

Entities > Work > [representative expression](#): [Element] of representative expression

Guidance

Representative expression is a new concept stemming from the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM). It is implemented in RDA by a [representative expression](#) element and a series of elements named “[element] of representative expression”:

[aspect ratio of representative expression](#)
[colour content of representative expression](#)
[content type of representative expression](#)
[date of capture of representative expression](#)
[date of representative expression](#)
[duration of representative expression](#)
[extent of representative expression](#)
[intended audience of representative expression](#)
[key of representative expression](#)
[language of representative expression](#)
[medium of performance of choreographic content of representative expression](#)
[medium of performance of musical content of representative expression](#)
[place of capture of representative expression](#)
[projection of cartographic content of representative expression](#)
[scale of representative expression](#)
[script of representative expression](#)
[sound content of representative expression](#)

Briefly, values for representative expression elements are aspects of an expression of a work that most people think of as fundamental to the work itself, e.g., *Alice’s adventures in Wonderland* is an English text intended for children. These aspects are sometimes referred to as “canonical.”

The [representative expression](#) element is a *relationship* element with domain Work and range Expression and reciprocal [representative expression of](#). This means that the [representative expression](#) element is recorded as a relationship in a metadata description set (a MARC authority record in current practice) linking an instance of Work with an instance of Expression; and reciprocally the [representative expression of](#) element is recorded as a

	<p>relationship in a metadata description set linking an instance of Expression with an instance of Work. In MARC this would be done using 5XX fields.</p> <p>Most of the “[element] of representative expression” elements are <i>attribute</i> elements with domain Work and no range. This means that the element is recorded as an attribute within a metadata description set for an instance of Work.</p> <p>The following three elements are <i>relationship</i> elements. This means that the element records a relationship between two entities within a metadata description set. In current MARC practice, however, these are recorded as structured values of the elements rather than as active links between records through access points. Functionally, they will appear to be attribute elements, but they are expressing a relationship. The three relationship elements are:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"> date of capture of representative expression (domain: work; range: timespan) date of representative expression (domain: work; range: timespan) place of capture of representative expression (domain: work; range: place) </p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>This MGD is primarily concerned with recording representative expression in authority records. The same principles may be applied to recording representative expression in bibliographic records, but since it is not expected that this will be a common practice, representative expression in bibliographic records is not further discussed here.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>Choosing a particular Expression description as the representative expression to link with a Work description is not current NACO practice, so this MGD will not treat the relationship element representative expression. Do not record this element.</p> <p>However, PCC catalogers may record the attribute elements “[element] of representative expression” in any work-level description (authority record) as appropriate. Recording “[element] of representative expression” is particularly important in series authority work because of the implementation of the LRM model as the basis for RDA, which causes many monographic series that were previously considered expressions of a series work to become works in their own right (see MG: Series: Entity boundary). In order</p>

	<p>not to lose aspects of the description previously recorded as expression elements (e.g. language, content type), “[element] of representative expression” may be recorded in the work-level record for a monographic series formerly considered an expression.</p> <p>Record values that in your judgment represent the “canonical” expression of a work, e.g., record the value “text” for content type of representative expression of a novel unless it has become better known in a different format, e.g., spoken word. However, more than one value can be recorded for a single “[element] of representative expression” element, e.g., a moving image work with color content expression of both black and white and color, or a musical work whose content type expression is equally known as notated music and performed music. Do not agonize trying to choose one value; if a “canonical” value is not obvious you may record more than one.</p> <p>Conversely, recording these elements is optional, though encouraged. There is no need to try to record values for every possible representative expression element that might apply to a given work.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>Code representative expression elements in MARC 387 fields with these exceptions:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">code medium of performance of musical content of representative expression in MARC field 382</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">code key of representative expression in field MARC field 384.</p> <p>Record subfield coding and indicators as defined in the MARC format and as detailed below.</p> <p>There is no MARC field or subfield defined yet for</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">extent of expression</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">extent of representative expression</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">medium of performance of choreographic content</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">medium of performance of choreographic content of representative expression.</p> <p>Until these fields are defined, do not record these elements.</p>

<p>Guidance</p>	<p>aspect ratio of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a numerical ratio of the width to the height of a representative expression of a moving image work.</p> <p>Record a value for the original aspect ratio of the original work as first released. Record a structured description using a representative fraction expressed as a numerical ratio in standard format with a denominator of 1.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$a.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre>130 0# \$a Gone with the wind (Motion picture : 1939) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Epic films \$a War films \$a Romance films \$a Historical films \$a Feature films \$a Fiction films \$a Film adaptations \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$a 1.37:1 130 0# \$a Empire strikes back (Motion picture) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Action and adventure films \$a Fantasy films \$a Science fiction films \$a Feature films \$a Fiction films \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$a 2.39:1</pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>colour content of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as an indication of the presence of color or tone in the content of a representative expression of a work.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the colour content element. PCC/NACO practice is to record using an unstructured description (e.g., “color”) rather than using the RDA colour content</p>

	<p>vocabulary encoding scheme (i.e., do not record “monochrome” or “polychrome”).</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$b.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre> 130 0# \$a Gone with the wind (Motion picture : 1939) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Epic films \$a War films \$a Romance films \$a Historical films \$a Feature films \$a Fiction films \$a Film adaptations \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$b color 130 0# \$a Wizard of Oz (Motion picture : 1939) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Action and adventure films \$a Fantasy films \$a Musical films \$a Fiction films \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$b black and white \$b color 130 0# \$a Wizard of Oz (Motion picture : 1925) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Fantasy films \$a Fiction films \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$b black and white 100 1# \$a Lange, Dorothea. \$t Migrant mother 380 ## \$a Photographs \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$b black and white </pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>content type of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a categorization of a representative expression that reflects the fundamental form of communication in which the content is expressed and the human sense through which it is intended to be perceived.</p>

	<p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the content type element.</p> <p>Record an appropriate term from the LC Term and Code List for RDA Content Types or RDA Content Type vocabulary encoding scheme, e.g.</p> <p>sounds</p> <p>text</p> <p>notated music</p> <p>performed music</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$c.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre> 130 #0 \$a Animal battles (Bellwether Media : Spoken word) 380 ## \$a Monographic series \$2 lcsb 387 ## \$c spoken word \$2 rdacontent 130 0# \$a Gone with the wind (Motion picture : 1939) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Epic films \$a War films \$a Romance films \$a Historical films \$a Feature films \$a Fiction films \$a Film adaptations \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$c two-dimensional moving image \$2 rdacontent 100 1# \$a Lange, Dorothea. \$t Migrant mother 380 ## \$a Photographs \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$c still image \$2 rdacontent 100 1# \$a Carroll, Lewis, \$d 1832-1898. \$t Alice's adventures in Wonderland 380 ## \$a Novels \$a Fantasy fiction \$a Nonsense fiction \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$c text \$2 rdacontent 100 1# \$a Bach, P. D. Q., \$d 1742-1807. \$t Little pickle book 380 ## \$a Music \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$d notated music \$2 rdacontent </pre>

	<p>387 ## \$d performed music \$2 rdacontent Note: values for content type of representative expression from two different expressions are recorded. In the cataloger's judgment either expression could be "canonical."</p>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>date of capture of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a timespan that is associated with recording, filming, etc., the content of a representative expression. As noted above, it is a relationship element with range Timespan and will be recorded as a structured description.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the date of capture element. PCC/NACO practice is to record a date of capture by giving the year, month, day, and time, as applicable.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$d. Record following the EDTF format. Note this might result in identical values of date of capture (387) and date of work (046).</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<p>046 ## \$k 1936-03 \$2 edtf 100 1# \$a Lange, Dorothea. \$t Migrant mother 380 ## \$a Photographs \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$d 1936-03 \$2 edtf</p> <p>046 ## \$k 1995 \$2 edtf 100 1# \$a Bach, P. D. Q., \$d 1742-1807. \$t Little pickle book 380 ## \$a Music \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$d 1995-04-11 \$2 edtf Note: date of capture of the first recording.</p> <p>046 ## \$k 1939 \$2 edtf 130 0# \$a Wizard of Oz (Motion picture : 1939)</p>

	<p>380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Action and adventure films \$a Fantasy films \$a Musical films \$a Fiction films \$2 lcgft</p> <p>387 ## \$d [1938-10-13..1939-03-16] \$2 edtf</p> <p>Note: beginning and ending dates of filming</p>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>date of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a timespan that is the earliest date associated with a representative expression of a work. As noted above, it is a relationship element with range Timespan and will be recorded as a structured description.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the date of expression element. PCC/NACO practice is to record a date of expression by giving the year, month, day, and time, as applicable.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$e. Record following the EDTF format. Note this might result in identical values of date of expression (387) and date of work (046).</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<p>046 ## \$k 1913 \$2 edtf</p> <p>100 1# \$a Debussy, Claude, \$d 1862-1918. \$t <i>Syrinx</i></p> <p>380 ## \$a Art music \$2 lcgft</p> <p>387 ## \$e 1927 \$2 edtf</p> <p>Note: originally composed in 1913, but no expression was published until 1927.</p>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>duration of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as an extent of expression of a representative expression of a work that is a playing time, performance time, or other length</p>

	<p>of time. For moving images, record running times that are readily ascertainable and consistent among secondary sources.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the duration element. PCC/NACO practice is to use an unstructured description. Record the exact time if readily ascertainable. If the exact time is not readily ascertainable, but an approximate time is stated or can be readily estimated, record that time preceded by “approximately”. Use Abbreviations for units followed by a full stop.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$f.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre>100 1# \$a Bach, P. D. Q., \$d 1742-1807. \$t Little pickle book 380 ## \$a Music \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$f 9 min., 52 sec. Note: duration of the first recording. 387 ## \$f approximately 6 min. Note: performance time specified on the score. 130 0# \$a Gone with the wind (Motion picture : 1939) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Epic films \$a War films \$a Romance films \$a Historical films \$a Feature films \$a Fiction films \$a Film adaptations \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$f 3 hr., 58 min.</pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>extent of representative expression</p> <p>Do not record this element until MARC coding has been defined.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>intended audience of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a category of user for whom a representative expression of a work is intended, or for whom a representative expression of a work is considered suitable.</p>

	<p>Note: in the absence of an RDA work-level element, similar information was previously recorded using MARC 385, “audience characteristics.” In most cases recording intended audience of representative expression will now be preferable.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the intended audience of expression element. Prefer values from a vocabulary encoding scheme such as LCDGT or LCSH.</p> <p>This is a core element for resources intended for children.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$g.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre>100 1# \$a Carroll, Lewis, \$d 1832-1898. \$t Alice's adventures in Wonderland 380 ## \$a Novels \$a Fantasy fiction \$a Nonsense fiction \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$g Children \$2 lcdgt 130 #0 \$a Reihe des literarischen Nobelpreises 380 ## \$a Monographic series \$2 lcsH 387 ## \$g German speakers \$2 lcdgt 100 1# \$a Josephson, Michael S. \$t Essential principles of evidence 380 ## \$a Law materials \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$g Lawyers \$g Law students \$2 lcdgt 110 2# \$a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. \$t Model Law on Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems 380 ## \$a Model acts \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$g Legislators \$2 lcdgt</pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>

<p>Guidance</p>	<p>key of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a set of pitch relationships that establishes the tonal center, or principal tonal center, used, or intended to be used, for performance of musical content of a representative expression of a work.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the key of expression element. Record the key given as an upper case letter, followed by the sharp or flat symbol, and the words major or minor, in lower case, as applicable.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 384, first indicator 2, subfield \$a.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre>100 1# \$a Abbott, Alexander N. \$t Washington's fanfare 380 ## \$a Fanfares \$2 lcgft 384 2# \$a G major 100 1# \$a Bach, Johann Sebastian, \$d 1685-1750. \$t Masses, \$n BWV 232, \$r B minor 380 ## \$a Masses \$2 lcgft 384 2# \$a B minor</pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>language of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a language used for the content of a representative expression of a work.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the language of expression element. Record using language codes from the MARC code list for languages. For moving image works, record for the original language(s) of spoken, sung, or signed content. For musical works, record for the original language of printed, sung, spoken, or accompanying text.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$h.</p>

<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre>100 1# \$a Carroll, Lewis, \$d 1832-1898. \$t Alice's adventures in Wonderland 380 ## \$a Novels \$a Fantasy fiction \$a Nonsense fiction \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$h eng 100 1# \$a Bach, Johann Sebastian, \$d 1685-1750. \$t Masses, \$n BWV 232, \$r B minor 380 ## \$a Masses \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$h lat 130 0# \$a Canada vu de près 380 ## \$a Monographic series \$2 lcsb 387 ## \$h fre Note: This was considered an expression of the series work <i>Canada close up</i> under original RDA. 046 ## \$k 2015 \$2 edtf 130 0# \$a Bigger splash (Motion picture) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$h eng \$h ita \$h fre Note: Dialogue is in English, Italian, and French.</pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>medium of performance of choreographic content of representative expression</p> <p>Do not record this element until MARC coding has been defined.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>medium of performance of musical content of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as an instrument, voice, or ensemble used, or intended to be used, for performance of musical content of a representative expression of a work.</p>

	<p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the medium of performance of musical content element. Record as a structured description using terms from the Library of Congress Medium of Performance Thesaurus for Music (LCMPT) when possible. Follow the instructions in the latest edition of the Music Library Association’s Best practices for using LCMPT.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 382, first indicator 2, subfields as described in MARC and in the MLA Best practices document.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre>100 1# \$a Abbott, Alexander N. \$t Washington's fanfare 380 ## \$a Fanfares \$2 lcgft 382 2# \$a flute choir \$2 lcmpt 382 2# \$a piccolo \$n 1 \$a flute \$n 3 \$a alto flute \$n 1 \$p flute \$n 1 \$a bass flute \$n 1 \$a contrabass flute \$n 1 \$a double bass \$n 1 \$s 8 \$2 lcmpt 100 1# \$a Debussy, Claude, \$d 1862-1918. \$t Syrinx 380 ## \$a Art music \$2 lcgft 382 2# \$a flute \$n 1 \$s 1 \$2 lcmpt</pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>place of capture of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a place that is associated with recording, filming, etc., the content of a representative expression. As noted above, it is a relationship element with range Place and will be recorded as a structured description.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the place of capture element. Prefer values from a vocabulary encoding scheme such as the LC/NACO AF or LCSH. The value can name a studio, concert hall, city, etc.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$i.</p>

<p>MARC Example</p>	<p>130 0# \$a Wizard of Oz (Motion picture : 1939) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Action and adventure films \$a Fantasy films \$a Musical films \$a Fiction films \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$i Culver City (Calif.) \$2 naf</p> <p>100 1# \$a Bach, P. D. Q., \$d 1742-1807. \$t Little pickle book 380 ## \$a Music \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$i Hoople (N.D.) \$2 naf Note: place of capture of first recording as declared on the compact disc container.</p>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>projection of cartographic content of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a method or system used to represent the surface of the earth or of a celestial sphere on a plane in a representative expression of a work.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the projection of cartographic content element. Record a projection statement in English, spelling out the word “projection”. For guidance, see Map and Geospatial Information Round Table (MAGIRT), Guidelines for cataloging cartographic resources using RDA.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$j.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<p>046 ## \$k 1744 \$2 edtf 100 1# \$a Bowen, Emanuel, \$d 1693 or 1694-1767. \$t New & correct chart of all the known world 380 ## \$a Early maps \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$j Mercator projection</p> <p>046 ## \$k 2010 \$2 edtf 110 2# \$a Geological Survey (U.S.). \$t Landsat thematic mapper image mosaic of Colorado</p>

	<pre>380 ## \$a Maps \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$j Albers conical equal area projection</pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>scale of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a ratio of the dimensions of a representative expression of an image or three-dimensional form to the dimensions of the thing that is represented.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the scale element. Record a structured description as a representative fraction expressed as a ratio. For guidance, see Map and Geospatial Information Round Table (MAGIRT), Guidelines for cataloging cartographic resources using RDA.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$k.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre>046 ## \$k 1744 \$2 edtf 100 1# \$a Bowen, Emanuel, \$d 1693 or 1694-1767. \$t New & correct chart of all the known world 380 ## \$a Early maps \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$k Scale approximately 1:90,000,000. At equator 046 ## \$k 2010 \$2 edtf 110 2# \$a Geological Survey (U.S.). \$t Landsat thematic mapper image mosaic of Colorado 380 ## \$a Maps \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$k Scale 1:650,000</pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>

<p>Guidance</p>	<p>script of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a set of characters or symbols used to express written language content of a representative expression of a work.</p> <p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the script element. Record a structured description using the English language names of scripts found at: Codes for the representation of names of scripts.</p> <p>This element can be recorded in any case but is especially encouraged if the language of representative expression is commonly written in more than one script.</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$l.</p>
<p>MARC Example</p>	<pre>100 1# \$a Kabiljo-Šutić, Simha. \$t Ukrštaji 400 1# \$a Kabiljo-Šutić, Simha. \$t Укрштaji 380 ## \$a Epic poetry \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$h srp 387 ## \$l Cyrillic \$2 iso15924 100 1# \$a Kālidāsa. \$t Raghuvamśa 380 ## \$a Epic poetry \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$h kok 387 ## \$l Devanagari \$2 iso15924</pre>
<p>BIBFRAME Example</p>	<p>NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.</p>
<p>Guidance</p>	<p>sound content of representative expression</p> <p>This element is defined as a presence or absence of sound in a representative expression of a work. Sound content is present in an expression with a value of "performed music", "sounds", or "spoken word" for content type.</p>

	<p>Record a value in the same way as the value would be recorded in the sound content element. Record “silent” or “sound,” from the RDA Sound Content vocabulary encoding scheme</p> <p>Record the value in MARC field 387, subfield \$m.</p>
MARC Example	<pre>130 0# \$a Wizard of Oz (Motion picture : 1925) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Fantasy films \$a Fiction films \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$m silent \$2 rdasco 130 0# \$a Wizard of Oz (Motion picture : 1939) 380 ## \$a Motion pictures \$a Action and adventure films \$a Fantasy films \$a Musical films \$a Fiction films \$2 lcgft 387 ## \$m sound \$2 rdasco</pre>
BIBFRAME Example	NARs for work will continue to be created and maintained in the NAF using MARC 21 coding and syntax.
Reference and Notes	No PS in original toolkit
Update History	2023-08-15
Document URL	https://www.loc.gov/aba/rda/mgd/work/mg-w-representativeExpression.pdf