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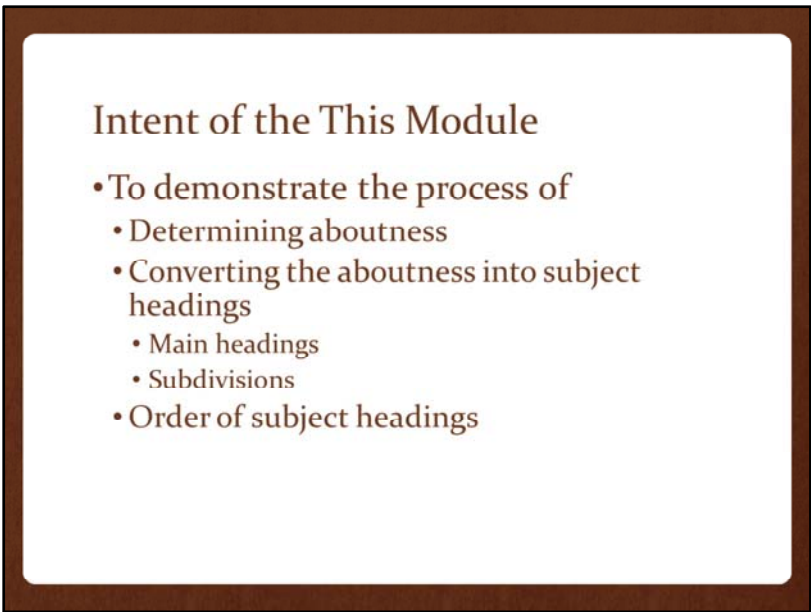
# Library of Congress Subject Headings

Module 7.7  
Extended Example 1:  
*America's Stamp on Sports*

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



Intent of the This Module

- To demonstrate the process of
  - Determining aboutness
  - Converting the aboutness into subject headings
    - Main headings
    - Subdivisions
  - Order of subject headings

In this module we will demonstrate the process for assigning an array of subject headings to a single resource.

The process begins by determining what the resource is about as well as its form.

We will then convert the aboutness statement into subject headings, including subdivisions as appropriate.

Finally, if it was necessary to assign more than one heading we will determine the correct order of those headings.



The resource we are cataloging is titled *America's Stamp on Sports*.

The summary on the back cover states,

Learn about the stamps that the US Postal Service has issued to commemorate athletes and sports over the past seventy years. Each entry in this richly illustrated encyclopedic history discusses

- The history and importance of the commemorated sports and athletes
- The processes used to create the stamps and
- The public reception of the stamp

Each entry also includes full-color reproductions of the stamps.

What are the key words and phrases in the summary?



**America's Stamp on Sports**

Summary

Learn about the stamps that the US Postal Service has issued to commemorate athletes and sports over the past seventy years!

Each entry in this richly illustrated encyclopedic history discusses

- The history and importance of the commemorated sports and athletes
- The processes used to create the stamps
- The public reception of the stamp

Each entry also includes full-color reproductions of the stamps.

The key words and phrases that we chose are underlined and highlighted in a different color.

We have chosen stamps, US Postal Service, athletes, sports, richly illustrated, encyclopedic, and full-color reproductions.

They can be organized into two categories:

- those that describe the content (U.S. stamps, athletes, and sports), and
- those that describe the form (illustrated and encyclopedic).

Now we will look at the table of contents.



The first thing we notice is that there are two parts to the resource: one is devoted to sports, and one is devoted to athletes.

By doing a bit of math based on the number of pages in each section, we find that 62 percent of the resource is about sports as commemorated on postage stamps, and 38 percent is about the athletes that appear on postage stamps.

Recall that one of the fundamental principles of LCSH, as described in SHM instruction sheet H 180, is that a subject heading may be assigned only if the topic constitutes at least 20 percent of the resource.

I would say that we are good here; there is no question that both athletes and sports are at least 20 percent.

Let's look further at the table of contents.



The topics in part 1 are arranged alphabetically by sport.

There are 21 sports listed, and part 1 as a whole constitutes 62 percent of the entire resource.

Is it likely, then, that the individual sports would be at least 20 percent of the resource, so that we should assign headings for individual sports? No.

Therefore, we will have to consider part 1 as a whole, instead of considering individual subject headings for individual sports.



Part 2 consists of names of athletes arranged alphabetically, but notice that they are alphabetical by first name. That really does not matter; the important point is that the entries are clearly alphabetical.

As with part 1, we should consider whether any of these individual athletes would merit individual subject headings. There are 30 athletes listed, and this section as a whole is only 38 percent of the resource. It is again very unlikely that coverage of any of these individuals would constitute 20 percent of the entire resource. Personal name headings should not be assigned as subject headings in this case.

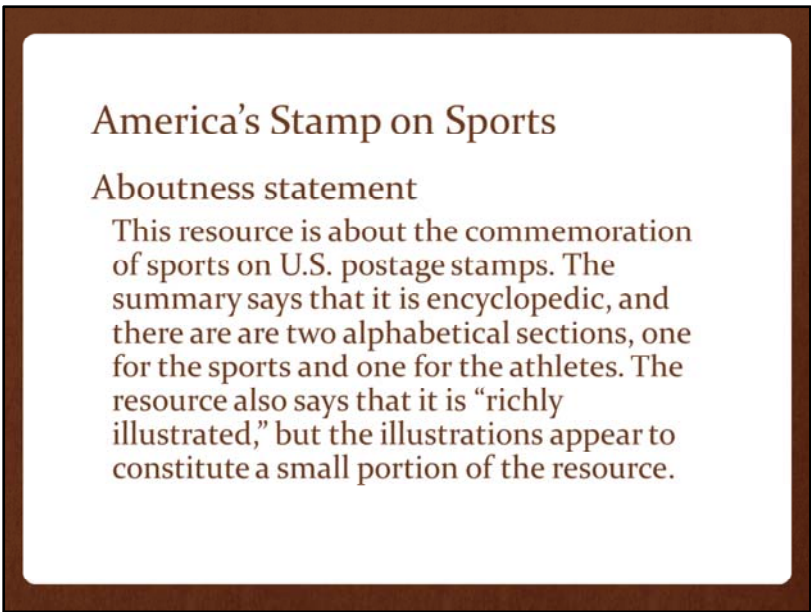
So far, we have confirmed that this resource is as it says on the back cover: it is about sports and athletes commemorated on postage stamps. We have also determined that it is arranged like an encyclopedia – that is, alphabetically. The cover also says it is richly illustrated, which could make a difference in how it is cataloged.



This slide consists of mock-ups of two sample pages.

There are definitely illustrations, as the cover says, but the resource has a lot more text than illustrations.





Our aboutness statement might read something like the following:

This resource is about the commemoration of sports on U.S. postage stamps. The summary says that it is encyclopedic and there are two alphabetical sections, one for the sports and one for the athletes. The resource also says that it is "richly illustrated," but the illustrations appear to constitute a small portion of the resource.

The cover summary does seem to be indicative of the contents, except that it seemed to overstate the importance of the illustrations. The subdivision **-Pictorial works** can be used to indicate that the illustrations are an important part of the resource.

Are there enough illustrations in *this* resource, though? That's a relatively easy question to answer, so let's do it immediately by reading the SHM instruction sheet for the subdivision **-Pictorial works**, H 1935.

**America's Stamp on Sports**

From H 1935, Pictorial Works

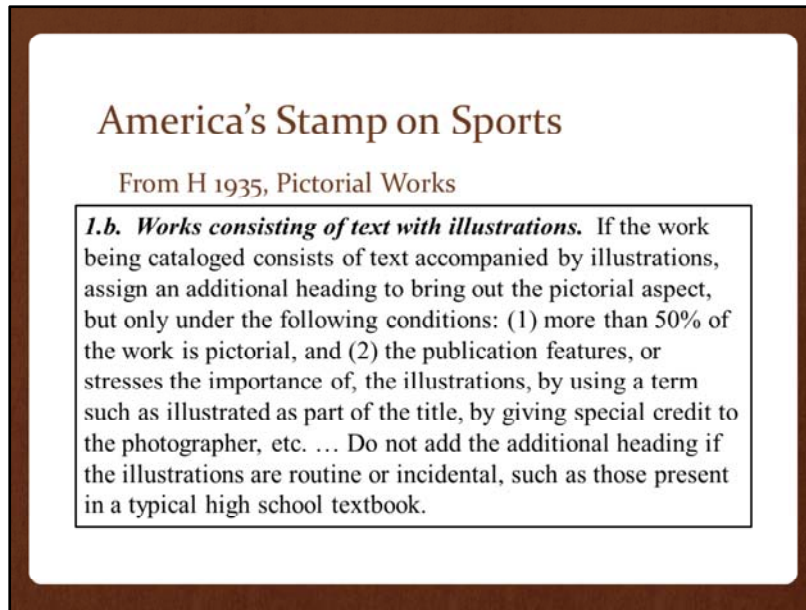
***1. General rules.***

***a. Works consisting entirely or primarily of pictures.*** If the work being cataloged consists entirely of pictures or of pictures accompanied only by captions and/or brief introductory text, add the form subdivision –**Pictorial works** to the headings being assigned to represent the topical focus of the work. Use this subdivision when the intent is to convey visual information about the subject.

The general rule begins with a section on resources that consist entirely or primarily of pictures.

We can essentially skip this instruction, because the resource clearly does not fit it. However, it is a good idea to skim it, just for context.

In summary, it says to add the form subdivision –**Pictorial works** to the topical subject headings that are assigned to represent the topics of the resource.



**America's Stamp on Sports**

From H 1935, Pictorial Works

***1.b. Works consisting of text with illustrations.*** If the work being cataloged consists of text accompanied by illustrations, assign an additional heading to bring out the pictorial aspect, but only under the following conditions: (1) more than 50% of the work is pictorial, and (2) the publication features, or stresses the importance of, the illustrations, by using a term such as illustrated as part of the title, by giving special credit to the photographer, etc. ... Do not add the additional heading if the illustrations are routine or incidental, such as those present in a typical high school textbook.

The next section discusses resources that are text with illustrations.

This section is pertinent. It says,

If the work being cataloged consists of text accompanied by illustrations, assign an additional heading to bring out the pictorial aspect, but only under the following conditions: (1) more than 50% of the work is pictorial, and (2) the publication features, or stresses the importance of, the illustrations, by using a term such as illustrated as part of the title, by giving special credit to the photographer, etc...Do not add the additional heading if the illustrations are routine or incidental, such as those present in a typical high school textbook.

**America's Stamp on Sports**

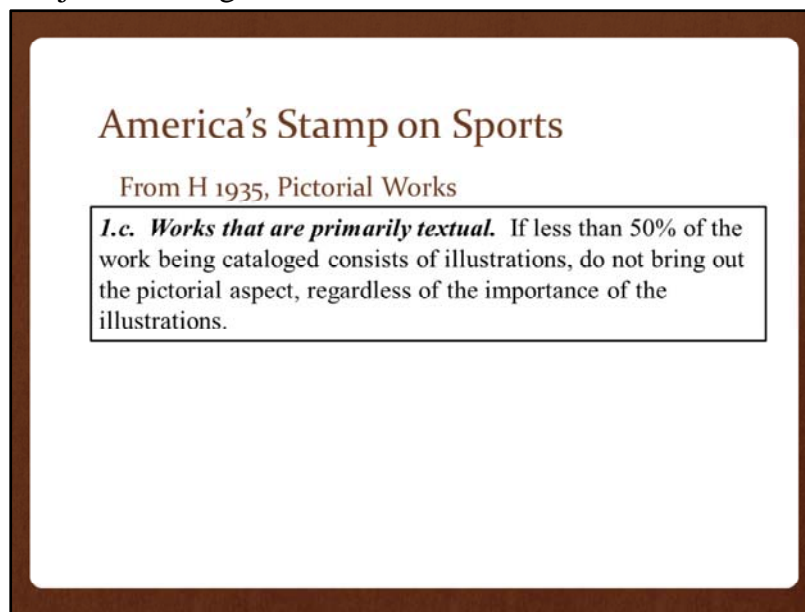
From H 1935, Pictorial Works

***1.b. Works consisting of text with illustrations.*** If the work being cataloged consists of text accompanied by illustrations, assign an additional heading to bring out the pictorial aspect, but **only** under the following conditions: (1) more than 50% of the work is pictorial, **and** (2) the publication features, or stresses the importance of, the illustrations, by using a term such as illustrated as part of the title, by giving special credit to the photographer, etc. ... Do not add the additional heading if the illustrations are routine or incidental, such as those present in a typical high school textbook.

This instruction is very restrictive.

We can bring out the fact that there are illustrations *only if* more than 50 percent of the resource is pictorial *and* the publication stresses the importance of the illustrations.

The resource fits into the second condition, because the summary on the cover stresses the illustrations, but it does not fit the first condition. Let's move on to the next section of the instruction sheet.



The third part of the general rule states,

If less than 50% of the work being cataloged consists of illustrations, do not bring out the pictorial aspect, regardless of the importance of the illustrations.

Therefore, we will not bring out the illustrations in the subject headings.

America's Stamp on Sports

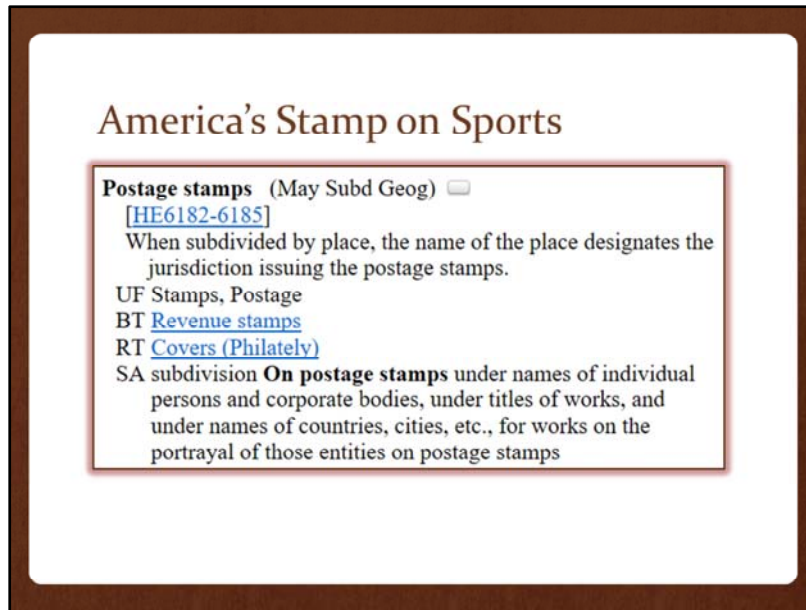
Aboutness statement

This resource is about the commemoration of sports on U.S. postage stamps. The summary says that it is encyclopedic, and there are two alphabetical sections, one for the sports and one for the athletes. ~~The resource also says that it is "richly illustrated," but the illustrations appear to constitute a small portion of the resource.~~

We should now revise our aboutness statement to remove the final sentence about illustrations.

What should we do next?

We know that forms are usually represented by a form subdivision, so let's start with the key concepts that are definitely topical: the depiction of sports and athletes on postage stamps.



Let's start by searching for the concept of postage stamps. We find that it is an authorized heading.

It has a scope note, but the scope note does not define the heading **Postage stamps**. Instead, it says that the geographic subdivision refers to the jurisdiction that issued the stamps. In other words, not to the place that may be depicted on the stamps.

We also see a general SEE ALSO reference. It says that the subdivision –**On postage stamps** is used under names of individual persons, corporate bodies, individual works, and under names of places.

We have already determined that we will not be assigning personal name headings for the individual athletes discussed in the resource, and the other categories do not apply. Therefore, we should not follow the instruction in the reference.



There is a list of over 8 dozen narrower terms under **Postage stamps**, and it includes several that are related to individual sports, such as **Baseball on postage stamps** and **Hockey on postage stamps**.

We have already determined, though, that the individual sports listed in the table of contents do not individually constitute 20 percent of the resource and that we have to assign a heading for sports in general. Luckily, it is established.



A screenshot of a web page showing a list of subject headings under the heading "America's Stamp on Sports". The list includes "Postage stamps" and several sports: "Baseball on postage stamps", "Basketball on postage stamps", "Hockey on postage stamps", "Soccer on postage stamps", "Sports on postage stamps", "Tennis on postage stamps", and "Volleyball on postage stamps". The "Sports on postage stamps" entry is highlighted with a red rectangular border. To the right of the list, there is a small box containing the text "20% rule".

America's Stamp on Sports

**Postage stamps**

NT Baseball on postage stamps  
Basketball on postage stamps  
Hockey on postage stamps  
Soccer on postage stamps  
**Sports on postage stamps**  
Tennis on postage stamps  
Volleyball on postage stamps

20%  
rule

**Sports on postage stamps** appears to be the heading that we want, but we should click on the link so that we can see the full entry for the heading, because it may include important information.

America's Stamp on Sports

**Postage stamps**

NT Baseball on postage stamps

Ba Sports on postage stamps stamps

Ho [\[HE6183.S6\]](#) nps

BT Postage stamps

Soccer on postage stamps

Sports on postage stamps

Tennis on postage stamps

Volleyball on postage stamps

20% rule

We see that it is indeed a valid heading and there are no special instructions.

I think we should use it.



Now let's look for a heading to represent the depiction of athletes on postage stamps.

In the narrower terms list, we find lots of classes of persons followed by "on postage stamps," so it looks promising.

America's Stamp on Sports

**Postage stamps**

- NT African Americans on postage stamps
- Authors on postage stamps
- Celebrities on postage stamps
- Children on postage stamps
- Inventors on postage stamps
- Jews on postage stamps
- [Astronautics on postage stamps](#)
- [Astronomy on postage stamps](#)
- [Australian literature on postage stamps](#)
- Methodists on postage stamps

*Athletes on postage stamps*, however, does not exist.

It would file between the NTs **Astronomy on postage stamps** and **Australian literature on postage stamps**.

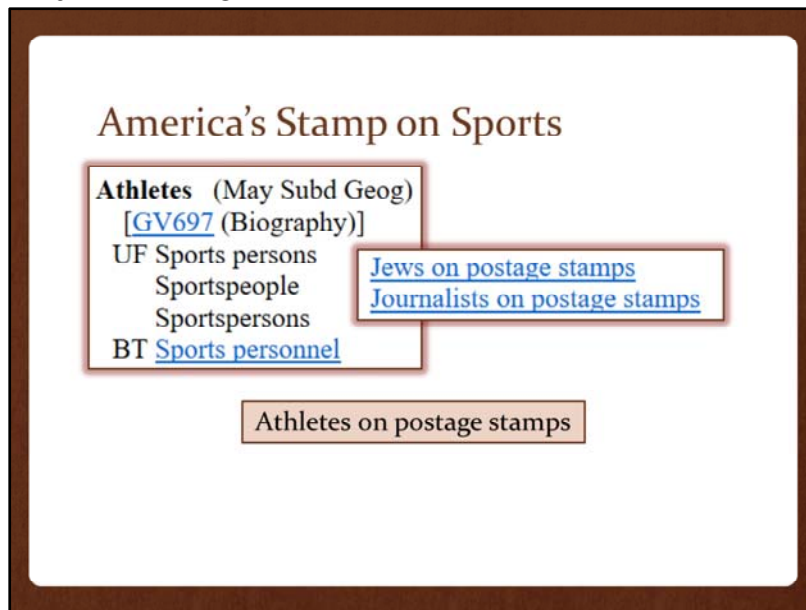
Now that we know the form that the heading is likely to take, it would be a good idea to specifically search for that heading, too. It may be that the heading exists, and it somehow didn't receive the BT **Postage stamps**.

## America's Stamp on Sports

**Postage stamps**

- NT African Americans on postage stamps
- Authors on postage stamps
- Celebrities on postage stamps → Athletes, Mexican American  
USE [Mexican American athletes](#)
- Children on postage stamps → Athletes, Polish American  
USE [Polish American athletes](#)
- Inventors on postage stamps
- Jews on postage stamps → [Astronautics on postage stamps](#)
- Journalists on postage stamps → [Astronomy on postage stamps](#)
- Methodists on postage stamps → [Australian literature on postage stamps](#)

It does not exist. What would you like to do now?



Well, what I'd like to do, Janis, is just make up a heading that says "Athletes on postage stamps" and then use it. The heading **Athletes** exists, and we know what the heading would be because there are so many like it.

It is tempting, but no we cannot just make it up. Except for two specific categories of main headings, which are

- regions associated with cities and geographic features, and
- some headings for music,

every single main heading must be established in LCSH. If we want to use "Athletes on postage stamps" as a heading, we have to propose it first.

You mean that I have to *propose* it if I want to use it?

America's Stamp on Sports

Athletes (May Subd Geog)  
[GV697 (Biography)]  
UF Sports persons  
Sportspeople  
Sportspersons  
BT [Sports personnel](#)

[Jews on postage stamps](#)  
[Journalists on postage stamps](#)

✗ Athletes on postage stamps  
**Must be proposed!**

Absolutely. If you did and it were approved, it would definitely be appropriate to assign to the resource. Library of Congress catalogers should always propose new headings as they are needed for resources that they are cataloging, and catalogers in SACO libraries can propose headings, too.

However, most catalogers do not work at LC or in a SACO library. If you are not able to propose the heading, the resource can still be considered to be adequately cataloged, because athletes participate in sports and we have already determined that we will assign the heading **Sports on postage stamps**.



**Sports on postage stamps** cannot be subdivided geographically – we know this because the entry does not say (May Subd Geog).

So how do we bring out the fact that the postage stamps were produced in the United States?

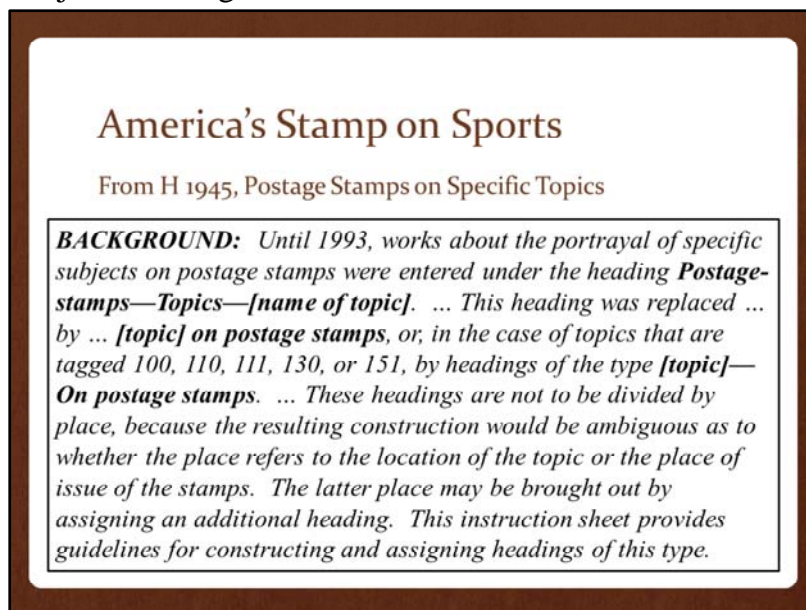


A screenshot of the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) interface. The main heading is "America's Stamp on Sports". Below it, there are two hierarchical levels of headings, each in a separate box with a small square icon to its right. The first box contains "Sports on postage stamps" with the alphanumeric code "[HE6183.S6]" and the text "BT Postage stamps" below it. The second box contains "Postage stamps (May Subd Geog)" with the alphanumeric code "[HE6182-6185]" and a scope note below it: "When subdivided by place, the name of the place designates the jurisdiction issuing the postage stamps."

We can take a hint from the scope note on **Postage stamps**, which says that the geographic subdivision would refer to the jurisdiction that issued the stamps.

Should we assign both **Sports on postage stamps** and **Postage stamps**, subdivided by the **United States**?

The SHM will help us decide if that is the best approach.



**America's Stamp on Sports**

From H 1945, Postage Stamps on Specific Topics

**BACKGROUND:** *Until 1993, works about the portrayal of specific subjects on postage stamps were entered under the heading **Postage-stamps—Topics—[name of topic]**. ... This heading was replaced ... by ... **[topic] on postage stamps**, or, in the case of topics that are tagged 100, 110, 111, 130, or 151, by headings of the type **[topic]—On postage stamps**. ... These headings are not to be divided by place, because the resulting construction would be ambiguous as to whether the place refers to the location of the topic or the place of issue of the stamps. The latter place may be brought out by assigning an additional heading. This instruction sheet provides guidelines for constructing and assigning headings of this type.*

By doing a keyword search on the phrase “postage stamps” in the SHM, we find that there is an entire instruction sheet detailing how to catalog resources about topics that appear on postage stamps, H 1945.

The background statement starts by giving some historical information, explains what is done now, and then briefly mentions geographic subdivision.

It says,

Until 1993, works about the portrayal of specific subjects on postage stamps were entered under the heading **Postage-stamps—Topics—[name of topic]**. ... This heading was replaced... by ... **[topic] on postage stamps**, or in the case of topics that are tagged 100, 110, 111, 130, or 151, by headings of the type **[topic]—On postage stamps**. ... These headings are not to be divided by place, because the resulting construction would be ambiguous as to whether the place refers to the location of the topic or the place of issue of the stamps. The latter place may be brought out by assigning an additional heading. This instruction sheet provides guidelines for constructing and assigning headings of this type.

**America's Stamp on Sports**

From H 1945, Postage Stamps on Specific Topics

**I. Topics portrayed on postage stamps.** For works about the portrayal of a specific topic on postage stamps, establish a subject heading according to the following model:

150 ## \$a [topic] on postage stamps  
550 ## \$w g \$a Postage stamps

Do not divide these headings by place.

The first section of the instruction sheet tells us what to do with the topic. It says to establish a heading in the form **[topic] on postage stamps**. The instruction to actually *use* the heading for the resource is implied.

It also clearly and definitively states, “Do not divide these headings by place,” because we need to hear it *one more time*.



**America's Stamp on Sports**

From H 1945, Postage Stamps on Specific Topics

**3. Place of issue.** If the work is limited to postage stamps issued in a specific place, and it is useful to bring out the place, do so by assigning the additional heading **Postage stamps—[place]**, or, if appropriate, a more specific heading such as **Commemorative postage stamps—[place]**.

Section 2 discusses personal names and so forth, which is not pertinent here. But section 3 is pertinent. It says,

If the work is limited to postage stamps issued in a specific place, and it is useful to bring out the place, do so by assigning the additional heading **Postage stamps—[place]**, or, if appropriate, a more specific heading such as **Commemorative postage stamps—[place]**.

Therefore, we were correct. We should assign **Postage stamps** subdivided by **United States**.

Or *maybe* we should assign **Commemorative postage stamps** divided by **United States**? We will consider that in a minute.

For now, we would like to point out a very significant phrase in this instruction.

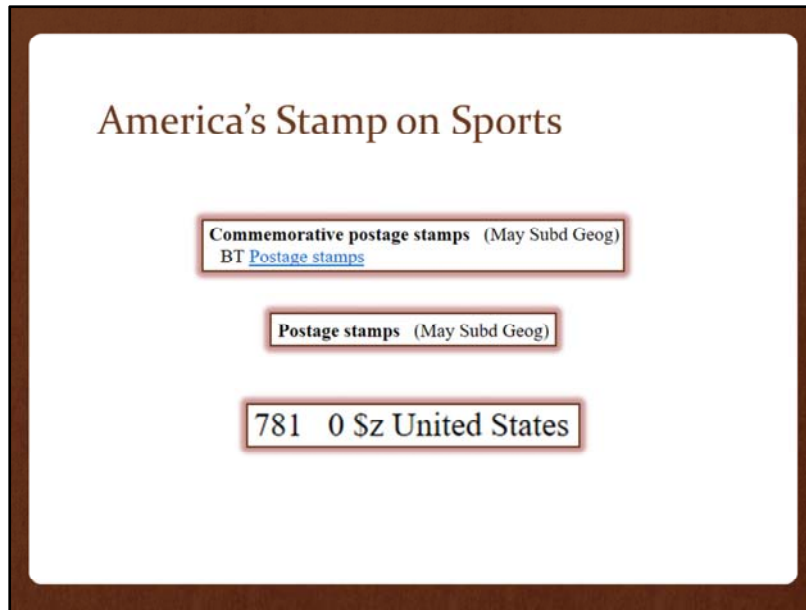
**America's Stamp on Sports**

From H 1945, Postage Stamps on Specific Topics

**3. *Place of issue.*** If the work is limited to postage stamps issued in a specific place, and it is useful to bring out the place, do so by assigning the additional heading **Postage stamps—[place]**, or, if appropriate, a more specific heading such as **Commemorative postage stamps—[place]**.

“Assigning the additional heading” means that whatever we assign in addition to **Sports on postage stamps** (either **Postage stamps** or **Commemorative postage stamps**), it should be a secondary heading.

Whenever the SHM says that a heading is “additional,” it means that the heading should not be the first heading assigned.



Let's now consider whether the secondary heading should be **Postage stamps** or **Commemorative postage stamps**.

Arguments can be made for both, and both can be subdivided geographically. **Commemorative postage stamps** would appear to follow the principle of specificity as defined in SHM instruction sheet H 180, because the resource says that the stamps being discussed were made to commemorate the sports and athletes. Is the word *commemorate* being used accurately, though? To commemorate something is to create a remembrance or memorial of it. Other definitions say that to commemorate means to show respect for; or to mark by some ceremony or observation.

It is probably appropriate for the stamps of athletes, but are the stamps that feature sports commemorating or memorializing the sports? Maybe, depending on the dictionary we consult for a definition of commemorate. This is a case of cataloger's judgment, a concept that we have not raised very often in this training, but is nonetheless very important to understand. Cataloger's judgment means that when you as a cataloger have two or more equally viable solutions, you need to judge which of the options would provide the best access for the resource. Sometimes checking the library's catalog can help with the decision.



In LC's catalog, **Postage stamps—United States** has been used on 308 resources, while **Commemorative postage stamps—United States** has been used on only 29 resources.

It makes sense to use **Postage stamps—United States** on this resource so it is collocated with over 300 other resources. However, it might be better to use **Commemorative postage stamps—United States** because the resource says it is about commemorative stamps, and the dictionary definition of commemorate does appear to fit the resource. **Postage stamps—United States** has so many hits that the resource we are cataloging – which is on a narrower topic – could be hard to find by researchers who are specifically interested in commemorative stamps.

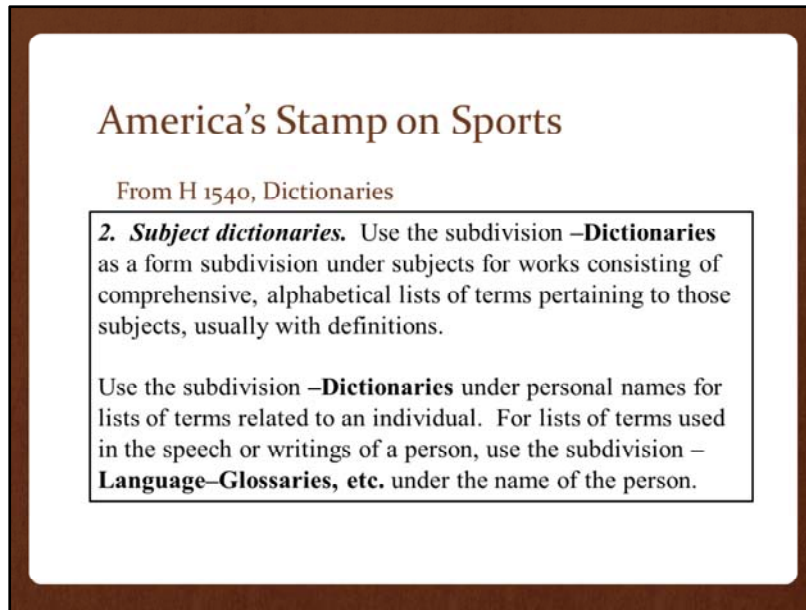
Therefore, the narrower heading, **Commemorative postage stamps**, would probably be better because it more specifically represents the contents of the resource.



So far, our headings are **Sports on postage stamps** and **Commemorative postage stamps—United States**.

We have not addressed the fact that the resource consists of two alphabetical lists of entries, and calls itself “encyclopedic.” Let’s do that now.





We did a keyword search on the word *encyclopedia* in the SHM and found an instruction sheet, H 1540, *Dictionaries*.

The word encyclopedia appears in section 2. The heading for section 2 is Subject dictionaries. It says,

Use the subdivision **–Dictionaries** as a form subdivision under subjects for works consisting of comprehensive, alphabetical lists of terms pertaining to those subjects, usually with definitions.

Use the subdivision **–Dictionaries** under personal names for lists of terms related to an individual. For lists of terms used in the speech or writings of a person, use the subdivision **–Language–Glossaries, etc.** under the name of the person.

This resource is not a comprehensive alphabetical list of terms on the subject of postage stamps, and we are not assigning any personal name headings. Let's read on.

**America's Stamp on Sports**

From H 1540, Dictionaries

**2. Subject dictionaries. (Continued)**

For incomplete lists of the terms associated with a particular subject, or for comprehensive lists of such terms that are not arranged alphabetically, use the subdivision **–Terminology** under the subject. See H 2184 for specific instructions.

For works consisting of explanatory articles arranged alphabetically or topically, use the subdivision **–Encyclopedias** under the subject. For encyclopedias intended for children up through age 15 or 9th grade, use the subdivision **–Encyclopedias, Juvenile** under the subject.

The next paragraph is about incomplete lists of terms on a particular subject. That is not pertinent, either.

But the fourth paragraph in the section *is* pertinent. It says,

For works consisting of explanatory articles arranged alphabetically or topically, use the subdivision **–Encyclopedias** under the subject. For encyclopedias intended for children up through age 15 or 9<sup>th</sup> grade, use the subdivision **–Encyclopedias, Juvenile** under the subject.

*America's Stamp on Sports* consists of explanatory articles arranged alphabetically *and* topically. Therefore, we should use the subdivision **–Encyclopedias** under our subject headings.

The resource is not for children, so we can disregard the final sentence.

**America's Stamp on Sports**

From H 1540, Dictionaries

**2. Subject dictionaries. (Continued)**

For incomplete lists of the terms associated with a particular subject, use the subdivision **—Encyclopedias**. **—Encyclopedias** are not arranged alphabetically. Use as a form subdivision under subjects. **—Encyclopedias** are not arranged alphabetically. See H 2184 for specific instructions.

For works consisting of explanatory articles arranged alphabetically or topically, use the subdivision **—Encyclopedias** under the subject. For encyclopedias intended for children up through age 15 or 9th grade, use the subdivision **—Encyclopedias, Juvenile** under the subject.

Although we found the instruction in the SHM, the instruction sheet does not indicate whether we can geographically subdivide the subdivision **—Encyclopedias**.

We can quickly find that out by consulting the list of free-floating subdivisions in Classification Web. In Class Web we find that it cannot be geographically subdivided, and also confirmation that it is a form subdivision that can be used “under subjects.”

Remember, “under subjects” means that it can be used with any subject heading.



Therefore, our subject headings are **Sports on postage stamps—Encyclopedias** and **Commemorative postage stamps—United States—Encyclopedias**. They appear in that order because the instruction sheet told us that the heading **Commemorative postage stamps** should be assigned as a “secondary” heading.

The heading *Athletes on postage stamps—Encyclopedias* is bracketed and italicized on the screen because it is appropriate for the resource and therefore has literary warrant, but it has not been established. If *Athletes on postage stamps* were proposed and approved, it could be assigned to *America's Stamp on Sports*, and the subdivision **—Encyclopedias** could be added.