How to Read a Call Number/How to Find a Book
at Dyersburg State Community College
Fall 2015

Each book in the LRC/Library has a unique call number. A call number is like an address: it identifies where the book is located. Call numbers appear on the spine of books, and sometimes on other library items in the collection. This LRC, like many college and university libraries, uses the Library of Congress Classification for call numbers. This system uses a combination of letters and numbers to arrange materials by subjects, and may appear in two different formats as seen below.

HD98 C2 1999

is read the same as

HD 98 .C2 1999

Read a call number by sections, line-by-line:

The first part of a call number contains letters. These letters are read alphabetically:

H before HA before HD

The second part of the call number contains numbers which are read as a whole number:

HD98 before HD 98 before HD115 before HD 204

This second part of the call number may or may not contain a decimal component:

HD98.55 before HD 98.78 before HD98.79
But the third part is the only real tricky part. It consists of letters and then a sequence of numbers.

**Point # 1.** Items are placed first in alphabetical order by the letter, then numerically according to the sequence of numbers.

**Point # 2.** All numbers in this line are treated as if they were preceded by a decimal; see examples.

|---------|-----------|---------|

This makes sense if you read the numbers as decimals, because:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C.200</th>
<th>C.215</th>
<th>C.250</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

200 then .215 then .250

The fourth part: The final lines of the call number may include dates, volume indicators, issue numbers, copy numbers, and other annotations. These annotations are read after the call number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HD8039S52B4852005</th>
<th>HD8039.S532002c.2</th>
<th>HD8039S53H271999v.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Note: It is important to be sure to write down the COMPLETE call number!** Do not leave any parts of the number out.

**Location Prefixes:**
Some call numbers are preceded by a location prefix indicating that the item is shelved in a specific location. For example:

- **Ref** - Reference item located on the Reference shelves in Reference section.

- **Oversize** – The item is too tall to fit on the regular shelving unit and is shelved in a special section of shelving.

- **AARC** – Items part of the African American Resource Collection and shelved in a special section. If you have any questions about locating any item in the LRC, contact any LRC staff member or the DSCC Help Desk for assistance.

Borrowed and updated August 21, 2015 by Susan J. Charley