Guidelines for Authors Preparing an Index

The following instructions are based on University of Nebraska Press house style, which follows chapter 16 of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition (hereafter CMS); many of them, however, are standard guidelines for an index submitted to any university press. Please note that some instructions may not be relevant for the topic of your book. If you think your index would serve your readers better in an alternate format, please consult your project editor. An index submitted to the press that does not follow these guidelines will be edited to conform to them. It’s always a good idea to run a draft of your index by your project editor.

Please use the following formats:

- letter-by-letter alphabetization (see CMS 16.59);
- cross-references are placed at the end of the entry;
- lowercase for words that are lowercase in the text (if a word appears both capitalized and lowercased in the text, index as lowercase so that readers know that they will be looking for a lowercased term on some pages);
- extra space between alphabet breaks;
- underlining for words that should be set in italics;
- run-in style for subheadings (see CMS 16.25);
- hanging indent (that is, the first line of the entry should be on the margin, the rest of the lines should be indented);
- no end punctuation;
- double-spaced, single (page-width) column, in non-proportional font.

There is no prescribed length for an index: some texts warrant a detailed index, others need only a short, simple one. CMS suggests that the length of a typical scholarly index is usually about 2 to 5 percent of the length of the text. Since indexes are usually set in two columns and in a typeface smaller than that in the text, your draft index can be up to about 10 percent of the length of your original manuscript. Another way to gauge length is by number of entries: five or six references per text page will yield a fairly short, basic index; fifteen to twenty references per page will make a long, more comprehensive index. Keep in mind that it’s easier to cut entries than to add them, so it’s better to err on the side of inclusion in the beginning.

Choose your main entries and subheadings carefully. Put yourself in the position of your reader and try to determine what terms and concepts would be most useful for someone using your book. Likewise, consider what terms a potential reader would want to search for in your book.

Main entries and subheadings should all lead to a discussion of the subject, not to peripheral references. Readers should be directed only to a page on which they will find significant information on a topic, not just a passing mention. Main entries will almost always be nouns; adjectives alone should not be main entries but should modify nouns, and verbs should use the gerund form (e.g., use running rather than run).

Avoid solidus constructions in main entries and subheadings (e.g., religion/religiosity): the reader will not know whether to interpret such entries as x and y, x or y, or x and/or y. Choose one heading, make the entries separate, or make one a cross-reference of the other.
For titles beginning with articles in any language, we prefer that the articles be left at the head of the title rather than inverted ("The End," not "End, The"; La dolce vita, not dolce vita, La); of course, the articles should be ignored in alphabetization.

If discussion of a topic continues for more than a page, join the first and last page of the discussion with a hyphen: 344–405. If a topic appears on consecutive pages, but other topics intervene between the mentions, provide the individual page numbers, separated by commas: 127, 128, 129.

Please follow CMS number style (see CMS 18.13) when eliding consecutive numbers*:
- 200–204 (first number is an even hundred; do not elide)
- 206–7 (both numbers x01 through x09, in multiples of a hundred)
- 198–203
- 67–92
- 3–20
- 178–81

Subheadings
- Alphabetize your subheadings, but disregard introductory articles, prepositions, and conjunctions (see CMS 16.68).
  Example: justice: for eternity, 123, 139; and the past, 45, 59
- It is best to furnish at least one subheading for every five to ten references (a range of pages, such as 53–58, is considered one reference).
- Subheadings should have a logical and grammatical relationship to the main entry (see CMS 16.10). Usually a conjunction or a preposition will suffice as a link. The subheading should not repeat the main heading.
- Readers should be able to find topics with a quick scan, so subheadings should be concise—three or four words are usually enough. The key word should be the first word or the first word after the conjunction or preposition that links the subheading to the main heading. More often than not, modifiers are unnecessary. You need only guide readers to the topic; it is not necessary to tell readers what argument they will find on the page.
  Example: in a book of literary criticism, under the heading “aesthetics,” the subheading “imitation vs. invention as fundamental modern problem of” could be shortened to “imitation vs. invention in” or “fundamental modern problem of,” depending on which concept is more important, and the reader will find the full argument.
- If subheadings include dates or numbers (such as military regiments), it is acceptable to sort them in chronological or numerical order; in this case, numerical subheadings should precede alphabetical subheadings.
  Example: allotment, xiv–xv, 18–19; and 1882 legislation, xiv, 16–17; and Dawes Act, 4
  Alternatively, dates and numbers may be alphabetized as if spelled out.
  Example: allotment, xiv–xv, 18–19; and Dawes Act, 4; and 1882 legislation, xiv, 16–17
- If all subheadings for an entry reflect a sequence of time, a chronological rather than an alphabetical arrangement can be used.
  Example: Minch, Mary: birth of, 12; childhood of, 16–34, 126; at art school, 6, 38–60; and death of parents, 55
• A subheading that introduces an author’s works should appear after all other subheadings, on a new line, preceded by an em-dash (two hyphens) and the word “Works”:
  Example:  
  Benjamin, Walter, 9, 10; and assimilation, 108, 111; on memory, 121–31; on modernity, 106–7; on Zionism, 109, 112
  — Works: Berliner Chronik, 130; Moscow Diary, 144

Cross-references
• Cross-references should exactly match the entry they lead to.
• Guard against blind cross-references, that is, a cross-reference that leads to an entry with no page references. For example, if an entry for “German shepherd” says “See dogs,” the entry “dogs” should include page references, not an additional cross-reference such as “See household pets.”
• Avoid generic cross-references such as See also individual examples. Such cross-references require the reader to guess at these examples, and a non-expert reader may not know the precise terminology you have used.
• If the cross-reference is to be italicized (for example, a title or foreign word), See or See also can be left roman.
  Example: See War and Peace
• A string of cross-references should be listed in alphabetical order, with entries separated by semicolons.
  Example: See also Brown, John; grave: moldering in  
  (note that the second cross-reference leads to the subheading “moldering in” under the main headline “grave”)

UNP style for indexing titles of works
• If the work was published only in a language other than English and is referred to in the text by its original title, please use only the original title in the index. First references to such works generally offer a translation for convenience, set in roman type with no quotation marks and with sentence, rather than title, capitalization; this translation need not appear in the index.
• If the work has been published in English (English title given in quotation marks or italics, with title capitalization) and is generally referred to in the text by its English title, please use only the English title in the index.
• If any work is presented as having been published in translation (English title in quotes or italics, with title capitalization) but is referred to in the text by its original title, use the original title in the index, followed by the translated title in parentheses. Please call any such cases to our attention.
• For titles beginning with articles in any language, we prefer that the articles be left at the head of the title rather than inverted; of course, they should be ignored in alphabetization.

UNP style for indexing notes
Index the chapter endnotes only when they present information, other than bibliographic information, that is not found in the text (see CMS 16.111).
• Indexed word or phrase appears in a single note:
  Example: 177n1, . . .
• Indexed word or phrase appears in consecutive notes:
  Example: 177nn1–3, . . .
• Indexed word or phrase appears in nonconsecutive notes:
  Example: 177n1, 177n3, 177n7, . . .

If your book employs true footnotes (a note set at the bottom of the same page on which the note marker appears), use the page number followed by “n” (e.g., 78n). If your endnotes are linked to the text with page numbers and short phrases, simply list the page number on which the specific note you want to index appears.

UNP style for indexing illustrations
Our usual style is to underline page references on which illustrations appear:
• Indexed word or phrase refers only to an illustration:
  Example: 27, 28
• Indexed word or phrase appears in main text and refers to an illustration on the same page:
  Example: 27, 2–28

Your book is unique, and as you complete your index you will probably come upon a situation not mentioned here. As always, don’t hesitate to get in touch with your project editor if you have any questions.