
Library of Congress Subject Headings

Module 2.6
Related Term References

Policy and Standards Division
Library of Congress
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Recap

- Associative relationships are often referred to as related terms
- RTs are made between headings that
 - Are neither synonymous nor hierarchical
 - Are connected in some way

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To review, associative relationships are between headings that are not synonymous nor are they hierarchical – that is, they are not UFs or BTs – but they are intrinsically connected in some other way. In LCSH, headings that have an associative relationship are called Related Terms and are notated RT.

In this module, we will discuss the general rules for RTs in LCSH, which are contained in *Subject Headings Manual* instruction sheet H 370. As you will see, the rules are very restrictive and very few RTs are currently being added to LCSH.

General Principle

- Headings must be
 - Mentally associated to a high extent
 - When one heading is considered, the other heading must be strongly implied

Education	Students
RT Students	RT Education

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In order to be RTs, headings have to be so closely associated with each other that people automatically think of one when they think of the other.

In this example, if we were to say **Students** to a group of people and ask what that brought to mind, most of them would probably say **Education**. You cannot have one without the other.

In the same way, if we said **Education**, most people would say that they immediately think of **Students**.

For this reason, RT references are reciprocal.

Look up **Education** and you will see **Students**; look up **Students**, and you will see a reference for **Education**.

Historical Note

- Rules for making RTs are now much more restrictive than they used to be
- Many RTs do not follow current rules
- Are being revised as time permits

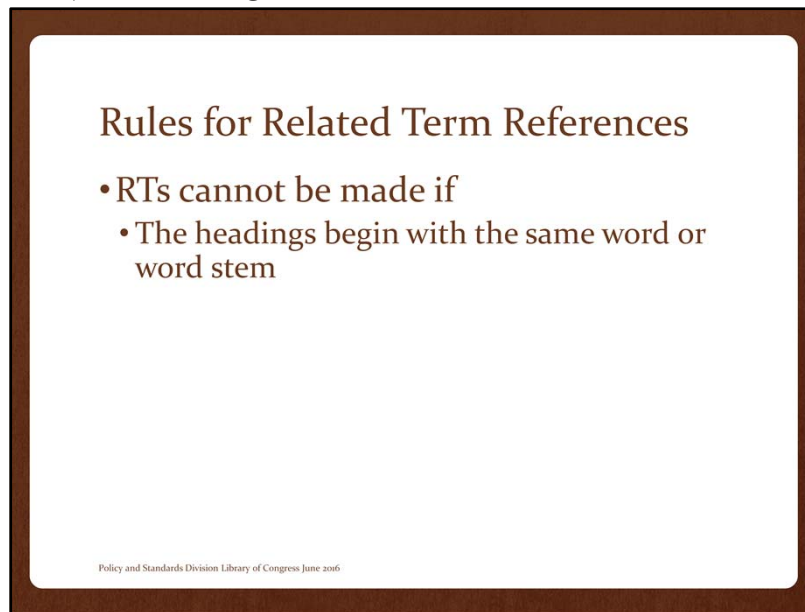
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Until 1985, the rules for making RTs – or SEE ALSO references, as they were called at the time – were very permissive, and relied heavily on cataloger judgment. If one heading was even occasionally associated with another, a reference was made. This policy caused a lot of problems.

My favorite example is one that Mary Kay Pietris, a chief of the former Subject Cataloging Division at LC, told me about. Apparently there was a prolonged debate over whether the headings **Swimming** and **Lakes** should be RTs, because people often swim in lakes. Would **Swimming** then also have to be an RT to the headings for oceans and swimming pools, and any other place where people might possibly swim?

The rules we use today were instituted in 1985, and those rules were intended to reduce the complexity of LCSH and make it easier to maintain. In the decades since the rule change, though, there has not been time to systematically review all of the existing RTs, so you will see many that do not follow the rules we are going to discuss in this module. Some of those RTs may be of use to you as you catalog, so feel free to use them or ignore them on a case-by-case basis.

Now let’s discuss the rules as they exist today.



Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - The headings begin with the same word or word stem

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The rules for making RTs begin with a list of prohibitions.

- First, headings that begin with the same word or word stem cannot be RTs.

Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - The headings begin with the same word or word stem

Nursing	Public libraries
Nurses	Public librarians

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Nursing and **Nurses** begin with the stem N-u-r-s, so they cannot be RTs.

Public librarians and **Public libraries** cannot be RTs, either, because they both begin with the word Public.

The theory is that in a browse index, or a card catalog, the entries for **Nurses** and **Nursing**, and **Public librarians** and **Public libraries** are close to each other alphabetically, making the RT unnecessary.

As with so many things, there is an exception to this rule.

Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - The headings begin with the same word or word stem

Nursing	Public libraries
Nurses	Public librarians

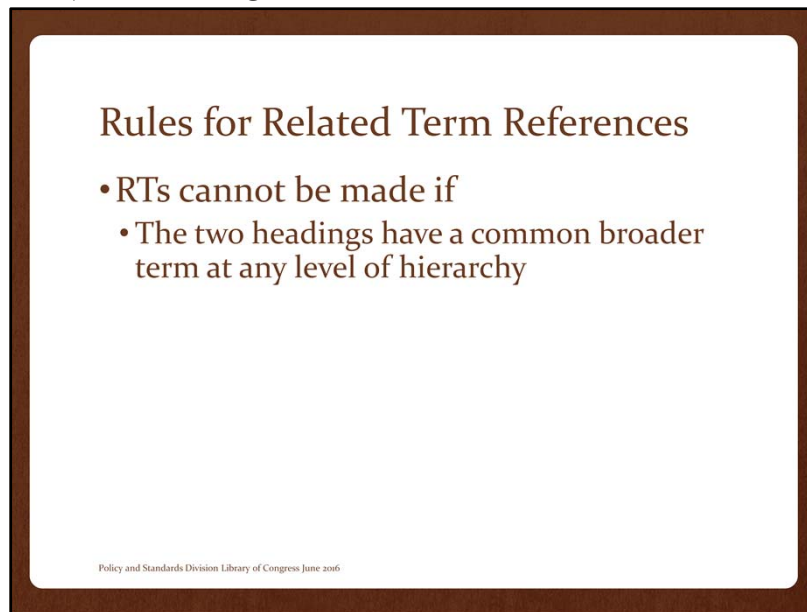
- Exception: top headings in the hierarchy for a discipline

Librarians
Libraries

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Headings that are at the top of the hierarchy within a discipline can be linked as RTs.

Libraries and **Librarians** can therefore be RTs of each other.



Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - The two headings have a common broader term at any level of hierarchy

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Second, headings cannot be RTs if they have a common broader term.

This is true even when the headings are very closely associated with each other.

Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - The two headings have a common broader term at any level of hierarchy

Gynecologists
Obstetricians

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For example, the headings **Gynecologists** and **Obstetricians** cannot be related terms, even though in the United States women often go to an ob/gyn, which is someone who specializes in both.

Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - The two headings have a common broader term at any level of hierarchy

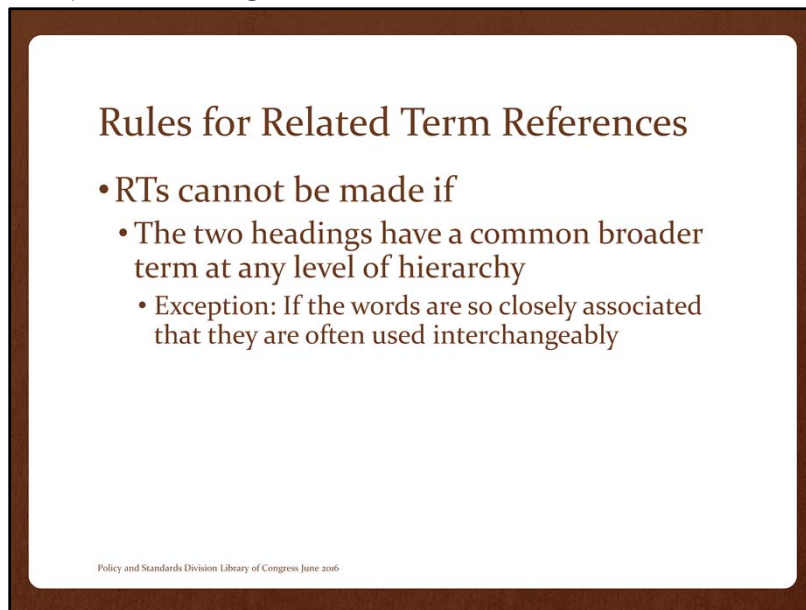
Gynecologists
Obstetricians

Gynecologists (May Subd Geog) BT Physicians	Obstetricians (May Subd Geog) UF Birth attendants BT Physicians
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Both **Gynecologists** and **Obstetricians** have the BT **Physicians**.

The idea is that headings are brought together through their BT, so an RT is not necessary.



Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - The two headings have a common broader term at any level of hierarchy
 - Exception: If the words are so closely associated that they are often used interchangeably

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There is an exception to this rule, too.

Sometimes words are so closely associated with each other that they are used almost as synonyms, even though they are actually separate concepts.

If that happens, the headings can be RTs, even if they have the same BT.

Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - The two headings have a common broader term at any level of hierarchy
 - Exception: If the words are so closely associated that they are often used interchangeably

Carpets (May Subd Geog) <input type="checkbox"/> [NK2775-2896 (Art)] [TS1772-1776 (Technology)] UF Carpet manufacture BT Decoration and ornament Floor coverings House furnishings Textile fabrics RT Rugs	Rugs (May Subd Geog) <input type="checkbox"/> [NK2775-2896 (Art)] [TS1777-1778 (Manufacture)] UF Rug manufacture BT Floor coverings Textile fabrics RT Carpets
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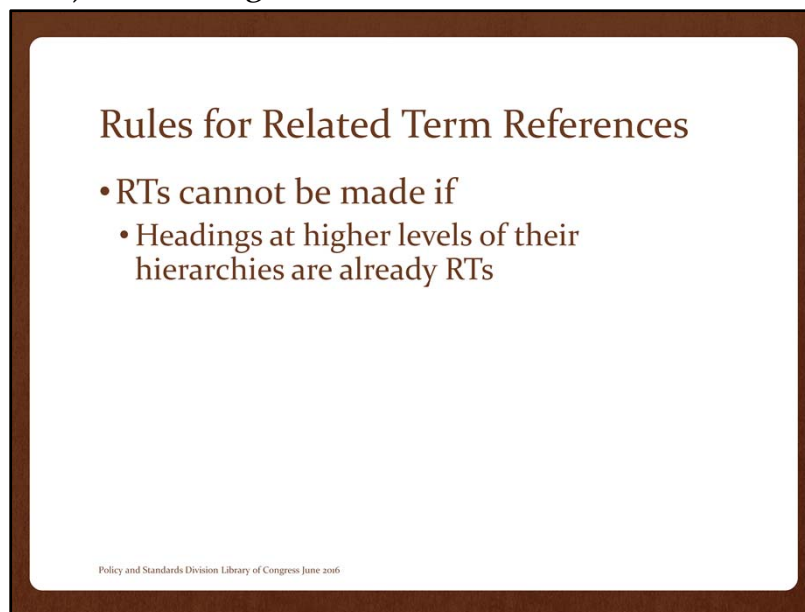
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Since many people refer to rugs when they mean carpets, and vice versa, those headings can be RTs even though they have two BTs in common: **Floor coverings** and **Textile fabrics**.

So what makes this situation different from **Gynecologists** and **Obstetricians**?

Gynecology and **Obstetrics** are different specialties and are not referred to interchangeably.

They are associated for American audiences only because so many obstetricians are also gynecologists.



Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - Headings at higher levels of their hierarchies are already RTs

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Third, RTs cannot be made if headings higher in their respective hierarchies are already RTs of each other.

Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - Headings at higher levels of their hierarchies are already RTs

Human-animal relationships
RT Animals
NT Human-bear encounters

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An example is definitely needed to explain this prohibition!

Animals and **Human-animal relationships** are RTs of each other. As you can see, **Human-animal relationships** also has an NT, **Human-bear encounters**.

Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - Headings at higher levels of their hierarchies are already RTs

Human-animal relationships
RT Animals
NT Human-bear encounters

Animals
RT Human-animal encounters
NT Predatory animals
NT Carnivora
NT Bears

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This entry shows the reciprocal RT relationship of **Animals** and **Human-animal encounters**.

Animals has an NT **Predatory animals**, which has an NT **Carnivora**, which has an NT **Bears**. So, obviously, **Bears** is in the **Animals** hierarchy.

Rules for Related Term References

- RTs cannot be made if
 - Headings at higher levels of their hierarchies are already RTs

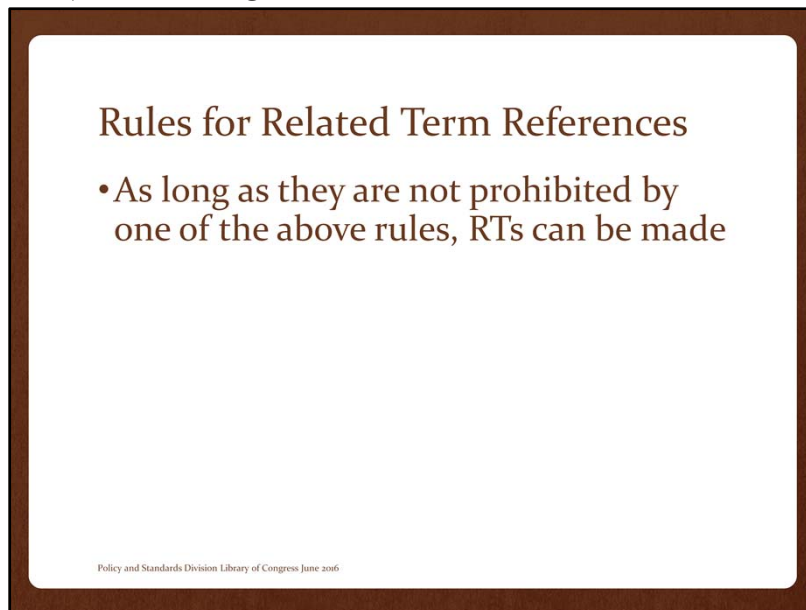
Human-animal relationships
RT Animals
NT Human-bear encounters

Animals
RT Human-animal encounters
NT Predatory animals
NT Carnivora
NT Bears

X Bears
RT Human-bear encounters

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Bears and **Human-bear encounters** cannot, therefore, be RTs because **Human-animal relationships** and **Animals** are already RTs.



Rules for Related Term References

- As long as they are not prohibited by one of the above rules, RTs can be made

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So when *can* RTs be made?

There are again three situations, but each of them has to be tested against the prohibitions that we just covered.

In other words, potential RTs that seem to be allowed according to the rules we are about to discuss, still have to be checked to see if they fall into one of the prohibited categories that we've already discussed. If they do, then the headings cannot be RTs after all.

Rules for Related Term References

- As long as they are not prohibited by one of the above rules, RTs can be made
- To link two headings whose meanings overlap to some extent, or that are used interchangeably

Boats and boating	Ships
RT Ships	RT Boats and boating

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RTs can be made if the headings have meanings that overlap, or that are used interchangeably.

The words **Boats** and **Ships** are often used interchangeably by the general population, so they can be RTs.

Rules for Related Term References

- As long as they are not prohibited by one of the above rules, RTs can be made
 - To link a discipline and an object studied

Birds	Ornithology
RT Ornithology	RT Birds

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RTs can also be made in order to link a discipline and an object studied.

Ornithology is the study of birds, for example.

Rules for Related Term References

- As long as they are not prohibited by one of the above rules, RTs can be made
 - To link persons and a field of endeavor

Medicine	Physicians
RT Physicians	RT Medicine

Finally, RTs can be made to link persons with their field of endeavor, for example **Physicians** and **Medicine**.

But note that the name for the people in a particular field and the name of the field itself often begin with the same word or word stem, so this type of RT does not occur very often.