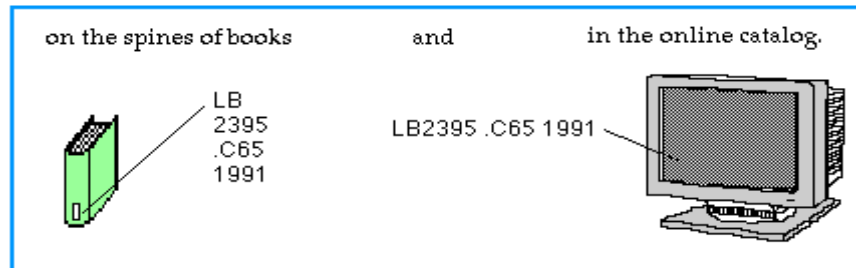


## Understanding Call Numbers

### What are call numbers for?

Each book in the library has a unique call number. A call number is like an address: it tells you where the book is located in the library.

Call numbers appear

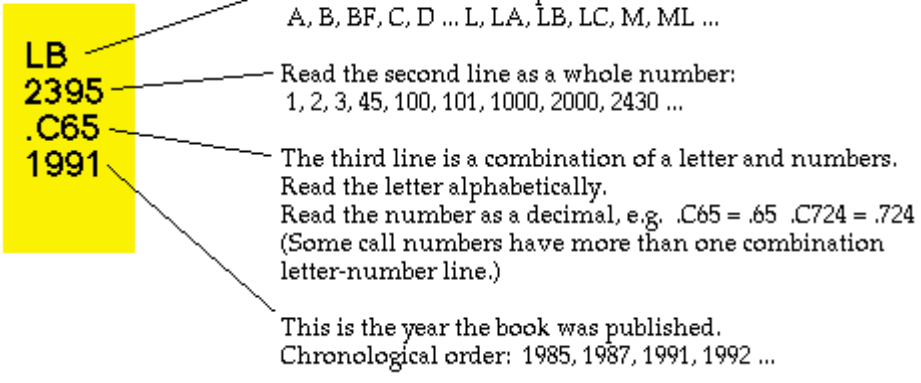


Note that the same call number can be written from top-to-bottom, or left-to-right.

Southern Arkansas University Tech Dr. George J. Brown Library/Learning Resource Center, like many academic libraries in the U.S. use the **Library of Congress Classification** for call numbers. This system uses a combination of letters and numbers to arrange materials by subject.

## Reading Call Numbers

Read call numbers line by line:



Read the first line in alphabetical order:  
A, B, BF, C, D ... L, LA, LB, LC, M, ML ...

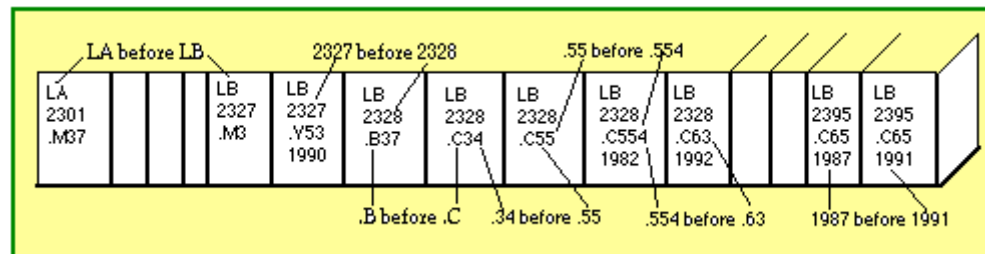
Read the second line as a whole number:  
1, 2, 3, 45, 100, 101, 1000, 2000, 2430 ...

The third line is a combination of a letter and numbers.  
Read the letter alphabetically.  
Read the number as a decimal, e.g. .C65 = .65 .C724 = .724  
(Some call numbers have more than one combination letter-number line.)

This is the year the book was published.  
Chronological order: 1985, 1987, 1991, 1992 ...

## Putting Call Numbers in Shelf Order

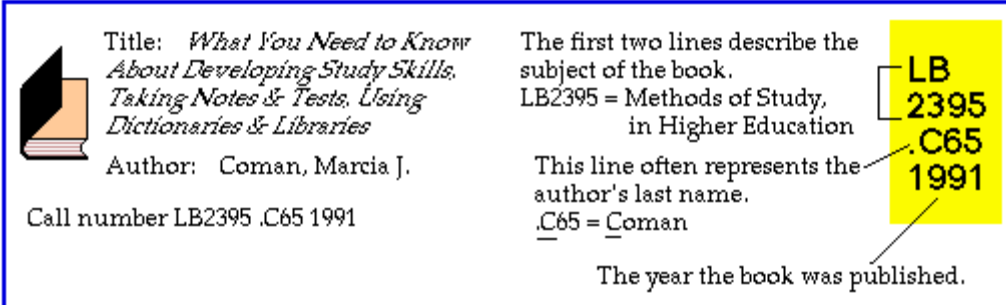
To understand how call numbers are put in order in Library of Congress Classification, again look at each section of the call number.




## What does the call number mean?

Remember that Library of Congress Classification arranges materials by subjects. The first section of the call number represents the subject of the book. The letter-and-decimal section of the call number often represents the author's last name. And, as you recall, the last section of a call number is often the date of publication.

Example:



 Title: *What You Need to Know About Developing Study Skills, Taking Notes & Tests, Using Dictionaries & Libraries*  
Author: Coman, Marcia J.  
Call number LB2395 .C65 1991

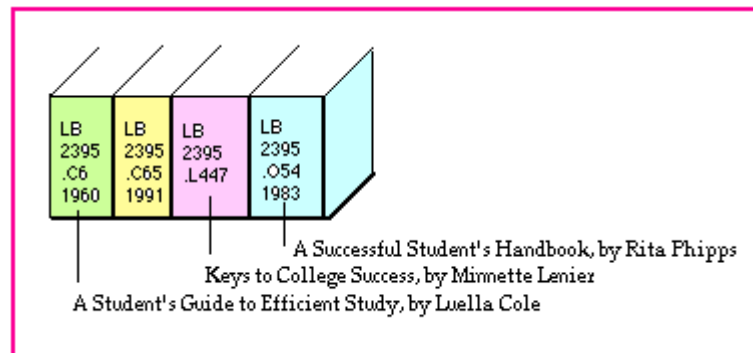
The first two lines describe the subject of the book.  
LB2395 = Methods of Study, in Higher Education

This line often represents the author's last name.  
.C65 = Coman

The year the book was published.  
1991

## Why is this important to know?

Because books are classified by subject, you can often find several helpful books on the same shelf, or nearby. For example, within the same call number LB2395, there are other guides for college study.



Since Library of Congress Classification arranges materials by subjects, knowing the letter(s) for your subject area gives you a place to start browsing the shelves. To find which letters represent your subject, consult the Outline of Subjects.

**Location Prefixes – Once I have a call number, where can I actually find the book?**

When a call number looks like the examples above (e.g. LB 2395 .C65 1991), the book is typically shelved in the non-fiction collection on one of the tall six shelves located in the east wing of the LRC. Some call numbers, however, are preceded by a **location prefix**.

Example:

**REF** AG243 .G87 1992

The REF prefix indicates that this book is shelved in the Reference Collection. This collection is located on the 3 tall shelves in the East wing of the LRC.

There are many prefixes used in our library system. Here are some commonly used ones:

<b>Beginning of Call Number (Prefix)</b>	<b>Department/Unit</b>	<b>Location</b>
REF	Reference Collection	3 tall shelves, East wing of LRC
RES	Reserve Collection	Behind Circulation Desk
FIC	Fiction Collection	Along North Wall in East wing of LRC
VID	Videocassette Collection	Reserve Area Shelving
DVD	DVD Collection	Multimedia Shelving, East Wing of LRC

For more information about call numbers and finding library materials, stop by the Circulation Desk to consult with an LRC staff member.

\*\* This document was originally created by Nadine Leong-Kurio of Honolulu Community College and, with permission, has been modified for use at Southern Arkansas University Tech.