Understanding Call Numbers
The Library of Congress (LC) Classification System

Call numbers appear like this, from top to bottom, on the spines of books:

\[ \text{LB} \]
\[ 2395 \]
\[ .P3 \]
\[ 1993 \]

and like this, from left to right, in the online catalog:

\[ \text{LB2395 .P3 1993} \]

Reading a Call Number

Read a call number by sections, line-by-line:

\[ \text{LB} \]
\[ 2395 \]
\[ .P3 \]
\[ 1993 \]

- **LB** – Read in alphabetical order
- **2395** – Read as a whole number
  \[ 1, 2, 3, \ldots 23, \ldots 200, 230 \ldots 2000, 2300, 2390, 2395, 2400 \]
- **.P3** – Read the letter alphabetically
  \[ A, B, C, D, \ldots P, Q, R, \ldots X, Y, Z \]
- Read the number as a decimal
  e.g. \[ P3 = .3 \]
  \[ P34 = .34 \]
  \[ P345 = .345 \]
- **1993** – Read this chronologically, this is the date the book was published
  \[ 1979, 1985, 1992, 1999 \ldots \]

The following Call Numbers are in Order:

- \[ \text{LA2301 .M37} \]
- \[ \text{LB1771 .K55} \]
- \[ \text{LB1771 .T47 1987} \]
- \[ \text{LB2301 .E38} \]
- \[ \text{LB2301 .N2} \]
- \[ \text{LB2301 .N27} \]
- \[ \text{LB2301 .N271 1948} \]
- \[ \text{LB2325 .K43 1963} \]
- \[ \text{LB2325 .K43 1972} \]

(LB comes after LA)
(Both start with LB1771, T comes after K)
(2301 comes after 1771)
(N comes after E)
(.N27 comes after .N2)
(Decimal 271 comes after 27)
(Same call number except for date, 1972 comes after 1963)
What the Call Numbers Mean

Like many other academic libraries, Clemson uses the Library of Congress Classification System, which arranges materials by subject. The first section of the call number (letter or letters) represents the broad subject category of the book. The second section of the call number (letter and number) often represents the author’s last name. The last section of the call number represents the date of publication. Consider the example we’ve been using:

Title: How to Study in College  ♦  LB2395  Subject of the book: Study Skills
Author: Walter Pauk  ♦  .P3  Pauk, the author’s last name
Call Number: LB2395 .P3 1993  ♦  1993  The publication year

The following chart lists the general subject categories of the LC Classification Scheme:

A  General Works  PS  American Literature
B  Philosophy-Religion-Psychology  PT  Germanic Literature
C  History (Civilization)  Q  Science
D  History (Except America)  QA  Mathematics
E  American History  QB  Astronomy
F  Local American, Latin American History  QC  Physics
G  Geography-Anthropology  QD  Chemistry
H  Social Sciences  QE  Geology
J  Political Science  QH  Biology
K  Law  QK  Botany
L  Education QL  Zoology
M  Music Scores  QM  Human Anatomy
ML  Music (Literature of Music)  QR  Microbiology
N  Fine Arts  R  Medicine
P  Linguistics  S  Agriculture
PC  Romance Languages  T  Technology
PD  Germanic Languages  U  Military Science
PE  English Language  V  Naval Science
PQ  Romance Literature  Z  Bibliography Library Science
PR  English Literature

Because books are classified by subject, you can often find other helpful books on the same shelf, or on nearby shelves. For example, within the call number used in the examples above, (LB2395) there are other guides to study skills:

LB2395 .A34  Getting good grades: how to succeed in college
LB2395 .C6 1991  What you need to know about developing study skills
**LB2395 .P3 1993**  How to study in college
LB2395 .S93 1990  The college student's handbook for better grades, job search, and career success
LB2395 .T4 1991  Teaching reading and study strategies at the college level
**Locating a Book in Cooper Library**

The library’s online catalog record indicates both a location and call number for materials. If the location is simply "Cooper Library", then the first letter of the call number determines the floor where the item will be shelved. Consult the chart below to determine whether the material is on Level 1, 2, 5, or 6 of Cooper Library. If the material is in a special location, check the location chart below the call number chart to determine its location.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call Number Range</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A – K</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L – P</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q – R</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S – Z</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Architecture Library: 112 Lee Hall
- Chemistry Library: 205 Hunter Chemistry Building
- Federal Documents: Public Documents, Cooper Library, Level 3
- Juvenile: Cooper Library, Level 2
- Popular Reading: Cooper Library, Level 4
- Reference: Reference Collection, Cooper Library, Level 4
- Reserves and Media: Cooper Library, Level 2
- Special Collections: Strom Thurmond Institute
- S.C. State Documents: Public Documents, Cooper Library, Level 3

**Locating a Magazine or Journal in Cooper Library**

All of our periodicals (magazines and journals) are arranged by call number. Each title has its own unique call number, and the call number is the same regardless of format: e.g. *Science* is call number Q1 .S41 for current issues, bound volumes, and microfilm.

Generally, *bound periodicals* (magazines or journals which have hard covers, like a book) are arranged by call number just as if they were a regular book. Therefore, the first letter of the call number of the periodical determines where it is located. Check the chart above to see which call numbers are shelved on which floors. These are listed in the online catalog as *Library Has*.

*Current issues* of periodicals (magazines or journals) are those that are not yet bound into hard covers. These loose issues are also arranged by call number. Most often, these current issues are located in the Current Periodicals Area on Level 4. Occasionally, current issues of heavily used magazines are kept in the Reserve Room on Level 2. Current issues are listed in the online catalog, with a note telling the location.

*Microfilm* and *microfiche* issues of periodicals are arranged by call number in the Reserve and Media Room on Level 2.