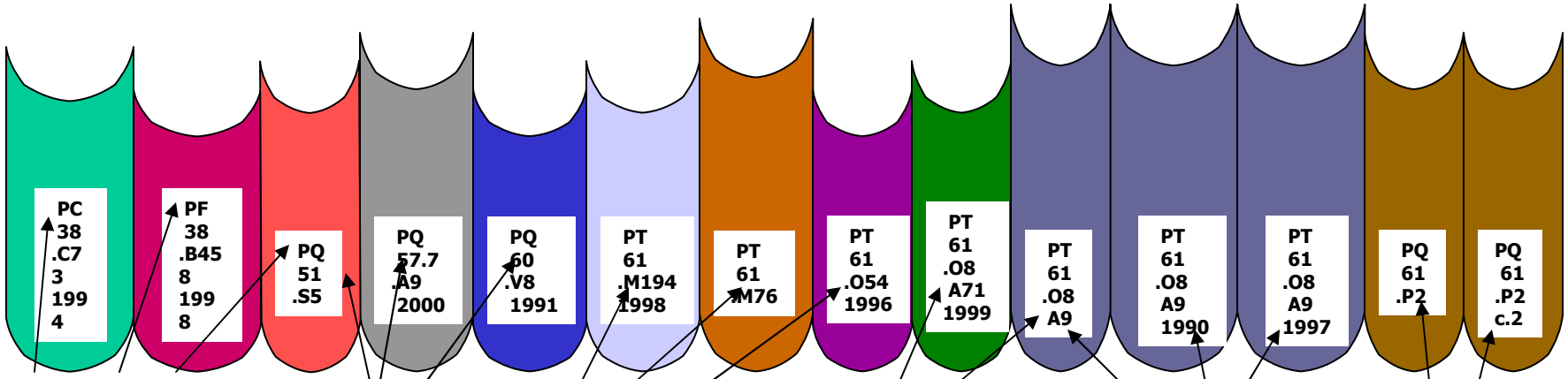
How Library of Congress (LC) Call Numbers Work



Books are shelved alphabetically (left to right) starting with the first letter or letters in the call number.

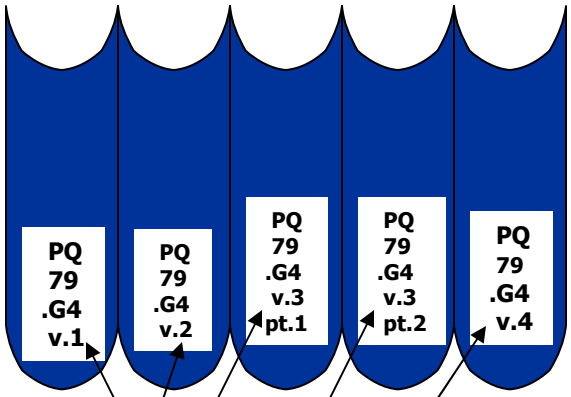
All books of the same first letter or letters are arranged numerically by the number following the top letter or letters.

All books of the same number are arranged first alphabetically by the letter after the decimal point – and then decimally by the number after the letter.

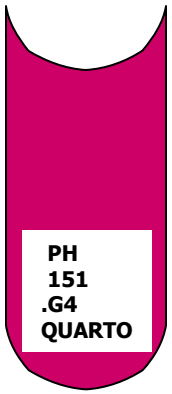
If a second letter-and-number combination appears after the decimal, it too is arranged first alphabetically within the previous number group, and then decimally by the number after the letter.

Books which have several editions are arranged in chronological order, starting with any undated edition, then sequentially from the earliest year.

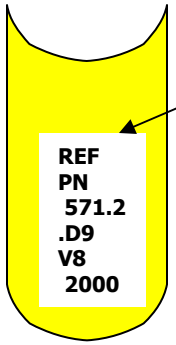
Multiple copies of the same book are arranged in copy number order, starting with the unmarked copy, which is copy #1.



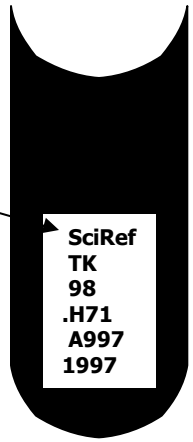
Volume sets are arranged in volume number order. If any volume is in multiple parts, those parts are arranged numerically and precede any higher volume numbers.



Quarto indicates the book is oversized. It will be filed at the end of the alphabetical range of that call number. In the example above this book would be filed at the end of the PH section before the PJ section (Compact Shelving).



Books with call numbers beginning with REF or Sci Ref are shelved in special sections. REF books are shelved in the Reference Section on M-Level. SCI REF books are shelved on the C-Level Reference section .



ELM 08/04