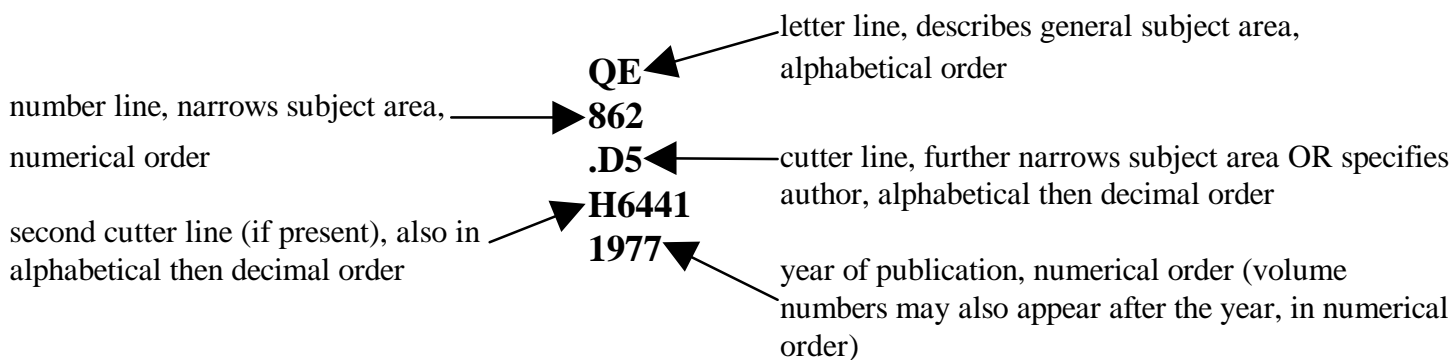


Understanding Library of Congress Call Numbers

Most books in the U-M libraries are organized by Library of Congress call number. Call numbers on books and journals appear either on the spine or on the front cover. A line above the call number identifies the U-M library which owns the item.

The Library of Congress classification system uses alphabetical, numerical, and decimal order.

What do the parts of the call number mean?



How are the call numbers arranged?

When you are looking for an item, always start with the top line of the call number. Items are arranged alphabetically. All BR numbers are together, after BP and before BS, and all B's come after all combinations of A and before all combinations of C. For example:

G . . . H, HA, HB, HC . . . HV, HX, J, JA . . . (note that H precedes HA:
"nothing comes before something")

When items have identical letter lines, look to the number line to find the item. Items are ordered using **whole numbers**. The following numbers are in correct order:

F	F	F	F	F
3	24	221	1983	2001

When the top two lines are identical, look to the third (cutter) line. Items are ordered alphabetically. Items with the same letter in the cutter line are then arranged by **decimal number**. The following call numbers are in correct order:

PN	PN	PN	PN	PN	PN
70	6231	6231	6231	6231	6231
.P441	.E29	.E295	.E4	.E74	.F44

When the top three lines are identical, look to the fourth line. If it contains a letter followed by numbers, items are organized by letter, and within each letter by **decimal** number. (Note that this works just like the line above it, treating the number as a decimal even though there is no visible decimal point.) The following call numbers are in correct order:

QE	QE	QE	QE	QE	QE
862	862	862	862	862	862
.D5	.D5	.D5	.D5	.D5	.D5
L22	L35	L4571	L461	M3311	M37

Multiple editions of a title will have the same call number, except for the last line, which will be the year of publication. Later years are shelved after earlier ones.

Some call numbers will include lines at the bottom to describe the volume, issue or part of the larger publication. These are shelved in alphabetical or numerical order, whichever is used. The following two examples are in correct order:

AE	AE	QK	QK	QK	QK
5	5	115	115	115	115
.E56	.E56 etc.	.R538	.R538	.R538	.R538
1997	1997	v.2	v.2	v.3	v.3
v.1	v.2	pt.1	pt.2	pt.1	pt.2

Dewey Decimal Numbers

A few items are cataloged using the Dewey Decimal system. Those call numbers are sorted line by line, like the Library of Congress system, with the first line organized by whole number, and the second line sorted by letter and then decimal number (just like the Library of Congress cutter lines), and then by letter, if applicable. The following Dewey numbers are in correct order:

800	808	808	808.9	808.9	808.9	808.9
W167pr	M279m	M279w	A435	A435	A49	A5
			A66	H62		

And More . . .

You may encounter items like videos, microforms, and dissertations which have other types of call numbers. For more information, ask at any library service desk.