

G60 Call numbers

BACKGROUND: The cataloger describes what a book is about by selecting one or more **subject headings**. Subject headings are chosen from a standard list contained in the **Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)**. The cataloger may also use the names of individuals, corporate bodies or places as subject headings. The subject headings are recorded in the 600-651 fields of the bibliographic record, as follows:

Not every book cataloged receives a subject heading. Works of fiction are an example of a category of works that are usually not assigned subject headings.

In addition to assigning subject headings, the cataloger assigns the book a **classification number** selected from the LC classification schedules. The classification schedules divide all knowledge into 21 main classes. Each classification schedule covers a particular subject area (e.g., the social sciences in the **Class H** schedule, the fine arts in the **Class N** schedule, etc.). Each schedule also presents a detailed breakdown according to the type of material (e.g., dictionaries, etc.) or according to topic (e.g., "Special topics, A-Z," etc.).

The call number represents the shelf location of the item in the library's collections. It is referred to as the call number, because it can be used to request or call for a particular item. A call number usually consists of three parts: (1) **classification number**, (2) **Cutter number**, or **book number**, and (3) **date**.

(1) The **classification number**, or **class number**, is determined by the cataloger based on the subject matter of the book. Examples of class numbers:

DA980 QK477.2 UA655 7th

(2) The **Cutter number**, or **Cutter**, is a combination of letters and numbers that follows the class number and is preceded by a decimal point. This is not to be confused with the decimal number, that may form part of the class number. The Cutter number is most frequently based on the first word of the main entry, usually the author's surname.

.B43 .I4E34 .W4

Classification numbers may include a subarrangement consisting of a topical Cutter. The topical Cutter, or its initial letter, is supplied by the cataloger.

The term Cutter is taken from the name Charles Ammi Cutter (1837-1903), who devised the Two-Figure Author Table in the closing years of the 19th century as an easy-to-use method for arranging books by author within a given class. The Cutter Two-Figure Author Table and its subsequent expansion, the Cutter Three-Figure Author Table, have been adopted and used by libraries throughout the world. In 1969,

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the Swanson-Swift revision of the edited and revised table was issued under the title Cutter-Sanborn Three-Figure Author Table (Swanson-Swift Revision).

Cutter's principles were modified to serve the special needs of the Library of Congress' rapidly expanding collections. The Library's book numbers are therefore composed according to the table in sec. 3 of this instruction sheet. The book number is the part of the call number that distinguishes a particular work from others in the same class. In the LC classification system, the book number is represented by the Cutter or part of the Cutter.

In the shelflist and on the shelf, the Cutter is the means by which an alphabetical arrangement of books is achieved. This alphabetical arrangement is based on the LC filing rules (see G 100) and the Preferred Shelflist Order table (see sec. 2 of this instruction sheet).

In order to permit infinite expansion between any two Cutter numbers, Cutters are treated as decimal numbers. This means that for entries such as E41.B35 and E41.B4, .B35 is filed before .B4.

(3) The **date** is supplied at the end of the call number. Since April 1982, most monographs include a date as part of the call number (see G 140 for procedures and exceptions).

In addition to the class number and the topic, the schedule may include instructions for the subarrangement of the class according to special tables or lists of Cutter numbers. These instructions always take precedence over the shelflisting procedures and tables normally used by the technician, such as the Regions and Countries Table ([G 300](#)) or the Biography Table ([G 320](#)).

The examples below illustrate some of the common types of instructions found in the LC classification schedules.

Illustration #1: Single Cutter

CB7
. T6
1962

No specific subarrangement instructions for this number are provided in the schedule. A single Cutter is assigned to the work.

Illustration #2: Single Cutter

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DS127

.A63

The Cutters **.A1-49** are reserved for special types of publications. The range **.A5-Z** is to be used. When the main entry begins with **A**, the Cutter must be adjusted to fit the range.

Illustration #3: Double Cutter--second Cutter for main entry

HV6250

.4

.A34 M43

1977

The first Cutter (A34) represents the subject of the book. It is printed in the schedule. Assign a second Cutter for the main entry.

Illustration #4: Double Cutter--second Cutter for main entry

HD5114

.A3 I65

1939

The first Cutter is specified in the schedule as a breakdown of the class number. Assign a second Cutter for the main entry.