

Principles of the Sears List of Subject Headings

Certain principles and practices of subject cataloging should be understood before an attempt is made to assign subject headings to library materials. The discussion that follows makes reference to the *Sears List of Subject Headings*, henceforth referred to as the Sears List or the List, but the principles are applicable to other lists of subject headings as well.

The Purpose of Subject Cataloging

All library work is a matter of the storage and retrieval of information, and cataloging is that aspect of library work devoted to storage. The best cataloging is simply that which facilitates the most accurate and complete retrieval. The two basic branches of cataloging are descriptive cataloging and subject cataloging. Descriptive cataloging makes possible the retrieval of materials in a library by title, author, date, etc. — in short all the searchable elements of a cataloging record except the subjects. Only by conforming to the standards for descriptive cataloging can a librarian assure the user accurate retrieval on the descriptive elements. Those standards are codified in *Resource Description and Access (RDA)*, the successor to the older *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, second revised edition (*AACR2*).

Until the second half of the nineteenth century, descriptive cataloging was the only library cataloging that was found necessary. Libraries were much smaller than they are today, and scholarly librarians then were able, with the aid of printed bibliographies, to be familiar with everything available on a given subject and guide the users to it. With the rapid growth of knowledge in many fields in the course of the nineteenth century and the resulting increase in the volume of books and other library materials, it became desirable to do a preliminary subject analysis of such works and then to represent them in the catalog in such a way that they would be retrievable by subject.

Subject cataloging deals with what a book or other library item is about, and the purpose of subject cataloging is to list under one uniform word or phrase all the materials on a given topic that a library has in its collection. A subject heading is that uniform word or phrase used in the library catalog to express a topic. The use of authorized words or phrases only, with cross-references from unauthorized synonyms, is the essence of bibliographic control in subject cataloging. The purpose of a subject authority, such as the Sears List, is to provide a basic vocabulary of authorized terms together with suggestions for useful cross-references.

The two most common types of subject authorities are the thesaurus and the subject heading list. A true thesaurus, in the realm of information science, is a comprehensive controlled vocabulary of discrete unit terms, called descriptors, arranged in such a way as to display the hierarchical and associative relationships among terms. It is usually limited to a particular realm of knowledge, as in the case of the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*. The American national standards for thesauri are

- Poisons and poisoning**
Railroad accidents
Shipwrecks
Space vehicle accidents
Traffic accidents
Wounds and injuries
Related Term(s): **Disasters**
First aid
- Accidents — Prevention**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 363.1; 658.3
Use For: Prevention of accidents; Safety measures
See Also: subjects with the subdivision *Safety devices* or *Safety measures*, e.g.
Railroads — Safety devices;
Radiation — Safety measures; etc.
 [to be added as needed]
Narrower Term(s): **Aeronautics — Safety measures**
Radiation — Safety measures
Railroads — Safety devices
Safety education
Safety regulations
Water safety
Related Term(s): **Safety devices**
- Acclimatization
Use: **Adaptation (Biology)**
Environmental influence on humans
- Accompaniment, Musical
Use: **Musical accompaniment**
- Accompaniments (Music)
Use: **Musical accompaniment**
- Accountability
Use: **Liability (Law)**
Responsibility
- Accountability in government
Use: **Government accountability**
- Accountants**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 920
Use For: Bookkeepers; Certified public accountants
Related Term(s): **Accounting**
- Accounting**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 657
Use For: Financial accounting
See Also: types of industries, professions, and organizations with the subdivision *Accounting* [to be added as needed]
- Broader Term(s):* **Business**
Business education
Business mathematics
Narrower Term(s): **Corporations — Accounting**
Cost accounting
Related Term(s): **Accountants**
Auditing
Bookkeeping
- Accounting machines
Use: **Calculators**
- Accounts, Collecting of
Use: **Debt Collection**
- Accreditation
 Use types of hospitals and service institutions, types of educational institutions, and names of individual institutions with the subdivision *Accreditation*, e.g. **Colleges and universities — Accreditation**; and subjects with the subdivision *Study and teaching*, for accreditation of programs of study in those subjects, e.g. **Mathematics — Study and teaching** [to be added as needed]
- Accreditation (Education)
Use: **Schools — Accreditation**
- Acculturation**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 303.48
Use For: Culture contact
Broader Term(s): **Anthropology**
Civilization
Culture
Ethnology
Narrower Term(s): **Ethnic relations**
Multicultural education
Race relations
Socialization
Related Term(s): **East and West**
- Achievement motivation**
Dewey: 153.8
Use For: Performance motivation
Broader Term(s): **Educational psychology**
Motivation (Psychology)
Performance
- Achievement tests**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 371.26
Use For: Scholastic achievement tests; School achievement tests
Broader Term(s): **Academic achievement**
Educational tests and measurements

citizens. Materials on Black Canadian citizens are entered under **Black Canadians**.
Use For: Canada — Black people
Related Term(s): **Black Canadians**

Black people — Children
Use: **Black children**

Black people — Civil rights
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 323.1196; 342
Broader Term(s): **Black people — Political activity**
Civil rights
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Civil rights**

Black people — Economic conditions
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 330.9
Broader Term(s): **Economic conditions**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Economic conditions**

Black people — Education
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 370.89; 371.829
Broader Term(s): **Education**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Education**

Black people — Employment
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 331.6
Broader Term(s): **Employment**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Employment**

Black people — Folklore
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 398
Use For: Black folklore
Broader Term(s): **Folklore**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Folklore**

Black people — France
Dewey: 305.896; 944
Use For: France — Black people

Black people — Housing
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 307.3; 363.5
Broader Term(s): **Housing**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Housing**

Black people — Intellectual life
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 305.896
Broader Term(s): **Intellectual life**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Intellectual life**

Black people — Music
Use: **Black music**

Black people — Political activity
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 322.4; 324
Broader Term(s): **Political participation**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Political activity**
Black nationalism
Black people — Civil rights
Black power

Black people — Race identity
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 305.896
Use For: Negritude
Broader Term(s): **Race awareness**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Race identity**
Black nationalism

Black people — Religion
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 270.089; 299.6
Broader Term(s): **Religion**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Religion**

Black people — Segregation
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 305.896
Broader Term(s): **Segregation**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Segregation**

Black people — Social conditions
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 305.896
Broader Term(s): **Social conditions**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Social conditions**

Black people — Social life and customs
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 305.896
Broader Term(s): **Manners and customs**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Social life and customs**

Black people — Songs and music
Use: **Black music**

Black people — Suffrage
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 324.6
Use For: Black suffrage
Broader Term(s): **Suffrage**
Narrower Term(s): **African Americans — Suffrage**

Black people — United States
Use: **African Americans**

subdivisions *Economic conditions; Economic policy*; or *Industries*.
Use For: Development, Economic; Economic growth
Broader Term(s): **Economic policy**
Economics
Narrower Term(s): **Infrastructure (Economics)**
Rural development
Sustainable development
Related Term(s): **Economic conditions**

Economic development — Environmental aspects

Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 338.9
Scope Note: Use for general materials on the environmental impact of economic development. Materials on economic development that satisfies the needs of the present generation without depleting natural resources for the future or having adverse environmental effects are entered under **Sustainable development**.
Use For: Eco-development; Ecodevelopment

Economic equilibrium
Use: **Equilibrium (Economics)**

Economic forecasting

Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 338.5
Broader Term(s): **Business cycles**
Economics
Forecasting
Narrower Term(s): **Business forecasting**
Employment forecasting

Economic geography
Use: **Commercial geography**

Economic geology

Dewey: 553
Use For: Geology, Economic
See Also: types of geological products, e.g. **Asbestos; Gypsum**; etc. [to be added as needed]
Broader Term(s): **Geology**
Narrower Term(s): **Mines and mineral resources**
Petroleum geology
Quarries and quarrying
Soils
Stone

Economic growth
Use: **Economic development**

Economic history
Use: **Economic conditions**

Economic indicators

Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 332.4
Broader Term(s): **Economics**

Economic integration, International
Use: **International economic integration**

Economic mobilization
Use: **Industrial mobilization**

Economic planning
Use: **Economic policy**

Economic policy

Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 338.9
Scope Note: Use for materials on the policy of government in economic affairs.

Use For: Business — Government policy; Business and government; Central planning; Economic planning; Government and business; Government policy; National planning; State planning
See Also: subjects with the subdivision *Government policy*, e.g. **Agriculture — Government policy**; and types of activities, facilities, industries, services, and undertakings with the subdivision *Planning*, e.g. **Transportation — Planning** [to be added as needed]

Broader Term(s): **Economics**
Planning

Narrower Term(s): **Commercial policy**
Domestic economic assistance
Economic development
Fiscal policy
Foreign aid
Free enterprise
Government lending
Government ownership
Industrial mobilization
Industrial policy
Industrialization
International economic relations
Labor policy
Land reform
Monetary policy
Municipal ownership
Privatization
Sanctions (International law)
Subsidies
Tariff
Transfer payments
Urban policy

- Helium**
Natural gas
Nitrogen
Oxygen
Poisonous gases
Related Term(s): **Pneumatics**
- Gases, Asphyxiating and poisonous
Use: **Poisonous gases**
- Gasification of coal
Use: **Coal gasification**
- Gasoline**
Dewey: 665.5
Broader Term(s): **Fuel**
Petroleum
- Gasoline engines
Use: **Internal combustion engines**
- Gastronomy**
Dewey: 641.01
Use For: Eating
Broader Term(s): **Diet**
Narrower Term(s): **Slow food movement**
Related Term(s): **Cooking**
Dining
Food
- Gauchos
Use: **Cowhands**
- Gaul — Geography**
Dewey: 914.4
Broader Term(s): **Ancient geography**
Historical geography
- Gay and lesbian rights
Use: **Gay rights**
- Gay authors**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 809; 920
Use For: Authors, Gay
Broader Term(s): **Authors**
Gay men
Related Term(s): **Gay men's writings**
- Gay liberation movement**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 306.76
Broader Term(s): **Homosexuality**
Related Term(s): **Gay rights**
- Gay marriage
Use: **Same-sex marriage**
- Gay men**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
- Dewey:* 306.76
Use For: Gays, Male; Homosexuals, Male
Broader Term(s): **Gays**
LGBTQ people
Men
Narrower Term(s): **Gay authors**
Gay parents
Related Term(s): **Gay men's writings**
Homosexuality
- Gay men — Civil rights
Use: **Gay rights**
- Gay men — Ordination
Use: **Ordination of gays and lesbians**
- Gay men's writings**
Dewey: 808.8
Scope Note: Use for collections of gay men's writings by more than one author and for materials about such writings.
Use For: Writings of gay men
Broader Term(s): **Literature**
Related Term(s): **Gay authors**
Gay men
- Gay parents**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 306.85; 649
Use For: Homosexual parents
Broader Term(s): **Gay men**
Lesbians
Parents
Related Term(s): **Children of gay parents**
- Gay people
Use: **Gays**
- Gay rights**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 323.3264
Use For: Gay and lesbian rights; Gay men — Civil rights; Lesbian rights; Lesbians — Civil rights; Rights of gays; Rights of lesbians
Broader Term(s): **Civil rights**
Related Term(s): **Gay liberation movement**
Gays
- Gay teenagers**
Geographic Note: May subdivide geographically
Dewey: 305.235; 306.76
Broader Term(s): **Gay youth**
Teenagers
- Gay women
Use: **Lesbians**