HOW TO ARRANGE BOOKS IN CALL NUMBER ORDER
USING THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SYSTEM

This is a cataloging system used to group books of the same subject area. Each book has a call number. It will consist of letters, whole numbers, and sometimes decimal numbers.

NX452  ---------------------------  TOP LINE  -----------------------------  E185.615

cutter  .E56  -------------------------  SECOND LINE  ------------------------  .P3C6
1988  --------------------------  THIRD LINE  -------------------------  (no 3rd line)

Each call number is arranged into at least two lines. We refer to the first line as the top line. The second line will always begin directly after the “cutter” symbol. A cutter symbol is a period followed by a letter. Some call numbers have a third line. This line will not have a separate cutter symbol. There is only one cutter symbol per call number.

ARRANGING BOOKS IN CALL NUMBER ORDER

I: First look at the letter or letters on the top line. They are read in an alphabetical sequence. A single letter will come before a letter combination.

B450  comes before  BA450
BM725  comes before  BN725

Sometimes another letter may follow the original letter combination, BUT it will be AFTER the cutter symbol. These books are shelved before any numerical combination which follows the letter combination:

K.B32  goes before  K1.A15
QP.B24  goes before  QP1.A17

II: If the letters of the top line are the same, look at the numbers on the top line. These are read as whole numbers and will be shelved in numerical order:

PA92  goes before  PA348
BR577  goes before  BR4218
SB351  goes before  SB2453

Some call numbers have decimal numbers on the top line. To determine the proper order for a decimal sequence:

1. The numbers before the decimal point are read as a whole number.

2. All numbers after the decimal point are read one place at a time.

A correct call number order for decimal is as follows:

QC342  QC342.3  QC342.32  QC342.4  QC342.476  QC342.67  QC342.854
III: If the top lines are exactly the same, look at the letters on the second line. These will be shelved in the alphabetical order with single letters preceding single letter combinations (provided the first letters are the same).

- BR538 goes before BR538.R
- QP59 goes before QP59.B
- HA61 goes before HA61.Sa

IV: If the first letter or letters of the second line after the cutter symbol are the same, look at the number in the next position to the right. If they are different, they are filed in number order:

- SF981 goes before SF981.Q8

If they are the same, look at the number in the NEXT POSITION TO THE RIGHT. Continue checking ONE PLACE AT A TIME until there is a difference. A correct line sequence would be as follows:


If one book has a letter and another book has number in the same position on the second line, THE BOOK WITH THE LETTER COMES FIRST.

- PS3515 goes before PS3515.A343B5.A343G8

EXCEPT when the letter is the part of a letter combination at the beginning of the line:

- PS3515 goes before PS3515.B33.Bf23

Some call numbers have a date in the second line position. These are placed at the beginning of the order for that particular top line:


V: Some call numbers may have a third line. Third lines are volume and copy numbers, supplement and part numbers, and dates.

If it is a volume or copy number, they will be shelved in numerical order:

- BF698 goes before BF698.M3.M3.v. 1
- HQ762 goes before HQ762.T7.T7.c. 1 c. 2
If the third line is a date, the books will be shelved in ascending chronological order:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 1</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 2</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HM278</td>
<td>.C43</td>
<td>HM278</td>
<td>.C43</td>
<td>HM278</td>
<td>.C43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1986</td>
<td></td>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the third line is not a copy number, volume number, or date, treat it as if it were a continuation of the second line:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 1</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 2</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PA1197</td>
<td>.M35</td>
<td>PA1197</td>
<td>.M35A2</td>
<td>PA3818</td>
<td>.H397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>v. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>A4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI: All call numbers may not be written the same way. Some may have part of the second line written on the top line. REMEMBER: THE CUTTER SYMBOL ALWAYS STARTS THE SECOND LINE !!!!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 1</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treat</td>
<td>E184.G5</td>
<td>as if it were written</td>
<td>E184 .G5P46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RC481.B6</td>
<td>goes before</td>
<td>RC481 .R23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Z4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some call numbers may be spaced out into three or more lines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 1</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Goes Before 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treat</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>as if it were written</td>
<td>PR4881 .D243C5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4881</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.D243</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VII: Some call numbers may have three or more letters at the beginning of the top of the line:

- KFG .P84 This would be shelved after all of the KF’s.
- Remember, if it were written: KF .Gp84 it gets shelved with the KF’s.
VIII: Some call numbers have a special designation written above the call number:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REF</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>ALEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HD9520</td>
<td>GV1785</td>
<td>TP291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REF – Designates a book as a Reference book. These are shelved in the Reference Room on the main level.

F, Fo, Folio - These all stand for FOLIO and mean the book is oversized. Folio’s are shelved on the third floor in a separate section before the sorting shelves.

DGLSS, KAL, EAL, LSM, CAMDEN, NWK, DANA - These are some other branches of the Rutgers University Library system.

DOC, DOC NJ, US, DOCUS, LAW - These are government documents and they are shelved in the Government Publication Room next to Reference.

**LOCATIONS**

B Level - Current Periodicals/Microforms, Bound Periodicals, Special Collections: SPCOL

1st Floor - Government Publications: DOC, DOCNJ, DOCUS

2nd Floor, South Wing - East Asian Library: EAL

3rd Floor - ED-LAB, ENG, JUV, SOC FOLIO

2A - A through HD2320

2B - HD2321 through PQ

3 - PR through Z

**REVIEW STEPS**

1. Use the top line letter(s) in alphabetical sequence; single letters before letter combinations.

2. Then use the whole number and its decimal for numerical sequence.

3. Next use the letter(s) of the second line for alphabetical sequence.

4. Then use the first number of the second line, treating it as a decimal. Consider each successive letter and/or number one place at a time to determine correct order.

5. Lastly, use date, volume and/or copy numbers to determine order.