

Keywords Cheat Sheet

What are keywords?

Keywords are words or short phrases that provide additional information about your book, beyond the title, author, publisher, and genre information indicated by use of BIC, BISAC and Thema codes.

Do I have to?

No, you don't have to – the keywords field is not a mandatory field on our metadata spreadsheet. However, using keywords helps your title become much more discoverable within retailers' shop fronts. If you're not using keywords, the number of ways a reader can discover your book is vastly reduced.

What's the point?

The point is to increase the number of ways your book is discoverable within an e-book bookstore – such as Amazon, Apple's iBook Store, and Kobo – or within in an online library service such as Bibliotecha cloudLibrary, OverDrive, and Ulverscroft. Keywords provide a way for readers to search beyond titles, authors, and genre-groups. Readers who know they like reading books about, for example, 19th century Gothic romance novels with strong themes of self-sufficiency and equality, and female protagonists can enter keywords to that effect and discover new titles that appeal to them, and – most importantly – buy them.

DO:

- ✓ Use short phrases of 2–3 words
- ✓ Provide more specific genre information than is given by the BIC, BISAC, and Thema codes: e.g. coming of age, Victorian romance, Gothic
- ✓ Include keywords that indicate locations central to the book: e.g. boarding school, manor house, northern England, Great Britain, Gateshead
- ✓ Include keywords that show when in time the story takes place: e.g. Victorian era, 19th century
- ✓ Include keywords that indicate the defining features of the main characters: e.g. orphan, cruel aunt, abusive headmaster, teacher, housekeeper, governess, mad wife, clergyman, independent woman
- ✓ Include keywords that indicate the kinds of things that happen in the story: e.g. imprisoning, uncle's ghost, typhus epidemic, secret love, arson, rejection, proposal, marriage, wedding, bigamy, mental illness, destitution, inheritance
- ✓ Include keywords that show the themes of the book: e.g. quest for love, belonging, integrity, equality in marriage, moral duty, earthly pleasure, religious faith, class prejudice, gender equality

DON'T:

- ✘ Replicate genre information already reflected in the BIC, BISAC, or Thema codes. For example, if your metadata already includes the BISAC code for psychological thriller (FIC031080) you don't need to repeat this as a keyword
- ✘ Repeat author, title, and publisher information in the keywords. Your book is already discoverable by these attributes
- ✘ Repeat keywords to include all possible spellings, verb, adjective and noun forms, plurals, synonyms, etc. The retailers' search engines already link these kinds of related keywords automatically
- ✘ Include titles of other books and authors, whether or not they are published by you. Amazon specifically rejects keywords for a title that do this. It doesn't help your title become any more discoverable
- ✘ Use keywords that have no relation to the title you're attributing them too, even if they are "of the moment" keywords.
- ✘ Use terms like "bestselling" or "number one selling [insert genre here] title" that indicate sales rank
- ✘ Reference advertisements or promotions with keywords like "free"

Using keywords in the Faber Factory metadata spreadsheet

- Although the more keywords the better, please keep the total per title below 100 keywords. Many retailers won't accept more than this many keywords.
- Separate keywords using **either** a comma **or** a semi-colon. Do not mix commas and semi-colons within the keyword field – this will create an error when you submit the spreadsheet through the validator tool.

Further reading

<https://www.ipgskillshub.com/courses/increasing-online-sales-with-metadata>

<https://www.ipgskillshub.com/courses/ten-practical-tips-to-improve-your-metadata>

https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G201097560