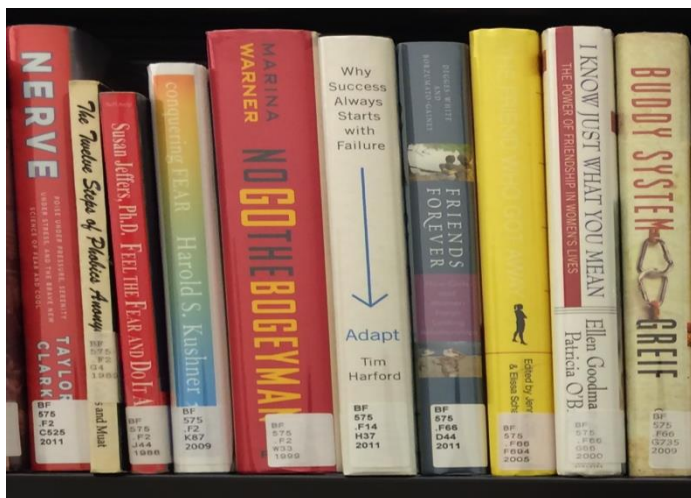


How to Locate Library Resources Using Call Numbers

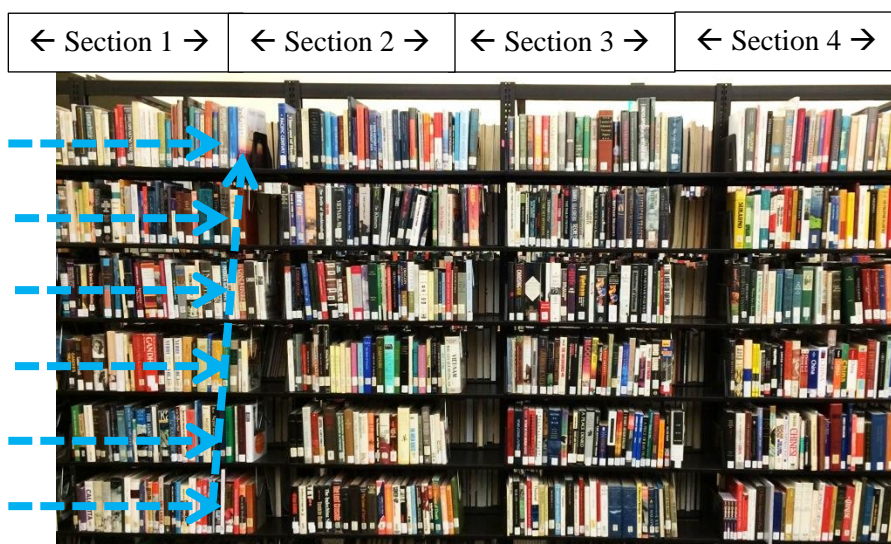
Library materials are arranged by collections which have their designated shelf locations in the library. **Within each collection/shelf location, items are arranged by call numbers in alphabetical order.** Thus, when searching your library catalog for a books or an audiovisual material, please be sure to write down the collection/shelf location in addition to the call number so that you can find the source.

Most of the books in college libraries are shelved in the main book collection, which is often referred as “the stacks” by most of the libraries. Books from this collection do not have any shelf location information on the call number stickers, and they can be checked out of the library for the longest duration.

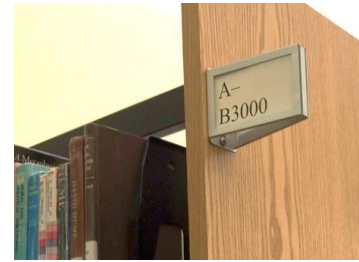
The **Main Book Collection** from Delta College Library on the College’s main campus is located on the second floor of the library, starting from **A section** on the southeast side and ending with **Z section** on the northwest side of the floor.



The shelves in the stacks consist of individual sections that are placed next to each other in blocks. Within each section, books are arranged by call numbers in alphabetical order from left to right and from top to bottom, continuing on the top shelf of the next section to the right.



At the end of each block, you will find a sign that provides the call number range within the block.



To locate a book from the Main Book Collection, check the call-number-range sign to find the **general subject area** (the first letter(s) in the first line of the call number (see the screenshot below).



The second line of the Library of Congress call numbers is made up of **whole numbers with possible decimal extensions**. When the call numbers on the first line are identical, the one with a smaller number on the second line comes first. For example:

BF	BF	BF	BF	BF
231	goes before	235	236	237
				239.5

The third line of the call number is called **the Cutter number** that consists of a letter and a number.

BF	BF	BF	BF	BF
231	231	231	231	231
.A51	.C2	.H4	.R15	.W7

When the first two lines of the call numbers are all the same, we take a look at the third line, first by the letters in alphabetical order and, then, by the **decimal numbers**. The **dot** in front of each letter in this line serves as a reminder of the decimal number that follows the letter.

Before you go to the book stacks to see how books are arranged on the shelves, it might be helpful to have a quick review of whole numbers and decimal numbers. We all know that **3** is smaller than **15** in whole numbers (such as 1,2,3...). We also know that **.15** is

smaller than **.3** (which can also be written as 0.30) in decimal numbers. For an easy comparison, you may add a zero after .3 to compare the two decimal numbers using **two digits** after the decimal point. Small decimal numbers will go before large decimal numbers if the first two lines as well as the letter in the cutter number are all the same.

Let us use money as an example to further illustrate this point:

15 cents = \$0.15 and **30 cents = \$0.30**

Thus, when you try to locate books in the stacks, you need to examine the call numbers line by line. If the first two lines are identical, you will need to check the third line by putting the letters in alphabetical order:

BF	BF	BF	BF	BF
231	231	231	231	231
.A51	.C2	.H4	.R15	.W7

If the first two lines and the letters on the third line are the same, then the smallest decimal number comes first:

BF	BF	BF	BF	BF
231	231	231	231	231
.D15	.D2	.D37	.D456	.D5

If there is a publication year to differentiate the various editions of the same title, the one that does not have a year (which can be treated as zero year) comes before those with a publication year. An early year will go before a later year.

BF	BF	BF	BF
231	231	231	231
.C2	.C2	.C2	.C2
	<u>1930</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1969</u>