

How to Shelve Books by Call Number

A Lesson
For Student Assistants at the
Shatford Library

By William K. Grainger



Revised by
Diana Lopez
February 2006



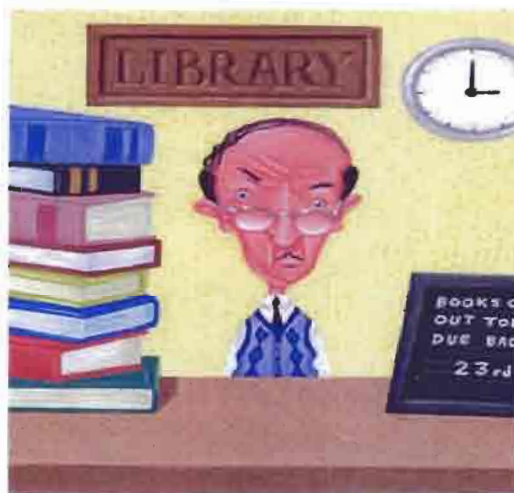
RESERVE
Hanson, E.



To the Student:

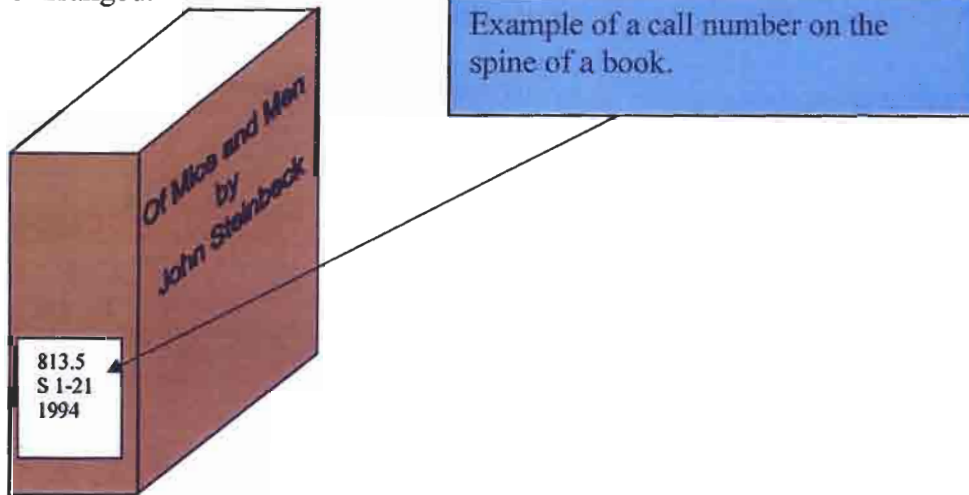
Welcome to the PCC Shatford Library! We are happy to have you join our team! This Dewey Decimal Manual you are about to read is an excellent independent guide in learning/understanding the arrangement of the Dewey Decimal System. The Shatford Library Circulation System is now automated, and of course, there have been many changes.

While you are learning the automated circulation procedures, your supervisor will explain the checking out process in detail. Whatever is not in this manual, you will learn by on-the-job experience and by reading memos that give up-to-date information on any policies or procedures to follow. Your supervisors are here to help you, so please ask them if you have any questions.



Section I - Call Numbers

What is meant by a “call number?” If you have ever checked out books from an organized library, you have used call numbers, for they are the numbers which librarians put on the spines of books and in the online catalog. The call number helps you to find the books on the shelves. However, unless you have actually worked in a library, or used one a lot, you may not have thought too much about how the numbers are arranged.



Dewey Decimal Classification is the main classification system used in the Shatford Library. In this scheme all subjects are given a particular number. To find a book on the library shelves you will need to know its **CALL NUMBER**. You can find this in Voyager and in the Library's Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC).

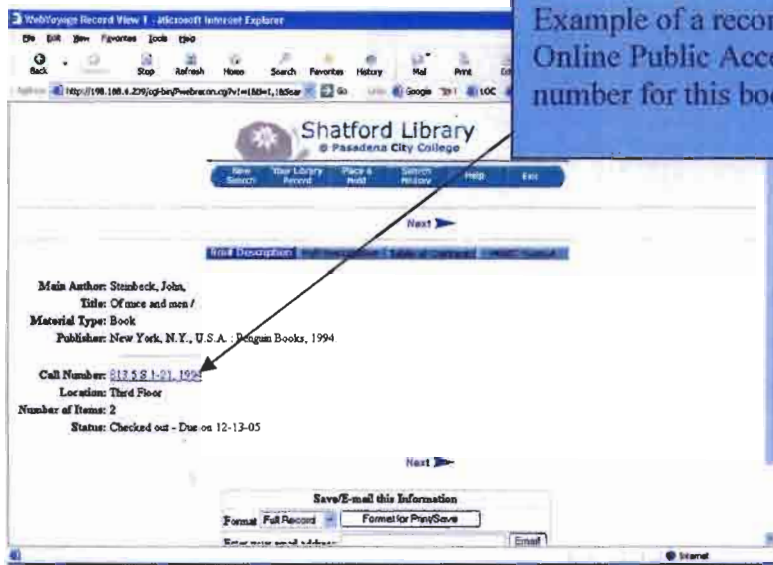
The screenshot shows the Voyager Circulation software interface. The main window is titled "Item Record" and displays the following information:

- Title: *Of mice and men / John Steinbeck, with an introduction by Susan Ghintley.*
- Location: CAC 000 926
- Item Type: book
- Item Status: Not Checked
- Exam: 0
- Chron: 0
- Copy: 1000389406
- Barcode: 1000389407

Below this, there is a section for "Holdings Records for the Current Bib" with a table:

Location Name	Call Number Type	Call Number
CAC 000 926	Dewey Decimal	813.5 S 1-21 1994

A blue callout box with a white border and a pointer to the call number in the table contains the text: "Example of a record in Voyager. The call number for this book is here."



Example of a record in the Shatford Library Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). The call number for this book is here.

As its name implies, Melvil Dewey constructed this classification system on a decimal base. Every subject is given a different number to represent it and a general book will have a lower number than a more specific book. The ten main classes are:

- 000 Generalia including computers
- 100 Philosophy and Psychology
- 200 Religion
- 300 Social Sciences
- 400 Language
- 500 Science
- 600 Technology
- 700 The Arts
- 800 Literature
- 900 History and Geography

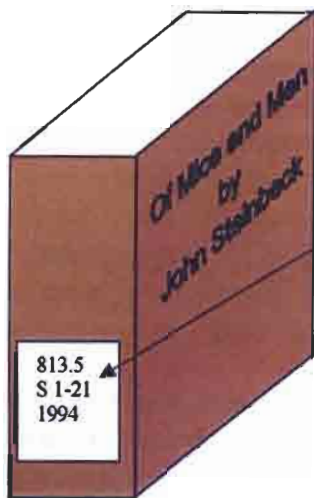
- 📖 Thus a book given a subject number of 800 would be a very general work on literature throughout the world.
- 📖 After finding a main subject area, the classification scheme breaks down the subject and gets progressively more specific.

For example:

800 General Literature→**810 American Literature**→**820 British Literature**→**830 German Literature**→**840 French Literature** and so on.

To continue the literature example to the third figure, the breakdown of the subject continues:

810 American literature in general→**811 American poetry**→**812 American drama**→**813 American fiction**→**814 American essay**



Dewey Decimal Classification goes from general → more specific
For example:
Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck is classified here:
800 Literature → 810 American Literature → 813 American fiction → 813.5 American fiction 1900-to date
The number 813.5 along with "S1" is the designation for Steinbeck. The "21" is called an accession number. This means that it is the 21st book the library has purchased by or about this person. You do not have to memorize all of this, but it helps to have an idea of what the numbers mean.

Next comes the decimal feature - that is the decimal point followed by one or more numbers, depending on how specific the book is about a topic.

Examples:

- 813.4 American fiction 1861-1900
- 813.5 American fiction 1900-to date
- 813.52 American fiction 1900-1945
- 813.54 American fiction 1945-to date

When shelved, books are arranged as a decimal number. That is left to **right and digit by digit** so that numbers such as 623.**8433** will come after 623.**843** but before 623.**844**.

TIP: When shelving, remember to look at the call number left to right and **digit by digit**.

Within a subject number the books are filed alphabetically by author—more on that later.

As a Student Assistant in this library, you will be expected to shelve books accurately according to call number. This booklet will teach you how to do it. Later, you will also complete a computer tutorial program called "Shelve It."

As you will see, this booklet breaks down the shelving task into small steps and presents the process to you in this way so that your supervisor will have more time to teach you other things and to supervise your work. However, if you have any questions about any steps in this "program," please ask your supervisor to help you.



Directions

Read each page in order as you come to it, unless you are otherwise directed. You will be asked to make various responses—sometimes just answer “Yes” or “No,” or fill in a blank; at other times, select a correct response from among several choices, or arrange a group of cards. Decide what you think the best response is; then look at the answers to find the correct response.

Please do not write in the booklet. If you find it helpful to write your answers on a separate sheet of paper, you may do so. In order to be fair with yourself, however, cover the correct answers with a card or with your hand until you have made up your own mind.

You will make very few mistakes. But if you do make any, go back and try to figure out your mistake; then correct it. If you cannot see why your answer is wrong, ask your supervisor for help. He or she will be happy to explain.



Section II – How to Determine Call Number Order

Remember: The number on the spine of a library book is known as the

CALL NUMBER.

Each call number has several parts. The first part is known as the Dewey Decimal number. Here, the first part of the Dewey Number is **813**, so we'll start there. In order to shelve books properly, you must first be able to arrange Dewey Decimal numbers in correct order.

To arrange books by Dewey Decimal number, you first read the numbers numerically (left to right), and then you put the smallest number first.

Example: 324 is less than 325, so 324 is shelved first.

250 is more than 123, so 123 is shelved first.

Now it's your turn. Put the following numbers in order: (Remember, when shelving books, we start with the smallest and end with the largest.)

How would you shelve these?

804, 424, 505, 020, 321

Answer: **020, 321, 424, 505, 804**

Write the following numbers in proper order on a separate sheet of paper:

137 030
021 344
345 220
010 423
120 001

Answer:
001, 010, 021, 030, 120, 137, 220, 344, 345, 423

So far we've been looking only at numbers to the left of the decimal point. Now let's look at numbers to the right. These decimals are valued just as they are in mathematics.

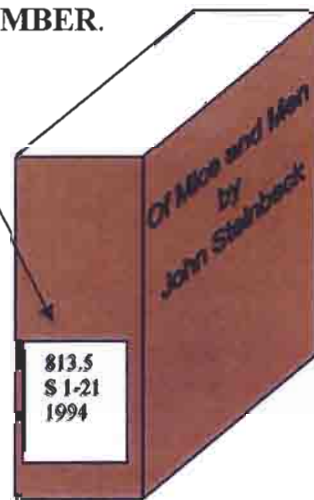
Remember: we look at the numbers from left to right and **digit by digit**.

Example:

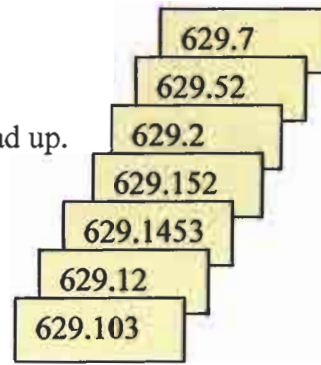
.21 is less than .3
.27 is less than .271
.3 is less than .4

923.5 is more than 923.45, so 923.45 will be shelved first and 923.5 goes after it.

Five is greater than four.



Are these cards in the proper order? Start at the bottom and read up.



If you think they are in the proper order, skip to page 9. If not, continue below.

You are having trouble with decimals. Let's take a slightly different approach and try reading each figure separately. Compare the numbers in each position from left to right. If they are alike, move to the next position. If they are not alike, put the smaller number first.

Now, let's compare **629.1305** and **629.134**.

The figures to the left of the decimal (629) are alike, so let's look at the numbers to the **right** of the decimal. They are: **.1305** and **.134**.

629.1305 629.134

- You can see that the 1s are alike.
- Moving to the right, you see that the 3s are alike.

Hint: Remember to look at the call number left to right and digit by digit.

BUT, in the next position, the 0 and the 4 are not alike. Zero is less than four, so 0 should be filed before 4.

Let's look at a couple more call numbers. In what order would you shelve the following?

.157 and .2

Answer: **One is less than two, so .157 comes before .2.**

.95 and .795

Answer: **Nine is more than seven, so .95 comes after .795.**

.482 and .53

Answer: **Five is more than four, so .53 goes after .482.**

This is a good time to talk about the “**nothing before something**” filing rule. When determining shelving order, you already know that we compare numbers left to right and **digit by digit**, but what if one call number has fewer or no digits in a decimal place? This is where we apply the **nothing before something** rule.

Let’s look at these call numbers:

947.202, 947.21, 947.211

947.202 is first because zero is less than one. (Remember, we compare left to right and **digit by digit**.) Now, let’s look at 947.21. If you compare the numbers digit by digit, 947.21 has no value (0) in the thousandths place (the third place after the decimal), so .21(0) is less than .211. Or we can look at this by remembering that **nothing comes before something**.

Arrange these call numbers:
808.5, 423, 327.5, 327.43, 808.33

Answer: **327.43, 327.5, 423, 808.33, 808.5**

Are these numbers in proper order—top to bottom?

432.6
433.1
436.7
436.52

Answer: **No. Switch the last two.**

If a number is the same as the first part of another number, file the shorter number first.

Example.:

321 is filed before
321.03

917.3 comes before
917.32

Which comes first
620.31 or 620.311?

Answer: **620.31**



Section III – Author Numbers

You learned in Section II to file books by Dewey Decimal numbers. Sometimes, though, Dewey numbers for two books are just alike. It is then necessary to file by other parts of the call number.

The second part of the call number is known as the author number.

Ex: 537.9 **C 2**
537.9 **C 1**

C 1 and C 2 above are author numbers.

In the call number 123 **R 1**, the author number is R 1.

In 423 **V 2**, what is the author number?

Answer: **V 2**

In 527.35 **K 4**, the Dewey Decimal number is _____, and the author number is _____.

Answer: Dewey Decimal Number is 527.35, Author number is K 4.

In the call number 808.8 **L 3**, the first part (808.8) is the _____ number, and **L 3** is the _____ number.

Answer: Dewey Decimal; Author Number

Author numbers are composed partly of letters and partly of numbers.

Author numbers are first alphabetized by letter. Then they are arranged by the numbers, as shown: A 1, B 8, B 9, D 7, D 11, E 2, F 1. Where would you shelve **K 2** in the sequence F 3, H 2, I 4, L 5, M 2, M 3?

Answer: Between I 4 & L 5

Where would you file **N 3** in this group?

N 1, N 4, O 2, P 4

Answer: Between N 1 & N 4

Are these author numbers in proper order?

T 3, V 10, U 11, U 13, W 1

If not, put them in order and write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

Answer: T 3, U 11, U 13, V 10, W 1

Sometimes the numeric part of an author number contains a dash followed by another number (for example, C 1-3); If there is more than one C 1, put the C 1s in order by the numbers after the dash. EX: C 1, C 2, C 2-2, C 2-3, C 3

Would C 1-2 be shelved before or after C 1-3?

Answer: before

Does F 4-1 come before or after F 3?

Answer: after

Is 725 R 1-3 before or after 725 R 2-2?

Answer: before

Does 437 M 5 come before or after 437 M 6-4?

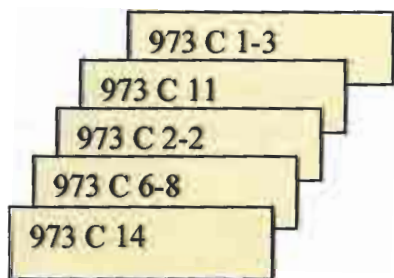
Answer: before

Put these in order:

N 4-1, N 4, N 3-4, N 4-3, N 3

Answer: N3, N3-4, N4, N4-1, N4-3

Are these in order from top to bottom?

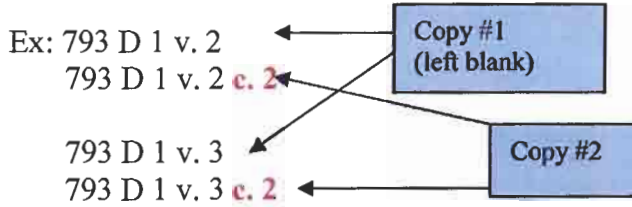


Answer: No. The correct order is 973 C 1-3, 973 C 1-3, 973 C 2-2, 973 C 6-8, 973 C 11, 973 C 14



Section IV – Volume and Copy Numbers

Two books often have the same Dewey numbers and author numbers. It is then necessary to file them by volume number (if any) then by copy number.



Copy number 1 is never given a number. As you can see above, it is left blank but is understood to be copy #1.

Are these numbers in order?

- 623 R 5 v. 1
- 623 R 5 v. 2
- 623 R 5 v. 1 c. 2
- 623 R 5 v. 2 c. 2

Answer:
 No. All v. 1s go before v. 2. The correct order is 623 R 5 v. 1, 623 R 5 v. 1 c. 2, 623 R 5 v. 2, 623 R 5 v. 2 c. 2

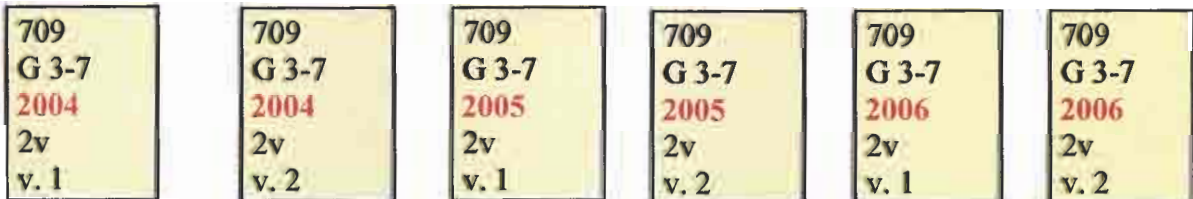
Remember that volume numbers and copy numbers are used in filing only when the Dewey numbers and author numbers of different books are alike. Are these in order? Read up.



Answer: **Yes**

Section V - Editions

Various editions of a book are shelved in order by the year of publication.



Section VI – How to Place Books on the Shelves

This diagram and excerpt from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library illustrates how you would physically shelve books and in what direction.



When either looking for or reshelving books, remember the rule, "left to right - top to bottom." That means you start at the left on the top shelf and move to the right until the shelf ends. Then, you go to the next shelf beneath that and do the same. When you get to the end of the bottom shelf, move up to the top shelf of the next section, and continue....

<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/circ/tutorial/shelving.html>

Congratulations!

You have completed the first part of your shelving training!! Now, let your supervisor know that you have finished with the manual. If time permits, you will complete the *Shelve It!* program and/or practice shelving some reserve books at the Circulation Desk.

