

Reviewing Transcriptions on the Smithsonian Transcription Center

What is transcription?

Transcription is when you take a document, journal, letter, ledger, etc. that has been written by someone and type up each word on the page just as you see it.

Why is transcription important?

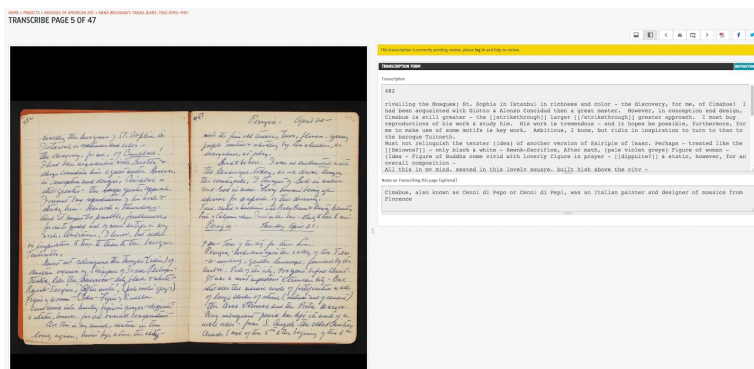
Transcription increases accessibility by making digitized materials more readable and searchable. This means that researchers can go online and read primary source documents about art and history. It means that scientists can learn about plants and animals from historic field books and data cards. It means that the stories of women, people of color, and other underacknowledged and marginalized groups can be shared so that we all learn a more inclusive history.

What is the Smithsonian Transcription Center?

Started in 2013, [The Transcription Center is a freely accessible website](#) that connects volunteers across the world with Smithsonian collections that need to be or already have been transcribed.

How do I get started reviewing transcription work?

Transcription review is when a volunteer carefully compares a completed transcription against the original text to ensure that they are the exact same.



To review on the Transcription Center, you must have an account. You can set one up on the [register](#) page of the Transcription Center or by clicking **sign up** in the top right corner of the home page at [transcription.si.edu](#).

Once you have an account, you can start reviewing. Find a source that is marked yellow and says **Needs Review**.

When you're reviewing, remember:

- **Review for accuracy and completeness!** Read the transcription and the original document carefully to make sure they match.
- **Read the entire transcript!** Make sure that the transcription is of the entire original document.
- **Correct any errors!** Use the blue *reopen for editing* button to make edits and modify the transcription to match the original document. Remember to preserve the original spelling and grammar, even if you know it's incorrect.
- **Use the Reviewing Quick Guide to make edits!** There are some special transcription markings you should be aware of. Use the [Quick Guide](#) below while you review.
- **Send back for review if you make edits!** Any edits means that a new volunteer will need to review the transcription. Click the *Complete and Mark for Review* button to put it back in the queue for review.

Transcription Quick Guide

Text to be Transcribed	Transcription Instructions
Columned data or tables	Use pipe symbol () to indicate number of rows and columns. Use three hyphens underneath the column headers to separate from other information. See example: Date Name Age State --- --- --- --- Aug. 7, 1865 John Smith 32 Virginia
Crossed out words	Write or before the word and or after the word
Ditto marks ("")	Type out the word that the ditto marks represent
Illegible word	Use [?] to indicate
Images	Use image to indicate. Transcribe captions
Insertions in text	Do not indicate. Add inserted letter or text to the word or sentence
Margin and/or footnotes	Transcribe and indicate they are additional notes using margin or footnote
Pre-printed vs. Handwritten text	Do not indicate
Special characters	Include accent marks and special characters. PC keyboard shortcuts are: ç - Alt 1159 ü - Alt 1153 ñ - Alt 164 á - Alt 0225 é - Alt 130 è - Alt 138 ç - Alt 0162 — (em dash) - Alt 0151 • (bullet point) - Alt 0149
Superscript	Avoid. Type "2nd"
Word Formatting (bold, italic, underlined)	Do not indicate