

# Library of Congress Subject Headings Guide

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## Definition of Subject Headings

Subject headings are a type of controlled vocabulary that is used to take the guesswork out of searching by using a single term to describe a subject.

For example, the American Revolutionary War can be described using the following terms:

- American Revolution
- American Revolutionary War
- Revolution, American
- Revolutionary War, American
- War of the American Revolution
- American War of Independence
- War of American Independence
- War of Independence

By using a controlled vocabulary, all materials about the American Revolutionary War are listed under one heading:

**United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783**

Having a controlled vocabulary helps create "see also" references :

American Revolution -- **See** -- United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783

It also creates consistent subdivisions:

- United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783 -- **Battlefields**
- United States -- History -- Civil War, 1861-1865 -- **Battlefields**
- World War, 1914-1918 -- **Battlefields**

Using a standardized controlled vocabulary allows searches to be done quickly and with more accuracy. Also, since most library's use the same controlled vocabulary in their catalogs, only one vocabulary style needs to be learned.

Controlled vocabularies are used outside of the library, with a common example being the yellow pages in a phone book. For example:

See also reference:

Lawyers -- see Attorneys

Subject heading:

Attorneys

Subdivision:

Attorneys -- Personal Injury & Wrong Death

## Library of Congress Subject Headings

The Library of Congress Subject Headings are a massive controlled vocabulary list used by the majority of libraries. It is currently published in 5 large, red volumes.

Work on creating LCSH list was started in 1898, with the first edition being published in 1909. The newest edition (27th) was published in June, 2004. It has over 270,000 usable headings, and over 490,000 headings that are used for cross referencing. It had 7,200 new terms added to the lists.

The J.D. Williams library owns the following copies:

<b><u>Edition</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Call Number</u></b>
10th ed. - 1986	Main	Z695 .L695 1986
12th ed. - 1989	Main	Z695 .L695 1989
15th ed. - 1992	Main	Z695 .L695 1992
11th ed. - 26th ed.	Gov't Documents	LC 26.7:
1992-2002, microfiche	Gov't Documents	LC 26.7/2:

## **Types of Subject Headings**

In the LCSH, subject heading types are grouped by the number of words that comprise the heading, and also by word order.

### **Heading type**

one-word

two-word

two-word, inverted

class first; narrowed

either by inversion,

subdivision, or ( )

### **Example**

Animals

Domestic animals

Animals, Fossil

Animals--Mortality

Adaptation (Biology)

### **three+ words**

AND

express relationship

AND

combine similar headings

Prep. phrases

normal word order

Prep. phrases

inverted

### **Example**

Computers and college students

Educational tests and measurements

Education of princes in literature

Plants--Effect of pesticides on

Most names (personal, corporate, events, etc.) are not listed in the LCSH.

Geographical names are traditionally inverted to keep the generic terms from being the main focus.

Lake Springfield (Ill.)

USE Springfield, Lake (Ill.)

## Types of Subdivisions

There are four main types of subdivisions:

Topical	Archaeology -- <b>Methodology</b>
Form	Archaeology -- <b>Fiction.</b>
Chronological	Archaeology -- History -- <b>18th century</b>
Geographic	Archaeology -- <b>Egypt</b>

However, listing all of the subdivisions available for each heading would add several more volumes to the already large LCSH. To solve this problem, there are free-floating subdivisions and pattern headings, both of which are included in the first volume of the LCSH (in newer editions). The free-floating subdivisions are also published separately (call number LC 30.2:F 87 ).

In the 27th ed. of the LCSH, more than 3,300 free-floating subdivisions are listed. These subdivisions can be added to the headings by following the instructions (usage notes) following each entry. For example:

### --**Tuition**

Use as a topical subdivision under names of individual educational institutions.

### --**Tumors** (May Subd Geog)

Use as a topical subdivision under individual organs and regions of the body.

BT --Diseases

Pattern headings are used to assign free-floating subdivisions to a category of subject headings. For example, in the category of "Educational institutions -- Individual," the pattern heading given is Harvard University. This means that the majority of free-floating subdivisions that can be assigned to a university or college will be found in the entries for Harvard University.

### **Harvard University--Auditing**

### **Harvard University--Awards**

UF Harvard University--Prizes [Former Heading]

### **Harvard University--Bands**

UF Harvard University--Orchestras and bands [Former Heading]

### **Harvard University--Baseball**

So, if subdivisions are needed for the University of Mississippi, any of the examples under Harvard University could be used.

### **University of Mississippi--Auditing**

### **University of Mississippi--Awards**

### **University of Mississippi--Bands**

### **University of Mississippi--Baseball**

A copy of the Table of Pattern Headings is given below.

**Table of Pattern Headings**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Pattern Headings</i>
Animals	Cattle Fishes
Art	Art, Chinese Art, Italian Art, Japanese Art, Korean
Chemicals	Copper Insulin
Colonies	Great Britain—Colonies
Diseases	Cancer Tuberculosis
Educational institutions Individual Types	Harvard University Universities and colleges
Industries	Construction industry Retail trade
Languages and groups of languages	English language French language Romance languages
Legal topics	Labor laws and legislation
Legislative bodies	United States. Congress
Literary authors (Groups)	Authors, English
Literary works entered under author	Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. Hamlet.
Literary works entered under title	Beowulf
Literatures (including individual genres)	English literature
Materials	Concrete Metals
Military services	United States. Air Force. United States. Army. United States. Marines United States. Navy
Music compositions	Operas
Musical instruments	Piano
Organs and regions of the body	Heart Foot
Plants and crops	Corn
Religious bodies Religious and monastic orders Religions Christian denominations	Jesuits Buddhism Catholic Church
Sacred works	Bible
Vehicles, Land	Automobiles
Wars	United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865

## Example LSCH Entry

<p>Philosophy, Moral USE Ethics</p>	<p><b>Improper heading</b> <b>Use instead</b> Equivalence relationship - USE references made from an unauthorized or unpreferred term</p>
<p><b>Ethics</b> <i>(May Subd Geog)</i></p> <p>[BJ]</p> <p>UF Deontology Ethics, Primitive <i>[Former Heading]</i> Ethology Moral philosophy Morality Morals Philosophy, Moral Science, Moral</p> <p>BT Philosophy</p> <p>RT Values</p> <p>SA <i>subdivision Ethics under names of individual persons and legislative bodies; and subdivision Moral and ethical aspects under non-religious or non-ethical topics</i></p> <p>NT Applied ethics Appropriateness (Ethics) Art and morals Vocation Will Work ethic</p> <p>— Biblical teaching USE Ethics in the Bible</p> <p>— Societies, etc.</p>	<p><b>Proper Heading</b>, may subdivide geographically. For example: Ethics--United States. Suggested <b>call number</b> - about 36% of entries have this <b>Used for</b>, lists the unauthorized or unpreferred terms under the authorised/preferred one also equivalence relationship</p> <p><b>Broader topic</b> - heirarchical relationship. Linked to other headings by cross-referencing <b>Related topic</b> - associative relationship Joins two headings that are linked by something other than hierarchy <b>See also</b> - general reference to an entire group of headings or subdivisions, when it would be impractical to list them all For example: United States, Congress--Ethics</p> <p><b>Narrower topic</b> - heirarchical relationship. Linked to other headings by cross-referencing</p> <p><b>Improper subdivision</b> <b>Use instead</b> <b>Proper subdivision</b></p>
<p><b>Vocation</b> Here are entered works dealing with the occupation of an individual in the sense of employment to which he is destined by nature, or called, as it were, by some higher power.</p> <p>UF Calling</p>	<p><b>Proper Heading</b> <b>Scope note</b> "provided when needed to ensure consistency of subject usage by specifying the range of subject usage by specifying the range of subject matter to which a heading is applied in the Library's catalog, by drawing necessary distinctions between related headings, or by stating which of several meanings of a heading is the one to which its use in the Library's catalog is limited." <b>Use for</b></p>