

# Introduction to Children’s and Young Adults’ Subject Headings

The Children’s and Young Adults’ Cataloging (CYAC) Program—formerly called the Annotated Card Program, or AC Program—provides data tailored to the needs of children and young adults who use school and public libraries. The CYAC Program is administered by the Literature Section of the U.S. Programs, Law, and Literature (USPRL) Division of the Library of Congress (LC).

CYAC catalogers prepare bibliographic records for materials in scope for the CYAC Program using the MARC format standards, RDA guidance, valid *LCSH* and *CYAC Subject Headings*, and current LC and CYAC cataloging policies and practices.

Bibliographic records created by the CYAC Program are distinct from standard LC cataloging in two ways. First, the bibliographic citations include a brief, noncritical summary. Second, the subject headings are primarily drawn from the *Children’s and Young Adults’ Subject Headings* list, a controlled vocabulary, which, as of July 2021, is completely separate from the *Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)*.

In MARC 21 bibliographic records, children’s and young adults’ subject headings are identified by the second indicator of 1 in 6XX fields. Records created prior to January 1, 1999, have the notation AC in subfield \$b of the 001 field. Records created or updated after January 1, 1999, have the notation lcaac in subfield \$a of the 042 field. Records created or updated after March 1, 2022, have the notation cyac in subfield \$a of the 042 field.

This introduction provides a brief history of the CYAC Program and outlines ways in which the *Children’s and Young Adults’ Subject Headings* differ from the *Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)* in form and application.

## HISTORY

In the fall of 1965, the Library of Congress initiated the AC Program to provide a more appropriate and in-depth subject

treatment of juvenile works, improving subject access to those materials. This was accomplished chiefly through a more liberal application of existing *LCSH* terms. To better serve young readers, some headings were changed or simplified, and in a few instances, headings were created where none had previously existed. Often a faceted approach was used, reducing the length of subject strings, emphasizing post-coordination, and using fewer subdivisions. These modifications were guided by the headings in the *Sears List of Subject Headings (Sears)*, the advice of the ALA/RTSD/CCS Cataloging of Children’s Materials Committee, and the needs of children’s libraries as articulated by authorities in the field.

In 1969, the first edition of *Subject Headings for Children’s Literature* was published. This list of subject headings outlined exceptions to the *LCSH* list and the two were intended to be used in conjunction when cataloging children’s literature. In 1996, the AC list was converted to individual authority records in the MARC 21 format. Authority records were established for headings that had been modified for use in children’s literature as well as subject headings unique to CYAC cataloging. Finally, in July 2021, authority records were created for all CYAC subject headings, including those which duplicated existing *LCSH* records, formally separating the *Children’s and Young Adults’ Subject Headings* from *LCSH*.

As the *Children’s and Young Adults’ Subject Headings* list grows and evolves, the CYAC Program is also evaluating and updating its policies to ensure they continue to meet the needs of libraries and institutions. Policy decisions are based on developments in the publishing of materials for children and young adults and on feedback from the American Library Association Core Committee on Cataloging: Children’s and Youth Materials (CC:CYM, formerly the ALCTS/CaMMS Cataloging of Children’s Materials Committee), the American Library Association Core Subject Analysis Committee (SAC), librarians, and other users.

New and revised headings continue to be distributed as part of the MARC distribution service for subject authorities and

may be viewed through ID.LOC.GOV or accessed through other free and subscription services.

## CATEGORIES OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULTS' SUBJECT HEADINGS

Historically, the subject headings used in the CYAC Program represented three categories: standard *LCSH*, modified *LCSH*, and headings established for the exclusive use in CYAC cataloging. Since the formal separation of the *Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings* from *LCSH* in July 2021, all headings currently in use in CYAC subject cataloging have individual authority records and are listed in the *Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings*.

The *CYAC Subject Headings* exhibit the following features, which distinguish them from *LCSH*:

(1) Words and phrases that would be superfluous in a juvenile catalog are deleted in headings like **Separation anxiety [in children]** and **First aid [in illness and injury]**. The adjective **Children's** is usually deleted, so that a heading such as **Children's parties** becomes **Parties**, and **Children's songs** becomes **Songs**.

(2) While many headings are established in the inverted form, preferred CYAC Program practice is to modify headings or create new headings in direct form, using natural language. Thus, **Mythical animals** is used rather than **Animals, Mythical**.

(3) Hyphens are removed from headings like **Water supply**; **Fortune telling**; **Metalwork**. In general, hyphenated headings are established following guidelines in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

(4) Glosses are removed from headings. For example, the *LCSH* terms **Separation (Philosophy)** and **Separation (Psychology)** are compressed into the single *CYAC* term **Separation**. Such granularity—e.g., differentiating a term as either philosophical or psychological in nature—is unnecessary in a children's catalog.

(5) Most animal and plant species are established in the plural form.

(6) The common names of plants, animals, and diseases are often used instead of the scientific ones. Thus, **Bedwetting** is used rather than **Enuresis** and **Tube-lipped nectar bats** is preferred over **Anoura fistulata**.

(7) Generally, headings for personal names, corporate bodies, and geographic names are drawn from the *Library of Congress Name Authority File (LCNAF)*. However, non-English-language names are frequently used in forms more commonly known in the United States. Therefore, personal names, names of corporate bodies, and titles of works may be changed to conform to popular English usage, as with **Howard, Mary, Lady, 1519-1557** rather than **Richmond and Somerset, Mary Fitzroy, Duchess of, 1519-1557**; **Solidarity (Polish labor organization)** rather than **NSZZ "Solidarność" (Labor organization)**; **International Children's Rain Forest (Costa Rica)** rather than **Bosque Eterno de Los Niños (Costa Rica)**; and **Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, 1821-1881. Crime and punishment** rather than **Dostoyevsky, Fyodor, 1821-1881. Prestuplenie i nakazanie**.

(8) Finally, some headings and subdivisions are used instead of the *LCSH* equivalents: **Sports—Fiction** instead of **Sports stories**; **Trees—Planting** instead of **Tree planting**; and **Christmas—Drama** instead of **Christmas plays**.

## APPLICATION OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULTS' SUBJECT HEADINGS

Some of the chief differences between the children's and young adults' subject headings and *LCSH* are in application rather than in form. For example:

(1) Omission of subdivisions containing the word **Juvenile**, such as **—Juvenile fiction** and **—Juvenile literature**, which would be superfluous in a children's literature catalog.

(2) Omission of any geographic subdivision for subject headings denoting classes of persons, such as **Athletes**; **Composers**; and **Explorers**.

(3) Liberal assignment of subject headings to fiction to provide a helpful approach to the literature. For example, if a story adds to the reader's information about a country, a social problem, or a disease, headings such as the following are used: **Switzerland—Fiction**; **Drug abuse—Fiction**; **AIDS (Disease)—Fiction**. Abstract concepts are also recognized, such as **Friendship—Fiction** and **Self-reliance—Fiction**.

(4) Use of both specific and general subject headings. In a catalog for a children's collection, a young reader can locate works through both a specific and a general approach, whereas the regular assignment of subject headings may provide only the specific subject heading. Examples of this expanded analysis are: 1. **Dodos**. 2. **Birds**.; 1. **Middle schools**. 2. **Schools**.; and 1. **Lift-the-flap books**. 2. **Toy and movable books**.

(5) Use of both popular and scientific or scholarly terms on nonfiction works. For material intended for very young children, popular terms like **Weather** or **Fossils** are applied. When the book is intended for older children, both the popular and scientific terms are frequently assigned. Thus, a single record may carry such headings as 1. **Weather**. 2. **Meteorology**. or 1. **Fossils**. 2. **Paleontology**. When nonfiction books are intended for young adults, ordinarily only the scientific term is provided: **Meteorology** or **Paleontology**.

(6) Use of headings denoting form, genre, or format. Such headings, created to make certain types of material more accessible to young readers, include **Jokes**; **Stories in rhyme**; **Spanish language materials**.

## SUBDIVISIONS

While many of the most commonly used *LCSH* subdivisions can be used in a catalog devoted exclusively to children's literature, some subdivisions require modifications in form or application. The following subdivisions are exceptions to *LCSH* form and practice.

### —Adaptations

Use as a form subdivision under name, name/title, and title headings, and under headings for literatures, for individual or

collected works whose form has been changed from the original (e.g., prose to graphic novel).

#### —**Biography**

Use as a form subdivision under headings for ethnic groups, fields and disciplines when a heading for the class of persons does not exist and cannot be created, and the heading **Women** for works of individual or collective biography.

#### —**Cartoons and comics**

Use as a form subdivision under headings for nonfiction works in comic book, comic strip, or cartoon form

#### —**Collections**

Use as a form subdivision under individual literatures and major genres of literatures, with or without adjectival qualifiers, for publications that consist of two or more works by different literary authors.

#### —**Fiction**

Use as a form subdivision under subjects for individual or collected works of fiction about those subjects.

#### —**Folklore**

Use as a form subdivision under names of countries, cities, etc., and under classes of persons, ethnic groups, uniform titles of sacred works, and topical headings for folklore texts on those subjects.

#### —**Habits and behavior**

Use as a topical subdivision under headings for individual animals and groups of animals, including birds, reptiles, and fish.

#### —**Humor**

Use as a form subdivision under subjects for humorous works about those subjects.

#### —**Kings, queens, rulers, etc.**

Use as a topical subdivision on nonfiction works under names of countries, cities, etc., and under ethnic groups.

#### —**Pictorial works**

Use as a form subdivision under subjects for nonfiction materials that consist exclusively or predominantly of pictures.

Other subdivisions are generally applied as they are used in standard LC practice, except that it is CYAC practice to use fewer subdivisions when applying *Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings* to works of juvenile fiction. For example, the topical subdivisions —**Corrupt practices**, —**Psychological aspects**, and —**Sports** may only be used on nonfiction juvenile works.

## HIERARCHICAL REFERENCES

Prior to July 2021, complete hierarches were not usually provided for terms in the *Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings* list, and catalogers were encouraged to consult *LCSH* for subject hierarchies. Efforts are currently underway to evaluate and/or create broader term, narrower term, related term, and “used for” references for the children's and young adults' headings.

As with *LCSH*, narrower term references are made to a subject heading from the next broader heading so that terms are arranged in a hierarchy. Related term references link two headings that are neither broader nor narrower than each other, but are nonetheless mentally associated with each other. “Used for” references point to equivalent terms and phrases.

## SCOPE NOTES

Scope notes limit the scope of a heading as it is used in the catalog, helping users determine to what extent it covers the materials they seek and making it possible for catalogers to maintain consistency in the way headings are assigned. In the *Children's and Young Adults' Subject Heading* list, scope notes may also be used to define the scope of headings when they are used in a way that differs from *LCSH*.

## PRODUCTS

Five services provide information about new and changed Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings.

(1) Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings are distributed as part of the Internet FTP distribution service that provides headings in the MARC 21 authorities format on a weekly basis to supplement the master database of children's and young adults' subject heading authority records.

(2) Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings appear on the *Library of Congress Subject Heading Approved Monthly Lists* which are posted monthly online at <https://classweb.org/approved-subjects/>.

(3) Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings are included in *ClassWeb*, a fee-based online service that also provides access to *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, the *Library of Congress Medium of Performance Thesaurus for Music*, the *Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms*, the *Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms*, and *Library of Congress Classification*.

(4) Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings are included in LC Authorities (<http://authorities.loc.gov>), a free online database that allows for browsing, display, and download (in MARC 21 format) of the authority records.

(5) Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings are included in the LC Linked Data Service (<http://id.loc.gov>), a free online service that allows for browsing, display, and bulk download (in various formats) of the authority records.

## COVERAGE

The *Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings* list contains 12,689 headings established for use through April 2022.

## CONTACT

Questions about children's subject cataloging and the construction and use of *Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings* should be sent to:

Library of Congress  
CYAC Program  
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20540-4286  
Telephone: (202) 707-6586  
Fax: (202) 707-0973  
Email: [cyacprog@loc.gov](mailto:cyacprog@loc.gov)