

How many books did Spike write?

This is an almost impossible question to answer. How do you define author? How do you define write?

Analysing Spike's books you come to some that are relatively easy to include. Novels and memoirs, there are 24, so easy there. His humour books such as *A Dustbin of Milligan* and *The Little Pot Boiler*, there are 21 of them plus three published posthumously. Poetry books, there are 8 of them and another 8 children's books. Thus there are 64 that are clearly written by Spike Milligan. This total includes accumulations of his letters such as, *Spike Milligan Letters* and *More Spike Milligan Letters*, which he did write of course but someone else collected them together and arranged them for the books. Total = 64

There are four other books where there is joint authorship; the others are *The Bedsitting Room*, *Milligan's Ark*, and *Depression and How to Survive It* and *Dear Robert, Dear Spike*. *Dear Robert Dear Spike* is another of these books where Spike is co-author via his letters but in this case Pauline Scudamore appears to have put the book together. Total = 68

Then of course there are the collections of his work that were published after his death. *The Essential Milligan*, *The Compulsive Milligan*, *Box 18*, *Milligan's Meaning of Life*, *Spike*, *Spike Milligan: Man of Letters*. How do we treat them? I have taken the notion if a book contains his writings then it is included. Three of these are books with new material. The other two are omnibus books. Total = 71

Omnibus books present another problem. He did write the individual books but when two or more are combined do you credit Spike with another book? Then there is the collections of prose, poetry and illustrations put together for Spike such as *Spike Milligan: A Celebration*. A Spike Milligan book, yes but is it also an omnibus book? When an omnibus book includes some new material, as in *Hidden Words*, what then? There are about sixteen omnibus books covering almost all of his range of output. Most are made up of complete books but then there is the reverse of omnibus where parts of books are assembled into a smaller version such as *Gunner Milligan 954024* and *Milligan's War*. We will give him the omnibus book with new material. Total = 72

Some of Spike's books can be described as annotated books. Books like *Spike's Bike Books* of which there were three and *That's Amazing*. Do we ascribe Spike as joint author of these books? Benefit of the doubt applied here. Total = 76

The Goons were the genesis of many books, *The Goon Show Scripts*, *More Goon Show Scripts*, *The Book of the Goons*, and *The Lost Goon Shows*. There are two Goon cartoon books not counted so far, *Goon Cartoons*, and *More Goon Cartoons* where Goon scripts have been put into a comic form. They use Spike's scripts but the comic illustrations are Cooke's. Are these two books joint authorship again? Omnibus? Benefit of the doubt again. Total = 78

Finally there are his privately published limited edition chapbooks. There were nine, although one seems to be a trial run for a subsequent chapbook. There is another that is a joint authorship chapbook. Total = 87

In total we can, with a bit of latitude, accredit him with writing 87 books. If we are to answer the question how many books did he produce? We have to add his 15 omnibus books giving a total of 102 books that he produced.