How to Read a Call Number

About This Guide
Have you ever gone into the library and had difficulty reading or locating call numbers? This guide explains how to read a Library of Congress Classification System call number, which is the classification system used at the Leatherby Libraries. It is recommended that you also read the "Library of Congress Classification System” guide for information on how the system is arranged.

Reading a Library of Congress Call Number
While it may initially be daunting to understand, the following chart breaks down a Library of Congress call number into its simplest form. The following example is for Spatially Integrated Social Science, a book located in the 2nd Floor Doy and Dee Henley Library of Social Sciences. This book has been assigned the call number HA 30.6 .S665 2004.

1. **Top Row:** Find books with the **FIRST LETTER** (in alphabetical order from A to Z).

2. Now find books with the **SECOND LETTER** (in alphabetical order from A to Z).

3. **Second Row:** The **NUMBERS** will be in numerical order starting with 1, and may include decimals.

4. **Third Row:** The **LETTER** will be in alphabetical order from A-Z.

5. The numbers are always read as decimals. Look for the **FIRST NUMBER** (in numerical order), before looking for the **SECOND NUMBER** (in numerical order).
   For example: .K487 is before .K52; .K52 is before .K6

6. **Fourth Row:** The book's publication date may appear here. The date may not appear in all call numbers.

This guide is one in a series of "How To" Reference and Instruction Guides created by librarians at the Leatherby Libraries. View the series online at [www.chapman.edu/library/reference/guides](http://www.chapman.edu/library/reference/guides)

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