

After checking your library's general reference books, you should find out whether the library has any specific books that would give you helpful material on the subject you're researching.

A large library may have its collection in an online database that is accessible only by computer. Entering author, title, and/or subject will give you an electronic display of the library's holdings.

A smaller library may have each book it owns listed on an index card. These index cards are assembled in the card catalog. How can the card catalog tell you where to look for the book on the shelves?

The Dewey Decimal System This system of organization divides library books into ten classes with numbers that identify them on the shelves.

000-099	General works (reference books, encyclopedias, bound periodicals, almanacs)
100-199	Philosophy, psychology, conduct
200-299	Religion, mythology
300-399	Social sciences, economics, government, law
400-499	Language (includes dictionaries, grammars)
500-599	Natural sciences (mathematics, history, etc.)
600-699	Useful arts (includes agriculture, engineering)
700-799	Fine arts (includes sculpture, painting, music)
800-899	Literature (includes poetry, plays, essays)
900-999	History (includes geography, travel)

Each of these classes has subdivisions. For example, literature may be divided into:

800-809	General
811-819	American literature
830-839	German literature
850-859	Italian literature
890-899	Literatures of other languages

There are additional subdivisions, so that under literature we have special numbers designating poetry, drama, fiction, etc. By the use of decimals, the numbers are broken down further. Early English Drama 1085-1400, for instance, is 822.1. These numbers

called the *class numbers*. They are combined with the initial of the author's last name to give the *call number*, by which a book is identified.

Some libraries use a system of their own or the Library of Congress system. Whichever system is used, the most important to the location of any book in a library is the call number. Some libraries have an *Author Card*, a *Title Card*, and a *Subject Card* for each book they own. In the upper left-hand corner of these cards is the call number.

Author card. If you know the author's name you can locate the title of his books, listed alphabetically, that are in the library. *Title card.* If you know the title of the book, you can find both the author on the title card. Title cards are placed in alphabetical order according to the first word of the title of the book, even if the author's name, *A. A. or The; East Days of Pompeii, The.*

Subject card. Through many libraries do not cross-refer the cards in their catalogs under general headings, name du.

Cross-reference card. If the topic you are researching is limited, you may not easily find specific books that would help you. In that case, look in related fields. Cards which say "see" or "see also" will guide you in directions that may prove fruitful.

The magazine file. After researching the card catalog, look next into the magazine indexes, such as *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, *Art Index*, *General Science Index*, etc., which list magazine articles. Check with the librarian to learn whether the magazines containing any articles that might shed light on your topic are available. Make a careful record of unavailable magazines, because you might find them at another source.

Newspaper index. Major newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, offer complete indexes to articles they have published, and these indexes are available in many libraries. *Special services.* Some libraries also offer online searching of databases in specific fields.