

# Self-Publishing 102: Create an Ebook with Sigil

## Setting up Sigil

- Open up the Sigil software program, the [VPL Sigil Guide](#), and a folder with all your documents (manuscript, images, etc.)
- In the toolbar, Click **Edit > Preferences > General Settings**. Once there, in the **Create New or Empty EPUBs as:** section, switch it from Version 2 to Version 3, then click **OK**
- In the toolbar, click **View > Preview** to be able to see a preview of your EPUB as you format it

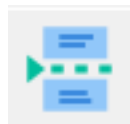
## STEP 1: Import your Manuscript

- Make sure that your manuscript is saved as a .txt file  
Click the **open** icon, change the format to .txt, and click on your manuscript
- Save your ebook by going to the **save** icon and clicking it. Name your ebook and click **save**



## STEP 2: Create Title page and Chapters

- Separate the chapters or sections by using the **Split at cursor** tool



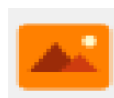
## STEP 3: Format the manuscript in Sigil

- Format your text using the **xhtml tags** (<h1></h1>, <p></p>, ect.) and the **indent** icon



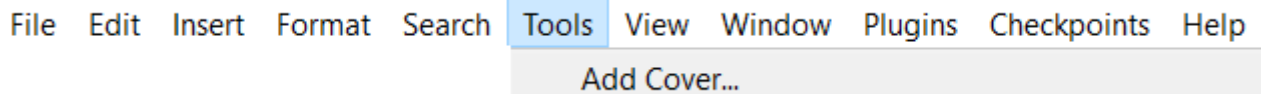
## STEP 4: Add images and alt text

- Make sure your images are the proper size you want them to be before adding them to your ebook
- Import images to Sigil using the **Add existing files** icon
- Find the place where you want your images to go and add them using the **Add image** icon
- Add in alt text for your images



### STEP 5: Add a cover

- Go to **tools** and **add cover**



### STEP 6: Add URL's

- Find where you want to add in a URL, highlight the text, then click the **link** icon and paste or type in the full URL



### STEP 7: Add a Table of Contents

- Click on the **Generate TOC** icon



### STEP 8: Add Metadata

- Click the **Add Metadata** icon



### STEP 9: Validate it and Test it out on an ereader!

- Sigil has a built-in Validator, but you can also upload your EPUB to a web-based validator such as <https://draft2digital.com/book/EPUBcheck/upload>
- Close Sigil and open your EPUB in an ereader software such as Adobe Digital Editions

# Sigil Workspace and Icons

## Sigil Workspace and Icons

1. Toolbar
2. Icons
3. Code View
4. Table of Contents and Preview
5. Files

The screenshot displays the Sigil workspace with several components highlighted by red boxes and numbered 1 through 5:

- 1:** The top menu bar (File, Edit, Insert, Format, Search, Tools, View, Window, Plugins, Checkpoints, Help).
- 2:** The toolbar containing various icons for editing and navigation.
- 3:** The code editor showing the HTML source code of the introduction page.
- 4:** The Table of Contents panel on the right side of the workspace.
- 5:** The Book Browser panel on the left side of the workspace.

The code editor shows the following HTML code:

```
1 <?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
2 <!DOCTYPE html>
3
4 <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xmlns:epub="http://www.idpf.org/2007/ops" lang="en" xml:lang="en">
5 <head>
6 <title>Introduction</title>
7 <link href="..\Styles/styles.css" type="text/css" rel="stylesheet"/>
8 </head>
9
10 <body>
11 <h1 id="introduction">Introduction</h1>
12
13 <p class="h1subheading">— Sigil: The EPUB Editor —</p>
14
15 <p>Welcome to the Sigil User Guide – updated for Sigil 1.9.10 and later.</p>
16
17 <p>Sigil 1.9.10+ is the result of countless hours of volunteer effort to create the fastest, most stable and powerful version of
18 the best free EPUB editing software available.</p>
19
20 <p>Jump right to the <a href="tutorials.xhtml">Tutorials</a> to learn how to use Sigil step by step. Or view <a
21 href="what's_new.xhtml">What's New</a> for changes in recent releases.</p>
22
23 <p>Download Sigil from:</p>
24
25 <ul>
26 <li class="indent"><a href="https://github.com/Sigil-Ebook/Sigil/">The Official Sigil Website</a></li>
27 </ul>
28
29 <p>Help is available from other users and the developers of Sigil at MobileRead:</p>
30
31 <ul>
32 <li class="indent"><a href="https://www.mobilerread.com/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=203">Sigil Forum @ MobileRead</a></li>
33 </ul>
34
35 <p>The Sigil User Guide includes documentation that will help you get the best out of editing your EPUB, including:</p>
36
37 <ul>
38 <li><span class="listheading"><a href="installation.xhtml">Installation</a>:</span> Installing Sigil on Windows, MAC and
39 Linux.</li>
40 <li><span class="listheading"><a href="features.xhtml">Features</a>:</span> A complete description of all of Sigil's
41 features.</li>
42 <li><span class="listheading"><a href="tutorials.xhtml">Tutorials</a>:</span> Step by step guides for using Sigil to create
43 your book.</li>
44 <li><span class="listheading"><a href="faq.xhtml">FAQ</a>:</span> Frequently asked questions about Sigil.</li>
45 <li><span class="listheading"><a href="contributing_to_sigil.xhtml">Contributing to Sigil</a>:</span> How to support Sigil.</li>
46 </ul>
```

# More Tips

## Basic XHTML tags

XHTML stands for Extensible Hypertext Markup Language. It's a markup language that can be used to format your manuscript in Sigil.

Generally, it consists of an opening tag, text that's affected by the tags, and a closing tag.

`<p>` This is an example of text affected by tags `</p>`

Common XHTML tags are

- `<title></title>`: Defines the title of the document
- `<h1></h1>`, `<h2></h2>`, `<h3></h3>`, etc.: Different sizes of headers
- `<p></p>`: Paragraphs
- `<b></b>`: Bold
- `<i></i>`: Italics
- `<u></u>`: Underlines text
- `<strike></strike>`: Strikethrough of text



## Alt Text

Alt text is meant to be descriptive text of an image that accessibility devices can read. It is meant to be descriptive, but under 125 characters. Good questions to keep in mind while writing alt text are:

- Who/what is the subject of the image?
- What are they doing?
- What type of image is it (an illustration? A chart? A photo?)
- What information is the image conveying?
- Why is it important to the writing/page? Is it showing an example or creating a feeling?

In Sigil, you must write the alt text between the quotation marks in the XHTML of the photo you have added. For example:

```

```

the alt text would go where the text "Image\_1" is

# Learn More

## **Computer and Technology Help ([www.vpl.ca/events](http://www.vpl.ca/events))**

- Drop in to practice your computer and technology skills and get help from VPL staff. For days, times and locations, check out the “Computer & Technology” category in our Events Calendar

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## **VPL’s Self-Publishing Guide ([www.vpl.ca/guide/inspiration-lab-self-publishing-ebook-format](http://www.vpl.ca/guide/inspiration-lab-self-publishing-ebook-format))**

- Learn to self-publish eBooks using one of three digital tools – from basic to advanced – available in VPL’s Inspiration Lab

## **VPL’s Sigil Guide ([www.vpl.ca/guide/inspiration-lab-sigil](http://www.vpl.ca/guide/inspiration-lab-sigil))**

- Learn how to get started in Sigil to make your EPUB ebook – available for free at home and in VPL’s Inspiration Lab

## **VPL’s Resources for Writers ([www.vpl.ca/guide/resources-writers](http://www.vpl.ca/guide/resources-writers))**

- A guide that links to resources for writers, including publishing and self-publishing, marketing and the writing community

## **VPL Indie Authors ([www.vpl.ca/indieauthors](http://www.vpl.ca/indieauthors))**

- The submission page for independent authors who wish to donate their books to the library

## **We are here to help!**

- Talk to VPL staff in person, by phone (604-331-3603) or by email ([inspirationlab@vpl.ca](mailto:inspirationlab@vpl.ca))