
Library of Congress Classification

Module 12.2 Classifying Literary Authors

Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division
Library of Congress
September 2019

Introduction

- Instruction sheet
 - F 632 Literary Authors
- Literary author
 - A person who writes literature that is meant to entertain
 - Fiction
 - Drama
 - Poetry

In this module, we will discuss the policies for classifying works by literary authors, and also explain what is meant by the phrase “literary author number.” All of the policies are contained in CSM instruction sheet F 632, *Literary authors*.

Before we begin, we need to define what we mean when we refer to literary authors. A literary author is someone who writes literature that is meant to entertain. Traditionally, a literary author may write fiction, drama, and/or poetry.

Classification of Literary Authors

- By language of the literature
 - May be further subarranged by time period
 - Refers to period of productivity, not birth date

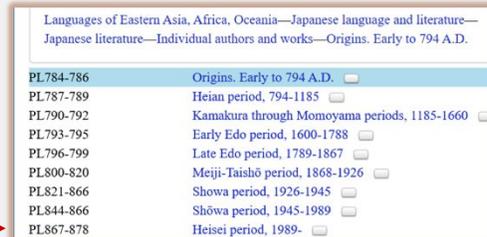
Languages of Eastern Asia, Africa, Oceania—Japanese language and literature—
Japanese literature—Individual authors and works—Origins. Early to 794 A.D.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| PL784-786 | Origins. Early to 794 A.D. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PL787-789 | Heian period, 794-1185 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PL790-792 | Kamakura through Momoyama periods, 1185-1660 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PL793-795 | Early Edo period, 1600-1788 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PL796-799 | Late Edo period, 1789-1867 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PL800-820 | Meiji-Taishō period, 1868-1926 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PL821-866 | Showa period, 1926-1945 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PL844-866 | Shōwa period, 1945-1989 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PL867-878 | Heisei period, 1989- <input type="checkbox"/> |

Literary authors are classed by the language in which they write. They may be further subarranged by time period, as in this example from the Japanese literature schedule. The time period refers to the period in which they wrote, not to the author's date of birth.

Classification of Literary Authors

- By language of the literature
 - May be further subarranged by time period
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Languages of Eastern Asia, Africa, Oceania—Japanese language and literature—
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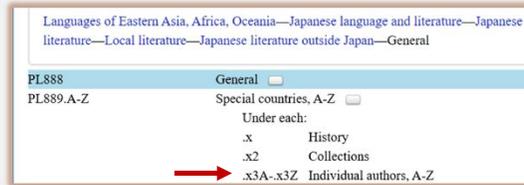
A red arrow points to the PL867-878 classification level.

In schedules with subhierarchies for time periods, the period assigned reflects the earliest publication by the author.

Therefore, a literary author who started writing and publishing after 1989 would be classed in PL867-878. The author *could* have been born after 1989, but could just as easily been born in 1970 or even 1930. *The birth date does not matter.* All that matters is when the first known work by that author was published.

Classification of Literary Authors

- By language of the literature
 - May be further subarranged by place



Literary authors may also be further subarranged by place when the author lives outside the country or region with which the language is commonly associated. This example is the series of numbers for Japanese literature outside Japan.

As you can see, PL889.A-Z is for Japanese literature from individual countries, and the internal table instructs us to subarrange each country by history, collections, and individual authors. The classification of individual authors by country is common for literature, but it can lead to questions.

Although many authors live in one country for their entire lives, a significant portion of them move around. Authors who vacation or work for short periods in a country other than their own – such as a poet who lectures at a foreign university for one year – are not an issue. They are classed with their country of citizenship.

It is the authors who change their residence, perhaps moving from the United States to France for an undetermined period of time, that are more of an issue. How should we classify the literature in that case? Is it an American author, who should be classed in PS? Or is it a French author who writes in English, and should therefore be classified in the PR schedule, with English literature from France?

Classification of Literary Authors

- Authors associated with more than one country
 - Class with the
 - Country of citizenship
 - Country in which the author's most productive years were spent
 - Country most commonly associated with the author
 - Make an arbitrary decision

There is no hard-and-fast rule, but there are some guidelines, which are listed in CSM instruction sheet F 632 section 2.c.

We should class the author with the country of citizenship if we know it. If we do not know the country of citizenship, we should consult reference sources to determine where the author's most productive years were spent, or the country that is most commonly associated with the author.

If none of that applies, then we make what the instruction sheet calls an "arbitrary decision."

Classification of Literary Authors

- Authors associated with more than one country
 - Class with the
 - Country of citizenship
 - Country in which the author's most productive years were spent
 - Country most commonly associated with the author
 - Make an arbitrary decision

Literary author numbers are not changed unless the number was clearly in error.

However, that arbitrary decision should be based on the best information that the cataloger has about the author. Once the literary author number is assigned, it will not be changed unless it was “clearly in error” (again, quoting the instruction sheet).

What does “clearly in error” mean? Let’s expand on our hypothetical example of an American who moves to France and writes literature in English.

The author’s citizenship could be the basis for assigning a literary author number in the PS schedule. If the author began to publish while living in France, though, a number in the PR schedule could just as reasonably be assigned. If a PR number was assigned, the temptation is to change it to a PS number in American literature, if the author moves back to the United States. However, the choice of the cataloger to use the PR schedule was not “clearly in error.” It was based on the best information that was available at the time. So the author will remain classed in PR.

However, it would be a clear error if an author who lives in Bolivia was classed as a Colombian, even if that author had never lived in Colombia.

The instruction sheet gives us additional guidance to help us make arbitrary – yet educated – decisions about living authors.

Classification of Literary Authors

- Authors associated with more than one country
 - Living authors
 - Base the classification on available information
 - Birthplace
 - Parentage
 - Residence
 - Place of publication of the resource being cataloged

In some ways, information about living authors is easier to find than it used to be, due to social media. However, we sometimes suffer from too much information.

We may not have known in 1970 that a Spanish author wrote her first book while living in Norway, but we are likely to know it now. In 1970, the cataloger would simply have classed the author as a Spaniard who writes in Spanish, but today we have to determine whether the author should be classed as a Spanish-language author from Norway.

Prefer to use author information from the resource being cataloged, if it is available. If the author refers to herself as a Spaniard, or says that she was born in Seville, class her as a Spaniard. We can also use the place of publication as a guide to the nationality of the author. If the author lives in Norway but publishes in Spain (not Norway), the author could be considered to be Spanish.

Overall, use common sense when determining the nationality of the author. If the author's blurb says that the novel was written on sabbatical in Norway, consider whether sabbaticals continue indefinitely (and I can tell you from experience, they do not).

Classification of Literary Authors

- Authors who also write nonfiction
 - Class nonfiction with the topic
 - Unless the schedule states otherwise

| | |
|--|---|
| Greek literature—Individual authors to 600 A.D.—Gall... to Her...—Geminus, of Rhodus, fl. 70 B.C. Γεμίνιος—Separate works. By title—Elementa astronomiae. Introduction to astronomy. Εισαγωγή εις τὰ φαινόμενα | |
| PA3998.G3 | Geminus, of Rhodus, fl. 70 B.C. Γεμίνιος Table P-PZ38 modified <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Cf. QA31 Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PA3998.G3A61-.G3A78 | Separate works. By title <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | e.g. |
| PA3998.G3A652 | Elementa astronomiae. Introduction to astronomy. Εισαγωγή εις τὰ φαινόμενα <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Cf. PA4400.S7 Pseudo-Proclus, Sphaera |

On rare occasion, though, the schedule specifically instructs us to class an author's nonfiction work with their literary works. This happens mostly for ancient and medieval authors. For example, Geminus of Rhodus was an ancient Greek and although astronomy is classed in QB, his introduction to astronomy is classed in his literary author number, PA3998.G3.

What is a literary author number, you ask?

Literary Author Number

- Single place where all resources by and about the author are classified

A literary author number is the single place in which all of the literary works by an author in a particular language are classed, along with all of the resources about that author.

Literary Author Number

- Single place where all resources by and about the author are classified

PQ8180.17.A73 Gabriel García Márquez

“Literary author number” is sometimes a misnomer.

It usually consists of a single number containing a cutter, such as PQ8180.17.A73 for Gabriel García Márquez.

Literary Author Number

- Single place where all resources by and about the author are classified

PQ8180.17.A73 Gabriel García Márquez

PR4502

Eliza Cook

It can also be a single whole or decimal number, such as PR4502 for Eliza Cook.

Literary Author Number

- Single place where all resources by and about the author are classified

PQ8180.17.A73 Gabriel García Márquez

PR4502 Eliza Cook

PR4180-4198 Elizabeth Barrett
Browning

But a “literary author number” can also consist of a range of numbers or cutters.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, for example, has the range PR4180-4198.

Literary Author Number

- Single place where all resources by and about the author are classified

PQ8180.17.A73 Gabriel García Márquez

PR4502 Eliza Cook

PR4180-4198 Elizabeth Barrett
Browning

PG7158.M5-M51 Adam Mickiewicz

And the “literary author number” for Adam Mickiewicz consists of a range of cutters, PG7158.M5-.M51.

The defining characteristic of a literary author number (or range) is that it has to be clearly demarcated for one author, and one author alone.

In a few moments we will discuss numbers that *look* like literary author numbers, but are not.

Literary Author Number

- Authors who write in more than one language
 - Literary author number for each language
 - Translations are classed with the work in the original language

All literary authors have a single literary author number, with one exception: authors who write in more than one language.

In that case, the author has a literary author number in each language.

Translations are classified with the original work in the original language.

Literary Author Number

- Authors who write in more than one language
 - Literary author number for each language

Jhumpa Lahiri
PQ5984.L34 (Italian)
PS3562.A316 (English)

For example, Jhumpa Lahiri writes in both Italian and English, so her Italian literary works are classified in PQ5984.L34, and her English works are classed in PS3562.A316 because she lives in the United States.

Literary Author Number

- Authors who write in more than one language
- Literary author number for each language

Jhumpa Lahiri

Class in PQ5984.L34 (Italian)

In altre parole

The works that she originally wrote in Italian, such as *In altre parole*, are classed in PQ5984.L34, her Italian literary author number.

Literary Author Number

- Authors who write in more than one language
- Literary author number for each language

Jhumpa Lahiri

Class in PQ5984.L34 (Italian)

In altre parole

In altre parole. English

In altre parole. Korean

Translations of those works are also classed in the same number. That includes the English translation of *In altre parole*, even though Lahiri has a literary author number for English works.

Literary Author Number

- Authors who write in more than one language
- Literary author number for each language

Jhumpa Lahiri

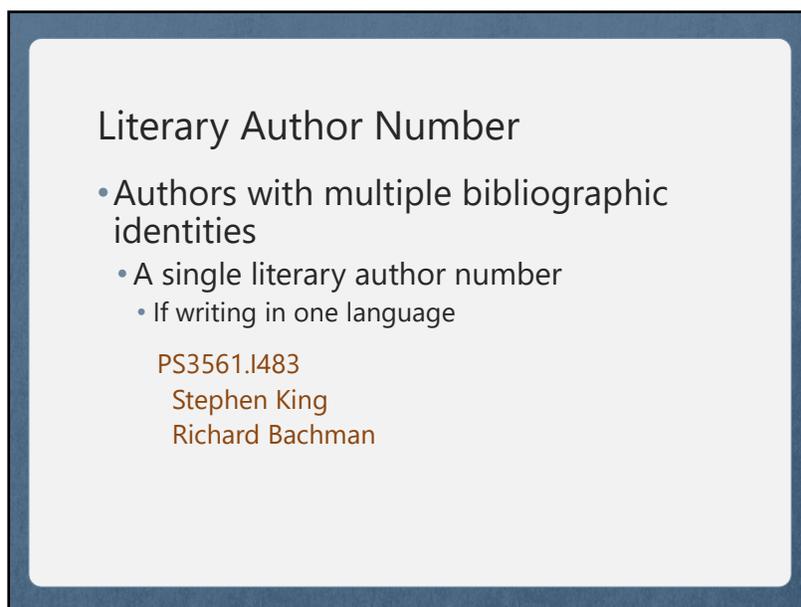
Class in PS3562.A316 (English)

Interpreter of maladies

Interpreter of maladies. German

Interpreter of maladies. Italian

Likewise, works that Lahiri originally wrote in English, such as *Interpreter of Maladies*, are classed in PS3562.A316. Translations of those works, including the Italian translation of *Interpreter of maladies*, are also classed in PS.



Literary Author Number

- Authors with multiple bibliographic identities
 - A single literary author number
 - If writing in one language

PS3561.I483
Stephen King
Richard Bachman

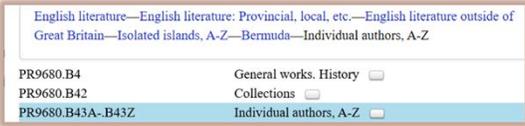
Some literary authors have multiple bibliographic identities. For example, Stephen King also writes as Richard Bachman. All of the works by the author are classified in one literary author number, regardless of the name used on an individual work – assuming that the author writes in only one language.

If the different bibliographic identities are used for works in different languages, then different numbers are assigned, one for each language.

According to policy, when such an author writes in only one language, there should be cross-references in the schedule to refer you to the correct number. The policy has been unevenly applied through the years, though. As we will discuss in the next module, the correct literary author number can usually be found in the name authority records.

Not a Literary Author Number

- Literary author on the second cutter
- Cutter individual works relative to the resources already classed in the number



| English literature—English literature: Provincial, local, etc.—English literature outside of Great Britain—Isolated islands, A-Z—Bermuda—Individual authors, A-Z | |
|--|--|
| PR9680.B4 | General works. History <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PR9680.B42 | Collections <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PR9680.B43A-B43Z | Individual authors, A-Z <input type="checkbox"/> |

Not all numbers assigned to literary authors are literary author numbers. Specifically, when the author is represented by the second cutter, it is not a literary author number.

In the example on your screen, English literature from Bermuda, a second cutter is assigned for the name of the literary author.

The authors classed there do not have literary author numbers because there is no single number or span of numbers assigned to the author. Instead, cutters are assigned relative to the other resources that are already classed in the number.

Not a Literary Author Number

- Literary author on the second cutter
 - Cutter individual works relative to the resources already classed in the number

| Call number | Entered under | Title |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| PR9680.B43 B373 2002 | Barry, Angela | Endangered species |
| PR9680.B43 B3734 2010 | Barry, Angela | Gorée |
| PR9680.B43 B538 1984 | Blackburne, Robin, 1933- | Vintage versage : a collection ... |

This is an excerpt from LC's catalog. As you can see, there are two works by Angela Barry already classified there, and they have different second cutters.

If another resource by Barry is cataloged and needs to be classified between *Gorée* and the collection by Robin Blackburne, it will have a still different cutter.

Literary works by other authors from Bermuda who write in English and whose names fall alphabetically between Barry and Blackburne also have to be assigned cutter numbers in this area.

Not a Literary Author Number

- Authors whose works are classed in PZ
 - Translations are classed with the language of translation
 - Commentaries and biography of the author are classed in other schedules

PZ numbers are not literary author numbers, either.

PZ is the schedule for juvenile belles lettres.

Although the schedule is arranged by language, translations are classified with the language instead of with the original work. Therefore, there is no single number in which all of the works of the author may be arranged.

In addition, criticism, commentaries, and biographies about authors who write for children are classed in the schedule for the literature in which they write.

Not a Literary Author Number

- Authors whose works are classed in PZ
 - Translations are classed with the language of translation
 - Commentaries and biography of the author are classed in other schedules

Maurice Sendak

| | |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| PZ7 | Where the wild things are |
| PZ23 | Where the wild things are. French |

Therefore, *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak is classed in PZ7, the number for children's fiction in English from the 1870s through 2014.

The French translation should be classed in PZ23, for children's fiction in French since 1870.

Not a Literary Author Number

- Authors whose works are classed in PZ
 - Translations are classed with the language of translation
 - Commentaries and biography of the author are classed in other schedules

Maurice Sendak

| | |
|-----------|---|
| PZ7 | Where the wild things are |
| PZ23 | Where the wild things are. French |
| PS3569.E6 | Commentary on Where the wild things are |

And a commentary on *Where the Wild Things Are* is classed in PS3569.E6, because Sendak was an American who wrote in English.

In the next module we will explain how to assign a literary author number to an author.

Exercises

•=====•
Click when you are ready to begin