

Amazon Ads for Authors – align your ads with your readers

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If your book is written and packaged to market expectations Amazon Ads are a great tool to connect with your readers. Here's a handy list of common terms to help you speak and understand advertising like a pro.

Acronyms, Terms and Concepts

Feeling like Amazon Ads is another language? Here is your language lesson! There might be a joke or two to keep you reading.

ACOS Advertising Cost of Sale, or: a metric on your advertising reports you should treat with extreme caution. Sales can be counted up to 14 days after a click. If you mostly get page reads you won't care about ACOS.

ACPC Average Cost Per Click. An *estimate* of the average amount spent when your ad is clicked. It's calculated by adding the cost of each click and dividing by however many clicks you've had. If you haven't had many clicks, the average is less meaningful as it works best over a long array. Your average will become less meaningful if you change your bid daily. For this reason, some people never change their bids, they just make new ads. I am not one of those people. There is a middle ground.

Ad blocking is software used to block ads, such as yours! If you are running ad blockers, you won't be able to read your ad blurbs in your KDP account and you won't see your ads running on Amazon. Hint: Switch off your ad blockers if you want to understand Amazon advertising.

Ad copy (or **ad blurb**) is written advertising copy that supports your ads, particularly the ads that sit under the landing pages of other books. Ad copy is optional. Writers typically obsess over their 'book blurb', which is the copy supporting a book on its landing page. Here's something new to obsess over. Ad copy is only

Ad groups are ads inside an ad campaign. You can run different types of ads in one campaign and you can split out your books. There are so many possibilities! You can also group paperbacks and eBooks and get and gain attribution information for both.

Adjacent market is a readership that isn't an exact fit, but might turn out to love your work. An adjacent market is not the same as a relevant market.

Algorithm An automated set of rules. Amazon uses more than one. Algorithms are usually simpler than people imagine.

Also-boughts are (often) found on product pages. They are carousels of titles that customers have bought who also bought that title. They help customers find other books they'd like, based on related product sales history. They also help you understand your readership.

Also-viewed A lower order of also-bought, often found under books or products which are selling lower volumes or just building their profile. Amazon plays with also-viewed all the time.

Amazon Ads Advertising you run on Amazon pages. Accounts are country-specific. Authors most commonly use the advertising service on the Kindle Direct Platform (KDP), but you can also set up advertising accounts through Seller Central.

Amazon Advantage A wider Amazon advertising platform for sellers with non-book products. Some authors gained accounts during 2017/18 to advertise books in other Amazon stores. In 2019, Amazon broadened the Amazon Ads platform bringing in much of the Advantage functionality. You are not missing out on much if you don't have one. Advantage folks are missing KENP reporting.

Auction a somewhat mysterious event held over a nanosecond as Amazon decides which ad to serve. Your book, your target, your categories your metadata, your CTR and your bid are all considered.

Bid The highest value you are prepared to pay for a click on your ad. If you win the ad auction, you pay the price of the next bid down (your next rival).

Buy box The buy box is the yellow box on the right of a product. It's the final step of the path to a buy. You cannot advertise if you do not control the buy box.

Campaign A sustained war strategy, a civil action plan (such as the campaign for women's suffrage) and, latterly, a term used by marketers to mean messages to sell stuff. Amazon uses the word 'campaign' in place of 'advertisement', presumably because you'll keep a good ad marching on and on. Also because you can have a nest of ads in one campaign. True!

Carousel A strip of sponsored ads, also-boughts, or also-viewed found under a product. Buyers will pass the carousel on the way down to read reviews. It's called a carousel because customers can hit an arrow to see more items and eventually return to the first items on display. An item needs to be visible on the carousel to count as an impression. The word carousel goes back to medieval times when knights, riding in circles, practiced various agility feats. This might explain why amusement park carousel rides often feature horses.

Click is when your ad gets clicked on. A great keyword will give you about one click per 100 impressions/views but one click per one thousand impressions is common.

CPC Cost Per Click. The average amount you are paying for a click on one of your ads.

CTR Click Through Rate. The ratio of clicks per impressions. A high CTR may mean your ad has relevance for your keyword selection or product targeting. Low CTR may mean a lot of your audience has ad blockers enabled.

Daily budget The total amount you are prepared to pay on an ad each day. Starting low is a good idea.

IMO In My Opinion. My opinions are just that. YMMV.

Impression When your ad is served, meaning it shows up somewhere in front of a human being, it is called an 'impression'. Your impression numbers will be far higher than your number

of clicks. The click through rate (CTR) is a reporting measure that compares impressions to actual clicks.

IS Impression share an indicator of how often your ad gets seen vs other ads.

Incognito Most browsers offer a mode known as 'incognito' to give you a way to browse the internet privately. Find yours by Googling your <browser name + incognito mode> When you are in this private window you won't save search history, cookies, site data, or information entered on forms. This is handy for seeing Amazon pages without your own history shaping what is served.

KDP is the acronym for the Kindle Direct Publishing platform, and you already know that.

KENP kindle edition-normalized pages – if you're enrolled in KDP Select your book can be borrowed and you are paid a small amount for each page read. Page reads are recorded against an ad for up to 14 days after downloading via your ad. You're paid for page reads after that, but won't see them against your ad.

Keywords (or **KW**) are bait you use to get your ads shown. They can be single words, collections of words, phrases, and also numbers. You can also use ASINs and categories.

Keyword finders Tools that suggest keywords by using web scraping methods or mining public sources of information such as Google Search Terms. There are free keyword finders as well as paid tools. Your brain is one of the best free keyword finders.

Lockscreen ads are full screen ads that appear on some Amazon reading devices on start up.

Loss leading is a marketing strategy where the sale price doesn't recoup the seller's costs. You might set up a loss leader campaign when you have strong read through in a series or when you can offset the loss with a lot of organic sales. I don't do this.

Online calculator Tools that can help you calculate ROI and tax and read through and other handy things. I love them.

Optimising is the process of adjusting your (evergreen) ads to improve their performance. Ad optimization (sic) is about creating and nurturing relevant ads.

Portfolios are big umbrella folders to house campaigns. You can use them to manage a budget across multiple ads. They are handy for co-authored titles. You appreciate portfolios when you have a lot of ads.

PPC Pay Per Click is a common internet advertising model used by Amazon, Google and many more. You pay only when someone clicks an ad, not when it is delivered. You usually bid to have your ad shown.

Read through is the term for reading on other books in a series. Knowing read through rate helps you determine bids.

Relevance is an Amazon term, so the dictionary won't help you. Relevance is the result of a much-debated set of optimal conditions. Amazon says relevance is important to ensure good customer experience. Amazon won't show ads that are not 'relevant to the customer's search'. If

our ad is relevant it may be served more often and cost less, since Amazon anticipates profit from sales.

ROI Return On Investment. The return on your ads relative to what they cost. A negative ROI is a loss. Use an online calculator, or divide your profit by your investment. For instance, if you make \$30 and you spend \$10 your profit is \$20 and your ROI is $\$20/\10 or 200 percent.

Seller. You are the seller.

SEO Search Engine Optimization. The optimization of web pages and other web products by the placement, for instance, of metadata and keywords to connect with relevant searching and get found.

Targeting is how you deploy your campaign strategy. You might target other authors like you, target tightly with specific products and exact phrases, or broadly through categories and broad keywords.

Web scraping is harvesting data from web pages and metadata. Keyword finding tools are built using web scraping techniques. Web scraping is also known as data scraping and screen scraping. While automated web scraping can cover millions of pages and return lots of information, human beings like you and I still have to make sense of the information. We can often do a very good manual web scrape ourselves.

Wide is the term for books not in KDP Select and therefore exclusive to Amazon. They will be available on other platforms such as Kobo.

What is the market for your genre?

Use a sales calculator such as this one <https://kindlepreneur.com/amazon-kdp-sales-rank-calculator/>

Pick some of the books on Amazon that are like yours. Scroll down to see product details. Find their sales rank for both eBook and paperback. Calculate the number of sales per day.

Have a look at the categories for the books – you can click through from product details. How well does the book fit with the top 100 in these categories?

What is the pricing for the books? First free or discounted?

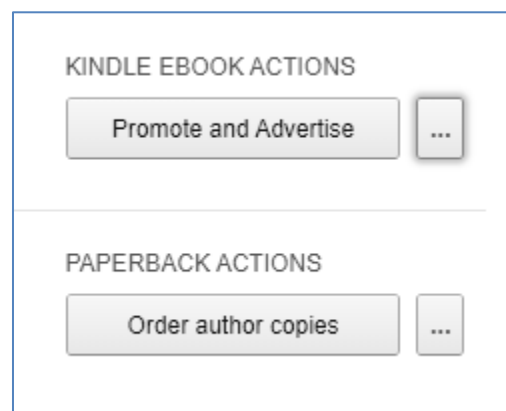
Stalk the authors. Do their ads show up on FB? Can you see their ads on Amazon? Are they independently published, traditional or a mix? Newsletters? Free material?

Making an ad – simple steps for complete beginners

If you have never made an ad before, this section is for you.

You need a KDP account to make ads for your books through Amazon Advertising. The ads you make for the American store will only show up on Amazon.com for American readers (and some, but not all, overseas readers with a .com account). To get ads showing up in other Amazon stores, you need to set up a separate account, also through KDP. There is in depth material on international advertising in section 9. Going Global, but we'll focus on the US first.

To make a first ad, open up your KDP account and get to ads by going to your Bookshelf.

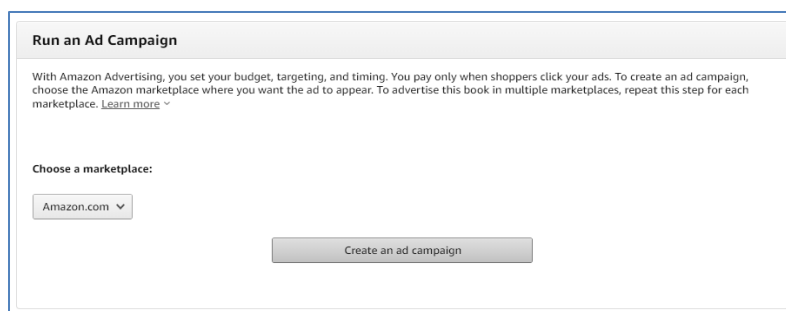


Click on Promote and Advertise to advertise an eBook. To make a paperback ad, click on the three little dots and choose Promote and Advertise from there. Many genres attract more eBook buyers than paperbacks. Ads for eBooks also show up under paperbacks but paperback ads stick to physical books. They are not cheaper though! So if you don't have a reason to target paperback only, start with an eBook ad. You can add the other format later when the ad is running.

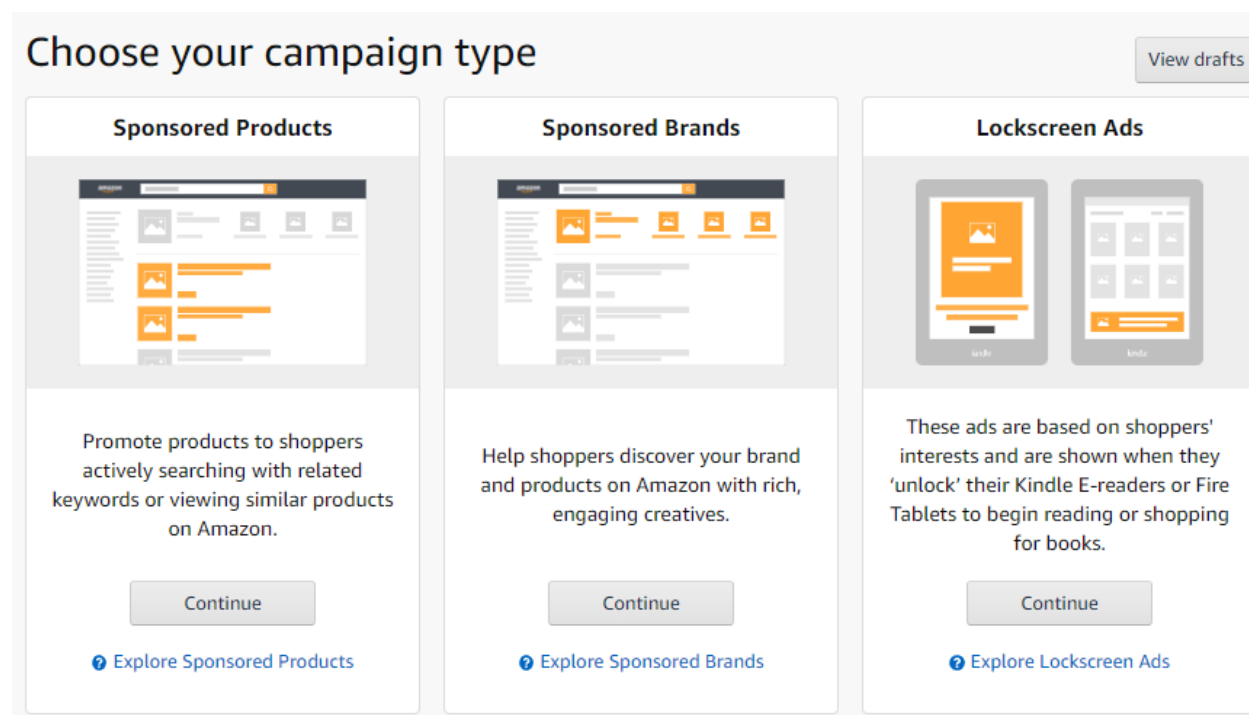
Now choose a marketplace.

The first time you visit the advertising page, you'll need to sign up and confirm your credit card details. I'll assume you don't need any help with that, but if you do run into problems, try the [Tips chapter](#).

Once you've authorized Amazon to take your money, you'll see something like the snip below:



To make your first ad, select a country first. On Amazon US, you have three Campaign Types to choose between:



Choosing Sponsored Product Campaigns will open up a raft of choices from automatic ads to very specific campaign targeting by keyword or product (book) targeting. A keyword ad and a product-targeted ad are the best place to start out.

The second big option, Sponsored Brands, allow you to create larger ads with groups of books in series. You graduate to these when you have a nice set of proven targets and a nice series of books.

The Lockscreen choice delivers full-page ads and banner ads on Kindle E-readers. That placement can make Lockscreen ads seem very appealing! Lockscreen ads are unsuitable for many genres. It's an older ad that Amazon haven't been upgrading and it isn't available in other

countries. If you have money to burn, you could start with a Lockscreen ad, but I recommend you step through these ad types, starting with the various campaign types you can run with Sponsored Products. Pick **Sponsored Product**.

By picking very specific keywords and products to trigger your ad you'll start to build market information that Amazon will also use. So don't be tempted to go too broad with your selections early on. Start specific and build relevant traffic to your book. This isn't just good for the ads you run over the next few months, it also helps the organic reach of your book. And Amazon will draw from everything that it can learn from your manual ad activity with auto ads.

More about Sponsored Products

Sponsored Products appear in Amazon customer searches, in carousels across the bottom of the landing pages of other books, and other places Amazon might trial from time to time. Amazon is always trying new things and deployed ads in new ways.

There are many variants within this ad type, which use different targeting methods. So the Sponsored Products campaign tool is like a Tardis – much bigger on the inside.

Wherever the Sponsored Product ads appear, they will have a little 'sponsored' label on them somewhere. You'll probably start noticing these whenever you're on Amazon pages from now on.

Let's make an ad.

Step 1: Campaign name

It's easy to overlook naming your ad. If you ignore it, Amazon will give your ad campaign a default name using the date you made it. The date isn't useful. Instead, give the campaign a meaningful name. 'Keyword targets Book1' or something like that.

Later, when you analyse your ads, your campaign names will be useful high-level information. The sorts of ideas you might want to seed into a campaign name are: an abbreviation of the title of the book, a memory jog about any ad blurb you used, a seasonal memory jog (Xmas ad, etc.), and a clue about the targets you used or a strategy you are applying.

Renaming ads: If you forget to name your ad in a meaningful way or you come up with a better system, you can rename them once they are running in **Campaign settings**. I rename my ads sometimes when I make a big change.

Step 2: Start and end date

I always leave my end dates open. If the ad turns out to be a cracker, I don't want it to end. You'll be able to pause or terminate ads, so I strongly suggest no end date. You *can* delay the start of an ad but generally you want them to turn on RIGHT NOW. An example of when you might choose to *delay* the launch of an ad would be when your ad blurb is seasonal "Curl up by the fire with..." or "Breeze through tax season with..." (You could name that first seasonal ad idea *Fireside ad*). If you see an option to join a portfolio just ignore this for now.

Step 3: Daily budget

This is your first ad. Let's set a conservative daily budget. Your daily budgets will get higher as you gain confidence and find out what works for your books. Go ahead and put in a number you feel comfy with. I suggest \$20 for starters.

Many newbies start with daily budgets of about \$5. You really don't get much for five bucks. If Amazon makes a commitment not to spend more than \$5, their algorithm will manage that \$5 budget by taking your ad out for a spin at 5am for ten minutes. Well, that's my theory. So, a slightly higher daily budget will give your ad more chance of being delivered onto a page for someone to see.

The more targets you have, the more work you are asking you ad budget to do. Ask yourself how many clicks it would take to spend your budget.

Step 4: Targeting

If you like, Amazon will target automatically. Auto ads do much better if they draw from good information. The Amazon program is very good at showing people who are searching for toilet rolls, different toilet roll choices, and different towels to towel buyers—but books are different. An auto ad won't perform *when it currently has no information about what works*. So, we make manually targeted ads, learn some stuff, and then later add a few auto ads.

Select **Manual** targeting.

When you choose manual targeting, you unlock more ad options down below. Remember this, because a week from now you might be thinking "*Am I going crazy? How do I get those category ads I wanted to try? How do I get the option to write an ad blurb?*" *How do I make an ad group?* It all happens when you hit 'Manual' targeting.

Step 5: Ad format

You can choose **Custom text ad** or **Standard ad** in the US. A standard ad has no supporting text, or 'ad copy' or 'ad blurb'. I wrote short ad copy for all my ads for the first few years I advertised. It may not be relevant for you to do this, especially if your cover explains exactly what your book is about. For instance, a non-fiction book called AMAZON ADS FOR AUTHORS shouldn't need much more explaining.

Be aware, however, *your ad copy won't always be shown*.

Click **custom text** to get the option to write ad copy. You could select one sentence from your book blurb, or customize (flash fiction) your book blurb. If you want a smooth transition from click to buy, *your ad copy should agree with what your book blurb proposes*.

Step 6: Choose the book you want to advertise

Books you select from your bookshelf page will show up by default but if you opt out of ad copy, you can have more than one product receive the same advertising treatment. This essentially

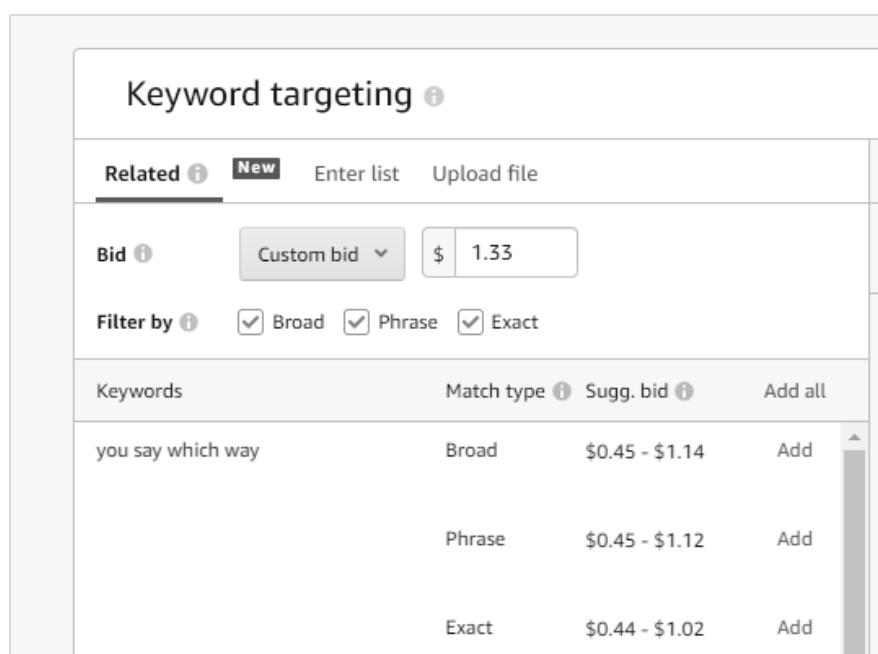
creates a bunch of replica ads with a non-compete clause on them but, as I mentioned, no ad copy.

If you use ad copy you can only pick one product, but perhaps you've changed your mind and want to swap in another book or the paperback version. I suggest you select your bestselling book in its bestselling format. Logically, if you have a series, you'll pick the first book in your series.

Lastly, if you don't see your book in the list to choose from, just use search. It's a glitch.

Step 7: Bidding

The first thing you want to do here is put your default keyword bid way down. The default bid is high. When I first wrote *Amazon Ads*, I noted the default had increased from 25 cents, the last update I noted it was at 75 cents. This is way too high to start exploring ads. Toggle to **Custom bid** (see the grey box below) and move the bid down.



Keyword targeting ⓘ

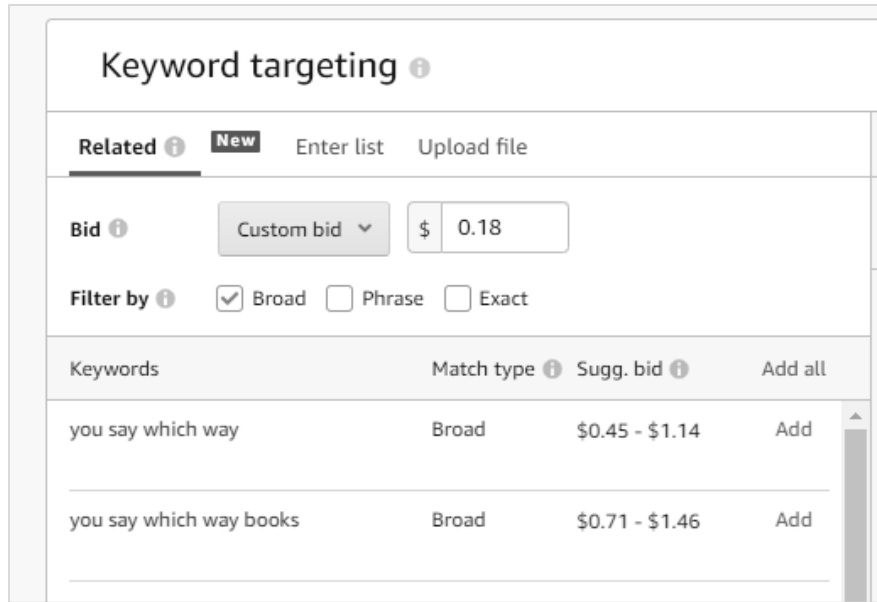
Related ⓘ **New** Enter list Upload file

Bid ⓘ Custom bid ▾ \$ 1.33

Filter by ⓘ Broad Phrase Exact

Keywords	Match type ⓘ	Sugg. bid ⓘ	Add all
you say which way	Broad	\$0.45 - \$1.14	Add
	Phrase	\$0.45 - \$1.12	Add
	Exact	\$0.44 - \$1.02	Add

Here is the ad in progress (below) with default bid turned down, and I've also disabled Phrase and Exact. I'm keeping it simple. Not just for you! I often only use Broad alone. You can add Phrase and Exact later.



I have never paid more than about 39 cents on a bid (on purpose) for one of my kids' books. The lowest you can set a bid to is 2 cents. Unfortunately, these days you aren't likely to get any impressions for 2 cents. Don't worry about getting this right though—later when your ad is live you'll be able to adjust your bids. Let's just put in a low default bid and move on.

If you are in a popular genre (like ROMANCE), bids for popular and obvious keywords will be high. That does not mean you can't find cheaper options. Adding another word usually reduces the bid. There will be less impressions but the target will be more relevant.

Above the default keyword bid, you'll see a box you can tick for Campaign bidding strategy. Amazon will increase your default bid to get more impressions if you enable it.

Don't. Wait until you have more market information.

Step 8: Keyword targeting or product targeting

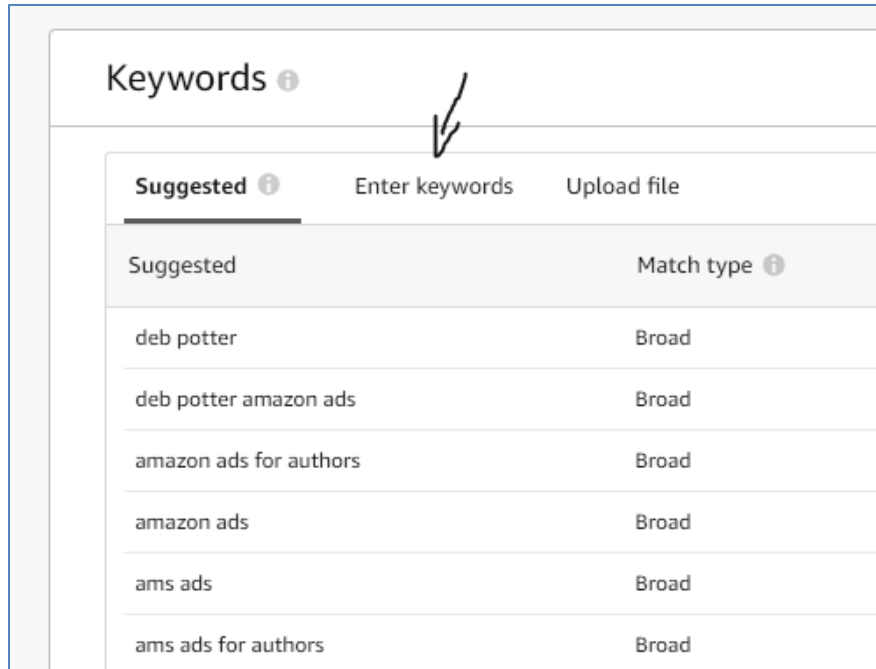
Let's go with keyword targeting for starters and come back to product targeting.

Step 9: Adding keywords

Here are the basics:

You are looking at three tabs. The first is a list of suggestions from Amazon—even though you said you didn't want an **auto ad**. It's worth checking out this ever-evolving list of suggestions. More on that later. Let's click on the middle tab: **Enter keywords:**

Click on the Enter keywords tab and add some words.



A couple of months later, go back and look at the Suggestions again. Chances are that Amazon will give you a slightly better list of suggestions this time. That's because it will gather intel from your own ads. I think you can guess which book I picked to make the screen shot above. I started an ad for this book when I published in 2019 and the list of suggestions is now very sensible. I'm not currently using the second suggestion so I may add it to the ad I already have running for this book. I bet I don't get many impressions. We call that suggestion a 'long tail' keyword, meaning three or more words. They can be very cheap but also less common.

At this stage, just add 10–20 broad keywords. We just want to get an ad up and running so we can edit it later and learn a bit more about active ads. Some quick ideas could be:

Ideas and themes in your books e.g. quilting, gardening, detectives

- Series names
- Character descriptions (strong women, mother, country girl, scientist, Christian etc.)
- Additional description with your genre e.g. San Francisco thriller, American thriller, medical thriller
- Misspellings of similar authors
- 'long tail' keywords putting a few ideas together because two words are often cheaper and more relevant than single words

Notice that an autocomplete suggestion comes up as you type in keywords. This might give you some great ideas, so slow down and notice what pops up, particularly as a second word. I really like two word combos.

Amazon lets you add up to 1000 keywords, but their metadata has gently encouraged less. I would not so gently suggest you use way less.

You'll see you can toggle to pick between different types of keywords: broad, exact and phrase. Again, there's more coming up on this. I trial keywords as broad generally, but I make an exception and use exact for any authors I want to target. If the book you are advertising has collected a ribbon of 'also bought' books you could add some of those or look for inspiration at the words used in their book blurbs. Try a few variations to describe your genre then STOP! You can add more later, once the ad is running. You don't need to list titles to target in this ad (but you can) because there is a better ad for that. It's called a **product-targeting ad**. We'll make one of those next.

Step 10: First edit of keyword bids

When you have a few keywords entered in your unpublished ad, scroll down again and you'll see them listed in a new section. Your keywords should have your default bid against them, but to the left you'll now see a suggested bid. If there's no suggested bid, congratulations! You have created an original keyword and Amazon hasn't any suggestions yet. If you keep using the keyword, they'll have data. But keywords without suggested bids probably won't get many impressions. More likely, you haven't been too original and Amazon already has some metrics on your keywords. At this point, you can consider Amazon's suggestions. Generally, Amazon will show you a range that the keywords are being bid at, and suggest something mid-range. Set your keywords at the bottom of the range or below the range (depending on how hot your market is). The more original your keywords, and groups of keywords of ('long tail') the lower the bid suggestions should be. Long-tail will have lower search results but higher conversion.

Step 11: Negative keywords

You can add information about where you *don't* want your ad served. Negative keywords are optional, but you'll want to experiment with them later on.

A negative keyword can help you carve up your category. A vegetarian cookbook might use negative keys such as: meat, chicken, bacon, liver, BBQ. Negative keywords are fantastic tools to steer your ads away from showing in the wrong places. They help you curate relevance.

I often negate the word 'free' and not much else when I create an ad. Later, if I see my live ad is spending on irrelevant targets I negate them.

Step 12: Write your ad copy

Lastly, you'll enter some ad copy. How comfortable are you about copying the first sentence of your book blurb into the box? If you don't think your book's blurb is a useful starting point you may want to revise the blurb!

Write a short hook for your book. Read it aloud. Double-check for grammatical correctness and mistakes.

Check your ad blurb against Amazon's rules, which are (in brief):

- No unnecessary capitalization
- No grammar or spelling mistakes
- No claims
- No advertising a cover or product that doesn't meet Amazon standards

Note: the rules about ad acceptability change. Keep up to date on the acceptability policy. If your ad is approved, you won't be able to change your ad copy. That's because Amazon knows some authors would be greatly tempted to put in claims, capitalization, and, in the course of doing this, introduce new grammar and spelling mistakes. Remember, your first ad is just a learning process. We don't expect much from it.

You can take a look at your ad now, in the various ways it might be served, by clicking on **Preview Your Ad**. This is a great last-minute check for ad copy.

Did you catch that word 'might' in the last sentence? Your ads are delivered in different ways and your ad text may never be seen. *If you are spending 99 percent of your time crafting ad copy and 1 percent of your time thinking about keywords you have it all backwards.*

Step 13: Launch your campaign

Your ad can take 72 hours to be approved, about 24 hours is the usual wait time, but many ads go through faster.

Just as almost nobody writes a bestseller right out of the gate, your first ads won't be your best. Making good ads uses new ways of thinking.