



FINDING BOOKS ON THE SHELVES

Books are arranged on the shelves by Library of Congress call numbers, which consist of letters and numbers. These numbers indicate a work's content, as well as its location on the library shelves.

The OPAC displays the call number horizontally → E 540.N3 M24

The call number label on the spine of a book (the narrow edge that faces you on the shelves) will display the call number vertically.



It will look like this: →

E
540
.N3
M24

To locate this number on the library shelves:

- Copy down the **complete** call number from the OPAC entry.
- Go to the correct stack area by matching the call number with the **guide labels** on the end of each stack. (*Guide labels* show the general call number of the first and last books in a bookcase. Example: A - BF)
- Find the correct letter area for the **FIRST line** of the call number. Single letters come before double letters. Example: L is shelved before LB
- Once you find books that match Line #1, look for the numbers on the **SECOND line**. Within each letter (or combination of letters), books are arranged numerically. Example: LB 309 comes before LB 3091
- If there are other books with the same first two lines, look for the **THIRD line** (and **FOURTH line**, if there is one). **Only one book will match all the lines of a call number.**

Lines #3 and 4 are decimal numbers, even if a decimal point doesn't show. Books within the same subject area are sub-arranged by the book number, in correct decimal order.

Example: LB 309 comes before LB 309
.D57 .D9

- The publication year may be the **LAST line** of a call number. If there are different editions of the same book, the publication dates will be different. These books will be shelved in numerical order.
- If the Library owns more than one copy of the same edition, there will be a *copy number*. This is a small letter "c" followed by a number. Example: c.2 indicates that the item is a second copy
- If you don't find the item, ask a reference librarian to double-check that you are in the right spot.
- If an item is not on the shelf, you may ask for a "Search & Hold" at the Circulation Desk. (Remember: The location box in the OPAC display also shows if the item is checked out or missing.)

For more information about call numbers, see [Library Resources, Organization and Use, Unit I -- Lesson 2](#), a workbook on RESERVE for LIBST 110 at the CCC Circulation Desk