Indexing Guidelines

An index is one of the two entrance points into a book. The front door—*the table of contents*—gives readers a broad overview of the subjects treated in the text. The back door—*the index*—gives readers a navigational tool to find precisely what they're looking for quickly and efficiently. They'll also be able to browse entries in which they have an interest, thereby expanding their grasp of a topic.

Some important points about indexing
- A good index does not provide a running commentary on the text, nor does it outline the text or introduce new information.

- An index is not a list of words/topics with page numbers; that would be a *concordance*. A concordance is useful if you want to know how many times Shakespeare used "forsooth" in his plays or where each instance occurs. Beyond questions of quantifying and locating, however, concordances are largely useless.

- An index cannot be made automatically in MS Word or any other software program. Indexes require human involvement—they must be thought into being. This takes time and experience.

- There is very little time in the production schedule for index-making. The entire task of proofreading *and* index preparation typically must be done within four weeks or less.

Think about hiring an indexer
Indexing is a specialized skill task that has to be completed in the tiny wedge of time authors have left after completing page proof review. Authors also have the handicap of familiarity with their books; they often find it difficult to put themselves in the mind of someone coming to the text fresh.

Good freelance indexers approach a book from the perspective of its audience, constantly asking themselves what readers will be looking for and in what contexts. They painstakingly prepare comprehensive indexes using skills they've honed and knowledge they've gathered, collaborating with their authors along the way. And authors always have the last word, reviewing and correcting penultimate drafts for their indexers to finalize.

Indexing Basics
These guidelines are concerned principally with the kind of index described in the *Chicago Manual of Style,* 17th edition, chapter 16. If you choose to index your book yourself, you'll need to review the chapter thoroughly before beginning work on your index.

A good index does not provide a running commentary on the text, nor does it introduce new information, nor does it function as an outline. The best entries are short, telegraphic ones that lead the reader to the most important information in the book. A long string of unmodified page numbers after a

single main entry does not accomplish the purpose of an index.

We prefer that indexes for JHUP be **run-in style** instead of indented style (see *Chicago* for explanation of the two styles). However, if a book's complexity necessitates the use of more than one level of subentry, the indented format may be used. Please discuss with your production editor.

When using "*See also*" cross references, make certain that the entry to which you're referring the reader gives *additional* page references. A cross reference should never simply repeat the page numbers given in the current entry.

Formatting the index

- Set your margins to make a single column that is 38 letter spaces wide or less.
- Indent runover lines 2 letter spaces; use the **hanging indent feature** of your word-processing software. **Do not** tab the indents manually.
- Allow 25 text lines to a page.
- Type the index **double-spaced**.
- Elide page numbers per *Chicago* style.
- Alphabetize using **letter-by-letter method**.
- In main entries, invert articles at the beginnings of titles of works: *Scarlet Letter, The*.
- List subentries in alphabetical order—*not* chronological order or order-of-appearance in text; if using names as subentries, alphabetize by *last* name (but do not invert first and last name in subentries); when alphabetizing subentries, **ignore** articles and prepositions at the beginning of the subentry.

If your index contains **non-English personal names**, consult *Chicago* on proper alphabetization.

When we send page proof electronic files, we will give you a length limit for the index manuscript which we will ask you not to exceed. The final index may be shorter than this maximum. However, if you find that your index length seems to be missing our estimate by a wide margin, please get in touch with your production editor at once.

Your index should be submitted as an electronic file in either MS Word or RTF format.

And of course, do not hesitate to contact your production editor with questions as you work, or for recommendations of freelance indexers who have worked with JHUP in the past.