

**HERMANN MEMORIAL LIBRARY / SULLIVAN COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Information Literacy Guides**

Introduction to the Dewey Decimal Classification

History and Current Use

The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system is a general knowledge organization tool that is continuously revised to keep pace with knowledge. The system was conceived by Melvil Dewey in 1873 and first published in 1876. The Dewey Decimal Classification is the most widely used classification system in the world. Libraries in more than 135 countries use the DDC to organize and provide access to their collections, and DDC numbers are featured in the national bibliographies of sixty countries.

Structure and Notation

In the DDC, basic classes are organized by disciplines or fields of study. At the broadest level, the DDC is divided into ten main classes, which together cover the entire world of knowledge. Each main class is further divided into ten divisions, and each division into ten sections (not all the numbers for the divisions and sections have been used). The three summaries of the DDC follow this introduction.

The first summary contains the ten main *classes*. The first digit in each three-digit number represents the main class. For example, 500 represents natural sciences and mathematics.

The second summary contains the hundred *divisions*. The second digit in each three-digit number indicates the division. For example, 50 is used for general works on the sciences, 510 for mathematics, 520 for astronomy, 530 for physics.

The third summary contains the thousand *sections*. The third digit in each three-digit number indicates the section. Thus, 530 is used for general works on physics, 531 for classical mechanics, 532 for fluid mechanics, 533 for gas mechanics.

Arabic numerals are used to represent each class in the DDC. A decimal point follows the third digit in a class number, after which division by ten continues to the specific degree of classification needed.

A subject may appear in more than one discipline. For example, “clothing” has aspects that fall under several disciplines. The psychological influence of clothing belongs in 155.95 as part of the discipline of psychology; customs associated with clothing belong in 391 as part of the discipline of customs; and clothing in the sense of fashion design belongs in 746.92 as part of the discipline of the arts.

Dewey Decimal System

000	GENERAL WORKS	500	SCIENCE
010	Bibliographies	510	Mathematics & computer technology
020	Library & information science	520	Astronomy
030	Encyclopedias & books of facts	530	Physics
040	[Unassigned]	540	Chemistry
050	Magazines, journals & serials	550	Earth sciences & geology
060	Associations, organizations & museums	560	Fossils & prehistoric life
070	Journalism, publishing & news media	570	Biology & life sciences
080	Quotations	580	Plants (Botany)
090	Manuscripts & rare books	590	Animals (Zoology)
100	PHILOSOPHY	600	TECHNOLOGY
110	Metaphysics	610	Medicine
120	Epistemology	620	Engineering
130	Astrology, parapsychology & the occult	630	Agriculture
140	Philosophical schools of thought	640	Home management & hospitality industry
150	Psychology & substance abuse	650	Management, public relations & printing
160	Logic	660	Chemical engineering
170	Ethics	670	Manufacturing
180	Ancient, medieval & Eastern philosophy	680	Manufacturing specific products
190	Modern Western philosophy	690	Building & construction
200	RELIGION	700	FINE ARTS & RECREATION
210	Philosophy & theory of religion	710	Landscaping & area planning
220	The Bible	720	Architecture
230	Christianity & Christian theology	730	Sculpture, ceramics & metalwork
240	Christian practice & observance	740	Drawing & decorative arts
250	Christian pastoral practice & religious orders	750	Painting
260	Church organization, social work & worship	760	Graphic arts
270	History of Christianity	770	Photography
280	Christian denominations	780	Music
290	Other religions	790	Sports, games & entertainment
300	SOCIAL SCIENCES	800	LITERATURE & CRITICISM
310	Statistics	810	American literature in English
320	Political science & international law	820	English & Old English literatures
330	Economics	830	German & related literatures
340	Law	840	French & related literatures
350	Public administration & military science	850	Italian, Romanian & related literatures
360	Social problems & social services	860	Spanish & Portuguese literatures
370	Education	870	Latin & Italic literatures
380	Commerce, communications & transportation	880	Classical & modern Greek literatures
390	Customs, etiquette & folklore	890	Other literatures
400	LANGUAGE	900	HISTORY
410	Linguistics	910	Geography & travel
420	English & Old English languages	920	Biography & genealogy
430	German & related languages	930	History of the ancient world (to 499 A.D.)
440	French & related languages	940	History of Europe (ca.500 A.D. -)
450	Italian, Romanian & related languages	950	History of Asia
460	Spanish & Portuguese languages	960	History of Africa
470	Latin & Italic languages	970	History of North America
480	Classical & modern Greek languages	980	History of South America
490	Other languages	990	History of other regions