Dewey Decimal System: There are two basic classification systems used by American libraries – the Library of Congress system and the Dewey Decimal System. PLOS, like most public libraries, uses the Dewey Decimal System, in which only the non-fiction materials are assigned numbers. Fiction is filed alphabetically.

Hoyt Library houses both state and federal documents, which use still different classification systems. Your supervisor will see that you get training in these systems if they apply to your job.

The following page is not comprehensive, but it will give you an idea of the organization of some common subject areas according to the Dewey system.
### Dewey Decimal Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>000 General</th>
<th>600 Applied Science</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>004 computers</td>
<td>610 medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>070 journalism</td>
<td>620 engineering</td>
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<td></td>
<td>630 gardening &amp; domestic animals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>641 cookbooks</td>
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<td>650 business</td>
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<td></td>
<td>690 construction</td>
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<td>100 Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>130 parapsychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>150 psychology</td>
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<td>158 self-help</td>
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<tr>
<td>200 Religion</td>
<td>700 Fine Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>201 Christianity</td>
<td>701 art history</td>
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<tr>
<td>290 world religions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>292 mythology</td>
<td>720 architecture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>745 crafts</td>
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<td>750 painting</td>
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<td>780 music</td>
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<td>790 sports</td>
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<tr>
<td>300 Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>320 political science</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>370 education</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>400 Language</td>
<td>800 Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>420 English</td>
<td>809 criticism of authors</td>
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<tr>
<td>430-490 foreign languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>500 Pure Science</td>
<td>900 History, Geography and Travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>510 math</td>
<td>914-919 geography and travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>520 astronomy</td>
<td>929 genealogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>550 geology</td>
<td>940.5 World War II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>570 biology</td>
<td>973 U.S. history</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GUIDELINES FOR SHELVING MATERIALS

PLOS catalog: PLOS uses a computerized system to check books in and out and locate materials in the library. This system serves all the branches, as well as many other libraries in a several county area.

Every book cataloged for PLOS is in the automated system. The screen will list all the copies in the system and will tell you if these copies are available for check-out.

When the circulation desk checks in a book on the computer, the online catalog immediately displays the book as being first on the shelving cart, then on the shelf. Prompt, accurate shelving is critical to providing good service to the public and to locating materials quickly and easily.

Book Information: Inside the back cover of all cataloged books is computer label which displays the printed book information, information about which library owns the book, the barcode, and in some instances a new book sticker.

Always check the back of the book before you return the book to the shelf. The computer label is the ultimate authority for where the book should go, NOT the spine label. There should be no new book stickers on materials that are no longer in the new section.

The 4 Ss As you get into the serious business of shelving materials, a helpful phrase you may want to remember is the “Four Ss”, which are SORTING, SHELVING, SHIFTING, AND SHELF READING. All are interconnected when it comes to successfully maintaining order and easy accessibility to materials.
Accuracy in shelving is more important than speed, although you will improve your speed as you go along.

Keep this general principle in mind as you shelve: items should be lined up neatly and positioned so patrons can remove or replace an item easily.

Pages should not get in the way of patrons. If a patron is browsing where you need to shelve, do not excuse yourself and begin shelving there. Begin somewhere else. This rule also applies if you are already shelving somewhere and a patron wants to look at that shelf. Move out of the way immediately.

**Sorting:**

When shelving cataloged materials from a book truck you will need to put the materials in order on the cart. Follow closely the directions of your page supervisor or trainer to learn how best to approach putting materials in order.

The essential part to remember when sorting and shelving is that the computer label on the inside back cover is ALWAYS your definitive guide to tell where the book belongs on the shelf. Train yourself to open the book and check the computer label for:

- **Ownership information**
- **The call number**
- **Codes to indicate Juvenile books or special collections**

The spine label on the outside of the book should always correspond with the computer label on the inside. If they differ, the inside label is correct. You should point out any discrepancies to your supervisor.

**Shelving:**

When you begin shelving, glance over the shelf where you are about to put a book. Scan the whole shelf to make sure you are not misplacing the book or material by putting it next to another misplaced item.
Before placing the item on the shelf, look 4 items to the left and 4 to the right. Re-shelve anything you find out of place. Stray books which are completely out of place should be returned to the circulation area unless you are certain where they should go.

Try to avoid tightening bookends against materials too tightly. This forces books back behind other books and also makes returning a book to the shelf very frustrating for the patron.

The opposite extreme should be avoided as well. Books very loosely shelved or with gaps in between can end up falling and sliding.

Books should be shelved with the spines even with the front edge of the shelf, but not extending beyond. This makes them easier to see and to pull off the shelf, and gives a uniform and neat appearance to the rows of books.

Whenever possible, try to keep the same call number or author on the same shelf.

**Shelving Rules:**

See attached Appendix.
Shelving Specific Items:

**Adult Fiction:** Books are shelved alphabetically by the author’s last name, first name, and then by title. In some libraries specific types of fiction (mysteries, westerns, science fiction, etc.) may be shelved in separate sections.

If two authors have the same last name, arrange by first name or initials so that all the books by the same person will be found together on the shelf. If there are several books by the same author the books are further arranged alphabetically by title.

**Adult Non-fiction:** Books are shelved by call number and the first two letters of the author’s last name.

Examples:
- 616.1
- 616.12
- 616.3
- 616.3 Arthur
- 616.3 Aslington
- 616.3 Bailey
- 616.327

**Biographies:** Biographies are shelved alphabetically by the name of the person the book is about, not by the author’s name. However, if there are several John Adams biographies, they would then be shelved by the author’s name.

**Paperbacks:** Some paperbacks are cataloged like hardback books and are interfiled with them. Paperbacks are sometimes shelved in separate area(s). This will vary from branch to branch, so be sure to ask your page supervisor.
**New Books:**
New books are generally shelved in a separate area for a specific length of time. Ask your supervisor for details on how this is handled at your branch.

**Shelving of YA (Young Adult), children’s materials, reference materials, magazines and newspapers and other materials varies widely from branch to branch. Your supervisor will show you how to shelve these materials correctly in your library.**

**Shifting:**
Ideally only two thirds to three quarters of a shelf should contain books. Though most libraries own many more books than will fit on their shelves at any one time, they can keep their shelves at the ideal level because many books are always in circulation. Sometimes, however, the shelves get crowded and tight. When this occurs it is time to shift.

Look at the shelf below – can you fix the crowding by moving books to the beginning of the shelf below? If not, check the shelf above. If the whole section is tight ask your supervisor which direction he/she wants you to shift toward.

Major shifting (whole sections) shouldn’t have to be done too often if you are shifting as you shelve. Should you find a major shift necessary, report it to your supervisor. Do not undertake major shifting unless given permission to do so.

Be sure that you check behind the books and down the backs of the shelves as you shift and shelve for items which may have slipped out of place.

**Shelf Reading:**
Straightening shelves and correcting shelving errors are ongoing tasks. High-use areas such as new books need to be straightened more often than areas which are less frequently used.

Shelf reading means reading the spines of the items on the shelf and rearranging any materials which are out of order. If the spine label is too worn to read, is
incorrect in some way, or is missing, pull the book and give it to a librarian on duty.

At some branches every page has a regular schedule of shelf reading in an assigned area. Ask your page supervisor if you are unsure how your branch approaches shelf reading assignments.

A good rule of thumb is to spot check all or part of your assigned area each time you work a shift.
GENERAL FILING RULES – APPENDIX A

These rules are followed at all PLOS branches so patrons and employees can locate items easily at any branch. Most of the rules listed here follow the American Library Association Filing Rules. The general rules are listed first, followed by instructions for specific and/or unusual cases. Please study the rules and ask questions where necessary. **When in doubt, refer to the computer label in the back of the book.** If your question is not resolved, ask your supervisor or a librarian on duty for help.

**Alphabetizing:**

Alphabetizing is done letter by letter, then word by word. Articles, “A,” “An,” and “The,” are disregarded when they appear as the first word in a title. Prepositions such as “of,” “for,” “into,” etc. are considered part of the title when shelving.

**The Killing Tree** is shelved as **Killing Tree**

**Into the Forest** is shelved as **Into the Forest**

Titles are compared to each other word for word. If the first two words of two different titles are identical, go to the third word or beyond to determine the shelving order.

All character strings beginning with numerals are arranged before character strings beginning with letters.

The principle “nothing files before something” applies with spaces and their equivalents being considered as nothing. Spaces, dashes, hyphens, and periods are all considered a space.

- Hand – Anatomy
- Hand in Art
- Hand-to-hand Fighting
- Hand Washing
- Hand – Wounds and Injuries
- Handbags
- Red Cloud
- Redbird
- Redmond
Fiction books are filed by author (last name, then first name, then middle name) then by title of book. Nonfiction books are filed by the Dewey Decimal number, then by Cutter (found under the Dewey Number and generally the first two letters of the author’s last name), and finally by title.

**Abbreviations:** File in alphabetical order exactly as written on the computer label or title page of the book.

- *Doctor Bard of Hyde Park*
- *Dr. Austin’s Guests*
- *Mister Fish Kelly*
- *Mr. Deeds goes to Town*
- *Saint Lambert*
- *St. Louis*
- *Staach, John George*

**Numerals:** Numerals usually file as if they were spelled out. Otherwise they are filed in numerical order.

**Books with no author:** File books with no author alphabetically by title. Books with up to three authors are filed by the last name of the author named first. Books with more than 3 authors are filed alphabetically by title.

**Unusual last names:** A prefix that is part of the name of a person or place is treated as a separate word unless it is joined to the rest of the name directly or by an apostrophe without a space.

- *Darby, William*
- *D’Arcy, Ella*
- *De Paola, Tomie*
- *Death, William*
- *Del Mar, Eugene*
- *Dell, William*
- *Mach, John*
- *MacLaren, Joseph*
- *Van Dyke, Henry*
- *Vanden Berg, Glen*
- *Vandenberg, Arthur*
Hyphenated Names: Ignore the hyphen and take each name as it comes.

Campbell, Arthur
Campbell-Bannerman, Henry
Campbell, Charles
Campbell-Copeland, Thomas

Punctuation, signs and symbols: Ignore punctuation and file as if there were no symbol or space there.

Le Strange, Roger
Le’Strange, Alfred
L’engle, Madeline
Lester, John
Life: a book for young men
Life – a bowl of rice
Life, mind and spirit

Exception: The ampersand (&) is filed as its spelled-out language equivalent (and).

A & B Poetry
A and G motor vehicle
Art and beauty
Art & common sense

Initials in Title: Initials separated by spaces, dashes, hyphens or periods are considered separate words. Initials not separated at all are considered one word. If there is a space before a letter follow the nothing before something rule.

I. D. A.
I Q
IBM
IEEE
Biographies: Biographies are filed in order of the subject’s last name as determined in the library catalog authority file. Bobby Kennedy biographies would go with the other biographies about Robert Kennedy in order by subject, then author, then title.

Ted, the Last Brother
Kennedy, E
Jones, Greg

American son: a portrait of John F. Kennedy Jr.
Kennedy, J
Blow, Richard

Kennedy
Kennedy, J
Davis, Mark

Camelot Years
Kennedy, J
Graham, Alex

Jackie, We Hardly Knew Ye
Kennedy, J
Smith, Richard

Matriarch
Kennedy, R
O’Brien, Dudley