

## Classification and Time Periods F 320

**BACKGROUND:** *The LC Classification schedules frequently provide captions that consist of a date or span of dates. This technique is sometimes used to break down the history of a topic by specific periods, and the dates refer to the period of time covered in the work being classified. In other cases, the technique is used to separate more recent material from older material, and the dates refer to the publication date of the work being classified. This instruction sheet provides guidelines on formulating captions of this type and on classifying material in these numbers.*

### 1. Classification according to period covered.

**a. Establishing date spans in the schedules.** Establish individual spans in a single list in a classification schedule, closing each period before beginning the next. The closing date of one span should be identical with the opening date of the next span. *Example:*

1945-1958	
1958-1971	[not 1959-1971]
1971-	[not 1972- ]

If it is desirable to leave a major time period open, set it off by means of a separate caption with the minor periods listed underneath, e.g.,

1945-
General works
1945-1958
1958-1971
1971-

If the span for the earliest period does not have an opening date, use the caption **Through [date]** rather than **To [date]** in order to avoid ambiguity, e.g.,

Through 1800
1800-1900
1900-

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### 1. Classification according to period covered. (Continued)

#### b. Assignment of numbers.

**(1) General rule.** Assign the class number that corresponds to the earliest period on which the work focuses when the work in hand covers several of the time spans listed under the topic in question. Ignore brief coverage of earlier periods that serves only to introduce the principal time period(s) being discussed.

**To [date].** Even though this formulation is not used when new date spans are proposed, there are many existing captions of this type in the schedules. Interpret them to mean *up to but not including* the date given in the caption.

**(2) Editions.** Assign the same class number to the various editions of a work, provided the time period covered in each edition remains essentially the same. If in a new edition the time span covered is enlarged to focus first on a later time period provided for in the schedule, class with the later period even though this will result in the work being separated from earlier editions.

### 2. Classification according to date of publication.

**a. Establishing date spans in the schedules.** Establish date spans in which the closing date of one span does not overlap with the opening date of the next span. If the span for the earliest period does not have an opening date, use the caption **Through [date]** rather than **To [date]** in order to avoid ambiguity. *Example:*

Through 1800	
1801-1859	[not 1800-1859]
1860-1900	[not 1859-1900]
1901-	[not 1900- ]

2. *Classification according to date of publication.*

b. *Assignment of numbers.*

(1) **General rule.** Assign the class number that corresponds to the publication date of the work being cataloged.

*To [date].* Even though this formulation is not used when new date spans are proposed, there are many existing captions of this type in the schedules. Interpret them to mean *up to but not including* the date given in the caption.

(2) **Editions.** Assign the class number that corresponds to the publication date of the edition being cataloged even if this results in the work being separated from its other editions. However, if a facsimile or reprint edition is being cataloged, assign the class number that corresponds to the publication date of the edition from which the reproduction was made.

(3) **Translations.** Assign the class number that corresponds to the publication date of the translation being cataloged even if this results in the work being separated the original work.