


# Get to know the Dewey Decimal Classification system



**A brief PowerPoint  
slide show to help you  
understand how the  
Dewey Decimal  
Classification system  
works in your library**

## Get to know the DDC

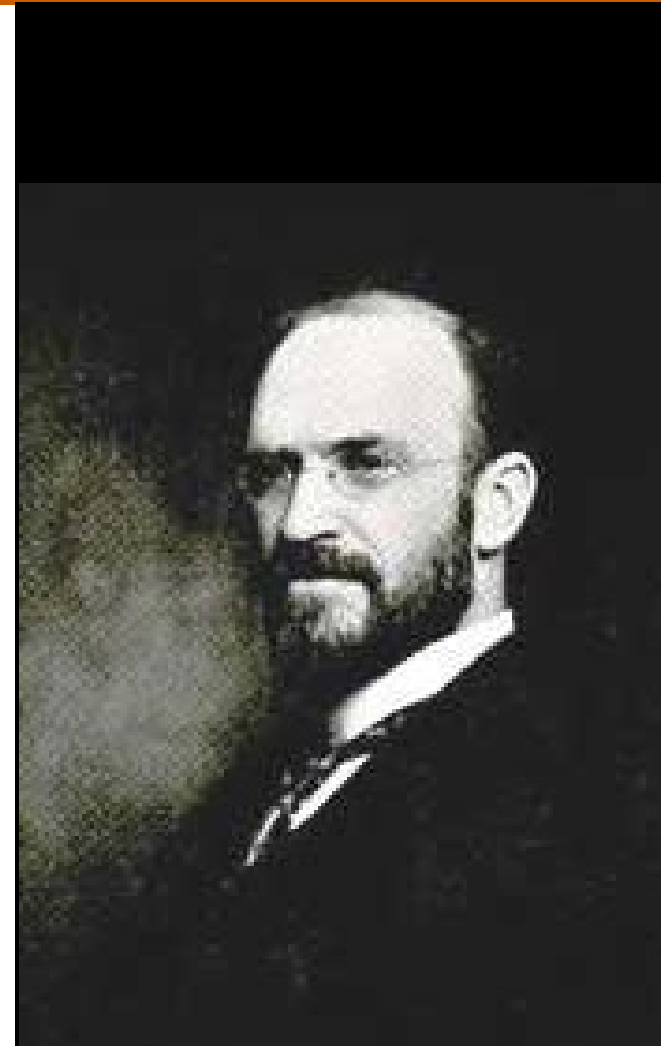
Have you ever gone to the library and wondered how you'd ever find the books you want?



**Did you know that your library has a great way of organizing its books so that you can find them easily?**



It's called the **Dewey Decimal Classification** system—or **DDC** for short. This system got its name from **Melvil Dewey**, the man who had this great idea for organizing library collections. He lived from 1851 to 1931 and introduced the DDC in 1876.



**Melvil Dewey**

Mr. Dewey's idea was so good that it has lasted for **130 years** so far and it has spread to **more than 200,000 libraries** in **135 countries** around the world!



**You may be wondering how you're supposed to use the DDC. Those numbers with periods in them on the ends of the bookshelves might look confusing to you. But once you know more about the DDC, you'll find that they make it easy for you to find the books you want.**



**So what does  
the DDC do?**

**It helps solve a big problem:  
helping you find the right  
information by giving you a  
specific number that belongs  
to the item you want.**

The DDC helps libraries arrange the items so that library users can find them. It's a lot like a neatly organized chest of drawers that you might have in your bedroom:

- Socks in the top drawer
- Underwear in the second drawer
- Shirts in the third drawer
- Pants in the bottom drawer





**Let's say you're interested in bicycles. What you want to know about them will decide what DDC numbers you'll need to find:**

- **The history of bicycles**
- **Taking care of your bicycle**
- **Bicycle safety**
- **Bicycle racing**



Each of these topics is about bicycles, but a book about each of these topics will have its very own DDC number.

- **The history of bicycles (796.6)**
- **Taking care of your bicycle (629.27)**
- **Bicycle safety (388.12)**
- **Bicycle racing (796.62)**

**Once you have the number for the book you need, you can go find the row of books where the book you want should be.**

**The books on each shelf are arranged in number order, but if you need help, a parent or someone who works at the library can help you.**

**You will probably notice that when you find a specific book, other books shelved around it are usually books on a similar topic.**

**That's how the DDC is arranged—by topic. And boy does the DDC have lots of topics! Hundreds of them! Thousands of them!**

## The topics in the DDC are arranged into ten main classes:

**000** Computer science,  
information & general works

**100** Philosophy & psychology

**200** Religion

**300** Social sciences

**400** Language

**500** Science

**600** Technology

**700** Arts & recreation

**800** Literature

**900** History & geography

## These ten main classes are each divided into ten divisions, like this:

**700 Arts**

**710 Landscaping &  
area planning**

**720 Architecture**

**730 Sculpture, ceramics  
& metalwork**

**740 Drawing & decorative  
arts**

**750 Painting**

**760 Graphic arts**

**770 Photography &  
computer art**

**780 Music**

**790 Sports, games &  
entertainment**

## Each division is then divided into ten sections, like this:

- 790** Recreational  
& performing arts
- 791** Public performances
- 792** Stage presentations
- 793** Indoor games  
& amusements
- 794** Indoor games of skill

- 795** Games of chance
- 796** Athletic & outdoor  
sports & games
- 797** Aquatic & air sports
- 798** Equestrian sports  
& animal racing
- 799** Fishing, hunting  
& shooting

You'll see all of these numbers on the **LEFT** side of the decimal point. But what about the numbers on the **RIGHT** side of the decimal point?

796.046



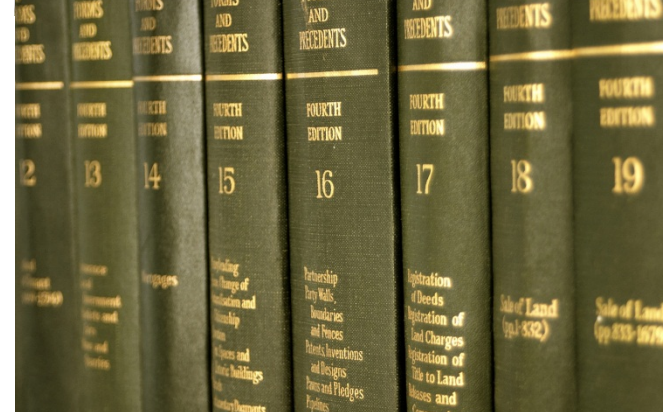
**The numbers on the right side are used to divide a specific subject into even more specific parts of a subject.**

- For a book on making cookies at home, look for 641.8654
- For a book on Golden Retrievers, look for 636.7527
- For a book on stained glass, look for 748.5

**It's like sorting your socks by color, or music CDs by performer or type of music.**

**So how do you know what numbers to look for in the first place? Here are a few suggestions:**

- **You can look up your topic on a computer in your library.**
- **You can browse the shelves, using the DDC numbers on the ends of shelves as your guide.**
- **You can ask someone who works at the library to help.**



**Once you get to know the DDC, you'll have a much better idea about where you'll find the books and other items you need in your library—and in other libraries that use the DDC.**



**Mr. Dewey had a great idea way back in 1876 that helps library users like you today.**

**His idea, the DDC, is your friend in the library— a friend you can always count on to help you find the information you need.**



**Melvil Dewey**