
Library of Congress Subject Headings

Module 3.2:
The Anatomy of an Instruction Sheet

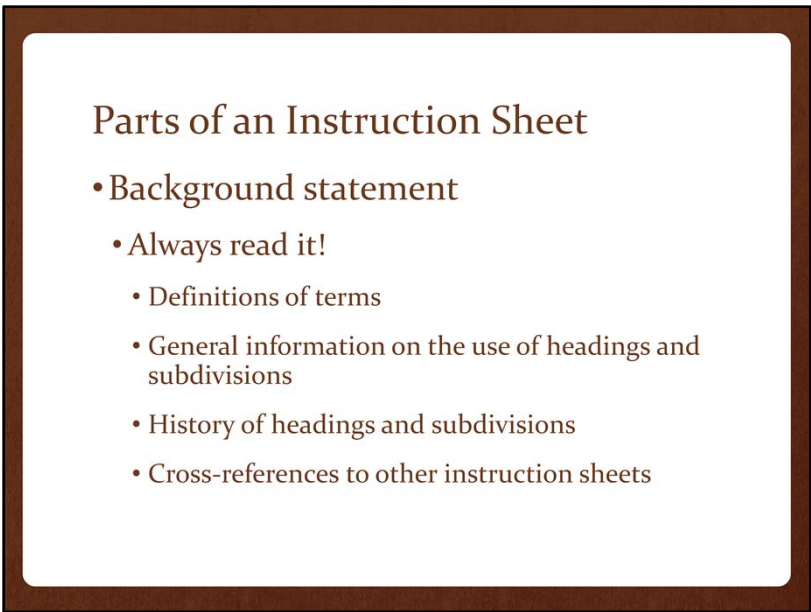
Policy and Standards Division
Library of Congress
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Recap and Plan

- Previous module
 - Overview of the contents and use of the *Subject Headings Manual* (SHM)
- This module
 - Detailed explanation of the parts of instruction sheets devoted to a specific topic, material, or subdivision

In the previous module, we provided a brief overview of the *Subject Headings Manual*, including a discussion of how it is organized, what it contains, and what it is used for.

In this module, we will discuss the parts of an instruction sheet and briefly explore how instruction sheets are organized.



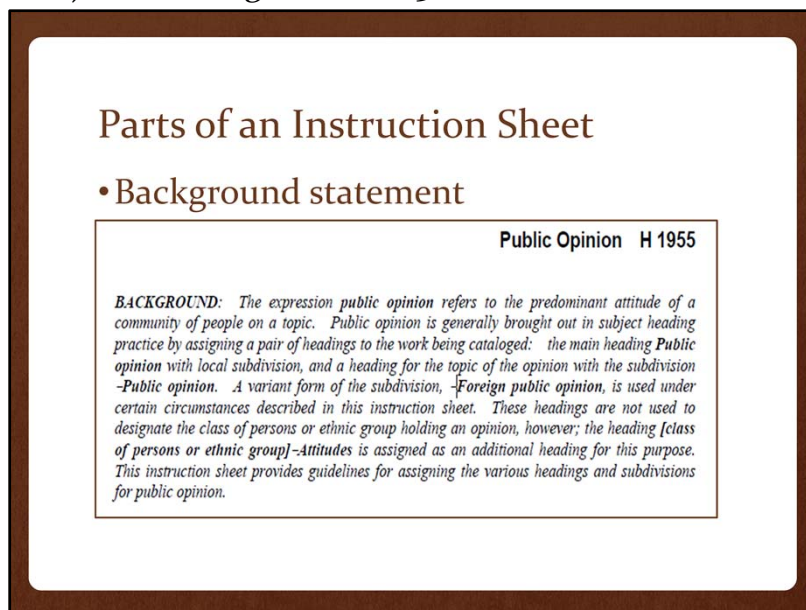
Parts of an Instruction Sheet

- Background statement
 - Always read it!
 - Definitions of terms
 - General information on the use of headings and subdivisions
 - History of headings and subdivisions
 - Cross-references to other instruction sheets

Background statements are probably the most overlooked parts of an instruction sheet, but you should always read them because they contain an enormous amount of information.

Many of them define the topic that they address, and tell you exactly what that sheet covers. In some cases, they provide cross-references to other instruction sheets that you may not have already realized would be helpful. They also sometimes provide basic information on the use of the headings and subdivisions that they cover. And when policy on headings and subdivisions has changed over time, they provide historical information.

Let's look at a couple of examples of background statements.



This is the background statement that appears in H 1955, which is about public opinion.

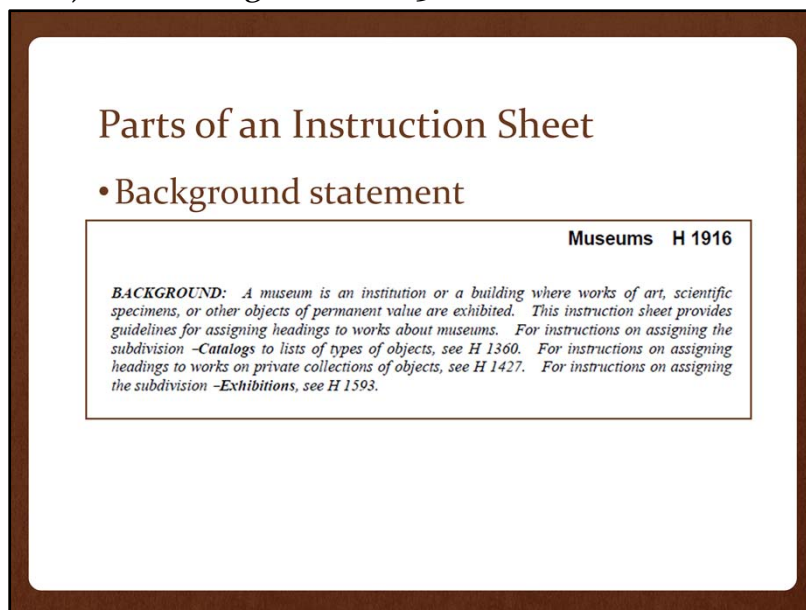
The first sentence defines what is meant by public opinion, when it says, “The expression **public opinion** refers to the predominant attitude of a community of people on a topic.”

The next two sentences provide a general explanation of the ways that headings and subdivisions are assigned. It says, “Public opinion is generally brought out in subject heading practice by assigning a pair of headings to the work being cataloged: the main heading **Public opinion** with local subdivision, and a heading for the topic of the opinion with the subdivision **-Public opinion**. A variant form of the subdivision, **-Foreign public opinion**, is used under certain circumstances described in this instruction sheet.”

The fourth sentence then tells us what NOT to do when a resource discusses opinions held by members of an ethnic group or class of persons. (By the way, class of persons is just an LCSH phrase that means “group of persons,” like librarians, married men, homeless people, and so forth.)

The fourth sentence says, “These headings are not used to designate the class of persons or ethnic group holding an opinion, however; the heading [**class of persons or ethnic group**]-Attitudes is assigned as an additional heading for this purpose.”

Finally, there is an explicit statement of the scope of the instruction sheet: “This instruction sheet provides guidelines for assigning the various headings and subdivisions for public opinion.”



Parts of an Instruction Sheet

- **Background statement**

Museums H 1916

***BACKGROUND:** A museum is an institution or a building where works of art, scientific specimens, or other objects of permanent value are exhibited. This instruction sheet provides guidelines for assigning headings to works about museums. For instructions on assigning the subdivision -Catalogs to lists of types of objects, see H 1360. For instructions on assigning headings to works on private collections of objects, see H 1427. For instructions on assigning the subdivision -Exhibitions, see H 1593.*

This background statement for *Museums* is slightly different. It says:

A museum is an institution or a building where works of art, scientific specimens, or other objects of permanent value are exhibited. This instruction sheet provides guidelines for assigning headings to works about museums. For instructions on assigning the subdivision – **Catalogs** to types of objects, see H 1360. For instructions on assigning headings to works on private collections of objects, see H 1427. For instructions on assigning the subdivision – **Exhibitions**, see H 1593.

As you can see, it provides a definition, in case we don't know what a museum is, and then immediately provides a scope statement.

Finally, it provides several references to other instruction sheets, because resources about museums are often catalogs of their objects or exhibitions.

Parts of an Instruction Sheet

- Background statement

Bibliography of Bibliographies H 1325

*BACKGROUND: Prior to 1998, lists of bibliographies on specific topics were entered under the heading **Bibliography-Bibliography**, further subdivided by the appropriate topic, for example, **Bibliography-Bibliography-Botany**. In 1998, the heading **Bibliography-Bibliography** was changed to **Bibliography of bibliographies** and the free-floating form subdivision **-Bibliography of bibliographies** was established for use under subjects. This instruction sheet provides guidelines for assigning headings to works that are bibliographies of bibliographies.*

Now, this background statement for *Bibliography of Bibliographies* is quite different. The title of the instruction sheet is self-explanatory, so a definition is not needed.

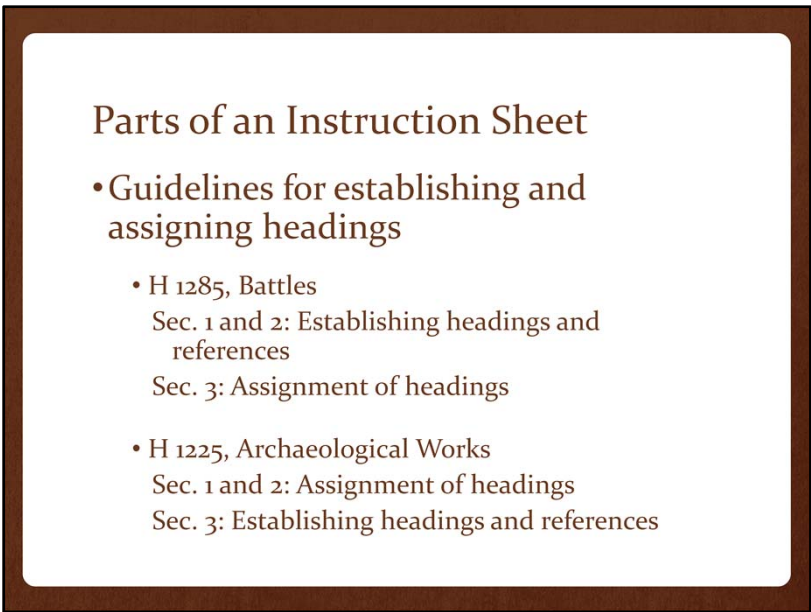
Instead, it tells us that the policy on assigning headings to these types of works changed in 1998 when it says,

Prior to 1998, lists of bibliographies on specific topics were entered under the heading **Bibliography—Bibliography**, further subdivided by the appropriate topic, for example, **Bibliography—Bibliography—Botany**. In 1998, the heading **Bibliography—Bibliography** was changed to **Bibliography of bibliographies** and the free-floating form subdivision **-Bibliography of bibliographies** was established for use under subjects. This instruction sheet provides guidelines for assigning headings to works that are bibliographies of bibliographies.

Now, why would you care about this history?

Well, honestly, you may not care if you are just trying to catalog a resource. But these statements are very useful for understanding why older catalog records do not appear to be correct.

Plus, catalogers often find it useful to check the catalog for similar resources, to see if the headings they are assigning to the new resource will allow similar resources to collocate. If the records in the catalog have not been updated yet, you may be misled, but if you check the instruction sheet, you will know why the old records look the way they do – and will get instruction on the right way to do it today.



Parts of an Instruction Sheet

- Guidelines for establishing and assigning headings
 - H 1285, Battles
 - Sec. 1 and 2: Establishing headings and references
 - Sec. 3: Assignment of headings
 - H 1225, Archaeological Works
 - Sec. 1 and 2: Assignment of headings
 - Sec. 3: Establishing headings and references

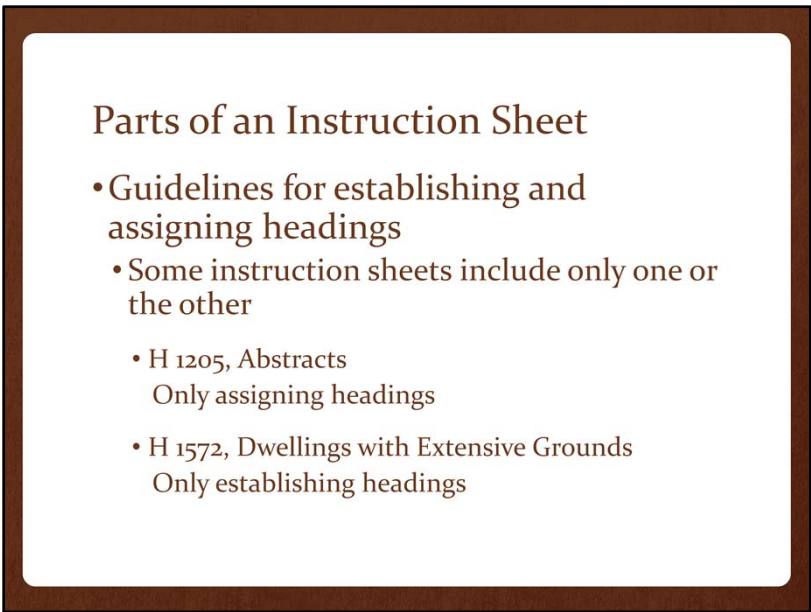
The majority of each of the Special Topics instruction sheets consists of the guidelines for assigning and proposing headings. The instructions are divided into sections and subsections, which are numbered.

Instruction sheets are often divided into two parts: how to establish a heading and how to apply headings.

For example, H 1285, for Battles, begins with two sections on establishing – that is, creating or proposing – headings and references to those headings. Section 3 provides the rules for assignment.

H 1225, Archaeological Works, provides the same types of information, but in a different order. The first two sections provide guidance on assigning headings to resources, and section 3 contains the rules for establishing headings.

You may wonder why the instructions are not in a consistent order across instruction sheets. When the manual was being drafted, the authors decided that the instructions that would be likely to be used most frequently should be at the top of each instruction sheet, and lesser-used instructions would be at the end. Unfortunately, this did not always work out. Few battles are proposed for inclusion in LCSH, for example, but many thousands of resources about battles are cataloged every year.



Parts of an Instruction Sheet

- Guidelines for establishing and assigning headings
 - Some instruction sheets include only one or the other
 - H 1205, Abstracts
Only assigning headings
 - H 1572, Dwellings with Extensive Grounds
Only establishing headings

While many instruction sheets include rules for proposing and assigning headings, some instruction sheets include *either* rules for assignment of headings *or* rules for proposing them.

H 1205, Abstracts, provides only rules for assignment because it is about an established subdivision.

H 1572, Dwellings with Extensive Grounds, covers only the special aspects of proposing headings for those structures. It was written to bring consistency to LCSH by mandating certain broader terms. The instructions for assigning headings to resources about individual buildings are in H 1334, Buildings and Other Structures.

Parts of an Instruction Sheet

- General rule
 - Often appears as the first part of the “Assignment of headings” area of an instruction sheet
 - The most basic statement of policy on assignment of headings or subdivisions for the topic
 - Followed by more specific guidelines

The portion of an instruction sheet that is about assigning headings usually begins with a “General rule,” which is the most basic statement of policy on the assignment of headings or subdivisions. General rules are always followed by more specific guidelines in further sections.

It is always a good idea to read the general rule, even if you think you know it, because our memories sometimes play tricks on us.

Let’s look at an example of a general rule.

Parts of an Instruction Sheet

• **General rule**

1. General rule. To works on the archaeology of a particular place, assign an appropriate combination of the following headings, as specified in sec. 1.a.-1.d., below:

```
651 #0 $a [name of site, if the work is about a specific site].
651 #0 $a [place] $x Antiquities <or Antiquities, Roman [etc.]>.
650 #0 $a Antiquities, Prehistoric $z [place].
650 #0 $a [name of people, prehistoric culture or period, etc.].
650 #0 $a Excavations (Archaeology) $z [place].
```

Also assign headings to bring out any other special topics, such as pottery, burial sites, agriculture, etc. Divide these headings by place, including the name of the site if the work is about an individual site.

a. Name of the site. For works about a specific site, assign the heading for the site. For procedures for establishing headings for individual sites, see sec. 3, below.

b. [Place]-Antiquities and/or Antiquities, Prehistoric-[place]. Assign a heading of the type [place]-Antiquities to works on the antiquities of a particular place, for example, Africa-Antiquities; France-Antiquities; London (England)-Antiquities.

It appears in the instruction sheet H 1225, for Archaeological works. It begins,

To works on the archeology of a particular place, assign an appropriate combination of the following headings, as specified in section 1.a through 1.d below.

It then goes on to provide a formula to follow when cataloging a resource about archeology in a particular place.

Parts of an Instruction Sheet

- **General rule**

1. General rule. To works on the archaeology of a particular place, assign an appropriate combination of the following headings, as specified in sec. 1.a.-1.d., below:

```
651 #0 $a [name of site, if the work is about a specific site].
651 #0 $a [place] $x Antiquities <or Antiquities, Roman [etc.]>.
650 #0 $a Antiquities, Prehistoric $z [place].
650 #0 $a [name of people, prehistoric culture or period, etc.].
650 #0 $a Excavations (Archaeology) $z [place].
```

Also assign headings to bring out any other special topics, such as pottery, burial sites, agriculture, etc. Divide these headings by place, including the name of the site if the work is about an individual site.

a. Name of the site. For works about a specific site, assign the heading for the site. For procedures for establishing headings for individual sites, see sec. 3, below.

b. [Place]-Antiquities and/or Antiquities, Prehistoric-[place]. Assign a heading of the type [place]-Antiquities to works on the antiquities of a particular place, for example, Africa-Antiquities; France-Antiquities; London (England)-Antiquities.

The bracketed and italicized information is essentially a fill-in-the-blank instruction.

Parts of an Instruction Sheet

- **General rule**

1. General rule. To works on the archaeology of a particular place, assign an appropriate combination of the following headings, as specified in sec. 1.a.-1.d., below:

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651 #0 $a [name of site, if the work is about a specific site].
651 #0 $a [place] $x Antiquities <or Antiquities, Roman [etc.]>.
650 #0 $a Antiquities, Prehistoric $z [place].
650 #0 $a [name of people, prehistoric culture or period, etc.].
650 #0 $a Excavations (Archaeology) $z [place].
```

Also assign headings to bring out any other special topics, such as pottery, burial sites, agriculture, etc. Divide these headings by place, including the name of the site if the work is about an individual site.

a. Name of the site. For works about a specific site, assign the heading for the site. For procedures for establishing headings for individual sites, see sec. 3, below.

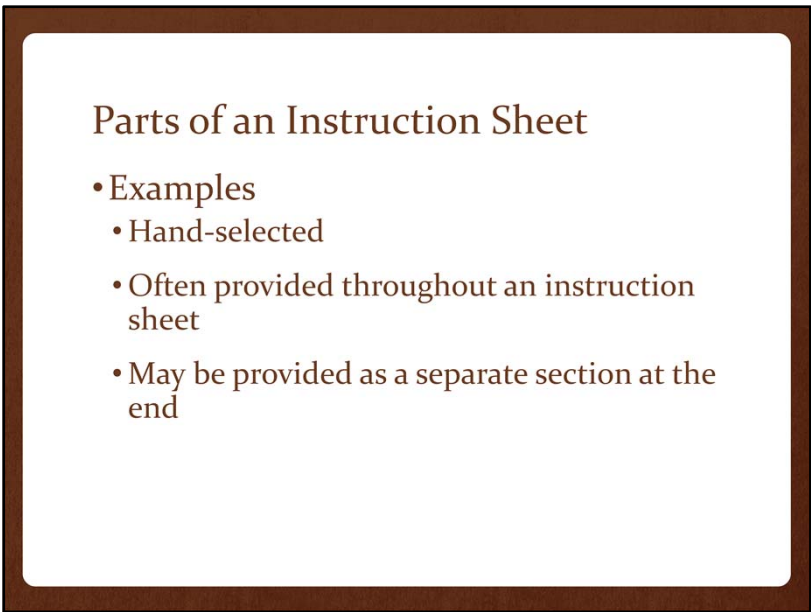
b. [Place]-Antiquities and/or Antiquities, Prehistoric-[place]. Assign a heading of the type [place]-Antiquities to works on the antiquities of a particular place, for example, Africa-Antiquities; France-Antiquities; London (England)-Antiquities.

The instruction sheet then goes on to say that you can assign other headings to bring out other aspects of the resource. It says,

Also assign headings to bring out any other special topics such as pottery, burial sites, agriculture, etc. Divide these headings by place including the name of the site if the work is about an individual site.

And then it explains in sections 1.a-1.d exactly how to interpret each of the headings in the formula at the top.

Pretty easy, huh?



Parts of an Instruction Sheet

- Examples
 - Hand-selected
 - Often provided throughout an instruction sheet
 - May be provided as a separate section at the end

Another important aspect of an instruction sheet is the examples. The examples in the SHM are specially selected for you to follow. Catalogers are normally discouraged from cataloging by example (because you don't know if the record you are looking at was done correctly!), but the examples in the SHM are the exception.

Most instruction sheets have at least a few examples, which may be interspersed throughout the instructions or provided as a separate section at the end.

Description and Travel H 1530

BACKGROUND: Formerly the subdivision *-Description and travel* was used under names of places larger than cities, and under headings for metropolitan areas. The subdivision *-Description* was used under names of cities (except ancient cities) and names of individual universities and colleges. In 1991, the subdivision *-Description* was cancelled in favor of using the subdivision *-Description and travel* under names of both cities and larger places for descriptive works and accounts of travel, including the history of travel, in those places. This subdivision is not used for broad geographical works about a specific place. The subdivision *-Geography* is used under names of places for works of that type. This instruction sheet provides guidelines for assigning the subdivision *-Description and travel*.

For the use of the subdivisions *-Guidebooks* and *-Tours*, see H 1645; for *-Pictorial works*, see H 1935; for *-Aerial photographs* and *-Aerial views*, see H 1210.5.

For works on discovery and exploration, see H 1564.

I. General rule. Use the free-floating subdivision *-Description and travel* under names of places for descriptive works or accounts of travel, including the history of travel, in those places. *Examples:*

This was a live demo. The slides on the handouts do not precisely match the slides in the audio-visual lecture.

This is instruction sheet H 1530, Description and Travel. As you can see there is a background statement, the first paragraph of which provides some historical information. The second and third paragraphs provide cross references to closely related instruction sheets

The first paragraph of the general rule then indicates the conditions under which we should use **Description and travel** and then provides examples of that use. The next paragraph describes situations in which **Description and travel** should NOT be used.

And finally, section 2 discusses the use of chronological subdivisions with **Description and travel**, and again provides examples.

Library of Congress Subject Headings: Module 3.2

Buildings and Other Structures H 1334

BACKGROUND: *This instruction sheet provides guidelines for establishing and assigning names of buildings and other structures as subject headings. The following types of entities are covered by these guidelines:*

- Bridges*
- Buildings and building complexes (castles, houses, city halls, etc.)*
- Building details (windows, doors, domes, rooms)*
- Fortresses*
- Gates*
- Monuments*
- Plazas*
- Tunnels*
- Walls*

In the case of structures that house corporate bodies, the provisions of this instruction sheet apply to those structures known by different names from the organizations that occupy them. Generally, when a building is known by the same name as the corporate body that occupies it, a corporate name heading is established for the body and that name heading is used as a subject heading for works about either the organization or the building. Typical cases include buildings such as churches, schools, hospitals, libraries, prisons, etc. Exceptions to this general rule are occasionally made on a case-by-case basis when there are special circumstances warranting an exception.

For instructions on establishing names of dwellings with extensive grounds, such as National Trust properties, see H 1572.

****This was a live demo. The slides on the handouts do not precisely match the slides in the audio-visual lecture.****

H 1334 again begins with a background statement, and in this case it indicates the types of resources that are covered by the provisions in the instruction sheet.

Section 1 is unusual in that it instructs us on the procedure for revising headings that do not conform to the rules in the instruction sheet. Normally that information is at the end of an instruction sheet, if it is present at all.

Section 2 is the first of several sections that provide instructions on proposing headings for structures. As you can see, it begins with a model, much like we saw in the instruction sheet for archaeological resources. Sections 2.a through 2.d provide more information but no examples.

Section 3, which is lengthy and consists of the rules for geographic qualifiers, does provide a few examples such as the one for the New York World's Fair.

Now, section 4 consists of the instructions for providing references. As I scroll through it, you will see a few more examples here.

Section 5, building details, does not have any examples, and neither does section 6. Section 7 provides several formulas for assigning headings to resources, but no examples.

Section 8, though, consists of three pages of examples.

As you can see, then, it is important to make yourself familiar with the entire instruction sheet so that you know how it is arranged.

Interpreting Instruction Sheets

- Before reading individual provisions
 - Read the Background statement and ask yourself: Am I looking at the correct instruction sheet?
 - Skim the entire sheet to learn how it is arranged

Whenever you are using instruction sheets, we recommend that you read the background statements first. It seems obvious, but it bears stating because the background statement is often your guide to the instruction sheet. As we have seen, it provides definitions, cross-references, and often an explicit statement of the coverage of the sheet.

If after reading the background statement you believe that the instruction sheet is applicable to the resource you are cataloging, it is a good idea to skim the entire sheet to see how it is arranged.

Interpreting Instruction Sheets

- Closely read the pertinent sections
 - The General rule, if present
 - Other sections that directly relate to the resource being cataloged
 - In case of doubt, read the entire sheet
 - Take the instructions literally
 - Do not overthink them
 - Hint: “Generally,” “In general,” etc., mean *usually, but not always*

After you have skimmed it, you will want to closely read the pertinent sections.

This always includes the general rule, if present, but in some cases the entire instruction sheet is pertinent. If you are not sure which sections are important, closely read the entire sheet.

When you read it, make sure to take the instructions literally. Do not read too much into the instructions and do not try to wrap yourself up in knots. If it says to do something – or not to do something – simply follow the instruction.

One important hint at this point is that when the manual says “generally,” or “in general,” or other words to that effect, it means “usually, not always.” You should strongly consider doing anything that is preceded by those words, but you’re not required to if it does not make sense for what you are cataloging.

In the next module, 3.3, we will look at two instruction sheets to see how we would use them to help us catalog some resources.