



ORANGE COAST COLLEGE LIBRARY

FINDING BOOKS ON THE SHELF AND THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (LC) CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

How do you locate books on the shelf by call numbers? Think of using a call number to locate a book in the same way that you use an address to locate a house on a street. Like an address, a call number gives you information from the very general (a city) to the very specific (a street and number). Look over the following description of how call numbers are arranged, going from the very general (LC classification letter) to the very specific (using decimals and numbers).

Library of Congress Classification System

The LC classification system is an alphanumeric code – it combines letters and numbers. The letters range from A through Z, and can be one or two letters. The second letter denotes a refinement or division of the subject indicated by the first letter. For example:

P (languages and literature)
PS (American literature)

On the shelves, A comes first, then AC, AE and so on until B, then BA, BD and so on all the way to Z. LC call numbers are usually four or five lines. The first line places the book in its subject area on the shelves. Books are arranged alphabetically by the letter or letters on the first line. For example:

C comes before **E**
PA comes before **PE**

The second line is still part of the subject area and is arranged numerically. For example:

DQ comes before **DQ** **JC** comes before **JC**
83 **528** **853** **1357**

The third line consists of a letter and a decimal number; and the fourth line is also read as a decimal. This means that .R49 would come before .R5. In your mind, add the extra zero to make the place value the same for both, e.g., .R49 comes before .R5(0). For example:

GA comes before **GA** **NC** comes before **NC**
57 **57** **269** **269**
.S49 **.S5** **.K327** **.K33**

The confusing line is the fourth one, which is read as a decimal even though it does not have a decimal on the line, as in the example:

DD comes before **DD**
33 **33**
.T55 **.T55**
C34 **C4**

Organizing knowledge is precisely what libraries attempt to do. Every topic has a home in a library classification system.

KNOWING THE GENERAL CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES ALLOWS YOU TO BROWSE
FOR BOOKS ON TOPICS OF YOUR CHOICE.

Library of Congress Classification - By Subject

Agriculture	S	Library Science	Z
Anthropology	GN	Literature	
Archaeology	CC	American	PS
Architecture	NA	British	PR
Art	N	Classical	PA
Astronomy	QB	Children's	PZ
Bibliography	Z	French, Italian, Spanish	PQ
Biology	QH	Germanic	PT
Botany	QK	Near Eastern	PJ-PK
Business	HF	Oriental	PJ
Chemistry	QD	Slavic	PQ
Cook Books	TK	Mathematics	QA
Dance	GV	Medicine	R
Drama-see literature		Military Science	U
Economics	HB-HJ	Music	M
Education	L	Naval Science	V
Fiction-see literature		Novels-see literature	
Folklore	GR	Oceanography	GC
Games	GV	Philosophy	B-BJ
Geography	G-GC	Photography	TR
Geology	QE	Physical Education	GV
History		Physics	QC
Africa	DT	Plays-see literature	
Asia	DS	Poetry-see literature	
Europe		Political Science	J
France	DC	Psychiatry	RC
Germany	DD	Psychology	BF
Great Britain	DA	Religion	BL-BX
Russia	DK	Science	Q
Spain	DP	Social Science	H
Latin America	F	Sociology	HM-HV
North America	E-F	Sports	GV
United States	E-F	Statistics	HV
Oceania	DU	Technology	T
World & General	D	Zoology	QL
Languages	PA-PM		
Law	K		