IT'S A NUMBERS GAME!
Understanding Recognized Genealogical Formats

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Genealogy Standards provides guidelines for clear, concise, and credible presentation of research results. By adhering to recognized organizational structures and numbering systems, we assure our work is easily understood by today's readers and by those of the future.

ASCENDING VS. DESCENDING

- **Ascending genealogies** begin with the most recent individual and work backwards through time to an earlier ancestor.

- **Descending genealogies** begin with an early ancestor and move forward through time to the most recent individual studied.

Determining which format best suits your needs requires thoughtful consideration of your project's purpose and audience. Presentations may be ascending or descending; they may focus on a single line, a single surname, or multiple family branches and surnames.

THREE BASIC OPTIONS FOR PRESENTING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

1. **Genealogies**
   - Demonstrate descent from one person or couple.
   - At least one generation highlights more than one couple or family.
   - **Single-surname** studies focus upon descendants who carry the featured family name.
   - **Full-family** studies treat all lines of descent, by whatever surname.
   - Use either the *Register* **System** or *NGS Quarterly*(*NGSQ*) **System** for format and numbering.

2. **Lineages**
   - Demonstrate descent from one person or couple *or* ascent from one person.
   - Only one person, couple, or family are highlighted in each generation.
   - Individual numbers are unnecessary.

3. **Pedigrees**
   - Demonstrate ascent from one person.
   - At least one generation highlights more than one couple or family.
   - Use the **Sosa-Stradonitz** Ahnentafel-based numbering system.

COMPILATIONS & FAMILY HISTORIES

All genealogies, lineages, and pedigrees include vital statistics and descriptive biographical narrative for each individual, couple, and generation. These details confirm kinship and provide generational context.

Key organizational components

1. Preface—an historical overview of the family and/or introduction of each generation
2. **Genealogical summary**—typically opening paragraph, introduces individual and his/her family
   - Birth, marriage, and death data for each individual and spouse(s)
   - Descending genealogies include a **parenthetical summary of descent**
3. Kinship determination proof summary or argument, if necessary, to establish identity and confirm relationship
4. Biography—life story
5. Final paragraph—conclusion of life story, **introduction of child list**
6. **Child list**—children of each couple are presented in chronological birth order; usually 1 point smaller font
   - Individuals not carried forward may be discussed in the child list
7. **Source citations** as footnotes or endnotes

FOUR TYPES OF NUMBERS

Genealogies and pedigrees present information one generation at a time and rely on numbering systems to identify and organize individuals, families, and generations.

1. **Source citation numbers** connect every stated fact not "general knowledge" to its source.
   - In-text superscript citation numbers usually appear *after* punctuation; not italicized.
     - *Register* citation numbers are [bracketed].
2. **Generational numbers and letters** place individuals in generational context.
   - American generations are designated with numbers; in descending genealogies, the earliest American generation is 1.
   - European ancestors are designated with letters.
     - Pre-American generations are assigned capital letters.
     - Non-emigrating European siblings and their children are designated with lower-case letters.
     - Collateral lines emigrating to America are designated by combining lower case letters and numbers.
   - Generational numbers and letters appear in specific context:
     - Placed *after* given names, *before* surnames and *before* punctuation
     - Introduction of individuals in genealogical summaries and parenthetical summaries of descent
     - Introductions to child lists
     - First child identified in the child list, implying the generation of consecutive children
3. **Child list birth order numbers**
   - Children are numbered in birth order using lower-case Roman numerals followed by a period.
4. **Arabic identification numbers,** unique to each individual, place each person in genealogical context.
   - Individual numbers are assigned sequentially; not superscripted or italicized.
   - When included with the genealogical summary, they are bold, followed by a period.
   - In the child list they are not bold and not followed by a period.

ASCENDING GENEALOGIES: SOSA-STRADONITZ SYSTEM (AHNENTAFEL)

Dating to the sixteenth century, this is a simple way to present a basic family structure.

- **Pedigree style—**traces generations back through time beginning with the most recent.
- All individuals in the direct line receive an Arabic identification number unique to each person.
- The most recent individual is number 1 (male or female).
- The father is assigned twice the child's number (always an even number).
- The mother is assigned twice the child's number plus 1 (always an odd number).
- Parenthetical summaries of descent are not included.

DESCENDING GENEALOGIES: TWO SYSTEMS

1. *Register* **System,** developed by the New England Historic and Genealogical Society, Boston, 1870

2. *NGS Quarterly (NGSQ)* **System,** developed by the National Genealogical Society, 1912

Differences in genealogical summaries

- *Register* uses bold face and SMALL CAPITALS to introduce individuals.
  - Parenthetical summaries of descent are italicized.
  - Generational numbers and letters are not italicized.
- *NGSQ* uses **boldface**.
  - Parenthetical summaries of descent are not italicized.
  - Generational numbers and letters are italicized.

Differences in child lists

- *Register* child names are SMALL CAPITALS; abbreviations in data acceptable.
- *NGSQ* child names are ALL CAPITALS; abbreviations in data not generally acceptable.
- *Register* provides limited vital data for children carried forward.
- *NGSQ* includes all known vital data for all children, whether carried forward or not.

Differences in Arabic identification numbers

Descending genealogies do not assign identification numbers to spouses.

- *Register* assigns identification numbers only to those individuals carried forward to the next generation.
- *NGSQ* assigns numbers to all known individuals (not spouses); a "+" sign in the child list indicates an individual is carried forward to the next generation.

SPECIAL CASES: *NGSQ*

A good genealogical numbering system accommodates all family members. As you format special situations, consider the following factors:

- How does the child relate to one or both parents?
- By what surname will the child be known?

Include relationship clarifications in child list introductions, genealogical summaries, and parenthetical summaries of descent.

Multiple marriages

- Each child receives an Arabic individual number.
- Birth order numbers for children may continue consecutively, or start over with each new spouse.
- Each child receives the next-generation number or letter of the direct descendant.

Unknown father

- Child receives an Arabic individual number and birth order number.
- Child retaining birth mother's surname receives next-generation number.

Stepchildren and adoptions

- Children of the direct descendant are listed first, then children of the spouse (stepchildren); clarify relationships and parentage in child list introductions.
  - Assign stepchildren Arabic individual numbers and the next-generation number of the birth parent; no birth order number.
- Adopted children are carried forward with the nuclear family in which they are raised.
- Adoptees of unknown parentage are identified as the adopted child of the direct descendant and his/her spouse.
  - Present adoptees after the direct descendant's children and stepchildren.
  - Assign an Arabic individual number; no birth order number.
  - Adopted child using adoptive surname receives generational number 1.
- Incorporate "stepchild of" or "adopted by" in parenthetical summaries of descent.

CONCLUSION

Appropriate, well-organized genealogical formats present information in a clear, easily understood manner, producing family genealogies that stand the test of time.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: *NGSQ* EXAMPLE

NOTE: This is a fictitious family. In a real situation, each stated fact that is not "general knowledge" would be documented with a footnote or endnote. Non-italicized, superscript source citation numbers would be included in-text.

Arabic individual identification number

Generational designations

Generation A

Genealogical summary

1. Dirk^A Jansen (Martinus^B, Cornelius^C) was born 16 March 1860 in Lienden, Netherlands; died 23 February 1934, Netherlands. He married (1) **Berdena Meyer** on 9 December 1885 in Leerdam, Netherlands. She was born 24 June 1864 in Leerdam, the daughter of Gerrit Meyer and Margrethe Heimstra; died 11 September 1900 in Leerdam. He married (2) **Wilhelmina Den Hartog** on 26 November 1903...

[Proceed with life story...]

Dirk^A Jansen and Berdena Meyer had the following children: ← Child list introduction

2   i.   CORNELIA^a JANSEN, born 25 May 1887, Leerdam; died 24 February 1953, Lienden, Netherlands. She married Simon De Jong on 1 April 1910. *[Additional details may be included]*

Non-emigrating sibling

3   ii.   KATRINA JANSEN, born 19 June 1890 in Leerdam; died 2 August 1960 in Leerdam.

+   4   iii.   WILLIAM^{a-1} JANSEN, born 28 March 1892 in Leerdam; died 10 May 1978, Woodbury County, Iowa. He married Elizabeth Porter on 1 February 1919 in Sioux County.

First immigrant

Child lists

Dirk^A Jansen and Wilhelmina Den Hartog had the following children:

5   i.   JACOB^a JANSEN, born 3 September 1905 in Leerdam; died 26 October 1990, Amsterdam, Netherlands. He married Ann Rensink on 3 July 1930 in Amsterdam.

6   ii.   LAMBERT^{a-1} JANSEN, born 25 January 1907 in Leerdam; died 1 May 1994 in Dubuque, Iowa.

Generation a-1 [Generation 1 if no European kin are presented]

Parenthetical summary of descent

4. William^{a-1} Jansen (Dirk^A, Martinus^B, Cornelius^C) was born 28 March 1892 in Leerdam, the son of Dirk Jansen and Berdena Meyer; died 10 May 1978 in Woodbury County, Iowa. He married **Elizabeth Porter** on 1 February 1919 in Sioux County, Iowa. She was born 14 June 1894 in O'Brien County, Iowa, the daughter of William Porter and Emma Turner; died 10 October 1980 in Platte County, Nebraska.

[Proceed with life story...]

William^{a-1} Jansen and Elizabeth Porter had the following children:

7   i.   MARGARET ANN^2 JANSEN, born 19 December 1920 in Sioux County, Iowa...

8   ii.   JOHN JANSEN, born 28 October 1922 in Sioux County...

+   9   iii.   CATHERINE LOUISE JANSEN, born 8 July 1926 in Sioux County; died 10 June 1990, San Jose, Santa Clara County, California. She married David Smith on 10 March 1943 in O'Brien County, Iowa.

Birth order

Arabic individual identification number

Individual carried forward

Generation 2

9. Catherine Louise^2 Jansen (William$^{a\text{-}1}$, Dirk^A, Martinus^B, Cornelius^C) was born 8 July 1926 in Sioux County, Iowa, the daughter of William Jansen and Elizabeth Porter; died 10 June 1990 in San Jose, Santa Clara County, California. She married (1) **David Smith** on 10 March 1943... She married (2)**Thomas Walker** on 5 April 1950. He married (1)Edna Matthews...

[Proceed with life story...]

Catherine Louise^2 Jansen and David Smith had the following child:

| Birth child |

+ 10   i.   SARAH JANE^3 SMITH, born 3 September 1946, O'Brien County, Iowa; died 5 February 2000, San Jose, Santa Clara County....

The stepchild of Catherine Louise^2 Jansen (said child born to her second husband, Thomas^1 Walker, and his first wife, Edna Matthews) was:

| Stepchild |

11   JAMES^2 WALKER, born 3 September 1944, O'Brien County, Iowa; died 5 February 2000, San Jose, Santa Clara County....

No birth order number

Catherine Louise^2 Jansen and Thomas Walker adopted the following child (said child of unknown parentage):

| Adopted child |

12   ARTHUR^1 WALKER, born 21 March 1950...

Surname change, female line

Generation 3

10. Sarah Jane^3 Smith (Catherine Louise^2 Jansen, William$^{a\text{-}1}$, Dirk^A, Martinus^B, Cornelius^C) was born 3 September 1946 in O'Brien County, Iowa, the daughter of Catherine Louise Jansen and David Smith; died 5 February 2000 in San Jose, Santa Clara County, California. She did not marry.

Sarah Jane^3 Smith was the mother of one child (father unknown):

| Unknown father |

13   i.   PETER^4 SMITH, born 16 April 1966, San Jose, Santa Clara County, California...

Mother's next-generation number

RESOURCES

All URLs valid as of 1 June 2018

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