Charles Ammi Cutter

March 14, 1837-September 6, 1903

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Charles Cutter

- Librarian at Harvard Divinity School, Harvard College, Boston Athenaeum Library, and Forbes Library

- Famous for *Rules for a Printed Dictionary Catalog* and *Expansive Classification*

- Formed the theoretical basis for Library of Congress Classification (LCC)

- Contemporary of Melvil Dewey

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Aunt was a librarian in Boston
Started as an assistant at the Harvard Divinity School library while a student, started reorganizing almost immediately.
LCC = Library of Congress Classification

First met with Dewey in Feb 1873 while working at Boston Athenaeum Library. Dewey was excited to meet him and asked him a bunch of questions about his classification system. He borrowed some of his ideas.

Dewey: "He puts the books on horse under 'horse' & not under 'zoology.'"

Both were at the first ALA meeting and continued to run into each other throughout their careers. There was one case where there was an injunction against Dewey that Cutter supported, but I couldn't find evidence of a big rivalry.

Rules for a Printed Dictionary Catalog

OBJECTS.*

1. To enable a person to find a book of which either
   (A) the author
   (B) the title   is known.
   (C) the subject
2. To show what the library has
   (D) by a given author
   (E) on a given subject
   (F) in a given kind of literature.
3. To assist in the choice of a book
   (G) as to its edition (bibliographically).
   (H) as to its character (literary or topical).

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After classifying the Boston Anethaeum Library, Cutter was asked by the US Commissioner of Education to present his methodology at the Centennial Exhibition in 1876.

Cutter was one of 102 librarians to form the ALA at the exhibition.

The rules are not just what is shown here, but this is the key part that is most remembered.

We think little of finding resources by author, title, or subject now because almost every classification system supports that, but it was revolutionary when Cutter introduced it.

Expansive classification is designed with the expectation that libraries will grow.

Cutter initially designed his classification systems for the libraries where he worked, but some librarians who considered adopting his classification system found it too complicated. He designed expansive classification so it would be simple at first and then be able to grow with a library.

Locations

	Northern Europe.				Bohemia
48	Scandinavia		58		
49	Iceland		59		South-East Europe, Turkey in Europe (in Geography), Balkan peninsula
50	Denmark				The Turkish Empire in 39.; the Byzantine Empire 33.
	Including the Faröe Islands.		591		Bosnia
51	Norway		592		Herzegovina
52	Sweden		593		Montenegro
53	Northern Europe		594		Servia
	(Works including Finnish, Lappish, Slavic, Scandinavian, and Teutonic nations or several of these.)		595		Roumania
531	North Sea		596		Bulgaria
532	Baltic Sea		597		Roumelia
533	Goths		598		Albania
534	Esthonia		599		Bosphorus and Black Sea
	Turanian Europe.		60		**ASIA**
535	Turanian race		601		Turkey in Asia
536	Lapland		602		Aleppo
537	Finland		603		Kurdistan
			604		Armenia
	Slavic Europe, 539-59.		605		Transcaucasia
539	Slavic race		606		Asia Minor
54	Russia, Russian Empire				The separate states to be alphabetically arranged with all other places.
	Include Caucasus.		607		Syria
55	Poland		608		Phœnicia
56	Austria-Hungary		609		Sinaitic peninsula
57	Hungary		61		Palestine, Holy Land, Bible [regions
			62		Arabia

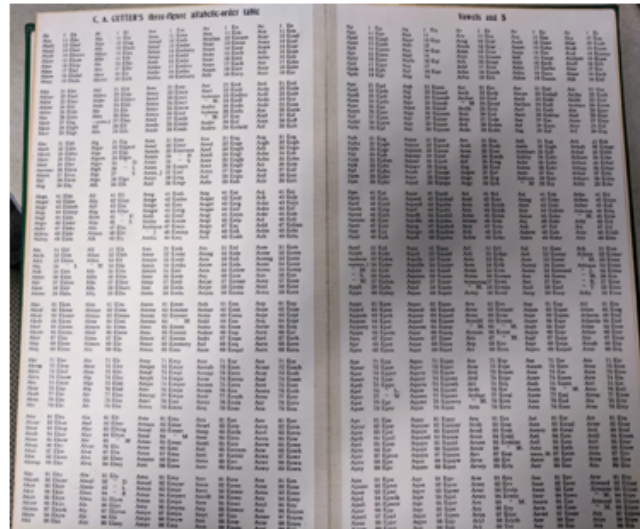Information School
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Link

Boston Athenaeum Library

Some classes like history depend on geography. All classes use the same scheme for indicating location.

The location number comes at the end of the

Cutter Number
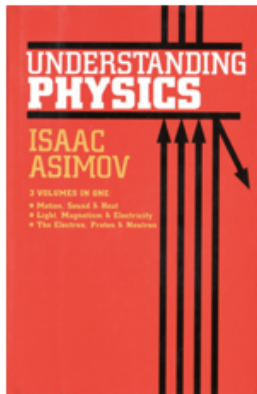

This is a shorthand to sort books within a class.

It is shorter than author name but can still produce a unique string.

Example of Cutter Classification

Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark
LH.As42u

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1st: Class mark – What is it about?
2nd Author mark or book mark – further help in sorting within the class. Usually uses a Cutter number

Example of Cutter Classification

Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark
LH.As42u

LH: Physics

1st: Class mark – What is it about?
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Example of Cutter Classification

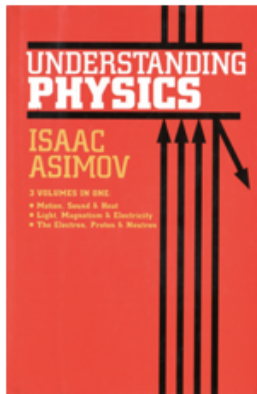Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark
LH.As42u

LH: Physics
As42: Asimov

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Example of Cutter Classification

Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark
LH.As42u

LH: Physics
As42: Asimov
u: Understanding...

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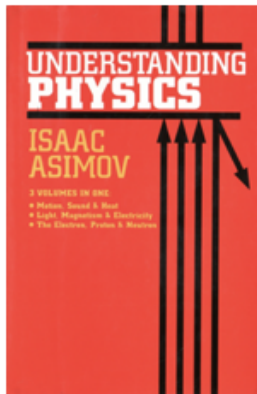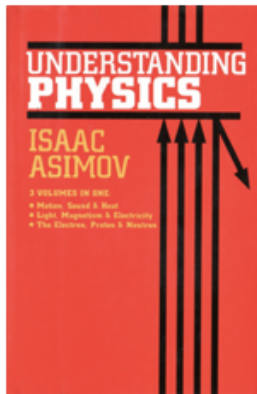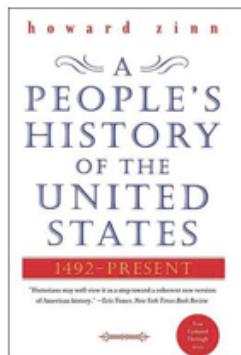
Example of Cutter Classification

Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark

F83.Z66p

Before the dot: Class mark – What is it about?
After the dot: Author mark or book mark – further help in sorting within the class.
Usually uses a Cutter number.

You can add to the class mark to make it more specific. For example, a history of the
US Civil war would be F834.

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Example of Cutter Classification

Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark

F83.Z66p

F: History
83: United States

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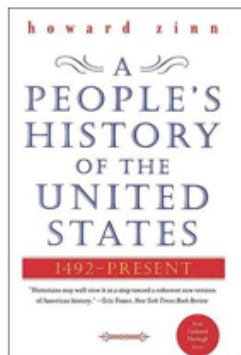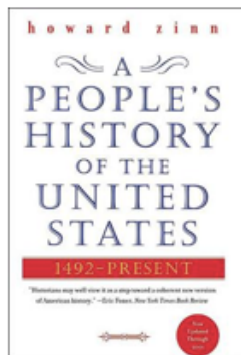UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

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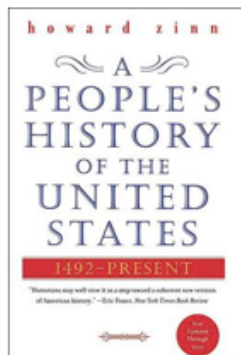F83.Z66p

F: History
83: United States
Z66: Zinn

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Example of Cutter Classification

Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark

F83.Z66p

F: History
83: United States
Z66: Zinn
p: People's…

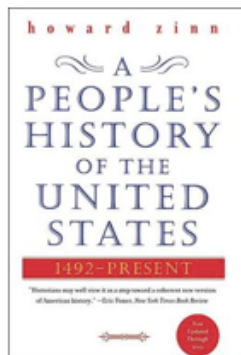**Information School**
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Charles Cutter: Links

Expansive Classification: Part I

The Buffalo Public Library in 1983

Boston Athenaeum: Charles Ammi Cutter

Forbes Library: Dewey-Cutter Concordance

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Note that the Buffalo Public Library essay was a prediction of what libraries would be like in 100 years. It predicts many technological advances, including interlibrary loan.