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## **UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY LIBRARY: FINDING A BOOK ON THE SHELF**

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### **Summary**

After completing this learning tool, you should be able to:

- Explain the concept of Dewey Classification System
- Explain call numbers, and
- Locate books on the Library shelves using call numbers

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## **EVERY BOOK HAS ITS NUMBER**

Each book in the library has a call number. A call number relates to an item's subject area, and directs you to its location on the shelf.

This means that if you have the first few numbers of the call number you can go to any library, even your local library, and find books on the same subject.

Call number subject ranges are based on the Dewey Decimal System:

- 000 – Computer science
- 100 – Philosophy and psychology
- 200 – Religion
- 300 – Social sciences and education
- 400 – Language
- 500 – Science
- 600 – Technology and business
- 700 – Arts and recreation
- 800 – Literature and biographies
- 900 – History and geography

So books on management will always be at call number 658, biochemistry at 572 and Joan of Arc at 944.026.

## **BREAK IT DOWN**

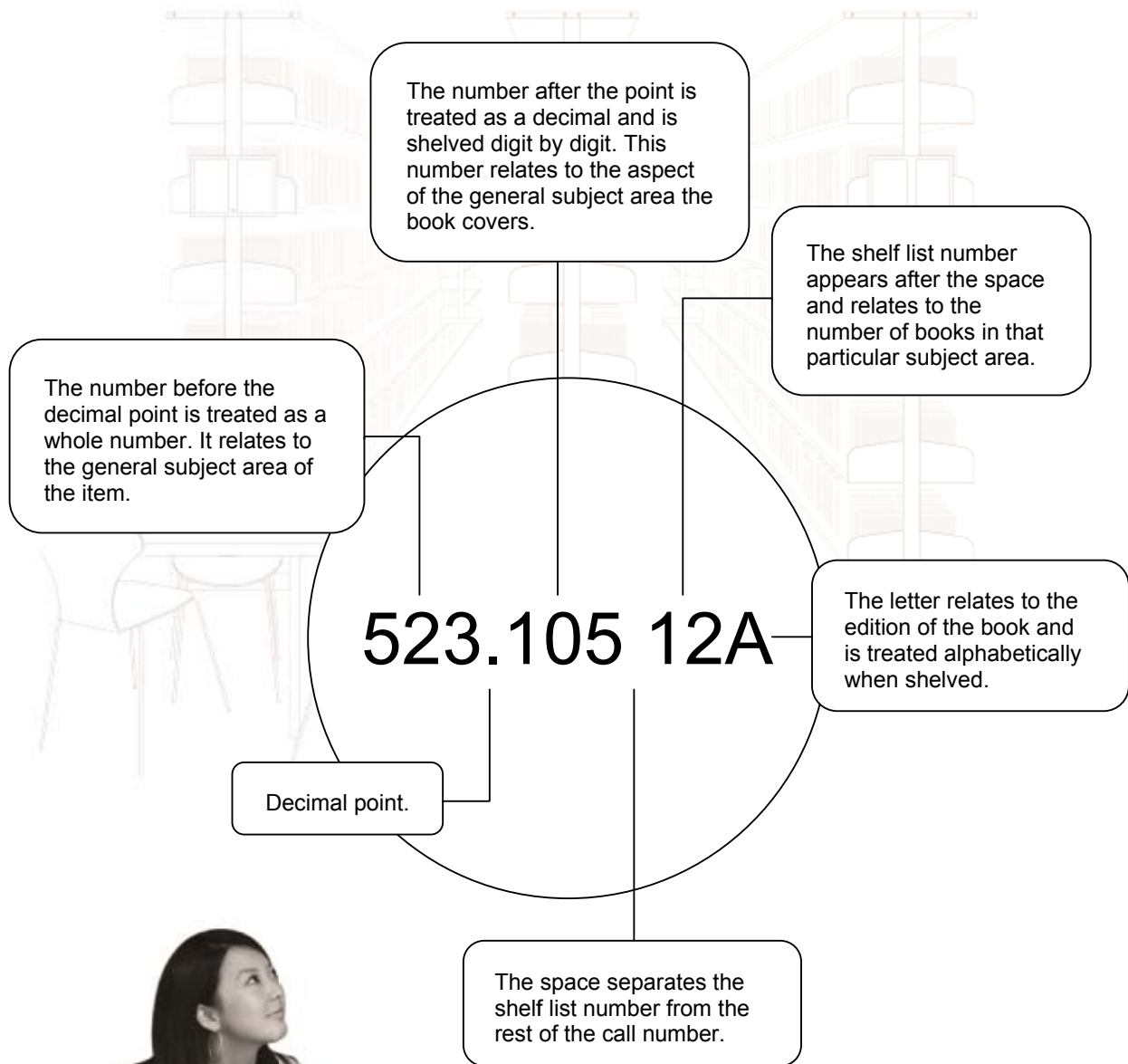
- The number before the decimal point is always treated as a whole number. So 544 is shelved before 545
- After the decimal point, books are shelved digit by digit, not by whole number. This means that 595.905 is shelved before 595.91
- After the decimal number there is a space followed by the shelf list number. The shelf list number distinguishes items that share the same subject. So a book with the number 567.905 14 is the 14th item at the subject area 567.905
- A letter after the shelf list number relates to the edition of the book and is treated alphabetically when shelved.

## **STREET SAVVY**

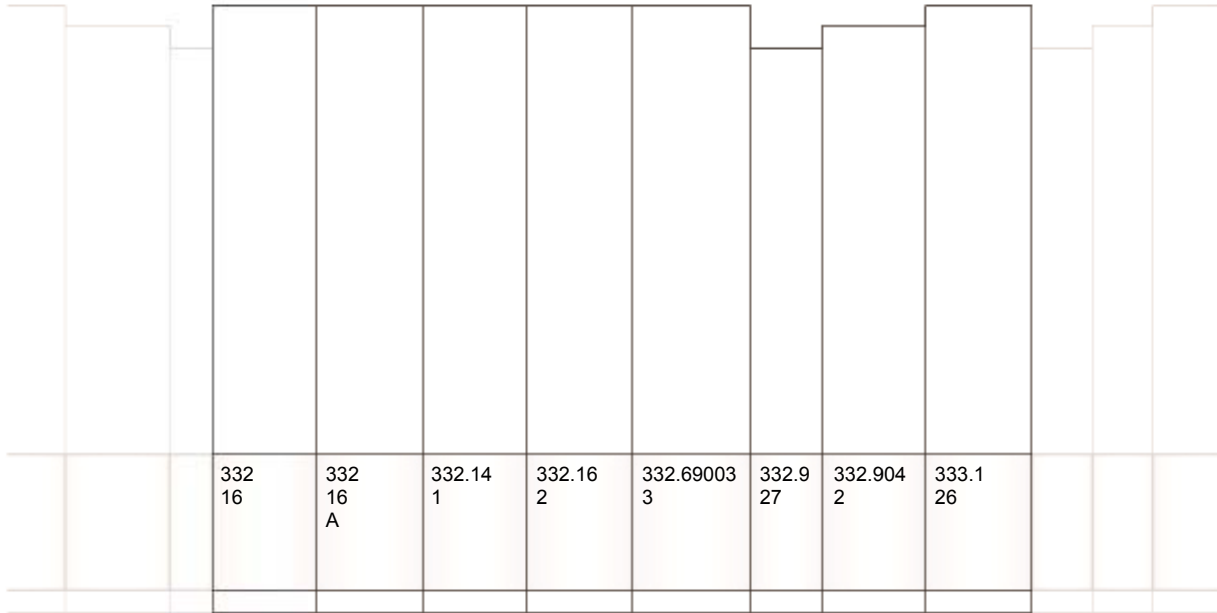
Try this analogy – think of the call number like a street address for the item. The numbers before the decimal point are the suburb, the numbers immediately after the decimal point are the street, and the numbers after the space are the house number.

If you ignore the space or the decimal point, you will end up on the wrong street, or even in the wrong suburb!

## THE MEANINGFUL BITS

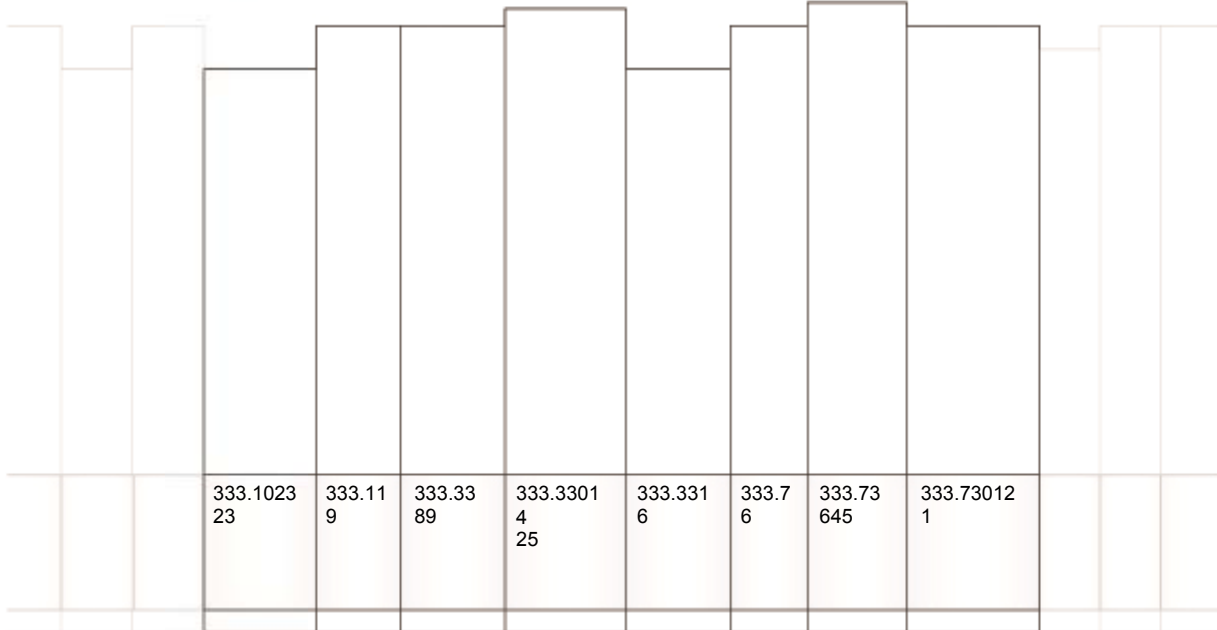


**EXAMPLE OF CALL NUMBERS SORTED CORRECTLY**



A diagram of a bookshelf with eight books. The call numbers are sorted in ascending order from left to right. The call numbers are: 332.16, 332.16 A, 332.14 1, 332.16 2, 332.69003 3, 332.9 27, 332.904 2, and 333.1 26.

332.16	332.16 A	332.14 1	332.16 2	332.69003 3	332.9 27	332.904 2	333.1 26
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A diagram of a bookshelf with eight books. The call numbers are sorted in ascending order from left to right. The call numbers are: 333.1023 23, 333.11 9, 333.33 89, 333.3301 4 25, 333.331 6, 333.7 6, 333.73 645, and 333.73012 1.

333.1023 23	333.11 9	333.33 89	333.3301 4 25	333.331 6	333.7 6	333.73 645	333.73012 1
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