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# Students in Transition: The Library Of Congress Classification System as Initiation

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## Students in Transition: Preparing Students for College Research

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**Overall Purpose:** To familiarize students with the LoC system, the organizational system by which books are arranged on library shelves at most universities. To help students develop alternative ways to think about and refine topic choices for research.

The first two letters of a call number (located on the book spine) denote one of 21 subject areas and indicate the category into which a book has been classified. For instance, a book about Stephen King, *Revisiting Stephen King: A Critical Companion*, by Sharon A. Russell, has the call number **PS3561.I483 Z864 2002**. The letters **PS** indicate the category of American Literature; the numbers 3561 indicate the sub-division called “Individual authors from 1961 – 2000.”

### Task 1: Thinking about initial information (5 – 10 min).

How we interpret a book’s title and content might differ from the way a librarian interprets title and content. For instance, we might, logically, place the Bill Murray book in biography or autobiography; some would, also logically, categorize the same book as humor. The LoC system categorizes it as Sports & Recreation. Understanding this difference helps us realize that looking in just one category for information would not deliver the best return, just as when we *google* something. The first search terms we use may not get us what we’re looking for. Understanding also helps us to approach a topic from a fresh perspective.

How would you guess the following books are categorized? What are other logical categories?

#### Book

*Cinderella Story: My Life in Golf* Bill Murray

Other possibilities:

#### Category

GV967 .M78 1999 (Sports & Recreation)

Humor; Biography; Autobiography; Societies and Clubs

*The Complete Guide to Divorce* Samuel Kling

Other possibilities:

KF535.Z9 K56 (Law)

Family, Marriage, Home; Religion; Manners & Customs; Economic History & Conditions

*Chaos in Classical and Quantum Mechanics* Martin C. Gutzwiller QC125.2 .G88 1990 (Physics)

Other possibilities:

Technology & Engineering; Astronomy

*Death of a Princess: The Investigation* Thomas Sancton DA591.A45 D5359 (Great Britain)

Other possibilities:

Law; Forensic Science; Folklore; Family, Marriage, Home; Heraldry; Genealogy

*The Power to Transform: Leadership that Brings Learning and Schooling to Life* Stephanie Pace Marshall

LB2822.8 .M38 2006 (Education)

Other possibilities:

Law; Business; Public Administration; Psychology United States

**Task 2: Further practice in categorizing** Working with your group members, look at the following titles and call numbers. Look up the call numbers in the LoC notebook and write in the category names, being as specific as you can; we are concerned only with the part of the call number *before* the decimal.

*Ethical issues in death and dying* / Robert F. Weir

**R726 .E77**

**R:** Medicine

**726:** Medical philosophy, Medical Ethics

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*Herbs for sports performance, energy and recovery* / Edmund R. Burke

**TX819.H4 L6 1998**

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*Defending the undefendable: the pimp, prostitute, scab, slumlord, libeler, moneylender, and other scapegoats in the rogue's gallery of American society* / by Walter Block

**HB95 .B58**

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*Current methods of autopsy practice* / Jergan Ludwig

**RA1058 .L8**

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*Ghost hunters of the south* / Alan Brown

**BF1026 .B76 2006**

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**Task 3: Becoming aware by browsing:** Turn to the following areas in the LoC listings; beginning with the given location, run your finger down the listings and see if there are surprises and the implications of any discoveries.

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
BF 1404 – 2055	BJ 1801 – 2195	CB 3 – 482
CC 1 – 960	GR 1 – GV 1860	KZA 1002 – KZD 5680
LC 1200 – LC 5160	ND 25 – 3416	PM 1 – 9021
PN 6010 - 6790	QC 801 - 809	RA 421 – 1270
RC 952 - 1245	SK 1 – 664	TD 1 – 1066
TX 1 - 1110	UB 1 - 440	VK 1 – VM 989

**Task 3: Creating a deep pool of possibilities (10 – 15 min).** If we were exploring Weddings as a topic, we'd obviously look in BL: Religion; BR: Christianity; we might also check out HM: Sociology; HQ: Family, Marriage, Home; GT: Manners & Customs. But to get a full picture and to develop a more original, subtle, complex idea to research, we'd also be well-served to look in the following categories, among others:

- CS**-Genealogy (What about the children? Will a blood test tell us everything we need to know?)
- CT**-Biography (for famous weddings, i.e. Princess Diana and Prince Charles)
- D**: History (The unions of powerful families formed alliances between countries for political (in)stability)
- GT**-Manners and customs (who gives the bride away, what about thank you notes, jumping the broomstick or crushing a glass)
- JX**-International Law (because marriage is also a legal union with legal implications; if you marry someone from a different country, which laws govern marriage? Divorce?)
- SB**-Plant Culture (flowers/plants used in your area; what if you have severe allergies?)
- TT**-Handicrafts, Arts and crafts (things we make at home to use in ceremonies; bouquets, rice nets, etc)

**Another example:** Hip Hop; besides Music, where else could we find information about this genre?

**E:** History of the Americas, African-Americans

Example: **Afeni Shakur : evolution of a revolutionary** / Jasmine Guy E185.97.S528 G89 2004

**CT:** Biography

**ML:** Music, History & Criticism, Popular Music

Example: **Making beats: the art of sample-based hip-hop** / Joseph G. Schloss ML3531 .S35 2004

**LC:** Special Aspects of Education

Ex.: **Black in school: Afrocentric reform, urban youth & the promise of hip-hop culture** / Shawn A. Ginwright LC2717 .G56 2004

**PN:** Literature, Motion Pictures

Ex.: **Representing: hip hop culture and the production of Black cinema** / S. Craig Watkins  
PN1995.9.N4 W38

Working with the topic that has been given to your group, use the Table of Contents page in the front of the notebook and list below EVERY area that might prove useful to you in research. Then flip to those sections and get more specific. Your responses will include the full call number (letters and numbers), the name of the major category, name of the sub-category, and what you would hope to find there. List the obvious then move beyond it.

Call Numbers	Subject Area	Specific Area	Why?
Ex: ND1385	Painting: Special Subjects	Sports, Hunting & Fishing	Representations in Art

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## Library of Congress Classification System

### **A – General Works**

AE – Encyclopedias  
AI – Indexes  
AY - Yearbooks

### **B - Philosophy, Psychology, Religion**

B – History and Systems  
BF - Psychology  
BL – Religions, Mythology  
BM – Judaism  
BQ – Buddhism  
BR - Christianity

### **C – Auxiliary Sciences of History**

CB – History of Civilization  
CC – Archaeology  
CR – Heraldry  
CS – Genealogy  
CT - Biography

### **D – History (except America)**

D – History (general)  
DA – Great Britain  
DAW – Central Europe  
DC – France  
DD – Germany  
DE – Mediterranean, Greco-Roman World  
DG – Italy  
DK – Russia and Poland  
DS – Asia  
DT – Africa  
DU – Oceania, Australia, New Zealand

### **E – America (general) and United States**

51-99 Indians of North America  
186-199 Colonial Period  
483-655 Civil War

### **F – United States (local) and America**

1-970 – United States (local)  
1001-1140 – British North America, Canada  
2201-2239 – South America

### **G – Geography, Anthropology**

G – Geography (general)  
GB – Physical Geography  
GR – Folklore  
GT – Manners and Customs  
GV – Sports and Recreation

### **H – Social Sciences (general)**

HB – Economic Theory  
HC – Economic History and Conditions  
HG – Finance  
HJ – Public Finance  
HM – Sociology  
HQ – Family, Marriage, Home  
HS – Societies and Clubs  
HX – Communism, Socialism, Anarchism

### **J – Political Science**

JK – Constitutional History and Administration  
JS – Local Government  
JX – International Law, International Relations

### **K – Law**

### **L – Education**

LA – History of Education

### **M – Music**

### **N – Fine Arts**

### **P – Language and Literature**

PA – Classical Philology (Greek and Latin)  
PN – Literature, Literary History and Collections  
PR – English Literature  
PS – American Literature  
PZ – Children's Literature

### **Q – Science**

QA – Mathematics  
QB – Astronomy  
QC – Physics  
QD – Chemistry  
QE – Geology  
QH – Natural history, Biology  
QK – Botany  
QL – Zoology  
QM – Human Anatomy  
QP – Physiology  
QR – Microbiology

### **R – Medicine**

RB – Pathology  
RK – Dentistry  
RT – Nursing

### **S – Agriculture**

SB – Plant Culture  
SD – Forestry  
SF – Animal Culture  
SK – Hunting

### **T – Technology and Engineering**

TA – Engineering, Civil Engineering  
TJ – Mechanical Engineering  
TK – Electronics and Electrical Engineering  
TL – Motor Vehicles, Aeronautics, Astronautics  
TP – Chemical Technology  
TS - Manufactures  
TT – Handicrafts, Arts & Crafts

### **U – Military Science**

UA – Armies, Organization and Distribution  
UD – Infantry  
UH – Other Services

### **V – Naval Science (general)**

VA – Navies, Organization and Distribution  
VD – Naval Seamen  
VE – Marines  
VK – Navigation

### **Z – Library Science, Bibliography**

4-8 – History of Books and Bookmaking  
40-115 – Writing  
116–550 – Book Industries and trade  
551-661 – Copyright  
665-997 – Libraries and Library Science  
1001-8999 - Bibliography