

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
CENTER FOR ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH

# ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPTION STYLE GUIDE

Columbia University Center for Oral History Research  
2022

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# INTRODUCTION

## Columbia Center for Oral History Research Transcription Style Guide

The Columbia Center for Oral History Research (CCOHR) transcription style guide has evolved over time. The 2018 edition was our first attempt to gather together the breadth of knowledge and experience CCOHR has gained over the years for the benefit of outside institutions and individuals. The 2022 revised edition reflects feedback we've received over the intervening years, and includes new standards specific to remote interviews, which have become increasingly common since 2020. Within this guide we describe not only our methods, but our core philosophy that informs each detail of oral history transcription.

The CCOHR style guide relies on the *Chicago Manual of Style, 17th Edition*. Refer to it for any style questions not addressed in this document. We have consolidated information that is especially relevant for oral history transcription, coupled with guiding principles of the field and of our office. In the few places where this style guide departs from the *Chicago Manual of Style*, we have noted clearly how it departs and the reason for doing so.

## The Transcript's Role in an Oral History Record

Transcribing oral history is an act of translation between spoken and written language, and there are many hands involved. An oral history record is cocreated during the oral history interview through the exchange of the interviewer(s) and narrator(s). That cocreation continues as the transcriptionists, audit-editors, principal investigator, interviewers, and narrators work together to craft the final document. The resulting transcript is an intersection between spoken word and text that represents the way narrators think as well as how they speak.

The final transcript plays a central role in the oral history record. The recording of the interview preserves details from the moment in time when the interview took place, and the aural and visual information embodied in the spoken word that a transcript cannot capture. The relationship between the recording and the transcript gives readers access to myriad facets of meaning. However, the process of transcription and review produces a record that has been fully considered and passed forward to future generations with intention. Most importantly, the narrator has approved both the style and content of the transcription as the basis for public use. For this reason, we encourage readers to privilege the transcript, as a source document, over the recording when quoting from the interview.

## Guiding Principles

The goal of this style guide is to lay out a road map for creating transcripts that are as versatile and as broadly accessible as possible. We recognize that we cannot foresee the breadth and diversity of readers who will access these transcripts in the future, what their needs and expectations will be, and how they will make use of the oral history. It is impossible to make one transcription that is ideal for all uses. The solution is to have a consistent and transparent process. Therefore, this style guide is designed to provide readers with the tools they need to fully interrogate the oral history record, and to understand the reasoning and methods behind its construction.

CCOHR's mission is to contribute to and to broaden sources of historical evidence and inference. We treat the veracity of individual memories with the same attention as we do the collective narratives of history, politics, and culture often contained in the recordings. Each person or institution taking on oral history research and transcription will be guided by their own methods and goals. Decisions about how to transcribe interviews will stem from careful consideration of research objectives and available resources for the project. At CCOHR, we offer our internal priorities as an example to help others get started. For example, as of 2022, we have the resources to record and archive high-quality audio and video, but not to edit those recordings. Accordingly, audio and video sources may be closed for a period of time if needed. Oral history records we produce are viewed either online or on-site via the Oral History Archives at Columbia University Libraries, INCITE, and our partners. Therefore, our transcripts are built with consideration for how they may be used by readers over time, whether or not access to the recordings is always possible.

The role of the transcript, first and foremost, is to represent as clearly as possible in the text what a speaker intended to say. This style guide prioritizes tools geared toward preserving that meaning in a context of written rather than spoken language. This places literary content and spirit of speech at the center of transcription work. Where possible, some qualities of the spoken word can be represented in text through syntax and punctuation. However, we do not transcribe speech phonetically. Future readers seeking aural details of communication are encouraged to reference interview recordings. The characteristics of *how* individual speakers communicate—in terms of syntax, grammar, and word usage—are welcome in the transcript so long as they do not interfere with the written clarity of *what* speakers meant to communicate.

The transcript is presented to readers as primary source material. CCOHR provides metadata and some contextual information with the transcript and finding aids, available via the Oral History Archives at Columbia University Libraries, to enhance access, use, and interpretation. The text does

not include any analysis of what was said during the interview. Some light fact-checking is provided with regard to names and dates, and is clearly marked as editorial insertions in the transcript. Fact-checking is conducted with a light touch, and in collaboration with narrators, with respect for myriad points of view and interpretations. Statements made during an oral history interview that are false in one way may offer valuable evidence in another. To preserve the general versatility of the source, CCOHR does not attempt to foresee which types of evidence will or will not be valuable and meaningful for readers.

Oral history transcripts are considered cocreated documents. When Columbia's oral history archive was founded in 1948, the practice was to eliminate questions and have the transcript read as a book. As the oral history field developed, greater attention was given to the dialogic relationship between the interviewer and narrator and to the revealing qualities of oral language itself. For that reason, the interviewer's questions and comments are now faithfully transcribed, and rarely edited. In order to transcribe the questions and statements of interviewers, CCOHR requires our oral history recordings to capture the words of interviewers and narrators with equal clarity and quality.

The style guide that follows will describe transparent methods, provide transcription tools for others in the oral history field, and train CCOHR staff to create quality transcripts. In service of CCOHR's overall mission, our transcripts must clearly communicate a speaker's intended meaning in text, serve as useful and accessible primary source material, and represent the cocreation inherent in the oral history interview and transcription process.

# PROCESS

## Transcription

Transcribe the interview recording in accordance with this CCOHR style guide.

[See](#) Formatting; Editing & Review; Style

When a speaker names a person, an organization, an acronym, a title of a publication, or another term especially relevant to the content of the interview, ensure that the name or term is complete, at least the first time it appears in the transcript. If the speaker says only a portion of the name or term, complete it in brackets the first time it appears.

[See](#) Complete Names & Terms

Any portions of the recording that are unclear or too difficult to verify should be marked [*unclear*] or [*phonetic*] for the audit-editor to double check.

[See](#) Phonetic; Unclear & Crosstalk

## Audit-Edit

Create a new digital copy of the transcript in Microsoft Word. Turn on “Track Changes” before entering any edits. Listen to the recording and compare it to the written transcription for fidelity to the recording and for clarity of the speaker’s intended meaning. As often as possible, the same person should act as audit-editor for all sessions in the interview.

Ensure that the transcript is in keeping with the CCOHR style guide. Also, check the transcription for typos and for errors, such as homophone swaps and misheard passages, which often result from low recording quality, hurried speech, or challenging accents.

[See](#) Formatting; Style

Statements that are clearly communicated orally may become distorted or convoluted in text. When necessary, it is all right for the transcribed text to differ slightly from the recording. Audit-editors should mark their editorial insertions, clarifications, and significant departures from the recording in brackets. Consult with the principal investigator and interviewer when unsure how best to proceed, especially in cases where a narrator was not interviewed in their native language. The narrator will come to a final decision during their review of the transcript.

## See Editing & Review

Review the transcript and provide light fact-checks. Names and terms should be spelled correctly, and should be written completely in brackets the first time they appear in the transcript. Dates or other misstated facts may be corrected or clarified using brackets and annotations as needed.

## See Fact-checking

In preparation for the narrator's review of the transcript, highlight any passages in need of special attention:

- 1) Portions of the interview recording that were unclear or difficult to verify, marked [*unclear*] or [*phonetic*] in the transcript.
- 2) Moments when the speaker seemed reluctant to share information, or when they clearly intended or expected their statements to be off the record.
- 3) Passages that could require verification, redaction, or other further consideration. In the event that content on the record could lead to legal or ethical risks for the narrator, or those they discuss, the principal investigator must be notified. The principal investigator will then review the issue with the narrator and with legal counsel if necessary.

Audit-editors and transcriptionists should not remove information in the above categories from the transcript. The narrator, principal investigator, and leadership of the institution responsible for the project will make the final decisions about omissions or redactions.

## Narrator Review

Narrators have the opportunity to review their interview transcript after the audit-edit, and before it is finalized for the archive or any public use. Create a new digital copy of the transcript in Microsoft Word. Turn on "Track Changes" before entering any edits. Review the transcript for fidelity to what was said during the interview and for clarity of the speaker's intended meaning.

Check the transcription for typos and for errors, such as homophone swaps and misheard passages. Edits to the text to clarify or correct information provided are also welcome. Comments, annotations, and citations can be added to the transcript if needed.

Confirm, correct, omit, or redact areas highlighted for special review by audit-editor and principal investigator.

## Finalize

Create a new digital copy of the transcript, with the narrator's edits, in Microsoft Word. Turn on "Track Changes" before making any adjustments. Review the narrator's edits and requested changes. Ensure that they are in keeping with the CCOHR style guide. Double check their formatting, punctuation, and spelling. All other changes made by the narrator to the content of the transcript should be incorporated, without notation in brackets when they depart from the recording. Do not conduct any further edits for grammar, word use, or clarity within the narrator's requested edits. Check with the principal investigator when unsure.

**See** Formatting; Style

Commentary on the transcript, annotations, and citations provided by the narrator can be included in footnotes.

**See** Annotations; Citations

Narrators have the final say about edits. Requested omissions from the transcript are made without notation. However, the transcript does include notation if portions of it are closed for a limited period of time. Any requests for redaction from the recording should be brought to the principal investigator's attention.

**See** Session Breaks

Once this last stage of review is complete, create a final copy of the transcript to deliver to the archive, or other permanent home. This final copy of the transcript should be clear of all editing and process notations. In Microsoft Word, use the function called "Accept All Changes in Document" to remove previously deleted text in "Track Changes." Review the transcript to remove any remaining highlights. If the "Comments" tool was used in the editing process, remove those as well.

The Oral History Archives at Columbia University Libraries require the final transcript to be delivered in both Microsoft Word Document format and PDF. Further details on oral history submissions to the Oral History Archives are available in their document "[Checklist for Delivering Oral History Collections and Materials to OHAC.](#)"

# FORMATTING

## Document

The transcript document has one-inch margins on all sides. Font is set in twelve-point “Times New Roman.” Lines are double-spaced.

## Title Page

Text on the title page of the transcript is centered. At the top of the page, the name of the oral history project is set in all caps. The title of the transcript document falls just below the title of the project. Transcript titles consist of “Oral History Interview with,” followed by the narrator’s full name.

At the bottom of the page, write the name of the organization responsible for the oral history project, usually the copyright holder, for citation purposes. Below that is the year the interview was completed.

**See** Appendix -1, Full Names

## Preface

Center PREFACE, in all caps, at the top of the page. Text in the body of the preface is left aligned with a double carriage return between paragraphs.

The purpose of the preface is to give readers valuable information about the document before they begin. Specify that the document is a nearly verbatim transcript of an oral history interview. Credit the narrator(s) and the interviewer(s) by their full names. Also include the dates of all the interview sessions, and the name of the oral history project.

**EX** The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Alfred G. Smith conducted by Terrance L. D’Emilio on May 1, 2015. This interview is part of the Columbia University Oral History Project.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the narrator.

Many, though not all, oral history transcripts are representations of spoken conversation, as in the example above. When interviews are conducted in a sign language, or via written correspondence, they should be described as such in the preface.

**EX** Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of dialogue in American Sign Language, rather than written prose. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the narrator.

In the event that interpreters, assistants, family members, or others are present to support the interview, credit them by full name in the preface as well, and specify what role they played.

**EX** The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Sandra Fischer conducted by Cooper L. Jackson, and interpreted in English and German by Emily Parker, on April 10, 2020.

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Tiana V. Somerset conducted by Sara Murphy Anderson on August 26, 2018. Vivian Somerset-Jones was also present to assist Tiana V. Somerset.

**See** Appendix - 2

## Metadata Header

Each interview session begins with a table, two columns and three rows, at the top of the page that contains the following metadata:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Transcriptionist: | – Name of the person or organization responsible for transcription   |
| Narrator:         | – Narrator’s full name   |
| Interviewer:      | – Interviewer’s full name  |
| Session Number:   | – Which of the interview sessions is represented   |
| Location(s):      | – Location of where the interview session took place. Include the name of the city and abbreviation for state, region or country |
| Date:             | – Date of the interview session  |

If there are multiple interviewers, label each interviewer as “Q1,” “Q2,” etc., in parentheses, next to the corresponding interviewer’s name.

In the event of a remote interview, where the narrator(s) and interviewer(s) are in different locations, list the location of each person followed by their name in parentheses and separated by a semicolon.

When interpreters are present to support the interview, credit them by name in the metadata header as well. The interpreter's full name should appear in the table directly under the name of the person they provided interpretation for. If one interpreter provided this service for the narrator and interviewer, the interpreter's name would appear twice.

Participants in the interview may identify their preferred pronouns. In such cases, include their pronouns in parentheses following their name in the metadata header.

## EX

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Transcriptionist: Transcription Service | Session Number: 1                         |
| Narrator: Sandra Fischer (she / hers)   | Locations: Columbus, OH (Sandra Fischer); |
| Interpreter: Emily Parker               | New York, NY (Cooper L. Jackson)          |
| Interviewer: Cooper L. Jackson          | Date: April 10, 2020                      |
| Interpreter: Emily Parker               |   |

See Appendix - 3

### Transcript Body

Each paragraph in the body of the transcript is flush left, with no indentations. Between each paragraph break there is a double carriage return.

As each person speaks in turn, denote who is speaking in-line and to the immediate left of their words. Narrators are labeled with their surname followed by a colon. Interviewers are labeled with a capital letter Q followed by a colon. When there are multiple interviewers, label them "Q1:," "Q2:," etc., and note in the metadata header, next to each of their names, in parentheses, which name they correspond with.

See Appendix - 3

## Session Breaks

- Interruptions

Indicate a break in an interview session with two carriage returns before and after the word “interruption” set in all caps and enclosed in brackets. Breaks in the interview include moments when the recording stops, as well as any moments off the record that may have been captured on tape, such as pauses to adjust equipment, breaks for refreshments, and other side conversations.

- Closed Portions of the Transcript

In some cases, portions of a transcript may be closed to the public for a limited period of time. Indicate where text has been closed with two carriage returns before and after the words “these pages closed” set in all caps and enclosed in brackets.

- Session End

At the close of each interview session, mark the ending with two carriage returns and the words “end of session” set in all caps and enclosed in brackets.

- Interview End

At the close of the final interview session, mark the ending with two carriage returns and the words “end of interview” set in all caps and enclosed in brackets.

See Appendix – 3

## Headers

Each page of the transcript body, except for the first page of each session, has a header. Headers list the narrator’s surname, the session number, and the page number. Page numbers are continuous across all sessions of the interview, beginning with the first page of the transcript body, and not including the title page or preface. The text is right aligned, and each field is separated by an en dash.

See Appendix – 3

# FACT-CHECKING

## Word List

Create a word list that contains full proper spellings for names and terms that are either especially common in or relevant to the project, and important to spell consistently and correctly. This list may be added to and updated over the course of the project, and shared among transcriptionists and audit-editors, in order to save time during fact-checking and to ensure consistent spelling throughout the project's transcripts.

Organizations, publications, and court cases referenced in the word list should have full titles. Acronym entries should show their complete names. Names of people on the list should not include their titles or honorifics, but should include their full names.

[See](#) Full Names

## Complete Names & Terms

Review the interview transcript to ensure that names and other proper nouns have all been spelled correctly. Partial names and terms are completed, in brackets, the first time they appear in the interview.

Complete names and terms are extremely helpful to future readers of the transcript. While a partial name may seem intuitive in the current context, readers from other contexts—such as international readers or readers fifty years in the future—may have difficulty recognizing it. For example, “Clinton” in the US in the 1990s may have clearly meant William “Bill” J. Clinton, but by the 2010s Hillary Rodham Clinton was far more prominent, and the abbreviated name would commonly be used to refer to either one of them.

Rely on the word list for help, and add to it any words that have not already been included. When the proper spelling or complete name cannot be verified, mark the word in the transcript as *[phonetic]*

- Full Names

A person's full name includes all the elements of their name that will help future readers to identify the person. For the purposes of a transcript, a full name may be as it appears in Library of Congress subject headings, on the person's government-issued ID, in credits of publications, or other trusted

sources. If a person's specific wishes regarding their full name are known—either because they are someone connected to the project, such as a narrator or interviewer, or because their preference is publicly known—those wishes should be honored. Consult with the principal investigator when unsure, and strive for internal consistency within the project.

Important elements of a full name to include, where applicable:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| given or chosen name                           | – A personal name, as distinct from a family name, This is also a formal name, as distinct from a nickname.  |
| nickname                                       | – Enclosed by quotation marks. Used only when a nickname is more commonly known than the given / chosen name.  |
| middle initial or middle name, /or maiden name | – According to cultural naming conventions, and and personal preferences, if known, either abbreviate a middle name or include it in full. Include family names before marriage, according to personal preference, if known. |
| surname  | – Also known as a family name  |
| suffix   | – Generational suffixes used to distinguish family members with the same name.   |
| a.k.a.   | – Stage names, noms de plume, and other commonly known aliases.  |

Full names do not include titles or honorifics.

**EX** Sally K. Ride  
Stevland H. Morris, a.k.a Stevie Wonder  
Martin Luther King Jr.  
Jacqueline “Jackie” Kennedy Onassis

**See** Word List; Phonetic; Brackets

#### Clarifications

Clarifications are inserted when the speaker's words, or intended meaning, would otherwise be unclear in the text. Such moments may include confusing use of pronouns, regional turns of phrase, abbreviated reference to complex concepts, and many others.

Clarifications that require only a few short words are entered in-line with the text as editorial insertions in brackets, to the immediate right of the phrase they modify.

**EX** Bill swore to George that he [Bill] hadn't taken his [George's] money.  
It didn't turn out as he said it would, so he kind of had egg on his face [looked foolish].

Clarifications longer than a few words can be inserted as annotations.

**See** Introduction; Corrections; Sic; Annotations; Vernacular; Brackets

## Corrections

Corrections are entered when a speaker clearly misspoke but did not correct themselves, and when an incorrect statement is especially significant to the purpose of the interview, misleading to readers, or otherwise detrimental to the speaker's intent. Corrections should be used sparingly. Bear in mind that statements that are false in one way may offer valuable evidence in another. For this reason, corrections may be added by an editor, but a speaker's incorrect statement should not be removed, unless specifically requested by that speaker.

Brief corrections are entered in-line with the text. In brackets, include the word "read" followed by a colon and the correction.

**EX** The pan wasn't [read: was] very hot, so she burned her hand when she grabbed it.  
Alfred Hitchcock was born in 1999 [read: 1899], right at the end of the century.

Corrections longer than a few words require a combination of [sic] and an annotation.

When a correction would require extensive notation in the transcript, consult with the principal investigator on how best to proceed, and highlight the relevant passages for the narrator to review.

**See** Introduction; Clarifications; Sic; Annotations; Brackets

## Sic

Sic is short for *sic erat scriptum* [thus it was written], and commonly indicates when a quoted statement is shown exactly as it was in the original document, even if it seems incorrect or out of

place when quoted. In oral history transcription it signifies when a phrase or term is transcribed as it was spoken during the interview, regardless of whether it is an incorrect statement or a nonstandard word.

If a speaker makes an incorrect statement, but the correct information is not known, place *[sic]* directly to the right of the statement it modifies. If the correct information is known, but requires more than one or two short words in-line with the text, mark the passage using *[sic]* and include an annotation with the full correction.

**See** Introduction; Corrections; Annotations; Vernacular; Brackets

### Annotations

Annotations to the transcript are included as footnotes on the same page as the content they are associated with. Annotations are used to include a narrator's commentary on the transcript, contributed during the review process after the interview was completed. They are also used for editorial notes such as clarifications and corrections.

Any annotations that require more than five lines of text can be inserted after the body of the transcript as endnotes. Place brief instructions, in a footnote on the content's page, to see supplemental information in the endnotes. Other supplemental materials—such as copies of pictures and documents referred to during the interview—may also be appended to the transcript and referenced in the content as other endnotes are.

**See** Finalize; Clarifications; Corrections; Sic; Footnotes & Endnotes

### Citations

Citations may be specifically requested by speakers during the interview, or by the narrator during their review of the transcript. Include citations as footnotes on the same page as the content they are associated with.

**See** Finalize; Footnotes & Endnotes

# EDITING & REVIEW

## Paragraphing

Where to place paragraph breaks in a transcript is not entirely intuitive. Listen for changes of subject and for transitions in the speaker's train of thought. Try to avoid overly long paragraphs, as they become difficult for readers to clearly understand. When a speaker's words span multiple pages, at least two paragraph breaks per page is a good place to start.

## Vernacular

In most cases, spoken language does not strictly adhere to formal written standards of grammar, usage, or syntax. Faithful translation of the spoken word to text requires a certain amount of artful compromise. How, and whether, to apply rules of standard written English will depend on the specific goals of each project, and the preferences of each narrator.

The diversity of English vernacular is only growing, and the challenge of oral history transcription is to portray this diversity without imposing biases on the text. Here are two important tools that will help:

- 1) Maintain a consistent approach. Be as transparent as possible about the methods of that approach so that future readers may clearly interpret the source.
- 2) Do not resort to phonetic spellings of any dialect's characteristic pronunciations. While a fluent American English speaker from the Midwest might pronounce a word "pärk," which a person from New England pronounces "p<sup>h</sup>a:k," they would both spell the word as "park." Use standard spellings of words available in the English dictionary.

In CCOHR's approach, a transcript's first priority is to clearly communicate what speakers intended to say. The second priority is fidelity to the recording, and portraying key characteristics of each individual's speech and thought.

Departure from the recording is necessary when a statement becomes especially unclear, misleading, or detrimental to the speaker's intended meaning (e.g., if the speaker clearly misspoke, or if the meaning is lost or distorted outside of its original spoken context).

Transcriptionists and audit-editors should rely on their experience and best judgment when deciding how to depart from the recording for clarity. Any significant departures from the recording,

or editorial insertions, are marked in brackets and must adhere to rules of standard written English described in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. When unsure how to proceed, consult with interviewers and principal investigators. Narrators will make the final decision when they review the transcript.

There are a few common ways for spoken words to become unclear in text, which should be given special scrutiny by audit-editors:

- 1) Singular / plural, tense, or subject / verb disagreements.
- 2) Omitted definite or indefinite articles, such as “a,” “an,” and “the.”

In most cases, the surest way to consistently make decisions, without imposing biases on the text, is to adhere to grammatical rules described in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Consult with principal investigators when unsure how to proceed.

- **Contractions**

Spoken words often run together, and some letters may go unpronounced. Nonstandard contractions (goin', would've) should always be transcribed as their full analogous words in standard written English (going, would have). Contractions found in the dictionary (isn't, wouldn't) may be transcribed as they are.

- **Slang & Regionalisms:**

Slang and regionalisms are words or phrases commonly used within socially or geographically bounded groups of people. Slang words may enter into and out of common use more rapidly than regionalisms.

Both slang and regionalisms may be unclear to people outside these common social or geographical groups. Provide clarification, if necessary, in brackets the first time each word appears in the interview's transcript.

Spell slang and regionalisms as they appear in the dictionary. Words not found in the dictionary are spelled as they commonly would be in their place of origin. When no standard or common spelling exists, or one cannot be found, spell the word as it sounds and mark it as phonetic in brackets the first time it appears in the transcript. Use one consistent spelling for all interview transcriptions in the oral history project, and rely on the word list as needed.

Some nonstandard slang are compound words that result when words, often spoken in pairs, merge into one (kinda, gotta). Transcribe such slang as their full distinct words in standard written English (kind of, got to).

- Neologisms:

Neologisms are nonstandard words, in many cases invented by the speaker. They are not commonly shared among a collective group. Neologisms will not be found in the dictionary, although their spelling is often easily intuited, and their meaning clear and intentional in context. Mark a neologism with [sic] the first time it appears in the interview's transcript.

**EX** I think my dad was more of a Republocrat [sic].

**See** Introduction; Word List; Clarifications; Sic; Annotations; Phonetic; Brackets

### Foreign Language Words & Phrases

This style guide is designed for oral histories conducted in English. However, speakers recording an oral history in English may also utilize words and phrases in other languages for any number of reasons. Spell and capitalize foreign language words as they would commonly be spelled and capitalized in their language of origin, and set them in italics. Proper nouns, however, are the exception. Do not italicize foreign-language proper nouns, such as places, institutions, companies, and brand names. Provide a translation of the word or phrase, in brackets, the first time it appears in the interview.

In the event that the language does not use a Latin alphabet, rely on standard phonetic spellings. When no standard phonetic spelling exists, or one cannot be found, spell the word as it sounds and mark it as phonetic in brackets the first time it appears in the transcript. Use one consistent spelling for all interview transcriptions in the oral history project, and rely on the word list as needed.

**See** Word List; Clarifications; Phonetic; Brackets

### Spelled Words

Words spelled out by speakers are set in capital letters and joined with hyphens.

**EX** That's why he spelled it A-M-E-R-I-K-A.

When a speaker spells out a word as an aside to their statement, omit the act of spelling from the transcription. ("Her name was Tanya, T-A-N-Y-A," is transcribed as, "Her name was Tanya.")

**See** Hyphens

## False Starts

False starts include both sentences and words that are cut short before completion.

False starts most frequently occur when a person has misspoken, in which case they will often stop and correct themselves. False starts followed by a correction can be omitted in the transcript, leaving only the correction. (“That was before the—after the mass,” is transcribed as, “That was after the mass.”)

False starts may also occur when one thought is interrupted by another as the person is speaking. In such cases, once the interrupting thought is expressed, the speaker will often repeat and complete the initial thought. If repeated after the interrupting thought, the initial false start can be omitted. (“Mom made the best—dad couldn’t stand them, but mom made the best pancakes,” is transcribed as, “Dad couldn’t stand them, but mom made the best pancakes.”)

If the speaker does not return to the initial thought, the false start should be transcribed in the text.

**EX** Mom made the best—dad couldn’t stand them, though.

However, there are exceptions to these guidelines. If a false start, regardless of whether it is subsequently corrected or completed, contributes valuable meaning to the text, it should not be omitted from the transcript. Instead, punctuate the break in the sentence with an em dash. Also, intentional repetition of phrases for emphasis should be preserved.

When a word is cut short before being fully pronounced, do not transcribe a partially spelled word. Either complete the word in the text or, if it cannot be deciphered in the recording, omit the word from the transcript.

When a number is cut short before being fully pronounced, the guidelines above will apply in most cases. However, it is common to say part of a date, large number, or decimal while thinking out loud about the exact figure. If the full number ultimately can’t be recalled, and the partially remembered number is still valuable, then it should be transcribed. In such cases, spell out the words, rather than numerals, for these partial numbers, and use an em dash to show that they are incomplete.

**EX** Okay, but he was born in nineteen fifty—I want to say seven, but I’m not sure.

It was off by this tiny amount, like three point—I don’t know, but less than 3.5.

**See** Unfinished Sentences; Em dashes; Numbers

## Reflexive Phrases

Some words and short phrases are uttered habitually, and do not contribute to the overall function of the sentence (well, so, I guess). At times they may even detract from the sentence's intended meaning (kind of, sort of). While they are distinctive aspects of a person's manner of speaking, they are likely to clutter a transcript and to become barriers to clarity in the text.

The general rule is to omit such utterances. However, when they are necessary to represent the unique characteristics of a person's speech, a small number can be transcribed at key points in the interview.

## Nonlexical Sounds

Speech may be peppered with a variety of nonlexical sounds. These are short utterances that are associated with thoughts, or that signal abbreviated exchanges between speakers, without being clearly or consistently tied to intentional communication. In most cases, any meaning they carry is better expressed in the recording of the interview than in the transcript, and they do not need to be transcribed.

- **Pause Fillers**

Pause fillers are commonly vocalized as a speaker thinks of what to say next, but they do not communicate specific meaning. They may be sounds (uh, um, hmm), and sometimes words (like, you know). The general rule is to omit pause fillers from the transcript.

- **Agreement & Disagreement**

Vocalizations expressing agreement (uh-huh) and disagreement (unh-uh) often act as reflexive sounds of engaged participation in a conversation. An interviewer, for example, might interject these sounds frequently, as a narrator speaks, as a means of encouraging them to continue. These sounds are likely to clutter a transcript and become barriers to clarity in text, and should be omitted in most cases. However, vocalizations of agreement and disagreement that are used as direct responses analogous to "yes" and "no" should be transcribed as "yes" and "no".

- **Questions & Consideration**

These sounds convey a need for clarification (hmm?) or are associated with thoughtful pauses (hmm). In many cases they are not necessary to transcribe. If needed, however, a question sound can be transcribed as an analogous word in brackets (What?), and consideration may be indicated with nonverbal communication notation.

**See** Reflexive Phrases; Nonverbal Communication

## Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication may include actions and gestures, affect, and other expressive sounds, as well as notations of modified speech, such as singing. This does not include environmental sounds, such as sirens or ringing phones, or other incidental noises made by the speakers, such as coughs or sneezes, unless such occurrences explicitly become part of the conversation.

Notation of nonverbal communication must be clear, consistent, and must avoid editorializing or overinterpreting. For example, write “laughs” and not “giggles” or “smirks,” and write “shows emotion” and not “gets choked up” or “begins to weep.” Notation is written in present tense, third-person verbs, not gerunds. Insert notation in-line, as with any other word in a speaker’s sentence.

Enclose notation in brackets. Brackets are set in roman, and the words are italicized.

Use notation of nonverbal communication sparingly, and omit any that may be equivalent to reflexive phrases, such as nervous laughter, or pause filler, such as sighs.

Examples of common notations and their use:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| [Laughs]                  | – The speaker laughs.  |
| [Laughter]                | – Multiple speakers laugh together.  |
| [Shows emotion]           | – Notable signs of affect, otherwise invisible in text.  |
| [Sighs], [Gasps]          | – Breath as intentional communication by the speaker.  |
| [Makes sound]             | – The speaker makes a sound to illustrate a point.   |
| [Makes sound of birdsong] |  |
| [Makes sound of gunfire]  | – The speaker imitates a specific sound.   |
| [Pause]                   | – Notable pauses in dialogue. Use sparingly.   |
| [Snaps]                   |  |
| [Indicates size]          |  |
| [Imitates gesture]        |  |
| [Refers to picture]       | – Actions.   |
| [Sings]                   |  |
| [Imitates accent]         | – Modified speech.<br>Place notation of modified speech to the immediate left of the words or phrases they modify. |

See Reflexive Phrases; Nonlexical Sounds; Unfinished Sentences; Brackets

## Unfinished Sentences

As opposed to false starts, unfinished sentences are neither misspoken nor interrupted thought. While they are incomplete written clauses, they may represent complete spoken thoughts or expressions.

**EX** It was just [*snaps*]*—*he was always that quick about it.

Well, I'm afraid of heights, so*—*

Punctuate the end of an unfinished sentence with an em dash. Do not use ellipses.

**See** False Starts; Em dashes; Ellipses

## Parenthetical Statements & Asides

Slight breaks in a sentence, such as interjections, parenthetical statements, and nonrestrictive clauses, can be enclosed in commas. Stronger breaks, such as asides for explanation or comment, can be enclosed in em dashes.

**EX** He screamed as loud as he could, which wasn't that loud, but they got the point.

I had a teacher*—*I think her name was Alexis*—*who really taught me about this.

**See** Commas; Em dashes

## Phonetic

Words and phrases spelled phonetically in the transcript must be noted as such for the benefit of future readers. Phonetic notation may also be used when a complete name or proper spelling could not be verified in the transcript review process.

Insert the word “phonetic” in brackets following the word or phrase it refers to.

**EX** Alvin [*phonetic*] was a neighbor when I was a kid.

## Unclear & Crosstalk

When a speaker's words cannot be deciphered in the recording, even after multiple reviews, mark such moments [*unclear*] in-line with the text.

**EX** She'd call sometimes [*unclear*] if I couldn't [*unclear*].

When multiple speakers talk over each other to the point where the recording is unclear, mark such moments as “crosstalk,” in brackets, in-line with the text.

**EX** Q: That couldn't [crosstalk]—  
Smith: —[crosstalk] back then.

When multiple speaker's talk over each other, but their words are not unclear, represent their simultaneous speech as a series of sequential interjections using em dashes.

**EX** Q: That couldn't have been—  
Smith: Well, it was Adam—  
Q: —it was Adam?  
Smith: —because I wasn't working back then.

**See** Brackets; Em dashes

## Conjunctions

Conjunctions are typically used more frequently in spoken language than they are in text. While speakers often use conjunctions to connect independent clauses, this may cause challenges in the text that are similar to reflexive phrases and pause fillers.

Some helpful guidelines to address conjunctions:

- 1) When the length of a sentence becomes burdensome or confusing in text, replacing conjunctions with punctuation may improve clarity.
- 2) If a conjunction begins a sentence, consider whether it is a reflexive phrase, or whether it contributes valuable meaning. Omit conjunctions that serve no specific purpose in such cases.

**See** Reflexive Phrases; Nonlexical Sounds

## Titles

- Publications

Titles of books, newspapers, journals, films, and other long-form works or collections are set in *Italics*. Titles of articles, chapters, essays, and other short works, such as poetry, are set in roman type and enclosed by quotation marks. Provide the full title in brackets the first time it appears in the transcript.

- Legal Cases

Titles are set in italics. Use the abbreviation for versus (v.). Provide the full title in brackets the first time it appears in the transcript.

EX *United States v. Windsor*

See Complete Names & Terms; Brackets; Italics; Quotation Marks

### Spelling & Homophones

Words that are frequently shortened in informal writing (alright, OK, alot) should always be spelled fully in transcripts (all right, okay, a lot).

Common sources of error in transcription are words that sound the same but mean different things.

The following is an abbreviated list of words often mistakenly swapped.

|         |   |         |   |         |
|---------|---|---------|---|---------|
| Ail     | — | Ale     |   |         |
| Berth   | — | Birth   |   |         |
| Chased  | — | Chaste  |   |         |
| Chute   | — | Shoot   |   |         |
| Council | — | Counsel |   |         |
| Decent  | — | Dissent |   |         |
| Effect  | — | Affect  |   |         |
| It's    | — | Its     |   |         |
| Rye     | — | Wry     |   |         |
| Tied    | — | Tide    |   |         |
| Who's   | — | Whose   |   |         |
| Pallet  | — | Palate  | — | Palette |
| Poor    | — | Pour    | — | Pore    |
| Rein    | — | Rain    | — | Reign   |
| Their   | — | They're | — | There   |

# STYLE

## Abbreviations

The general rule for abbreviations is to use periods for those that end in lowercase letters, and not to use periods for those that end in upper case letters.

**EX** e.g., a.m., p.m., etc., a.k.a  
PhD, US, DC, MA

Degrees that end in lowercase letters (BLib, MDiv, DSc) are the exception. Do not use periods for academic degrees.

Initials in place of given names use periods (W. E. B. Du Bois), however initials in place of full names do not (JFK, MLK Jr.).

If the abbreviation is uncommon, or unclear out of context, insert the full unabbreviated term in brackets the first time it appears in the interview.

**See** Complete Names & Terms; Clarifications; Time of Day; Brackets

## Acronyms

Acronyms do not use periods.

When an acronym is given on its own, not previously connected to its term in full, insert the full term in brackets directly following; likewise, a term that first appears on its own, without its acronym, should be directly followed by the acronym in brackets provided the acronym is used on its own later in the narrative.

**See** Complete Names & Terms; Brackets

## Brackets

Use brackets for editorial insertions made by audit-editors or transcriptionists.

Brackets enclose expanded abbreviations and acronyms, translations of foreign language phrases, and complete names and terms the first time they appear in the interview.

Brackets enclose corrections and clarifications, instances of nonverbal communication, notations of phonetic spellings and modified speech, moments of unclear recordings, as well as session breaks, interruptions, and interview end points.

#### - Punctuation & Format -

Expanded abbreviations and acronyms, translations, clarifications, and notations of phonetic spellings follow the terms they modify. Any necessary punctuation falls to the right of the closing bracket.

**EX** He just said, “*Addio* [goodbye].”

She [Anne Miller] wasn’t that mad at her [Sara Miller], but she [Sara] didn’t want to find out.

Notations of modified speech precede the terms they modify.

**EX** The song goes—[sings] “lavender’s blue dilly, dilly—” slowly, like that.

She talked [imitates accent] like this.

Complete names and terms are inserted where they would naturally fall in the term.

**EX** [Angela Y.] Davis was at Brandeis [University] back then.

Notations of corrections, editorial insertions, nonverbal communication, and unclear recordings are inserted wherever they occur in their clause, and are punctuated as any other word in the sentence would be.

**EX** It sounded like [imitates sound of airplane] right over our heads.

She never—[pause] she never called me after that.

He was born in the year that—you know, like the title of the book [1984].

When beginning a sentence with a bracketed term, capitalize the first letter of the first word in brackets. When the bracketed term stands outside the bounds of a sentence, capitalize the first letter, but do not punctuate.

**EX** Smith: Do you know what I mean?

Q: [Laughs]

Smith: I’ll take that as a yes [laughs].

**See** Sessions Breaks; Complete Names & Terms; Clarifications; Corrections; Sic; Vernacular; Foreign Language Words & Phrases; Nonverbal Communication; Phonetic; Unclear & Crosstalk; Abbreviations; Acronyms

## Capitalization

- Professional Titles

The general rule is to capitalize a title that is used as part of a name, but not when it is used in place of a name.

**EX** The captain may have been the best person to speak to Admiral Díaz about this.

**Note** See *Chicago Manual of Style* 8.19 – 8.36 for further details on capitalization rules for titles and offices.

- Ethnic, Socioeconomic & Other Groups

Names of groups by class, generation, ability, and other physical characteristics are not capitalized.

In general, names of ethnic and national groups (Hispanic, Chinese) are capitalized. Compound nationalities and ethnicities (African American, American Indian, and Native American) are capitalized, but not hyphenated.

It is also increasingly common to capitalize terms for racial identities (Black, Indigenous, Brown, White). Consult with the principal investigator when unsure, and strive for internal consistency within the project, unless the narrator voices a specific preference for their transcript.

**Note** See *Chicago Manual of Style* 8.38 – 8.43 for further details on capitalization rules for ethnic, socioeconomic & other groups.

## Commas

Use commas to clearly organize elements of a sentence. Do not use them to indicate breaths, short pauses, or rhythms of a speaker's cadence.

Commas enclose interjections, parenthetical statements, nonrestrictive clauses, and other slight breaks in a sentence. Significant breaks in a sentence may be enclosed by em dashes instead.

Commas do not enclose suffixes of names (Eric H. Holder Jr., Queen Elizabeth II).

Commas are used to set off names of places (Chicago, IL) as well as dates that include the month, day, and year (December 2, 1987). In these cases, a comma follows the year or state when the sentence continues.

When a question occurs within a larger sentence, a comma precedes the question.

**EX** You had to ask, “Why would anyone do this?” even if it made you unpopular.

**Note** This is an abbreviated list. See *Chicago Manual of Style* 6.16 - 6.55 for further details on commas.

**See** Introduction; Parenthetical Statements & Asides; Em dashes; Dates

## Ellipses

Ellipses are only used to represent omissions and redactions from a transcript. To indicate suspension points, unfinished sentences, or false starts use em dashes. To indicate notable pauses in speech use nonverbal communication notations in brackets.

**Note** CCOHR does not indicate in transcripts or recordings when omissions or redactions have taken place. Omissions would only be made from transcripts upon narrator request, and edits or redactions from recordings are only provided in extremely rare circumstances.

**See** Introduction; Process; False Starts; Nonverbal Communication; Unfinished Sentences; Em dashes; Brackets

## Em dashes

Em dashes help to preserve the flow of thoughts in a paragraph, allowing the reader to clearly understand transitions that often take place in reflective and analytical interviews.

Use em dashes to punctuate the break at the end of an unfinished sentence or false start.

Em dashes may also be used to enclose interjections, parenthetical statements, and asides mid-sentence. Short parenthetical statements and other slight breaks in a sentence may be indicated with commas. Stronger breaks—such as breaks for contextual information or comment—are indicated with em dashes.

EX This was—or so she thought at the time—a good idea.

This seemed, at the time, to be a good idea.

#### - Punctuation & Format -

There are no spaces on either side of an em dash. The sole exception is at the start of a speaker's statement, between the name and colon that indicate who is speaking and an em dash.

EX Q: I thought that was—it could have been in—

Smith: Maybe it was later.

Q: —the 2000s.

Do not capitalize the first letter of a new sentence directly following an em dash. However, if there is a paragraph break between the em dash and the new sentence, then the first letter is capitalized. Proper nouns and other titles following an em dash are capitalized as they usually are.

EX That was all very [*gestures thumbs down*]—  
Anyway, let's change the subject to something—oh, I can't remember the name of the—Gerald.  
That was it. That's a great story.

Do not use additional punctuation marks, such as commas and periods, immediately following or preceding em dashes. Quotation marks, exclamation points, and question marks are the only exceptions.

EX He said, "We only have enough—" meaning just his family "—only enough for us."

Do you remember the—? when was that? Twenty years ago?

This was well before \_can you believe it?\_ anyone had imagined the internet.

Note These punctuation guidelines for em dashes are similar to, but different from *Chicago Manual of Style* 6.89 and 13.54, because em dashes serve a slightly different purpose in oral history transcripts than they do in other written works.

See False Starts; Unfinished Sentences; Parenthetical Statements & Asides; Unclear & Crosstalk; Commas; Ellipses; Parentheses

## Footnotes & Endnotes

- Footnotes

Use footnotes for clarifications or corrections that require more than a few short words in-line with the text of the transcript, for annotations to the transcript, and for citations of external sources or references to supplemental materials included with the transcript, such as photographs and other documents.

Mark footnotes with sequential superscript numerals in-line, and include the full content of the note at the bottom of the same page. Source citations should be formatted as full notes according to *Chicago Manual of Style*.

- Endnotes & Supplemental Materials

In the event that any clarifications, corrections, or annotations require more than five lines of text, place brief instructions in the footnote to see supplemental information in endnotes following the body of the transcript. Endnotes and supplemental materials may also include copies of photographs and documents referred to during the interview. Each of the notes and materials should be labeled with the numeral of the corresponding footnote in the transcript body.

**See** Clarifications; Corrections; Sic; Annotations; Citations

## Hyphens

Use hyphens for modifiers and compound words as needed. Do not use hyphens to join compound nationalities or ethnicities.

**Note** *Chicago Manual of Style*, 7.81 – 7.89, provides a detailed hyphenation guide.

**See** Spelled Words; Capitalization; Numbers

## Italics

Italics are used to indicate words and phrases in foreign languages, letters as letters, and titles of publications such as books, newspapers, journals, films, and other long-form works or collections.

Do not use italics to indicate emphasis in speech. Underlines are used instead.

**See** Foreign Language Words & Phrases; Titles; Letters; Underlines

## Letters

- Letter Grades

Capitalize and set in roman type. When they are plural do not use apostrophes.

**EX** I got the one A in math, but the rest were all Cs.

- Letters as Letters

Set in lower-case and italicize. Use apostrophes when plural.

**EX** Well, *a*, he didn't remember, and *b*, it wasn't in his notes.

She won't say the *f*-word.

There are two *p*'s in Mississippi.

- Exceptions

Common exceptions to the rules above occur when letters are used as words or in turns of phrase.

Exceptions may be capitalized or lowercase, set in roman type or italicized. Use apostrophes when plural and lowercase. Do not use apostrophes when capitalized and plural. Merriam-Webster dictionary is a reliable source for proper usage if unspecified in Chicago Manual of Style.

**EX** They carefully reviewed the facts from A to Z.

He always dots the *i*'s and crosses the *t*'s.

## Numbers

The general rule for numbers is to spell whole numbers from zero through one hundred (seven, fifty-two), and to use numerals for numbers above one hundred (313, 1,520). The exception is when whole numbers above one hundred are spoken in combination with hundred, thousand, million, billion, trillion, etc. In those cases, hundred, thousand, million, etc. are spelled out and the preceding numbers follow the general rules for numbers (three hundred, two hundred thousand, 430 trillion).

**Note** This is a departure from *Chicago Manual of Style* 9.4 and 9.8 for simplicity and to clearly represent speech.

Spell any number that begins a sentence, regardless of whether it would typically be represented in numerals.

**EX** Nineteen forty-nine is when I was born.

I was born in 1949.

- Roman Numerals

Used in proper nouns, such as names of people and events (Robert Irving III, World War II).

- Dates

Decades and years are written in numerals (1912, '96). Do not use an apostrophe s for decades (1980s, '80s).

Centuries are spelled out and lower case (twenty-first century).

Specific dates are often spoken in ordinal form (twelfth of November, the twelfth), and should be written out as they were said on the recording. All dates, whether spoken in ordinal or cardinal form, are spelled out as would generally be done for numbers zero through one hundred.

**Note** This is a departure from *Chicago Manual of Style* 9.31 in order to clearly represent speech.

Dates that include the month followed by the day and year are written with the year offset by a comma (November twelfth, 1998).

Dates used as titles for historical events are written with the full title of the event in brackets the first time they appear in the interview.

**EX** Policing changed in this city after nine-eleven [September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001].

December fourth [assassination of Fred Hampton, December 4, 1969] was a turning point.

- Addresses

Numbered streets between zero and one hundred are spelled out as numbers usually are. Ordinals for numbered streets above one hundred, set in numerals, are not superscript.

Building and apartment numbers are always set in numerals.

**EX** We rode down from 116th and Broadway to get to 45 Fifth Avenue.

- Percents, Fractions & Decimals

Percents are spelled out zero through one hundred as numbers usually are. Spell out the word “percent” rather than using the symbol “%” (fifty percent, 110 percent).

**Note** This is a departure from *Chicago Manual of Style* 9.18 for the sake of simplicity.

Spell out and hyphenate simple fractions (five-eighths, two-thirds).

Use numerals for decimals (“two point five” is transcribed as 2.5). For decimals smaller than one, place a zero to the left of the decimal point (“point five” is transcribed as 0.5).

- Times of Day

Spell out times of day in even, half, and quarter hours (four thirty, six o'clock, noon, midnight, quarter to two, half past three, six fifteen). Use numerals when exact times of day are emphasized, such as times followed by a.m. and p.m. and times that are specific to the minute.

**EX** We woke up at 8:23 a.m. and had to run to catch a 10:00 a.m. train.

So, it's ten in the morning and we're going to get started.

- Currency

As with other numbers, spell out amounts of money zero through one hundred, use numerals for decimal numbers, and write out the dictionary words for large sums of money as spoken in the recording (million, trillion). Spell out the words used for currencies, and do not use currency symbols.

**EX** There were 125 dollars left, out of three hundred in the budget.

Latina women made fifty-four cents for every dollar a White man made.

The bill called for 1.5 trillion in spending.

He'd bought a home for 150 thousand dollars before 2008, but had to sell it at ninety thousand.

**Note** This is a departure from *Chicago Manual of Style* 9.24 in order to clearly represent speech.

**See** Complete Names & Terms; Clarifications; Corrections; Abbreviations; Brackets; Commas; False Starts

## Parentheses

CCOHR does not use parentheses in transcripts. For parenthetical statements and asides, use em dashes or commas instead of parentheses.

**See** Parenthetical Statements & Asides; Commas; Em dashes

## Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotations made by a speaker. Quotation marks can also be used sparingly—only as necessary for clarity in text—to indicate unspoken discourse or internal voice. Unspoken discourse that occurs within a sentence begins with a capital letter, whether or not it is enclosed in quotation marks.

**EX** Well, Chavez said, “You’re never strong enough that you don’t need help.”

I had to keep thinking, “She’s wrong. I know that.”

I just felt like, What the hell? You know? I can’t believe they did this.

Scare quotes should only be used sparingly, as necessary for clarity, as specifically requested by the narrator, or as specifically stated by a speaker. When a speaker says, “quote, unquote,” place the modified word or phrase in quotation marks rather than spelling out “quote, unquote.” (“We were quote, unquote, friends,” is transcribed as, We were “friends”.)

Quotation marks are also used for titles of articles, chapters, essays, and other short works.

**See** Titles

## Slashes

Slashes are used when explicitly stated by the speaker (“He was a teacher slash mentor,” is transcribed as, He was a teacher/mentor).

## Underlines

Use underlines sparingly to indicate special emphasis in speech. Do not use italics for this purpose.

**EX** But, he was there. He didn’t tell you that?

**See** Italics

# APPENDIX - 1

Title Page Template

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[NAME OF ORAL HISTORY PROJECT]

Oral History Interview with

[Narrator Full Name]

[Name Of Copyright Holder, Or Organization Responsible For The Oral History]

[Year of Interview]

Title Page Example

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral History Interview with  
Alfred G. Smith

Columbia Center for Oral History Research  
Columbia University  
2015

# APPENDIX – 2

Preface Template

---

## PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with [Narrator Full Name] conducted by [Interviewer Full Name] on [Date of Interview Session 1], and on [Date of Interview Session 2]. This interview is part of the [Name of Oral History Project].

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the narrator.

## Preface Example

### PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Alfred G. Smith conducted by Terrance L. D'Emilio on May 1, 2015. This interview is part of the Columbia University Oral History Project.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose. The following transcript has been reviewed, edited, and approved by the narrator.

# APPENDIX – 3

## Transcript Example

Transcriptionist: Transcription Service

Session Number: 1

Narrator: Alfred G. Smith

Location: New York, NY

Interviewer: Terrance L. D'Emilio

Date: May 1, 2015

Q: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean feugiat congue felis ut tincidunt. Nunc congue metus id ante efficitur ullamcorper. Nullam tempor vehicula ipsum, vel mollis diam ultricies ut. Nulla congue in tortor non tincidunt. Vivamus quis eros tempor, dapibus turpis sit amet, suscipit turpis. Suspendisse vestibulum purus ligula, sed lacinia elit fermentum aliquam. Nunc sed dapibus mi. In sit amet sodales velit, id blandit erat. Duis in purus non sapien fermentum aliquam a id neque. Aliquam faucibus magna sit amet est posuere sodales.

Smith: Nullam tempus felis lectus, eget tincidunt sapien auctor id.

Q: Praesent id dolor justo. Curabitur metus risus, vehicula at maximus nec, blandit sit amet augue?

Smith: Morbi eget orci rhoncus, sagittis orci sit amet, molestie lectus. Proin pretium augue et dolor vulputate congue tempus eu metus. Maecenas sem tortor, accumsan mattis mauris id, fermentum efficitur quam. Nulla gravida et erat elementum tempor. Mauris consectetur leo aliquet suscipit rhoncus. Morbi rutrum suscipit tortor, vel aliquet quam efficitur sit amet.

Aliquam pharetra elit eget sem ultricies, ac gravida nunc fringilla. Morbi eget orci rhoncus, sagittis orci sit amet, molestie lectus. Proin pretium augue et dolor vulputate congue tempus eu metus. Maecenas sem tortor, accumsan mattis mauris id, fermentum efficitur quam. Nulla

viverra libero. Aliquam non fringilla lectus. Quisque ac suscipit sem. Aliquam maximus pellentesque pulvinar. Pellentesque diam ipsum, consequat in metus sed, malesuada aliquam ipsum. Ut ac auctor magna. Praesent sodales, arcu non pharetra iaculis, ex ante semper eros, eget sollicitudin quam quam ut erat. In ultricies tincidunt euismod. Nunc mollis euismod odio, sed semper justo aliquet a. Vivamus accumsan dapibus nisi, sed mattis massa scelerisque quis. Nulla posuere sollicitudin nisl sit amet bibendum. Nam sagittis, ex accumsan tempus aliquet, est massa auctor massa, eget fringilla risus diam quis eros.

[INTERRUPTION]

Smith: Phasellus a leo nec diam elementum dapibus sed rutrum lectus. Mauris efficitur, ipsum sit amet iaculis molestie, orci ligula porttitor libero, vel tincidunt mauris arcu at sem. Fusce viverra pellentesque libero eget pharetra. Maecenas id aliquet diam, nec tempus nibh. Sed id nisl sem. Proin convallis arcu semper, rhoncus felis et, semper arcu. Donec venenatis, nulla ornare consequat finibus, sapien diam lobortis nisl, nec sollicitudin nisi neque et massa. Praesent nec sem tellus. Nunc commodo nisi eu neque fermentum, nec commodo nibh congue. Fusce finibus, erat sed bibendum commodo, mi arcu eleifend metus, vitae mattis ex ante ut eros. In nec est est. Fusce iaculis venenatis porta. Aliquam erat volutpat. Sed quis dignissim magna. In congue arcu quam, vitae suscipit mauris dapibus nec.

Vivamus nec nulla ut felis sodales tincidunt vel eget velit. Aenean vel molestie odio. Phasellus pellentesque interdum interdum. Donec dignissim aliquam finibus. Cras a luctus eros, at tempor ipsum. Etiam scelerisque ullamcorper varius. Quisque neque quam, aliquam nec placerat eget,

ligula. Nulla eu commodo dolor. In pharetra leo ac mollis vestibulum. In tempus molestie erat in pellentesque. Praesent volutpat turpis sed felis iaculis, ac eleifend quam dignissim. Etiam iaculis sollicitudin dapibus. Aenean sed elementum nisi. Quisque ac purus at turpis placerat finibus. Phasellus quis accumsan nulla. Etiam at mollis purus, sed lobortis sem. Pellentesque consectetur felis imperdiet, tristique ex ac, auctor justo. Suspendisse convallis sapien at nisi maximus ullamcorper. Fusce fringilla lacus a lorem convallis, at pellentesque mi maximus. Aenean sit amet tortor vitae elit euismod molestie at at urna. Fusce est elit, fringilla quis tempus eu, sodales sed libero. Fusce ex enim, cursus eu euismod non, tincidunt ac augue. Aliquam erat volutpat. Nulla dignissim risus ac sem imperdiet, vitae accumsan purus euismod. Ut at vestibulum tellus. Vivamus nec condimentum tortor. Praesent vitae metus et velit ultrices pharetra. Aliquam vitae velit at elit bibendum maximus. Morbi elementum ligula imperdiet, mattis ipsum vitae, volutpat ex. Nullam vel metus eleifend, feugiat purus ut, lobortis nisl. Cras sit amet nibh sed leo rhoncus imperdiet. Proin erat ante, euismod vestibulum sollicitudin ac, semper et quam. Donec ac elit eget metus sodales pellentesque vitae in nulla.

Q: Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Vivamus non.

[END OF SESSION]

Transcriptionist: Transcription Service

Session Number: 2

Narrator: Alfred G. Smith

Location: New York, NY

Interviewer: Terrance L. D'Emilio

Date: May 3, 2015

Q: Fusce aliquam aliquet purus sit amet vulputate. Proin egestas neque non nunc varius dignissim. Nulla enim dolor, accumsan lacinia est in, lobortis laoreet ipsum. Phasellus magna libero, fermentum at pretium sit amet, malesuada at lacus?

Smith: Nunc tincidunt enim in odio sagittis, sed finibus lacus dignissim. Aenean congue ornare justo venenatis ultricies. Nam sed suscipit lacus, a placerat enim. Vivamus et felis dolor. Etiam rhoncus ipsum et augue aliquet, id pharetra urna mollis. Donec vulputate lobortis mauris at hendrerit. In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Fusce venenatis ligula turpis, et fringilla lorem malesuada ac. Ut volutpat rhoncus dictum. Nulla efficitur et augue pharetra varius. Sed iaculis auctor eros, nec ullamcorper purus mattis et. Sed ornare ultricies lectus, ac euismod odio tincidunt non. Morbi nec ipsum ligula. Duis ligula lorem, pulvinar sit amet ullamcorper at, euismod et libero. Aliquam erat volutpat.

Vestibulum faucibus sit amet odio non imperdiet. Suspendisse accumsan sed augue sed pellentesque. Sed in iaculis dui. Donec non placerat nisl, ut maximus libero. Sed ac bibendum sem, sed mattis tortor. Sed malesuada lorem ac elit maximus pharetra. Ut euismod mauris sit amet euismod ornare. Mauris elit nisl, rutrum vel lacus non, venenatis eleifend risus. Nunc tincidunt euismod libero, at mollis nulla ullamcorper nec. Donec congue orci eu urna volutpat bibendum. Sed lectus nibh, accumsan at aliquam eget, bibendum in purus. Mauris sed

volutpat. Fusce placerat dignissim tincidunt. Sed ultricies vehicula nulla, eu volutpat libero gravida at. Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae; Sed dapibus metus molestie, fermentum ante a, gravida nibh. Quisque tincidunt ut magna eget consectetur. Nulla vitae urna arcu. Aliquam id mauris placerat, laoreet quam eget, ornare nibh. Sed porta lorem neque. Vivamus posuere ex lectus, non interdum ex pellentesque nec. Maecenas egestas quam nec lorem laoreet, non eleifend ipsum venenatis. Donec iaculis felis nisi, a mollis nisi dictum venenatis. Vestibulum accumsan purus in sapien fermentum, id congue ligula consequat. Fusce efficitur fermentum risus, fringilla semper sem sodales at. Sed vitae dictum purus. Integer ac nisi congue, auctor nisi interdum, ultrices felis. Ut aliquam ultrices orci pretium tincidunt. Praesent ac mollis libero. Ut semper leo vel scelerisque lacinia. Sed in tempor nunc, sed mollis quam. Donec mattis varius massa.

Q: Lorem ipsum.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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