

# Guide Series

## ANATOMY OF A LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CALL NUMBER

The call number serves to locate the book or microform in the library and brings together materials on specific subjects. It appears on the online catalog screen highlighted by a box in the lower half of the display.

The Library of Congress (LC) classification system divides the entire field of knowledge into 21 main classes that correspond largely to academic disciplines or areas of study. LC call numbers consist of two principal elements - class number and book number. The notation uses letter and number combinations. Most of the University of San Diego Legal Research Center materials are arranged using this system.

### 1. SUBJECT CLASS

Most LC call numbers have between three and five distinct parts. These call numbers may appear on one line, as in the online catalog display, (*e.g.*, KJW 3181.52 .T33 1988), but on book spine labels each part usually appears on a separate line, as in the following typical pattern:

KJW	◀Class or subclass
3181.52	◀Class number
.T33	◀Book number
1988	◀Date of publication

The LC call number always begins with a letter. The LC system denotes main classes by single capital letters. Double or triple capital letters represent subclasses.

#### **EXAMPLES:**

J	=	Political science
K	=	Law
KF	=	Law of the United States
KFC	=	Law of states of the United States beginning with "C"

The first letter/number combination in the call number describes the subject class of the book, usually the first two lines on a book spine label, as in the following call number assigned by the Library of Congress to the 1988 book, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law*, by Emily Zack Tabuteau:

KJW	=	The triple letters for the subclass: Law of French regions, provinces and departments
3181.52	=	The number for regions, provinces and departments assigned to Normandy

2. **BOOK NUMBER**

The book number follows the subject class number in a recognizable pattern: a single capital letter preceded by a decimal point (.), plus numbers that are read in decimal sequence and filed accordingly, i.e., .C52, .C6, .C74, .C8, etc. The book number may also contain further elements, such as a work letter, a date, and/or volume number to distinguish among different works or editions of the same work or different issues in a series. In the call number assigned to *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* the third line is the book number and the fourth line is the date of publication, as follows:

.T33	=	The book number for a general work based on the author: <u>T</u> abuteau
1988	=	The date of publication

3. **EXAMPLES OF CLASSIFICATION OF LAW MATERIALS**

*California Criminal Law*, B.E. Witkin and Norman L. Epstein. 3rd ed. 2000.

KFC	=	The triple letters for the subclass: Law of states of the United States with names beginning with "C"
1100	=	The number meaning general works of criminal law in California
.W57	=	The book number based on the first author: <u>W</u> itkin
2000	=	The date of publication

*Policy Guidelines for Bail: An Experiment in Court Reform*, John S. Goldkamp and Michael R. Gottfredson. 1985

KFX	=	The triple letters for the subclass: Law of cities of the United States
2137.4	=	The number meaning special topics relating to local offenses in Philadelphia
.B3	=	The first book number for the special topic: bail
G65	=	The second book number for the author: <u>G</u> oldkamp
1985	=	The date of publication

4. **FINDING HINTS**

The following call numbers are arranged in the correct order.

AE	AE	K	KF	KF	KF	KFC	KFC	KFC	KFC	RA
5	5	115	1301.5	1454	1456	1020	1020	1100	1100	407.4
.E333	.E52	.M65	.B36	.I852	.A65	.Z9	.Z9	.A65	.A65	.C2
1993	1987	1981	L45	1987	S2	C65	P72	C92	C92	H43
			1991		1965	1993	1990	1977	1977	
								v.1	v.2	

**CONTACT A REFERENCE LIBRARIAN FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE**

