Library of Congress Classification: Module 11.2

Classification of Biographies: History Schedules

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In the previous module, we described the general principles for classifying biographies. We are to classify the biography with the topic with which the biographee is most closely associated, and to always use a biography number. There is a little more to it than that, of course, but those are the most general principles.

This module will focus on classification of biographies in the history schedules, and is based on CSM instruction sheet F 275, Biography.
Biographies of heads of state, monarchs, and politicians are classified in the history schedules. So are high-ranking members of government, such as cabinet ministers. (In the United States and perhaps elsewhere, they are called secretaries, such as the secretary of state, and secretary of defense.)

A person does not have to be nationally prominent to be classified in the history schedules, though. Governors of states, mayors of cities, and other local officials are classed there, for example.
The beginning of the hierarchy for each country includes a collective biography number for, such as DT303, for collective biography of Morocco.

Assign these numbers only to the most general collective biographies of the country – those whose coverage is not specific to a particular location within the country, or to a specific time period or event.
Biography Numbers

- Appear for specific time spans
  - Including individual monarchs, heads of state, etc.

Biography numbers also appear in hierarchies for specific periods, and sometimes even in hierarchies for specific heads of state.

Let’s look at some biography numbers in the DH schedule, which is the history of Belgium.
DH581.A-Z is for biographies and memoirs of people who were prominent in Belgium in the period 1101-1400.

The caption is “biographies and memoirs, A-Z”, so we use the surname of the biographee as the basis for the cutter.
The “e.g.” printed in the schedule means “for example,” and we can see that Robert I, the Friesian, has been assigned the class number DH518.R6. The two names listed here are not the only people whose biographies are classified in DH581.A-Z. It is just a sample of them. In fact, individual names are not printed in most biography numbers, because of longstanding policy.

If the person discussed in the biography does not have a number printed in the schedule you should consult the catalog. You assign a cutter that allows the person’s name to file alphabetically with all of the other names of biographees in the class number already. The cutter that you assign to that person, in that class number, has to be assigned to all of the other biographies of that person in that number.
Biography Numbers

• Appear for specific time spans
  • Including individual monarchs, heads of state, etc.

DH583.A-Z is for biographies and memoirs of people who were prominent in Belgium in the 15th century – 1401-1506.

It does not include a list of names, so you would need to consult the catalog for every person whose biography is being classified there.
Biography Numbers

- Appear for specific time spans
- Including individual monarchs, heads of state, etc.

DH602.A-Z, for biographies of people from 1598-1714, provides a single name.

So far, all of the biography numbers have been in hierarchies for lengthy spans of Belgian history, but they do appear for individual rulers and heads of state.
Biography Numbers

• Appear for specific time spans
  • Including individual monarchs, heads of state, etc.

This is an example.

Leopold I, who ruled Belgium from 1831-1865, has a “General works on life and reign” number.

As we will see in the next module, this is not a biography number, but biographies are classed there.

DH656 is used for resources about the history of Belgium during Leopold’s reign, as well as biographies of his life.
Biography Numbers

• Appear for specific time spans
• Including individual monarchs, heads of state, etc.

DH659.A-Z is for biography and memoirs of Leopold’s contemporaries. As you can see, the schedule lists a few of them.

This number is only for individual biographies.
Biography Numbers

• Appear for specific time spans
  • Including individual monarchs, heads of state, etc.

However, the “biography and memoirs of contemporaries” of Albert, a later king of Belgium, has both a collective biography number and an individual biography number.
Biography Numbers

• Appear for specific time spans
  • Including individual monarchs, heads of state, etc.

It also has a “general works on life and reign” number, DH671, which is where biographies of Albert himself should be classed.

Now that we have seen examples of biography numbers, let’s find out how to apply them.
If a person is known nationally, then classify biographies of the person in the most specific number that includes biographies that you can. We have already seen three of the most common captions:

“Biography and memoirs” or “Biography and memoirs, A-Z” is typically used in hierarchies for long spans of time.

“General works on life and reign” always refers to the life of the monarch.

“Biography and memoirs of contemporaries” always refers to people who were (or are) prominent during a monarch’s reign or the administration of a head of state.

Other formulations are possible, especially in the E schedule, for the history of the United States. Let’s look at an example.
John F. Kennedy was a president of the United States.

Resources about the history of the United States during his administration are classified in E841.
There are several numbers provided for biographies of Kennedy. Autobiographies and diaries are classed in E842.A3. Notice that .A3 is a reserved cutter, and that the instructions say “by date.” Therefore, resources classed there are subarranged only by publication date.

Letters, by date, are classed in E842.A4.

And biography and criticism – that is, resources written about Kennedy’s life that are written by someone else – are classed in E842.A6-Z8.
People with National Prominence

The range of numbers for biography continues. There are separate numbers for resources for children.
People with National Prominence

And for particular periods of his life.
People with National Prominence

For monuments and portraits, and for resources on his assassination and funeral.
Finally, there is a number, E843, for the Kennedy family, which includes biography. This is not a biography number, as we will see in the next module, but biographies of his wife and children are classified here.

Kennedy has the most highly developed hierarchy for biography of all of the modern American presidents, but do you see what is missing? There is no number for biographies of contemporaries.

Before we discuss why that is, let’s look at the administration for another president.
George H. W. Bush, another late-20th century president, has a more typical array. As you can see, there is a number for biographies of the president, E882.
It is subarranged with Table E2, which provides reserved cutters for autobiography, letters, and biography.
People with National Prominence

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The schedule also provides a “Special (not A-Z)” number for aspects of Bush’s life that do not fit well into the table. A book about his pets might be classified there.
And finally, there is a number for non-genealogical resources about the Bush family, including biographies.

Once again, there is no number for contemporaries of George H. W. Bush.
Instead of classing contemporaries of a president with the president, there are biography numbers under larger time spans.

Robert Kennedy was the attorney general during his brother John Kennedy’s administration. If a biography of Robert focused on Robert’s relationship to John, you might choose to class it with John’s family. However, biographies of Robert Kennedy in his own right are classed with the biographies of other nationally prominent people of the late 20th century in E840.8.A-Z. Notice that biographies in E840.8 are subarranged by Table E2A, which is different from Table E2, which we saw earlier.
Let’s look at an example.

Gordon Brown was the Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1997-2007, when Tony Blair was the prime minister of Great Britain. Elizabeth II was the queen of England during that time.
As you can see, there is a biography number for Elizabeth II herself, DA590.

There is also a well-developed range for biography and memoirs of her contemporaries. First are the numbers for the royal family, including Prince Philip and Prince Charles among others.
People with National Prominence

• Example

Biography of Gordon Brown

Then DA591.A5-Z is for biographies of other contemporaries including Margaret Thatcher. There is not a specific hierarchy for Tony Blair’s administration, so biographies of Blair’s contemporaries are classified as contemporaries of the queen. A biography of Gordon Brown would be classified in DA591.A5-Z, and the first cutter would be based on his last name.
Now we have a biography of Xi Jinping, the president of the People’s Republic of China since 2013.
Xi’s presidency is in the period since 2002.

Rather than hierarchies for the history of China under individual rulers, the schedule provides for the history of longer periods of time.
People with National Prominence

• Example

Biography of Xi Jinping

A biography of Xi will be classified in DS779.49.A-Z, which is for individual biography of people with national prominence in China after 2002. The first cutter will be based on his surname, Xi.

Now that we have discussed persons with national stature, let's discuss people who are known locally.
Locally Prominent People

- Class with the local place
- In the biography number if available
- In another appropriate number (e.g., General works)

Government officials and other locally prominent people are classed with the local place, although many local places do not include biography numbers.

If a biography number for the local place is established, use it. If not, use another appropriate number, which is commonly the “General works” number for the place, or the general works number for a particular time period in the history of the place.

This is quite different from people who are known nationally, whose biographies have to be classed in numbers that are specifically intended for biography.

Let’s look at some examples of locally prominent people.
Tom Ridge was the governor of Pennsylvania, a state of the United States, from 1995-2001.

He was therefore prominent at the state level, and biographies of him should be classified with the state as a whole.

The hierarchy for the history of Pennsylvania since 1951 includes an individual biography number, F155.3.A-Z. Biographies of Tom Ridge should be classed there.
Dame Mary Donaldson was elected the first female lord mayor of London in 1983. Because it is such a large city with so many resources written about it, London has a highly developed hierarchy.

Unlike many cities, therefore, London has biography numbers. Biographies of persons prominent in London are classified in DA676.8, and more specifically, individual biographies are classified in DA676.8.A2-Z. The first cutter will begin with a D, for Donaldson.

In contrast to the examples that we have already seen, many local places have only one number assigned to them. If that is the case, you can use it for biographies.
Don Guardian was the mayor of Atlantic City, New Jersey, from 2014-2017.

Atlantic City is classified at F144.A8.

Every resource about the history of Atlantic City is classed there, including biographies.
As we know, politicians and others who are prominent in government often are elected to, or accept, positions at various levels over time. Many are prominent on a local level before they rise to national prominence. In that case, you should follow the general rule for classifying biographies and class them with the period covered in the biography.

If the biography covers the entire life of the individual, it is usually classified with the most recent, or most prominent, position. However, that is not always the case, so you should consult the catalog to see where other biographies about the person have been classed.
For example, Tim Kaine was a practicing lawyer at the beginning of his career. He was elected to be the mayor of Richmond, Virginia, and served in that role from 1998-2001.

He was then the lieutenant governor of Virginia for four years, and then became the governor in 2006. In 2012, he became a U.S. Senator from Virginia.
Biographies of Kaine that cover the period when he was a practicing lawyer should be classified with law. Biographies of American lawyers of the 20th and 21st centuries are classed in KF372-373.
People with Various Roles

- Example

Tim Kaine
Mayor of Richmond, Va. (1998-2001)

A biography of Kaine’s time as mayor of Richmond would classified with the history of Richmond in the F schedule. Richmond has biography numbers.

Collective biography is classified in F234.R553 A2-A29.

Individual biographies are classified in F234.R553 A3-Z.
People with Various Roles

• Example

Tim Kaine
Lieutenant governor of Virginia (2002-2006)
Governor of Virginia (2006-2010)

A biography of his time as lieutenant governor and/or governor of Virginia would be classed with the history of Virginia as a whole.

There is a biography number for the history of Virginia since 1951, F231.3.

Individual biographies are classified in F231.3.A3-Z.

As always, the cutter is based on the biographee’s surname, Kaine.
U.S. senators are considered to have national prominence, so biographies of Kaine as a senator should be classified with the history of the United States.

Kaine began his service in the Senate in 2013, which fits into Barack Obama’s administration. However, there is not a biography number for contemporaries of Obama, so we move up a level of hierarchy.
Individual biographies of nationally prominent people in the United States in the 21st century are classed in E901, for collective biography, and E901.1.A-Z for individual biography.

A biography that covers Kaine’s entire life would also likely be classified there. If he were to achieve prominence in a higher position, though, the biography number for that position would take precedence.
Exercises

Click when you are ready to begin