A guide to the

Research Guide 13

Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme

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 Computer Science, information and general works

1. Philosophy and psychology

200 Religion

1. Social sciences

400 Language

**500 Science**

1. Technology

700 Arts and recreation

1. Literature

900 History and geography

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

1. Science
2. Mathematics
3. Astronomy
4. **Physics**
5. Chemistry
6. Earth sciences and geology
7. Fossils and prehistoric life
8. Biology
9. Plants (Botany)
10. Animals (Zoology)

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

1. Physics
2. Classical mechanics
3. Fluid mechanics
4. Gas mechanics
5. **Sound and related vibrations**
6. Light and related radiation
7. Heat
8. Electricity and electronics
9. Magnetism
10. 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 and related vibrations**

534.1 Generation of sound

* 1. Transmission of sound

534.22 Transmission in solids

534.23 Transmission 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:

1. = **Medical sciences**

610.**6** = **Professions**

610.6**9** = **Medical personnel**

610.69**5** = **Specific kinds** of medical personnel

610.695**2** = **Physicians**

610.6952**0942**  = Physicians in **England and Wales**

610.69520942**05** = 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

LON /B

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 **BOR** **STO** CIV **PRE** **PRO**

***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 LibrarySearch. Look out for sequences such as Oversize, Local Collection, Short Loan, Music Scores, Paul Oliver Vernacular Architecture Library.

***Journals***

Journals are also shelved in a separate section. The same DDC numbers are used, but LibrarySearch 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 painting can be found at the shelfmark 759.4 and have **three** letters after the numbers. At the end of these come works about specific French artists, at the same number 759.4, but these have **four** letters after the numbers. For example:

759. 759. 759. 759. 759. 759.

4 4 4 4 4 4

BOI FRI ROS DEL LAT LAT

/J /C /O

This happens in some other areas in the 700s, so when checking LibrarySearch 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 LibrarySearch.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **000** | **Computer science, knowledge and systems** | **500** | **Science** |
| 010 | Bibliographies | 510 | Mathematics |
| 020 | Library and information sciences | 520 | Astronomy and allied sciences |
| 030 | Encyclopaedias and books of facts | 530 | Physics |
| 040 | *Not used* | 540 | Chemistry and allied sciences |
| 050 | Magazines, journals and serials | 550 | Earth sciences |
| 060 | Associations, organizations and museums | 560 | Palaeontology |
| 070 | News media, journalism and publishing | 570 | Biology |
| 080 | General knowledge | 580 | Plants (Botany) |
| 090 | Manuscripts and rare books | 590 | Animals (Zoology) |
| **100** | **Philosophy and Psychology** | **600** | **Technology** |
| 110 | Metaphysics | 610 | Medicine and health |
| 120 | Epistemology, causation and humankind | 620 | Engineering and allied operations |
| 130 | Parapsychology and occultism | 630 | Agriculture and related technologies |
| 140 | Specific philosophical schools | 640 | Home economics, catering |
| 150 | Psychology | 650 | Management |
| 160 | Philosophical logic | 660 | Chemical engineering, food technology |
| 170 | Ethics | 670 | Manufacturing |
| 180 | Ancient, medieval, and eastern philosophy | 680 | Manufacture for specific uses |
| 190 | Modern western philosophy | 690 | Construction of buildings |
| **200** | **Religion** | **700** | **Arts and recreation** |
| 210 | Philosophy and theory of religion | 710 | Planning and landscape architecture |
| 220 | Bible | 720 | Architecture |
| 230 | Christianity | 730 | Sculpture and related arts |
| 240 | Christian moral and devotional theology | 740 | Graphic arts and decorative arts |
| 250 | Christian orders and local church | 750 | Painting and paintings |
| 260 | Social and ecclesiastical theology | 760 | Printmaking and prints |
| 270 | History, geography, biography of Christianity | 770 | Photography, computer art, film, video |
| 280 | Christian denominations and sects | 780 | Music |
| 290 | Other religions | 790 | Recreational and performing arts, sport |
| **300** | **Social sciences** | **800** | **Literature** |
| 310 | Collections of general statistics | 810 | American literature |
| 320 | Political science | 820 | English and Old English literatures |
| 330 | Economics | 830 | German and related literatures |
| 340 | Law | 840 | French and related literatures |
| 350 | Public administration & military science | 850 | Italian, Romanian and related literatures |
| 360 | Social problems and services | 860 | Spanish, Portuguese, Galician literatures |
| 370 | Education | 870 | Latin and Italic literatures |
| 380 | Commerce, communications, transportation | 880 | Classical Greek and related Literatures |
| 390 | Customs, etiquette, folklore | 890 | Literature of other languages |
| **400** | **Language** | **900** | **History and geography** |
| 410 | Linguistics | 910 | Geography and travel |
| 420 | English and Old English language | 920 | Biography |
| 430 | German and related languages | 930 | History of the ancient world |
| 440 | French and related languages | 940 | History of Europe |
| 450 | Italian, Romanian and related languages | 950 | History of Asia |
| 460 | Spanish, Portuguese, Galician | 960 | History of Africa |
| 470 | Latin and related Italic language | 970 | History of North America |
| 480 | Classical Greek and related languages | 980 | History of South America |
| 490 | Other languages | 990 | History of other areas |

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