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# Library of Congress Subject Headings

Module 6.12  
Geographic Subdivisions Part 5:  
Formulating Geographic Subdivisions for the Exceptional Countries

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Policy and Standards Division  
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**Recap and Plan for this Module**

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

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

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

Now that that’s covered, let’s begin.

All of the rules that we will be discussing can be found in *Subject Headings Manual H 830, Geographic Subdivision*.

### Exceptional Countries

For...	Subdivide through the...
Canada	Province
United States	State
Great Britain	Constituent country

Hopefully you noticed in the last module that every geographic subdivision for a country or a place within a country begins with the name of the country. The subdivision for Cairo, Egypt, is —**Egypt—Cairo**. The subdivision for Munich, Germany is —**Germany—Munich**.

Canada, the United States, and Great Britain are considered to be exceptional because Canada, United States, and Great Britain are used as subdivisions only when they appear alone. That is, if the resource discusses the United States, Canada, or Great Britain as a whole, —**United States**, —**Canada**, or —**Great Britain** can be used as a geographic subdivision. Otherwise, a province of Canada, a state of the United States, or a constituent country of Great Britain comes first.

Except for that difference, all of the general rules apply.

Let’s look at some examples.

Exceptional Countries

- Resource discusses librarians in the United States  
**Librarians—United States.**
- Resource discusses librarians in Georgia  
**Librarians—Georgia.**
- Resource discusses librarians in Atlanta, Georgia  
**Librarians—Georgia—Atlanta.**

If a resource discusses librarians in the United States as a whole, then the subdivision —**United States** should be used.

But if the resource discusses librarians in Georgia, a state of the United States, then the subdivision —**Georgia** is used instead.

And if the resource discusses librarians in Atlanta, which is a city in Georgia, then the subdivision —**Georgia—Atlanta** is used.

As you can see, the subdivision —**United States** is not used when a resource is more specific than the United States in general.



The same is true for Canada, except the province is used instead. All of the headings that you see on the screen are valid.

In the first case, the resource discusses librarians from across Canada. In all of the other examples, the resources discuss librarians in particular localities within Canada.

And let's look at one more set of examples, this time for Great Britain.

**Exceptional Countries**

**Librarians—Great Britain.**

**Librarians—England.**

**Librarians—England—London.**

**Librarians—Northern Ireland.**

**Librarians—Northern Ireland—Belfast.**

**Librarians—Scotland.**

**Librarians—Scotland—Edinburgh.**

**Librarians—Wales.**

**Librarians—Wales—Cardiff.**

As you can see, the same rule applies.

A resource that discusses librarians in Great Britain in general is assigned **Librarians—Great Britain**.

Any local place is brought out by assigning the constituent country, —**England**, —**Northern Ireland**, —**Scotland**, or —**Wales**, and then the local place's name.

## Exceptional Countries

- Same rules apply
  - Remove the state, province, or constituent country from the authorized heading
    - Becomes the first part of the subdivision
    - Spell out any abbreviations
  - Remainder of heading is second part of the subdivision

When formulating the geographic subdivision, the general rules for other countries apply, but with a twist: every time we would use the country as the first element, we now use the state, province, or constituent country. If the authorized heading is for a state, province, or constituent country, the subdivision is identical to the heading.

If the heading is for a local place within a state, province, or constituent country, then the state, province, or constituent country is removed from the qualifier and becomes the first part of the geographic subdivision. The rest of the heading is the second part of the geographic subdivision.

**Exceptional Countries**

Heading:  
**M5 Motorway (England)**

Subdivision:  
**—England—M5 Motorway**

  

Heading:  
**Dinosaur Provincial Park (Alta.)**

Subdivision:  
**—Alberta—Dinosaur Provincial Park**

As you can see from these examples, it is a straightforward process.

In the first example, —**England** becomes the first part of the subdivision because it is the constituent country that appears in the qualifier. —**M5 Motorway** is the second portion.

In the second example, the abbreviation Alta. is spelled out, Alberta, and is the first part of the subdivision. And the first part of the heading, **Dinosaur Provincial Park**, becomes the second part of the subdivision.



**Exceptional Countries**

Heading:  
**Fyne, Loch (Scotland)**

Subdivision:  
**—Scotland—Fyne, Loch**

Heading:  
**Seattle (Wash.)**

Subdivision:  
**—Washington (State)—Seattle**

Here are two more examples. In the first one, —**Scotland** is the first part of the geographic subdivision, and —**Fyne, Loch** becomes the second part.

In the second example, W-A-S-H is spelled out as Washington in the first part of the subdivision. Notice that the first part is qualified by (State). That is because the heading for Washington – and therefore the subdivision – is qualified in that way.

### Exceptional Countries

- Inverted headings for regions that include the name of the state, province, or constituent country
- The geographic subdivision is identical to the heading

Heading: **Virginia, Northern**

Subdivision: —**Virginia, Northern**

When the geographic heading is inverted and includes the name of a state, province, or constituent country, the subdivision is identical to the heading, as you can see in this example.

**Exceptional Countries**

- Headings qualified by more than one state, province, or constituent country

Heading:  
**Black Mountain (Wales and England)**

Subdivision:  
—**Black Mountain (Wales and England)**

Heading: **Crow Creek (Wyo. and Idaho)**

Subdivision: —**Crow Creek (Wyo. and Idaho)**

Headings that are qualified by more than one state, province, or constituent country are treated analogously to headings that are qualified by more than one country.

Since we cannot choose one jurisdiction to use as the first part of the geographic subdivision, the geographic subdivision consists of only one part and is identical to the heading.

When Black Mountain in Wales and England is used as a geographic subdivision, the subdivision is identical to the authorized heading.

The same is true for Crow Creek in Wyoming and Idaho.

### Exceptional Countries

- Places with a qualifier that includes an intermediate-level jurisdiction

Heading: **Saint Marys (Elk County, Pa.)**

Subdivision: —**Pennsylvania—Saint Marys (Elk County)**

Heading: **Head Harbor (Washington County, Me.)**

Subdivision: —**Maine—Head Harbor (Washington County)**

Places can have qualifiers that include intermediate jurisdictions in addition to the state, province, or constituent country in which they are located. They are treated analogously to headings that have intermediate jurisdiction in addition to a country.

The state, province, or constituent country is removed from the qualifier and becomes the first part of the geographic subdivision. The remainder of the heading is the second part.

In the example Saint Marys (Elk County, Pa.), —**Pennsylvania** is the first part of the geographic subdivision and —**Saint Marys (Elk County)** is the second.

In the second example, —**Maine** is the first part of the subdivision, and —**Head Harbor (Washington County)** is the second.

Exceptional Countries

- Qualifiers with several parts

Heading: **North River (Carteret County, N.C. : River)**

Some headings have a mix of qualifier types, but the same basic rule applies. The state, province, or constituent country is removed from the qualifier and turned into the first part of the geographic subdivision. The second part of the subdivision consists of the rest of the heading, minus any extraneous punctuation.

In this example for the North River in Carteret County, North Carolina, the qualifier consists of three parts: the county and the state in which it is located, and a generic qualifier denoting the type of feature.

The heading looks complicated, but it is actually quite easy to turn it into a geographic subdivision, if we remember the rules.

### Exceptional Countries

- Qualifiers with several parts

Heading: **North River (Carteret County,  
N.C. : River)**

Subdivision: —**North Carolina—North  
River (Carteret County : River)**

North Carolina is removed and placed first, and then the rest of the heading, including the qualifiers for the county and the type of feature, are placed second.

### Abbreviations in Qualifiers

- Australian states
- Most Canadian provinces and territories
- Most U.S. states and territories
- Countries
  - New Zealand
  - United States

You have no doubt noticed that many qualifiers for jurisdictions and geographic features include abbreviations. All of the Australian states as well as most Canadian provinces and territories, and American states and territories are abbreviated, as are the names of the countries of New Zealand and the United States.

When those jurisdictions are used as the first element in a geographic subdivision, they have to be spelled out. But how do you know what the abbreviation means?

**Abbreviations in Qualifiers**

- SHM H 810, Qualification of Geographic Headings
  - Appendix lists abbreviations

<i>First Order Division</i>	<i>Form in Qualifier</i>
Utah	(Utah)
Vermont	(Vt.)
Virginia	(Va.)
Washington (State)	(Wash.)
West Virginia	(W. <u>Va.</u> )
Wisconsin	(Wis.)
Wyoming	(Wyo.)

As you might expect, there is a controlled list of abbreviations. It can be found in SHM instruction sheet H 810.

The appendix to that instruction sheet lists every place that may be abbreviated in the qualifiers of headings, and provides the abbreviation for each.

The slide shows only a small portion of that appendix. If the place is not listed with an abbreviation in H 810, then the place will never be abbreviated in a qualifier.