

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

CIP & Dewey Section

To: Melissa Parent, Chair  
Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee

Cc: Members of the Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee  
Caroline Saccucci, Chief, U.S. Programs, Law, and Literature Division

From: Kathryn Becker, Editor in Residence  
Dewey Decimal Classification  
OCLC, Inc.

Re: Drag

**Continuation**

From	To	Topic
792.7	792.72	Drag

We received an email from Jamie King, Materials Services Assistant Supervisor and Lead Cataloging Librarian at Niles-Maine District Library in Niles, IL requesting a specific Dewey number for drag performances and shows. The work he used as an example, *How You Get Famous: Ten Years of Drag Madness in Brooklyn*, has a number of 792.702/8.

To fully understand what drag is and what it is not, it is important to look where works on drag have been classified in the past. Having a good understanding will result in accurate classification. Currently, works on drag are predominantly classified in 306.7xx and 792.028.

**Drag defined**

The Association of LGBTQ Journalists (NLGJA) defines drag as “the practice and acting in styles typically associated with another gender, usually exaggeratedly so and for entertainment value,” and Homosaurus defines drag as “a performance genre involving dressing and/or using makeup to produce, emphasize, and/or exaggerate traits associated with a certain gender, which typically (but not always) is not the gender the performer primarily identifies with”. The key ideas are “exaggeration (of gender)” and “performance.”

Drag performers, often referred to as “drag queens” or “drag kings,” create personas for entertainment. The personas may or may not match the gender of the performer; the performer may be of any sexual orientation or gender identity.

### **Comparison with dramatic impersonation**

Impersonation, whether male or female, like drag is usually for entertainment purposes. However, impersonation is not an exaggeration in make-up and dress to the same level that drag is. The art of impersonation can easily be seen on television shows like *Saturday Night Live* in their portrayal of political and celebrity figures, or other entertainment venues with acts “featuring” Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, or Cher. Actors may impersonate characters of the same or another gender. While drag and impersonation may overlap at times, it is the exaggerated costuming of drag that is the main difference. Impersonation is currently classed as 792.028.

### **Proposed actions**

Drag performance has become a part of current events, culture, and the LGBTQ+ community. LCSH has an entry for “Drag performance” with a BT of “Performing arts,” and “Drag shows” with a BT of “Theater.” Unlike LCSH, the DDC will not draw a distinction between drag performance and drag shows; both will be classed at the same number.

While drag has elements of stand-up comedy (792.76) and theatrical dancing (792.78), there may be other elements including drama or comedy skits, dancing, and singing. Keeping these elements in mind, we propose an entry of 792.72 Drag to accurately reflect these elements and to allow room for other entries as warranted.

The DDC entries of Drag (Performance) and Drag (Aerodynamics) will be created to make clear distinctions between the aerodynamic sense of drag and the stage sense. Similarly, to distinguish theatrical impersonation from criminal impersonation, criminal impersonation will be found as Impersonation (Crime).

The entry 792.028 Acting and performance, which includes impersonation, will have class-elsewhere note to guide users to drag in 792.72. The new class will have a see-also reference pointing to the new interdisciplinary number for cross dressing as proposed in EPC 144-S30.1.

In the following schedules, 792 is given for context. The class-elsewhere note pointing to 391.68 for cross dressing is contingent on approval of the changes proposed in EPC 144-S30.1.

## References

- Blazucki, Sarah, and Jeff McMillan, eds. "NLGJA Stylebook on LGBTQ Terminology." Stylebook on LGBTQ+ issues, March 2023. <https://www.nlgja.org/stylebook/>.
- "Cross-Dressing." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, March 24, 2023. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-dressing>.
- "Cross-Gender Acting." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, November 8, 2022. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-gender\\_acting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-gender_acting).
- "Homosaurus Vocabulary Terms." Homosaurus Vocabulary Site. Accessed March 29, 2023. <https://homosaurus.org/v3>.

## 792 Stage presentations

Class here dramatic presentation, theater

Class texts of plays in 800

*For motion pictures, radio, television, podcasting, see 791.4; for puppetry and toy theaters, see 791.5*

*See Manual at 780.92 and 791.092*

### .028 \*Acting and performance

Including impersonation, improvisation, use of expression and gestures

Class drag in 792.72

### .7 †Variety shows and theatrical dancing

Class here burlesque, cabaret, vaudeville, music hall and nightclub presentations

Subdivisions are added for variety shows and theatrical dancing together, for variety shows alone

Class stage productions in 792.9

*For magic shows, see 793.8; for juggling, see 793.87; for ventriloquism, see 793.89*

*See also 791.12 for minstrel shows and skits*

### .72 †Drag

Class impersonation in 792.028; class interdisciplinary works on cross dressing in 391.68

\*Add as instructed under 792.022–792.028

†Add as instructed under 792.1–792.8

**D**

<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Drag (Aerodynamics)	629.132 34
<b>P</b> aeronautics	629.132 34
<b>P</b> Drag (Performance)	792.72
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Drag performance	792.72
<b>I<sub>a</sub></b> Drag shows	792.72

**F**

False impersonation	364.163 3
law	345.026 33

**I**

Impersonation	792.028
stage	792.028
Impersonation (Crime)	364.163 3
law	345.026 33