

KDP Keyword Kickstart Guide



*How to Find Keywords That Actually
Sell Your Books on Amazon*





Introduction

Hi, I'm **Ivy Hang**, a content creator and self-publisher helping others build passive income through Amazon KDP. I've published books, tested tools, made mistakes — and figured out what actually works.

I created this guide to help you avoid one of the biggest beginner mistakes: ignoring keyword research. Most people upload their books too soon without considering how customers will actually find them. This guide gives you a simple roadmap for doing keyword research the right way — even before you pick your niche.

Who this guide is for:

- KDP Beginners who want to get discovered on Amazon
- Anyone struggling to get visibility or traction
- Self-Publishers who want a repeatable niche research process

“The right book in the wrong place is the same as a great book that’s never seen.”

Contents

	Page
01 - Why Keywords can make or break your book	4
02 - Why Keyword Research Comes Before Niche Selection	5
03 - Understanding the 7 Backend Keyword Boxes	6
04 - What Makes a Good Keyword?	7
05 - The Amazon Search Bar Method (Free!)	9
06 - Keyword Validation in Under 5 Minutes	10
07 - Tools to Supercharge Your Keyword Research	11
08 - Turning Keywords into Winning Book Ideas	12
09 - Keywords Dos & Dont's (Cheat Sheet)	13
10 - Stay Connected & What's Coming Next	14



01 Why Keywords can Make or Break Your Book

Publishing on Amazon KDP isn't just about designing a beautiful interior or choosing a catchy title. One of the most overlooked (yet powerful) tools in your publishing toolbox is **keywords**.

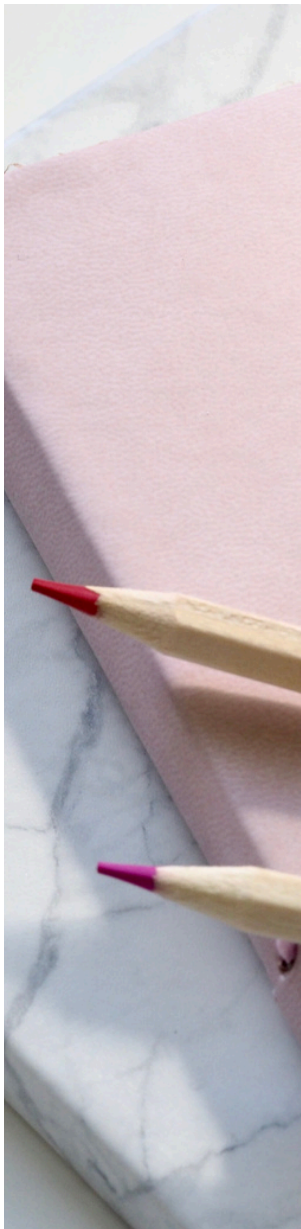
Every KDP listing allows you to enter **7 backend keyword boxes**. These don't appear publicly on your listing, but they help Amazon understand where your book belongs and what kinds of shoppers should see it. In other words: they directly influence your visibility, discoverability, and ultimately, your sales.

And yet most authors spend **less than 10 minutes** on this step.

This guide will show you why that's a mistake, and how to fix it. We'll walk you through the exact process of keyword research — even **before** you choose your niche — using free and affordable tools, so you can position your books for success from day one.



02 Why Keyword Research Comes before Niche Selection



Picking a niche before researching keywords is like building a house before checking the land.

A good niche is only valuable if:

- People are searching for it
- It's not completely saturated
- You can position your book to compete effectively

That's why it's important to **target sub-niches**, not just broad categories. Broad niches like "Coloring Book for Adults" or "Gratitude Journal" are often too general and competitive.

Instead, start with keyword research to uncover **sub-niches** that are specific, buyer-driven, and underserved.

For example:

- Instead of "Coloring Book for Adults," try "Mindfulness Coloring Book for Women Over 50"
- Instead of "Gratitude Journal," try "5-Minute Gratitude Journal for Teachers", etc.



03 Understanding the 7 Backend Keyword Boxes

When you upload your book to KDP, Amazon gives you 7 keyword slots. These are not visible on your product page, but they help Amazon index your book in the right categories and searches.

These keyword boxes help Amazon understand how to categorize your book and who to show it to — even if the customer never sees these words directly.

Key Tips:

- Don't repeat words from your title or subtitle
- Use phrases (e.g. "gratitude journal for moms"), not individual words
- Don't use commas; just spaces
- Don't include irrelevant or misleading terms
- Think like your buyer: what would they type to find a book like yours?

04 What Makes a Good Keyword?

The 3 Golden Criteria:

Every strong keyword has these three ingredients:

#1 RELEVANCE



Does it match your book's content?

Using irrelevant keywords — even high-volume ones confuses Amazon's algorithm and can hurt your visibility. Stick with keywords that accurately reflect what your book offers. If your book is for toddlers but you use a keyword like "mindfulness journal for adults," Amazon will see poor engagement and lower your ranking. Stick with keywords that clearly and accurately describe what your book offers.

#2 DEMAND



Are people actually searching for it?

You could rank #1 for a keyword like "weekly journal for underwater robots," but if no one is ever searching for it, it won't help your book get discovered. Visibility only matters if there is actual interest.

Focus on keywords that show up in Amazon's autocomplete or are used in popular listings. High search volume means people are actively looking for books like yours — and that's where you want to be.

The 3 Golden Criteria (*Continued*):

#3 LOW-TO- MODERATE COMPETITION



Is the market too saturated with top sellers? Can a new book stand a chance?

Avoid keywords with over 10,000 results unless you have a strong brand or unique angle. Aim for under 5,000 if possible.

A keyword like “Daily Fitness Tracker for Seniors” may not be trending on TikTok — but it could be highly searched, have little competition, and perfectly match your content.

“The right keywords don’t just describe your book - they deliver it to the people who are already looking for it.”

Screenshot of the 7 backend keywords form you need to fill out when you publish on Amazon KDP.

05

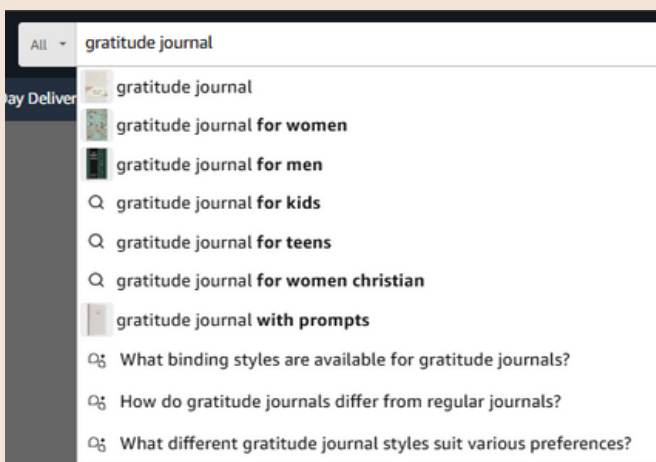
The Amazon Search Bar Method (Free!)

If you're just getting started with keyword research, this is a simple and free way to ease into the process.

Steps:

1. Go to Amazon.com (in incognito mode if possible)
2. Type part of your niche or a broad keyword (e.g., "gratitude journal")
3. Look at the autocomplete suggestions — these are based on real search data
4. Click one of them and check the number of results + bestselling books

Screenshot of Amazon autocomplete suggestions:



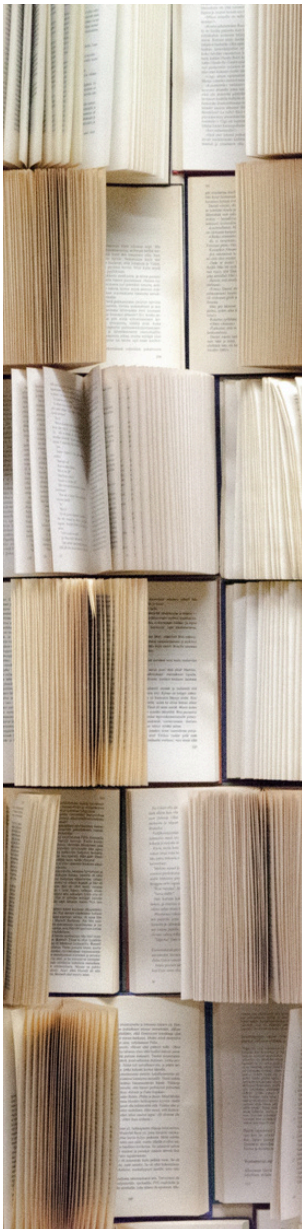
What to Look For:

- Specific long-tail phrases (e.g. "gratitude journal for kids")
- Under 10,000 results, although the lower the better
- Consistent sales in top 10 listings (look for BSRs ideally under 300,000)

This method is free, fast, and surprisingly insightful. You'll begin to notice patterns in what buyers are actually searching for. That said, it does have limitations. For deeper insights or faster validation, you can also explore other free and affordable tools listed in Section 07 (pg. 11).

06

Keyword Validation in Under 5 Minutes



Use this **mini-checklist** to quickly validate a keyword:

- ☒ Does Amazon suggest it in the search bar?
- ☒ Are the search results under 10,000 (ideally under 5,000)?
- ☒ Do the top listings have Best Seller Ranks (BSRs) below 300,000?
- ☒ Are the top listings relatively recent (published in the last 1–2 years)?
- ☒ Can you realistically compete with the top 5 books (cover, title, interior)?

If you check most of these boxes, you're on the right track!

07 Tools to Supercharge Your Keyword Research

Before you settle on a niche or upload your book, these free and affordable tools can help you dig deeper, validate your ideas faster, and make smarter decisions based on real data.

Tool	Free / Paid	What It Does	Good For	Notes
Amazon Search Bar Method	Free	Shows real-time keyword suggestions	Brainstorming niche phrases	No account needed, but no visibility into actual keyword search volumes
Self Publishing Titans Chrome Extension	Free / Paid (Pro)	Analyzes keyword competition, BSR, search volume	Keyword validation	Free = basic info; Pro = deeper stats, trends
Book Bolt	Paid (with Free Trial)	Keyword tool, niche research, interior designer	All-in-one KDP research & creation	Try it with 20% off using my link & code below

Links to Try the Tools Recommended Above:

- [Self Publishing Titans](#)
- [Book Bolt – Get 20% Off](#) with discount code *ivyhang*

These tools can help you go from “I think this might work” to “I know this has potential.”

08 Turning Keywords into Winning Book Ideas

Once you find a keyword that checks the boxes, **reverse-engineer a book idea**:

Example: Keyword: "Mindfulness Journal for Teens"

- Book idea: A 90-day guided journal with prompts & trackers
- Interior: Custom-designed pages + weekly affirmations
- Cover: Bright, modern, teen-friendly design

Repeat this process and you'll have a vault of keyword-driven sub-niches ready to go.



09 Keyword Dos & Don'ts (Cheat Sheet)

DO



- Use natural search phrases
- Combine keyword ideas (e.g. "gratitude journal" + "for moms")
- Think like your customer
- Include plurals and synonyms

DON'T



- Repeat your title in the keyword boxes
- Use filler words (like "book" or "by")
- List author names or brands
- Include irrelevant trends (unless they directly relate)

You're now equipped with the tools and mindset to approach KDP publishing strategically, starting with keyword research.

These small steps can make a huge impact on your book's visibility and sales. And remember, you want to do these things before deciding on your niche for your next book.

10

Stay Connected & What's Coming Next

This guide is just the beginning. I'm creating more resources to help you succeed with KDP, including:

- Helpful video tutorials to support your KDP journey
- New tips, tools, and exclusive free content delivered straight to your inbox
- Occasional offers and opportunities to go deeper when you're ready

If you'd like to stay in the loop:

- Subscribe to my [YouTube channel](#) for more free tutorials
- Watch for upcoming emails with bonus tips, tool recommendations, and offers

Thanks for reading!

♥ *Ivy Hang*

“

*“Great books don’t sell themselves —
the right keywords help the right
readers find them.”*



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