ABSTRACT

An encoding method according to an embodiment includes an index generating step and an encoding step. The index generating step generates a common index in which numbers of one or more reference images included in a first index and numbers of one or more reference images included in a second index are sorted in a combination so as not to include a same reference image. The first index is set to represent a combination including the one or more reference images referred to by a first reference image. The second index is set to represent a combination including the one or more reference images referred to by a second reference image. The numbers of the reference images included in the first index and the second index are scanned in a predetermined order. The encoding step encodes the common index.