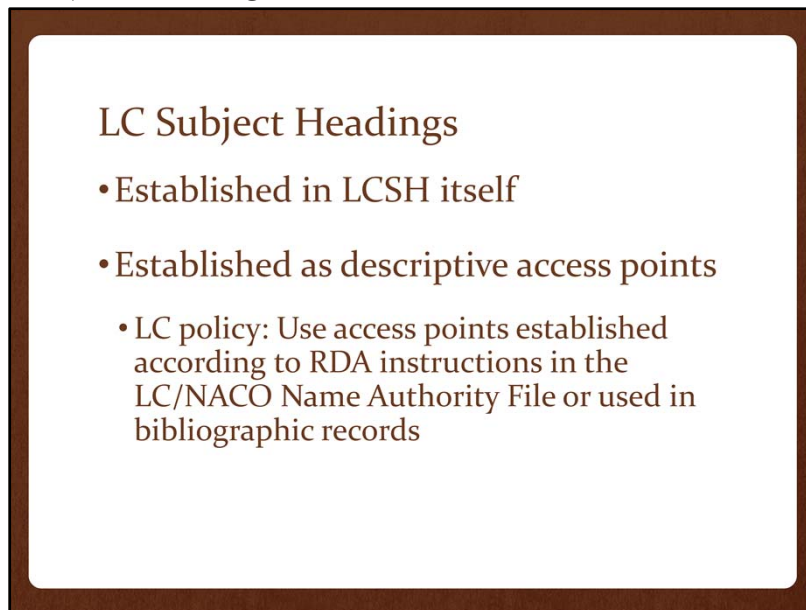

Library of Congress Subject Headings

Module 4.4:
Introduction to Descriptive Access Points
as Subject Headings

Policy and Standards Division
Library of Congress
October 2016



LC Subject Headings

- Established in LCSH itself
- Established as descriptive access points
 - LC policy: Use access points established according to RDA instructions in the LC/NACO Name Authority File or used in bibliographic records

So far in this unit we have discussed headings that are established in LCSH itself. We would now like to turn our attention to another important group of headings: descriptive access points that may be used as LC subject headings.

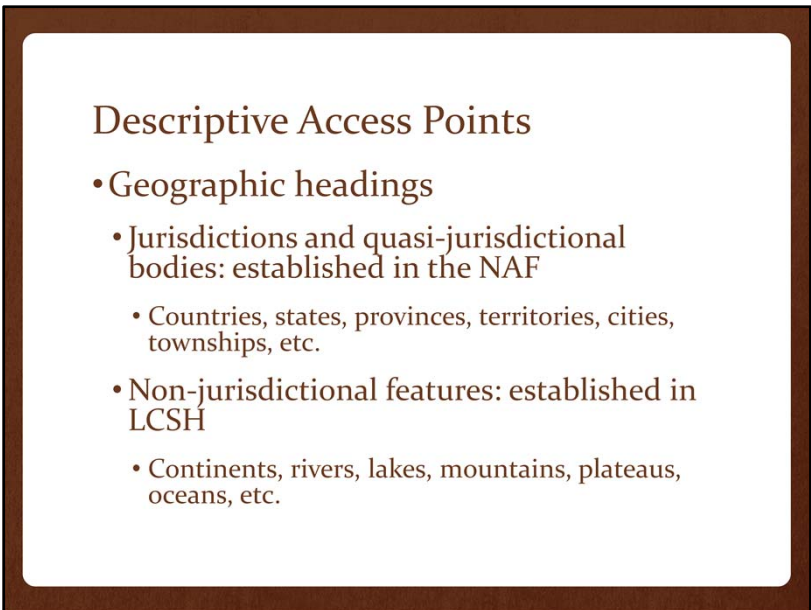
LC policy is to use descriptive access points established according to RDA instructions and found in the LC/NACO Name Authority File, or NAF.

Descriptive Access Points

- Most descriptive access points can be used as subjects
 - Personal names
 - Corporate names
 - Including names of events, such as conferences
 - Jurisdictional names
 - Titles
 - Name/title access points

Most of the access points for personal and corporate names established in the NAF can be used as subject headings, as can authorized access points for jurisdictions established in the NAF.

Titles and name/title access points can also be used as subject headings. For policy reasons, some of these access points are established in the NAF, while others exist only in bibliographic records. The reasons for this disparate treatment are outside the scope of this training.



Descriptive Access Points

- Geographic headings
 - Jurisdictions and quasi-jurisdictional bodies: established in the NAF
 - Countries, states, provinces, territories, cities, townships, etc.
 - Non-jurisdictional features: established in LCSH
 - Continents, rivers, lakes, mountains, plateaus, oceans, etc.

We need to make a special mention about geographic headings, because some of them are established in LCSH, and some are established in the NAF.

Jurisdictions – that is, those geographic places that are established in law – are established in the Name Authority File. This includes countries, states, provinces, territories, townships, counties, parishes, cities, villages, and on and on.

Non-jurisdictional features are established in LCSH. This includes continents, non-jurisdictional regions like Western Europe and Southeast Asia, as well as rivers, lakes, valleys, oceans, plateaus, mountains, et cetera.

If you are not sure whether a geographic place is established as a subject heading or as a descriptive access point, you can either check both places or consult SHM H 405.

“Division of the World”

- H 405, Establishing Certain Names in the Name or Subject Authority File
 - Ambiguous entities that could reasonably be established in either the NAF or in LCSH
 - Decision can arbitrary
 - Often based on whether the type of entity is likely to be needed as a descriptive access point

H 405 is officially titled “Establishing Certain Names in the Name or Subject Authority File,” but is informally known as the “Division of the World.”

In most cases, it is easy to tell which entities should be established in the Name Authority File, or NAF, and which should be proposed for *Library of Congress Subject Headings*. If it’s a title? Then it’s the Name Authority File. If it’s an ethnic group, then LCSH. But there are some cases in which it is a little more difficult to know where an entity should be established.

Most of the time, good arguments could be made on both sides. The decisions can seem arbitrary, but they are often based on the likelihood that a certain type of entity would ever be needed as a descriptive access point. If it is likely, the decision is usually to establish headings of that type in the NAF. If it is unlikely, then they are established in LCSH.

Remember that descriptive access points can usually be assigned as subjects, but subjects can never be assigned as descriptive access points, so the decision on where to establish an entity is an important one.

H 405 provides two lists:

- the categories of headings that are established in the NAF, and
- the categories of headings that are established in LCSH.

“Division of the World”

- **H 405, Establishing Certain Names in the Name or Subject Authority File**
 - Group 1: Established in the NAF, e.g.,
 - Named airplanes
 - Circuses
 - Refugee camps
 - Zoological gardens

Group 1 consists of categories of headings that should be established in the Name Authority File.

The list is lengthy, so we will only point out a few of them.

Named airplanes, for example, are established in the NAF. These are individual airplanes that have names, such as the Hindenburg, the blimp that caught fire in 1937, not the names of brands or the names of models of airplanes like the Boeing 707.

Circuses are established in the NAF.

So are refugee camps.

So are Zoological gardens, more commonly known as zoos.

“Division of the World”

- H 405, Establishing Certain Names in the Name or Subject Authority File
 - Group 2: Established in LCSH, e.g.,
 - Amusement parks
 - Bus terminals
 - Camps
 - Palaces
 - Opera houses
 - Theaters

Group 2 consists of categories of headings that should be established in LCSH. It includes some categories that may surprise you, such as amusement parks. We tend to think of them as businesses, but in LCSH we emphasize their geographic aspect instead of their business aspect.

Bus terminals and camps – such as Girl Scout and Boy Scout camps – are also established in LCSH.

So are palaces and opera houses and theaters and numerous other types of entities.

“Division of the World”

- H 405, Establishing Certain Names in the Name or Subject Authority File
 - Revised on occasion
 - Names of individual non-human entities
 - Opera houses

The list is revised on occasion, and catalogers should therefore review it periodically. The biggest revision in recent years was the decision to establish individual fictitious characters, deities, mythological beings, and legendary characters in the NAF instead of in LCSH where they had been established for decades.

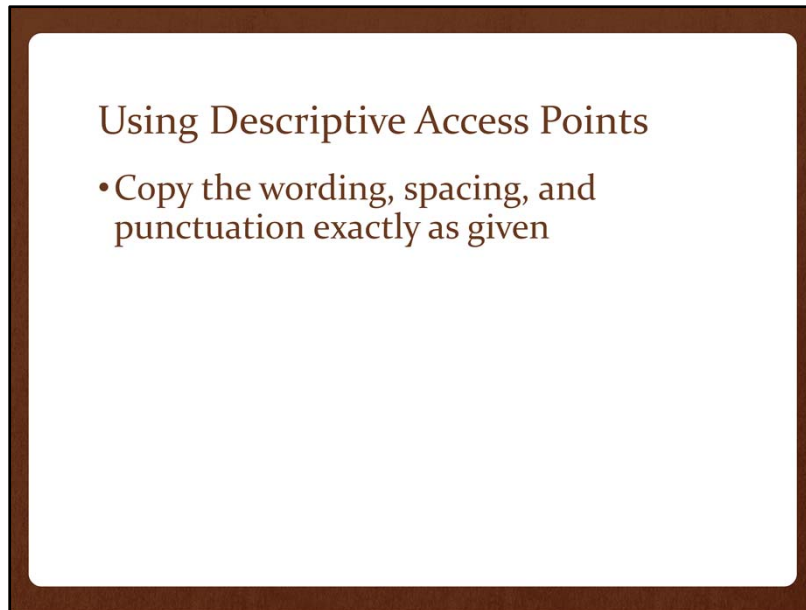
This revision was prompted by the implementation of RDA, which allows these entities to be assigned as descriptive access points.

Another recent revision was to move opera houses from Group 1 to Group 2. For some reason, opera houses were established as names, and theaters were established in LCSH. You tell me: what is the difference between a theater and an opera house?

Yes, there probably is some difference at some level, but each provides a stage for performers and seating for an audience. Several years ago now, the Policy and Standards Division decided that it would be better to treat them the same, so opera houses were moved to Group 2.

Decisions about where to establish the heading are often arbitrary and are made for reasons of practicality. Opera houses were moved to LCSH instead of theaters being moved to NAF because there were many, many more theaters already in LCSH than there were opera houses already in the NAF. The decision was based, therefore, on the amount of work required to make the change.

For the rest of this module we will discuss the general rules for using descriptive access points as subjects.



When using a descriptive access point as a subject, it is important to copy the wording, spacing, and punctuation exactly as given.

Sometimes the form of heading is different from what you would expect if it were established in LCSH.

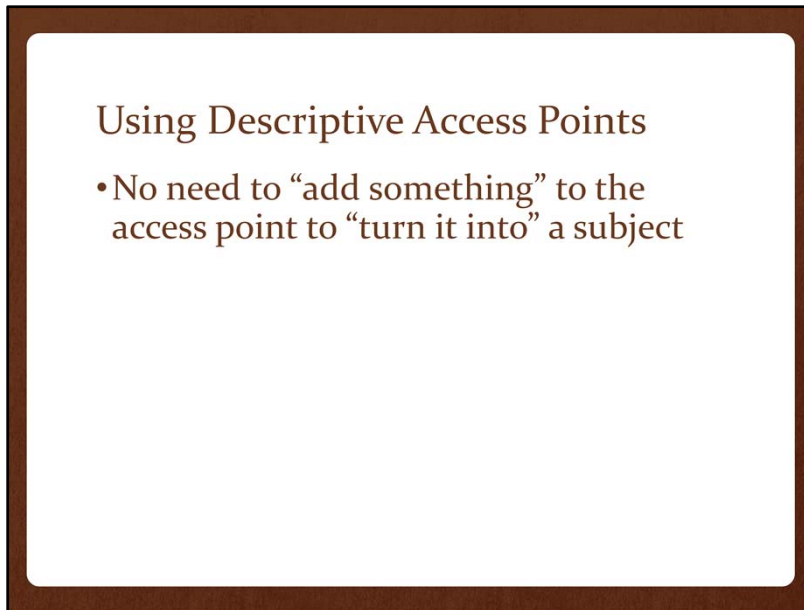
Using Descriptive Access Points

- Copy the wording, spacing, and punctuation exactly as given

Descriptive access point
Mt. Albert Centre for Mental Health Care.

LC subject heading
Mount Hood National Forest (Or.)

For example, the word Mount is always spelled out in LCSH, not abbreviated, but it may be abbreviated in some descriptive access points established in the NAF.



Using Descriptive Access Points

- No need to “add something” to the access point to “turn it into” a subject

There is no need to “add something” like a subdivision to make a descriptive access point into a subject heading. The fact that you are using it as a subject makes it a subject.

Some subdivisions can and should be used with descriptive access points as appropriate, but in most cases the descriptive access point alone is sufficient.

Using Descriptive Access Points

- No need to “add something” to the access point to “turn it into” a subject

**Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. *Macbeth*.
Weird Sisters (Fictitious characters)**

For example, a resource about the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* would be assigned the name/title access point for *Macbeth* without further subdivision (although an additional heading for the Weird Sisters would also be assigned).

Using Descriptive Access Points

- No need to “add something” to the access point to “turn it into” a subject

**Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. *Macbeth*.
Weird Sisters (Fictitious characters)**

**Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. *Macbeth*—
Criticism, Textual.**

On the other hand, a textual criticism of *Macbeth* would be assigned the name/title access point, subdivided by **–Criticism, Textual**.

Using Descriptive Access Points

- No need to “add something” to the access point to “turn it into” a subject

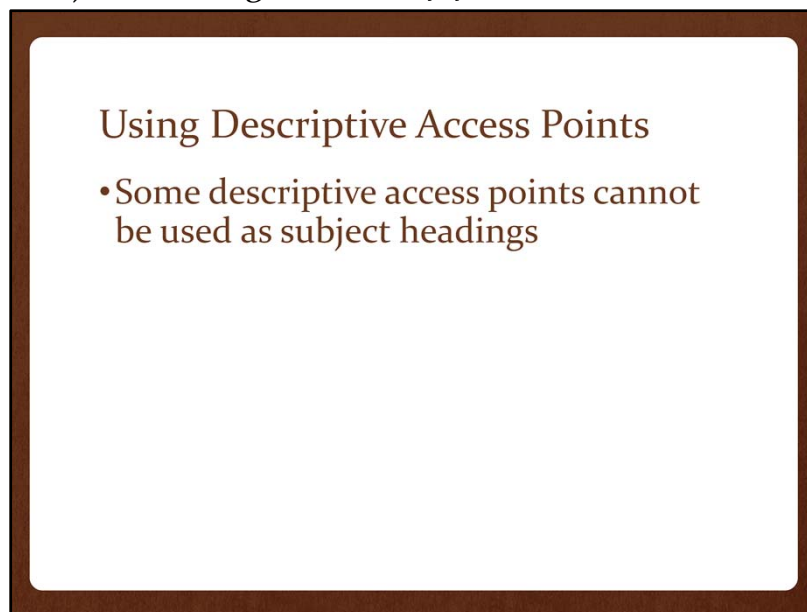
Bank of England.

Bank of England—Employees.

The same principle applies to corporate bodies as subjects.

A resource about the Bank of England in general would be assigned the heading **Bank of England.**

A resource about the Bank of England’s employees would be assigned **Bank of England—Employees.**



Using Descriptive Access Points

- Some descriptive access points cannot be used as subject headings

Some descriptive access points cannot be used as subject headings because they conflict with subject cataloging policies.

Using Descriptive Access Points

- Some descriptive access points cannot be used as subject headings

✗ **United States. President (1861-1865 : Lincoln)**

✓ **Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865.**

For example, corporate name headings for heads of state may not be used as subject headings. The personal name for the head of state is used instead.

Using Descriptive Access Points

- Some descriptive access points cannot be used as subject headings

✗ Hobbes, Thomas, 1588-1679. Leviathan. Arabic.

✓ Hobbes, Thomas, 1588-1679. Leviathan.

Title and name/title access points that include the language are not eligible for use as subject headings. Instead, we use the title or name/title access points without the language appended.

Using Descriptive Access Points

- Some descriptive access points cannot be used as subject headings
 - ✗ Peters, Elizabeth, 1927-2013.
 - ✗ Michaels, Barbara, 1927-2013.
 - ✓ Mertz, Barbara.

When literary authors use more than one name, only one of those is used as the subject heading.

Barbara Mertz used the name Elizabeth Peters on her mystery novels and Barbara Michaels on her suspense novels, and wrote nonfiction under her real name.

All of the resources about her are assigned the heading **Mertz, Barbara**.

Using Descriptive Access Points

- Some descriptive access points cannot be used as subject headings
 - ✗ Peters, Elizabeth, 1927-2013.
 - ✗ Michaels, Barbara, 1927-2013.
 - ✓ Mertz, Barbara.
 - ✓ Peters, Elizabeth, 1927-2013. Die for love.
 - ✓ Michaels, Barbara, 1927-2013. Witch.

If the resource is about one of her novels, though, the name/title access point for that novel is used, even though it is entered under either Peters or Michaels.

Using Descriptive Access Points

- Some descriptive access points cannot be used as subject headings

✘ **Ceylon.**

✔ **Sri Lanka.**

Some earlier names of jurisdictions may not be used as subjects, either, because the latest name is used.

For example, we use **Sri Lanka**, not *Ceylon*, its earlier name.

Using Descriptive Access Points

- Some descriptive access points cannot be used as subject headings

✗ Ceylon.

✓ Sri Lanka.

✗ Byzantium.

✗ Constantinople.

✓ Istanbul (Turkey)

And for subject cataloging purposes, we always use **Istanbul (Turkey)**, not *Byzantium* or *Constantinople*, the earlier names of Istanbul.

We will cover the rules governing these situations in much more depth in later modules. For now, just know that most descriptive access points can be used as subjects, but there are some very important exceptions to that general rule.

Summary

- Most descriptive access points can be assigned as subjects
 - No need to “turn them into” subjects by adding a subdivision
 - Subdivisions should be added only when permitted by the rules and as needed for the resource
 - Copy the punctuation, capitalization, and spacing exactly

In summary, descriptive access points that are established in the Name Authority File can generally be assigned as subjects. Assigning them in that way automatically makes them subjects; although subdivisions may be used at times, there is no requirement to use a subdivision with a descriptive access point in order to use it as a subject.

There is, however, a requirement to copy the punctuation, capitalization, and spacing of the descriptive access point exactly as they appear in the NAF, even if they conflict with policies for headings that are established in LCSH.

Finally, there are some descriptive access points cannot be used as subject headings.

In the next several modules we will discuss in more depth the rules for assigning each type of descriptive access point as subjects.