



Finding Books using Call Numbers

What are call numbers used for?

Each item in the library has a unique call number that tells us exactly where books are located on our shelves. Call numbers can be written from top-to-bottom or left-to-right. For example:

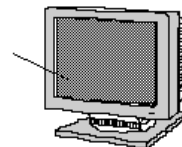
on books they look something like this:



HF
5382.7
.K734
1997

in the library catalog they look something like this:

HF5382.7 .K734 1997



Pierce College libraries use the Library of Congress classification system for assigning call numbers. This system uses a combination of letters and numbers to assign call numbers by subject and to arrange books on the shelves. The other system you'll encounter in U.S. libraries is the Dewey Decimal classification system, in which call numbers begin with numbers instead of letters.

Why are they important?

To find a book on our shelves, you'll need to know its call number and how to use that call number. Because call numbers are assigned by subject, you can usually find books on similar subjects near one another on the shelf. For example, in the call number area HF5382.7 you will see dozens of books about job hunting.

Knowing the call number area for subjects you're studying also gives you a place to start browsing the shelves. For example, if you're studying law, you'll probably be spending time in our library around the shelves where call numbers begin with the letter K. Lists of subjects and corresponding call numbers are available at our Reference desks.

What do they mean?

The first two lines of call numbers represent the subject of a book. The letter and number combination on the third line represent the author's name. Often you will see another line indicating the year of publication. For example, *Welcome to the real world: you've got an education, now get a life*, by Stacy Kravetz, has this call number:

HF
5382.7
.K734
1997

Here's what each section of the call number means:

HF = major subject category for this book: commerce
5382.7 = specific subject category for this book: job hunting
.K734 = author code for Stacy Kravetz
1997 = year of publication

Reading call numbers

Read and search for call numbers on shelves one section at a time. For example, follow these steps to find the book in the example above:

1. Read the letters in the first line in alphabetical order: A, B, C... **H**. Then HA, HB, HC... **HF**.
2. Read the number in the second line as a whole number: 1, 2... 20... 30...100... 200... 1000... **5000**. Then 5100, 5101... 5200... **5300**. Then 5301, 5302... **5380**. Then 5380, 5381, **5382**.
3. If there is a number after a decimal in the second line, read it as a decimal number: 5382.1... 5382.11... 5382.101... 5382.2... 5382.20... **5382.7**.
4. Read the letter in the third line in alphabetical order, and read the following number as a decimal number. 5382.7A... **5382.7K**. Then 5382.7K.1... 5382.7K.10...5382.7K.2... **5382.7K.7**... 5382.7K.701... **5382.7K.734**.
5. Because the last line is the year the book was published, two books with identical subject numbers would be arranged in date order, with the more current one to the right..

Finding books on the shelf using call numbers

These call numbers are in the correct shelf order following the steps outlined in the previous section:

HF 5381.7 .G34 1990	HF 5382.5 .U5 P445 1997	HF 5382.55 .H46 1996	HF 5382.55 .H46 1998	HF 5382.7 .A33 1992	HF 5382.7 .D45 1995	HF 5382.7 .K734 1997	HF 5382.75 .U6 S453 1996	HF 5383 .P35 1989
------------------------------	-------------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	---	--------------------------------------	----------------------------

Call numbers and locations in our library catalog

Our library catalog gives you a lot of useful information about exactly where a book is on our shelves. When you are looking at the record for a specific item, scroll down to the lower portion of the screen to see its location information. You will see the area in the library where it's shelved (Circulating shelves, Reference shelves, or Media), which campus it's on, its call number, and its status. The status line will either will say "Available on shelf" or will tell you its due date. For example:

Main Author: Kravetz, Stacy.

Title: Welcome to the real world : you've got an education, now get a life!

Subject(s): Job hunting.
Vocational guidance.
Finance, Personal.

Primary Material: Book

Publisher: New York : Norton, c1997.

Location: Circulating Shelves - Ft. Steilacoom

Call Number: HF5382.7 .K734 1997

Status: Available on shelf

This book is at our Fort Steilacoom library, on the Circulating shelves under the call number HF5382.7 .K734 1997 and isn't currently checked out.

Library of Congress Subject Classifications

Each of the call number areas below is broken down further into very specific subjects. For example:

H is Social Sciences

HF is Commerce

HF5000-6182 is Business

HF5381.7 is Job Hunting.

At our Reference desk you'll find lists of more specific subjects and their corresponding call numbers.

A = General Works (encyclopedias, dictionaries, yearbooks)

B = Philosophy, Psychology, Religion

C = Auxiliary Sciences of History

D = History, General & Old World

E-F = History, American

G = Geography, Anthropology, Recreation

H = Social Sciences

J = Political Science

K = Law

L = Education

M = Music

N = Fine Arts

P = Language and Literature

Q = Science

R = Medicine

S = Agriculture

T = Technology

U = Military Science

V = Naval Science

Z = Bibliography, Library Science

Why are they important?

- Use call numbers to browse the shelves for books on a particular subject. If you find the call number for one book, when you look on the shelf for that book you will probably find several books on the same topic.
- Browsing the reference collection in the same call number area will lead you to even more resources.
- You can search our Online Catalog by call number.

This handout was inspired by Seattle Community College District libraries (http://www.sccd.ctc.edu/~library/call_no.html)

Library faculty at the Reference Desks can help with your research in person or by phone at 964-6555 (Fort Steilacoom) or 840-8302 (Puyallup). Stop by our web site <<http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/Library/>> for more information about our library or to use our library catalog and periodical indexes.

3/18/02, kkells