
UNIT 4 INDEXING

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4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This Unit deals with an aspect of book production which is important to every author. A badly made index irritates the reader who may wish to look up particular references. Since an index is not signed by anyone, it is usually credited to the author. Also, since the author knows the book best, as also the importance of the topics dealt with in it, he himself is the ideal indexer. He has to learn the following things:

- indexes are made from page proofs;
- index cards should be kept ready; their quantity will depend upon whether the index is going to be short or long;
- the main entry should be entered on top left, followed by sub-entries, if any, and the page number in the bottom right hand corner;
- if errors and inconsistencies are found in the text while making the index, the author or publisher should be consulted;
- selection of items for entry should be comprehensive in the first instance; the list may be reduced later; however, all the important facts and ideas should be included;
- there can be word-by-word entries or letter-by-letter entries; the indexer should choose a uniform style;
- once the book is read and the important items have been put on slips, these should be alphabetically arranged in sequence;
- from the examples given, six different kinds of indexes emerge; it is important to note the difference between them,

4.1 INTRODUCTION

An author wishes his readers to use his book extensively. To make the identification and use of his book easy, he gives a title to his book, adds a contents page and the list of illustrated matter and acknowledgements; includes notes, footnotes, references, and bibliographies; marks chapter headings and sub-headings. Yet many of the subjects discussed remain unidentified and lie scattered in the text. A reader wishing to look up the name of a person, a place or an organisation in the book, finds an index extremely helpful. He can locate, through the index, all the references to a particular subject in the book. An index thus acts as an organised guide to all the relevant units of subject matter a work of non-fiction deals with. It helps to locate quickly the important statements in the book.

4.2 THE INDEX CAN BEST BE PREPARED BY THE AUTHOR HIMSELF

A good index to a book can only be prepared by a person who knows the subject well. The contents of the book will be best known to its author and none else. An indexer will have to read the book first and grasp its essence and purpose if he can. On the other hand, the author not only knows the subject thoroughly, but also has in mind the readers for whom he has written the book. The author himself knows what his readers may be looking for, so, ideally, he should prepare the index himself. He only has to learn the methodology of preparing an index.

Keeping this in mind and the fact that you might be called upon to prepare an index of your book of non-fiction, let us see how an index can be prepared.

4.3 BASIC GUIDELINES

Get a set of corrected page proofs from the publisher. Start scanning the whole book from the point of view of indexing it. Mark references in the pages available to you. You will get a rough idea of how many index cards or slips you would need, as one, and only one, reference would have to be written on each index card in the beginning. You would, therefore, need index cards. Index cards are usually 3' X 5' slips of cardboard or good paper.

4.3.1 Mode of indexing depends upon the size of a book

It is important to know at this stage the type of index the book needs. The nature of the book and its size will dictate that. For a small book you may have only one index covering subject entries as well as proper names. If the book is large and treats the subject extensively, you may have several indexes, such as name index and subject index. Some books even need indexes to contributors, titles, place names, etc. But generally speaking, you make a comprehensive index in which both subjects and proper names are included.

4.3.2 Methodology

On each index slip you have to write the index entry and the page on which it appears in the book. Write in ink the heading of the index entry in the top left hand corner, followed by the subhead in the middle of the slip. In the bottom right hand corner, give the page number.

4.3.3 Index entry should be precise

An index entry has to be precise and easy to look up. For finding suitable words for use in the index you, may consult a thesaurus. An index entry could be a single word or group of words. If the entry comprises a single concept and the concept stands by itself, the entry should be adequate.

4.3.4 Compound index entry

But, if the main concept is discussed in its various aspects, you have to divide the **entry** into two sections: viz., the **main** focus and the qualifiers of the focus. Let us **call this** a compound index entry. In this compound index entry the focus comprises the **main** concept the reader is going to look for while using the index. In other words, it is the focus, the main entry, which is central and important. The qualifying items or the subentries define the scope of the focus. The subentries draw the reader's **attention** to the particular aspects which comprise the main focus.

4.3.5 Indexing of proper names

In regard to proper names, the entry element or focus should be **determined**. This **may** be clear **from** the following examples.

- Khan, Abdul **Ghaffar**,
arrest of (1930), 82
- Nehru**, Motilal,
birth of, 13
- peasants in Soviet Union, 63
- poverty of, 135
- poverty,
of peasants, in the Soviet Union, 135
- Poona, 86
- Soviet Union,
peasants, in, 63

4.3.6 List all the errors in the text for correction

While indexing you may come **across** several errors, such as **overlappings**, ambiguities, misspellings, wrong statements, inconsistencies, etc. You should make a list of them. If the page proofs you have received have not been printed off, you may be able to make the corrections in the text in consultation with the author or publisher. If the text is already printed and corrections need to be made, you should add an 'Errata' page to the book. Try to persuade your publisher to do so. Otherwise keep a note of such corrections for the next edition.

4.3.7 Entries should be comprehensive

While indexing you should be comprehensive in **making** entries. When in doubt, include. You can discard them once you arrange **all** the cards or slips together. But **you** should follow the **spellings** and **capitalisation** used in the text. As you go on **making** entries, underline the indexed words in the page proofs. Also, keep the slips according to page **numbers** as you make **them** until you have completed indexing. These steps will help you in cross-checking the entries should you wish to do so.

4.3.8 Entries should not be ambiguous

It is important to ensure that the **entries** you have made are not ambiguous. Therefore, when two or more entries are similar but with different meanings, they **should** be suitably **distinguished**. A few examples below may illustrate the idea.

- A Bhargava, K.K. (1910-71)
Bhargava, K.K. (1927-)
- B **Gandhi** Memorial College, **Amritsar**
Gandhi Memorial **College**, **Patna**
Gandhi Memorial **College**, **Srinagar**
- C Council for Cultural Studies (India)
Council for Cultural Studies (Japan)
- D **Delhi**
not city of Delhi
- E **Bihar** (State)
Bihar (City)

After preparing the entries, they should be **carefully** checked against the corresponding page numbers, and edited for precision of language.

4.4 ARRANGEMENT OF ENTRIES

There are two ways of arranging the slips: letter-by-letter and word-by-word:

Word-by-word

India
India Neon Signs
India, partition of
India silk
Indiaman
Indian Home Rule League
Indian National Congress

Letter-by-letter

India
Indiaman
India Neon Signs
Indian Home Rule League
Indian National Congress
India, partition of
India **silk**

If an index entry **begins** with a preposition, conjunction or an article, ignore it while arranging the entries. In case of personal names, if the name begins with an article or a preposition, such as **Al-Mahmud** or **De-Quincey**, and it is part of the surname of the person, enter the entry under the article. Also, dates or numerals in an entry should be spelt out **only** for the sake of arranging them in the alphabetical index. They may be entered in the numerical form in the index.

4.5 EDITING AND TYPING OF INDEX

After the **entries have** been alphabetically arranged you will notice that there are several slips **under** an entry, each with a different page number. Such **slips** have to be **further** arranged **according** to page numbers. And then, you can enter on the first **slip** the page **numbers** of all the remaining slips, including this entry in serial order, and remove **them** from the index file. **Such an** entry will be written as **follows**:

India, 2, 8, 47, 108, 220, 487, 500

Now, if under **such an** entry, there are subentries which form part of the main entry, they have to be **included** under the main entry as follows:

India, 2, 8, 47, 108, 220, 487, 500
changes in education, 87, 400
exports in 1984, 4, 9, 25
growth of industries, 78, 91

From the **above example** you will **notice** that the subentries have all been grouped under India. If a **reader** looks for entries under 'Industries', 'Education' or 'Exports' he **will** not be able to **find** any reference. **Therefore, duplicate** entries **have** to be made. If the above **index** entries belong to a book on India, we **will** have to make the following duplicate **entries**:

Education,
changes in 87, 400
Exports in 1984, 4, 9, 25
Industries, growth of, 78, 91

If the entries belong to a book that discusses the issues in relation to **several** countries you may **add** the following cross-references:

Education, Indian, see India
Exports, Indian, **see** India
Industries, Indian, **see** India

Once you have made duplicate entries and cross-references and incorporated them also in the index, **your** index for the book is ready for typing. Before **passing** it on to the typist check the **alphabetical** order. See that there are no mistakes. **Ask** the typist to leave triple **space between** the entries and a sufficient margin and type at least two copies of the index.

4.6 TYPES OF INDEXES

Let me now offer some examples of the types of indexes, ranging from simple to the complex ones.

4.6.1 Author/Name index

Dasgupta, Pradeep, 754
 Dasgupta, R., 794
 Das **Gupta**, Sailen, 580

4.6.2 Title index to a catalogue of books

India. A **Bird's** Eye View (**Bundas**), 116
 India: A Few Pages About It (**Watkin**), 147
 India and China (Bagchi), 349
 India and the **English** (Wingfield-Stratford), 149
 India and the Future (Archer), 103
 India as I Saw It (**Antaki**), 429

4.6.3 Author/Title index to a bibliography

Fincastle, P.C., 833
Finlay, J.F., 944
 First Book of Indian **Botany** (Oliver), 1314
 First Report **from** the Committee... (**Burgoyne**), 2743

4.6.4 Index of geographical names

Afghanistan, 31, 108
 Agra, **32**, **35n.**, 48
Ahmadnagar, **149n.**, 356, 357
Ahmedabad, 346, 437, 500

4.6.5 Subject index (example I)

Eating houses, for the poor, 210, 211
education, **Akbar's** rule, 288, 289
 elephants, where numerous in India, 685, imperial, 123, 124; prices of, 124, 125;
kinds of, 125; gestation, **125**; **white elephant**, **124n.**, marks of, 127; **when**
mast, 127;

4.6.6 Subject index (example II)

This is an **example** from an **index** to a multi-volume book. The numbers in bold print refer to volumes:

Karma, 3: 380; **16**; 125
 (**see also** Part II)
 Buddhist conception of, **16**: 131
 higher **lines** of, **16**: 207
 Karmayoga, **3**: 343; **17**: 147
 of the Gita, **20**: 88
 and the Integral **Yoga**, 23: **670ff**

4.6.7 General index (example I)

Abdullah, Sheikh, 165, 169
Ackroyd, W.A., 201
Adi Granth, **40**, **42**
Age of Consent **Bill**, 71
Ahmad Khan, Sir **Sayyed**, 87
Ahmed Sha, 47
Amritsar Congress (1956), 148

Aryan invasions, 23
 Arya Samaj, 65
 Associated Chambers of Commerce, 227

4.6.8 General index (example II)

Nizam-ud-din Aulia, xxiii, xxiv, 10, 113
 baoli of, 17, 268
 tomb of, 17, 268-9
 Notch, *see* Nautch
 Nurgarh, 44
 Observatory, *see* Jantar Mantar

Activity

Prepare an Index to the **handbook** (titled SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS) which has already been supplied to you for information. Use paper of A4 size and write on one side only. Keep it for use in later assignments.

4.7 SUMMING UP

In this Unit I have **emphasised the importance** of indexing if you are planning to write a book. **As discussed** in this Unit, a carefully worked out index will enable your reader to locate references to people, places, subjects, etc., promptly, and conveniently. This is because a book without an index is like an uncharted landscape.

4.8 GLOSSARY

You will find in the **glossary** a short list of the terms used in this Unit.

Thesaurus: A special kind of dictionary which enables an author to think of suitable words and expressions to convey certain ideas. As a potential author, you are advised to keep **Rogets Thesaurus** on your desk for constant reference.

Ambiguity: See **glossary**, Unit 2.

4.9 ADDITIONAL READINGS FOR BLOCK 4

Bodian, Nat C. *Copywriters Handbook*, Philadelphia: ISI Press, 1984.

Butcher, Judith. *Copy Editing: The Cambridge Handbook*, Cambridge University Press, 1975, 1981.

Collison, Robert L. *Indexing Books*, New York: De Graff, 1962.

Manual of Style, A. (12th ed) Chicago: University of Chicago-Press, 1969, pp. 399-430.

MLA Style Sheet, The Hyderabad: American Studies Research Center, 1951, 1969, 1970.

Pike, Kenneth L. 'How to Make an Index', *PMLA*, 1968, 1983, pp 991-93.

Referring, Commissioning and Editing for Journals and Books (Association of Learned & Professional Society Publishers, 1980.

Spiker, Sena, Indexing Your Book, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964.

Typescripts, Proofs and Indexes, Cambridge Authors and Publishers Guides, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968.