

# Keywords in Lightroom

Notes by Mark Brimblecombe (updated 15 June 2011)

<http://www.markbrimblecombe.com/Tuition/Keywords/Keywording.html>

In this tutorial we shall discuss keywording in Lightroom, deleting existing keywords, and starting afresh with a keyword list made in Microsoft Word and then imported into Lightroom.

## Delete Existing Keywords for a 'Fresh Start'

If you have assigned 'random' keywords to photos in your LR catalogue, then I suggest that you remove all the keywords in your existing catalogue. This is so that you can build a 'Keyword List' for a consistent and systematic application of this LR feature to your images.

*To remove keywords, right click on the keyword in the 'keyword list' and select 'Delete...'  
This will also delete the keyword from all images that use this keyword in the catalogue.*

To remove all keywords that have not been used, select from the Metadata menu (top) the 'Purge Unused Keywords'. You should now have no keywords in the 'Keyword List'.

## **BUT BEFORE YOU DELETE KEYWORDS...**

Before you delete existing keywords, I suggest that you make collections for each keyword that you already have, so that you can apply new keywords to these images later.

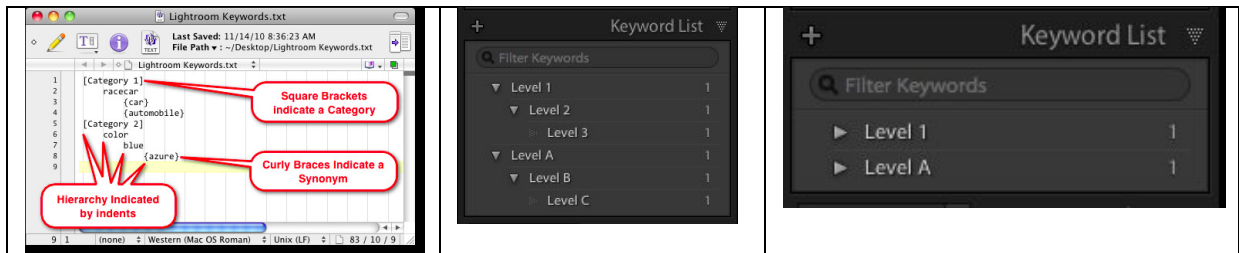
1. Click on the '+' alongside the 'Collections' tab/menu on the left panel and choose 'Create Collection Set'. Call this the name 'Keywords'.
2. Use the 'Library Filter' to find all the images with a given keyword, or better still use the 'Keyword List' on the right bar and click on the little arrow to the right of the number that indicates how many images you have with a particular keyword. This will now filter all your images to show those with this particular keyword.
3. Select all of these filtered images
4. Click on the '+' (Create Collection) on the left Collections bar and choose 'Create Collection'. Name the collection with the particular keyword, and for the 'Set:' choose 'Keywords' (the collection set we created above). Tick 'Include selected photos'. No need to make virtual copies. Create 😊
5. Now you have a collection for this keyword and can come back to it later to reapply keywords.
6. When you have finished applying the new keywords, then you can delete this collection.

## Build a Keyword List

The best way to make a keyword list, in my opinion, is to do this in Microsoft Word and then import the list into Lightroom as a '\*.txt' file. This is much easier and faster than making the list in Lightroom.

Alternatively you may like to build a keyword list in Microsoft Excel. This is easier for working your hierarchy of keywords in respective columns. When you convert the Excel spreadsheet to a txt file it will put a tab marker where there was a blank field. I'll explain this process in more detail later.

So let's make a keyword list in MS Word. Turn on the show/hide 'show paragraph marks and other hidden formatting symbols' ¶



**Tab.** Each level in the keyword hierarchy is indicated by a TAB character. (Symbol →)

**Category bracket ' [ ] '.** The square brackets tell Lightroom that the keyword they surround is a category.

**Synonym bracket ' { } '.** The squiggly bracket indicates a synonym. It is not a keyword as such, but when you search for images by keyword it will nevertheless find all of the images with this synonym.

### Convert to Plain Text (\*.txt) File

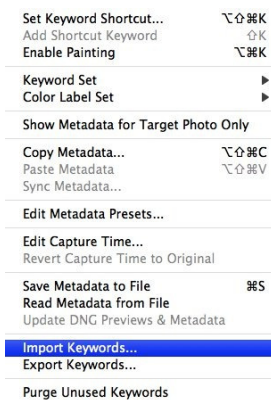
When you have made your Keyword List, then convert it to a '\*.txt' file.

1. Choose 'Save as'... 'Other formats'.
2. Save as type (under the File name field)... choose 'Plain Text (\*.txt)' and click Save.
3. Replace existing File (if asked)
4. Choose Text encoding... click on Other Encoding and select 'Unicode (UTF-8)' from the list of options.

*Note that if you have used macrons for Maori vowels then these are retained when using the above method of conversion to a txt document.*

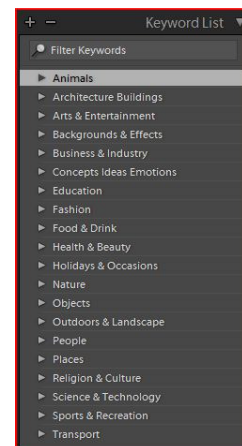
## Import the Keyword list into Lightroom

Under the Metadata menu in the Library module, choose **Import Keywords...**



After importing my Keywords List, this is what I see in Lightroom →

Listed here are my main categories. It is good to limit this so that you're not scrolling down the page to see your options.

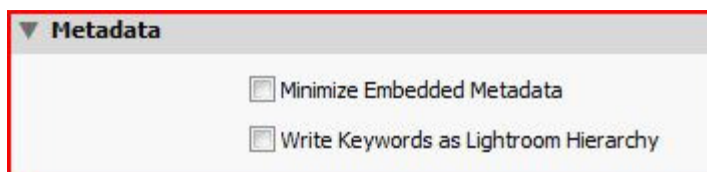


If you later edit your list in the external program (e.g. MS Word) you can re-import the file and Lightroom's keyword list will be updated. 😊

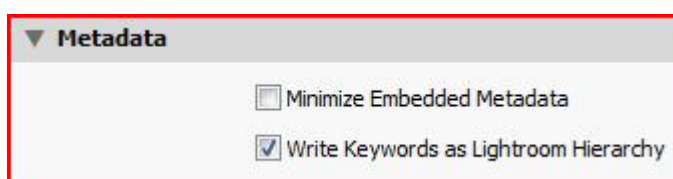
Sometimes you may want to create a keyword in Lightroom rather than in this external list. It will not be placed in the hierarchical categories that you have made in the external list. So I suggest that you note down the new keyword for adding it to your external list later. Then go through the procedure described at the beginning of this tutorial on *Delete Existing Keywords for a 'Fresh Start'*.

## Exporting Images with Keywords and Synonyms

When you export images there is a Metadata box in the export instructions.



When neither of these boxes are ticked you export the file with the **Keywords** and **Synonyms** only.

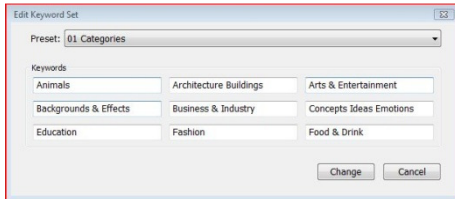


When you tick the 'Write Keywords as Lightroom Hierarchy you export with **Keywords** and the **category keywords** above this in the hierarchy. No synonyms are included.

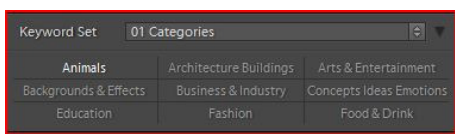
## Keyword Sets

This is the quickest way to keyword images.

To make a Keyword set, click on the Edit Keyword Set option (off down triangle).



Write your keywords in each of the nine fields, then 'Save Current Setting as New Preset'. The example to the left is named '01 Categories'.

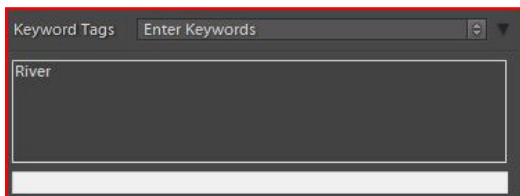


When you have saved this Preset, this is what you will see. Simply Click on the keyword listed here to include it in an image.

There is another even faster way to apply these keywords to an image.

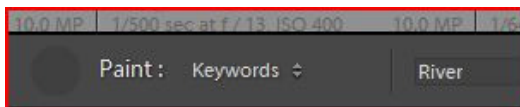
Hold down the 'Alt' key and a number appears to next to each keyword in your set. To add this keyword to an image (or group of selected images) just go 'Alt' + [number].

## Other Ways to Keyword Images



Just type the keyword in the field at the bottom of Keyword Tags Box.

As you type LR will suggest other keywords that you which start with the same letters.



Pick up the Painter 'aerosol can' and then select keywords and type in your keyword. Then paint the keyword onto the image(s).