



## Indexing guidelines

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## 1. Indexing guidelines

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There is a sample index at the end of this document. If you are confused by any instruction as you read through this guidance, a quick look at the sample index may help solve your question. If not, do of course contact your production editor.

### **Preparing an index**

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Unless otherwise agreed you are responsible for providing the index for your book. We believe that you as the author are best placed to do this task as you are most familiar with the subject matter.

A good index keeps the needs of the reader in mind: what information will readers expect to find and in how much detail? What does not need to be included? It can help to take a step back from the text and think about what the reader will look for in the index. Authors should ask “What is this chapter/paragraph actually about?” (This avoids getting too bogged down in the detail). The index should help readers to locate relevant statements made in the book. An index is often the first point of reference for the reader. A complete and well-structured index can add real value to your book and make its content more accessible to readers.

Our standard requirement is a single combined index of subjects and names. Please adhere to these guidelines as much as possible to ensure the index you submit is to a good standard. The Press will check for style and format, but we cannot check page references or edit extensively. If rework is needed it will be returned to you and this could delay publication.

If you would like to discuss the indexing process in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact your production editor.

### **Timing**

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Indexing is done at first proof stage when you have a paginated proof.

## Indexing at first proofs

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You will index from the paginated PDF, and this occurs at the same time as proofreading. However, you may create a list of keywords in advance of this. For edited collections, you might consider asking each of the contributors to submit 5 to 10 key terms for their chapter.

You will be given approximately three weeks to complete the index. Please don't underestimate how long the index might take to create (it can take up to about 40-50 hours to create an index for a 250-page book). Please let your production editor know if you have any queries or if you would like them to check a sample.

## Length

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It is typical to have one combined subject and name index. A typical index should be around 3-5% of the book's length (i.e. 7-12 pages for a 250-page book).

## Using a computer

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It is important not to rely on a computer programme to index your book. Human judgement and decisions are always necessary in compiling an index. If using a computer:

- Use either dedicated indexing software or word processing software with an indexing programme
- Be aware that indexing software tools will not index to the page number in the page proofs. This means that you will have to change the page number to match the page proof

## Terminology

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**Entries:** the main headings in an index, usually found flush left on the page.

**Sub-entries:** the more specific groupings under entries.

**Locators:** the locations where a reader should go to find the thing referenced. Most locators are page numbers, but locators also include tables, figures, and plates.

**Cross references:** point readers to additional entries related to the entry they are currently reading. They come in *See* and *See also* formats: *See* is exclusive, meaning there should be no locators in the entry. *See also* is non-exclusive, meaning there can be locators in the entry.

## Selecting entries

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- Main entries should be nouns, as concrete as possible. For example, “characteristics of algae” is an acceptable topical heading in the text, but readers are not likely to look for information about algae under the abstract noun “characteristics.” The proper index entry is “algae, characteristics of.”
- Never use an adjective as an entry. For example, the adjective “absolute” by itself is not a proper entry but “absolute humidity” could be.
- If an unfamiliar acronym or abbreviation is used as a main entry, it should be spelled out in following parentheses, e.g. TCS (Total Conservation Solutions). If an organisation is known both by an acronym and as fully spelled out (e.g. RSPB and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds), ensure that both are in the index, with the page references at one and a cross-reference from the other e.g. RSPB see Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- If you index a person, include a first name (or at least an initial) even if the text mentions only the surname (family name). Try, as far as possible, to use first names or initials consistently across the index. Ignore any given titles in alphabetisation.

Please remember an index is not a concordance and as such it should not include every single occurrence of a term that appears in the book. When deciding whether to include items in the index, consider how frequently the item is discussed and in how much depth. Usually if an item is only mentioned once in the book, it is unlikely to require an index entry unless the general topic is discussed in depth.

The main entry is always a noun (the keyword); it may be a concept or topic, but not always a specific term used in the text.

Write main entries as nouns followed by the description:

advertising, types of 000  
epistemology, normative 000  
heating system, balancing 000  
but:  
unity of self 000  
virtues of ignorance 000

Write sub-entries using articles, conjunctions, and prepositions as necessary (and to avoid ambiguity) for phrasing and relating to main entries. Note that a sub-entry must be logically related to its main entry and make sense both grammatically and semantically.

Nietzsche  
as different responses to Nietzsche 000  
and its diagnosis of Nietzsche 000  
as opposite counterpart of Nietzsche’s ideas 000

How heavily you need to structure your index and employ sub-entries depends on the complexity of your material. Academic books tend to require more detailed indexes, as their readers need to be directed to very specific topics. They are less likely to be reading around the topic as they would in a general book.

## Compiling the entries

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Find the main entries, determine the keywords, and break the entries into sub-entries as necessary. Remember that every sub-entry must be logically related to the entry and make sense both grammatically and semantically:

advertisements  
    definition of 000  
    self-interest in 000  
    for success 000

nonprofit organisations 000  
    tax status of 000–000  
    *see also* foundations

- Main entries followed by a long line of page numbers will force the reader to search through many pages before finding the needed information. A good rule of thumb is to generate sub-entries when there are more than five page references, so that the reader can easily find the exact information needed.
- Use parenthetical qualifiers (known as 'glosses') for clarity:  
  
    China (country)  
    China (material)  
    or  
    Cox, Brian (actor)  
    Cox, Brian (physicist)
- Distinguish between continuous discussions of a subject over two or more pages (when the page reference is given as a single range: "30–36") and discrete mentions of a subject across a passage of text ("30, 31, 36").

## What to include and what to leave out

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- Index important figures, tables, and maps if you wish.
- Author names are indexed only where substantive in-text discussion of the author or their work is found.
- Do not index information from the prelims (pages with roman numerals) or from the end matter (appendices, contributors, glossary, bibliography), or chapter titles. You may index material from the text introduction, however, if it falls in the prelims (these pages will have roman numerals). More substantive or lengthy introductions should be part of the main text.
- Do not index notes (endnotes or footnotes) if they merely provide bibliographical information. However, you may index notes, if they continue discussion in the text. Do not index sources of information unless essential in the field.

## Style

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### **Alphabetical order**

We prefer the letter-by-letter style of alphabetisation. Letter-by-letter alphabetising considers every letter in sequence and only the letters. It disregards spaces, punctuation, capitals, and accent marks. Entries are alphabetised as a single string of characters (e.g. “publications” comes before “public works”)

New, Agnes

Newark, DE

Newark, NJ

New Brunswick

- Entries that consist solely of numbers (e.g. 80386) are listed before the letter A.
- Mc and Mac are ordered letter by letter as they appear; de and De, van and Van are ordered under D and V respectively.
- Alphabetise St as Saint and U.S. as United States (United States would be indexed as thus with U.S. as a qualifier)
- Geographical names are inverted – Ouse, River or Ouse (river) not River Ouse, but not those with compound names, e.g. Great Yarmouth, New York.
- Articles (definite and indefinite) are transposed in entries –

*Christmas Carol, A*

*Old Curiosity Shop, The*

Please use indented style for sub-entries rather than run-on

### ***Indented style (indent one tab)***

artistic

    publicity rights on images of 317

### ***Number elision***

- Check elision of page numbers in ranges is consistent and elides to the fewest possible digits e.g. 56–7, 100–2, not 101–102, but for teens repeat the teen digit i.e. 115–16

### **Style/formatting tips**

- Do not insert a comma between the entry and the first page number
- Use en dashes rather than hyphens between page ranges
- Present page numbers in rising order e.g. 97, 99, 105
- Make capitalisation consistent
- Check *See/See also* are used consistently
- Spelling should follow main text of book (common nouns and noun phrases should be lower case e.g. theology, religion. Proper nouns should be capitalised as they are in the text e.g. Bento, São Paulo, Brazil)
- Check alphabetical order (letter-by-letter is our standard)
- Styling of author names must match that used in the main text. Double-check the bibliography to follow the style.
- Use italics for titles of books, songs, legal cases – i.e. *Alice in Wonderland*; *Brown v. Board of Education*
- Avoid long strings of numbers or large spans of numbers – use sub-entries to break these entries up where necessary
- Check that spelling, hyphenation, and capitalisation are the same as in the text
- Succinctly phrase main entries and sub-entries. Make sure they are not excessively detailed
- Page numbers referring to figures should be *italics* and those referring to tables in **bold** with an explanation of this usage in a note at the start of the index e.g. 'Figures are denoted by the use of italic page numbers and notes by 'n'.' Index references to notes should be in the form '96n', where 96 is the page number, or "nn." Plus the note numbers for multiple note citations



## Cross-references

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These are not essential in every index, but they are useful in guiding readers to related topics in the text.

- See cross-refs are used to guide the user to a preferred term, e.g. adolescence  
see teenagers
- See *also* cross-refs may be placed before or after a list of headings. They inform the reader of conceptually related terms, e.g. nonprofit organisations 62, 69 administration of, 278; *see also* foundations
- A cross-reference indicated by “see” does not also have page numbers: here “see” means that the reader will find whatever they were expecting to look up here somewhere else in the index. The “see” type of cross-reference is useful to link between synonyms or acronyms/abbreviations and full forms
- Separate multiple cross-references with semi-colons, e.g. rights *see* citizenship rights; human rights; liberty
- A cross-reference indicated by “*see also*” follows a set of page references or else is attached to a main heading that has sub-headings. It is telling the reader that more information is available somewhere else.
- To refer to a sub-entry, you can use the form “*see X under Y*,” where X is the sub-entry and Y the main entry. Alternatively, to avoid a string of cross-references, you can use a generic term (italicised), e.g., *see under individual element names*.
- Antonyms either –
  - health 46, 109, 126, 199, 201
  - ill-health *see* health
  - or
  - health and ill-health 46, 109, 126, 199, 201
  - ill-health and health 46, 109, 126, 199, 201

Synonyms are treated the same way.

## Common mistakes in indexes

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- Entries not in alphabetical order
- Sub-entries alphabetised by opening articles, conjunctions, and prepositions rather than ignoring these parts of speech – prepositions and articles are not part of alphabetisation.
- Page numbers not in rising numerical order
- Combination of run-in and indented style, rather than one consistent style
- Spelling of headings doesn’t match text (e.g. ‘metaethics’ in text; ‘meta-ethics’ in index)
- Sub-entries not logically related to main entry
- Too many entries and sub-entries
- Entries too detailed, excessive description, outline style
- Excessive number of page locators for an entry or sub-entry
- Excessive number of sub-entries with one page number
- Indexing the citation sources (these people are already in the Bibliography)

## Resources

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You might find it useful to look at indexes in [UCL Press books](#) similar to yours. In addition, please see below resources:

Anderson, M.D. *Book Indexing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Butcher, Judith, Caroline Drake and Maureen Leach. *Butcher's Copy-editing: The Cambridge Handbook for Editors, Copy-editors and Proofreaders*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

*The Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*. 17<sup>th</sup> edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017. (chapter 16)

<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html> [behind paywall]

Mulvany, Nancy C. *Indexing Books*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

*New Oxford Style Manual*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016

Stauber, D. M. *Facing the Text: Content and Structure in Book Indexing*. Eugene, Or: Cedar Row Press, 2004.

Society of Indexers <https://www.indexers.org.uk/>

<https://tanyaizzard.co.uk/2019/04/14/indexing-your-first-monograph-a-guide-for-phd-students-and-early-career-researchers/>

<https://www.asindexing.org/about-indexing/index-evaluation-checklist/>

## 2. Index submission checklist

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### **Before submitting your index please check:**

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- ☐ Do length, style and format follow guidance?
- ☐ Are all the main concepts and topics of the book represented in the index?
- ☐ Have you distinguished between substantive discussion and passing mentions of topics?
- ☐ Are the words used for the entries clear? Will they make sense to the reader?
- ☐ Are there long strings of page references or long spans (e.g. 68–100 that might need to be broken up with sub-entries?
- ☐ Do the cross-references make sense?
- ☐ Are the page numbers accurate? (please spot check a few)

Please send the finished index (single spaced, leaving an extra line space between each letter of the alphabet) to your production editor in Word. You will have a chance to review the typeset index at a later stage.

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### **3. Working with a freelance indexer**

In the event that you are unable to create the index for your book we can suggest professional indexers from our pool of freelancers. You would commission the index and be billed directly by the indexer (your production editor will be able to provide a cost estimate). If you have any specific requirements, please inform the indexer. Please also submit a list of keywords if possible (though please do not provide a comprehensive list of terms – around 10–20 words is sufficient). Once complete, you will be sent the index in a Word document to approve.

## 4. Appendix

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### Marked up index sample

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#### *Index*

References to figures are in *italics*; references to notes are indicated by n.

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<note style of cross reference – If there are no sub-entries, the italic 'see also' follows on from the main entry after a semicolon

e.g. collective action 14, 71, 103–4, 113–14, 117–18; see *also* mass desertion; strikes  
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