

GEDCOM dates crib sheet

GEDCOM Date format is **DD MON YYYY** e.g. **01 APR 1900**

- Use the first three letters of the month name
- You may omit the day, or the day and month e.g. **APR 1900** or just **1900** but **never the other way**
- You may add GEDCOM modifiers in upper or sentence case e.g. **ABT** or **Abt**
- Translate Julian dates to Gregorian (put Julian date in a note)

Single date modifiers

- **ABT** for About e.g. **ABT 1900** - exact date is unknown and none of the following modifiers applies:
- **AFT** for After e.g. **AFT 06 APR 1900** - a date follows another, such as a burial date following a death
- **BEF** for Before e.g. **BEF 06 APR 1900** - a date precedes another, such as a birth date preceding a christening
- **CAL** for Calculated e.g. **CAL 1900** - infer a date from two or more other facts, such as a person being eleven years old on the 1911 Census
- **EST** for Estimated e.g. **EST 1900** - extrapolate a date from another, such as estimating the birth date of a parent from the birth date of their first child
- **FROM** e.g. **FROM APR 1900** - event such as residence occurs from a known start date up to an unknown end date (also see FROM ... TO)
- **INT** for Interpreted e.g. **INT 29 SEP 1900** - derived from a date phrase such as 'Michaelmas Day 1900.' *INT is rare and you could enter this as a pure date without a modifier. Either way, you should add the actual date phrase as a separate note to the date.*
- **TO** e.g. **TO 1900** - an event such as residence occurs from an unknown start date up to a known end date (also see FROM ... TO)

Date range modifiers

- **BET ... AND** e.g. **BET APR 1900 AND JUN 1900** - one-off event such as birth occurs sometime between two dates. **The classic use for this is to represent British quarter dates for entries in the BMD registers**
- **FROM ... TO** e.g. **FROM APR 1900 TO MAR 1901** - continuous event such as residence occurs from one date to another

If it's not mentioned on this sheet it doesn't belong in a date field

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Quick Tips

Those were the rules. Each family tree program has its own spin on how to handle date entry to help the user. Some are more helpful than others. Here are some quick tips that we have identified

Family Historian (FH)

FH is very good at forcing the right syntax for date ranges but can produce strange results if you enter ? in a date. For example, 199?, which was intended to mean sometime in the 1990's was converted to the year 0199!

Family Tree Maker (FTM)

Ignore Invalid Date

FTM uses validation rules on date fields to prevent invalid date formats being used. However, you can override the warning message by clicking the **Ignore** button. **Please don't**, because that will force the invalid date into the GEDCOM file and it will not be recognised as a date by other programs, including YourTrees.

Circa and **c.** will be converted to **ABT**; **SAY** and **OR** are not accepted, nor should they be.

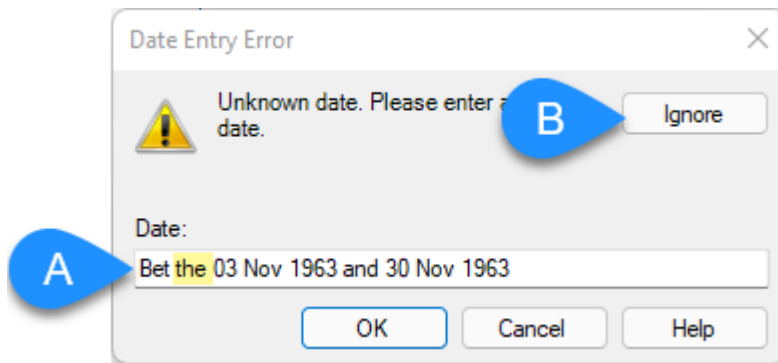
Date ranges

It also handles date ranges incorrectly e.g. BET 03 NOV and 30 NOV 1963 is changed to BET 3 AND 30 NOV 1963. However, you can force it to the correct behaviour like this:

1. Enter the date range but deliberately make it invalid e.g. BET **the** 03 NOV 1963 and 30 NOV 1963 and press Enter

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2. FTM will show an error box



- a. Edit the text to remove 'the'
- b. Press **Ignore**

3. This will force FTM to put the correct date into GEDCOM file exports

INTerpreted date modifier

FTM doesn't recognise the INT date modifier. We recommend you omit it and add a note in the description field with the date phrase from which you derived the actual date or date range

Rootsmagic 8 (RM)

RM does a great job of interpreting entered dates such as e.g. April 23rd, 1963 and converting them to e.g, 23 April 1963 as a displayed value while sending 23 APR 1963 to GEDCOM.