

INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

USING BOOKS FOR RESEARCH

WHY USE BOOKS FOR MY RESEARCH?

Books are a very important resource for research and a great starting place for your research. They provide broader coverage of a topic than articles present and are more focused and offer in-depth coverage on a topic. Books provide you with:

- Detailed analysis of a topic
- Background information
- An overview of big issue
- Unique bibliographies to find other sources
- Specific table of contents and indexes to locate the chapters that are most useful to you

UNDERSTANDING CALL NUMBERS

Each book in your library has a unique **call number**. The call number is a book's "address." Use it to locate a book on the shelves. Books as well as videos, DVDs and other items in this Library are organized by subject using the system used by most college libraries - the [Library of Congress classification](#). Books of a similar subject have similar call numbers and sit together on the shelves.

Call numbers begin with one or two letters. You will see them in 2 different formats:

- Listed in the online computer catalog: B 74 .M67
- On the spine label of a book: B74 .M67

Read and compare call numbers line by line.

Items are shelved alphabetically - left to right - by the top letter or letters in the call number. For example, the entire B section is before a BF item.

- B 74 .M67
- B 105 .T266
- B 105 .T54
- BF 76.7 .P83

Then all call numbers with the same top letter are sorted by the number below. In the example, B74 comes before B105

All materials that have the same beginning letter and number are arranged alphabetically by the letter after the decimal point, then by the decimal number. Hint: Think of .T266 as .266 - a number smaller than zero. For this reason, B105.T266 comes before B105.T54.

There may be a final number, the date of publication. Chronological order: 1995 comes before 2002.

BF76.7.P831995

BF76.7.P832002

INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

USING BOOKS FOR RESEARCH

CLASSIFICATION

The [Library of Congress](#) provides more specific detail for each range.

- A -- General Works
- B -- Philosophy, Psychology, Religion
- C -- History of Civilization, Archaeology
- D -- World history except Americas
- E -- Indians of North America, History of United States
- F -- Local history of United States, History of Canada, Latin America
- G -- Geography, Anthropology, Recreation
- H -- Social Sciences
- J -- Political Science
- K -- Law
- L -- Education
- M -- Music and books on 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

EVALUATING BOOKS

Just because something is in print doesn't necessarily mean that the information it contains is true - or that it's an appropriate source to use in your research. Before you cite a book in your paper, consider the following points:

AUTHORITY: WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK?

- What are the author's credentials or other qualifications?
- Is the author affiliated with any universities, corporations, or other organization?
- Is the author a recognized authority in their field?
- Who published the book? Was it published by an academic or popular press?

CURRENCY: IS THE INFORMATION UP TO DATE?

- Check the publication or copyright date (located on the title page)
- Is the information time-sensitive? Some types of information go out of date quickly (e.g., medical knowledge)

PURPOSE: WHY WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?

- Who is the intended audience? Is the book written for an academic or popular audience?
- Does the author present a balanced view of the topic? Do they acknowledge opposing viewpoints?