

How LC Call Numbers are Arranged on the Shelves

The average call number has four lines on a book label, and each of those lines are read differently.

Z
693
.A52
1977

The first line is made up of 1-3 letters, and is read in alphabetical order.

A	B	BC	BF	CJ	D	G	GE	GR	H
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Z
693
.A52
1977

The second line is made up of whole numbers, and is read numerically. The numbers in this line may sometimes have decimals.

1	5	25	78	126	333	790	790.5	1357	4274
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Z
693
.A52
1977

This line is called the cutter number, which usually represents the author's last name, but can also stand for the name of a corporation or the book's title. It is read first alphabetically by letter, and then the numbers are read as a decimal.

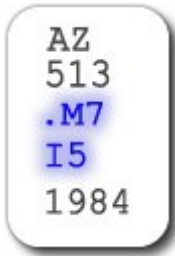
.D12	.D3	.G45	.G5	.G56	.G564	.G5643	.G6	.G67	.H2
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Z
693
.A52
1977

The last line is the year of publication, and is read in chronological order.

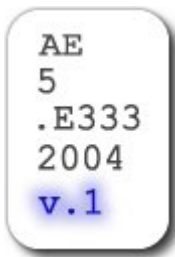
1654	1776	1796	1854	1910	1959	1959b	1978	1999	2001
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Some labels, though, may have more than four lines.



This call number has two cutter numbers. The first cutter number narrows the topic; in this case **.M7** stands for Mississippi. The second cutter number on this label, **I5**, represents the book's title. Both are read like the examples of cutter numbers [above](#).

Ending the call number may be letters or numbers designating the book's order in a series or set. They are read either numerically (v.1, v.2, v.3, ...) or alphabetically (ser.A, ser.B, ...). Some common examples are:



v.1	Volume 1
v.193(1998)	Volume 193, year 1998
v.37, no.2	Volume 37, Number 2
no. 305	Number 305
ser.B	Series B
Suppl	Supplement

The call number may also end with a copy number (c.2, c.3, ...). This is used to tell multiple copies of the same book apart.