Learning the Library’s Classification Scheme

Or How to Find the Books You Need!

Let’s Start…

Image provided by Clip Art. 1 May 2013.
Library Item Call Numbers

A call number is:

- **An ID number**: Every item in the library is assigned a unique call number, which identifies that item much like a social security number identifies a person.

- **An address**: A book's call number determines where exactly it will be on the shelf.

- **An ingredient label**: The exact number assigned is based on the content (and author or title) of the work.

All books and other items in ODU Library are organized on the shelves by **call number**.
A Call Number is typically made of 2 elements:

1. Dewey Decimal Classification – based on the subject
2. Cutter Number – 1st letter of author’s name plus additional numbers to make a unique ID

940.5318 K676h

Dewey Decimal Classification  
Cutter Number  

This unique call number belongs to one item in ODU Library’s collection.
The Dewey system attempts to classify knowledge into numerical divisions and subdivisions to then organize that knowledge so that it can be accessed & utilized readily.

The Dewey system has 10 sections of numbers, representing general subject areas:

Librarians use a classification system to organize the items in library collections by subject.

Like many libraries, ODU Library uses the Dewey Decimal Classification system.
The Dewey system has 10 sections, or classes, of numbers, representing general subject areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>000s</th>
<th>Generalities</th>
<th>500s</th>
<th>Pure Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100s</td>
<td>Philosophy &amp; Related Disciplines</td>
<td>600s</td>
<td>Technology/Applied Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200s</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>700s</td>
<td>Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300s</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>800s</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400s</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>900s</td>
<td>Geography &amp; History</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These 10 classes are each divided into 10 divisions.

These divisions are then divided further, each time showing more detail.
Sample Call Number: How it Works

Let's take a close look at the call number for Mark Klempner's book *The Heart has Reasons: Holocaust Rescuers and Their Stories of Courage*, 940.5318 K676h, 2006:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call No. Component</th>
<th>What the Component of the Call No. Means (The Ingredients)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>940</td>
<td>General subject: History of Western Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1918–current year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.53</td>
<td>World War II, 1939–1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.531</td>
<td>Social, political, economic history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.5318</td>
<td>Holocaust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K676h</td>
<td>Klempner...Heart Has Reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is what the book is all about!
Another Way to Use Call Numbers…

Once you find a book on your subject, e.g., the Holocaust, browse in the Main Stacks of ODU Library for more items on the Holocaust to check out:

Browse through the other books on the shelf with the same Dewey Classification of 940.5318.

Or go to the Reference Stacks and browse for dictionaries, encyclopedias, or handbooks on the Holocaust—great starting points!

All items in both locations, Main Stacks and Reference Stacks, are organized the same way, from 000 through 999.
Let's take a close look at the call number for Mark Klempner's book *The Heart has Reasons: Holocaust Rescuers and Their Stories of Courage*, 940.5318 K676h, 2006:

You first need to know where this item is located. In the ODU Library Catalog, you can see it is located in the Main Stacks.

Once we have the general location, we can then start looking for “the address,” the call number: The 900s in ODU Library are located on the **Middle Floor**, to the right of the stairs as you descend.

This book will be down the aisle that includes the **940s**.

You can even find **exactly where** on the shelf this book will be based on its number!
To locate your item by its call number on the shelf:

1. Look for the 1st part of the number—"940"—and you will find items in order the order of counting in the nine hundreds: 939, 940, 941, etc.
2. Find the 2nd part of the number —".5318"—by reading it differently: digit by digit
3. If you have a 3rd part, it will begin with a letter, like our example. Look alphabetically at this point.

940.478 W276
940.5 R32
940.51 W913
940.5303 O98, 1995
940.5317 N994a, 1979
940.5318 J7135m
940.5318 K62, 1979
940.5318 K6724a
940.5318 K676h, 2006
Various Editions of a Book are shelved with the same call number plus unique year of publication.

- That’s why sometimes you’ll see a year after the call number: 940.5318 K676h, 2006.

Multiple Copies of an Item are shelved in order of the copy number (c.2, c.3, etc.): View example

Sets of multivolume works are shelved in order by the volume number (v.1, v.2, etc.): View example

As in many libraries, our popular fiction and juvenile fiction collections use a different classification system: the beginning of the author’s last name: View example
Once you are finished using a book or other item, place that item on a table or a cart. We ask that you do not reshelve the item. Instead, please be mindful of others’ needs:

- Library staff take note of which books & other items are used. Those that don’t get used can be discarded.

- Before reshelving, we count your use of the item and then reshelve it.

- If an item is used but we don’t know it’s used, it may not be available for the next person who needs it.

Help us make sure every item is in its proper order on the shelf so that others can find what they need too!

Library staff are trained to reshelve items accurately and we shelve regularly.
Need assistance?

Ask a Librarian:

- refdesk@ohiodominican.edu
- (614) 251-4585
- Toll free (888) 681-8044
- www.ohiodominican.edu/library/help/ask