

## How to Index your own book

It sounds like a fantastically easy job to do, creating an index for a book. But once you start the process you'll realise that it is a much harder and longer process than you may have initially thought. There are a number of companies and individuals out there who are qualified as indexers, or have the skills and expertise to index a book for you. But if you fancy giving it a go yourself, here are some top tips to make the process as organised and pain free as possible!

1. Start by looking at indexes of other non-fiction books that are similar to your book. For example, if you've written a book on how to bake muffins, look at other printed baking or cookery books. It doesn't have to be the same topic, simply a book that is along the lines of yours in terms of style and content. Take a look at which words are listed in these book's indexes to get an idea for which words are relevant to include in your own book's index
2. Take 26 A4 blank sheets of paper and write one letter from the alphabet in the corner of each piece of paper. You will use these pieces of paper to compile your index; one piece of A4 paper representing the words that fall under each of the letters in the alphabet
3. Next, go through your book and make a list of words you want to include in the index, noting each word on the piece of A4 paper that represents the letter the word starts with. Note down the page number(s) that the word appears. With the muffin cookery book example, the list might include muffin types such as blueberry; carrot; peach and raspberry; banana chunk; chocolate chip; low fat. As you are compiling your list of words you will be deciding how detailed you want your book's index to be
4. Once the index is compiled on A4 paper, type it up on the computer. Under each letter, ensure each word is listed alphabetically too
5. It's now time for editing! Tidy up your index by adding in sub-headings if the words under a specific team (low fat, for example) run to a list that's greater than 5
6. Undertake a spot check of the page references to check they are correct

Have fun!

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