

Yale UNIVERSITY PRESS

Suggestions for Writing Front Matter

In assembling your manuscript, follow our guidelines for [Preparing Your Files and Printout](#). Consult the suggestions below for guidance about the nature and purpose of the various front matter elements.

Table of Contents

The table of contents should list all the front matter, chapter titles, and back matter included in the book. Subheadings should not be listed. Do not include page numbers, which will be added later in the process.

Foreword

A foreword is optional but may be a valuable addition to the book. It is written by someone other than the author or editor, usually a recognized authority in the area the book covers, and introduces the book to its audience.

Preface

The preface is neither an integral part of the text nor a vehicle for exposition or lengthy discussion. It should not require more than two printed pages (three manuscript pages). It is entirely different from a foreword or an introduction and cannot replace or be replaced by either.

The preface is about the book as a book, not about the subject matter. It informs readers and reviewers of the aims and purposes of the book and the audience for whom it is intended. Since many reviewers base some of their comments on the preface and often quote from it directly, it is particularly important to provide a summary of the need for, and outlook of, the book in a way that will enable them to use suitable passages in their reviews.

In writing a preface, emphasize the constructive and creative ideas presented and avoid self-criticism. Deliberate omissions of relevant material should be pointed out, but not apologetically.

The following kinds of information should be included in the preface:

1. Why the book is needed, and how it is different from other books in its field. A few words about its origin may be suitable.
2. The scope and treatment of the subject matter (but no details or discussion of the subject matter) and the kinds of information that can be found in the volume.
3. What function the book will perform for its readers.
4. What groups of readers will find it of interest (including both those to whom the book is primarily directed and others who will also find it of value).
5. Method of research, editorial method, or special information about the book's organizational scheme.

Any additional material (such as acknowledgments, if brief) should be placed after these points. The preface need not be signed.

Acknowledgments

Brief acknowledgments may be placed at the end of the preface, but longer acknowledgments should constitute a separate section, placed either after the preface or in the back matter. The best acknowledgments thank those who contributed to development of the book but are not overly effusive and do not form a mini-biography of the author's life. The acknowledgments section may include credit lines for material that was taken from other sources or appeared elsewhere in an earlier form.

List of Abbreviations

If many abbreviations are used in the text, consider including a list of abbreviations in the front matter to help the reader keep track of them. If abbreviations are used only in the notes, then the list of abbreviations should be placed in the back matter.

Introduction

Most introductions are not a part of the front matter but begin the text proper, starting with arabic page 1. The introduction delineates the subject of the book, provides overall cohesion, and indicates the direction of the text. Unlike the preface, it is an integral part of the text.