

Outline Text



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The text in this PDF has been converted to outline. This is a practical demonstration of the quality of the process.

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Fix KDP “Unsupported Font” Errors

Convert Text to Outline

As of January 2026, KDP will block books that contain “unsupported fonts.” KDP does not provide a way to determine which fonts are supported.

If your book is blocked, KDP offers two options:

- Change fonts (limited to a short list of recommended families¹)
- Convert text to outline

Changing fonts requires reformatting the entire book. Converting text to outline is the fastest and most reliable solution. It has been used in professional printing since the mid-1980s to eliminate font-related issues.

Pros

- Eliminates font-related errors
- Preserves layout and typesetting
- Reliable for KDP submissions

Common concerns (frequently mentioned online.)

- Text may appear bolder or jaggy
 - In practice, differences are negligible (see page 5)
- Some formatting may be affected (e.g., bullets, underlines)
 - Rare in well-prepared PDFs; as shown
- File size will increase
 - Generally not a problem given KDP’s 650MB limit; see box on opposite page
- Text cannot be edited in the PDF
 - Editing should always be done in the source file

Do it yourself—or have it done

The following pages show how to convert text to outline using Affinity, InDesign, Acrobat, and LightPDF.

If you prefer not to deal with the process, I offer a **conversion service for \$25**:

Step 1: Make the payment through PayPal² (you do not need an account)



Step 2: Return to this page and use the upload link³ to upload your file.



Step 3: Send me an [email](#) with your book’s title.

Allow 1–3 days—however, the turnaround is usually a few hours if the file is received during business hours.

Please review the file carefully before uploading it.

¹ Customer Support says: Centaur, Garamond, Hightower Text, Palatino Linotype, Amazon Endure, Constantia, and Cambria, from *Paperback Fonts* https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G202145450

² Paypal: https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=3RGSTYT754C2J

³ Hightail: <https://spaces.hightail.com/uplink/12on14-review-AcdT13u>

Outline Text

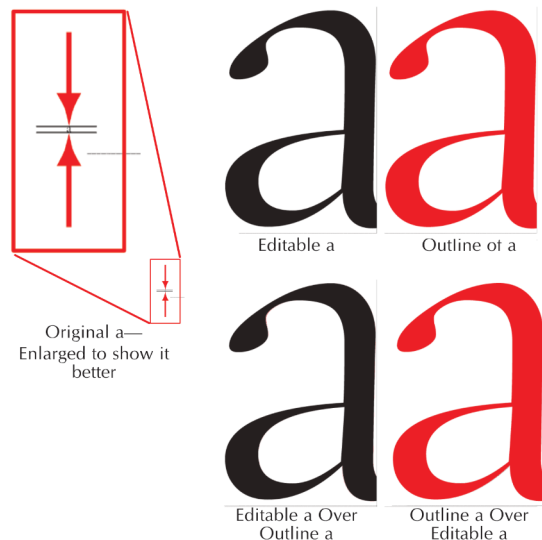
Outlining text—also called “converting text to curves” or “text as curves”—means converting editable text into graphic objects. In the early days of digital printing and desktop publishing, font handling was often unreliable, especially across different systems. Converting text to outlines was a common solution to minimize text-related printing problems.

Today, almost every expert will tell you that converting text to outline is unnecessary and old-fashioned. “This is one of those urban myths . . . Certain attributes will be lost . . . The truth is that you should almost never have to outline fonts. . . It’s a crazy thing to do . . . I’ve heard the reasons, and they all make me sad. . . If your printer wants you to outline text, you should find another printer . . . Printers who want outlined text are using antiquated RIPs . . . are ignorant . . .”

I doubt that Amazon KDP and IngramSpark are old-fashioned, ignorant, or use antiquated software. These companies print millions upon millions of books a year. Their presses are designed to run 24/7. One press can print 20,000 book pages an hour, the equivalent of sixty-six 300-page books. Yes, sometimes stuff happens, and historically, font handling can be one of the biggest problems. KDP and IS are not explicitly asking for outlined fonts. My point is simply that, in some cases, converting text to outlines solves real production problems.

Two common objections to converting text to outline are that the outlined text gets thicker, and outline text can be “chunky.”

I have converted text to outline scores of times for clients and many more times for tests. And I have seen the text *appear* to thicken. I hit undo/redo to assess the problem: thicker-thinner, thicker-thinner. The eye is very sensitive to subtle shifts, even when the differences are minimal. I took an “a” from a block of text that appeared to thicken. I compared the editable version to the outline version. Here, the text has been enlarged 14,000%. You can just see a slight red fringe outside the black, editable “a” when it is placed over the red outline “a”.



The other problem, the outline text getting chunky, is clearly not a problem here. Conversions using Acrobat, InDesign, and Affinity are all like the previous example: sharp and smooth. However, until quite recently, Word won’t embed OpenTypeFonts (e.g., most Adobe fonts). When Word converts a file to PDF/A, it rasterizes (Word calls it “bitmaps”) those fonts. When enlarged to 600%, those fonts appear visibly chunky or jaggy.



I have seen four types of problems that converting text to outlines can fix:

- Font export issues (PDF): Some fonts do not export reliably to PDF unless converted to curves. Until recently, Word did not properly embed certain OpenType fonts (e.g., Adobe fonts).
- Complex text situations (printing): Books containing dense typography, type specimen material, mathematical formulas, or other complex layout elements may not print correctly or may be rejected as “too complex” or “corrupt.”
- Font substitution during print processing: All PDFs received by print-on-demand companies such as KDP and IS are processed before printing. During that preparation, errors can occur. I have seen books in which some text printed as boxes (as if glyphs were missing), or fonts changed unexpectedly. In one instance, several running heads in a 600–page book were replaced with Hebrew glyphs. The substitution occurred in the same locations across scattered retail copies, but not in the proof copy the client approve
- Occasional font corruption during printing:

<i>BarlowCondensed—light italic</i>	<i>Sphinx of black quartz, judge my vow.</i>
Ēññēv Êêûkêñkù ñķzōññ *	âñfiæwēz t ãt ċ ñõññz̃ ãùžķ ę x ũęv °
Ēññēv Êêûkêñkù ãññ *	âñfiæwēz t ãt ċ ñõññz̃ ãùžķ ę x ũęv °
BarlowCondensed—medium	Sphinx of black quartz, judge my vow.

This same example, converted to outline. It prints perfectly:

<i>BarlowCondensed—light italic</i>	<i>Sphinx of black quartz, judge my vow.</i>
BarlowCondensed—regular *	Sphinx of black quartz, judge my vow.
<i>BarlowCondensed—italic*</i>	<i>Sphinx of black quartz, judge my vow.</i>
BarlowCondensed—medium	Sphinx of black quartz, judge my vow.

I doubt if converting all books to outline is necessary for print-on-demand. I do it if there are problems at the proof stage, if I anticipate problems, and now for KDP.

Affinity Publisher: export to PDF. Select either 1) the Flatten preset, or 2) Advanced > Embed Fonts> Text as Curves. Flatten produces a file 2–3 times bigger than Text as Curves. This is the safest and easiest of all methods.

InDesign: I have tried this and any other instructions to convert text to outline from inside InDesign since 2013. I do not remember ever getting it to work. Several CreativePro articles suggest this won’t work in some versions of InDesign. Nonetheless, here are the basics:

1. Create a “convert all text to outlines” transparency flattener preset.
2. Place some non-printing transparency on each spread . . . you need to ensure that the transparency you put on the page isn’t just any transparent object, but rather a transparent object that interacts with some text. This can be done easily with master pages.
3. Exporting to an Acrobat 4 compatible PDF, or printing-and-distilling, or export an EPS file.

creativepro.com/converting-text-to-outlines-the-right-way-updated/

I recommend exporting from InDesign to PDF then using Acrobat PDF Fix (next page).

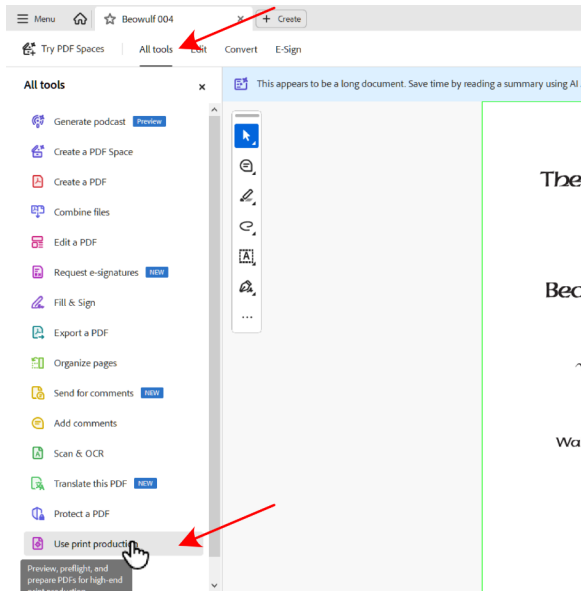
Word: Using Word’s Save As PDF with PDF/A selected will rasterize OpenType (.otf) fonts into small bitmapped images. You cannot make it bitmap TrueTypeFonts (.ttf).

Adobe Acrobat DC (not Reader): has three methods (how well they work is based on my experience and recollection, and may be idiosyncratic):

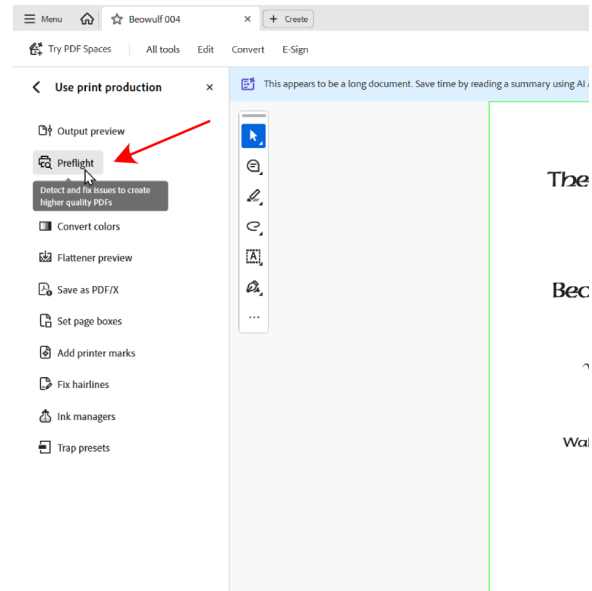
Preferred Method for Print-ready PDF Files Using Acrobat DC

PDF Fix—Acrobat DC—when this first came out it was not reliable; however, it now works consistently. It is the quickest and easiest method to convert text to outline.

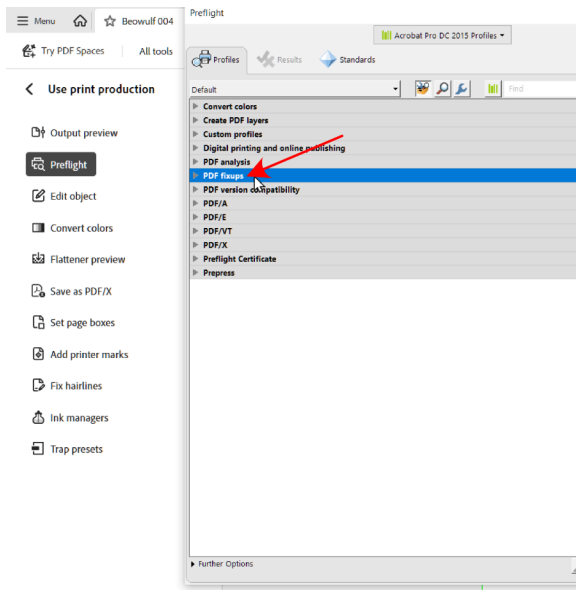
- Open the PDF in Acrobat DC.
- Tools > Print Production.*
- Click on the Toolbox Icon.
- PDF Fixups > Convert fonts to outlines > Analyze and Fix.*



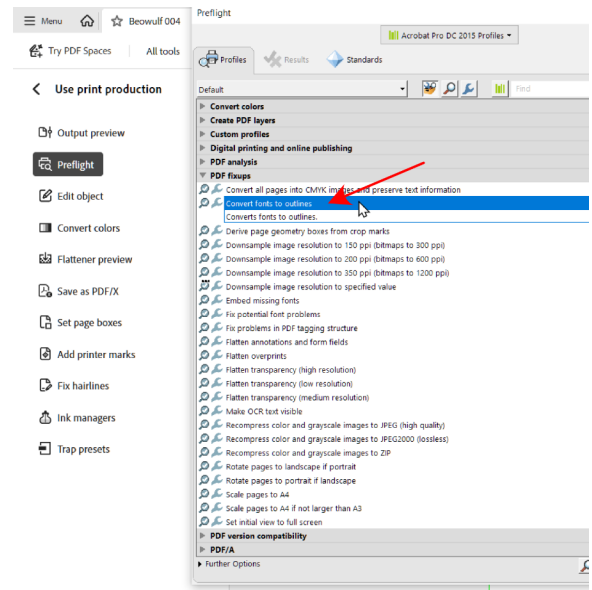
Click on *All Tools > Use print production*



Click on *Preflight*



Open *PDF fixups*



Select *Convert fonts to outlines* click on *Analyze and fix*

Alternate Methods in Acrobat

Flattener—by itself, I may have gotten it to work once or twice.

- a. Open the PDF in Acrobat
- b. *Tools > Print Production > Flattener Preview*
 - i. Under Preview Settings, tick *Convert All Text to Outlines*
 - ii. Under Apply to PDF select All pages, Current Page, or Page range (the preview will go blank)
 - iii. Click Apply

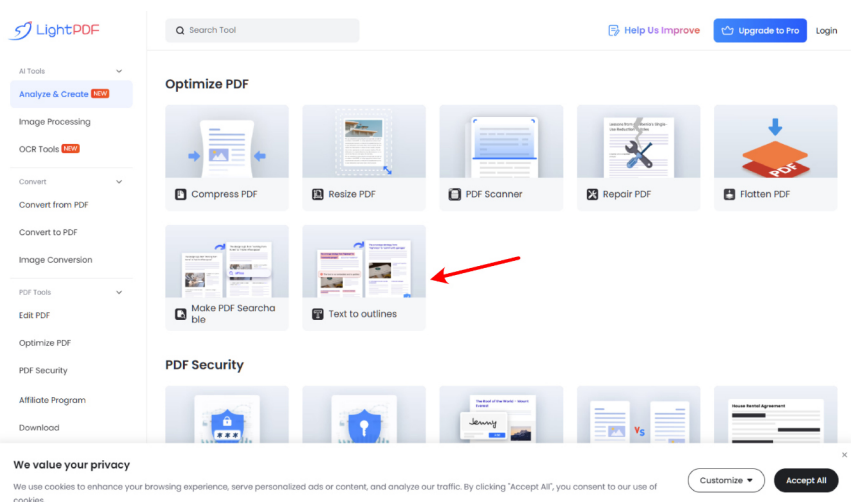
Adobe says we need something to flatten, therefore:

Watermark & Flattener—this works most of the time, and until recently, was my preferred method when I have to use Acrobat. See method 3.

- a. Open the PDF in Acrobat
- b. *Tools > Edit PDF > Watermark > Add*¹
 - i. Type anything in Text, even an 8 pt period is okay
 - ii. Select a color (I usually choose the lightest gray)
 - iii. Slide the opacity down to 1%
 - iv. Click OK
- c. *Tools > Print Production > Flattener Preview*
 - i. Under Preview Settings, tick *Convert All Text to Outlines*
 - ii. Under Apply to PDF select All pages, Current Page, or Page range (the preview window will go blank)
 - iii. Click Apply

LightPDF—Alternative to Acrobat

LightPDF—<https://lightpdf.com>, can convert text to outline. If I read it correctly, you can convert up to three 10MB files for free. There is a \$19/month plan and 3 free days. You can use it online or down-load the program. You can use Light PDF to merge PDFs. It can create PDF/A files but not PDF/X. It will not convert to grayscale, nor remove transparency (although PDF/A does not support transparency).

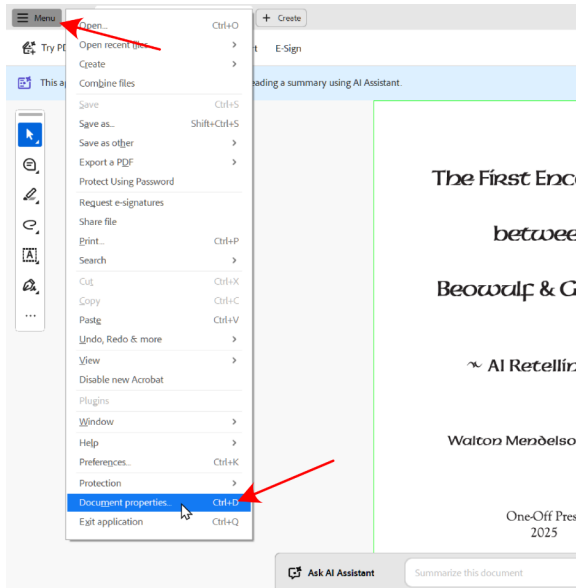


I converted one file using LightPDF. It worked well. Files from 10–30MB files can be merged.

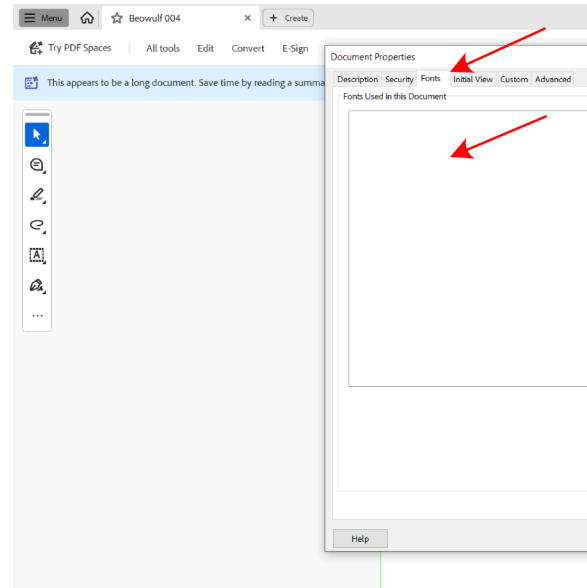
¹ This watermark can cause a slightly noticeable dark area if placed over a background. If this could be a problem, test things, and, if possible, move to a print safe area outside the background.

Check Fonts

Carefully double check the PDF *before* uploading. Look first at *File > Properties > Fonts*. No fonts should be listed.



Click on *Menu > Document Properties*



Click on *Fonts tab*, the Fonts box should be empty

I recommend scrolling through the entire file to confirm that everything converted correctly. If you discover problems, you will not be able to fix them in the PDF itself. Return to the source file (Word, Affinity, InDesign, etc.), make corrections there, export to PDF, and repeat the outline conversion.

