

# What You Need

The minimum working setup has five parts.

1. A built faux-press binary.
2. A book project with `book.toml`.
3. A `src/SUMMARY.md` file that defines reading order.
4. Markdown files for the actual book.
5. A design reference, either built in or external.

That is enough to render a PDF. It is not enough to work comfortably. For real work, add three more things: a stable output folder, a trace file for debugging, and a short visual checklist.

The important habit is to keep source, configuration, and output separate. Source says what the book means. Configuration says how it should be treated. Output shows what survived.

```
1 book project
2   source      → Markdown content
3   manifest   → book.toml
4   design     → faux-design.yaml or builtin
   design
5   command    → faux-press book render
6   artifact   → PDF + optional trace
```

The renderer can do a lot, but a first project should stay plain. Start with chapters, paragraphs, lists, blockquotes, code blocks, and a few small tables. Add figures, citations, custom components, and heavy design overrides only after the basic book loop is stable.

# The Mental Model

Faux Press does not simply paste Markdown onto pages. It resolves a document through a chain of questions:

- **Source:** what did the author provide?
- **Structure:** what is a chapter, section, paragraph, quote, table, or note?
- **Design:** which tokens and policies apply?
- **Layout:** what fits on each page?
- **Paint:** what exact marks are emitted?
- **Trace:** why did the system choose that result?

When a page looks wrong, do not guess first. Ask which layer made the decision.