

HOW TO MAKE AN INDEX

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HOW can an author contribute to an index the kind of detailed attention which he alone can give, without costing more direct time and energy than he can afford? If he fails to solve this problem, he will (1) either omit an index completely (which will cut the usefulness of some reference books in half), or settle for a partial index; or (2) have the work done by someone who (a) cannot label a topic—for look-up purposes—by other than the words of the text, (b) cannot balance probable reader need of specialized bits, (c) cannot judge the completeness of the index by reading the index against the author's knowledge of the book, (d) cannot decide which items need extensive indexing since they are important and occur pervasively throughout the volume, but are not listed in the Table of Contents, and/or (e) cannot assess the role of cross-referencing one item of the Index to others which are conceptually but not lexically connected.

For several volumes I have used the following procedure.

Stage 1

The author *dictates* entries onto a recording machine.

A simple entry will contain one catch word, with the page number, for example, "Tamil 127."

A complex entry will contain main entry plus subheading—and possibly sub-subheading—with page number. This may be dictated, for example, as "Phoneme, indent, variant of, double indent, conditioned by syllable, 127." The cross-indexing for this entry is dictated immediately if the author wishes to allow the reader to find the same item from different search points: "Syllable, indent, conditioning phoneme, 127"; "Variant, indent, of phoneme, 127"; and the like.

The next item on the same page is then dictated, and so on, until the page is complete. The author states "new page" on the tape, to warn the typist that a new page number *should* be coming.

The dictation style is not modified if an item which was given earlier occurs again. All main and subentries are repeated at every occurrence.

The name of a person can be indexed satisfactorily by name alone, if it occurs rarely. If the same name comes often enough, some crucial

subentries may be added to suggest topics.

Entries for indexing section headings need to be dictated also. I have found it convenient to do these for one chapter at a time, before beginning page by page indexing.

Special care needs to be taken by the author to include entries for concepts which do not enter the titles of section headings (and so cannot be found through the Table of Contents) but which nevertheless are important to the treatise and recur in snatches here and there throughout.

Where the author believes that a reader may wish data about an entry which is to be found, in part, under another entry, he dictates the name of the first entry, plus "See also . . .," filling in the name of the further entry or entries.

A sample of dictated running entries chosen from the end of one page and the beginning of the next might appear as follows:

Contrastive-Identificational 163

Mode

manifestation

of morpheme 163-68

Morpheme

manifestation mode of 163-68

Variant

of morpheme

identical 163

Morpheme

variant of 163

Unit

variant of

morphemic 163

Unit *See also* Morpheme

Matrix

conflation of 163n

Voegelin 163n

Householder 163n

Variant

phonological

of morpheme 164

Morpheme

variant of

phonological 164

Stage 2

The typist is then requested to make a running list of the dictated entries, on ordinary paper, with a carbon copy.

All entries should be separated by quadruple spacing (any lesser spacing will later leave the cut slips too small for rapid handling).

Complex entries, like simple ones, each begin

a new line. A subentry, however, is indented once, a sub-subentry twice, under the dictated main heading.

The typist has before her the page proof while transcribing the dictation. She is requested to watch for change from one page to the next (which, if overlooked in the prior dictation, leads to error). If the author has remembered to say "new page," the typist will go ahead accurately. If the author forgets to give the warning signal, the typist should check to be sure that in fact the author changed page number when he turned the page.

At the same time, the typist, on following a page with names on it, can be asked to add routinely any which were omitted in the author's dictation. (If the author is consistent in warning the typist of a new page, it will be only necessary for him to mention the page number once in dictating all of the entries on one page—the typist can put in the same page number for every entry.)

Stage 3

Proofing for dictated error is now done by comparing numbers in *this running typescript*, with the page proof. Note that a set of several references in dictated sequence should each end with the same page number—that is, all which are taken from the same page. Any mixture of numbers, therefore, should be especially investigated as a potential error.

Proofing at this stage eliminates all later look-up checking of isolated slips against scattered places in the page proof; proofing is done of items in sequence, against pages in sequence, in a format so arranged that separate search is avoided except in special instances.

Stage 4

Now, the typist slices all slips with a paper cutter (preserving the carbon copy for checking where an occasional reference looks unconvincing, where checking in conjunction with the dictated draft of entries is more helpful than page-proof search alone, or where an occasional typing error has made the reference unclear and a copy that has items in sequence might be useful).

The slips are then sorted and alphabetized. I prefer to have the typist do this in several stages: She is asked to begin by sorting all main entries into five piles (more piles may slow the work greatly—faster decisions, but more of them, are less expensive than fewer but slower sorting decisions). Five cards are placed on a

table, one vowel-plus-consonant-before-next-vowel—that is, Abcd, Efgh, Ijklmn, Opqrst, Uvwxyz. Slips are tossed onto the piles.

Then the piles are subdivided according to the initial letter. A third sort calls, again, on the five-vowel-set cards just mentioned, to begin to subdivide the main entries according to the second letter of the word; a fourth sort finishes alphabetizing the second letter of the entries. Fifth (gross) and sixth (refined) sortings alphabetize the entries according to their third letters. Further sortings, gross and refined, alphabetize the entries according to any remaining letters. When only a few entries are left in a group, as the sorting of some bit of the index nears completion, the gross versus refining steps can be omitted and the alphabetizing can be done directly and quickly.

If no subentry is indicated on the slips of an entry set, but several page numbers are involved, the slips are sorted according to the sequence of numbers.

When a main-entry set has, also, various slips with subentries indicated, the sorting routine above is applied to the subentries, until they too are in appropriate subsets.

If the subsets have sub-subentries, the sorting routine is then applied to them.

Stage 5

The typist now takes the separate, alphabetized slips, and prepares them for editing.

A puddle of paste or rubber cement is poured on a flat surface, conveniently at one side. A pile of clean typing paper lies ahead. The typist picks up a slip, dips part of it lightly in the paste, and applies it loosely and rapidly to a clean sheet. Other slips follow, in order.

When she is finished, all the entries are once more before the author on regular sheets of paper (in the form of pasted slips), which he can study and edit. This promotes far greater author efficiency than an attempt to study thousands of separate elusive slippery slips—and allows him to see scores of slips at once, by these sheets spread on the table, rather than restricting him to cards seen one at a time in a file.

(Dr. Joseph Grimes has suggested that the alphabetizing indicated here in Stages 4 and 5 could be handled by computer. I am unable to estimate the net amount of time which would be saved—since there might be some accompanying losses in the need to prepare the data for input in a form somewhat more costly in typist time than typing entries consecutively on ordinary paper with ordinary symbols. Note, further, that the

saving would be of typist time. Investment of author time would be as great—or greater, if computer output were less convenient than the pasted sheets.)

Stage 6

The author now reads the tentative, unedited index, to reach several judgments: (a) Does he think of any topics (or even references to crucial sections) which should have been included, but were somehow missed? By seeing alphabetized entries some gaps are brought to mind. Only the author can have that overview which allows a mental search of all topics to find the missing ones. For these, separate search is made in appropriate sections, and entries added. (b) Should some main entries be combined, since they are either trivially different (singular versus plural), or are more likely to impede reader use than to help him (he may restrict look-up to one, assuming he has exhausted probable entries)? If so, the entries are merged. (c) Should further cross references (“*See also . . .*”) to entries be added? Are some which are already there without value since no further page numbers occur in them? And does every entry referred to, in such a way, in fact occur in the Index?

Stage 7

Editing of the paste-on Index can now proceed, to get ready for final typing. For each main entry, the first occurrence is maintained. All succeeding repetitions are crossed out, leaving numbers, and subentries, to be copied by the typist.

When subentries are repeated, the first, similarly, is retained and successive ones crossed out, with page numbers retained in order. If, however, these successive subentries are accompanied by sub-subentries, one may by joining lines show that they should be typed as a single, continuing paragraph with hanging indentation.

The following sample is copy from the Index for the second edition of my *Language* (1967).

Mason 36, 673, 692
 Mather 537, 708
 Mathesius 345, 595
 Mathiot 95, 184, 431, 691
 Matrix (*see also* Dimension)
~~Matrix~~ 9, 298n, 324n A
~~Matrix~~
 of behavior 641n

~~Matrix~~
 and categories 560 ;
~~Matrix~~
~~categories~~ interlocking 565n
~~Matrix~~
 and chronology 512n
~~Matrix~~
 conflated 163n
~~Matrix~~
~~conflation of~~ 548n, 627
~~Matrix~~
 cultural 673–74
~~Matrix~~
 derivation in 473n

Punctuation for chosen format can be added—or checked—here.

Stage 8

The typist now copies the paste-on index, preparing the final typescript for the publisher. The paste-on sample, shown above, appears in the final manuscript as follows:

Mathiot: 95, 184, 431, 691
 Matrix: 9, 298n, 324n (*See also* Dimension)
 of behavior: 641n
 and categories: 560; interlocking: 565n
 and chronology: 512n
 conflated: 163n, 548n, 627
 cultural: 673–74
 derivation in: 473n

Stage 9

Proofing of this typescript is now done against the paste-on sheets. Proof here does not—except in case of author doubt—refer to page proof. (Queries to page proof were made earlier, under Stage 3, which see; query can still be made of the carbon copy of the dictated, running entries.)

In sum: Author energy is minimized by involving him in the running dictation of entries as well as in initial judgment of the value of entries and the later assessment of coverage. Otherwise, the mechanical details can be handled efficiently by his assistants. A book of some 250 manuscript pages with many bibliographical references may go through these stages in about a week, with author and one typist alternatively involved.