# Transcribing on the 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 connecting volunteers across the world with Smithsonian collections that need to be or already have been transcribed.

## How do I get started doing transcription work?

Sign up for a personal account with the Transcription Center. An account allows you to transcribe, review other volunteers' transcriptions, and keep track of your progress.

You can sign up by clicking the *sign up* button on the Transcription Center's homepage. Enter a username and an email address. Once registered, you'll receive an email confirmation with instructions on setting up your account and choosing your password.

*Note: You do not need an account to transcribe but you do need one to review and to keep track of your progress.*
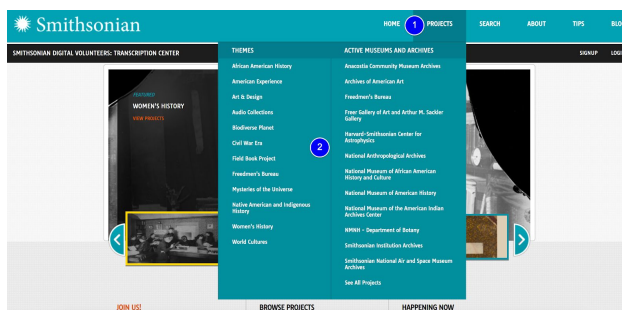


Once you have confirmed your account, use your cursor to hover over the word *Projects* in the top menu bar of the Transcription Center's homepage. Choose a theme or museum to work on.

Next choose a project with grey in the progress bar. Find a document that says *Continue Transcribing* or *Start Transcribing*.

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The document in the black box is the primary source. Click on the white box called *Transcription Form* and begin typing the words that you see.
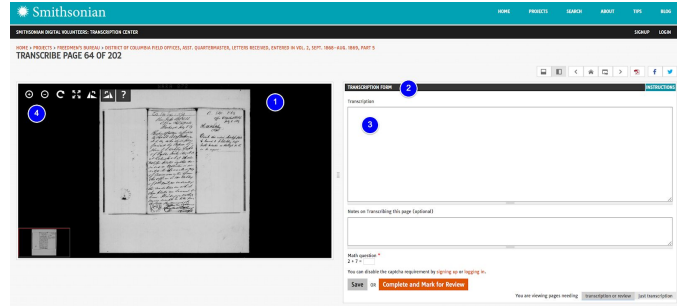


# When you're transcribing, remember:

- **Type what you see**: Preserve original spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word order, even if it is grammatically incorrect
- **Keep it simple**: Don't worry about formatting
- **Save frequently**: Click the SAVE button located below the transcription form to save your progress.
- **Mark for review**: Only hit the orange *Complete and Mark for Review* button when the entire page has been transcribed

# 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:<br><br>\|Date \| Name \| Age \| State \|<br>\| --- \| --- \| --- \| --- \|<br>\| Aug. 7, 1865 \| John Smith \| 32 \| Virginia \| |
| **Crossed out words** | Write [[strikethrough]] *or* [[crossed out]] before the word and [[/strikethrough]] *or* [[crossed out]] 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:<br><br>ç - Alt 1159<br>ü - Alt 1153<br>ñ - Alt 164<br>á - Alt 0225<br>é - Alt 130<br>è - Alt 138<br>¢ - Alt 0162<br>— (em dash) - Alt 0151<br>• (bullet point) - Alt 0149 |
| **Superscript** | Avoid. Type "2nd" |
| **Word Formatting (bold, italiac, underlined)** | Do not indicate |