

## How do I find a book on the shelves in the LRC?

### The Library of Congress Classification System:

#### How does it work?

Books are arranged on the library shelves by subject with all the books on one subject shelved together. Each subject is assigned a one or two letter code or what's known as a call number. The letters do not necessarily stand for the first letter of the subject they represent. For instance, Political Science is letter J, and Art is letter N. This system is called the Library of Congress classification system because it was first designed and used by the Library of Congress and is used in most academic libraries today. It uses a combination of letters and numbers to denote subjects.

Here is a brief listing of letters assigned to subjects:

A = General works	M = Music
B-BJ = Philosophy	N = Fine arts
BF = Psychology	P = Language & Literature
BL-BX = Religion	Q = Math, Science, Computer Science
C,D,E,F = History	R = Medicine
G = Geography, Anthropology, Recreation	S = Agriculture
H = Social Sciences, Business	T = Technology, Engineering
J = Political Science	U = Military Science
KF = Law of the United States	V = Naval Science
L = Education	Z = Bibliography, Printing, Publishing

#### Call Numbers: How do they work?

Each book is assigned a call number which serves to designate both its subject and its location on the shelves. This call number usually has three parts. The first part is one or two letters for the broad subject area. The second part is numbers and is a further subdivision of the broad subject. The third part is a letter and number code for the author's last name. Here are two examples and what they mean:

TK = electrical engineering  
 2851 = motors, generators  
 .H3 = Harwood (author)

This call number is for the book:  
 Harwood's Control of Electrical Motors

HQ = family, marriage  
 756 = fathers, husbands  
 .D76 = Dubrin (author)

This call number is for the book:  
 New Husbands & How to Become One

The call numbers appear on the spine of the book and are written vertically, as above, but can be written horizontally as well, for example: **TK 2851 .H3.**

## This is IMPORTANT!

Remember: There is no need to memorize this classification scheme. You only need to write down the complete call number listed from the online catalog and take it with you as you go into the stacks to find the book on the shelf.

### Shelving: How do I find a book on the shelf?

**Books are shelved alphabetically by first letter of the first line of the call number, then by the second letter, if any. Then, it switches back to numbers.**

- In our examples below, Book 1 comes before book 2 because plain B comes before BF.
- Book 2 comes before book 3 because BF precedes BT, alphabetically.
- The second lines are arranged as whole numbers with book 4 coming before book 5 because 541 comes before 964, numerically.
- NOTE: Any number appearing after the decimal point is treated as a decimal. In the third line book 5 would be shelved before book 6 because **.A42 comes before .A7**. Adding 0's to the decimals helps in more easily being able to see the sequence. In other words, **.A42 comes before .A70 (.42 before .70)**.

Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book4	Book 5	Book 6
B	BF	BT	HV	HV	HV
792	198	1003	541	964	964
.T51	.S2	.M49	.P2	.A42	.A7

So, if you understand this sequence above, you should be able to locate any materials on the shelves in the DSCC Learning Resource Center.

But if you still have difficulty or have any questions about locating materials, please ask a Librarian (Susan Charley, your Instructional Librarian or Teresa Johnson, Dean of the LRC) for help. We will be glad to assist you anytime.



Last Updated 2/11/09 by Susan J. Charley