Guide to finding items in the library
‘I hear and forget. I see and I remember, I do and I understand’ (Confucius BC)

There are several different ways that you can find resources that you need in the library.

No way is wrong.

Some are more efficient than others

Some more appropriate for the task in hand.

Ultimately the goal is to come away with resources appropriate for your assignment.

This guide lists two of the main methods finding resources in the library.

Try out the exercises for both so that you will have a better understanding of when to use which method when.

Using Reading lists:

If you have a lot of assignments that include essential reading then your best way to get these items are to master both

1) Primo book catalogue

2) Dewey classification system

Exercise:

Challenge: Find these specific books

A) ‘The undergraduate research handbook’ – Wisker, G
B) ‘Essential study skills: the complete guide to success at University’ 2006
C) ‘The foundations of research’ Grix 2010’

1) What is your plan?
2) What is your first problem?
3) What type of information do you need to note down? Look for
4) How many copies of each title did on the shelves?
5) Those that you could not find any copies do you know/understand why???
6) Would you do anything differently next time you have to find books on a reading list.

Browsing

If you are not working from a reading list and just looking for resources on a topic Browsing is often a successful strategy.

Pitfalls to browsing – topics scattered, focussing on an aspect to narrow or too wide

Positives to browsing – discovering the unexpected, finding things you didn’t know you didn’t know!

Exercise:

Challenge: Find books on one or more of these topics

a) Writing essays
b) British photographers
c) Organising events.

1) Where do you start?
2) Are there a lot of items on the same topic in the same place.
3) How many items would you consider taking out.
4) Has this method given you further inspiration to …
**Helpful hints 1: Reading:**

Reading and referring to quality material is a key element of academic writing.

Information can come from a bewildering array of sources and you will need to become adept at assessing what is quality, relevant information. This is a key skill that will stand you in good stead for both your academic and professional career.

Top tips to get the most out of your reading are:

1. Though you will absorb some information passively when reading Active reading, i.e with Pen and pad to make notes is miles more effectively.
2. The content and Index pages are your best friends and should always be the starting point for reading. If these are no good is the book really any use?
3. Quality reading counts more than quantity
4. Getting the best out of your books is usually done by jotting down a few questions to interrogate what you are reading, similarly jotting down a list of questions is also useful as you read.
5. Speed reading can be a useful skill to develop. As it is a good way of helping to identify what a paragraph is all about.
6. The golden rule of research is **Never rely on one source of information**


With this in mind it is probably best before you take books out is to check the index and contents pages to see how much information on the topic you are after it covers as seriously you cannot tell a book by its cover but by its index. This will inform you whether it is worthwhile taking out or not, though sometimes you may have to settle for very little if not much has been written on your topic and then books may not be the answer - consider journals.
Helpful hints 2: Getting the right information of the library catalogue (Primo)

If you are accessing a record via an online reading list very often it will link straight through to the record so you should not need to further searching.

Your reading list will look a bit like this

Selecting one of the items will produce something that looks like this screen shot.

This information gives you the shelf mark number and whether the item is out or not. See information on Dewey if you are not sure how that works.
Selecting the record in the reading list will take you into the relevant record in this instance there is more than one edition so …

By following the instructions it will open up to further information.
If you are looking for the class number it is here.

Here we have a bit more information about the book and where it is etc.
Helpful hints 3: Getting to grips with the shelf mark system (Dewey)

Books in the library are organised using a system of numbers, decimals and letters called a shelf mark.

Dewey organises on a hierarchical model the top level that is always your starting point is the organisation of information into 10 broad areas.

000 General Knowledge – (Starts on level 2)

100 Psychology and Philosophy

200 Religions and Mythology

300 Social Sciences and Folklore (Includes Education, Tourism etc.)

400 Languages and Grammar

500 Math and Science

600 Medicine and Technology

700 Arts & Recreation (includes Architecture, Design etc.)

800 Literature

900 Geography and History (Finishes on level 0)

These top numbers are then broken into smaller and smaller topics. Different topics are assigned numbers.
Dewey Decimal Number always has three numbers to the left of the decimal point. There is no limit to how many numbers can be after the decimal point. The more numbers that are added after the decimal, the more specific the subject.

Finally as there are likely to be more than one book at the same number we use the first three letters of the Author of the book or if there is no author the title of the book. (In Arts we sometimes also use the artists name instead of the author – just to confuse you!)

This method is like a hierarchy

the whole initial number comes first and overrules

Look first for all the books at the number before the decimal point

Once you have located the number before the point now look for numbers after the point it runs 0 – 9

Then finally alphabetical order

1) Try these simple multiple choice questions and sorting exercise to see if you understand which shelfmark comes first.

Which of these shelfmarks would you find first on a shelf?

- 651.4 CAR
- 651.3 RAC
- 651.33 ARC
2) Which of these shelfmarks would you find first on a shelf?

Try these - they may be longer but the exact same rules apply as for shorter ones.

- 003.45621 SCH
- 003.46521 BRI
- 003.54612 ABE
- 003.45621 SEC

3) What about this? (In this question non letter come before letter you would not normally have this on the shelves.)

Answers on page 13
Answers

1)

- 651.4
- 651.3
- 651.33

Feedback

Well done! This code comes before the others as the 3 after the decimal point is lower than the 4 above and it does not have anything else after. Now try something harder...

2)

Which of these shelfmarks would you find first on a shelf?

- 003.45621 SCH
- 003.46521 BRI
- 003.54612 ABE
- 003.45621 SEC

Feedback

Well done! This code comes before the others because of both its number after the decimal point and the letters
4)

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How did you do? If not sure how you got any right (or wrong) read the information again and see if that helps if not seek out your Information Specialist for help.