

How Libraries Work

The Basics

Libraries are information warehouses. Because they contain so many items, libraries have basic rules that group similar items into **collections**, and that assign unique **call numbers** to each. Once library users know how to “work the system,” they can go to any library and find what they need. Most libraries use **online catalogs** to find items in their collections. Library users can select searches in the online catalog for titles, authors, subjects or type keywords to describe an item they would like to find. If the search finds items, the computer will show which collection the items are in, what the call numbers are and if they are available to check out. To access Lakeland Library’s catalog, go to: <http://lakeopac.lakelandcc.edu>

Collections — Lakeland Library has three main collections: Reference , Circulating and Media.

Call Numbers — Lakeland Library is an academic library. Most academic libraries use Library of Congress Classification (LCC). LCC uses letters first, then numbers. Public libraries often use Dewey Decimal Classification, which uses numbers first, then letters.

Regardless of how the labels appear, call numbers are always read the same way. See below.

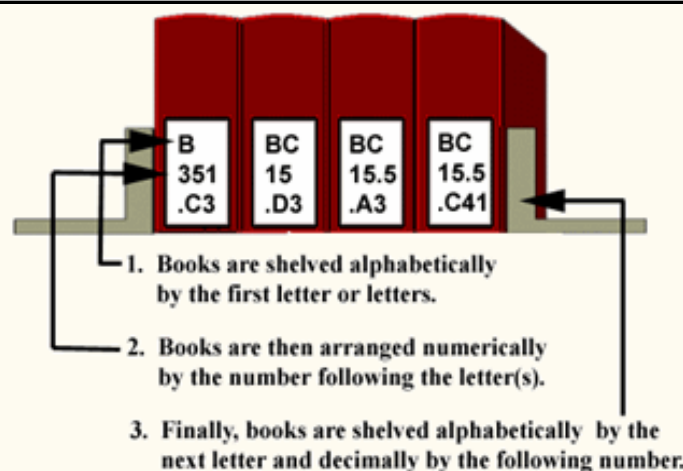
Collections

Reference Collection— A reference collection contains items meant to be referred to in the library. The reference collection contains subject encyclopedias, dictionaries, statistical sources, legal reference, literary criticism, medical reference and more. If the books on a topic have been checked out from the circulating collection, the reference collection will have quality information to suit most needs.

Circulating Collection— A circulating collection contains books and videos that can be checked out. They are arranged on the shelf by subject area and then by call number.

Media Collection— Lakeland’s media collection contains CDs, DVDs, tapes and other non-print items. They cannot be checked out, but can be played in the library at media stations.

Call Numbers



Whether Library of Congress (starts with letters) or Dewey (starts with numbers) call number system is used, libraries arrange their items on the shelf reading from left to right:

1. Alphabetically from A to Z
2. Numerically from 0 to 9999

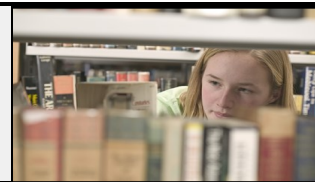
Play the Call Number Game at:

<http://www.library.kent.edu/page/13761>

Graphic to left from Univ. MD, Tilt Tutorials

Photo credit: University of Maryland TILT Tutorials

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LCC Subject Guide

Library of Congress system assigns a letter of the alphabet to each subject. Here's a general guide:

A	General Encyclopedias and Dictionaries	J	Political Science
B	Philosophy, Psychology and Religion	K	Law
C	Biography	L	Education
D	History, Europe, Asia, Africa Oceana	M	Music, Fine Arts
E	History, America General	P	Language and Literature Literature, Poetry, Drama Fiction
F	History, North, South, Central America	Q	Science, Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Geology, Natural History Zoology Anatomy and Physiology
G	Geography, Anthropology, Recreation	R	Medicine
H	Social Sciences Economics Social History, Family, Women Social Pathology	S	Agriculture
		T	Technology, Engineering, Photography
		U, V	Military Science, Naval Science

Library Lingo

Boolean operators: used in databases to combine or exclude terms for more exact results. AND combines terms, OR accepts any term and NOT eliminates terms.

Citation or Bibliographic Citation: contains the publication information and library location of a book or other library item. MLA Citation: the Modern Language Association's format for documentation of sources, both in the text and in a list of works cited.

Database: a collection of citations, articles, or other information searchable by a number of different fields, which include Keyword, Subject, Author, Title, and more.

HTML: a web page design language often used to provide full-text articles in online databases. Unlike PDF, HTML articles are reformatted for viewing on the computer.

Index: a print index is found at the end of a book and lists the contents of the book by names, places, and subjects. It gives page numbers where that information can be found in the book.

Journal: a scholarly, peer-reviewed publication containing research articles, case studies, criticism, and other forms of research, communication, and writing important to academic or professional communities.

Keywords: words that uniquely describe a subject or concept when searching a database. The accuracy of the search depends on the quality of the keywords used and how they are combined.

PDF: a file format often used to provide full-text articles in online databases. Unlike HTML, PDF documents have not been reformatted for the computer. A full-text article in PDF format is like a photocopy of the article as it originally appeared in a print version.

Search Engine: a program that uses keywords and phrases to search the web, library catalogs or article databases to find documents or information. Search engines return lists of results.

Spine: the flat back strip on the bound edge of a book where the title, author, and library call number can often be found.

Stacks: shelves of books.



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<https://myportal.lakelandcc.edu/web/about/library-departments-home>