The Book Dash Manual

This is a work in progress: guidelines on how to run a Book Dash event, and how to participate as a volunteer. It's a live community document: feel free to comment and send us your ideas, and our core volunteers will update and improve it as we fly.

Unless otherwise specified, this document details how to run a physical Book Dash event, where all (or the vast majority) of participants are physically present in one large venue. For details on the initial learnings of how to run a remote version of the event, see the section on "Hosting a remote event".

Contents

Do you want to run a Book Dash?

We'd love to see others using and improving our process to make more books. This manual should help, and please let us know how it goes.

If you are running a book-creation day separately from Book Dash, you are free to use this model but **please do not use the name 'Book Dash'** for your event. As an organisation, we have to be very clear to our supporters and sponsors what is and isn't official Book Dash work.

If you want to collaborate with us more closely to host an event please check that we're all on the same page and then reach out to us, to see what our capacity is like. An official Book Dash gets promoted in our networks, and your books and volunteers get to use the infrastructure we've built, especially our website and Dropbox for sharing books.

What is Book Dash?

Book Dash gathers volunteer creative professionals to create new, African storybooks that anyone can freely translate and distribute.

Why? Children in South Africa need more books, but they cost too much purchased from publishers. The cheapest books have no publisher – then the only cost is printing. So our participants do the work of publishers. Then anyone can get print runs sponsored and put finished books into the hands of children.

We believe **every child should own a hundred books by the age of five**. In South Africa, that means giving 600 million free books to children who could never afford to buy them. Every day we lose, more children grow up unable to read and write well, and to enjoy the worlds that books open up.

Every one of us can help to give lots of free books to very young children. Most importantly, these books should be:

- new, African stories
- with characters they recognise
- in languages they speak
- beautiful enough to love for a lifetime.

There are two sides to getting new, better books into children's hands:

1. **Book creation**: writing, illustration and design, guided by an editor. (Output: print and digital files than anyone can download and share.)
2. **Book distribution**: printing, delivering and handing out to children and parents. (This includes reading on mobile phones.)

Book Dash *creates* books. We support others in *distributing* them to children.

Our book-creation process is where our name comes from: a Book Dash is a single day when volunteer teams of skilled creative professionals come together to create new children's storybooks in just 12 hours.

- Each team comprises a writer, an illustrator, and a designer.
- The teams have twelve hours to create one book per team.
- We provide expert editors, tech support, a great venue, great food and lots of coffee.

Working in solidarity, the room (or virtual room) buzzes with creative energy and inspiration, driven by some important principles:

- Our teams create new, African stories in local languages (on the day or translated by us, or our partner organisations).
- Committed volunteers bring their A-game. Read our books to see the world-class quality for yourself.
- Real-time teamwork knits writing, illustration and design together powerfully – almost impossible in lengthy, traditional publishing workflows.
- Our work is our gift to the world: everything is open-licensed ('Creative Commons Attribution') so that anyone can download, translate, print, and distribute it afterwards. Already our books are being reused in print and digital forms around South Africa and beyond.

This makes Book Dash the cheapest way to give great books to little children.

You can find out about what Book Dash is working on, and download our books, at bookdash.org.

What happens at a Book Dash?

A Book Dash day is a 12-hour, facilitated book-creating marathon. It runs from 9am to 9pm and a bit longer for the organisers. In that time, each team (writer, illustrator, designer) has to produce a finished children's book, with the help of various supporting volunteers. That is a huge ask, and we've developed some very specific guidelines that make it possible at all.

Everything works well if everyone fulfils their roles.

- Facilitators organise and run the day, keeping the teams on track
- Each book-making team comprises:
    - a writer
    - an illustrator, and
    - a designer
- Their support team comprises:
    - an editor for every two teams

- a facilitator dedicated to two teams (same as the editor)
- a technical director
- an art director (not always necessary if the facilitators can fulfil this role)
- a videographer–photographer (not necessary for virtual events)
- a social media storyteller
- logistics wizards.

The organisers might fill any of these roles, too, on the day. But in this guide we'll describe what they do separately, because they have to plan and pull everything together starting several months in advance. After all their planning, this is how the day will go.

To meaningfully close the circle, the digital printing of participant copies must be included in the budget. These should be sent to all the creative volunteers and editors (three or more copies per person, of the book they worked on) as soon as possible after the event. This is a tangible way to thank them for their time. The sponsors of the event can also receive one or two sets of the printed copies.

For virtual events, we try and re-create the buzz and excitement of a physical event by sending participants surprise hampers before the event, containing snacks, a T-shirt, fun gifts, after-care gifts, etc. An example of the hamper contents can be found here.:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tmArHV1Pavai589e2jPfDe_oEFw22YAkwisOV2-eJRU/edit#

Detailed agenda/outline of the day for Facilitators

You can use something like this spreadsheet to track teams' progress on the day:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/14xw0L_i9_6W4oDrsaXaxqfCAr0DNxMXd4_bC5UIW0Dk/edit#gid=0

The below outline should be printed for each Facilitator, and each team and participant should receive a copy of the first two columns only! See this example of how you can allocate responsibilities to the various facilitators on the day:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1imxfpTOCuYBRoDbVnj2ul9eCWQaBZo6KsEmxqVVdnVM/edit?usp=sharing

If you are running a **Remote Book Dash**, you can use this agenda:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AWO-x5qPU_dVmKUjxkJFOCDO_08aNKBPLiHcXrzjZ7A/edit?usp=sharing

Allocate **one facilitator per two creative teams**. In this way the facilitator gets involved constructively with only these two teams, and can help to troubleshoot in a meaningful way. It also avoids the situation where a whole group of facilitators come to a creative team every 40 minutes to check in, possibly overwhelming the team and making contradictory suggestions. Facilitators check in with each other regularly during the day (see the schedule below), and problems and solutions can then be discussed. One facilitator will then also work closely with one editor, also allocated to the same two stories, thereby increasing the cohesion around the stories.

Time	Milestone	Description

7:00	Set up	Get projector, sound and WiFi working. Put out name badges. Place flat plans and info packs on team tables, along with a labelled flash drive for each team. Ensure banners, bunting and multiplugs are all set up. Get the music playing. Put out the tea, coffee and morning snacks. *Virtual event:* *Check that all links to different spaces/teams are working, that social media posting is ready to go, etc.*
7:30–45	Support team briefing	Cover basic logistics: venue, toilets, wifi, visitors, food, scanning, who's who & core responsibilities.
9:05 - 09:25	Participants arrive and general welcome	Participants are welcomed, and invited to get a refreshment and find their tables and meet their teams. Facilitators welcome all participants, including sponsors: - go over the 'Why, How, What' of Book Dash, and the goals for the day. - Cover venue logistics (incl. bathrooms, safety briefing, smoking etc), housekeeping and sponsors. *Virtual event: explain etiquette (i.e. everyone muted and type messages/questions in the chat* - Go over the timeline with teams. - Explains the CC-BY license and introduces all roving participants. - Emphasise/explain the importance of the flatplan. - Introduce the first briefing as below
09:30–10:15	Teams work on flat plan to plan book	Quickly use [flatplan](#) to decide together how the book will be laid out: which text and illustrations will go where etc. The team needs to map out the whole book. Allocate a facilitator or editor to each team. This person will lead the flat planning process, the illustrator will make quick small drawings, and the designer will place these pictures and text (regardless of whether you are doing a paper or digital flat plan). *For virtual events, teams can use InVision (an app in Microsoft Teams) for flatplanning.* At 10:20, illustrators should be able to hit the ground running on the first illustration and the designer

| | | needs to start setting up the files. Writers and editors start perfecting story and text.

Each facilitator should be assigned to 2 teams and make sure they fully understand what to do, and that it's being done properly and complete on time. |
|---|---|---|
| 10:15 | Finished flatplan, start work. | The designer can keep fleshing out the flatplan, but the illustrator **must** now start working on the first illustration. It should be the one that is least likely to change (i.e. it doesn't have to be the first spread).

Editors start working with their writers to tighten up stories. First draft is due at 11:00.

Each of the facilitators available for "their" editor to help troubleshoot. |
| 10:15 | Facilitator check-in | All facilitators meet to discuss concerns. |
| 11:00–11:40 (can be longer) | [Technical design briefing](#) | Designers are briefed on layout and font guidelines and given tips on how to prepare their files. Get experienced designers to share tips. |
| 11:00 | First draft of story due

First illustration spread complete

Flatplans complete

Mid-morning snacks | Worked-on stories go to editors for comment. Editor's check-in (15 minutes): Editors have the worked-on stories, can comment and check their thinking with each other, writers then keep working on them.

Storyteller takes photographs, documents on social media. Snacks are handed round. |
| 11:40 | Second illustration spread complete

Editors return first drafts. | Illustrators are expected to finish a story spread every 40 minutes.

Editors should have reverted all first drafts of stories back to writers with input, second drafts should be underway.

Designers start setting up files. |
| 12:20 | Designers have set up files, laid out completed illustrations.

Second story drafts due.

Third illustration spread complete. | Tech Directol to check in now or at 13:00 with each designer separately to see if the files have been set up correctly.

Writers should have given a second draft to their editors to read for final remarks/changes before the readthrough after lunch.

Illustrators are expected to finish a story spread every 40 minutes. |

12:20-12:30	Facilitator check-in	All facilitators meet to discuss concerns and progress.
13:00- 13h30	Lunch	Participants eat as and when they are ready.
13:15	Fourth illustration spread complete.	Designers should have done a draft layout by now and inserted the text onto each spread (even if it will change slightly) as well as have started work on the cover and the end papers. They should also have laid out the four illustrations that are complete.
13:30–14:30	Writers' read-through and title bash	Writers and editors gather in their breakaway meeting to read their stories aloud and get feedback. Also do the "Title Bash" to help everyone come up with the best possible title for the book. All titles finalised by 14:30.
14:00	Fifth illustration spread complete.	Facilitators help illustrators keep going. Identify struggling teams and come up with a plan for them.
14:30	Editor check-in/swap	Any changes from the readthrough have been made and editors can now swap stories and sign off if they're happy. They should also check that the story is laid out in the design files correctly, and read the blurb on the back cover.
14:40	Sixth illustration spread complete.	
14:40-14:50	Facilitator check-in	All facilitators meet to discuss concerns and progress.
15:20	Seventh illustration spread complete. Designers have worked on endpapers, cover and typography.	Low res scanning of illustrations, consulting on art direction, and proofing continue for all teams as needed. Writers to keep busy with blog posts and social media updates. They must stay with their teams and help however they can to keep morale up.
16:00	Eighth illustration complete (rough guide).	Snacks are handed round by logistics support at 16h00.
16:40	Ninth illustration spread complete.	Text of stories final and laid out in the design file. Editors must check the text as it is laid out in the design file.
16:40-16:50	Facilitator check-in	All facilitators meet to discuss concerns and progress.
17:00	Refreshments served	Wine/beer and other refreshments are served.
17:15-17:30	Prize-giving	Facilitators hand out spot prizes to teams to recognise progress and keep spirits up. These can be silly, morale-boosters and usually address

		something specific about the book, or could use some of the prize ideas [here](#).
		Prizes are usually given to whole teams rather than individuals (don't forget the support roles, though) and we're of the opinion that everyone gets a prize, and if you can wear it or use it on the day, all the better.
		Virtual event: if you had sent hampers to the participants, you can ask them to open the team gifts now, put them on, and post pics.
		After this, teams have two hours left until they need to start exporting files.
17:20	Tenth illustration spread complete. Cover, endpapers and typography are almost complete.	
18:20	Eleventh illustration spread complete.	
18:30	Dinner	Dinner is set out, ready for participants to help themselves.
19:00	Twelfth illustration spread complete. Cover, endpapers and typography are complete.	Illustrations are complete and now final touches must be made to the files, placing illustrations, finishing cover etc. Start exporting if ready.
19:30-19:40	Facilitator check-in	All facilitators meet to discuss concerns and progress.
19:30	Book is finished! Editor has proofread story in situ (in the design file) Designer starts exporting the book for show-and-tell	By this point, the work is done (all spreads and cover are finalised) and the designer must start the saving and exporting of the files. Last-mile-sugar snacks are served to teams. Each team is to provide their files on their flashdrive to Tech Director for show-and-tell *before* 20:00. *For virtual events, the designer only exports low-res PDFs at the end of the day for Show-and- tell, and saves the final high-res and InDesign files in the shared Google drive folder, or sends them via WeTransfer or similar.*

20:00- 20:15	All files handed in and Tech Director prepares files for show-and-tell	Technical Director gets all the flashdrives with the final files and show-and-tell PDFs from each team, checks the files and loads the PDFs on the projector computer for show-and-tell.
20:15-21:00	Final wrap up and Show-and-tell	Wrap up and BIG THANKS! Gather everyone around the projector and show off the books. Each team goes to the front to read their book (and get their Tshirt and certificate). Facilitators congratulate each team, as well as editors and all other support volunteers. Remember to thank all sponsors and present certificates to roaming roles as well. *For virtual Book Dash: send links to family members of participants to join the General room in Teams for Storytime. T-shirts and certificates are included in the hamper you send beforehand.* Hand out the care packs for all participants (including "recuperation" items like slippers, bath salts, scented candles, rooibos tea bags, etc). *For virtual Book Dash: incorporate these items in the hamper sent to participants before the event.* After the final wrap up, make sure that everyone has provided their flashdrive with **all** their files and illustrations are in. Make sure everyone has a Tshirt and certificate. They leave on a high-note knowing that they've done something amazing. *For virtual Book Dash, agree with designers by when they will transfer the design files to you.*
21:00–22:45	Clean and pack-up	Gather any outstanding final files on flash drives: Make sure that you have **all** files and all the flash drives and all physical illustrations for hi-res scanning. Clean and pack up the venue, making sure to leave it as you found it. Depending on the venue, this may involve a lot of moving around chairs and tables, or simply taking down the bunting, banners, signs and extension leads. *For virtual Book Dash, agree with designers by when they will transfer the design files to you.*

Checklist for facilitators

On the morning of the event, everything should be set up by 08:30 latest, ready for the participants to start arriving. Things to check include:

- ❏ Each team has a Google Drive folder, and this has been shared with them before the event. All design files are there.
- ❏ All teams' workstations have a sign, folder with briefing documents and a flash drive and flatplans, plus space for four people to sit.
- ❏ *For virtual events: all the channels on the platform are set up correctly, with the correct people invited to each channel.*
- ❏ Each workstation has a dedicated multiplug with at least 4 available plugs.
- ❏ Each table has at least 3, preferably 4 chairs.
- ❏ The printer and scanner are plugged in, set up and working
- ❏ Name badges are set out near the entrance and someone with a participant-list is ready to welcome participants
- ❏ Breakfast food and drinks are set up and ready for incoming volunteers
- ❏ There are sufficient signs from the parking/arrival area to find the venue
- ❏ All banners are set up in appropriate spaces and the bunting is hanging
- ❏ Breakaway venues are unlocked & set up for briefings (one needs a screen/projector)
- ❏ Bathrooms are clean and have toilet paper, deodorant and female hygiene products
- ❏ Wine and/or beer is being chilled, or there is a plan for that to happen
- ❏ T-shirts and certificates are readily accessible, but not yet laid out.
- ❏ *For virtual events: if you sent surprise hampers to the participants beforehand, have a plan about when they should open which items in the hamper, and announce this during the course of the day.*

Participant briefing before the event

- Thorough briefings are critical to success on the day. You'll need to have a briefing session for each of the primary roles that participants will be fulfilling. These smaller groups are much more effective for getting role specific information across.
- Briefing the groups remotely/virtually in the week running up to the event is very effective, because people then have an opportunity to think the information over, and internalise it.
- Schedule 1 hour per briefing.
- *If you are hosting a virtual event, use the same platform for the briefings that you will be using on the day. Use the first 20 minutes of each briefing session to show participants around the platform, and explain how you want them to use it during the event. This ensures that everyone has downloaded and registered to run the platform, and know how to use the video-call function.*

Editor briefing (1 hour)
- What makes a good Book Dash book?
- Role of the editor.
- Flat plan: this is the first task of the day: the team needs to map out your whole book. The editor or facilitator will lead this process, the illustrator will make quick small

drawings, and the designer will place these pictures and text (regardless of whether you are doing a paper or digital flat plan).
- Then get illustrator working immediately on strongest spread (the image that won't change).
- Think about how to critique someone to their face: tender, empathy.
- Keep in mind the read-aloud session at 1pm.
- Editor pairs, check-in at 2:20pm, and swapping of texts.
- Some writers and editors struggle to work on Google Docs because they are used to working in Word (in isolation, not collaboratively). Brief them explicitly on using Google docs.

Writer briefing (1 hour)

You can use this slideshow to brief the editors and writers: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1_0IHR_fZ4xfkOUd3qtBh8_bPzJuHqhhTkSk8vcRrRjA/edit?usp=sharing

- Cover "What Makes a Good Book Dash book?
- Role of the writer – including energising the team.
- Reduce ideas (**one double-page-spread = one idea**): allow the illustrations to tell the story as much as the words, but also write a story that allows for easy illustrations.
- We chose your illustrator and designer for a reason.
- No poetry, no dedications
- Working with editors.
- Read-aloud session later in the day, be ready!.
- Don't forget to write the blurb for the back cover.
- Work to support team after you're finished. Blog about the day, make coffee or find other ways to add value to the day. *Stay with your team.*
- Get illustrator working straight away on the strongest image.
- Some writers and editors struggle to work on Google Docs because they are used to working in Word (in isolation, not collaboratively). Brief them explicitly on using Google docs.
- The writers' first task is to submit their story draft as a Google Doc (using this template: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1N6WCaYuF0HjmaAXXvBBVjFLEIbug-8dGzL2yB-Cpqkw/edit).

Illustration & general design briefing (1 hour)
Organise separate briefing sessions for the illustrators and the designers, but cover the same content in both sessions. You can use this slideshow to brief them: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1_0IHR_fZ4xfkOUd3qtBh8_bPzJuHqhhTkSk8vcRrRjA/edit?usp=sharing

- You are the visual authors of this book. So:
  - Make sure you're happy with the story and give your writer feedback about what will work for your illustration style.
  - Designer and illustrator to work together - designer is often able to illustrate and/or colour digitally, so talk about what each can do. (*See **Unathi and the dirty, smelly beast** for an example of a book where the designer and illustrator worked very well together*)
- Flat plan: this is the first task of the day: the team needs to map out your whole book. The editor or facilitator will lead this process, the illustrator will make quick small

drawings, and the designer will place these pictures and text (regardless of whether you are doing a paper or digital flat plan).

- Illustrators: pick a style and process that is simple and fast: time is tight at a Book Dash! You can work digitally or traditionally, or use a combination of both.
- You have 40 mins per spread. **One illustration** per double-page spread. There should also only be **one concept** per spread. Check this when you review the story.
- Simplify as much as possible (colour & detail) - this is better for kids and faster to complete.
- Work closely with the writer: could you have some pages without words, where an image is the 'reveal' or punchline? The smallest detail in an image can reduce the number of words needed to tell a story (see **A Beautiful Day** *for an example of this*).
- Together with the designer, decide which elements can be repeated cleverly to finish on time. And children love repeated, recognisable images. (*see* **Why is there a hole in the wall?** *and* **Thato's birthday surprise** *for examples of where this is done well*).
- Think of the gutter (the fold where the book will be stapled) when you plan your illustrations: there shouldn't be important visual detail in the middle of the spread *(see* **Rafiki's style** *for an example of what to avoid)*. The middle spread is the only one where you can put as much detail as you like in the gutter.
- Decide on a colour pallet and stick to it (**Little Ant, Mali's friend,** *and* **What if?** *are good examples*)
- Get to a viable version of each spread first, then move on to the next, and return later to refine each by adding more detail. Think of end of day Show & Tell…
- Start with strongest spread first (that won't change).
- Think about repeating an element across the different pages (e.g. the dog in **My special hair** which wasn't originally part of the story). Kids love this kind of detail, and will often fixate on it.
- The way a book is illustrated can maximise the opportunities for development, so when you create picture books for young children, keep these five principles in mind (adapted from research informing The Mikhulu Trust book-sharing approach):
  1. Readers must be able to **point to and name** different things (*see* **The Best thing ever** *for a good example*)
  2. Readers must be able to link what they see on the page to their own environment (*see* **I can dress myself** *as examples where this is done effectively*)
  3. Readers should be able to count things on the page and make comparisons. Think about including countable objects (*see* **The Best thing ever** *for a good example*)
  4. Readers must be able to talk about different characters' feelings (*see* **Sizwe's smile** *for an example where this is done effectively*)
  5. Readers must be able to talk about different characters' perspectives (*See* **A Beautiful day** *for a good example of this*)
- Draw at (or set your canvas size to) 200mm x 200mm per page. If drawing traditionally, please stick to using A4-size sheets, for our scanner.
- Pictures and designs must be clear and readable if printed in black-and-white (e.g. printed on a school photocopier). So avoid storylines that rely on colour.
- All text must only be in black (if we print multiple language versions we just change the black plate). Ensure enough space around the text, because some languages are a lot longer than others and more space is needed when translated (*see* **And also!** *for an example of not enough space left for translations*).
- The background behind text must be very light, otherwise the text is not readable *(see* **Let's have an inside day** *for an example of backgrounds that are too dark, and* **Unathi and the smelly beast** *for a plan that did work*).

- Any text that appears in the artwork (labels, road signs, etc) must be typeset and not part of the artwork (for translations). (*See **And also***! *For an example of where the text is part of the artwork - should be avoided*)
- Please save all illustrations as TIF files, as well as PSD, or any other format. This allows them be accessible after the event.

Be firm if anyone is slowing you down, and ask if anyone can help save you time: it's everyone else's job to help *you* finish in time. Good luck!

> *'You have around 40 minutes per illustration (rough guide). If you want to finish 12 illustrations in time, you're going to have to graft. Stick to something simple. Unless you're doing a lot of preparation beforehand, simple is going to look better given the time-frame. Limit your colour palette to to three or four colours colours, or choose a style that doesn't require a lot of fine detail work.'*— Book Dash illustrator

Briefings and break-aways on the day

Support briefing (10 minutes)
- Logistics: venue, toilets, wifi, visitors, food, scanning, who's who.

General welcome (15 minutes)
- Welcome.
- Why Book Dash?
- What it means to open-license
- Introduction to: tech, editors, support and any other roaming
- Thank sponsors.
- House keeping: toilets, wifi, visitors, food, scanning, show & tell.
- First task: 45 minutes for the flat plan.

[Designer briefing](#) (60 - 90 minutes)
- How to assemble your book in InDesign.
- Talk through the template on screen, show how to place images and text simply.
- You are responsible for the flatplan: you need to map out your whole book by drawing it out.
- Fonts, readability, and glyph sets. Books will be printed at 150mm x 150mm so keep fonts legible at that size.
- Go through '[What Makes a Good Book Dash Book](#)'.
- Have a design vision for your book that makes sense for the story
- No text in/as illustration. Must be editable in a shade of black.
- Get ahead of your design & do what you can immediately: think about your cover and end papers and play with typography as soon as you sit down.
- Energise team in the morning
- You are the keeper of the flash drive. Go through what's on there.
- Aim for a great PDF for show-and-tell: how to export files properly, and use the job options file.

Writer's Read-through (45 minutes)

Writers and editors gather to read their stories aloud and get feedback.

Title Bash (20 minutes)

Writers gather in a breakaway venue for a "Title Bash" to help everyone come up with the best possible title for the book**.**

Editor checking

Editors swap stories for an extra pair of eyes. Last minute tips and proofreading (remember to read the story as it is in the design file as well to make sure that the designer has laid it out correctly!).

Templates and standard documents

You'll need a few standard documents for planning and preparation:

- The Book Dash Contributor Agreement
- The Book Dash flatplan
- IDML templates for the cover and book-interior
- Story draft template for writers.

Each participant should receive a name badge on the day. Also provide, in advance and printed on the day, the briefing notes for their role from this manual. You should add to those notes any specific information about your event that they might need (like WiFi passwords and the phone numbers of the organisers). Here's your volunteer-pack checklist:

- Briefing documents (including your phone number)
- Name badge
- Flash drive (one per team)
- Blank flat plans (A3)

Briefing folders

Team folders:

One folder per team with the following documents:

- Team brief (Writer, Illustrator, Designer)
- Outline of the day
- What makes a good Book Dash Book
- The team's story
- Dummy Book

Designer briefing folder (this is usually one of the Facilitator's folders, too):

- Designer briefing

Editor folder:

- Team brief
- Editor brief
- Outline of the day
- What makes a good Book Dash Book
- The team's story

Facilitator folder:

- Detailed outline of the day
- Full Book Dash Manual (or relevant Participant Briefs) & one full Manual available
- Participant List: general one for name tags (with phone numbers), one for T-shirt sizes, one for guests.
- Prize list

Logistics folder:

- Logistics brief
- Outlines of the day

Social Media folder:

- Outline of the day
- Social media brief
- Participant List (for social media handles)

Videographer/Photographer:

- Outline of the day
- Videographer/Photographer brief
- Participant List (for interviews and headshots)

Contributor Agreements folder:

- One of the facilitators to take responsibility for getting these signed and back
- 50 copies of the Contributor Agreement
- Participant List (to check off as received)

General folder (A3 size):

- Team numbers
- A3 flat plans
- Social Media posters x 5
- Wifi posters x 5
- Bathroom signs
- Direction signs
- Agenda for the day

Finishing the books afterwards

Most teams can't quite polish off their books in the 12 hours. Some take another day or two to finish. After the event, the organisers arrange with the team a plan to finish the files and prepare them for distribution and printing (dates are important here). All original artwork should be scanned at hi-res. Sometimes you'll need to pay professionals to finish the layout of the books, or the export and "finishing" of the files.

Finishing a book usually includes one or more of the following:

- A recon of each book's status: create an issue list for each book outlining what still needs to be done. Every book should have a Trello card on the public Book Dash Books board.
- Communicate with authors, illustrators and designers to gather outstanding material and ensure sign-off – and thank them for their contribution.
- Organise for artworks to be scanned at high resolution.
- Touch up artworks in Photoshop.
- Do any final edits and proofreading.
- Finalise cover designs and typography.
- Manage translations, either through partners or by commissioning volunteers.
- Lay out translations of books.
- Assign ISBNs and generate and place barcodes.
- Name and store files in their output formats (print-ready PDF, web PDF, HTML, low-res JPGs), and upload all files to the Book Dash Dropbox.
- Create a webpage for each book on bookdash.org with images of each spread.
- Market the availability of newly finished titles through social media, direct mailing and communications with our partners.
- Write and distribute a press release and a report on the day to our mailing list.
- If printing is funded, manage a print run of selected titles.

Depending on the status of the book files, it can take several days or several weeks for books to be ready to share. If books are being printed, add four to eight weeks for printing.

See the Book Dash Trello boards at trello.com/bookdash.

Planning a Book Dash

Months in advance, a Book Dash is a twinkle in the eyes of its organisers. We've found that a team of three or four organisers works well for us. This team has a few key things to organise:

Funding

A Book Dash incurs all kinds of costs, even if some things are donated. Food, stationery, transport, equipment hire, for instance. Depending on the organisers, curating teams, event management, and completing books after the event can be a full-time job for a month. Where

this amount of work is impossible for part-time volunteers, someone needs to be paid for a few weeks. We only organise a Book Dash when we have R100 000 in sponsorship secured.

The venue

The space for a Book Dash is critical. Choose wisely. It's better to use some of your event budget on a great venue than to settle for a lesser, donated one. We've had a small Book Dash in an office, and lovely big Book Dashes in large spaces in the Cape Town Central Library and the Goethe Institute in Johannesburg.

- For ten teams, you need enough space to accommodate ten large desks, each with four seats (writer, illustrator, designer, visiting editor).
- Separate space for everyone to eat and relax away from the team desks.
- To keep energy up you need lots of natural light and real air (air con will drain people by lunchtime).
- Toilets should be clean and easy to get to.
- WiFi with fast, free Internet access (teams must be able to do research, and share their work on social media).
- There should be plenty of plug points for extension leads and multiplugs on the day.
- A big wall or screen to project onto. (Projecting images of work during the day helps keep everyone engaged, but mostly you need the screen for the show-and-tell session at the end.)
- Add buzz with fun decorations: balloons, bunting, posters, books.
- Quiet corners for participants to retreat to when they need quiet time. For instance, writers and editors need to have alone time to read their stories aloud over and over.

Technical tools and platforms for a virtual event

In a remote environment, it's necessary to use a platform or tool to create the environment since there is no physical space for that. For this reason, selecting the correct tools to host the event becomes extremely important, and not all tools are the same.

You should consider what you require from the tool/s and research and choose accordingly.

To host a successful remote/virtual Book Dash, one main platform or tool is required that allows for different chat "rooms" where various configurations of the same people could gather at different times of the day (to mimic the main area of a physical event, as well as the breakways rooms, and each team's table/home group.) The platform must allow for video calling, and chat and image/document-sharing as well as collaborative working for the flatplanning process.

We use Microsoft Teams for the number of our requirements that it fulfils within one platform. We create a Team, invite all participants and set up channels accordingly:

- There is a **General channel**, where we host event-wide sessions like the welcome, prize-giving and Show-and-Tell storytime.
- Each **team** also has its own channel where flatplanning, video calling and chat could happen. This is where most people spend the whole day, and the facilitators can move between channels to check in on teams.

- Each **break out session/role group** needs its own channel too, like designers for their Technical Design Briefing and writers for the Writers Readthrough.
- Then, anyone who needs access to images and screenshots for **social media** is added to the social-media channel.
- You can see **screenshots** of the different channels here: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q0t032gx3nitz66/AADZTRFL0F5VCmPFkVT-HvOPa?dl=0
- Even though Microsoft Teams fulfill many of the requirements, we still use additional tools like WeTransfer/Dropbox for sending large files, InVision for flatplanning, and Google Docs for collaborative editing.
- We create a **shared Google drive folder** for each team where Work in Progress is saved.

Food

When organising, make sure you can keep everyone fueled up on the day. Grab a big piece of the event budget for food: it's very, very important that everyone feels really well cared for. Happy volunteers do their best work and come back again next time.

To note:
- We want to keep everyone comfortable and energised, without encouraging sugar highs that lead to energy crashes.
- If more than two thirds of the food caters for vegetarians, you're taking care of most other dietary preferences, too.
- Please avoid the most common things that religious preferences and tastes prohibit, such as pork and shellfish.
- Please also budget to clearly label all food that will be served, people always request this!

Throughout the day, we like to provide:
- ceylon and rooibos tea plus some others
- great coffee (if possible, both good-quality instant coffee and filter/plunger coffee)
- bowls of fruit
- lots of drinking water: still and sparkling.

And at specific times:
- 8h30: A breakfast snack when everyone arrives. This should include protein (e.g. boiled eggs, peanut butter on low GI bread, chipolata sausages, little cups of baked beans, yoghurt), and not things like sugary muffins.
- 10h00: A mid-morning snack to have with tea or coffee. Some muffins are okay, but also include savoury snacks: savoury scones (e.g. cheese-and-spinach), crackers and cheese, and some fresh vegetables.
- 12h30: Lunch should be light, but filling, and include protein without being too heavy. We want to avoid putting everyone to sleep. Include lots of salads: roast vegetable, quinoa or cous cous, chicken noodle salad, etc.
- 16h00: A late afternoon snack. People are starting to need sugar by now, but include some savoury snacks again, too. Dried fruit and nuts are great here, though best to put them on the tables in little bowls, so they don't get hogged by just a few people in the food area.

- 18h30: Supper. Casual carbohydrates work here: pasta and pizza with vegetables, hot meat dish with rice, lasagne with salads etc.
- 20h00: Last-mile sugar: the last two hours are tough going, so sweets and chocolates help get everyone to the end. For instance, you can just put a slab of chocolate or a packet of Quality Street on each team's table (there are ten teams).

Enough clean cutlery, glasses and crockery will need to be provided, and cleaned between meals if needed.

A few small sponsorships can make a huge difference. We've had sponsors provide biodegradable plates, cups and cutlery for free before, which saved a lot of time while being environmentally friendly. If you prepare far enough in advance, you can often get sponsors for things like wine, chocolate and biscuits – products that are often marketed with free samples and giveaways. Ask the storyteller to tweet and share about the sponsors on the day, along with pictures of their products being used.

Themes

Book Dash organisers, literacy organisations, and sponsors often want to see particular kinds of books produced. For instance, you might want to produce books about humans' relationship with nature. However, a Book Dash doesn't need a theme, and we don't recommend having one. We've found that a theme can lead people to try so hard to stay on message that their books and their swift progress suffer.

That said, if you must have a theme, keep it broad and lightly enforced. To help participants really understand what you want, write a couple of paragraphs as guidance, describing why you need particular kinds of books from your Book Dash.

Gathering volunteers

Put out a call for volunteers to apply to join your Book Dash, and set a closing date for applications about a month ahead of the big day. Applications are important: not everyone is able to make a good book. To get the best possible books, you need the best possible people. We usually require that applicants have a portfolio of work we can see. We ask for a link to this in our online application form (Google Forms work well for this).

We keep a list of creatives we already think are awesome, and we approach them directly and ask them to apply.

- Writers should clearly be able to craft words like a magician, and know how to write for children.
- Illustrators should have loads of experience, and be versatile enough to work in styles that are fast to finish in.
- Designers should be great at typography, and be comfortable working in InDesign.
- Editors should be very experienced, professional book editors, preferably with experience publishing for children. Aim for one experienced editor for every two or three teams

You'll also need to call for and appoint volunteers to all the support roles:

- facilitators: usually also the organisers, great at organising and timekeeping and have a good understanding of Book Dash, what's needed and how to achieve it
- a videographer: someone with talent and experience taking photos and video, including interviews
- a technical director: they'll make sure the technology works, from WiFi to flash drives to scanning to InDesign
- an art director: someone with lots of experience leading design work can help teams, and especially designers, make good final decisions about layout and typography. This can also be achieved through the combined skills of the facilitators.
- a storyteller: a whizz on social media who also understands Creative Commons licensing
- one or two logistics wizards: organising, enthusiastic people who don't mind driving to the shops at the last minute or washing up when the spoons run out.

Once the closing date has passed, you need to select people for all the positions you need to fill. Ideally, you'll have more than enough applications, and you can select your participants based on factors that matter to you. We consider a range of things. Some things we can know, and some we must guess at.

- First and foremost, are they super talented?
- Do they have lots of relevant, real-world experience? There's no time for learning curves at a Book Dash: everyone needs to be able to be at full speed from the start.
- Are they nice to work with? No jerks allowed. After hours under pressure together, cooped up in the same room, everyone needs to get along really well.
- Do they add diversity of race, age, language, religion and experience? For instance, if you want to create books for black, Zulu-speaking South Africans, you should prioritise including black, Zulu-speaking South Africans in your teams.

We ask people to apply individually, but they can indicate if they'd like to work with someone else and, given they are both successful in their application, have styles that will work together and have applied for different roles, they should stay together. For the rest, you'll need to work a little alchemy, matching styles, personalities and interests. You're trying to predict the chemistry of each team as best you can. But first, the writers should submit a draft idea of their story.

Once you've chosen your successful participants, send them their role descriptions (the Team Brief), the timeline for the next few weeks and "What Makes a Good Book Dash Book" documents (you'll find them later in this manual), so that they can prepare. You'll also need to correspond with them throughout the weeks leading up to the event and examples of timelines and content of that correspondence is currently being recorded and will be available here soon as appendices or on one of our Trello Boards.

Make sure you write personally to everyone you didn't select. It was brave of them to apply, and you'll want them to try again in future, or pitch in in other ways later. Willing volunteers are a rare and special thing, so nurture them.

Writers then have a week to submit a draft idea for a story. Once you have that, you can pair teams and editors that you think will work well together. After that, and only one week before the event, announce the teams/introduce them to each other with their editor via email. They have this week to talk, plan, sketch, re-read the briefs and get mentally ready for the event.

It takes approximately 8 weeks to plan a Book Dash from the day you announce it to the public, until the final event. A potential timeline, then, might look like (this is an example, but you can use it to plan backwards from the date you'd like to host an event):

- Week 1, Monday: Announce event and open applications
- Week 3, Sunday: Applications close after two or three weeks
- Week 4, Tuesday: Organising team meet sometime in the following week to choose successful applicants
- Week 4, Thursday: Let successful/unsuccessful applicants know, and waitlisters
- Week 4, Friday - Sunday: Time for volunteers to tell you that they can't make it anymore, and to let waitlisters know that they're in.
- Week 5, Monday: Send briefs to all participants and tell writers that draft stories are due in a week's time
- Week 6, Monday: Writers submit story ideas/drafts to the organising team, using [this template](#).
- Week 6: Organising team read the story drafts
- Week 7, Tuesday: Organising team meet to finalise team selection and editors based on story drafts that were submitted.
- Week 7, Thursday: Announce teams, editors and share story drafts and remind teams to reread briefs as well as start planning as a team.
- Week 8, Monday - Friday: Teams chat and prep for event
- Week 8, Saturday: The big event takes place!

Creative Commons licensing

The work we do is our gift to the world. We want anyone to be able to reuse, translate, adapt, print and distribute what we create. To make that possible under any country's copyright laws, we apply a standard license to our work, called a Creative Commons Attribution licence. This is special legal wording, developed by the Creative Commons organisation and community, that allows reuse and remixing without permission, as long as the work's creators are credited.

Legally (automatically under law in most countries), each participant owns the copyright in their own contribution – even though it would be almost impossible to say where one person's contribution ends and another's begins. That doesn't matter much, though, since all participants sign a simple agreement to open-license everything produced on the day (the books and all their component parts) under the Creative Commons Attribution licence.

The organisers then make the files available online for other projects to share, adapt and reproduce. For instance, projects like Pratham Books and the African Storybook Project can amplify what we make and get more children reading.

It is best to send participants their Contributor Agreements in the week running up to the event, and get the signed copies in from them, also before the event.

What makes a good Book Dash book?

We're creating new, high-quality storybooks for children under five in Africa.

A big challenge is how to create great books in a very short time. To make that possible, we have some rules and guidelines for everyone at a Book Dash. It's especially important that writers, illustrators, designers and editors know these well.

To make it possible to produce great books quickly, we balance constraints and spontaneity. Carefully chosen constraints help us avoid distractions. Space for spontaneity lets volunteers bring their own magic to new books.

Many aspects of our books are determined in advance, including a template InDesign document and flatplan (a page-by-page map of the book). These constraints help us move quickly, and ensure that the books can be flexibly translated and printed afterwards.

Book specifications

Every book is 200mm square in size, and contains 32 pages:

- 1: a book-plate page ('This book belongs to')
- 2–3: a double-page spread of solid colour or decoration (endpapers)
- 4: a copyright/license page
- 5: a title page
- 6–29: 12 double-page spreads
- 30–31: a double-page spread of solid colour or decoration (endpapers)
- 32: a blank page or small decoration (often a detail from one of the images in the book).

(If the endpapers were dropped, it could be printed as a 32-page self-covering edition at lower cost. The size is the biggest that accommodates good short-run digital printing, allowing for cost-effective small runs as well as large offset runs. The 200mm size also allows illustrators to work on A4 paper and scan it on an A4 scanner, while allowing for 5mm bleed all round. The inside of the cover is left blank.)

We usually print the books at 150mm x 150mm because this is a cost-effective format. Designers should keep this in mind for the typography: the font size must be large enough to work, even if printed in the smaller format.

You'll get printed flatplans for planning your book when you arrive on the morning.

Design

When designing, remember:

- The best typography is invisible: that is, it never draws attention to itself. A good book designer removes everything that can come between the reader and the story.

- All text must be pure black and must have space around it for translations into languages that need more space. (This way, several translations can be printed in one print run by switching only the black-ink plate. Designers must be careful to use pure black for text, not black as a combination of CMYK.)
- Only use elements (pictures, text) that are created on the day or are also open-licensed in ways that allow free redistribution, derivatives (changes and adaptations) and commercial use. (E.g. use fonts from google.com/fonts.) Attribute all your sources on the copyright page.

Story

We need stories that a grown-up or older sibling can *read aloud to a child*. For under-fives, a book enables and encourages their interaction with a caregiver, and it's that interaction that boosts brain development.

When writing your story:

- Absolutely *no poetry*: no rhyme and metre. Rhyme and metre is much harder to get right than most people realise. They take ages to refine, and you won't have enough time at a Book Dash. We've seen, too, that in an effort to get their rhyme and metre right, writers sacrifice entire story elements just to use a phrase that fits the poetry, to the detriment of the story. Also, poetry won't carry over when translated into other languages anyway, and it's likely that more copies of your book will be distributed as translations than in your original language. Finally, punctuation in poetry is often contentious, but for young readers, *punctuation is essential.*
- Aim for ten to fifteen words on a page, and just 300 - 400 words in total. Express just one thought per spread. Let the images provide all the detail, so that the words become only a nudge in the direction of your story.
- If you can create your story with no text at all – a wordless book – that's great! Wordless books are great for child–caregiver interaction, useful if a caregiver is illiterate, and never need translating. Despite what it seems, the writer is possibly more important in writing a wordless book that one with words! They need to carefully craft the plot of the story so that the illustrator can convey it in images. It should be very simple so as not to be overwhelming for the illustrator.
- Stories should be fun and should *not* aim to to be worthy or educational. Avoid concept books like 'numbers' or 'colours' and rather tell an exciting story.
- Avoid complex clichés, idioms or wordplay – young children won't follow them, and they rarely translate into other languages.
- Please note that we do not allow dedications in Book Dash books.

Writers and Editors should read Fred Rogers' 9 point pamphlet he wrote for his writers on how to communicate to small children:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i1-I0Sje6mpSbeAb06T_AGcYDYzxEcgFbIlDpPvplNc/edit?usp=sharing

Illustration

When you're illustrating:

- Pick a style and process that is simple and fast: time is tight at a Book Dash! You can work digitally or traditionally, or use a combination of both.
- Please save **all** illustrations as TIF files, as well as PSD, or any other format. This allows them be accessible after the event.
- We'll have a low-res scanner available on the day, and will arrange professional scanning afterwards.

- Pictures and designs must be clear and readable if printed in black-and-white (e.g. printed on a school photocopier). So avoid storylines that rely on colour.

- Think of the gutter (the fold where the book will be stapled) when you plan your illustrations: there shouldn't be important visual detail in the middle of the spread.
- Work closely with the writer: could you have some pages without words, where an image is the 'reveal' or punchline? The smallest detail in an image can reduce the number of words needed to tell a story.
- Think of how you can repeat elements (copy/paste!) so as to make your process faster and children love repeated, recognisable images.

Reading up: Resource and Links

Guidelines for storybook production

Room to Read, in consultation with many different partners organisations, have put together a guideline document of "What Makes a Great Storybook" that you may find useful to read: https://www.dropbox.com/s/y34nzrikj4wokyu/REACH_recommendations_FINAL_3%2026%2018.pdf?dl=0. These are guidelines, not rules, but a great resource to consider when approaching the creation of a storybook.

Early childhood literacy in South Africa

Book Dash: Reading as many of our existing books as possible before the day is the best prep you can do. All books created at previous events are listed on the Book Dash website. They are a great example of what can be achieved in 12 hours: http://bookdash.org/see/books/

Nal'ibali is a national campaign for reading for enjoyment based on research done by PRAESA (The Project for Research in Alternative Education South Africa). Their website provides a lot of links, infographics and downloadable resources on why and how we need to write for and read with children in South Africa. Check them out here: nalibali.org

African Storybook is an open licence (Creative Commons) digital publishing initiative. You will find Book Dash and other Creative Commons storybooks on the African Storybook website too. Anyone can register to use the website to create, translate and adapt storybooks: www.africanstorybook.org.

Great tips from authors and illustrators

Writing tips for kids from children's authors: http://bit.ly/kidsbooktips

Top 10 illustration and design tips for children's books:
http://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2014/mar/11/david-mackintosh-top-10-illustration-and-design-tips

An interview with Ghanian children's book writer Meshack Asare on writing for African children: publishingperspectives.com

Some of the best children's books build on classic storylines such a folklore, fairytales and myths (whether African or otherwise). Simplified or modernised versions of these well-known stories can be incredibly effective and a good way to start writing for children. The most important thing is to distill the story to one that a young child can understand and to not place too much emphasis on any morals or lessons that take away from the fun of the story. You can read two interesting pieces on this here Folktales in Children's Literature and here Folklore in Children's Literature.

Great books with simple stories and simple illustrations
Reading other storybooks is the best research and preparation you can possibly do.

A quick online search for these titles will let you see much of each book. Have a look, or look at these in a bookstore or library.

African
- *Three Friends and a Taxi* by Maryanne and Shayle Bester published by Jacana
- *Porridge* by Zimbili Dlamini and Hlengiwe Zondi
- *Soccer Game* by Letta Machoga
- *I like to read* by Letta Machoga
- *Khalai talks to plants* by Ursula Nafula
- *Big blue bus* by Mecelin Kakoro
- *Come back, Cat!* by Karen Lilje, Nicola Rijsdijk and Sam Scarborough.

International

- *Monkey and me* by Emily Gravett
- *Orange, Pear, Apple, Bear* by Emily Gravett
- *Ten little fingers and ten little toes* by Mem Fox and Helen Oxenbury
- *Toddle Waddle* by Julia Donaldson and Nick Sharratt
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
- *I Want My Hat Back* by Jon Klassen
- *Harold and the Purple Crayon* by Crockett Johnson

Roles on the day

Facilitator

As the facilitator, it's your job to keep the teams informed, focused and on track, and working well with their editors. You keep things running on time, and are a go-to person for quick decisions on the day.

You will be working with two or three teams on the day, so you will have a very good understanding of progress and challenges.

Your first task of the day is to steer one team through the flat plan (a facilitator or editor should be allocated to each team). This is where the team needs to map out the whole book. The editor or facilitator will lead this process, the illustrator will make quick small drawings, and the designer will place these pictures and text (regardless of whether you are doing a paper or digital flat plan).

Also, you should arrange little spot prizes to give to teams during the day: small trinkets, cheap novelties and packets of sweets work well. Announce the prizes loudly for everyone to hear, using them to describe what others are doing: this helps teams interact and keeps the mood positive. You can give prizes for things that you make up on the spot (e.g. 'First book with a cover finalised', 'First story complete!', 'Quirkiest title', 'Helping someone else choose their book title', 'Strength in the face of technical challenges'). Try to get a spot prize to each team over the course of the day.

You're responsible for making sure the finished book and all source files like images and InDesign files are safely saved to team flash drives, and uploaded to the Book Dash Dropbox repository. This must happen on the day before everyone goes home (actual syncing up to Dropbox may take a day or two).

Videographer & Photographer

After the day, the magic lives on in the photos and video you create. These images and especially good video are incredibly powerful: they inspire others to join future Book Dashes, celebrate those who were there (which makes them want to return), and encourage sponsors to put money into more book creation and printing.

Videographers and photographers should check in with the Facilitators at the start of the day to talk through a quick action plan and "shot-list" -- we can help guide you on who not to miss.

Both: Try to get lots of footage of the creative process (illustrators at work, briefing sessions, writers talking to editors, designers laying out typography).

Videographer/s: In addition to creative action footage, please make sure to get at least 8 soundbite interviews with the creative participants about why they got involved, what appeals

to them about the project, as well as interviews with at least 2 of the Book Dash team and the donors/sponsors if they're present.

Photographer/s: We'll give you a list of **all** the participants, and ask that you please get at least one great shot of each person (clear, close-up headshot type photos, taken either at the team table or in front of a Book Dash banner if the creative is not busy at the time!). A photo of each book-making team, plus editor is also imperative.

Also, make sure you get shots of any products that were sponsored (e.g. wine, chocolates, the venue). Happy sponsors become repeat sponsors.

Let the Book Dash team know when you'll be able to finish editing the video/photos, and be upfront about realistic expectations. You can create one full video (2 - 5 minutes) or more shorter clips (30 seconds - 1 minute), whatever works best for you! If you can't edit the photos, no problem, just send them through on WeTransfer when you can.

If you use any other sources, such as music, in your final video, make sure it's open-licensed or entirely owned by you, and credit your sources at the end. Remember to include your own name (and any others who helped you) in a credit at the end of the video.

Please send a video export with music and one without in case we'd like to use the footage in further cuts, where different music can be difficult to work with.

Editors

An editor's job is to help a team produce its best work. You'll be working with two or three books, each produced by a three-person writer–illustrator–designer team. Our simple style guide is here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hctAZGwHpd8UGBrP20tkglGpe2CZZ7ZVBbGN_e6_jAU/edit?ts=5efb0aff

You'll spend most of your time working with the writer, getting their story word-perfect, while helping the whole team combine text, images and layout beautifully. While it's important that the team produces something that is theirs, you'll need to bring your experience producing books to the process, sometimes with a firm hand. You will have to judge whether their work is the best they can bring, or whether the team can do better with the time and energy they have left.

You're the facilitators' ears and eyes on the ground, so you'll also need to let us know of anything significant on the day. Often, you're a cheerleader encouraging great creatives to keep going!

In particular:

- Your first task of the day is to steer one team through the flatplan (a facilitator or editor should be allocated to each team). This is where the team needs to map out the whole book. The editor or facilitator will lead this process, the illustrator will make quick small drawings, and the designer will place these pictures and text (regardless of whether you are doing a paper or digital flat plan).
- Help them refine their storyline and finalise it as early as possible. The illustrator can't work with confidence if they're worried that the story is changing.

- Start the illustrator off as soon as possible, working on the strongest image (this doesn't have to be the first image).
- Help the writer polish every phrase, cutting everything extraneous.
- Proofread. And get another editor to proofread, too. Then proofread again. And once more.
- Keep the facilitator informed about your teams' progress especially if there are any issues.

You need to understand the team's roles well, so also read the briefing notes on what they have to do. In short:

- The designer has to create the team's book in InDesign (Adobe CS5 or later). They must take great care about: gorgeous typography, colour choices, endpapers, cover and page layout, and Book Dash image elements. They must enforce the Book Dash rules on book production on their team's work.
- The writer is aiming to create a book that children and parents will read over and over and over again. The hardest part is to keep text short and simple while maintaining a lyricism. They're going to spend the day creating endless drafts and revisions, and re-reading their story countless times. In addition to your guidance, they will need your encouragement! Make sure they read the story out loud to you, not just in their heads.
- The illustrator has the most work to do in the time available. They must keep their illustrations simple: it's better that they get through every illustration and then come back to refine them than to perfect a few and never finish. You must make sure the team have a final storyline flat-planned early on so they can keep illustrating while the writer refines the text. The designer is responsible for the flatplan.

Technical director

Your role is to make sure everything technological works on the day: projectors, WiFi, Internet access (for research and Twitter streams), scanners, printers, power, and sound. Set up at least one or two computers where participants can print out draft pages quickly and easily. Ideally, have a plug-and-play printer or two available.

You'll work a lot with the designers, who're laying out the books. Designers don't have to prepare much in advance, but we do expect them to arrive with a laptop running Adobe CS5 or later. Ideally, they've already opened and scanned through the cover and book-interior InDesign templates.

Depending on how their illustrator works, the designer may also need help with scanning artwork.

Please read the briefing notes for the teams, so that you know what we're asking from them.

We'll provide each designer with a flash drive to save all their team's work on. On the flash drive will be [InDesign templates](#) (as IDML files) for the cover and interior of the book.

To prepare each flash drive:

1. If you're reusing a drive from a previous Book Dash, make sure all data on the drive is safely backed up to the Book Dash Dropbox. (This should have been done after the last Book Dash.)
2. Format the drive. Formatting deletes all data on the drive. This is important for making sure the drives are fresh and empty, and free of any viruses that may have come from former unfortunate users. When formatting the drive:
   a. Use a FAT32 file system for the flash drive for maximum compatibility across operating systems.
   b. Include the team number in the volume label, e.g. BOOKDASH5 for team 5.
3. Create a folder on your computer containing everything you want each team to have on their drive. You can copy this from the Book Dash dropbox in bookdash-books/_book-templates/flash-drive-template. This is usually these files and folders:
   a. interior.idml (the InDesign template for book pages)
   b. cover.idml (the InDesign template for the cover)
   c. Fonts (Book Dash-approved fonts for book text)
   d. Links (images the templates need, like the Book Dash logo)
   e. Book Dash presentation.joboptions (Adobe PDF preset for exporting a PDF of the interior and cover for end-of-day show and tell)
   f. README.txt (notes to the designer)
4. Copy these files and folders onto the drive.
5. Put a physical sticker label on the drive with the team number.

Art director

Your role is to help the teams produce their best possible design work. At the start of the day, you'll help illustrators stick to a style they can produce quickly and with happy confidence. You'll help them visualise the day ahead, and plan their work so that they can finish in time.

By the afternoon, you'll be spending time working with the designers, helping them realise the team's vision for their book in InDesign. While it's important that the team produces something that is theirs, you'll need to bring your experience, strong opinions, a firm hand and an eye for typography to the process. You should judge whether the team has done their best work or whether they can do better with the time and energy they have left.

In particular:

- Help them refine their overall look and feel.
- Help them to use the flatplan effectively to spot potential design challenges.
- Help them polish every piece of typography.
- Keep the facilitator informed about their progress.

The designer has to create the team's book in InDesign (Adobe CS4 or later). They must take great care about gorgeous typography, colour choices, cover and page layout, and Book Dash identity elements. They must enforce the Book Dash rules on book production (see below) on their team's work.

The illustrator has the most work to do in the time available. They must keep their illustrations simple, and let the design support that. You must help the designer and illustrator make creative decisions together quickly and smoothly.

Since you'll be looking out for font choices and typography, keep in mind that all fonts should be open-licensed and have big glyph sets (mainly for translations into languages with diacritics). We list our strong font recommendations in the team briefing for the designer.

Please read the briefing notes for the teams, so that you know what we're asking from them.

Social Media Storyteller

Your role is to let the world know what is going on at Book Dash by:

- sharing as many updates and images and videos on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook as possible; **at least every 30 minutes,** preferably more!
- and/or writing a longform story/blog of the day, with a few interviews from participants

On the day, you'll get:

- participants' Twitter & Instagram handles on that list for posting about them (ask if they have one, even if it's not on the list)
- a list of sponsors (with their handles or hashtags) for social media

Highlight key participants (tagging them), share quotes from important people (tagging them), and show lots of previews of books created (tagging creators). The tagging creates the amplification we're looking for on and after the day.

You'll need to use your own Twitter, Instagram and Facebook profiles. Please download these on your phone or laptop if you don't have them. Then, in order to make sure people see it, please always use the hashtag #bookdash, as well as the official event hashtag and also tag @bookdash in the photos/posts. Make sure to tag volunteers, venue and sponsors too!

Hashtags

#bookdash (Official Book Dash hashtag)
#everychild100books #100before5 (indicates our vision of every child owning 100 books by the age of 5)

#readyourworld (a hashtag for diverse kids' books) and others like #kidlit, #childrensbooks #earlymomentsmatter #eatplaylove etc

Our handle is @bookdash on each on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Please make sure to tag us!

We'll give you the Wifi details on the day, and it'd be helpful if you could make sure anyone else who needs them has them.

Logistics wizards/support team

You're responsible for making sure everyone has the environment they need to have fun and be productive. So you need to know exactly what's going on and who's involved: names, places, equipment, process, timelines. You're also responsible for fielding visitors and guests, particularly where these are invited media or potential sponsors. You'll also need to make sure that visitors don't disturb the teams.)

You'll have to jump in where things get stuck, and to deal with the unpredictable things that happen on the day: running to the shops for milk, cleaning up a spill, washing spoons, showing people where the toilets are, making coffee for a flagging illustrator, cheering up despairing designers, distracting the visiting children of participants, fixing fallen decorations, making extra copies of [flatplans](#) and agreements, finding multiplugs, or being a demo reader for a draft story.

Also, you'll collect a signed Contributor Agreement from *every* participant on the day. (Use a list of participants to check off the names one by one.) So be sure you have:

- blank copies of the [contributor agreement](#)
- a list of participants to collect contributor agreements from.

You'll also need to keep everyone comfortable and energised.

Throughout the day, we'll be providing:

- coffee, ceylon and non-caffeinated teas
- Fruit & lots of drinking water.

Make sure people know that these are around!

And at specific times there will be:

- A breakfast snack when everyone arrives.
- Lunch: make sure people eat!
- A late afternoon snack
- Wine: Offer drinks around
- Supper: make sure people eat supper!
- Last-mile sugar: the last two hours are tough going, so sweets and chocolates help get everyone to the end. Take these to people's tables and encourage them to eat!

Book-making teams (writer, illustrator, designer)

The books created on this Book Dash day will be your gift to the world. There is a huge lack of relevant, accessible literature for South African children, containing characters they can relate to and stories that resemble their own lives. The book that you create will be published digitally on our website and Android app, and spread across various platforms including Freekidsbooks.org, the Nal'ibali Reading Supplement, African Storybook Project website and StoryWeaver. It will also possibly be printed and distributed freely to literacy organisations, ECD centres, libraries and directly into homes across South Africa and abroad. We want your

uninhibited creativity to shine on the day, but try to keep in mind what type of book you would like to create and for which age-group.

At a Book Dash, each team has 12 hours to create a finished children's book. Your team consists of a writer, an illustrator and a designer. The day is designed to help you do your best work fast. You'll work directly with a few experts:

- a facilitator, who'll keep you on track and give general insight and advice
- an editor, who'll help you refine text, solve editorial challenges and proofread
- an art director, who'll help you refine your overall design and layout
- a technical director, who'll make sure the lights stay on and you can scan and print.

There will also be other support volunteers around, keeping things ticking along.

Well in advance, each team's writer should send the organisers a rough story outline (template here: https://goo.gl/twiMi4). This goes to the illustrator, who'll prepare rough character sketches. The illustrator will need to bring their characters to life quickly, so imagine them from various angles and in different situations, so that you know them well on the day. The designer will get the InDesign templates in advance – look through them before the day so you're familiar with the layout and can mull over how you'll work with that.

You won't have time on the day to develop everything from scratch. The invention of your story and characters and design ideas should happen in advance and over time: in the bath, on a long walk, in quiet meditation. The Book Dash is about making that real, assembling your pieces and polishing them. If you're worried you haven't prepared enough in advance, try drawing on old folk stories, or tweaking characters you've drawn before (any licence terms allowing). Keep designs simple.

The most important thing to focus on is that we're creating new, high-quality storybooks for children under five in Africa. Make sure you read our guidelines on 'What makes a great Book Dash book'.

Writer

The writer is responsible for developing the story and getting the words perfect. Try to bring a laptop on the day to write and edit on.

The deep quality and longevity of your team's book rests on you more than anyone. Remember that children and parents will read your book aloud, together over and over and over again. Its story – even if it's incredibly simple – must be woven beautifully, and its text deftly and perfectly crafted. Our simple style guide is here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q-VTuG81Z0xc9Q6uiOdxpT2T87_0-AVGSHpDtZOPl0U/edit

The hardest part is usually keeping it simple: you should be aiming for just ten to fifteen words on a page (and a maximum of 300 - 400 words in total). As with any writing, you're going to spend your day creating endless drafts and revisions. You will read your own story so many times you'll feel like you're going crazy. Draw on the editor who works with your team: you'll need their help to create something that will last.

'Writing your story out just one time is not enough. You'll need to revise carefully. Once you think it's done, go find a quiet corner and read it aloud to yourself 15 times over.'— Book Dash writer

The book you're writing is meant to be *read aloud* to a child. It is not a graded-reader intended to teach a child how to read. Having said that, the language and words should be simple enough for the child to begin repeating or reading along with the reader. Different voices of characters in your book (in other words, direct speech) will also make reading aloud fun.

When writing for children (even though these books will be read to them) you need to consider what makes a text difficult or easy to understand. Fountas and Pinnell have written extensively on this, but they summarise the 10 factors that play a role in text complexity here: [What makes a text complex?](). Try to consider all of these when you write your draft story and on the day. Only introduce more complex concepts towards the end of the book if you need to, building on ideas introduced earlier.

When drafting your story, consider your illustrator and designer: keep number of characters to a minimum. Allow space for your illustrator and designer to create the story as well - Book Dash is about collaborative book-making, so you don't want to feel as if you're commissioning the artwork. Rather, stay open to their ideas. Don't be too prescriptive about exactly what things look like or how the story flows across the pages: wait to brainstorm this with your team. A big factor of books for young children is that the images and words are intertwined, so try to think visually.

You'll finish long before the illustrator and designer. Once your writing is done, you're there to keep your team motivated and well fueled. You can also use the time to help spread the Book Dash word, blogging about the event or writing about your book, or see if you can help other writers and teams finish.

Tip: Here's a [list of character names]() already used in Book Dash books, please come up with something unique!

Illustrator

The illustrator is responsible for creating at least twelve beautiful, storytelling images really fast. No pressure! Please bring your own illustrating equipment and media. If you work in physical media, we'll have a low-res scanner available on the day, and will arrange professional scanning afterwards.

Out of everyone else at a Book Dash, you have the most to do in the time available. Choose to work in a style that makes illustration quick: it's better to get through every illustration and then come back to refine them than to perfect a few and never finish. Use as many repeated elements as possible to help speed up your work. Also, be firm if anyone is slowing you down, and ask if anyone can help save you time: it's everyone else's job to help *you* finish in time. Good luck!

'You have around 40 minutes per illustration (rough guide). If you want to finish 12 illustrations in time, you're going to have to graft. Stick to something simple. Unless you're doing a lot of preparation beforehand, simple is going to look better given the time-frame. Limit your colour palette to to three or four colours colours, or choose a style that doesn't require a lot of fine detail work.'— Book Dash illustrator

Work with the designer closely - depending on their skills, they can even help you colour your illustrations digitally, do the scanning or even tweak some illustrations. Remember to make sure that your illustrations don't overlap with text in the book and that you don't add detail in the gutter (centre of the spread where the book folds). When printing multiple translations we need to just be able to switch the text plate to save printing costs. If text and images overlap, or text is incorporated into an illustration, this can be impossible.

You'll be given a group briefing on the day as well as some tips for illustrating a Book Dash book.

Designer

The designer is responsible for:

- Creating the layout and typography.
- Combining pictures and text into a coherent whole that delights children.
- Setting up an InDesign file that others can work with in future.
- Managing your team's flat-plan. You are responsible for managing your team's 'map' of your book (the illustrator can draw quick pictures, but you need to place these plus text on the flat plan).
- Extracting text and images from your nervous writer and illustrator. Get it on the screen!
- Understanding and enforcing the production rules that we'll describe here.

Setting up

- Bring your own computer running Adobe InDesign CS5 or later. It is essential that InDesign is already installed and working before you arrive. We'll give you IDML files as templates for your cover and book interior.
- You're going to need to be very organised. For the first few hours you do all your prep work:
    - choose your fonts
    - prepare your palette
    - draft page layouts
    - experiment with endpaper designs
    - Prepare your file naming and saving system.
    - Use placeholder text to do lots of design thinking.
    - Chat to the other designers to share ideas.
- Work closely with your illustrator and make sure they know they have your support. You may be required to:
    - scan illustrations
    - do digital touch-ups
    - digitally colour illustrations.

Organising your files

- Keep your files very organised. You are going to get very busy and very tired: you need to establish a good system while you're still fresh. For instance, name all files with descriptive file names: e.g. 'girl-and-bird' and not 'page-5_gb'. And follow standard InDesign file packaging conventions by placing all source images in a Links folder alongside the book and cover files.
- Everything must be saved on your team flashdrive.

The template

You are creating a book with no spine that is 200 × 200 mm. (These are usually printed smaller, e.g. as 150 mm square.)

- The **cover** template includes:
  - The Book Dash logo block. Leave this where it is.
  - A space for the barcode and language. Leave this as is, we'll add these later.
  - No spine (we saddle-stitch our books).
  - Space for you to express yourself! Use an image from the inside of the book for the front. Include the title and your team's names on the front. Include the book's blurb (description) on the back.
- The **interior** template includes:
  - A book-plate page for you to design. Make it amazing! This page celebrates the child's ownership of the book – help them know that that is special. Leave the image of the adult and child reading where it is. And include the words 'This book belongs to' above a space to write in.
  - A spread of end-papers. This is like the curtain on the stage before the show begins. It's up to you to create a wonderful design here.
  - The copyright page. This is standard text that you don't design. You only need to insert your team's names here. We'll do the rest.
  - The title page. This might be very similar to your cover design, but must only use pure-black text (more on this later). It must include the book's title and the three names of your team members.
  - Twelve spreads for your story. Book Dash books don't have page numbers.
  - Another spread for end-papers. These can be a repeat of your opening end-papers, or you can tweak the design a little (e.g. a slightly different colour). Think of these as the curtain coming down on the show.
  - A last decoration page. Leave the child a tiny little decoration on the last page. This is not part of the story. It's just a little treat for the child that keeps going to the very end.

Typography

- The best typography is invisible: that is, it never draws attention to itself. A good book designer removes everything that can come between the reader and the story.
- For the interior text of your book, only choose from the fonts provided on your flash drive. We have chosen these for their readability (by children) and because they have an open licence, so that they are free to use and redistribute. Some also have big glyph sets, so that they can be used in languages with special characters (like ļ or ȼ). Here are some of the recommended fonts: [Andika](#) (check out: http://software.sil.org/andika/); [Quicksand](#); Crimson (not Crimson text); Caudex; Didact Gothic; Josefin San; Lato
- We recommend you set up your font selection for the body text in InDesign's [Paragraph Styles](#). This makes it easier to check how your text styling looks on every page, and update your font and text sizing in one go if you change your mind. This will also help us later down the line when your book is being translated, if we need to quickly update the font or text size.

- For your cover lettering, you may use other open-licensed fonts. Anything from google.com/fonts is open-licensed, so we recommend getting your fonts there. Note that 'free' fonts are not necessarily open-licensed! Avoid cursive, because beginner readers can't understand it.
- If you really want to hand-letter your cover type, also create a version of the design in editable type on the pasteboard. This will enable designers creating translations to quickly create a cover for which you've chosen the type and layout.

Colours

- All text must be pure black. This way, several translations can be printed in one print run by switching only the black-ink plate. Designers must be careful to use pure black for text, not black as a combination of CMYK.
- You can have white text on a pure-black background, too, as long as it's 100% black (not any combination with cyan, magenta or yellow). Place the black background and the white text on the language layer, not the 'Common' layer.
- Avoid creating a white or light-coloured cover. White covers quickly get dirty in little hands and dusty in storage.

Placing images

- All images should be placed, never embedded in the InDesign document.
- Only place the original master image, e..g the Photoshop or Illustrator file, or high-res TIFF. Don't save a JPG version of a Photoshop file and place that. We want the best, original image placed in the book.
- If your illustrator is creating physical art that will be scanned and retouched later, then you can place JPG scans in your book on Book Dash day. They will be replaced later with professional scans.
- Think of the gutter (the fold in the middle of a spread, where the book will be stapled) when you plan your illustrations: don't place important visual detail in the middle of the spread.

Bleed and slug

- Make sure all images and colours that touch the edge of the page extend 5mm into the bleed. This ensures that we don't get white edges on books if the printer trims the book imperfectly.
- If you like, leave notes to future designers or printers in the slug: the area between the bleed and the pasteboard. This is important if you create special graphic effects that they should know about, especially for translations.

Translations

- Your InDesign file will eventually contain the text of many translations, each language on a separate layer.
- Keep all colour images on the 'Common' layer. This layer will be visible on any translation.
- Keep all text on a layer named for its language, e.g. the 'English' layer.
- All text must have space around it for translations into languages that need more space.
- Create your text frames with vertical alignment and insets left and right, to make pasting translations easy, and in line with your design vision.

Licensing

- Only use pictures and text that are:

- ○ created on the day or
- ○ open-licensed. The open licence must allow free redistribution, derivatives (changes and adaptations) and commercial use. (E.g. use fonts from google.com/fonts.)
- If you used images belonging to others, and they require attribution, add their names and links on the copyright page.

Finishing up

- At the end of the day, you have two things to prepare: a PDF for show-and-tell:
  - ○ Load the 'Book Dash presentation.joboptions' file on your flash drive to your PDF export presets. Do this at File > Adobe PDF Presets > Define… > Load…
  - ○ Then use that preset to create a PDF of your cover and your interior. That is: File > Export… > Save and then choose 'Book Dash presentation' from the Adobe PDF Preset list at the top.
  - ○ In Acrobat Pro, combine the cover and interior presentation PDFs into one, with your team number and 'presentation' in the file name, e.g. '1-presentation.pdf'.
  - ○ Save the show-and-tell PDF to your team flash drive.
- And packaged files:
  - ○ Run File > Package to create a zip folder of everything in your book, and save the package on the flash drive.
  - ○ Do this for your cover and for your interior.
  - ○ Make sure you want till packaging is complete before you remove your flash drive! To check if packaging is complete, go to Window > Utilities > Background Tasks. If nothing is listed there, packaging is complete.
  - ○ Check that the package is complete by opening the InDesign files in your packages. If you get no warnings about missing fonts or images, then everything should be okay.
  - ○ Give your flash drive to the facilitators. Well done!

Before the day, it's essential that you have a look at as many of the suggested books (in "What makes a good Book Dash book") as possible to get great ideas of *creative design* in storybooks. You'll be given a group briefing (along with the other teams' designers) and tips for designing Book Dash books on the day.