

## PRE-PRODUCTION

# Pre-Production Product Check

*Prepare your printable product for production in about 15 minutes using one focused checklist.*

Check your product before you build your product.

A practical quick-win report for printable creators preparing coloring books, activity books, worksheets, planners, journals, puzzles, and other downloadable PDF products.

## COLOR ME CRAZY CLUB

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# Check Before You Create

You have a printable product idea. You know what you want to make, so starting the design feels like the next logical move.

You open Canva, your illustration software, or another design tool. You create the first few pages. Then the questions start.

How many pages should this product contain? What size should every page be? Which pages belong in the finished PDF? Does the buyer need instructions? Are you creating one PDF or several files? What belongs in this product, and what should you save for another one?

Those questions seem small when you begin. Once production is underway, each unanswered question interrupts your work.

A page-size change means fixing completed pages. An unclear page count makes the project grow. Missing content requirements send you back to create pages you didn't plan for. Inconsistent design decisions force you to choose between accepting the inconsistency or reworking finished material.

Most of those problems start before the first page gets designed.

The **Pre-Production Product Check** gives you a faster way to handle them. Instead of trying to plan every detail of your product, you'll spend about 15 minutes confirming the decisions that directly affect production. You'll finish with one checklist you keep beside you as you work.

**The goal is simple: know what you're building before you start building it.**

## An Idea Isn't a Production Plan

Consider this product idea: **Adult floral coloring book**. You know the general product. You still don't know enough to produce it consistently.

Compare it with this: **30-page adult floral coloring book, 8.5 x 11-inch portrait pages, single-sided coloring designs, consistent black line art, supporting front and closing pages, delivered as one printable PDF.**

Now you have something you can build. You know the type of product, page target, dimensions, orientation, content style, and delivery format.

**Quick insight: A product idea tells you what sounds worth making. A production check tells you what you're going to make.**

## Decide Once, Then Build

One of the easiest ways to slow down production is making the same decision several times.

Suppose you're creating a printable activity pack. You design ten pages before deciding whether every activity needs an instruction line. Now you have two choices. Add instructions to the first ten pages or allow the product to contain inconsistent page formats.

A pre-production decision prevents the problem: **Every activity page includes one short instruction line below the title.** You decide once. Every page follows the decision.

**Quick insight: Repeated decisions waste production time. Record the decision once and use it as your reference.**

## Watch for These Early Warning Signs

- You don't know your final page dimensions.
- You keep adding new types of pages.
- You haven't chosen a target page count.
- You aren't sure what files you'll deliver.
- Similar pages follow different design rules.
- You haven't decided which supporting pages belong in the finished product.
- You keep changing what the product is supposed to accomplish.
- Several good ideas are competing for space inside one product.

**Quick insight: Separate production decisions from business decisions. Pricing, SEO, traffic, promotion, and launch planning belong elsewhere.**

## Your 15-Minute Finish Line

You aren't trying to predict every issue. You're looking for unanswered questions with enough impact to interrupt production later.

**Confirmed:** You made the decision and know what you're doing.

**Needs Decision:** The answer affects production, and you still need to choose.

**Not Applicable:** The item doesn't apply to this product.

By the end of your check, every essential production item should have a usable answer.

## Before You Open Your Design Software

- I know what type of printable I'm producing.

- I know who will use it.
- I know its primary purpose.
- I have chosen the basic format.
- I know the page dimensions.
- I have a target page count or range.
- I know the main content the product needs.
- I know what finished files I'm working toward.
- I know where I plan to publish the product.
- I have placed a boundary around this version.

A missing answer doesn't mean your idea is bad. It tells you where to spend the next few minutes. Next, turn your idea into a specific production target before running the full check.

# Set Your Production Target

Before you run the full Pre-Production Product Check, give your product a clear target. You need answers to eight practical questions.

- What are you making?
- Who will use it?
- What will they use it for?
- How will you deliver it?
- Where will you publish it?
- How large will the product be?
- What belongs inside this version?
- What stays outside this version?

## 1. Name the Product Type

Start with the simplest description of what you're producing. Be specific enough to identify the product without turning the description into sales copy.

- Adult coloring book
- Preschool tracing pack
- Printable gratitude journal
- Kids' activity pack
- Word-search puzzle book
- Classroom multiplication worksheet set
- Monthly budget planner
- Printable habit tracker

## 2. Identify the Intended User

You don't need a detailed customer profile. You need to know who will use the printable. If your description immediately helps you make production decisions, it's specific enough.

- Preschool children learning letter formation
- Teachers preparing multiplication practice
- Adults using a weekly budget planner

- Adults who enjoy detailed coloring pages
- Parents looking for rainy-day activities for young children

### 3. State the Primary Purpose

Finish one sentence: **This product helps the user...** Use the answer as a filter when new pages or features appear.

- Plan meals for one week
- Print and color a collection of floral designs
- Practice uppercase letter tracing
- Complete multiplication practice

### 4. Choose the Delivery Format

Decide what the customer receives. Every extra format creates another file to prepare, inspect, name, organize, and maintain.

- One printable PDF
- Several PDFs organized by purpose
- A PDF plus separate printable files
- Individual page files packaged together
- Multiple size versions of the same printable

### 5. Record the Publishing Destination

Write down where you expect to publish or deliver the finished product. Record the destination because its current requirements might affect file preparation.

- Gumroad digital download
- WordPress resource page
- Direct customer download
- Private customer delivery
- Another digital storefront

### 6. Set a Page Target

Products become harder to finish when the finish line keeps moving. Set a target or narrow range. Separate primary content from supporting pages.

- Primary content: 30 coloring pages
- Supporting content: title page, usage page, closing page

## 7. Decide What Belongs Inside

List the main content required for this version. Think in page types first. A new idea now has to earn its place by fitting the product purpose and planned structure.

- Cover or title page
- Instructions
- Core activity or content pages
- Answer or reference material where needed
- Closing or information page

## 8. Decide What Stays Out

Create a short **Not This Version** list. You preserve good ideas without allowing them to expand today's production target.

- Party decorations
- Flashcards
- Reward certificates
- Extra fact sheets

## Complete Your Product Definition

|                               |                                                                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Product type</b>           | Adult floral coloring book                                               |
| <b>Intended user</b>          | Adults who enjoy relaxing floral coloring pages                          |
| <b>Primary purpose</b>        | Provide a printable collection of floral designs for at-home coloring    |
| <b>Delivery format</b>        | One downloadable PDF                                                     |
| <b>Publishing destination</b> | Direct digital-download store                                            |
| <b>Primary content target</b> | 35 coloring designs                                                      |
| <b>Supporting content</b>     | Required front and closing pages                                         |
| <b>This version includes</b>  | Single-sided floral coloring designs with consistent page specifications |

**This version excludes**

Coloring tutorials, journal pages, activity pages, trackers, and separate digital-coloring files

## Run the 60-Second Target Test

- I can name the exact type of product.
- I know who will use it.
- I can explain its primary purpose in one sentence.
- I know how I plan to deliver it.
- I have recorded the publishing destination.
- I have a page target or narrow range.
- I know the main content types required.
- I know which tempting extras I'm leaving out.

Keep this stage small. You don't need final pricing, sales copy, SEO keywords, promotional graphics, email campaigns, traffic plans, or a complete launch schedule. Save this definition with your project files. Then run the full 15-minute check.

# Run the 15-Minute Check

Work through these checks in order. Confirm the decisions affecting production, flag anything unresolved, and move forward with one dependable reference.

**Confirmed = decided. Needs Decision = important but unresolved. Not Applicable = does not apply.**

## 1. Confirm the Product

Write down the exact product type, intended user, primary purpose, and main product boundary. If those four answers point toward different products, fix the conflict now.

- Product type confirmed
- Intended user confirmed
- Primary purpose confirmed
- Product boundary confirmed

## 2. Lock the Page Specifications

Confirm final page dimensions, orientation, single-sided or double-sided intent where relevant, print use, and any intentional exceptions. Settle repeated-layout specifications before producing batches of pages.

- Dimensions confirmed
- Orientation confirmed
- Print use considered
- Any exceptions recorded

## 3. Build the Content List

Define what must exist before the product counts as finished. Think in page types first, then add quantities where they matter. Separate optional content from required content.

- Required page types listed
- Important quantities recorded
- Supporting pages included
- Optional content separated

## 4. Set the Page-Count Target

Give the project a finish line. Count core content, supporting pages, answer or reference pages, and other required pages. Your planned total should match the product you intend to produce.

- Core content counted
- Supporting content counted
- Answer or reference content counted
- Planned total recorded

## 5. Record the Design Requirements

Record repeatable rules rather than designing the product here. Note typography, layout rules, recurring elements, consistency requirements, and special page requirements.

- Typography requirements recorded
- Layout rules recorded
- Recurring elements identified
- Visual consistency requirements recorded
- Special page requirements recorded

## 6. Define the Finished Files

List every finished file you expect to deliver. Use customer-facing names someone will understand after downloading them. Keep internal version labels separate.

- Delivery files listed
- Customer-facing filenames selected
- File purposes are obvious
- Internal working files stay separate

## 7. Confirm the Licensing Choice

Choose the established licensing option for this product and identify any related material that must accompany it. Resolve uncertain rights before publishing.

- Licensing option selected
- Required licensing material identified
- Separate packages identified where needed

## 8. Confirm the Publishing Destination

Ask one production-focused question: does this destination create a requirement you need to account for before finishing the files? Verify current platform requirements when they affect production.

- Publishing destination recorded
- Relevant external requirements verified
- Unverified items marked Needs Decision

## 9. Run the Scope Check

Compare every planned component with the primary purpose. Use KEEP for required content, SAVE for good ideas suited to another product or version, and REMOVE for work that doesn't earn a place.

- KEEP: required for this product
- SAVE: useful later
- REMOVE: unnecessary for this product

## 10. Complete the Ready-to-Start Check

Bring every decision together. Once every essential item reads Confirmed or Not Applicable, stop planning and move into production.

- No essential production question remains unanswered
- Product is ready to enter production

## Master Ready-to-Start Checklist

- Product type, intended user, primary purpose, and scope confirmed
- Page dimensions, orientation, print use, and page-count target confirmed
- Required page types and supporting pages listed
- Design and consistency rules recorded
- Delivery format and finished files defined
- File-naming pattern selected
- Licensing option and required material confirmed
- Publishing destination recorded
- Current external requirements affecting production verified

- Unnecessary additions removed or saved elsewhere
- No essential production question remains unanswered
- Product marked READY

## Complete Example: Printable Road-Trip Puzzle Pack

|                        |                                                                                                           |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Product                | Printable road-trip puzzle pack                                                                           |
| Intended user          | Children ages 8 to 10 needing screen-free travel activities                                               |
| Primary purpose        | Provide printable puzzles children work through independently during travel                               |
| Product boundary       | Puzzle activities only, with answer material included                                                     |
| Page size              | 8.5 x 11 inches, portrait                                                                                 |
| Core content           | 20 puzzle pages                                                                                           |
| Supporting content     | Title page, instructions, answer pages, usage page                                                        |
| Planned total          | 28 pages                                                                                                  |
| Design requirements    | Readable instructions, consistent headings, clear writing space, page numbers, matching answer references |
| Delivery format        | One printable PDF                                                                                         |
| Customer filename      | Road-Trip-Puzzle-Pack.pdf                                                                                 |
| Licensing choice       | Established personal-use terms                                                                            |
| Publishing destination | Direct digital-download storefront                                                                        |
| Scope exclusions       | Coloring pages, travel journal pages, scavenger hunts, reward certificates                                |
| Open decisions         | None                                                                                                      |
| Production status      | READY                                                                                                     |

**Fast decision rule: Will this decision change what I need to produce? If yes, resolve or record it. If no, leave it for the appropriate stage.**

# Catch Problems Before Production

Your checklist is filled out. Spend five minutes looking for problems hiding between the answers. Check for missing decisions, conflicting decisions, unnecessary additions, and requirements you still need to verify.

## Find the Blanks First

Start with anything marked Needs Decision. Separate production blockers from tasks that belong later.

- Must resolve: dimensions, orientation, required content, page types, page target, repeated design rules, delivery format, essential file requirements
- Resolve later: sales copy, promotional graphics, email promotion, social content, SEO work, launch material

## Look for Decisions That Don't Agree

A checklist filled with answers still fails if those answers conflict. Compare product purpose with planned content, page target with content list, dimensions with layouts, delivery format with finished files, licensing with included terms, and publishing destination with file requirements.

## Test Every Planned Page Against the Purpose

Use KEEP, SAVE, and REMOVE. A page should support the primary purpose or serve a necessary production function. Useful extras do not automatically belong in the current product.

- KEEP: directly supports this product
- SAVE: useful idea for another product or later version
- REMOVE: adds work without enough value

## Recheck Dimensions Before Repeated Production

Confirm width, height, orientation, margin plan, recurring elements, and intentional exceptions before duplicating a base layout across many pages.

## Make the Numbers Agree

Use one count: core content + supporting content + answer/reference pages + other required pages = planned total. Your internal production count should include every page you're responsible for finishing.

## Confirm the Files You're Working Toward

Picture the finished delivery. Write down each expected file and remove supporting documents that do not serve a clear purpose.

## Stop Scope Creep Early

If an addition changes the page target, delivery structure, primary purpose, or production workload, stop and evaluate it before adding it.

- Does this belong in the product I defined?
- Does the buyer need it to use the product as intended?
- Does it replace something, or only add more work?
- Would saving it for another product leave this product complete?

## Know When to Verify Instead of Guess

If an external requirement affects your finished files, verify the current source. Mark the item Needs Decision until the answer is confirmed.

## Essential Finish Versus Optional Improvement

**Essential:** resolve production blockers, correct conflicts, confirm dimensions, make page counts agree, remove unwanted scope growth, confirm required files, and verify outside requirements affecting production.

**Optional:** refine internal organization, add extra production notes, create more detailed version labels, save future-product ideas, or add tracking for a large project.

Optional improvements should never keep a ready product stuck in planning.

## Five-Minute Final Pass

- Nothing essential is blank.
- Every Needs Decision item affecting production has been resolved.
- Product specifications agree with each other.
- Planned content supports the primary purpose.
- Page dimensions are confirmed.
- Intentional format exceptions are recorded.
- The page count matches the planned content.
- Supporting pages are included in the internal production count.
- Required finished files are defined.

- Licensing material is identified.
- External requirements affecting production have been verified.
- Unnecessary additions have been removed or saved elsewhere.
- The product has a clear completion point.

## Stop and Fix These First

- Uncertain dimensions
- Undefined content requirements
- No page target
- Conflicting product purposes
- Unknown delivery files
- Unresolved licensing choice
- Unverified publishing requirement
- Growing content list

Fix the specific problem. Don't restart the entire plan. Once every essential item passes, place READY at the top and save the checklist with the working product files.

# Keep the Check Beside You

Your Pre-Production Product Check has done its first job once your product is marked READY. Don't file it away. Keep the completed check with the product throughout production.

## Use the Check as Your Reference

Production creates new choices. Compare each meaningful change with your confirmed purpose, scope, specifications, content list, and finished files. Update the check when a genuine production decision changes.

## Keep One Current Version

A production reference loses value when several conflicting versions exist. Keep one current copy and update it immediately when a confirmed decision changes.

## Use Your Page Target as the Finish Line

Track progress against the content plan. If the required pages are complete, don't automatically add more because new ideas appeared. Save unrelated additions for later.

## Check the Files Before Export

Compare the finished delivery with the file list you planned. Make sure every required file exists and every extra export serves a clear purpose.

## Don't Confuse Improvement With Expansion

Fixing unclear instructions, inconsistent margins, or a missing answer page improves the defined product. Adding new categories, bonus worksheets, or extra sizes expands it. Fix problems. Complete requirements. Save unrelated expansion ideas.

## Your Use-This-First Check

- Name the exact product type.
- Identify the intended user.
- Write the primary purpose.
- Choose the delivery format.
- Record the publishing destination.
- Set the page-count target.
- List required content.

- Confirm page dimensions and orientation.
- Record design requirements.
- Define the finished files.
- Confirm the licensing choice.
- Remove unnecessary additions.
- Resolve essential open decisions.
- Mark the product READY.
- Save the completed check with the project.

## Give Every Project a Simple Header

|                        |                                                 |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Product                | Printable Morning Routine Cards                 |
| Version                | 1                                               |
| Target pages           | 24 cards plus supporting pages                  |
| Dimensions             | Confirmed product dimensions                    |
| Delivery files         | Main printable PDF plus required usage material |
| Publishing destination | Selected digital storefront                     |
| Production status      | READY                                           |

## Start With One Small Action

Take your next printable product idea and write down three things: **product type, intended user, and primary purpose**. Three lines are enough to begin turning a loose idea into a production target.

Keep the finished check with your working files. Refer to it when production raises a question. Update it when a confirmed decision changes.

**Once the essential decisions are settled, mark the product READY and start producing what you already decided to make.**

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