

# Reading call numbers is like finding a street address.

A call number is a code given to a book or magazine that tells the general subject matter as well as identifying each book in the library.

The following will help you understand the code:

MAR — location symbol (*what library it is in*)  
 PR1347 — class number (*indicates subject*)  
 B48  
 2004 } — book number (*includes date of publishing*)  
 c.2



The call number can be written as follows:

PR1347 B48 2004 c.2	or	PR 1347 B48 2004 c.2	or	PR1347.B48.2004 c.2
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Volumes are arranged on the shelves:

1. Alphabetically by the letter(s) at the start of the call number. The letters come from the Library of Congress classification system.

Ex: A (before) AE (before) B (before) BF

2. Then, numerically by the numbers that follow:

Ex: A6 A23 B299 BF3 BF35

3. Next, in alphabetical and decimal order by the second letter/number combination. *On a catalog card or on the book this letter/number combination would be the second line of the call number.*

Ex: B1875  
C28

*This combination is arranged as if the number following the letter were a decimal.*

Ex: B1875  
(.)0C6

*These call numbers are arranged in correct order because .28 is smaller than .6, and .68 is smaller than .8.*

Ex: BF572 BF572  
F68 F8

4. Then, by date of publication. Not all call numbers end in a year. Dates are added to the call number only when a new edition is published or an earlier work is reprinted.

Ex: BF1875 BF1875 BF1875  
C28 C28 C28  
1970 1979

