



## How to Read Call Numbers

Libraries use classification systems to organize the books and videos on the shelves. Most public libraries use the **Dewey Decimal Classification System (DDC)** and most academic libraries (including Reynolds Library) use the **Library of Congress Classification System (LC)**.

You may be more familiar with the Dewey Decimal system which uses only numbers to arrange materials on the shelves. The LC system uses a combination of letters and numbers to arrange materials on the shelves.

These classification systems allow each book and video in the library to be assigned a unique **call number**. A call number is like an address; it indicates where the book is located on the library shelves.

### Anatomy of a Call Number

Read call numbers line by line:


LB  
2395  
.C65  
1991

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

Read the second line as a whole number:  
1, 2, 3, 45, 100, 101, 1000, 2000, 2430..  
(Some call numbers include a decimal number after the whole number on the second line. Any number after a decimal point is read as a decimal number)

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

The last line is the publication date, read in chronological order: 1987, 1989, 1998, 2000



Title: *What You Need to Know About Developing Study Skills, Taking Notes & Tests, Using Dictionaries & Libraries*

Author: Coman, Marcia J.

Call number LB 2395.C65 1997

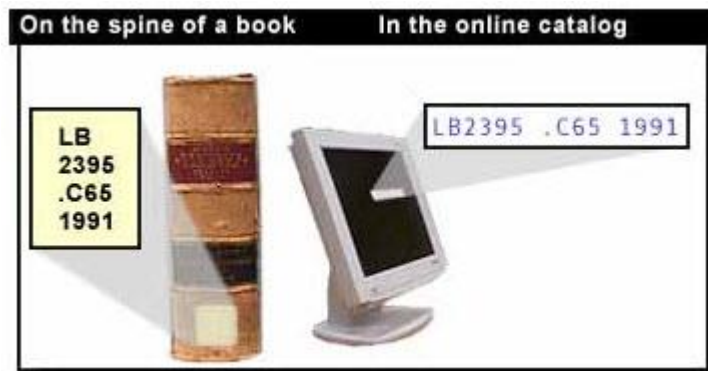
The first two lines describe the subject of the book:  
LB2395 = Methods of study in higher education

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

The year the book was published

LB  
2369  
.C65  
1997

A call number label is attached to each book and video spine or front cover. Every item record in the library catalog also includes a call number. When searching the library catalog (Reynolds Library uses *QuickSearch*), you want to be sure to jot down the complete LC call number in order to locate the item on the shelf.



If you haven't narrowed down your topic for a research assignment but have a general subject in mind, you can also browse the shelves if you know the beginning *Library of Congress classification* letters for that subject (e.g., BF – Psychology books; L - Education; PS – American Literature; R – Medicine) .

