

## How to Read a Call Number

Once you've found a record for a book in the Online Catalog, you're halfway there. Now you need to locate the item on the shelf. Of course you can always stop at the Reference Desk and have the librarian show you on the Library map where the item is located, but if you know how the call numbers are arranged, you can save some time. The following guide should provide some helpful hints.

1. Take each call number one line at a time. In the Library of Congress Classification System call numbers, the first line will always consist of 1 to 3 letters. These should always be placed in alphabetical and hierarchical order. All A's before B's, single letters before doubles, combinations in alphabetical order, etc.

<b>A</b> 101 .B56	<b>B</b> 96 .B74	<b>BJ</b> 86 .B2	<b>BL</b> 43 .B32
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2. The second line always consists of numbers arranged in numerical order from one to the thousands.

<b>A</b> <b>1</b> .B3	<b>A</b> <b>14</b> .B3	<b>A</b> <b>131</b> .B3	<b>A</b> <b>1159</b> .B3
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Always remember to take the call number one line at a time.

Example:

A                      B  
100 comes before 10

Sometimes you will have a call number like:

<b>A</b> 101 .5 .B35
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You should think of this number as though it was typed:

<b>A</b> <b>101.5</b> .B35
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All **101**'s come before **101.5**'s and all **101.5**'s come before **102**'s.

3. The third line of the call number will have a letter followed by numbers. Again, the letters are arranged alphabetically before considering the numbers.

A	A	A
101	101	101
<b>.B3</b>	<b>.C7</b>	<b>.D1</b>

When placing the numbers of the 3rd line in order, treat the numbers as **DECIMALS!**

A	A	A	A
101	101	101	101
<b>.B13</b>	<b>.B3</b>	<b>.B455</b>	<b>.B46</b>

Any number starting with **1** will come before any line of numbers starting with **2** etc.

**.B1211** before **.B212** before **.B32**

4. When you have a letter/numbers combination on the fourth line, follow the same rules that you use for the third line.

A	A	A	A
101	101	101	101
B13	.B13	B13	.B13
<b>C25</b>	<b>C256</b>	<b>C27</b>	<b>C3</b>

\*\*\* REMEMBER, the ONLY time you place the numbers in numerical rather than decimal order is on the FIRST line of numbers in the call number. \*\*\*

### **EXCEPT**

After 1982 call numbers began ending with the year of publication. Call numbers the same up to that point, file in chronological order. In addition there may be designations for copy1, copy 2, (c.1, c.2) and volume 1, volume 2, (v.1, v.2), etc., but these letters combinations are always in lower case.