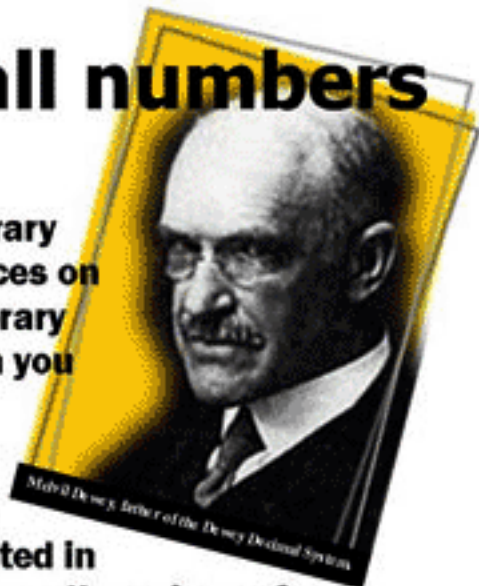
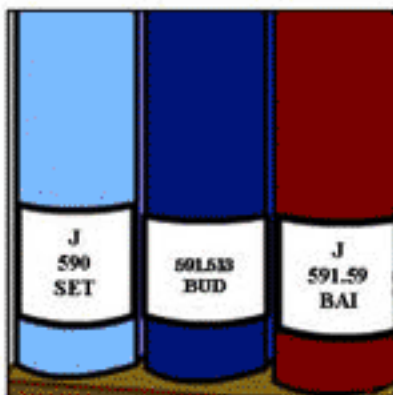


Understanding call numbers

1 Have you ever wondered how library materials are assigned their places on the shelves? Each item in the library has its own “Call Number” which you need to know in order to find it.



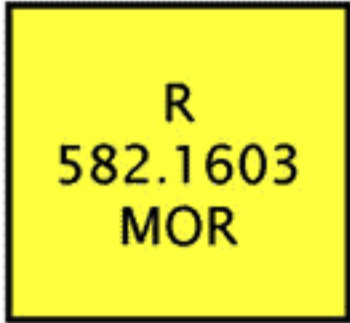
2 A call number is like an address: It tells us where the book is located in the library. Call numbers appear on the spines of books and in the online catalogue.



3 The call number is a code which provides valuable information about the book. At right, the spine label on Ernest Thompson Seton's *Animal Tracks and Hunter Signs*. The “J” is short for juvenile—this is a children's book. “590” is the Dewey number for zoological science (more on this later), and “SET” at the bottom refer to the author's name.

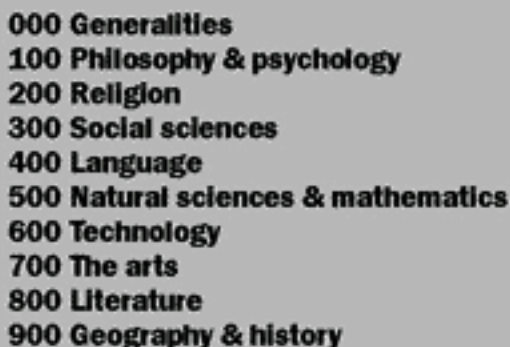


4 At right, the spine label on the *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Trees*. The prefix “R” signifies reference—an item to be used in the library only. “582” is the Dewey number for botany. “MOR” are the first three letters of the author’s name, David More.



R
582.1603
MOR

5 Library materials using the Dewey Decimal system are in numerical order. The system classifies books by dividing them into ten main classes:



000 Generalities
100 Philosophy & psychology
200 Religion
300 Social sciences
400 Language
500 Natural sciences & mathematics
600 Technology
700 The arts
800 Literature
900 Geography & history

6 Each of these ten classes further divides into more specialized fields:

500 Natural sciences & mathematics



510 Mathematics
520 Astronomy
530 Physics
540 Chemistry
550 Earth sciences
560 Paleontology
570 Life sciences
580 Botany
590 Zoology

7 And each sub-category in turn divides into nine more specialized topics ranging from 1 to 9:

590 Natural sciences & mathematics

590 Animals
591 Specific topics in natural history
592 Invertebrates
593 Marine and seashore invertebrates
594 Mollusks
595 Arthropods
596 Chordates
597 Cold-blooded vertebrates; fishes
598 Birds
599 Mammals

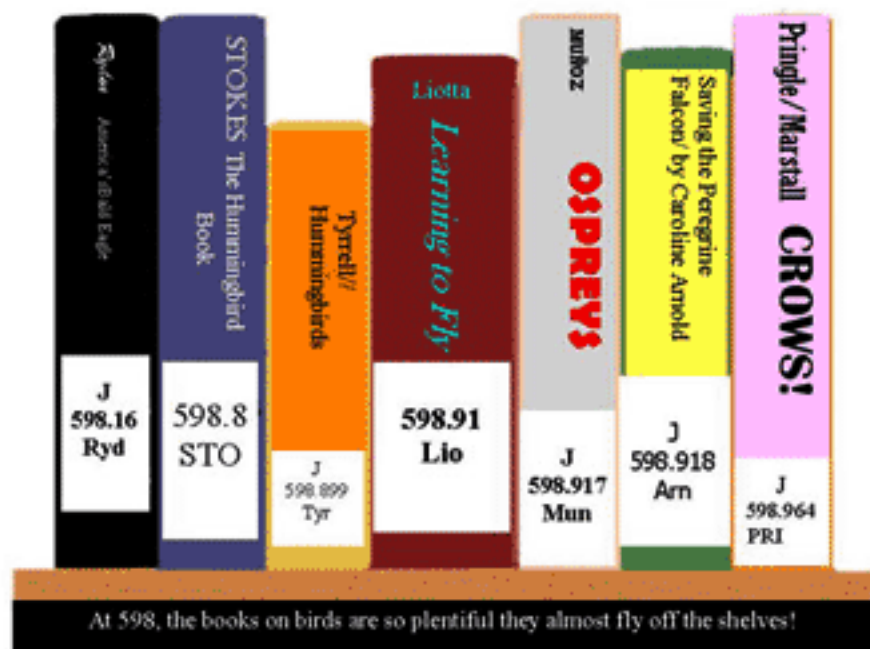
8 And by adding decimals—hence *Dewey Decimal System*—these topics can be broken down even more:

598 Birds

598.07234 Bird watching
598.32 Cranes
598.47 Penguins
598.97 Owls

Note that the longer a call number is, the more specific the subject is.

9 Remember that the Dewey Decimal system arranges materials by subjects. A useful strategy, therefore, for anyone looking for items in the library is to get a Dewey number for your subject and then go to the shelf to browse. Knowing that 598 is the number assigned to birds, for example, you can go to that area in the collection and find several related books of interest. A basic organizing principle at your library is that *like goes with like*.



10 The Dewey Decimal system is used for those materials in the library considered to be “nonfiction”—that is, materials concerned with real things, people, events, and places. Note, however, that poetry (at 821), drama (at 822), fairy tales (at 398), and recorded music (at 780) are some exceptions to that rule.

Fiction—novels and short stories—are arranged alphabetically by author. DVDs are arranged alphabetically by title.