

I would like to sell books at appearances. Do I have to pay in advance?

Q: My book is being sold to libraries, rather than at retail. I would like to bring books with me when I do appearances. Do I have to pay for these books in advance, or can I just pay for what's sold afterward and return unsold books to the publisher?

“You should first check your contract to see if you are allowed to resell your books,” according to Bill Hanshaw, customer service manager at Harcourt Brace. If you can resell, the publisher will probably expect you to buy the books in advance at your author discount, which is generally around 40%. These books are usually non-returnable, but you can get small quantities and just reorder as needed.

If you expect to sell a lot of books on an on-going basis, you may want to consider obtaining a tax number and setting yourself up as a distributor. This would mean you'd get a deeper discount from the publisher, get billed as other distributors do, and that you could return books that were in good condition. Keep in mind, though, that you'd have to do the paperwork, meet the minimum quantity requirements, and report it as a business for tax purposes.

The simplest solution is still to encourage the libraries to contact their wholesalers, or the publisher and have them place orders for your books. 2:3/95