PREPARING AN INDEX

This document provides a basic overview of index creation. For more detailed guidance, please refer to the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition, chapter 16.

You are responsible for providing the index to your book. You can create the index yourself, or you may hire someone to do it for you. If you are doing your own index, plan on dedicating at least 2–3 weeks to it. As a general guideline, the index manuscript should be approximately 3–5 percent the length of the copyedited manuscript—20 pages of index (single-column) would suit a 400-page book.

SELECTING ENTRIES

An index is first and foremost a tool to guide the reader through a book’s content. Only substantive terms are generally indexed: every single mention of a term in the text might not be included in the index.

Main index entry keywords are always nouns. Main entries may be concepts or topics, not always specific terms used in the text. Main entries and subentries are only capitalized if capitalized in the text. We prefer letter-by-letter alphabetization (please see Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition, 16.59).

Write main entries as nouns followed by the description:

advertising, types of
epistemology, normative
heating system, balancing

but: unity of self
virtues of ignorance

Arrangement of sub-entries should normally be alphabetical by key words, ignoring leading prepositions and articles. Write subentries using articles, conjunctions, and prepositions as necessary for phrasing and relating to main entries. Note that a subentry must be logically related to its main entry and make sense both grammatically and semantically.

advertisements, classified, 000–000
attribution, 000
definition of, 000
self-interest in, 000
for success, 000
feminism
as different responses to Nietzsche, 000
and its diagnosis of Nietzsche, 000
liberal vs. radical, 000
as opposite counterpart of Nietzsche’s ideas, 000
nonprofit organizations, 000. See also foundations
administration of, 000
and legislation, 000–000 (see also Congress)
tax status of, 000–000

Compiling the Entries

▶ Find the main entries, determine the keywords, and break the entries into subentries as necessary. Sub-entries are used chiefly to analyze a complex subject heading, but also to avoid long strings of page numbers. Entries with more than five page references are typically broken into subheads. (This may not always be possible, or practical, in an exhaustive index—for example one containing numerous references to authors of cited publications, or in a separate index of authors, or an index of musical works.)
▶ It is acceptable to index important figures, tables, and maps.
▶ It isn’t necessary to index information from the front matter (pages i– . . . ) or from the back matter (appendixes, contributors, glossary, bibliography). You may index substantive material appearing in the introduction, however.
▶ Do not index notes (endnotes or footnotes) if they merely provide bibliographical information; you may index notes, however, if they continue discussion in the text.
▶ Do not index sources of information unless essential for your discipline.
▶ Check that spelling, hyphenation, and capitalization are the same as in the text.

Adding Cross-References

See: When you select one keyword among several possible keywords for a main entry, use a see cross-reference to direct readers to the entry where the pages are referenced. Use this in moderation. If there are only a few citations, you may index both keywords.

adolescence. See teenagers
Evans, Mary Ann. See Eliot, George
plants. See botany

See also: To point to additional information in another entry or subentry, use a see also cross-reference.

nonprofit organizations, 62, 69
administration of, 278
and legislation, 336–43 (see also Congress)
tax status of, 284–87
See also foundations
Note that both *see* and *see also* should be italicized in your index manuscript.

Never give page references with a *see* or a *see also* notation.

Never give subentries with a *see* reference.

Make sure that no *see* entry refers readers to another *see* entry.

**Using an Indexing Program**

Programs that assist with index creation can be a very useful tool; however, they cannot create an acceptable index by themselves. While a computer program will be helpful for preparing straightforward indexes of author names, place names, and titles, it will be unable to create a nuanced index or select subentries. An index that is created solely created by an indexing program will not be helpful for a reader.

**STYLING AND FORMATTING**

- Double space the index manuscript, type only one column per page, and leave an extra line space between the alphabetical sections.
- Make capitalization consistent: only capitalize main entries and subentries that are capitalized in the text.
- Present main entries and subentries in alphabetical order, ignoring articles, conjunctions, and prepositions that precede subentries.
- Use the same style for inclusive numbers as in the page proofs (i.e., full ranges: 386–392, 401–402 or abbreviated ranges: 386–92, 401–2).
- Avoid using terms such as *ff.*, *et seq.*, and *passim*.
- Indicate information contained in notes by adding “n” after the page reference (e.g., 100n1, 154n1–2).

**Organization**

We prefer that you use the indented style of presentation over the run-in style, but we will accept run-in style if it is done consistently. If you cannot avoid sub-subentries, you must use indented style.

**Indented style:**  Eliot, George, 167–68, 293–96  
                     early childhood of, 23, 27–29  
                     literary influences on, 254n1, 257, 277–79  
                     reputation of, 56–57, 112–15nn3–5, 189–95

COMMON MISTAKES IN INDEXES

▶ Entries not in alphabetical order
▶ Subentries alphabetized by opening articles, conjunctions, and prepositions rather than ignoring these parts of speech
▶ 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)
▶ Subentries that are not logically related to main entry
▶ Excessive entries and subentries
▶ Entries too detailed, excessive description, outline style
▶ Excessive number of page cites with an entry or subentry
▶ Excessive number of subentries with one page number
▶ Indexing citation sources

HIRING AN INDEXER

OUP has a pool of qualified freelance indexers who we work with regularly. If you would like us to hire an indexer for you, please fill out the indexing portion of the Manuscript Submission Form, as this will furnish the freelancer with the information they need to provide you with an appropriate index for your book. Return the Manuscript Submission Form to OUP along with your Author Questionnaire.

OUP’s freelance indexers start at a rate of $3.50 per typeset book page. This cost may be higher depending on the trim size of your book. The indexing fee will be billed directly to you unless otherwise specified by your acquiring editor. Freelancers begin their work during author review of page proofs, and usually complete the index within three weeks. You will have a chance to review the freelancer’s work before the index is typeset.