BACKGROUND: *Headings for geographic names fall into two categories: (1) names of political jurisdictions, and (2) non-jurisdictional geographic names. Headings in the first category are established according to descriptive cataloging conventions with authority records that reside in the name authority file. Since these jurisdictional name headings are routinely assigned as subject headings, frequently in combination with non-free-floating subdivisions, many of them were also represented by authority records in the subject authority file. To alleviate the confusion caused by duplicate authority records, the Library of Congress ceased creating new subject authority records for name headings in January 1995 and began a project to delete existing duplicate authority records for name headings from the subject authority file. Headings in the second category are established according to guidelines in this instruction sheet with authority records that reside in the subject authority file. Headings for entities having geographic extent, including certain types of engineering constructions, are treated as geographic headings. The following is a representative list of such entities:*

> *Archaeological sites, historic sites, etc.*
> *Areas and regions (when not free-floating)*
> *Canals*
> *Dams*
> *Extinct cities (pre-1500)*
> *Farms, ranches, gardens*
> *Forests, grasslands, etc.*
> *Geographic features (for example, caves, deserts, non-jurisdictional islands, lakes, mountains, ocean currents, plains, rivers, seas, steppes, undersea features)*
> *Geologic basins, geologic formations, etc.*
> *Mines*
> *Parks, reserves, refuges, recreation areas, etc.*
> *Reservoirs*
> *Roads, streets, trails*
> *Valleys*

This instruction sheet provides guidelines for formulating the substantive portion of non-jurisdictional geographic names established as subject headings. For procedures for qualifying geographic names, see H 810.

H 690   Formulating Geographic Headings

1.   *Obtaining the approved form of name*.

   a. Names of the United States. For names of the United States, the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), U.S. Geological Survey (U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) domestic names system) is available on the Internet.   GNIS may be accessed and queried at <https://edits.nationalmap.gov/apps/gaz-domestic/public/search/names>.

   b. Foreign names other than those of New Zealand. For foreign geographic names other than those of New Zealand, the NGA GeoNames application (Geonet) of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (the BGN foreign names system) is also available on the Internet.   It   may   be   accessed   and   queried   at   < https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GeographicNamesSearch/>.

   Note: Not all features mentioned in the Background statement are found in GNIS or Geonet.

   c. Names of New Zealand. For names of New Zealand, prefer the form found in Land Information New Zealand's *New Zealand Gazetteer of Official Geographic Names*. For Maori names, search *Official Names with Macrons*.   If the name does not appear in either of the above sources, consult the archived *New Zealand Place Names Database*, which is a valid source for names not yet added to the other lists. All three sources are available on the World Wide Web at < https://www.linz.govt.nz/products-services/place-names >.

2.   *Additional authority research*.   Although the BGN decision, when it is obtained, is generally preferred over any other name forms for all names other than those of New Zealand, additional authority work is usually required for the following reasons:

   !   The BGN decision may not in itself be sufficient to determine if name conflicts exist and further qualification of the heading is necessary.

   !   In cases of conflict, research can confirm that the BGN decision does in fact refer to the same place discussed in the work being cataloged.

   !   For geographic names in non-English-speaking countries, reference sources may aid in the translation of generic terms or may justify the choice of the conventional English form when BGN has supplied the name only in the vernacular form.

   !   Variant forms of the geographic name found in reference sources are useful as UF references in addition to the variants provided by BGN.

2. *Additional authority research*.   *(Continued)*

! All types of geographic features are not included in the BGN database. Examples of features that are not included are: roads, highways, administrative, or cultural features. In 2021, some items were removed from GNIS that had previously been included: airport, bridge, building, cemetery, church, dam, forest, harbor, hospital, mine, oilfield, park, post office, reserve, school, tower, trail, tunnel, and well. These are now considered "administrative" and therefore fall into the list of features that are not included in BGN.

The BGN decision, when it is obtained, must be evaluated in conjunction with information found in the standard authorities available to subject catalogers.   Consult additional authorities such as *Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary*, *Columbia Gazetteer of the World, National Gazetteer of the United States of America*, national gazetteers issued by the country where the feature is located, standard encyclopedias, atlases, titles in the database, etc.

Cite the works consulted in 670 fields in the authority record, following the conventions for citation of sources described in H 203.

Record in a $b subfield of each 670 field any data that conflicts with, or supplements, the BGN decision.

Record any data showing that the name under consideration conflicts with other names.   This serves to justify the form of the qualifier constructed in accordance with H 810.

3. *Selecting the form of the heading*.

***a. The BGN decision*.**   If the BGN decision has been obtained, generally favor it over any other name forms obtained from other sources.   Adjust it or choose another name form when necessary to conform with the other guidelines provided below.

If BGN provides more than one form, select the English form of the name, if one is provided. Select the conventional form if one is identified as such.   Use the information found in other authorities as guidance in making a final decision.

If no BGN decision is obtained, select the form of name found to be in predominant usage in the reference sources that were consulted.

H 690 Formulating Geographic Headings

3. Selecting the form of the heading. *(Continued)*

> *Note: When a new country is formed or a country changes its name, LC must take into account information from several sources before an accepted name can be established for the name authority file or for LCSH. LC coordinates with the Board of Geographic Names, which gets its information from the State Department. The latter takes into account which countries the United States has recognized and also information from the United Nations. In addition, it is necessary to establish MARC country and geographic area codes compatible with LCSH and ISO 3166, the international standard for country codes. SACO and NACO participants should refrain from sending proposals or creating authority records for the new country name until LC has created the name authority record and determined the appropriate LCSH treatment.*

b. English vs. vernacular form. Select the English form of the name whenever possible, especially for geographic features. *Examples:*

Vernacular	*English*	
Passo del San Gottardo	Saint Gotthard Pass	*Note: For purposes of these*
Fujiyama	Mount Fuji	*illustrations the geographic*
Øresund	The Sound	*qualifiers are omitted.*
Peipsi järv	Lake Peipus	

If no English form is found, construct an English heading by translating the generic term into English. If, in the case of certain inflected languages, the resulting construction is grammatically awkward, use the noun form of the proper name in the nominative case, rather than either the adjectival form or the noun form in the genitive case. In such situations, provide UF references from the pure vernacular forms, as specified in sec. 10, below. *Examples:*

```
        151 #0 $a Strážov Mountains (Slovakia)
        451 #0 $w nnnn $a Strážovská hornatina (Slovakia)
        451 #0 $w nnnn $a Strážovské vrchy (Slovakia)

   [not 151 #0 $a Strážovská Mountains (Slovakia)]
   [not 151 #0 $a Strážovské Mountains (Slovakia)]

        151 #0 $a Gauja River (Latvia and Estonia)
        451 #0 $w nnnn $a Gaujas upe (Latvia and Estonia)

   [not 151 #0 $a Gaujas River (Latvia and Estonia)]
```

3. Selecting the form of the heading.

   b. English vs. vernacular form.

   Use the vernacular form under the following circumstances:

   ! if the generic term is an integral part of the name and cannot be separated from the distinctive portion, for example, **Kilpisjärvi (Finland and Sweden)**.

   ! when establishing parks, reserves, gardens, trails, streets, and roads in the vernacular.   See H 1925 for specific instructions for parks, reserves, gardens, and trails; see H 2098 for streets and roads.

   ! if the entity in question is best known in the English-speaking world by its vernacular name, for example, **Rio Grande**; **Blanc, Mont (France and Italy)**.

   Use English-language gazetteers and reference sources to determine whether an entity is known in its vernacular form in the English-speaking world.   If a vernacular form is used and it includes the generic term for the feature, do not add the English generic term to the heading.   For example, **Tien Shan** is a conventional name which includes the Chinese term for mountains.   Do not add **Mountains** to the heading.

4. Arrangement of elements appearing in the name.   If necessary, rearrange the elements of the name so that the distinctive portion of the name occurs in the initial position.

   a. Names in English.   For entities in English-speaking countries, and for entities that have a conventional English name, invert the heading if necessary to put the distinctive portion of the name in the initial position.   *Examples:*

English Name	*Name Inverted*	
Firth of Forth	Forth, Firth of	*Note: For purposes of these illustrations the geographic qualifiers are omitted.*
Lake Erie	Erie, Lake	
Mount Abbot	Abbot, Mount	
Gulf of Mexico	Mexico, Gulf of	
River Wye	Wye, River	

H 690   Formulating Geographic Headings

4. Arrangement of elements appearing in the name.   (Continued)

   b. Names in foreign languages.   Translate the name and rearrange the elements to put the distinctive portion of the name in the initial position.   Since the resulting heading is not inverted, do not put a comma between the elements.   *Example:*

Vernacular	*Final Form of Heading*
Río Jiloca	Jiloca River (Spain)

5. Abbreviations.   Spell out in full all words in the substantive portion of the name.   For provisions on the use of abbreviations in qualifiers, see H 810.   *Example:*

   Saint Johns River (Fla.)   [*not* St. Johns River (Fla.)]

6. Initial articles.   Anglicize names of geographic features that are located in non-English-speaking countries and that begin with an article by dropping the initial article and including a generic term in English describing the feature.   Retain initial articles for non-English names in English-speaking countries.   For English names beginning with the word **The** as an integral part of the name, retain **The** and invert the name.   *Examples:*

Name of Entity	*Final Form of Heading*
La Huasteca *[a region in Mexico]*	Huasteca Region (Mexico)
Les Cévennes *[mountains in France]*	Cévennes Mountains (France)
Los Olmos Creek *[a stream in Texas]*	Los Olmos Creek (Tex.)
The Fens *[a region in England]*	Fens, The (England)
The Sound *[conventional English name for sound between Denmark and Sweden]*	Sound, The (Denmark and Sweden)

7. *Transliteration*.   As a general rule, transliterate geographic names in non-Roman scripts by means of LC transliteration tables.   If BGN provides a romanized form in conflict with LC's policy for the romanization of a particular script, convert the name to the LC form.   However, if it is clear that a non-LC-romanized form is more commonly used in English-language reference sources, establish the heading using that form, and add a 451 field with the LC-romanized form.

> *Note: During 1999 the Library of Congress changed a limited number of name and subject headings that contain names of Chinese provinces and major cities from conventional to pinyin romanized forms.   In October 2000 the Library discontinued use of the Wade-Giles system of romanization of Chinese in favor of pinyin in name and subject headings except for geographic names of Taiwan, which continued to use Wade-Giles. In May 2012 the Library determined that pinyin romanization will now be used for geographic name and subject headings for places in Taiwan. This decision follows the 2010 decision of the U.S. Board of Geographic Names, which now also uses pinyin romanization for places in Taiwan.*

8. *Conflicts*.   Conflicts involving geographic names may be resolved by designating the category of the feature in the parenthetical qualifier following a colon (cf. H 810) or by incorporating the generic term for the feature into the name itself.   Prefer the latter method if it will resolve the conflict without causing redundancy.   *Example:*

> ```
>       151 ## $a Madura Island (Indonesia)
> [not 151 ## $a Madura (Indonesia : Island)]
> ```

> *Exception:*   For named regions that conflict with names of cities, include the term **Region** in the qualifier (cf. H 760, sec. 1.e.(2)).

9. *Capitalization.*   When formulating names or references, use the appropriate current rules of capitalization for the language in question (see Appendix B of this manual and Appendix A of AACR2).

For English forms of place names, capitalize all nouns and adjectives that are essential parts of the name.   For example, in the heading **Tatar Strait (Russia)**, the word **Strait** is capitalized since the heading is in English.   However, in the UF reference from the vernacular form, **Tatarskiĭ proliv (Russia)**, the word **proliv** is lowercased in accordance with Russian capitalization rules.

H 690   Formulating Geographic Headings

10. References.

    a. UF references. Add 451 fields with alternative forms, including:

        !   alternative name forms supplied by BGN or found in other authorities, and their LC romanized equivalents if different from the forms supplied or found.

        !   the straight form of the name if the heading is established in inverted form.

        !   the name in the vernacular, including variant forms, if the name is translated into English or a conventional English form is adopted.   In this reference, a generic term may appear in the initial position.

        !   other pertinent foreign language forms, for example, forms in other official languages of the country where the feature is located; the form in the language of countries that previously controlled the feature.   Do not add 451 fields with foreign language forms used in a work being cataloged if they are not pertinent to the feature.

        !   the English form of the name, if meaningful, if the selected name is left in the vernacular.

        !   abbreviated forms, if the name commonly occurs with an abbreviated term in the initial position.

        !   alternative forms after the decision has been reached to include or delete the initial article.

        !   the BGN romanized form if it differs from the LC romanized form and has been supplied as a variant by BGN.

    b. Broader terms. Add up to three 550 (broader term) fields containing the generic heading for the type of feature, structure, etc., subdivided by country, etc.   For features in more than three countries or first order political divisions of the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, use an appropriate broader geographic name as the subdivision.

    References are made for some types of entities, such as parks, archaeological sites, early cities, etc., according to pattern provisions.   These patterns are described in individual instruction sheets in this manual.

10. References.   *(Continued)*

c. Named groups as broader terms.   Add a 551 field containing the named group to which an individual feature belongs, if appropriate and if the heading already exists, for example, an individual peak in a mountain range or an individual lake in a group of lakes, such as **Great Lakes (North America)** or **Finger Lakes (N.Y.)**.   Do not establish headings for larger groups only to make the reference.

Make this reference from the smallest applicable named group.   *Example:*

```
        151 ## $a Black Mountains (N.C.)
        551 ## $w g $a Blue Ridge Mountains
   [not 551 ## $w g $a Appalachian Mountains]
```

Do not add a 551 field containing the name of a region in which a feature is located.

11. Model for heading and references.   The above provisions may be summarized as follows:

```
151 ## $a [distinctive name] [generic term] ([geographic
qualifier])
451 ## $a [alternate name(s)] ([geographic qualifier])
550 ## $w g $a [type of feature, structure, etc.] $z [country or
first order division]
551 ## $w g $a [name of group] ([geographic qualifier)]
```

12. Examples.

Note: The following examples illustrate complete headings, including the proper forms of qualifiers.   For rules for qualification, see H 810.

```
151 ## $a Margeride Mountains (France)
451 ## $a Montagnes de la Margeride (France)
551 ## $w g $a Massif Central (France)
550 ## $w g $a Mountains $z France

151 ## $a Ejón Hill (Colombia)
451 ## $a Cerrejón (Colombia)
451 ## $a El Cerrejón (Colombia)
451 ## $a Cerro Ejón (Colombia)
550 ## $w g $a Mountains $z Colombia
```

H 690   Formulating Geographic Headings

12. Examples.   (Continued)

```
151 ## $a El Capitan (Calif.)
451 ## $a Capitan (Calif.)
550 ## $w g $a Mountains $z California
551 ## $w g $a Sierra Nevada (Calif. and Nev.)


151 ## $a Erzgebirge (Czech Republic and Germany)
451 ## $a Kruš́é hory (Czech Republic and Germany)
451 ## $a Krušnoho⊂í (Czech Republic and Germany)
451 ## $a Ore Mountains (Czech Republic and Germany)
550 ## $w g $a Mountains $z Czech Republic
550 ## $w g $a Mountains $z Germany


151 ## $a Forth, Firth of (Scotland)
451 ## $a Bodotria (Scotland)
451 ## $a Firth of Forth (Scotland)
451 ## $a Forth Estuary (Scotland)
451 ## $a Forth, River, Estuary (Scotland)
550 ## $w g $a Estuaries $z Scotland


151 ## $a Fuji, Mount (Japan)
451 ## $a Fuji-san (Japan)
451 ## $a Fuji-yama (Japan)
451 ## $a Fujiyama (Japan)
451 ## $a Mount Fuji (Japan)
451 ## $a Suji Mountain (Japan)
550 ## $w g $a Mountains $z Japan
550 ## $w g $a Volcanoes $z Japan


151 ## $a Peipus, Lake (Estonia and Russia)
451 ## $a Chudskoe ozero (Estonia and Russia)
451 ## $a Chudskoye ozero (Estonia and Russia)
451 ## $a Lake Peipus (Estonia and Russia)
451 ## $a Peipsi järv (Estonia and Russia)
550 ## $w g $a Lakes $z Estonia
550 ## $w g $a Lakes $z Russia (Federation)


151 ## $a Rio de la Plata (Argentina and Uruguay)
451 ## $a Plate River (Argentina and Uruguay)
451 ## $a Plata, Rio de la (Argentina and Uruguay)
550 ## $w g $a Estuaries $z Argentina
550 ## $w g $a Estuaries $z Uruguay


151 ## $a Suiattle River (Wash.)
451 ## $a Miner's Creek (Snohomish County and Skagit County,
Wash.)
550 ## $w g $a Rivers $z Washington (State)
```

12. ***Examples.***   *(Continued)*

```
151 ## $a Saint Gotthard Pass (Switzerland)
451 ## $a Gotthard Pass (Switzerland)
451 ## $a Pass of Saint Gotthard (Switzerland)
451 ## $a Passo del San Gottardo (Switzerland)
451 ## $a Saint Gothard Pass (Switzerland)
451 ## $a Sankt Gotthardpass (Switzerland)
451 ## $a St. Gotthard Pass (Switzerland)
550 ## $w g $a Mountain passes $z Switzerland


151 ## $a Sound, The (Denmark and Sweden)
451 ## $a Øresund (Denmark and Sweden)
451 ## $a Sundet (Denmark and Sweden)
451 ## $a The Sound (Denmark and Sweden)
550 ## $w g $a Sounds (Geomorphology) $z Denmark
550 ## $w g $a Sounds (Geomorphology) $z Sweden


151 ## $a Wye, River (Wales and England)
451 ## $a River Wye (Wales and England)
550 ## $w g $a Rivers $z England
550 ## $w g $a Rivers $z Wales


151 ## $a Yellow River (China)
451 ## $a Hoang Ho (China)
451 ## $a Huang He (China)
451 ## $a Huang Ho (China)
451 ## $a Hwang Ho (China)
550 ## $w g $a Rivers $z China
```