

Indexing guidelines

The purpose of the index is to give the reader an informative, balanced portrait of what is in the book and a concise, useful guide to all pertinent facts in the book. These facts, in the form of an alphabetically ordered list of main entries and subentries, will include both proper names and subjects.

What to Index

As a general rule, only the body of the text is indexed. Front matter, back matter (glossary, bibliography, appendixes, notes, etc.), and footnotes are not usually indexed. Possible exceptions are an introduction that has been placed in the front matter, endnotes or footnotes that contribute substantively to the discussion, and appendixes that do much more than document the text. Figures, tables, and charts in the text are indexed lightly—only when items contribute significantly to the text discussion. Exceptions to this rule are certain art or architecture books that require a thorough coverage of illustrations in the index.

The usefulness of an index depends on the indexer's sense of relevance. An index should be neither an indiscriminate list of everything mentioned in the book nor an overly complex work of scholarship; it should reflect the book's real emphases and should downplay or omit people and things mentioned only in passing or as background.

Indexing Procedure

The indexing process begins at the page-proof stage. First, the indexer reads through the page proof and underscores all the key words. The indexer should consider the complexity and scope of the book when choosing the pertinent facts for entries and when distinguishing between main entries and subentries. The indexer should also keep the reader in mind: Where is the reader most likely to look when seeking out a specific subject? Will a certain item listed as a subentry become lost to a reader who might not look under the chosen main entry? Has the author coined words or used special terms that the reader might not ordinarily consider? Are certain terms used interchangeably throughout the book when they should be listed as one entry in the index? In cases of ambivalence the indexer should make judicious use of cross references (*See* or *See also*, followed by a complete listing of the referenced entry) to guide the reader to the correct location.

After completing the task of marking up the page proofs, the indexer uses a spreadsheet program such as Excel—using column A for main entries, column B for subentries, and so on—and enters

1. The key word.
2. A subentry, or descriptive phrase about this key word (if the page references to the key word accumulate) and should bear a logical, grammatical relationship to the key word.
3. The page number on which the key word appears. If the key word continues for several pages, this should be indicated by listing the first and last page numbers with a hyphen in between (514-516). Endnotes are referred to by page (on which the text of the note appears), the letter "n," and the note number, with no internal space (504n14). If a footnote is indexed, this is indicated by listing an "n" after the page number (52n); if more than one note is on a page, then the note number may be added (52n4). No digit should be omitted (514-516, not 514-16).

A tip: Use column D for page numbers in case you have sub-subentries, which would be entered in column C. Use column E for cross-references.

During this stage, the indexer will be making ongoing, tentative decisions about the main entries, subentries, and cross references. After all the entries have been made on the cards, alphabetizing begins.

Alphabetizing

We use the letter-by-letter method. For main entries this means that alphabetizing begins with the first letter and continues until the first mark of punctuation. For example, the entry “Abstraction” would go before “Abstract structure.” For subentries, alphabetizing begins instead with the first key word—conjunctions and prepositions are bypassed.

Final Assessment

Sort the data alphabetically, by column A, then B, and so on, and import or copy and paste into Word. As a general rule, subentries are not necessary if there are fewer than six page references to the main entry and are recommended if there are more. (We discourage the use of sub-subentries.) The page numbers should be listed sequentially.

Typing the Index

The index manuscript should be double-spaced, with the subentries indented 1 tab space (.25 inch is ideal) below the main entries. Main entries are capitalized (with the exception of proper nouns with lower-cased particles, such as “de Ville”), and subentries are lower-cased (with the exception of proper nouns). Subentries should be indented 1 tab space, and runovers (entries exceeding one line) can be set flush left (or, if you would prefer, use a hanging indent of 1/2 inch). Write out in full all inclusive numbers. Please review the sample typed index page for correct format—note especially the different handling of cross references for main entries and for subentries.

Personal names should be listed in full (at least include the initials) even if the text reference is more casual. Names that might confuse, such as New York, may be clarified with a parenthetical note: “New York (state).” Acronyms that are commonly known may be listed and alphabetized without definition.

Length of the Index

Indexes vary greatly in length. A short index is OK if it is appropriate to the book. In general, the number of index pages runs between 1/50 and 1/20 the number of text pages. Index pages are set in two columns, in small type, so roughly, the index manuscript for a 300-page book could run from 20 (or less) to about 60 double-spaced, single-column pages (for a 6- to 15-page typeset index).

For more complete information about indexing, we suggest that you refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition (University of Chicago Press, 2010), or Nancy C. Mulvany, *Indexing Books*, 2nd edition (University of Chicago Press, 2005).

Sample of Typed Index—for format only

- Housing, 35-36, 130-136. *See also* Homes, ownership of; Residential location and transportation
central city, 14, 29, 48-49, 118-120, 289n5
forms of, 40, 189, 311-316
and government, 11, 60, 119-121, 194-199 (*see also* Renters)
suburban, 131-133
- Housing allowance. *See* National housing allowance
- Houston (Texas), 80, 89
boundaries of, 97
population growth in, 174
- Hughes, James W., 81
- Human Development Corporation, 172
- Income
declining, 80, 113, 115
and inflation, 141, 142 (*see also* Inflation)
- Ingram, Gregory K., 261-262, 365
- Interest rates, regulation of, 386
- Internal Revenue Service, 406
- James, Franklin, 140-142, 182
- Jobs. *See* Employment
- Johnson, J. C., 376
- Judicial decrees and social policy, 279. *See also* Courts, zoning regulations and