



Clerical work involves a great deal of data entry and filing and sorting of documents. This is why you need to master the basics of alphabetical filing before landing any clerical position.

Alphabetical filing as a skill becomes even more crucial if you want to work for the government where one mistake can lead to significant repercussions.

In this article, you'll learn the basic rules of alphabetical filing. Knowing these rules will help you ace the clerical ability subtest of the civil service exam, and become more prepared to take on any clerical government job.

1. Always write the given names of the persons in the appropriate format of alphabetizing.

Here's the right format:

Surname, First Name, Middle Name or Middle Initial.

This is the first thing you have to consider when alphabetizing a set of names of persons. Check if the given names are written in the manner stated above. Otherwise, you have to arrange them.

Sample Problem:

- Jonathan Q. Santiago
- Ma. Anita G. Patapat
- Juan Simon F. Farron
- Claude Alex A. Tibay
- Sheila Belinda M. Cruz



Notice that the given names are not written in the way as stated above. Thus, you need to arrange them in this manner:

- Santiago, Jonathan Q.
- Patapat, Ma. Anita G.
- Farron, Juan Simon F.
- Tibay, Claude Alex A.
- Cruz, Sheila Belinda M.

Finally, we can now alphabetize the given names:

- Cruz, Sheila Belinda M.
- Farron, Juan Simon F.
- Patapat, Ma. Anita G.
- Santiago, Jonathan Q.
- Tibay, Claude Alex A.

2. Names without middle initial or middle name are filed first before the names with a middle initial or middle name.

The principle of "*nothing comes before something*" applies in this kind of situation. That is, the name without a middle name comes before a name with a middle name.

Sample Problem:

- Juan Simon Patapat Toledo
- Juan Simon Toledo

Note that the name *Juan Simon Toledo* has no middle name. Thus, this comes before the name *Juan Simon Patapat Toledo* which has a middle name.

Therefore, the correct arrangement should be:

- Toledo, Juan Simon
- Toledo, Juan Simon Patapat

3. Compound surnames are treated as a single unit.

Some surnames have a prefix that precedes another word. Examples are *Delos Reyes*, *Delos Santos*, *Dela Cruz*, and *Villa Roman*.

Sample Problem:

- Ma. Bertha G. Delos Reyes
- Victor A. Del Monte
- Guido Q. Santos
- Armando S. Dimaguiba

Treat compound surnames as a single unit. Afterwards, rewrite the given names such that the surname is written first:

- Del Monte, Victor A.
- Delos Reyes, Ma. Bertha G.
- Dimaguiba, Armando S.
- Santos, Guido Q.

4. Ignore the hyphen (-) in a hyphenated name.

The hyphen can be found either in the surname, first name, or middle name. The important thing here is to consider these hyphenated names as one unit only and ignore the hyphen.

Sample Problem:

- Ma. Leticia U. Manansala-Patapat
- Arnold G. Smith-Nomad
- Antony Q. Toledo-Santiago
- Adrian P. Ramos

Consider the hyphenated words as a single unit only (ignore the hyphen). Afterward, write the given names such that the surname is written first:

- Manansala-Patapat, Ma. Leticia U.
- Ramos, Adrian P.
- Smith-Nomad, Arnold G.
- Toledo-Santiago, Anthony Q.

5. Name suffixes such as Jr. and Sr. as well as designations such as Ph.D. and CPA are written as the last unit of the name.

Suppose that the given name is *Juan Gregorio F. Patapat, Sr.*

Arrange the given name in the format *Surname, First Name Middle Name, Name Suffix.*

Hence, the given name must be written as *Patapat, Juan Gregorio F., Sr.*



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Sample Problem:

- Victor G. Cruz, Jr.
- Ellen Q. Manansala, PhD.
- Arnold D. Delos Santos, Sr.

Write the given names in the format *Surname, First Name Middle Name, Name Suffix*.
Afterward, alphabetize the given names. The answer should be:

- Cruz, Victor G. Jr.
- Delos Santos, Arnold D. Sr.
- Manansala, Ellen Q. PhD.

6. Name titles such as Mr., Mrs., Engr., Dr., Atty., are also written as the last unit of the name.

In a case where a name has a title and a suffix, the suffix comes first before the title. For example, the name *Dr. Ramon P. Manansala, Sr.* must be arranged as *Manansala, Ramon P. Sr. Dr.*

Sample Problem:

- Mr. Jonathan Delos Santos, Jr.
- Dr. Anna Beth P. Dimaguiba
- Alejandro G. Agustin
- Atty. Jonathan Delos Santos, Sr.
- Jonathan Delos Santos, Jr.

Rewrite the given names following the format stated above.

- Delos Santos, Jonathan Jr. Mr.



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- Dimaguiba, Anna Beth P. Dr.
- Agustin, Alejandro G.
- Delos Santos, Jonathan Sr. Atty.
- Delos Santos, Jonathan Jr.

Finally, arrange the given names alphabetically.

- Agustin, Alejandro G.
- Delos Santos, Jonathan Jr.
- Delos Santos, Jonathan Jr. Mr.
- Delos Santos, Jonathan Sr. Atty.
- Dimaguiba, Anna Beth P. Dr.

7. If the business name has the name of the individual, write the business name in this format: Surname, First Name, Nature/Purpose of the business.

Suppose that the given business name was *Alicia Bernardo Dental Clinic*. We must write the given business name as *Bernardo Alicia Dental Clinic*.

Sample Problem:

Alphabetize the following business names:

- Carlo Salvador Tireshop
- Michael Delos Reyes Bakeshop
- Marco Tibay Computer Shop
- Makati Clubhouse

Answer:



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- Delos Reyes Michael Bakeshop
- Makati Clubhouse
- Salvador Carlo Tireshop
- Tibay Marco Computer Shop

However, it is not necessary to transform business names with the name of an individual if that person is well-known.

For example, if the business name is *Jose Rizal Bookstore*. You don't have to write it as *Rizal, Jose Bookstore* since the name *Jose Rizal* is well-known.

8. When alphabetizing business names or organizations, ignore or drop the punctuation marks such as period(.), comma(,), apostrophe('), and hyphen(-).

For example, business names such as *Brian's Shop* will be written as *Brians Shop*; *Charmaine's Beauty Parlor* will be written as *Charmaines Beauty Parlor*; and *Sasha-Ramon Bakeshop* will be written as *SashaRamon Bakeshop*.

Sample Problem:

- Carla's Flower Shop
- Golden Bank Incorporated
- Anita Manansala Dental Clinic
- Shiela's Beauty Salon
- Happy Place Milktea

Answer:

- Carlas Flower Shop



- Golden Bank Incorporated
- Happy Place Milktea
- Manansala Anita Dental Clinic
- Shielas Beauty Salon

9. Ignore articles such as the, a, and an of a given business name or organization.

Suppose that the given business name is *The Downtown Laundry Shop*. We will only write the given business name as *Downtown Laundry Shop*.

Sample Problem:

- The Gamer's Hut
- All Around Toy Store
- Jessie Cruz Consultancy Firm
- James Harper Incorporated
- A Korean Cuisine spot

Answer:

- All Around Toy Store
- Cruz Jessie Consultancy Firm
- Harper James Incorporated
- Gamer's Hut
- Korean Cuisine Spot

