

What is Library of Congress?

As a general rule, all libraries in the United States use one of two systems to classify and organize books and other materials. Many public and some college libraries use the Dewey Decimal System. The Great Bay Community College library uses the Library of Congress Classification System, as do most college and University libraries. Both systems accomplish the same purposes – organizing the books into subject areas. They differ in that the Dewey System assigns a number code to each book, while the Library of Congress system assigns a letter and number code.

The Library of Congress Classification uses the following schedule to arrange books by subject:

A.....	General Works
B.....	Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion
C.....	General History
D.....	Foreign History
E and F.....	American History and Auxiliary Sciences
G.....	Geography, Anthropology, and Recreation
H.....	Social Sciences
J.....	Political Science
K,F.....	Law
L.....	Education
M.....	Music
N.....	Fine Arts
P.....	Literature
Q.....	Science
R.....	Medicine
S.....	Agriculture, Hunting and Fishing
T.....	Technology
U.....	Military Science
V.....	Naval Science
Z.....	Bibliography and Library Science

The arrangement of books on the shelves is alphabetical by their classification letters, from A to Z and within each group numerically from 1 to 9999. The classification code for a book is located at the bottom of the record in the computerized card catalogue. Codes are also located on the spines of the book, and in addition, code letters appear at the ends of each book stack rows.

The letter and number code assigned to each book is known as a call number, and might look like this:

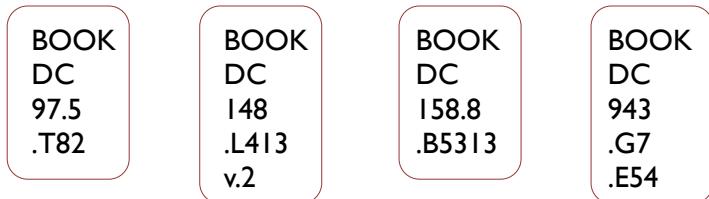
RC
280
.B8
.L53

This is the call number for
The Breast Cancer Survival Manual
by John Link.

You will find this call number both on the spine of the book and on the record that represents this book in the card catalog.

The letter part of the call number indicates the broad subject area of the book. The first number line indicates a more specific or narrower subject area. The letter and number on the fourth line are a code for the author's last name.

If you go to any section of shelves, you will notice that the call numbers run from left to right, and you will see that they are arranged in alphabetical and numerical order as below:



You can see that this keeps the books in a logical sequence on the shelves and that they are thus, roughly arranged by subject.