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# Library of Congress Subject Headings

Module 6.17  
Form Subdivisions

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Policy and Standards Division  
Library of Congress  
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## Recap and Plan

- Form headings and subdivisions
  - Indicate what a resource *is* rather than what *is about*
- This module
  - Use of form subdivisions
    - Where and how to find subdivisions and instructions on their use
    - Placement in the heading
    - Used as topical subdivisions

As we discussed in Module 4.3 on form *headings*, LCSH includes a wide variety of form headings and subdivisions that are used to identify what a resource *is* instead of what it is *about*. While some resources are assigned form headings, it is much more common to use a form *subdivision*.

In this module we will discuss the use of form subdivisions, including where and how to find them. We will provide instruction on their use, the general rules on their placement in headings, and information about their alternate use as topical subdivisions.

### Finding Form Subdivisions

- H 1095, Form and Topical Subdivisions of General Application
- H 1100-1200, other lists of free-floating and pattern subdivisions
  - When subdivision is specific to a category of headings
- Few are established *only* with specific headings

Most form subdivisions are established in H 1095, Form and Topical Subdivisions of General Application. Numerous others are established in the other lists of free-floating and pattern subdivisions because they are intended to be used with specific categories of headings.

Relative to the number of free-floating and pattern form subdivisions and the total number of LC subject headings, there are very few form subdivisions established for use with specific headings.

Finding Form Subdivisions

- All appear in the list of free-floating and pattern subdivisions in Classification Web

—**Concordances, English**   
Use as a form subdivision under uniform titles of sacred works.

As we indicated in earlier modules, all of the free-floating and pattern subdivisions can also be found through Classification Web’s free-floating subdivision search.

When you find those subdivisions, you will notice the usage note for all of the form subdivisions begin with the phrase “Use as a form subdivision,” which is about as clear as it can be.

### Finding Form Subdivisions

- References to form subdivisions are provided in LCSH
- See Also reference if an analogous heading is established

**Reference books** (May Subd Geog)   
UF Reference books, English  
BT [Books](#)  
[Reference sources](#)  
SA subdivision **Reference books** under subjects

The main body of LCSH also includes references to free-floating form subdivisions.

See Also references to subdivisions are provided when there is an analogous heading.

**Finding Form Subdivisions**

- References to form subdivisions are provided in LCSH
- USE references are provided if there is no analogous subdivision

**Personal narratives**

USE subdivision Personal narratives under individual events and wars, e.g. World War, 1939-1945—Personal narratives

If there is not an analogous heading, a USE reference is provided instead.

**Order of Subdivisions**

- Three standard configurations

Topic—Topic—Geographic—Chronology—Form.

Topic—Geographic—Topic—Chronology—Form.

Geographic—Topic—Topic—Chronology—Form.

As we have seen in several other modules in this unit, there are three standard configurations for subdivisions, and the form subdivisions come last in every one of them.

The truth is that form subdivisions are the last element probably over 95 percent of the time. There are a few notable exceptions to this rule.

### Order of Subdivisions

- Exceptions
  - The form subdivision is followed by a topical subdivision
  - Form subdivision remains a form subdivision

—**Dictionaries**—**Polyglot**   
Use as a form subdivision under subjects.

The first exception occurs when the form subdivision is followed by a topical subdivision. The classic example is the form subdivision —**Dictionaries** followed by a language or the subdivision —**Polyglot**, which in this context means a dictionary composed of multiple languages. We refer to the subdivision —**Polyglot** as a topical subdivision, although it is not topical, because it is coded as topical in the MARC format.

There is an important point to remember here: this resource is a dictionary, and the form subdivision —**Dictionaries** remains a form subdivision. It just so happens that the language subdivision comes after the form subdivision.

You will understand why we are emphasizing this point in a few minutes.



Order of Subdivisions

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions

—**Biography**—**Anecdotes**   
Use as a form subdivision under names of countries, cities, etc. for anecdotes about persons in or from those places.

The other major exception is when two form subdivisions are included in a single heading. They are assigned back-to-back, and may in fact be established as a pair.

The subdivision combination —**Biography**—**Anecdotes** is assigned when the resource is composed of biographical anecdotes about people from a place.

The resource *is* biography and it *is* anecdotes, so both subdivisions are forms.

**Order of Subdivisions**

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions
    - Maps**   
Use as a form subdivision under names of countries, cities, etc., and individual corporate bodies, and under topical headings for individual maps or collections of maps on those subjects.

More commonly, two form subdivisions are assigned separately to the same heading, based on the rules for each subdivision.

For example, the form subdivision —**Maps** may be used under names of places, individual corporate bodies, and topical headings.

**Order of Subdivisions**

- **Exceptions**
  - **Two form subdivisions**
    - Maps**   
Use as a form subdivision under names of countries, cities, etc., and individual
    - Facsimiles**   
Use as a form subdivision under headings or subdivisions designating types of printed or written materials, documents, etc.

The subdivision —**Facsimiles** may be used under headings or subdivisions designating types of printed or written materials, documents, etc.

Let's say that we are cataloging a facsimile map of London, England.

**Order of Subdivisions**

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions
    - Maps**   
Use as a form subdivision under names of countries, cities, etc., and individual
    - Facsimiles**   
Use as a form subdivision under headings or subdivisions designating types of printed or written materials, documents, etc.

**London (England)—Maps—Facsimiles.**

The form subdivision —**Maps** can be used under names of places, so we should start with **London (England)—Maps**.

Because —**Facsimiles** can be used under subdivisions denoting types of printed or written materials, —**Facsimiles** can be appended, and the full heading is **London (England)—Maps—Facsimiles**.

**Order of Subdivisions**

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions

—**Bibliography**

Use as a form subdivision under subjects for works consisting of bibliographies about the subject. Use under names of individual persons and corporate bodies for lists of works by or about the person or corporate body.

Let's look at another example.

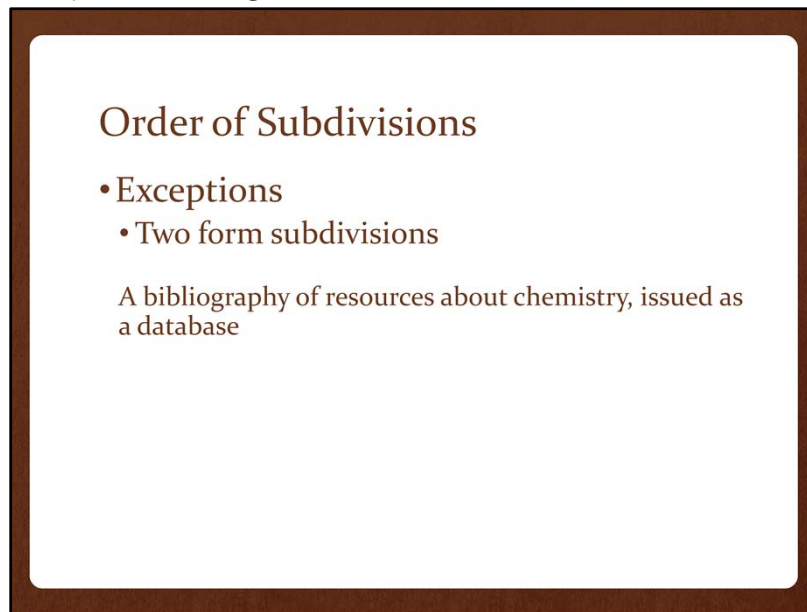
The form subdivision —**Bibliography** may be used under subjects.

## Order of Subdivisions

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions
    - Bibliography**   
Use as a form subdivision under subjects for works consisting of bibliographies about the subject. Use under names of individual persons.
    - Databases**   
Use as a form subdivision under subjects for databases on those subjects.

So can the form subdivision —**Databases**.

So how do you know in what order they should be assigned?



Order of Subdivisions

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions

A bibliography of resources about chemistry, issued as a database

Let's say that you are cataloging a bibliography of resources about chemistry, and that bibliography is in the form of a database.

**Order of Subdivisions**

- **Exceptions**
  - Two form subdivisions

A bibliography of resources about chemistry, issued as a database

**Chemistry—Databases—Bibliography.**

**Chemistry—Bibliography—Databases.**

Your two options are to assign **Chemistry—Databases—Bibliography** or **Chemistry—Bibliography—Databases**. Both are valid from a technical standpoint, but which one describes the resource better?

We have to think about what each of those two headings means.



**Order of Subdivisions**

- **Exceptions**
  - Two form subdivisions

A bibliography of resources about chemistry, issued as a database

**Chemistry—Databases—Bibliography.**  
A bibliography of databases about chemistry

**Chemistry—Bibliography—Databases.**

**Chemistry—Databases—Bibliography** means that the resource is a bibliography of databases about chemistry.

Notice what I did there: I read the subject string backward.

So it is a bibliography of databases about chemistry.

**Order of Subdivisions**

- **Exceptions**
  - Two form subdivisions

A bibliography of resources about chemistry, issued as a database

**Chemistry—Databases—Bibliography.**  
A bibliography of databases about chemistry

**Chemistry—Bibliography—Databases.**  
A database that is a bibliography about chemistry

**Chemistry—Bibliography—Databases** means that the resource is a database that is a bibliography about chemistry.

**Order of Subdivisions**

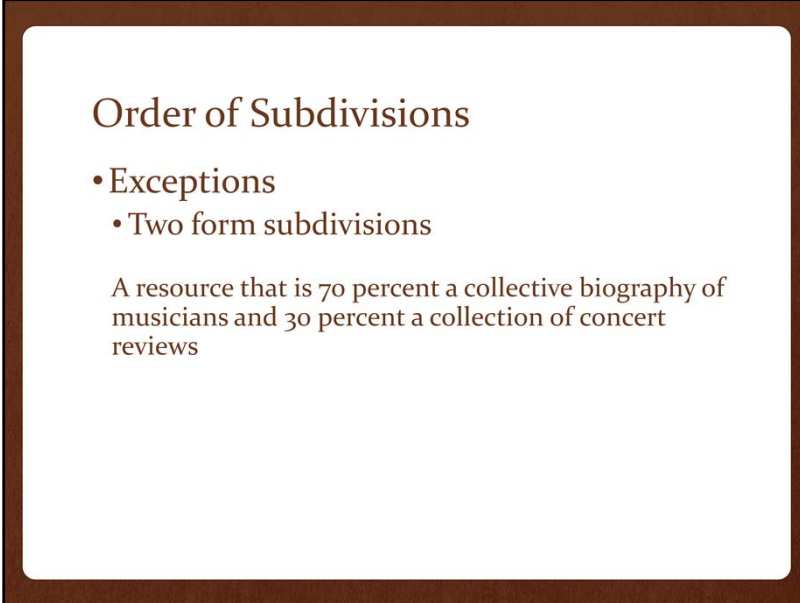
- **Exceptions**
  - Two form subdivisions

A bibliography of resources about chemistry, issued as a database

**✗ Chemistry—Databases—Bibliography.**  
A bibliography of databases about chemistry

**✓ Chemistry—Bibliography—Databases.**  
A database that is a bibliography about chemistry

The second heading combination on your screen is the proper one for the resource.



Order of Subdivisions

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions

A resource that is 70 percent a collective biography of musicians and 30 percent a collection of concert reviews

Sometimes, though, it is not possible to assign two form subdivisions in a single heading.

Consider this resource that is primarily a collective biography of musicians, but is more than 20 percent also a collection of concert reviews.

**Order of Subdivisions**

- **Exceptions**
  - Two form subdivisions

A resource that is 70 percent a collective biography of musicians and 30 percent a collection of concert reviews

**Musicians—Biography.**

The form subdivision —**Biography** can be used under the main heading **Musicians** because the usage note for —**Biography** reads:

**Order of Subdivisions**

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions

—**Biography** □  
Use as a form subdivision under names of countries, cities, etc., names of individual corporate bodies, uniform titles of sacred works, and under classes of persons, ethnic groups, types of animals, and historic events for works of collective or individual biography.

Use as a form subdivision under names of countries, cities, etc., names of individual corporate bodies, uniform titles of sacred works, and under classes of persons, ethnic groups, types of animals, and historic events for works of collective or individual biography.

Instruction sheet H 1330 provides further information on where and when to use the subdivision — **Biography**, and you should read it before assigning the subdivision in actual cataloging.

Order of Subdivisions

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions

A resource that is 70 percent a collective biography of musicians and 30 percent a collection of concert reviews

**Musicians—Biography.**  
**Concerts**

Now, **Musicians—Biography** covers only 70 percent of the resource. We still have to bring out the concert review aspect.

There is an established heading **Concerts**.

Order of Subdivisions

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions

Reviews  
USE [Books—Reviews](#)  
[Information resources—Reviews](#)  
[Newspapers—Sections, columns, etc.—Reviews](#)  
[Reference sources—Reviews](#)  
[Television programs—Reviews](#)  
[Theater—Reviews](#)

If we look up the concept of reviews in LCSH, we find that it is not established, but it is a cross-reference to several headings. Unfortunately, **Concerts** is not one of them, but notice that the subdivision —**Reviews** is used consistently. That gives us the idea to see if —**Reviews** is free-floating as well as occasionally established.



**Order of Subdivisions**

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions

—**Reviews**

Use as a form subdivision under types of books and nonbook materials for collections of descriptive and evaluative accounts of those materials. Also use under headings for mass media and the performing arts for collections of critical writings about programs, performances, etc.

NT —[Book reviews](#)

Searching it in Class Web, we find that it is established as a free-floating subdivision, and the scope note says in part,

Use as a form subdivision ... under headings for mass media and the performing arts for collections of critical writings about programs, performances, etc.

Order of Subdivisions

- Exceptions
  - Two form subdivisions

A resource that is 70 percent a collective biography of musicians and 30 percent a collection of concert reviews

**Musicians—Biography.**  
**Concerts—Reviews.**

We can therefore make the heading **Concerts—Reviews.**

**Order of Subdivisions**

- **Exceptions**
  - Two form subdivisions

A resource that is 70 percent a collective biography of musicians and 30 percent a collection of concert reviews

**Musicians—Biography—Reviews.**  
**Musicians—Reviews—Biography.**  
**Concerts—Reviews—Biography.**  
**Concerts—Biography—Reviews.**

We cannot combine the subdivisions —**Biography** and —**Reviews** into a single heading. We have to bring out the fact that the resource is about concerts and musicians both.

In addition, the possible combinations are completely illogical. Reviews of biographies about musicians? It is possible that such a resource exists, but it certainly is not applicable to this resource.

Biography of reviews about musicians, or about concerts? Can you even imagine what a biography of a review would be? We certainly can't.

How about reviews of biographies of concerts? No, that's not possible either.

If we follow the rules for each of the form subdivisions, we would never assign the nonsensical combinations. The subdivision —**Biography** cannot be assigned on a free-floating basis under topics like **Concerts** or publications like **Reviews**, and —**Reviews** cannot be assigned under classes of persons like **Musicians**.

### Form Subdivisions Used as Topics

- Most form subdivisions can also be used as topical subdivisions
  - Free-floating and pattern instruction sheets do not indicate which ones
  - For guidance, consult
    - Instruction sheets about the forms
    - Free-floating list in Classification Web

Remember a few minutes ago when we stressed that both of the subdivisions we were discussing were form subdivisions?

That is because most of the form subdivisions can also be used as topical subdivisions, for resources about the form.

Unfortunately, the free-floating and pattern subdivision lists in the SHM do not explicitly indicate which can be used as topics. However, instruction sheets dedicated to particular forms do, and so does the free-floating list in Classification Web.

**Form Subdivisions Used as Topics**  
**From H 1969, Quotations and Maxims**

**BACKGROUND:** *The subdivision —**Quotations** is used under classes of persons, ethnic groups, and names of individual persons and families for collections or discussions of quotations by or about the group, person, or family. It is also used under the uniform titles of individual sacred works for collections or discussions of quotations from or about these works. ... This instruction sheet provides guidelines for assigning these subdivisions.*

Here is an example.

The background statement in H 1969 says in part,

The subdivision —**Quotations** is used under classes of persons, ethnic groups, and names of individual persons and families for collections or discussions of quotations by or about the group, person, or family. It is also used under the uniform titles of individual sacred works for collections or discussions of quotations from or about these works.

“Collections or discussions of quotations” means that the subdivision may be used as a *form* subdivision for resources that are compilations of quotations and as a *topical* subdivision for resources that are about quotations.

### Form Subdivisions Used as Topics

**—Quotations**

Use as a form subdivision under names of individual persons and families, classes of persons, and ethnic groups for collections of quotations of or about

Use as a topical subdivision under names of individual persons and families, classes of persons, and ethnic groups for works about quotations of or about those persons or groups. Also use under uniform titles of sacred works for works about quotations from or about those works.

The entry for the subdivision **—Quotations** has two scope notes in Classification Web. The first begins “use as a form subdivision,” and the second begins “use as a topical subdivision.”

**Form Subdivisions Used as Topics**  
**From H 1920, Newspapers on Special  
Topics and Ethnic Newspapers**

**4. Works about topical newspapers.** ... Do not use the subdivision —**Newspapers** with or without further subdivision when cataloging a work about newspapers. The subdivision may be used only as a form subdivision to designate an individual newspaper.

Some form subdivisions cannot be used as topical subdivisions. In that case, the SHM might be silent on the issue, or it may specifically say that it cannot be done.

H 1920 is of the latter group. This excerpt from section 4 states,

Do not use the subdivision —**Newspapers** with or without further subdivision when cataloging a work about newspapers. The subdivision may be used only as a form subdivision to designate an individual newspaper.

**Form Subdivisions Used as Topics**  
**From H 1920, Newspapers on Special Topics and Ethnic Newspapers**

**4. Works about topical newspapers.** ... Do not use the subdivision **—Newspapers** with or without further subdivision when cataloging a work about newspapers. The subdivision may be used only as a form subdivision to designate an individual

ne **—Newspapers**   
Use as a form subdivision under subjects.

Accordingly, the entry for **—Newspapers** in the list of free-floating subdivisions in Classification Web includes only one scope note, indicating that the subdivision may be used only as a form.

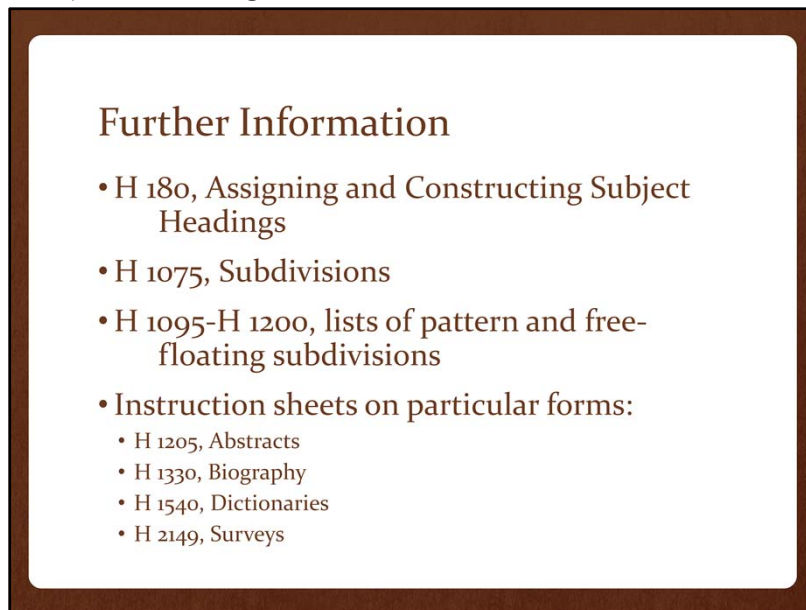


Topical Subdivisions Used as Forms

- Subdivisions marked as topical can never be used as form subdivisions

—**Nitrogen content** (May Subd Geog)   
Use as a topical subdivision under individual materials and types of materials.

While most form subdivisions can also be used as topical subdivisions, the reverse is not true. Topical subdivisions can never be used as form subdivisions.



**Further Information**

- H 180, Assigning and Constructing Subject Headings
- H 1075, Subdivisions
- H 1095-H 1200, lists of pattern and free-floating subdivisions
- Instruction sheets on particular forms:
  - H 1205, Abstracts
  - H 1330, Biography
  - H 1540, Dictionaries
  - H 2149, Surveys

More information about form subdivisions and their assignment can be found throughout the SHM.