



## STEWARDSHIP OF TRUTH WITH EDITORIAL EXCELLENCE

# ISBN GUIDE

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An ISBN (International Standard Book Number) is a 13-digit identifier unique to each edition and format of a book. ISBNs help booksellers, libraries, distributors, and readers track and order your book accurately. Books with assigned ISBNs are listed in major databases (like Bowker, Books In Print) and look professionally published. ISBNs are not required to publish and sell your book, but in many cases, they are highly recommended.

### When You Need an ISBN

- You want to sell your book through bookstores (online or brick-and-mortar).
- You want libraries to be able to catalog and carry it.
- You want to have wider distribution channels (like IngramSpark, Barnes & Noble, independent bookstores).
- You want your book to look professional and to be identifiable as a legitimate publication.

### When You Do Not Need an ISBN

- You are only publishing an eBook on Amazon Kindle (they use their own ASIN number).
- You are distributing a private or free book to a limited audience (such as a church group, family history, or private course manual).
- You only use Amazon KDP and opt for their free ISBN (making Amazon the publisher, not you).

### ISBNs and Self-Publishing Platforms

- **Amazon KDP:** Offers a free ISBN for paperbacks and hardcovers if you don't have your own. However, Amazon is listed as the *imprint*, and you cannot use that ISBN elsewhere.
- **IngramSpark:** Requires you to have your own ISBN if you want full control and wide distribution.
- **Barnes & Noble Press:** Requires an ISBN for print books if you want them sold beyond their platform.

### Different Formats and ISBNs

Every unique format or edition requires its own ISBN. The cost of an ISBN is \$125, but if you need more than one, consider buying ten for \$295.

FORMAT	NEED SEPARATE ISBN?	NOTES
Paperback print	Yes	Different ISBN from hardcover or digital
Hardcover print	Yes	Each binding gets its own ISBN.
eBook (ePub)	Yes	For distribution outside of Amazon.
Kindle eBook	No	Amazon uses its own ASIN instead of an ISBN, so not required if sold only on Amazon. You <i>can</i> assign an ISBN if distributing elsewhere.
Audiobook	Yes	If distributed through traditional retail (e.g., Audible, library distributors), it requires its own ISBN.