Library of Congress
Subject Headings
Module 7.1
Is the Heading Properly Constructed?
Part 1

Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division
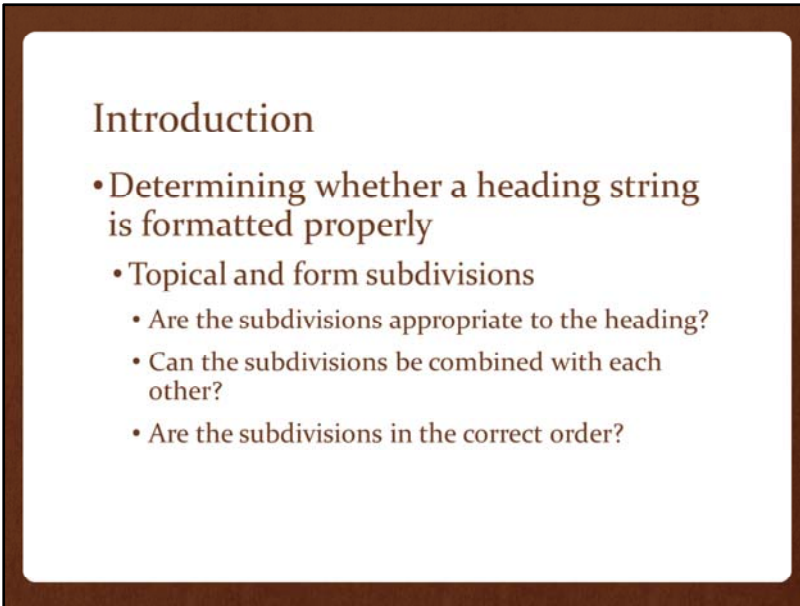Library of Congress
August 2019

Introduction

- Determining whether a heading string is formatted properly
  - The heading
    - Is it established in LCSH or the NAF?
    - Is it one that can be created on a free-floating basis (some geographic and music headings only)?

Whether you are training someone, doing copy cataloging, correcting bibliographic descriptions, doing a performance evaluation, or checking your own work, you will need to determine whether a heading string – what we have typically called a **[heading]— [subdivision]** combination in this training – is correctly put together.

You will need to determine whether the main heading is in fact valid – that is, that it is established in LCSH or the NAF, or is one of the limited number of main headings that can be created on a free-floating basis.

Introduction

- Determining whether a heading string is formatted properly
  - Topical and form subdivisions
    - Are the subdivisions appropriate to the heading?
    - Can the subdivisions be combined with each other?
    - Are the subdivisions in the correct order?

You will need to determine whether the topical and form subdivisions assigned can be used with a particular heading, and with the other subdivisions that were assigned. You will also need to determine whether they are assigned in the correct order.

Introduction

- Determining whether a heading string is formatted properly
  - Chronological subdivisions
    - Can the heading be subdivided chronologically?
    - Has the correct subdivision been used?
    - Is the subdivision properly located?

You will need to determine whether the heading can in fact be subdivided chronologically, whether the proper chronological subdivision has been assigned, and whether the subdivision is located in the proper place in the heading.

Introduction

- Determining whether a heading string is formatted properly
  - Geographic subdivision
    - Can the heading and any subdivisions be subdivided geographically?
    - Is the subdivision formatted properly?
    - Is the subdivision properly located?

You will need to determine whether a geographic subdivision can in fact be used, whether the subdivision itself is formulated correctly, and whether its placement is correct.

In order to do all of this, you will need to break a subdivided heading into its component parts, check them against LCSH and the instructions in the SHM, and determine whether to put them back together again, and how to fix them, if not.

In this module we will describe the general principles to follow when reviewing headings and then demonstrate those principles with three examples. We will also provide additional examples in the next module.

General Principles

- Check every element of the heading separately and together
  - Is the main heading valid?
  - Is each of the subdivisions valid?
  - Can the subdivision or subdivisions be combined into a single heading?
    - Look at the usage instructions in *Classification Web* and in the SHM

When evaluating a heading for correctness, you should check every element of the string to make sure that it is valid, and to make sure that the individual pieces can be put together into a whole. The main heading and each of the subdivisions needs to be checked to determine whether they are valid and whether they can be combined into a single complete heading string.

To do that, search LCSH and the list of LCSH free-floating subdivisions and follow any instructions you find there. And search the Name Authority File for any jurisdictions that are in the heading, as well. And do not forget to search the SHM, too, because there are probably instructions that you can find there.

General Principles

- Order of operations
  1. Main heading
  2. Topical, chronological, and form subdivisions
  3. Geographic subdivision (both format and placement)
- Always double-check the string against LCSH, excluding the geographic subdivision

The general order of operations is to search the main heading first, and then the topical, chronological, and form subdivisions.

It is most useful to save the geographic subdivisions for last, because you not only need to know how the subdivision should be formatted, but also where it should be located within the heading string.

As you examine the main heading and subdivisions, notice whether they can be geographically subdivided. By the time you are finished, you will know exactly where that geographic subdivision should be placed.

And always, *always*, remember to check the string – excluding the geographic subdivision – in LCSH in order to make sure that it is not a UF reference instead of an authorized heading.

Example 1

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.
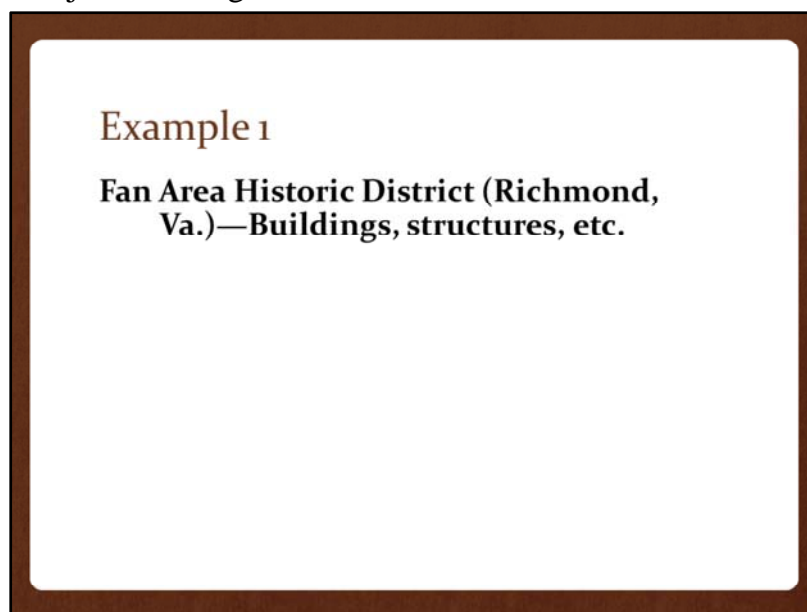
Our first example is **Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.**

First we need to determine whether the main heading is valid. Historic districts are established in the Name Authority File, but if you did not know that, you could easily search both LCSH and the NAF.

Example 1

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)

By searching the NAF we find that the descriptive access point **Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)** is established.

Now let's search the subdivision **–Buildings, structures, etc.** in Classification Web.

We want to:
- see if the subdivision is established, and
- To find what the usage instructions say.

Example 1

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)

⊖ Subject heading ❶
Free-floating subdivision ❶ buildings structures ✕

—**Buildings, structures, etc.** ▭
Use as a topical subdivision under names of cities and city sections.

In Class Web we see that the subdivision is established, and the note says to use it as a topical subdivision under names of cities and city sections.

Is the Fan Area Historic District a city section?

Example 1

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.

From H 720, City Sections

Since July 1996, headings for city sections, including districts, designated historic districts, special economic zones, quarters, and neighborhoods, are established as geographic headings in the name authority file.

Historic districts that are in cities are considered to be city sections, according to SHM instruction sheet H 720, which says,

> Since July 1996, headings for city sections, including districts, designated historic districts, special economic zones, quarters, and neighborhoods, are established as geographic headings in the name authority file.

It looks like the heading string **Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.** is correctly formulated.

A best practice, though, is to look for instructions in the SHM.

Example 1

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.

From H 1334.5, Buildings and Structures in Cities: Assignment of Headings

> **2. When to assign [city]–Buildings, structures, etc.** If the work discusses the class of structures from the *architectural* standpoint, that is, if it describes the structures as physical entities, also assign the heading [*city*]–**Buildings, structures, etc.**

In fact, there is an instruction sheet called H 1334.5, Buildings and Structures in Cities: Assignment of Headings. Sections 2 and 3 provide instructions on when to assign the subdivision, but do not provide any additional prohibitions or exceptions.

Section 2 says,

> If the work discusses the class of structures from the *architectural* standpoint, that is, if it describes the structures as physical entities, also <u>assign the heading</u> **[*city*]– Buildings, structures, etc.**

Example 1

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.

From H 1334.5, Buildings and Structures in Cities: Assignment of Headings

> *3. When to omit [city]–Buildings, structures, etc.* If the work discusses the buildings from the *institutional* standpoint, that is, if it describes the activities or services performed or occurring in the buildings, rather than describing the buildings as physical entities, do not assign the [*city*]–**Buildings, structures, etc.** heading.

Section 3 says,

> If the work discusses the buildings from the *institutional* standpoint, that is, if it describes the activities or services performed or occurring in the buildings, rather than describing the buildings as physical entities, do not assign the [*city*]–**Buildings, structures, etc.** heading.

If we had the resource in front of us, we could determine its focus and follow these instructions. For the purposes of this example, though, we just have to determine whether the heading itself is constructed properly. Because we are allowed to use **–Buildings, structures, etc.** with this type of heading, the heading is properly formulated.

Example 1

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.

Fan (African people)
    USE Fang (West African people)
            Fe'fe' (Cameroonian people)

Fan (Cameroonian people)
   USE Fe'fe' (Cameroonian people)

But remember that before we can say definitively that the heading is valid, we have to search it in LCSH to make sure that the **[heading]—[subdivision]** combination is not a UF.

If it were, it would fall between the two entries on your screen.

Example 1

Fan Area Historic District (Richmond, Va.)—Buildings, structures, etc.

✓

The heading is properly formulated.
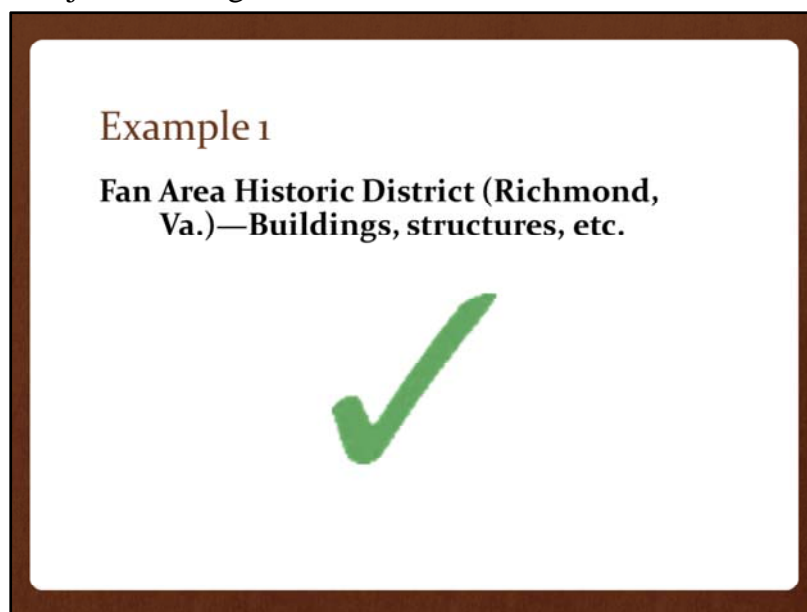
Example 2

Roses—Southern States—Deformities.
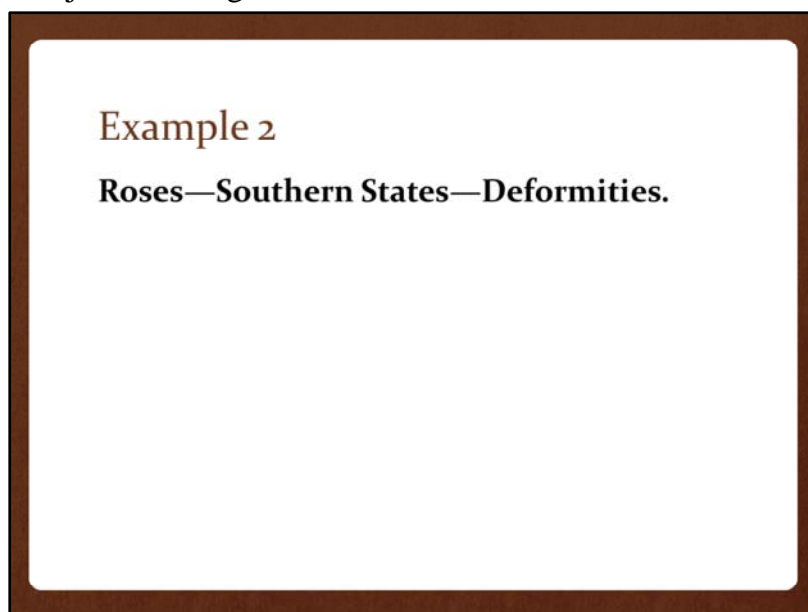
Our second example is **Roses—Southern States—Deformities**.

When evaluating a heading with a geographic subdivision, it is often useful to mentally remove the geographic subdivision from the string and deal with it last.

We will therefore consider the main heading, then the topical subdivision, and *then* the geographic subdivision.

Example 2
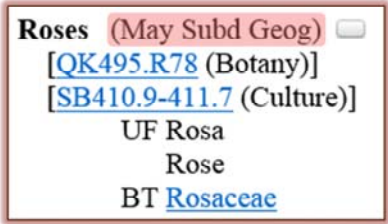
Roses—Southern States—Deformities.

Roses (May Subd Geog)
[QK495.R78 (Botany)]
[SB410.9-411.7 (Culture)]
UF Rosa
Rose
BT Rosaceae

Our first step is to search the heading in LCSH, and we find that **Roses** is a valid heading.

Example 2

Roses—Southern States—Deformities.

Roses (May Subd Geog)
[QK495.R78 (Botany)]
[SB410.9-411.7 (Culture)]
UF Rosa
Rose
BT Rosaceae

We should note that the heading may be subdivided geographically. We will remember that for later.

Now we will check the subdivision **–Deformities**.

Example 2

Roses—Southern States—Deformities.

—Deformities
    USE —Abnormalities
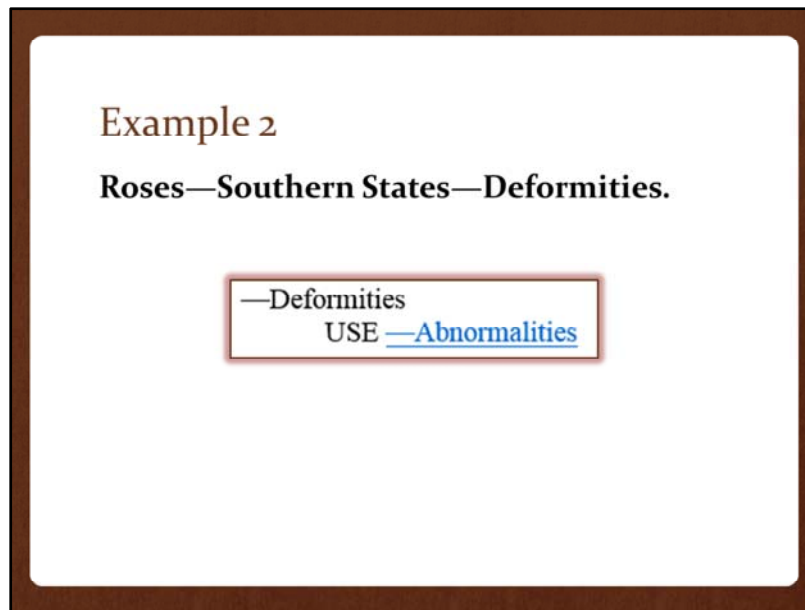
The subdivision *–Deformities* does not exist, but it is a cross-reference to the subdivision **–Abnormalities**.

We cannot assume that it can be used with the heading **Roses**, though.

We have to click on **–Abnormalities** to look at the full entry, which includes instructions.

At **–Abnormalities**, we find a note about further subdivision, and then a scope note that says,

> Use as a topical subdivision under individual animals and groups of animals, individual plants and groups of plants, and individual organs and regions of the body.

Example 2

Roses—Southern States—Abnormalities.

—**Abnormalities** (May Subd Geog)
Further subdivide by subdivisions used under diseases when used under animals and organs and regions of the body.
Use as a topical subdivision under individual animals and groups of animals, individual plants and groups of plants, and individual organs and regions of the body.
UF —Abnormities and deformities [Former subdivision]
—Deformities

Since **Roses** is a group of plants, we can use the subdivision **–Abnormalities** in the place of *–Deformities*.

Example 2

Roses—Southern States—Abnormalities.

—**Abnormalities** (May Subd Geog)
  Further subdivide by subdivisions used under diseases
    when used under animals and organs and regions of
    the body.
  Use as a topical subdivision under individual animals
    and groups of animals, individual plants and groups
    of plants, and individual organs and regions of the
    body.
  UF —Abnormities and deformities [Former
    subdivision]
    —Deformities

We also should note that **–Abnormalities** can be subdivided geographically.

Now that we have finished correcting the main heading and the topical subdivision, we can move on to the geographic subdivision.

We already know that both the heading and the topical subdivision can be subdivided geographically, but where should the subdivision go?

> ## Example 2
>
> **Roses—Southern States—Abnormalities.**
>
> From H 870, Interposition of Geographic Subdivisions
>
> > **BACKGROUND**: When topical headings are combined with topical subdivisions, place may be expressed by one of two methods: (1) interposing the name of the place between the heading and the subdivision, for example, **Construction industry–Poland–Finance**, or (2) further subdividing the topical subdivision by place, for example, **Construction industry–Law and legislation–Poland**.

Instruction sheet H 870 answers the question for us.

The background statement says,

> When topical headings are combined with topical subdivisions, place may be expressed by one of two methods:
>
> > (1) interposing the name of the place between the heading and the subdivision, for example, **Construction industry–Poland–Finance**, or
> >
> > (2) further subdividing the topical subdivision by place, for example, **Construction industry–Law and legislation–Poland**.

Example 2

Roses—Southern States—Abnormalities.

From H 870, Interposition of Geographic Subdivisions

> *1. General rule.* Bring out place for topical headings with topical subdivisions by interposing the name of the place between the main heading and its subdivision …., provided that the heading is authorized for geographic subdivision and the subdivision is not, for example, **Construction industry–Poland–Finance**.

The general rule states,

> Bring out place for topical headings with topical subdivisions by interposing the name of the place between the main heading and its subdivision …., provided that the heading is authorized for geographic subdivision but the subdivision is not, for example, **Construction industry–Poland–Finance**.

Therefore, the geographic subdivision in our heading is in the wrong place. It should be after the *final* element that can be geographically subdivided. And that is the subdivision – **Abnormalities**.

Now, we still have to check the geographic subdivision itself.

Southern States appears to be a non-jurisdictional region, so we should search for it in LCSH.

Southern States is a valid heading, but is the form of the subdivision correct?

To find out, we can refer to the rules in H 830, Geographic Subdivision, but the information is usually present in the 781 field of the MARC authority record.

Example 2

Roses—Abnormalities—Southern States.

Southern States
    Here are entered works on the part of the United
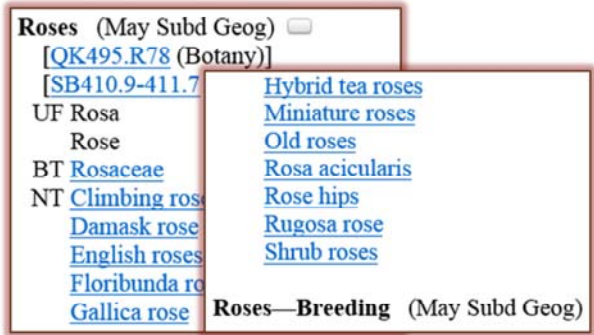   States south of the Mason-Dixon Line, the Ohio
    781 0 $z Southern States   d
    the western border of Texas, sometimes
    including or excluding individual states along
    these borders.

When we look at the record, we see that the subdivision is formulated properly.

We have to perform our final check against LCSH.

Again, you want to remove the geographic subdivision. Just search **Roses—Abnormalities**.

The reference, if there were one, would appear before **Roses—Breeding**.

Example 2

Roses—Abnormalities—Southern States.
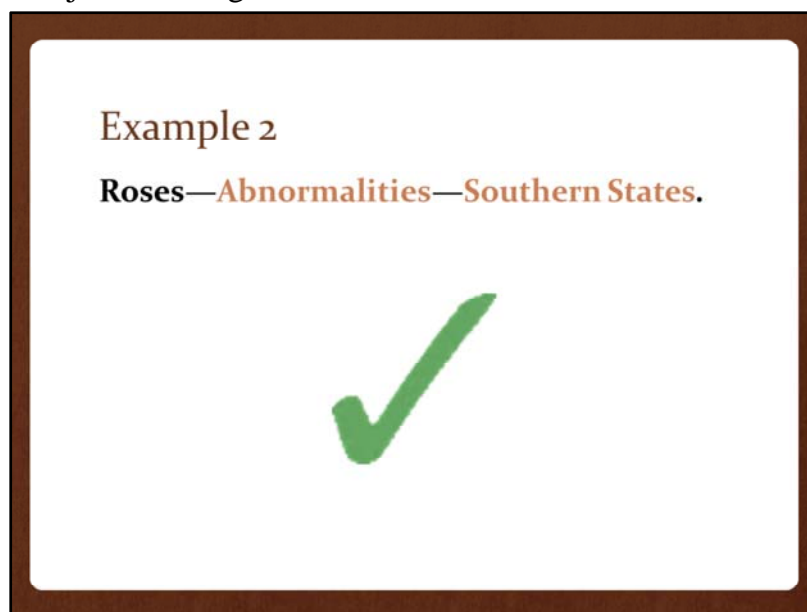
The LCSH string is now correct. We had to revise the topical subdivision to the authorized form, and move the geographic subdivision to the correct location.

Example 3

Medieval coins—Russia—Moscow— History—To 1500—Identification.
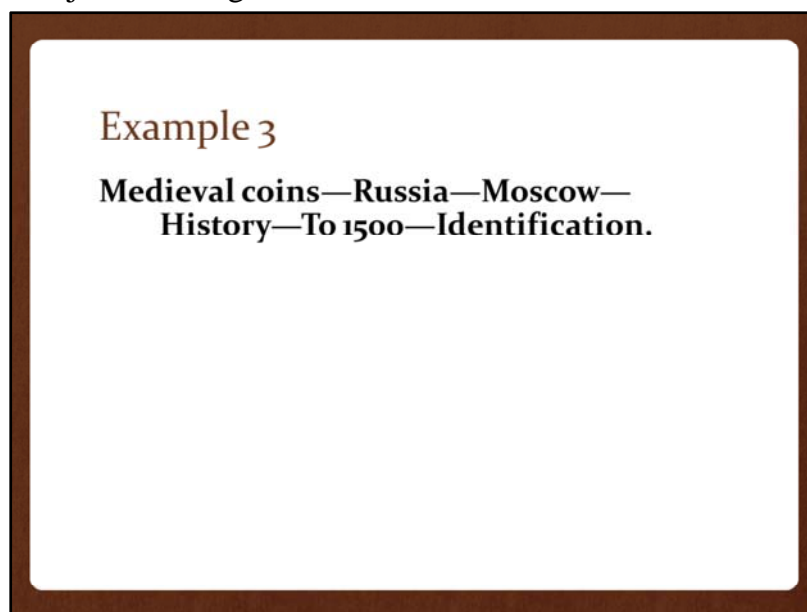
Our third example is **Medieval coins—Russia—Moscow—History—To 1500— Identification**.

Let's start at the beginning of the string and search **Medieval coins**.

Example 3

Medieval coins—Russia—Moscow— History—To 1500—Identification.

> Medieval coins
> USE Coins, Medieval

We find that it is not an authorized heading, and is instead a UF reference to **Coins, Medieval**.

Example 3

Medieval coins—Russia—Moscow—History—To 1500—Identification.
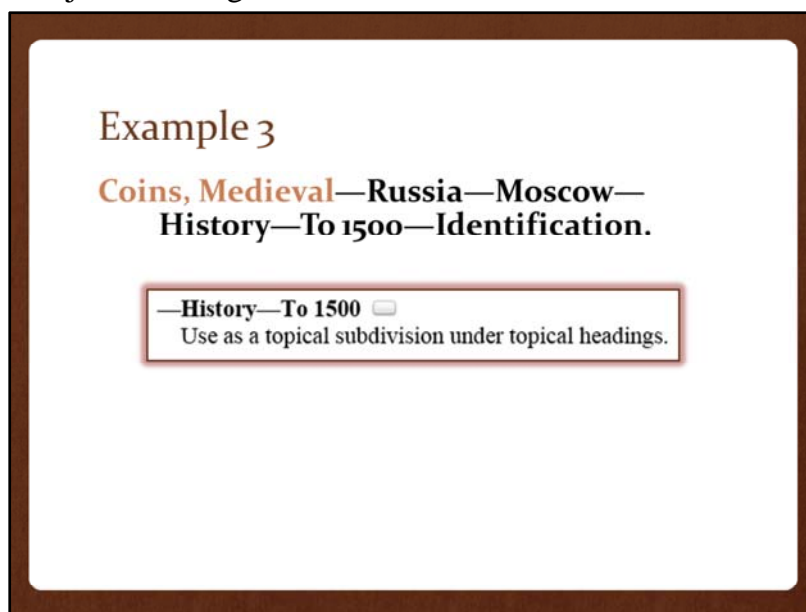
Medieval coins

Coins, Medieval (May Subd Geog)
  [CJ1601-1715]
  UF Medieval coins
  NT Tremissis

We will take note that the heading can be subdivided geographically, but let's investigate the **–History—To 1500** portion of the heading before determining the placement of the geographic subdivision.

By searching Classification Web, we find that **–History—To 1500** is a valid free-floating subdivision that can be used under topical headings. **Coins, Medieval** is certainly topical, but is the subdivision valid for use with this heading?

Before we consult the SHM, we should think about what the heading would mean. As generally defined, the medieval period occurred from about 600 to 1500. That being the case, it is not necessary to have a chronological subdivision stating that the resource is about medieval coins through 1500, because the subdivision is redundant. **Coins, Medieval** *means* coins from 600 to 1500. The subdivision **–To 1500** should therefore be removed.

Example 3

Coins, Medieval—Russia—Moscow—
History—~~To 1500~~—Identification.

> **—History—To 1500**
> Use as a topical subdivision under topical headings.

We are left with the subdivision **–History**. Should we use it under **Coins, Medieval**?

It is time to consult the SHM.

SHM instruction sheet H 1647 states, "Do not use **–History** under headings or subdivisions that denote history, that have an obvious historical connotation, or that have been treated as inherently historical."

We have to ask ourselves: does **Coins, Medieval** denote history? No.

Does it have an obvious historical connotation? Yes, it does.

We therefore cannot assign the subdivision **–History** with **Coins, Medieval**.

Now let's turn to the subdivision **–Identification**.

As we can see, **–Identification** is used

> [a]s a form subdivision under individual animals and groups of animals, individual plants and groups of plants, and types of objects for works presenting the characteristics of a group for the purpose of determining the names of its members.

Example 3

**Coins, Medieval**—**Russia**—**Moscow**— ~~History~~—~~To 1500~~—**Identification.**

—**Identification**
Use as a form subdivision under individual animals and groups of animals, individual plants and groups of plants, and types of objects for works presenting the characteristics of a group for the purpose of determining the names of its members.

The pertinent phrase is "types of objects."

Since coins are a type of object, we can assign the subdivision.

We should note that the subdivision **–Identification** cannot be geographically subdivided.

Example 3

Coins, Medieval—Russia—Moscow—
~~History—To 1500~~—Identification.
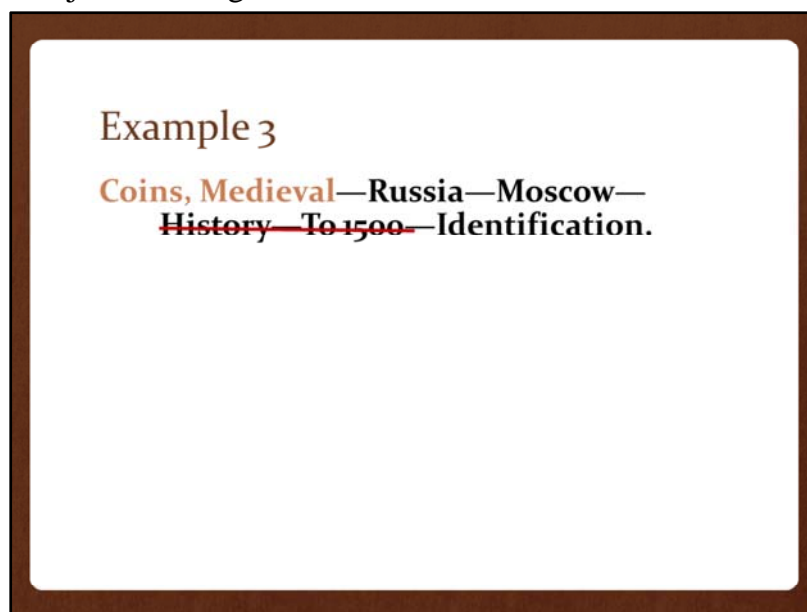
Now we will review the geographic subdivision.

As before, our first step is to look up the heading that would be associated with the subdivision presented: **Moscow (Russia).**

It is a city, so it will be established in the Name Authority File.

We find it, and look at the 781 field in the record.

The correct geographic subdivision includes the qualifier **(Federation)**.

Using that qualifier may look a bit strange to you because the Russian Federation has existed only since the fall of the Soviet Union and our heading refers to medieval coins – when Russia was an Empire.

We assure you, though, that the subdivision is correct. We know that because of the instructions in SHM instruction sheet H 1023, Soviet Union, which states,

Example 3

Coins, Medieval—**Russia**—**Moscow**—
~~History—To 1500~~—Identification.

From 1023, Soviet Union

> *Geographic subdivision.* The normal rules for geographic subdivision given in H 830 apply for the individual republics. Divide all localities only through the latest name of each republic, regardless of the time period covered in the work being cataloged.

The normal rules for geographic subdivision given in H 830 apply for the individual republics. Divide all localities only through the latest name of each republic, regardless of the time period covered in the work being cataloged.

Example 3

Coins, Medieval—Russia (Federation)—
    Moscow—History—To 1500—
    Identification.

Coins, Medieval   (May Subd Geog)
    [CH601-1715]
—Identification ▢
    Use as a form subdivision under individual animals and
    groups of animals, individual plants and groups of
    plants, and types of objects for works presenting the
    characteristics of a group for the purpose of
    determining the names of its members.

There is one more question to be answered: is the geographic subdivision in the correct place?

Coins, Medieval can be subdivided geographically, but **–Identification** cannot be.
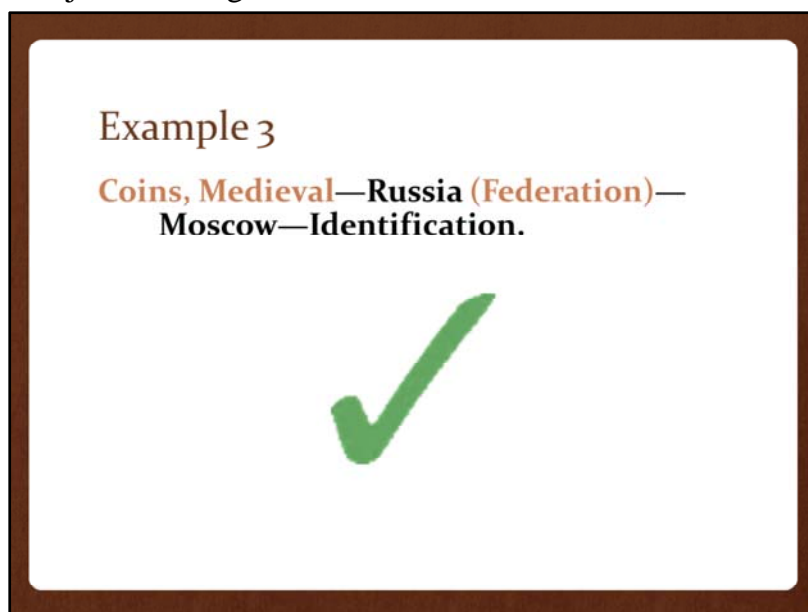
The subdivision is properly placed.

Our final check is to search **Coins, Medieval—Identification** in LCSH.

It is not a UF.

The valid heading is **Coins, Medieval—Russia (Federation)—Moscow—Identification.**