



Charles Ammi Cutter

March 14, 1837-September 6, 1903

 Information School
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON



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



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
 - (C) the subjectis known.
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).

After classifying the Boston Athenaeum 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

FIRST CLASSIFICATION. For a very small Library.

- A** Works of reference and works of a general character covering several classes
Includes such works as are usually kept in the Endless Room or the Reading Room for the free use of the public, such as the best dictionaries of languages and other subjects; encyclopedias, both general and special, handbooks of dates, dictionaries of biography and geography, gazetteers, manuals of statistics, books of quotations, concordances, etc.
- B** Philosophy and Religion
Includes Moral philosophy.
- E** Historical sciences
Includes Biography, History, and Geography and Travels.
- H** Social sciences
Includes Statistics, Political Economy, Commerce, the Poor, Charity, Education, Pains, Temperance, the Woman question, Politics, Government, Crime, Legislation, Law.
- I** Sciences and Arts, both Useful and Fine
- X** Language.
- Y** Literature
Includes Literary history, Bibliography, and the arts that have to do with books.
- Yr** Fiction
To save time it is not unusual to attach the classification of the class Fiction, calling for and changing words by the book-work alone.



- Kkx** Employment, labor
For names see Division 1.
For names see Division 2.
- Kvz** Legal rights
- Kvz** Property
- Kvz** Political rights
- Kvz** Suffrage
- Kvz** Office holding
For names see class W.
- Ks** Societies (not otherwise provided for)
Many societies go under subjects, a historical society under History, a geographical society under Geography, a scientific society under Science, a literary association under Literature, and so on. These receive the classification of the subject, and are distinguished from other general works by prefixing it to the author mark, e.g. 92 being National history, M & B Big Boston Society of Natural History, and (G being Geography) G & B Big Royal Geographical Society of London.
Learned societies of a general character go in class A, division 1, e.g.
Ar B4 The Academy of Berlin
Ar M4 The Academy of Madrid
- Ksc** Clubs
With the local list, see Ks as a Club in London. Ks as a Club in London. Ks as a Club in London.
- Kvz** Freemasonry
With the local list.
- Kvz** Odd fellows
With the local list.
- Kvz** Other secret societies
(H)

- L** Sciences and Arts together
- La** Sciences (Natural)
La includes works on Experiment, Observation, Instruments, Classifications and Measurement of science, and on the Laws of nature.
- Ls** Mathematics, Number and space sciences
General works and works which treat of Mathematics, Kinematics and Dynamics together, also works treating of Natural science and Physics viewed mathematically. The general works include Tables, Problems, Instruments, Relations, and Study.
- Lc** Arithmetic
- Lc** Interest tables
- Ls** Algebra
- Ls** Logarithms
- Ls** Probability
- Lc** Geometry
- Ls** Plane
- Ls** Solid
- Ls** Curvilinear
- Ls** Conic sections
- Ls** Trigonometry
- Ls** Plane
- Ls** Spherical
- Ls** Calculus
- Ls** Differential
- Ls** Integral
- Ls** Quadratures
- Ls** Kinematics, Motion
- Ls** Dynamics (force and matter)
(H)



[Link](#)



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.	
48	Scandinavia
49	Iceland
50	Denmark
51	Norway
52	Sweden
53	Northern Europe
<small>(Includes Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Estonia unless otherwise noted.)</small>	
301	North Sea
302	Baltic Sea
303	Gothia
304	Ethiopia
Turanian Europe.	
535	Turanian race
536	Lithuania
537	Finland
Baric Europe, 539-55.	
539	Slavic race
54	Russia, Russian Empire
<small>(Includes Siberia.)</small>	
55	Poland
56	Austria-Hungary
57	Hungary
58	Bohemia
59	South-East Europe, Turkey in Europe
<small>(in Geography), Balkan peninsula</small>	
591	Bosnia
592	Herzegovina
593	Montenegro
594	Serbia
595	Rumania
596	Bulgaria
597	Russia
598	Albania
599	Byzantium and Black Sea
60	ASIA
601	Turkey in Asia
602	Afghanistan
603	Kashmir
604	Armenia
605	Transcaucasia
606	Asia Minor
<small>The various states in the approximately arranged into 4 sub-divisions.</small>	
607	Syria
608	Phoenicia
609	Sinaitic peninsula
61	Palestine, Holy Land, Bible
62	Arabia



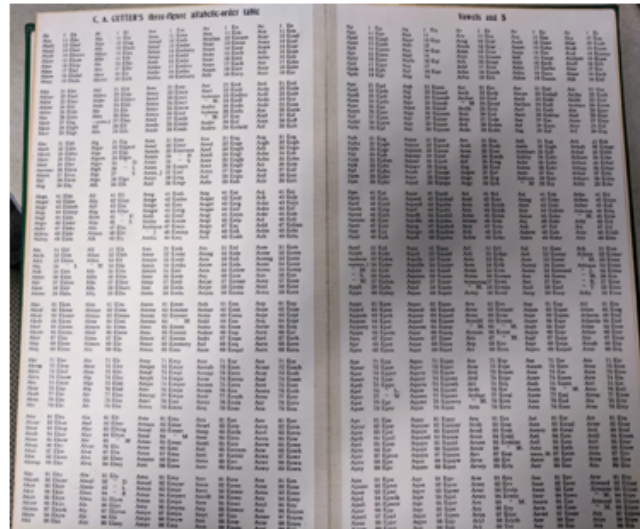
Boston Athenaeum Library

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

31 Ere	Ash	31 Esg	Ath	31 Et
32 Ereb	Ashb	32 Esgh	Athab	32 Et
33 Erec	Ashburt	33 Esh	Athal	33 Et
34 Erech	Ashby	34 Eshe	Atham	34 Et
35 Ereg	Ashe	35 Eshe	Athan	35 Et
36 Eret	Asht	36 Esht	Athap	36 Et
37 Erf	Asht	37 Esu	Athar	37 Et
38 Eng	Ashton	38 Esir	Atharv	38 Et
39 Erh	" M	39 Esj	Athb	39 Et
41 Eri	Asi	41 Esk	Athe	41 Et
42 Eric	Asiag	42 Eske	Athen	42 Et
43 Erich	Asin	43 Eski	Ather	42 Et
44 Erick	Asir	44 Eskim	Atherton	44 Et
45 Erica	Asius	45 Esko	" M.	45 Et
46 Erie	Asj	46 Eskr	Athi	46 Et
47 Erin	Ask	47 Esal	Ati	47 Et
48 Erk	Askew	48 Esale	Atin	48 Et
49 Erko	Askn	49 Esaler	Atit	49 Et
51 Erl	Asl	51 Eam	Atk	51 Et
52 Erlan	Asli	52 Esmar	Atkins	52 Et
53 Erle	Asm	53 Esme	" M.	53 Et
54 Erik	Asmai	54 Esmo	Atkinson	54 Et
55 Ern	Asmo	55 Esmond	" J.	55 Et
56 Ermen	Asn	56 Esmu	" M.	56 Et
57 Ermi	Aso	57 Eso	" R.	57 Et
M. 58 Ermin	Asol	58 Esol	" T	58 Et
59 Erml	Asop	59 Esop	Atky	59 Et
61 Ern	Asp	61 Esp	Atl	61 Et
62 Ernant	Aspas	62 Espar	Atlan	62 Et

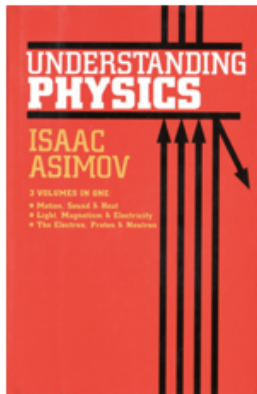


W

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

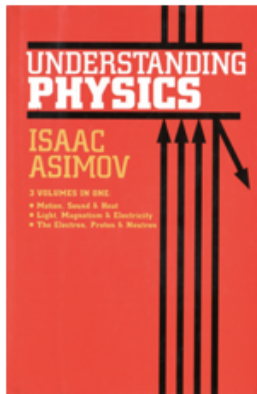
 Information School
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

W

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



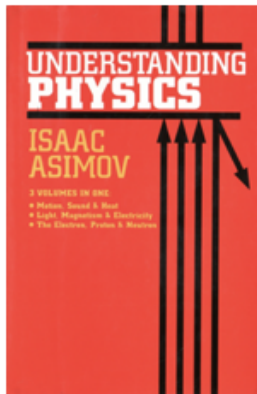
Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark
LH.As42u

LH: Physics

1st: Class mark – What is it about?

2nd Author mark or book mark – further help in sorting within the class. Usually uses a Cutter number

Example of Cutter Classification



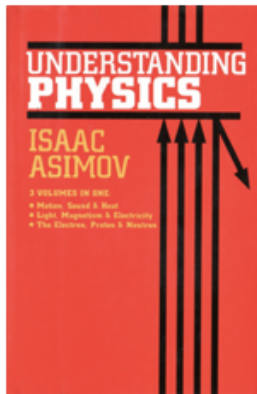
Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark
LH.As42u

LH: Physics
As42: Asimov

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



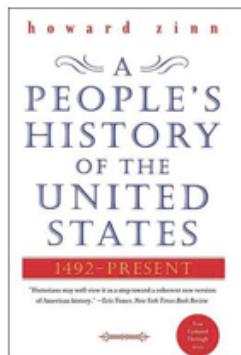
Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark
LH.As42u

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

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
F83.Z66p

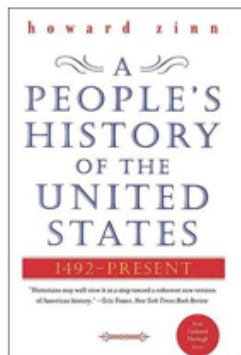
Before the dot: Class mark – What is it about?

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.

Example of Cutter Classification



Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark

F83.Z66p

F: History

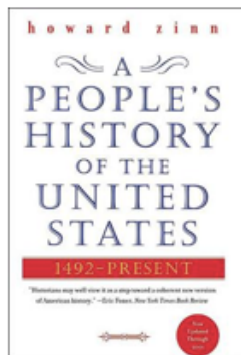
Before the dot: Class mark – What is it about?

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.

Example of Cutter Classification



Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark

F83.Z66p

F: History

83: United States

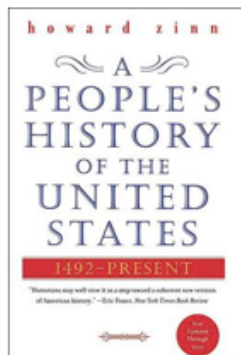
Before the dot: Class mark – What is it about?

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.

Example of Cutter Classification



Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark

F83.Z66p

F: History
83: United States
Z66: Zinn

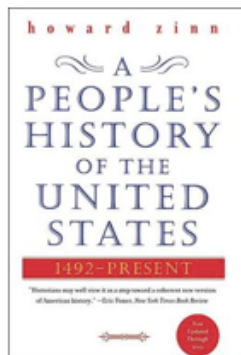
Before the dot: Class mark – What is it about?

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.

Example of Cutter Classification



Class Mark | Author Mark or Book Mark

F83.Z66p

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

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.

Charles Cutter: Links

[Expansive Classification: Part I](#)

[The Buffalo Public Library in 1983](#)

[Boston Athenaeum: Charles Ammi Cutter](#)

[Forbes Library: Dewey-Cutter Concordance](#)



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.