 No keywords or tropes.

"Enemies to Lovers Small Town Romance" is a search query. Those phrases belong in your keywords.

3 No claims or prices.

"Bestselling," "award-winning," "free," "#1." All prohibited in the field, all grounds for rejection.

4 No other authors' names.

"For fans of Sarah J. Maas" belongs nowhere near your metadata. That's a fast way to get pulled.

5 Keep punctuation clean.

No "!!!," no emoji, no HTML. Series info goes in the series field, not bolted onto the title.

What KDP allows in the subtitle field

A subtitle is optional. If you use one, it lives under the same rule as the title: **it must match your cover** and still follow KDP's metadata rules, not act as a second keyword box. Recent enforcement has focused on keyword-stuffed subtitles.

**SAFE**

On your cover

A subtitle that matches your cover and reads like a subtitle, not a string of search terms. Matching the cover is necessary, but it still has to follow KDP's rules.

**WIDELY USED**

A clean genre line

"A Paranormal Romance." "A Cozy Mystery." Common, but KDP treats a genre line as metadata, so keep it on the cover and don't lean on it as a safe default.

**DANGER**

A query in disguise

"A Steamy Enemies-to-Lovers Fae Romance for Fans of ACOTAR." Tropes, heat, comp authors. This is what gets flagged.

Matching the cover and keeping the subtitle free of keyword stuffing puts the listing closer to KDP's stated requirements.

What the rule says, and what authors are seeing

TRUE

- Your title and subtitle must match your cover. This has always been the rule.
- Authors are reporting tighter enforcement, with keyword-stuffed subtitles being flagged or suppressed.
- A non-compliant listing can trigger a quality alert or be held until it's fixed.
- Repeat or serious violations can put the whole account at risk.

OVERBLOWN

- "Amazon is deleting every book with a subtitle." No. Clean subtitles are fine.
- A simple genre line is not what puts accounts at risk. Stuffing and repeat abuse is what Amazon acts on.
- This isn't a brand-new rule so much as an existing one being enforced more visibly. KDP's metadata guidelines have long applied to ebooks and print alike.
- You do not need to panic-edit a compliant listing. You need to know which side of the line you're on.

The rumor spreads because the fix is invisible: nobody posts "my compliant listing is fine."

Some of this locks once the book is live

A few fields are difficult to change after publication, so check them before you publish.

LOCK IT BEFORE LAUNCH

Title and subtitle. Once the book is live, these are very hard to edit.

Fixing them often means publishing a new edition, which can reset your reviews and ranking. Settle them before you go live.

REFINE ANY TIME

Keywords, categories, and your description.

These stay editable, so you can adjust them as sales show you what is working. Change them as often as you learn something new.

Lock the title and subtitle with care. Everything else you can improve as you go.

The part written for the reader

The tropes, tone and stakes you were tempted to force into the title live naturally here, because the blurb is written for readers rather than the search index. It still has its own KDP rules (no other titles, author names, URLs or review quotes), so it isn't a dumping ground either.

A blurb structure to try:

Hook

One or two lines that create a question the reader needs answered.

Stakes

Who wants what, and what it costs them. Name the tension, not the plot.

Promise

Name the experience: the tropes and the feeling the reader is buying.

Close

A single line that tips them into the sample, plus KU if you're in it.

Keywords help readers find the book; the blurb persuades them once they're on the page. Keep each to its own task.

The same book, stuffed and then sold

Tropes belong in the blurb. Dumped in as a list they push readers away; worked into real sentences they pull readers in.

STUFFED

"Enemies to lovers, small town, grumpy sunshine, forced proximity, slow burn, HEA, for fans of Lucy Score." A label sheet. It tells a reader nothing about the actual story.

SOLD

"He runs the harbour and wants everyone off it. She has come home to sell her late father's boat and can't say why that feels like a betrayal." A slow-burn, grumpy-sunshine romance in a town with real problems. Same tropes, now a story.

The tropes are still there, but now the reader gets a story instead of a label sheet.

Seven slots, phrased like a reader

1 Write them as searches.

Type what a reader would type. “reverse harem fae academy,” not “fae.” Whole phrases beat single words.

2 Don't repeat your category.

If you're in Paranormal Romance already, that phrase is wasted as a keyword. Spend the slot on something new.

3 Aim for phrases you can rank for.

A phrase with fewer, warmer searches you can rank for does more for you than one giant term you'll never surface in.

4 No names, no stuffing.

No other authors, no trademarks, no synonym pile-ups. The same rules as the title apply here too.

5 Use all seven.

An empty slot is discovery you're giving up. I fill all seven where each adds a real search phrase, then revisit as sales show what's working.

One keyword slot, badly and well

Same book, same slot. The difference is whether the phrase is something a reader would type.

STUFFED

“romance, love, good books, fiction, kindle, best romance”. Single words and filler. You compete with everything and rank for nothing, and repeating “romance” wastes a slot when it is already your category.

A REAL SEARCH

“grumpy sunshine small town romance”. One specific phrase a reader types when they want exactly this book. Fewer searches, far less competition, and a chance to surface.

Write each slot as a phrase a reader would search, not a pile of words you hope to be found under.

Three rooms, chosen on purpose

You get three browse categories. They're the shelves your book sits on, and they decide which bestseller lists you can even appear on.

Fit the book first

The category has to describe your book. Amazon acts on categories picked to chase a chart rather than match the story.

Choose where readers browse

Pick the category a reader would browse to find a book like yours. Where several fit equally well, weigh which one you can realistically rank in.

Use the specific paths

Enter the full browse path, deep as it goes. Depth is where the winnable sub-charts live.

Revisit after launch

Categories aren't permanent. When you can see where you're ranking, move to where you'll rank best.

Accurate and broad, or accurate and winnable

Both of these fit the book. One is a shelf you will never chart on; the other is where a book like yours can rank.

ACCURATE, BUT BROAD

“Romance” or “Contemporary Romance.” Correct, and stacked with thousands of titles including the biggest names in the genre. Real visibility here is unlikely.

ACCURATE, AND NARROWER

“Contemporary Romance › Small Town” or “Romance › Holiday.” Still a true fit, browsed by readers who want exactly this, and a chart you have a realistic shot at.

Fit first, always. Among the categories that fit, choose the one you can realistically rank in.

The listing checklist

DO

- Match every title and subtitle to the cover and KDP's rules.
- Put tropes, tone and comp hooks in the blurb.
- Write keywords as whole reader searches.
- Fill all seven keyword slots and all three categories.
- Choose categories you can realistically rank in.
- Revisit metadata once sales show you what works.

DON'T

- Stuff keywords or tropes into the subtitle.
- Name other authors anywhere in metadata.
- Claim "bestselling," "free" or "award-winning" in a title.
- Repeat your category as a keyword.
- Leave slots empty because you ran out of ideas.
- Assume ebook rules are looser than print. They aren't now.

What gets a listing flagged

A stuffed subtitle

Tropes, heat level and search terms crammed under the title. A common trigger.

A title that isn't on the cover

Metadata and cover disagree. A quick automatic rejection.

Another author's name

"For fans of..." or a comp author in any field. Reads as trademark misuse.

A claim in the title

"Bestseller," "#1," "free." Prohibited outright, cover or not.

A misleading category

Placing a sweet romance in erotica to chase a chart. Readers report it, Amazon acts.

Repeat offenses

One fix is housekeeping. A pattern is what puts the account itself at risk.

The shorthand, explained

ASIN

Amazon's unique ID for your book. Every edition has its own.

Metadata

Every field you type into KDP: title, subtitle, keywords, categories, description.

Browse category

The shelf your book sits on. Drives the bestseller charts you can appear on.

BSR

Best Sellers Rank. A live sales ranking, lower is better. Moves by the hour.

KU / KENP

Kindle Unlimited, and the page-reads you're paid on inside it (KENP).

Also-boughts

The “readers also bought” row. Earned by selling to the right nearby readers.

A+ Content

The image-and-text modules further down the page. Free, and underused.

Series field

Where series name and number belong. Never bolt them onto the title.

The Research Tool I Use

The keywords, the categories, and the competition check in this guide are exactly what Publisher Rocket is built for. It shows you the phrases readers type, how much competition each one has, and which categories a book like yours can realistically rank in. It does in minutes what takes hours by hand.

It's the one paid tool I recommend for this.

[Take a look at Publisher Rocket →](#)

An affiliate link. It costs you nothing extra, and it helps keep this guide free.

It's a one-time purchase rather than a subscription, so there is no recurring cost.

THE GUIDE, IN ONE LINE

**If it reads like a real title, it's fine.
If it reads like a search query, it's
stuffing.**

Everything in this guide comes back to that. Match the cover, sell in the blurb, and let the keywords and categories do the finding.

Not sure which side of the line your listing sits on? That's what I'm here for.