

# A guide to the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme

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This library uses the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme (DDC) to arrange books and other library materials on the shelves so they may be easily retrieved. It is used in many libraries and allows items about the same subject to be shelved together.

### *How does the Dewey Decimal system work?*

DDC is an hierarchical number system that organizes all human knowledge into ten main categories. These are:

- 000 Generalities (includes computing)
- 100 Philosophy
- 200 Religion
- 300 Social sciences
- 400 Languages
- 500 Natural sciences and mathematics**
- 600 Technology (applied science)
- 700 The arts
- 800 Literature
- 900 Geography and history

Each main category is then divided into ten sub-categories. For example:

- 500 Natural sciences and mathematics
- 510 Mathematics
- 520 Astronomy
- 530 Physics**
- 540 Chemistry
- 550 Earth sciences
- 560 Laeontology
- 570 Life sciences
- 580 Plants
- 590 Animals

Each sub-category is then also divided into ten specific topics. For example:

- 530 Physics
- 531 Solid Mechanics
- 532 Fluid mechanics
- 533 Pneumatics
- 534 Sound
- 535 Light
- 536 Heat
- 537 Electricity
- 538 Magnetism
- 539 Modern physics

Each of these topics may be further divided into more specific subject areas. A decimal point is used after the first three digits to separate the specific subjects - it also makes the numbers easier to read. You will see that as the subject becomes more specific, so does the numbering. For example:

**Sound**  
 Generation of sound  
 Transmission of sound  
 534.22          Transmission of sound in solids  
 534.23          Transmission of sound in liquids

### ***DDC at Oxford Brookes***

When an item arrives in the library it is assigned a DDC number, often called the “classmark” or “shelfmark”. Each of the numbers in this shelfmark has a meaning and is not assigned randomly.

For example, the book “The Royal doctors 1485-1714” by Elizabeth Furdell has been assigned the shelfmark 610.6952094205 FUR. These numerals indicate:

**610**                                = **Medical sciences**  
**610.6**                              = **Professions**  
**610.69**                             = **Medical personnel**  
**610.695**                          = **Specific kinds** of medical personnel  
**610.6952**                         = **Physicians**  
**610.69520942**                  = Physicians in **England and Wales**  
**610.6952094205**               = Physicians in England and Wales **1485-1603**

Most items will also be assigned some letters at the end of the numerals, “FUR” in the above example. These are taken from the author’s surname or the first word of the title.

### ***Finding items on the shelves***

The shelfmark will always have at least three numbers, followed by some letters. It is usually displayed on the spine of the item, but is sometimes placed on the front cover. Here are some examples:

361.	382.	576	599.	647.	823.
3	63	JON	935	944	914
HIG	COC		PHI	21	BAI/B
				LON	

The DDC system places items about the same subject at the same number. This means that once you have identified the DDC number for the subject you are interested in, you can browse the shelves at that number.

On each shelf the items are arranged in a numerical sequence from left to right by their DDC number. Where several items have an identical DDC number, the letters are used to further arrange them. For example,

361.	361.	361.	363.	363.	363.
3	32	32	35	377	377
HIG	<b>BOR</b>	<b>STO</b>	CIV	<b>PRE</b>	<b>PRO</b>

## ***Beware of separate sequences***

If you are looking for a specific item you should check the library catalogue and make a note of the full shelfmark (numbers and letters) and any words that appear before the shelfmark. The majority of library materials are shelved together but there are several separate sequences that are kept in different areas, but which are all indicated on the Library catalogue. Look out for sequences such as Pamphlet, Oversize, Local Collection, Short Loan, Music Scores, Quick Reference, Subject Floor Quick Reference.

## ***Journals***

Journals are also shelved in a separate section. The same DDC numbers are used, but the catalogue shows these items with a shelfmark that is preceded by a "J", and which only has one letter after the numbers. For example, the journal "Nursing Standard" has the shelfmark J 610.73 N.

## ***And finally ... Art and Architecture materials***

When looking for items in this area you may be confused to find two alphabetic sequences at the same number. For example, general items about French architecture can be found at the shelfmark 724.90944 and have **three** letters after the numbers. At the end of these come works about specific French architects, at the same number 724.90944, but these have **four** letters after the numbers. For example:

724.	724.	724.	724.	724.	724.
909	909	909	909	909	909
44	44	44	44	44	44
FIR	PRI	ZYM	BAR/M	LEC/F	LEC/M

This happens in some other areas in the 700s, so when checking the library catalogue remember to make a note of the full shelfmark – numbers and letters.

If you have any questions or would like more help, please ask a member of library staff.

## Quick guide to Dewey numbers used in this library

This is only a brief guide to subjects. For more information, especially when looking for specific items, please remember to check the library catalogue.

<b>000</b>	<b>Generalities and Computing</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>Natural sciences and mathematics</b>
010	Bibliography	510	Mathematics
020	Library and Information Science	520	Astronomy, cartography
030	Encyclopaedias	530	Physics
040	<i>Not used</i>	540	Chemistry
050	<i>Not used</i>	550	Earth sciences
060	Organizations and Museums	560	Palaeontology
070	Journalism and publishing	570	Life sciences, biology
080	General knowledge	580	Plants
090	Manuscripts and rare books	590	Animals
<b>100</b>	<b>Philosophy and Psychology</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>Technology</b>
110	Metaphysics	610	Medical sciences
120	Epistemology, causation	620	Engineering
130	Paranormal phenomena	630	Agriculture
140	Specific philosophical schools	640	Home economics, catering
150	Psychology	650	Management
160	Logic	660	Chemical engineering, food technology
170	Ethics and moral philosophy	670	Manufacturing
180	Ancient, Medieval, Oriental philosophy	680	Manufacture for specific uses
190	Modern western philosophy	690	Building
<b>200</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>The arts</b>
210	Theory of religion	710	Planning – urban, rural, transport
220	Bible	720	Architecture
230	Christianity	730	Sculpture, pottery, ceramics
240	Christian moral & devotional theology	740	Drawing and decorative arts
250	Christian orders and local church	750	Painting and paintings
260	Social and ecclesiastical theology	760	Graphic arts
270	Christian church history	770	Photography
280	Christian denominations and sects	780	Music
290	Comparative religion	790	Entertainment, recreation, sport
<b>300</b>	<b>Social sciences</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>Literature</b>
310	Collections of general statistics	810	American literature
320	Politics	820	English literature
330	Economics	830	German literature
340	Law	840	French literature
350	Public administration & military science	850	Italian literature
360	Social problems and services	860	Spanish literature
370	Education	870	Latin literature
380	Commerce, communications, transport	880	Greek Literature
390	Customs, etiquette, folklore	890	Literature of other languages
<b>400</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>Geography and history</b>
410	Linguistics	910	Geography and travel
420	English and Old English language	920	Biography
430	German language	930	History of the ancient world
440	French language	940	History of Europe
450	Italian and Romanian languages	950	History of Asia
460	Spanish and Portuguese languages	960	History of Africa
470	Latin language	970	History of North America
480	Greek language	980	History of South America
490	Other languages	990	History of other areas