

AMA Manual of Style

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Letter-by-Letter vs Word-by-Word

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These are 2 styles of alphabetization. Letter-by-letter considers all letters of the entire entry, ignoring spaces between words. Word-by-word sorts by the first word of an entry term, then the next word. Letter-by-letter alphabetization is commonly used by scholarly publishers and is the familiar arrangement found in dictionaries and encyclopedias., Word-by-word sorting might result in more informative groupings of terms, especially multipart terms,, but in medical indexes letter-by-letter sorting usually allows readers to locate terms equally well. Consult indexing texts for detailed descriptions of these 2 methods of sorting. The publisher may specify a sorting style. The following examples are