Library of Congress Subject Headings

Module 2.2
Headings

Policy and Standards Division
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Recap

- Headings are unique words and phrases that represent the concepts in, and forms of, resources
- LCSH includes headings from every discipline
  - Headings may consist of single words, phrases, or subdivided strings
  - Shown in boldface type or in the 1XX field of MARC authority records

So far, we have seen that controlled vocabularies, including LCSH, contain headings that refer to concepts, places, and so on. Headings are assigned to resources to bring out the contents of those resources, as well as the forms of the resources.

LCSH includes headings from every discipline, although it is not a comprehensive list of every concept that exists. In addition, some entities that are assigned as subjects are established in the LC/NACO Name Authority File, or N.A.F., instead: they are personal and corporate names, and names of jurisdictions, as well as titles and authorized name/title access points.

In LCSH, headings may consist of single words or phrases. Headings may also consist of subdivided strings. In *Classification Web* and in the PDF files, headings appear in boldface print.

Established Main Headings

- Headings are based on literary warrant
  - Proposed as needed for new cataloging
  - Based on usage in resources in resources being cataloged and in reference sources
- All main headings are specifically established in LCSH
  - Two exceptions
    - A specific type of geographic heading
    - Some headings for forms and genres of music

Headings are based on literary warrant. Catalogers who find that the existing headings are not sufficient for new cataloging may propose the headings that they need, and those proposals are vetted by specialists at the Library of Congress. Most of those proposals are researched in reference sources, either in print or online.

The form that the heading takes depends on the resource being cataloged, the information found in reference sources, and also on rules for LCSH format and style.

Every main heading is specifically established and published in LCSH; in order to assign a concept as a main heading, you <u>must</u> find it in LCSH. If you cannot find a heading, you cannot assign it.

There is only one exception to that rule, which is one very particular type of geographic heading. We are not going to discuss that one exception in this module, and will do so later.

In this module, we will provide more information on the format and style of main headings.

Format of Main Headings

• A single word, usually a noun

Biochemistry

Children

Leg

Telemarketing

Some headings consist of a single word, like **Biochemistry**, **Children**, **Leg**, and **Telemarketing**.

You'll notice that **Children** is plural, **Leg** is singular, and **Telemarketing** is a gerund.

We'll discuss the reasons for this in just a moment.

Format of Main Headings

- Compound nouns, usually modified by an adjective or adjectival phrase
  - May be in natural-language order or inverted

    Canvas embroidery
    Single-parent families

    Folk poetry, Bengali
    Love, Paternal

Headings may consist of two or more words, usually a noun and a qualifying adjective or adjectival phrase.

Headings that consist of multiple words may be in natural-language order, as in **Canvas embroidery** or **Single-parent families**.

Others are inverted, as in **Folk poetry, Bengali** and **Love, Paternal**.

Again, we will explain the rules in a moment.

Format of Main Headings

• Compound phrases

Animals and history
Brigands and robbers
Comic books, strips, etc.

Main headings may also combine two or more concepts, usually with the conjunction "and," as in **Animals and history** and **Brigands and robbers**.

There are a very few headings that include "etc." One of them is **Comic books, strips, etc.**

Format of Main Headings

• Prepositional phrases

Asthma in old age
Conspiracy on television
Golf for people with disabilities
Lamps in literature

Other headings combine concepts into prepositional phrases, like

- **Asthma in old age**
- **Conspiracy on television**
- **Golf for people with disabilities** and
- **Lamps in literature**

Format of Main Headings

- Headings may have qualifiers

  Absurd (Philosophy)
  Dome cars (Railroads)
  F-16 (Jet fighter plane)
  Volk (The German word)

Some headings also have qualifiers to clarify the meaning of the heading.

We will discuss the use of qualifiers in the next module.

Next we will explain some of the specific rules for determining whether a heading should be singular or plural, inverted or in natural language, and some other rules.

Singular or Plural (SHM H 285)

- General rule (part 1)
  - Entities that can be counted are established in the plural

    Alarm clocks
    Computers
    Lakes
    Walls

We are often asked why one heading was established in the plural form, while another is singular.

Entities that can be counted are established in the plural, such as **Alarm clocks**, **Computers**, and so forth.

Singular or Plural (SHM H 285)

- General rule (part 2)
  - Abstract concepts are established in the singular

    Housing rehabilitation
    Multiple birth
    Philosophical anthropology
    Trust

In contrast, headings for abstract concepts such as **Housing rehabilitation** and **Multiple birth** are established in the singular.

Singular or Plural (H 285)

- Pairs of headings sometimes exist

  Short stories
  Short story

  Opera
  Operas

There are sometimes pairs of headings that at first glance seem to represent the same concept.

In these examples, **Short stories** and **Operas** – the plural headings – are assigned to actual short stories and operas. They are plural because short stories and operas can be counted.

The singular headings, **Short story** and **Opera**, are assigned to resources that are *about* the short story as a literary form or *about* the opera as a musical form.

Scope notes are provided in these cases, in order to help catalogers and other users understand the difference between the similar headings.

Singular or Plural (H 285)

- Parts of the body
  - Can be counted, but headings are usually singular

    Eye
    Hand

One of the persistent themes to LCSH is that there are exceptions for almost every rule. We will discuss a few of them.

First, parts of the body can obviously be counted, but headings for parts of the body are normally established in the singular instead of the plural.

Singular or Plural (H 285)

- Parts of the body
  - Can be counted, but headings are usually singular

    Eye
    Hand

  - Exceptions to the rule

    Fingers
    Kidneys

There are exceptions to this exception, though; for example, **Fingers** and **Kidneys** which are plural.

Just use the headings as they are established.

Singular or Plural (H 285)

- Named products
  - Brands and makes: generally plural
  - Models: generally singular

Fiat automobiles
Fiat 126 automobile

Hoover vacuum cleaners
Roomba vacuum cleaner

Another special case is that of named products.

Brands and makes are generally established in the plural. If you think about it, it makes sense: if there is a brand, there are generally two or more individual models. Therefore they can be counted.

A heading for a particular model is established in the singular.

For example, Fiat is a brand of car, and it makes several models. **Fiat automobiles** refers to the brand and is plural, while headings for individual models like the 126, are singular.

Singular or Plural (H 285)

- Biological common names
  - Species: singular

    Lion

    - Exception: domestic animals and cultivated species, which are generally established in the plural

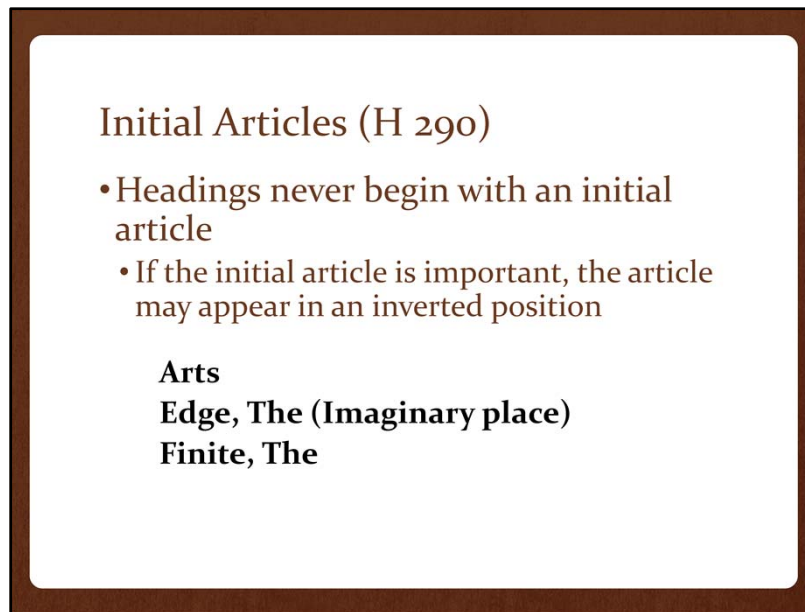   **Cats**

  - Higher levels of taxonomy: plural

    Wolves

Most headings for biological entities are established under their Latin taxonomic names, but some are established in English instead. If they are established in English, species are singular while headings for families, genuses, and so forth, are established in the plural. The exceptions are domestic animals and cultivated plants, which typically are established in the plural regardless of taxonomic level.

Singular or Plural (H 285)

- Musical instruments and types of musical compositions
  - Special rules: H 1918, H 1160

There are also special rules for headings for musical instruments and types of musical compositions, which may be found in SHM instruction sheets H 1918 and H 1160.

Initial Articles (H 290)

- Headings never begin with an initial article
  - If the initial article is important, the article may appear in an inverted position

    Arts
    Edge, The (Imaginary place)
    Finite, The

One constant in LCSH is that headings never begin with an initial article, that is A, AN, or THE, or their equivalents in other languages.

Sometimes the article is integral to understanding, though.

In that case, the article may be included in the heading, but as the second element, set off with a comma (as in **Finite, The**).

Initial Articles (H 290)

- Headings never begin with an initial article
  - If the initial article is important, the article may appear in an inverted position

    Arts
    Edge, The (Imaginary place)
    Finite, The

    La Plata dolphin

Articles, however, are not always used as articles.

For example, LA is a Spanish article, but it is sometimes an essential part of the name of the concept (**La Plata dolphin**).

In those cases, the article may appear in the initial position.

Foreign Terms (H 315)

- Headings for concepts are established in English
  - Exception 1: No English term for the concept exists and even English-language reference sources use the foreign term

    Cinéma vérité
    Haiku

LCSH is an English-language vocabulary, so headings for new concepts are generally established in English. But there are two exceptions.

The first is when no English term for the concept exists and even English-language reference sources use the foreign term. This often occurs when the word or phrase has been borrowed into English, like **Cinema verite** and **Haiku**. Other familiar examples are **Kimonos** and **Film noir**.

Foreign Terms (H 315)

- Headings for concepts are established in English
  - Exception 2: No English-language citation to the concept can be found, and the concept appears to be unique to the language of the work being cataloged

    Ḥukm

The second exception is when the concept cannot be found in English-language reference sources and it appears to be unique to the language of the work being cataloged, like this concept in Islamic law.

Foreign Terms (H 315)

Ḥukm ▢
[KBP447]
Here are entered works on the concept in Islamic law that defines individuals' rights and duties in a given situation, the rights emerging from obligations or duties towards other people or towards God.
BT Islamic law

It is the concept in Islamic law that defines individuals' rights and duties in a given situation, the rights emerging from obligations or duties towards other people or towards God.

Such a concept does not exist in Western law, and does not have an English-language translation or equivalent. It is therefore established in the language of the concept; in this case, Arabic.

Natural Language (H 306)

- Preference is to establish natural-language headings

  Farm management
  not *Management, Farm*

  Hula dancers
  Not *Dancers, Hula*

New headings are established in natural-language form wherever possible. Natural-language means that we use the phrase for the concept as you would say it in a sentence. We say **Farm management**, not *Management, Farm*, and **Hula dancers**, not *Dancers, Hula*.

Establishing headings this way makes them more useful as keyword phrases.

Most headings for new concepts are established in natural-language form, but there are whole categories of headings that are established in inverted order.

Inverted Headings (H 306)

• Those qualified by language, ethnic group, or nationality

Quotations, Marathi

Pottery, Hausa

Diplomatic and consular service, Namibian

Headings that are qualified by language, ethnic group, or nationality are inverted.

Inverted Headings (H 306)

- Those qualified by language, ethnic group, or nationality
  - Exceptions
    - Some headings for literatures

      American fiction
      Belgian poetry

    - Headings qualified by U.S. ethnic groups

      Navajo pottery

There are, of course, exceptions to the general rule.

Some headings for forms of literature are established in natural-language form, such as **American fiction** and **Belgian poetry**, while others are established in inverted form such as **Short stories, American**.

Headings qualified by ethnic groups in the United States are also established in natural language.

Recall the example of **Pottery, Hausa**, on the previous slide. Because headings for pottery by individual ethnic groups are established in two different ways, a Used For reference is always provided from the other form. Therefore, **Navajo pottery** has a reference from *Pottery, Navajo* and **Pottery, Hausa**, has a reference from *Hausa pottery*. That way, users and catalogers don't have to remember the rule in order to find the headings.

Inverted Headings (H 306)

- Those qualified by time period or artistic style

History, Modern

Silverwork, Baroque

Headings qualified by time period or artistic style are also inverted.

Inverted Headings (H 306)

• Headings for battles, fossils, and royal houses

Zacatecas, Battle of, Mexico, 1873

Eggs, Fossil

Tudor, House of

Headings for battles, fossils, and royal houses are three more examples of types of inverted headings.

Inverted Headings (H 306)

- Headings for some musical forms and geographic features

Operas, Arranged

Vocal duets, Unaccompanied

Taneycamo, Lake (Mo.)

Parnassus, Mount (Greece)

As are some musical forms and geographic features.

Inverted Headings (H 306)

- Older headings may not follow the current rules
  - They are valid regardless

    Ability, Influence of age on

    Computers, Optical

  - Revised as time permits

There are also older headings that do not conform to the rules we have outlined. LCSH policies on headings have been revised over time, but an authorized heading is an authorized heading. You do not need to worry about whether a main heading follows the current rules when you are cataloging. You only need to verify that the heading is authorized.

Some older headings are revised on occasion, as time permits.

Inverted Headings (H 306)

- Why invert?
  - Early 20th century belief that users preferred to search by form instead of by the qualifying adjective
  - Holdover from the card catalog

Many of the policies on inverted headings are a holdover from an early 20th century view that users would naturally search by the noun instead of by the qualifying language, nationality, and so on. Some other policies, though, were just considered to be more practical. LCSH includes hundreds, if not thousands, of headings for individual battles. Can you imagine the heading for each being "Battle of [whatever]?" Filing them under the first significant word (like Zacatecas in the earlier example), spreads them out.

Inverted headings also served another practical purpose. If you consider that the Library of Congress' card catalog consisted of dozens and dozens and dozens of cabinets, you can understand why the time of the user was saved by using inverted headings. If resources about Hausa pottery and Ashanti pottery and Soninke pottery were all desired, just walking from cabinet to cabinet could be physically exhausting, if the headings were all in natural language order.

At times, LC has revised the policy for particular groups of headings. For example, headings qualified by religions and religious denominations (such as **Catholic preaching** and **Buddhist shrines**), used to be inverted. They were later revised to turn them into natural-language headings.

[Topic A] and [Topic B] (H 310)

- Two topics that are normally treated together

  Bolts and nuts

  Right and wrong

  Bards and bardism

  Quacks and quackery

There is one more type of heading that we would like to mention that this time: the **and** headings.

Sometimes it is not practical to establish separate headings for two topics that are almost always treated together. Bolts would not be useful without nuts to tighten them, for example.

Some older headings, like **Bards and bardism** and **Quacks and quackery**, combine a group of people and their activity. Most of those headings have now been split. *Nurses and nursing* was split into two headings, for example, **Nursing** and **Nurses**, but some headings of that type do remain.

[Topic A] and [Topic B] (H 310)

- Headings for resources that discuss the relationship between two topics from both perspectives and in such broad terms that it could not accurately be described by the use of a main heading and subdivision

Art and society

Literature and globalization

Property and socialism

The other type of **and** headings are those that discuss the relationship between two topics from both perspectives and in such broad terms that it could not accurately be described by the use of a main heading and subdivision.

These types of **and** headings are often overused. They should be assigned only to the most general resources. **Art and society** is assigned to resources that discuss the effect that art has on society and that society has on art; **Literature and globalization** is for resources that discuss the effect of literature in general on globalization and the effect of globalization on literature.

It is *not* necessary to remember all of this!

We have now explored the general rules governing the various styles of main headings that can be found in LCSH. We did this so you would understand why the headings are not all alike. There is no need to remember all of the details. If a heading is authorized, you can use it.

When you are cataloging, be sure to copy headings exactly as you see them in LCSH. Hyphens, commas, and other punctuation marks are important.

You may be planning to submit proposals for new and revised headings someday. Even then, you do not need to memorize the rules, because they are all provided in the *Subject Headings Manual*, where they can (and should!) be consulted as needed.