

1. For complete guidelines, sign into FamilySearch, hover over Indexing, click Web Indexing. Click Help Resources, scroll down to Indexer in Orange bar, click Open. Click Basic indexing guidelines. Print the four pages if desired.
2. Try Guided Tour. Instead of clicking Basic Indexing guidelines, click Guided Tour. This is just a practice and the indexed information is not saved.

Basic indexing guidelines **highlights**

Information

These guidelines help you know what to do in most indexing situations. Occasionally, projects do not follow these guidelines. Before indexing, always read the project instructions and field helps for the most current and specific rules for each project.

Type What You See

Most of the time, you should type what you see on the document. The field helps and project instruction describe any exceptions. Remember, you are making an index to help individuals find their ancestors. In many cases, they can review the information about their ancestors on the image to form their own interpretations and conclusions. If you have questions as you index, do the following:

- Refer to the field helps and project instructions.
- Refer to these basic indexing guidelines.
- Use your best judgment.
- Do not assume information that is not specifically given in the document.

Abbreviations

- Names
 - **Do not** spell out a name that was abbreviated.
 - Type names as they were written.
 - In web indexing, you can include punctuation when typing names; however, including punctuation is not required.
- Places
 - If the name of a place was misspelled and you can determine the correct spelling, correct the mistake, unless otherwise directed in the project instructions or field helps.
 - If the name of a place was abbreviated and you can determine what the abbreviation stands for, type the complete name instead of the abbreviation, unless otherwise directed in the project instructions or field helps. Use the lookup list for assistance.
 - If you are not sure what an abbreviation stands for, type what was written.
 - In web indexing, you can include punctuation when typing places; however, including punctuation is not required.

Corrected and Crossed-Out Information

- If information was crossed out and replaced, type the replacement information.
- If information was crossed out and not replaced but the original information can be read, type the crossed-out information.
- If information was crossed out and not replaced and the original information cannot be read, press **Ctrl+U** to mark the field as unreadable.
- A document that was marked as being canceled or void is treated the same as corrected or crossed-out information.

Ditto Marks

- If a record has a ditto mark or other sign of repetition, type the corresponding information from the previous record or field.

- Do not type the word “ditto” or the ditto mark itself. Other signs of repetition include the abbreviation “Do” or a vertical or horizontal line under a surname or other information intended to be repeated.

Unreadable Information

- **One character.** If you are unable to read one letter or number, use a question mark (?) to replace the unreadable letter or number.
 - Example: **H?ndley**
 - Not all fields accept a question mark. If you cannot enter a needed question mark in a field, press **Ctrl+U** to mark the field as unreadable.
- **Multiple characters.** For consecutive unreadable letters or numbers, use an asterisk (*) to replace the unreadable group of letters or numbers.
 - Example: **Di*son**
 - Not all fields accept an asterisk. If you cannot enter an asterisk in a field, press **Ctrl+U** to mark the field as unreadable.

Titles or Terms

- If “Mrs” was used before a name typically used for males, such as in Mrs. Jason Jones, type **Mrs** in the Title or Terms field if there is one. In this example, **Jason** would be typed in the Given Names field and **Jones** in the Surname field.
 - If no Titles or Terms field is available, ignore the “Mrs,” and type the name in the corresponding name fields for the woman. For the example above, **Jason** would still be typed in the Given Names field and **Jones** in the Surname field.
- When “stillborn” or “baby” was recorded for a name in a document, such terms should be typed in the Titles or Terms field, if one is available.
 - If no Titles or Terms field is available, do not type “stillborn” or “baby,” or similar terms in the Given Names or Surname fields.

Places

- When typing a place-name, do not include identifying descriptions or terms, such as “near,” “about,” “around,” “twp,” “township,” “city,” “county,” or “state,” with the place-name unless the term is normally used as part of the name (for example, Carson City, Salt Lake City, New York City, and so on).
- If you do not know whether a place-name on a document refers to a city, state, country, or other locality, type the place-name in the geographically smallest locality field that is available.
- Do not type a nationality as a place-name unless you are directed to do so in the project instructions or field helps.

See the [Abbreviations](#) section for more information

Ages

- Round ages down to the nearest full year. For example:
 - If a child was listed as “5 years and 8 months old,” type the age as **5**.
 - If a child was listed as less than one year old, type the age as **0** (zero)
- If an age was given as a range, such as 65–67, type the first age that was recorded, which is **65** in this example.
- If an age was recorded as an approximate number, such as “age 14 at next birthday,” “about 14,” “near 14,” or “close to 14,” drop the description, and type the number alone. (For these examples, the age would be typed as **14**.)
- If an age was recorded as an uncertain number, such as “over 21” or “over 18,” skip the age field by pressing **Tab** if the field is not a required field, or mark the age field blank by pressing **Ctrl+B** if the field is required.
- If “stillborn” was recorded for an individual, type the age as **0** (zero).

- If a specific age was not given, do not calculate an age from other information, such as dates.
- Sex**
- Do not assume the sex of a person based on given names. However, you can use relationship terms or other indications in the language to determine the person's sex, such as the words "daughter," "son," "Mrs," "she," "he," and so on.