



A SELF-ASSESSMENT, FREE

Is Your Archive a Book?

A 5-question diagnostic for writers — Substackers, bloggers, coaches, professors, retirees with a stack of letters, journalists with scattered work. About ten minutes. Be honest with yourself. The score doesn't decide anything for you; it points at where the real work is.

How to take this

For each question, check the answer that's most true (not most aspirational). Note the points in the right column. Add them up at the end and check the score band on the last page. If you're between two answers, pick the lower score — the score is more useful when it's truthful than when it's flattering.

QUESTION 01

How many words have you written across your archive?

- Under 25,000 words. **1 pt**
- 25,000–50,000 words. **2 pts**
- 50,000–100,000 words. **3 pts**
- Over 100,000 words. **4 pts**
- Honestly, I don't know — but it's a lot. **3 pts**

Why this matters: a finished book is typically 50,000–80,000 words. Below that and you'll be writing more; above and you'll be cutting. Both are fine. Knowing which you face is the first step.

QUESTION 02

How organized is your existing material?

- Scattered across platforms, drives, notebooks, half-finished docs. **1 pt**
- Mostly in one place but not sorted. **2 pts**
- Sorted by topic, theme, or chronology. Could read end to end. **3 pts**
- Already in a draft sequence I'm reasonably happy with. **4 pts**

Why this matters: organization isn't the book — but disorganization is the largest hidden tax on the writer who has the material but can't see it. A scattered archive doesn't mean you don't have a book; it means the first move is curating.

QUESTION 03

Do recurring themes or arguments emerge across the work?

- Not really — it's a grab bag of unrelated pieces. **1 pt**
- Some echoes, but I'd struggle to name a unifying through-line. **2 pts**
- Yes, three or four strong themes I could articulate. **3 pts**
- One central question or argument runs through almost everything. **4 pts**

Why this matters: a book is held together by an argument or arc, not by an author. Many writers don't see the through-line in their own work; an editorial framing pass surfaces it. If you scored 3 or 4, you're closer than you think.

QUESTION 04

Why do you want this book?

- Personal completion of a long-held project. I want it for me. **2 pts**
- To leave something durable — for family, for legacy. **2 pts**
- To establish credibility in my field, get on stages, anchor my work. **3 pts**
- To open speaking opportunities, drive my coaching/consulting practice, or generate income from sales. **4 pts**
- Because readers keep asking me when the book is coming. **4 pts**

Why this matters: the why determines the production scope. A legacy book wants to be beautiful and held by your grandkids; a credibility book needs distribution and a real ISBN; a sales book needs metadata done right and a launch playbook. None of these are wrong; they're different scopes.

QUESTION 05

What's actually stopping you?

- I don't know what's a book and what isn't in what I've written. **3 pts**
- I know roughly what the book is, but I can't face the technical work — layout, ISBN, distribution, metadata. **4 pts**
- I don't have time to write the bridging material I'd need to add. **3 pts**
- I tried once and gave up — Vellum, Atticus, KDP — too many hours, too much friction. **4 pts**
- I'm not sure I want to be that publicly visible. **2 pts**

Why this matters: every blocker has a different solution. The first three are exactly what an editorial framing brief and structural draft solve. The fourth is what we absorb as a service. The fifth is a deeper conversation worth having with someone before you commit.

Add up your score

Five answers, one number. Find your band below. *The bands aren't a verdict — they're a starting point.*

5–9 POINTS

Diagnostic territory

Your archive isn't quite ready for a full editorial engagement yet, but it has the bones. The first move is the paid Diagnostic — a focused archive review that produces a one-page written assessment of what you have, what kind of book it might support, and what work needs to happen before the editorial stage makes sense. Includes a 30-minute call to walk you through the reasoning.

Crossroads tier that fits: The Diagnostic — \$500.

10–14 POINTS

Editorial territory

You have enough material to work with, even if you can't see the book inside it yet. A framing brief surfaces two or three concept directions for what your material wants to become. A structural draft assembles your existing essays into the chosen architecture, with placeholder gaps clearly marked. A real editorial polish in tracked changes finishes the manuscript. You leave with a finished, edited book — ready for whatever you decide to do with it.

Crossroads tier that fits: Editorial — \$1,500.

15–19 POINTS

Published territory

You're not just ready for an edit — you're ready to ship. Everything in Editorial, plus the production work that makes a book a book: house-template interior layout, a Crossroads cover, ISBN through our Bowker block, copyright registration, BISAC codes, metadata for Amazon and Ingram, IngramSpark submission. A finished printed copy in your hands.

Crossroads tier that fits: Published — \$3,500.

20+ POINTS

Architected territory

You have a real book — maybe more than one — and you want a publishing partner, not just a publishing pipeline. Everything in Published, plus six to eight working sessions across the project arc, custom (rather than templated) editorial work, two revision passes, attention to back-cover copy and discovery metadata, and a pre-launch playbook. For writers whose book matters strategically — not just as an artifact, but as a platform piece.

Crossroads tier that fits: Architected — \$5,500.

What to do with this

If you scored 5–14: book a free 20-minute discovery call. We'll walk through your specific situation and confirm fit before any money changes hands.

If you scored 15+: you're ready to engage. The page you got this from has direct purchase links per tier.

Either way, save this PDF — it's a snapshot of where you are right now. Re-take it in three months and the score should change.

A diagnostic is not a diagnosis. The book you actually write is the one only you can write — and the one we can help you make real. Reach out anytime: cthomasprevost@gmail.com.

— Chad Prevost, Crossroads Press

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