
Library of Congress Subject Headings

Module 6.11
Geographic Subdivisions Part 4:
General Rules for Formulating Geographic Subdivisions

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Plan

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 - General instructions guiding the format of geographic subdivisions
- Next module
 - Rules for the “exceptional countries”
 - United States
 - Canada
 - Great Britain

As we have already seen, headings may be geographically subdivided in only one place. Sometimes the geographic subdivision is interposed, and sometimes it comes at the very end of the heading string.

While headings may be geographically subdivided in only one place, the geographic subdivision itself may consist of either one or two parts.

In this module, we will discuss the general instructions for formulating geographic subdivisions. In the next module we will discuss special provisions that are made for the so-called exceptional countries: the United States, Canada, and Great Britain.

We have to address an administrative issue first. Unlike the other modules, which each has a single set of exercises at the end, there are practice exercises interspersed throughout this module and the next one, *in addition to* exercises at the end. These two modules are highly detailed and technical, and we want to make sure you have an opportunity to practice each step before moving on to the next one. The interspersed exercises are not graded. We recommend that you set aside enough time to complete each of the modules in one viewing, rather than stopping partway through. Otherwise, you will have to redo the interspersed exercises to get to where you left off.

Now that we have covered that, let's begin.

All of the rules that we will be discussing can be found in SHM H 830, Geographic Subdivision.

General Rule

- Subdivide directly by names of continents, regions larger than countries, countries, the provinces of Canada, the constituent countries of Great Britain, or the states of the United States
- Subdivide to subordinate localities located wholly within a country by interposing the name of the relevant country between the heading and the name of the subordinate locality

The general rule is as follows.

Subdivide directly by names of continents, regions larger than countries, countries, the provinces of Canada, the constituent countries of Great Britain, or the states of the United States.

Subdivide to subordinate localities located wholly within a country by interposing the name of the relevant country between the heading and the name of the subordinate locality.

That is a lot of information, and we will cover each part separately.

In this module we will discuss the rules that apply everywhere in the world *except for* the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, or any place within them.

Determining the Format

- Countries, regions larger than countries, continents
 - Subdivision is identical to the heading

Heading	Subdivision
Niger	—Niger
Europe, Central	—Europe, Central
North America	—North America
Congo (Democratic Republic)	—Congo (Democratic Republic)

The simplest situation is a geographic subdivision representing a country, a region larger than a country, or a continent. The subdivision is identical to the geographic heading in those cases.

The geographic subdivision for Niger is —**Niger**.

The geographic subdivision for Central Europe is —**Europe, Central**, just like the heading.

Notice that the subdivision includes the qualifier on the heading if there is one, as in the heading **Congo (Democratic Republic)**.

Determining the Format

- Begin with the heading

Mumbai (India)

Geographic subdivisions for local places within a country consist of two parts.

Start with the authorized heading for the place. You will see that the local place is followed by the name of the country in parentheses.

Determining the Format

- Begin with the heading

Mumbai (India)

- First part of the subdivision: the name of the country
(in parentheses)

—India

The country will become the first part of the geographic subdivision. Now mentally delete the parentheses.

Determining the Format

- Begin with the heading

Mumbai (India)

- First part of the subdivision: the name of the country (in parentheses)

—India

- Second part of the subdivision: remainder of the heading

—India—Mumbai

The remainder of the authorized heading for the place, excluding the parentheses, is the second part of the subdivision.

Let's look at some more examples.

Determining the Format

- Examples

Heading: **Lagos State (Nigeria)**

Subdivision: —**Nigeria—Lagos State**

Heading: **Quito (Ecuador)**

Subdivision: —**Ecuador—Quito**

Heading: **Lao Mountains (China)**

Subdivision: —**China—Lao Mountains**

The heading for Lagos State in Nigeria can be transformed into the subdivision —**Nigeria—Lagos State**.

The heading for Quito, Ecuador becomes —**Ecuador—Quito**.

And the heading for the Lao Mountains in China becomes —**China—Lao Mountains**.

Determining the Format

- Countries whose authorized headings are qualified
 - Insert the qualifier into the first part of the subdivision, although it does not appear in the heading for the locality

Qualifiers that appear in the heading for the country do not appear in the qualifiers for the *heading* for the local places in the country. When that happens, we have to put the qualifier “back into” the geographic subdivision.

This is kind of hard to explain, and an example will show it better.

Determining the Format

- Countries whose authorized headings are qualified

Heading: **Russia (Federation)**

Subdivision: —**Russia (Federation)**

Take for example, the heading for post-Soviet Russia, which is **Russia (Federation)**.

If we were to use it as a geographic subdivision, the subdivision would be identical to the heading:
—**Russia (Federation)**.

Determining the Format

- Countries whose authorized headings are qualified

Heading: **Russia (Federation)**

Subdivision: —**Russia (Federation)**

Heading: **Moscow (Russia)**

Subdivision:

—**Russia (Federation)**—**Moscow**

But if we need a subdivision for Moscow, we cannot follow the general rule because the word “Federation” does not appear in the heading for Moscow.

That is, we just cannot take Russia from the parentheses and make it the first part of the subdivision. Instead, we have to think about what the geographic subdivision for Russia is. The first part of the subdivision for Moscow is therefore —**Russia (Federation)**, and the second part is —**Moscow**.

Determining the Format

- Places qualified by more than one country
 - Subdivision is identical to the heading

Heading:

Everest, Mount (China and Nepal)

Subdivision:

—**Everest, Mount (China and Nepal)**

Some headings for geographic features are qualified by multiple countries. We cannot just pick one of the countries to be the first part of the subdivision, and we can't put both countries in the first part of the subdivision, so the subdivision is identical to the heading.

Mount Everest is on the border of China and Nepal, so its authorized heading is qualified by both countries. The subdivision is identical to the heading.

Determining the Format

- Places with a generic qualifier denoting the type of jurisdiction or feature
 - Treat the country in the qualifier as usual
 - Retain the generic qualifier in the second part of the subdivision

Florence (Italy : Province)

Attersee (Austria : Lake)

Sometimes an authorized heading contains a generic qualifier that indicates the type of jurisdiction or feature, as in the example **Florence** qualified by **(Italy : Province)**, and **Attersee**, which is qualified by **(Austria : Lake)**.

When this happens, treat the country the same as usual. That is, remove it from the qualifier and turn it into the first part of the subdivision. The remainder of the heading, including the generic qualifier, is the second part of the subdivision.

Remember to remove that now-extraneous colon.

Determining the Format

- Places with a generic qualifier denoting the type of jurisdiction or feature

Heading: **Florence (Italy : Province)**

Subdivision: —**Italy**—**Florence (Province)**

You can see the effect.

When used as a geographic subdivision, the heading **Florence (Italy : Province)** is transformed into —**Italy**—**Florence (Province)**.

Determining the Format

- Places with a generic qualifier denoting the type of jurisdiction or feature

Heading: **Florence (Italy : Province)**

Subdivision: —**Italy**—**Florence (Province)**

Heading: **Attersee (Austria : Lake)**

Subdivision: —**Austria**—**Attersee (Lake)**

And the heading for Attersee is transformed into the geographic subdivision —**Austria**—**Attersee (Lake)**.

Determining the Format

- Places with a qualifier that includes an intermediate-level jurisdiction and the country

Heading: **Min River (Sichuan Sheng, China)**

Subdivision:

—**China**—**Min River (Sichuan Sheng)**

If a qualifier includes an intermediate-level jurisdiction, then the country becomes the first part of the geographic subdivision as usual. The remainder of the heading, minus extraneous punctuation, becomes the second part.

For example, the heading for the Min River is qualified by the province of Sichuan, China. When we turn it into a geographic subdivision, we remove China and place it in the first part of the subdivision. The rest of the heading, Min River qualified by Sichuan Sheng, is the second part of the subdivision.

Determining the Format

- Places with a qualifier that includes an intermediate-level jurisdiction and the country

Heading: **Min River (Sichuan Sheng, China)**

Subdivision:

—**China**—**Min River (Sichuan Sheng)**

Heading: **Nieuwpoort (West Flanders, Belgium)**

Subdivision:

—**Belgium**—**Nieuwpoort (West Flanders)**

Nieuwpoort is qualified by the province of West Flanders, Belgium.

We remove Belgium from the qualifier and put it in the first position and retain the rest of the heading for the second part of the subdivision.

Determining the Format

- Special instruction for Australia
 - Qualifier on the authorized heading does not usually include the country name, but it is in the first position when used as a geographic subdivision

Heading: **Ash Range (Vic.)**

Subdivision: —**Australia**—**Ash Range (Vic.)**

Heading: **Adelaide (S.A.)**

Subdivision: —**Australia**—**Adelaide (S.A.)**

Just to keep things interesting, there is a special practice for places within Australia.

Authorized headings for features and jurisdictions in Australia include a qualifier, but the qualifier does not include the name of the country. Instead, it includes only the name of the state, or its abbreviation.

As you can see from these examples, the first part of the subdivision is —**Australia**, regardless. The entire authorized heading becomes the second part of the subdivision.

Determining the Format

- Inverted headings for regions that include the name of a country or continent
- The geographic subdivision is identical to the heading

Heading: **Italy, Southern**

Subdivision: —**Italy, Southern**

Heading: **Africa, Northern**

Subdivision: —**Africa, Northern**

Some geographic headings are inverted and describe a region within a country or continent. In that case, the geographic subdivision is identical to the heading, as you see in the examples on the screen.

Determining the Format

- Historic kingdoms, former jurisdictions, extinct cities, etc., that lie wholly within a currently existing jurisdiction
- The first part of the subdivision is the current jurisdiction

Leon (Kingdom)

Memphis (Extinct city)

There is one more situation that we would like to discuss in this module.

Historic kingdoms, former jurisdictions, extinct cities, and so on, sometimes lie within a current jurisdiction, but they rarely include the name of the current jurisdiction in the geographic heading.

Despite that fact, the current jurisdiction is the first part of the geographic subdivision.

Determining the Format

- Historic kingdoms, former jurisdictions, extinct cities, etc., that lie wholly within a currently existing jurisdiction

Heading: **Leon (Kingdom)**

Subdivision: —**Spain—Leon (Kingdom)**

Heading: **Memphis (Extinct city)**

Subdivision: —**Egypt—Memphis (Extinct city)**

As you can see from these examples, the current jurisdiction is the first part of the geographic subdivision and the second part is identical to the heading for the historic or former jurisdiction.

There are some other very specific rules about formulating geographic subdivisions, such as what to do with celestial bodies, islands, places on Antarctica, among others. We are not going to cover them here. Please consult SHM instruction sheet H 830 for further information.