



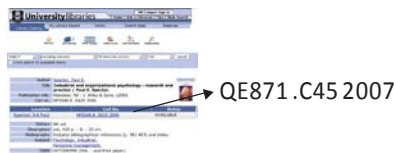
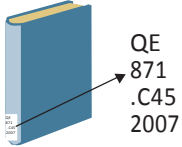
Reading Library of Congress Call Numbers

University Libraries

Once you've searched the library's catalog, how do you locate your items in the library? Some catalogs will list the library and floor for each item. It will also list a call number so you can zero in on the correct shelf in the library. Many academic libraries in the U. S., use the *Library of Congress Classification System* to assign call numbers to most library materials, including books and journals.

What is the purpose of call numbers? Each book or journal has a unique call number, which provides an address or location for the item, and also provides valuable information about it, such as the subject, first letter of the author's last name, and date of publication.

Call numbers appear:
on the spine of books... and ...in the library catalog



Note that the same call number can be written from top-to-bottom, or left-to-right.

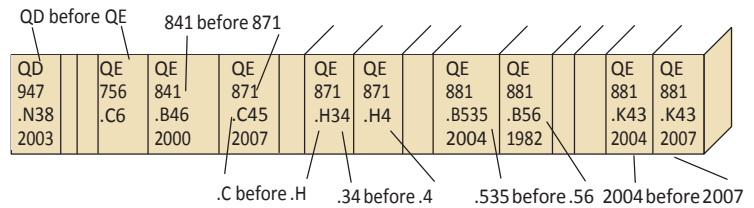
How do you read call numbers? The Library of Congress Classification System uses a combination of letters and numbers to arrange materials on library shelves by subject:

Read call numbers line by line

QE
871
.C45
2007

- Read the first line in alphabetical order. A, B, BF, CD... Q, QA, QB... QE, R, S...
- Read the second line as a whole number. 1, 2, 45, 101, 500, 500.1, 500.5, 871, 1000, 2468...
- The third line is a combination of a letter and numbers:
Read the letter alphabetically.
Read the number as a decimal:
.B535 comes before .B56
(Some call numbers have more than one combination letter-number line.)
- The last line is the publication date, read in chronological order: 2005, 2006, 2007

In what order do call numbers appear on the shelf? Call numbers are arranged line by line, just as they are read, starting with the letter or letters in alphabetical order:



What information does the call number tell you? The Library of Congress Classification System arranges materials by subjects. The first sections of the call number represent the subject of the book. The letter-and-decimal section of the call number often represents the author's last name. The last section of a call number is often the date of publication:



Title: *Glorified Dinosaurs: the origins and early evolution of birds*
 Author: Chiappe, Luis M.
 Call Number: QE 871 .C45 2007

The first two lines describe the subject of the book:
 QE871 = paleozoology - birds

This line often represents the author's last name:
 .C45 = Chiappe

The year the book was published

QE
871
.C45
2007

Why is this important to know? Although the most efficient way to locate materials on a particular topic is usually to perform a subject search in the catalog and then note the call number for each retrieved item, browsing the shelves can also help you locate material appropriate for your topic. Since books are classified by subject, you can often find several helpful books on the same shelf, or nearby. For example, within the subject classification QE 871, there may be several guides about the evolution of birds.



QE Glorified
871 dinosaurs
.C45 Chiappe, Luis
2007



QE Mesozoic birds:
871 above the head
.M47 of dinosaurs
2002 Witmer, Lawrence



QE Dinosaurs of
871 the air
.P38 Paul, Gregory
2002



The Library of Congress Classification system is used in libraries to organize knowledge into broad categories from A-Z. Each category is subdivided into narrower topics.

Library of Congress Classification System

Class Subject

A	General works
B	Philosophy, Psychology, Ethics and Religion
C	History-related disciplines
D	History (except the Americas)
E-F	History (the Americas)
G	Geography, Anthropology and Recreation
H	Social Sciences
J	Political Science
L	Education
M	Music
N	Fine Arts and Architecture
P	Language and Literature
Q	Sciences
R	Medicine
S	Agriculture
T	Technology and Engineering
U	Military Science
V	Naval Science
Z	Bibliography and Book Trade