

Session 1 : Introduction to the online version of DDC 23 **National Library of New Zealand**

This session introduces principles of classification, the main parts of the Dewey Decimal Classification 23rd edition, how to classify, the relative index, the principle of hierarchy, the concept of disciplines, interdisciplinary numbers, and comprehensive works.

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What is classification?

Classification is:

- A logical system for the arrangement of knowledge
- A grouping together of like objects.

Prior to Melvil Dewey, library books were shelved in a fixed location on a particular shelf. Dewey developed his system of 'relative location' between 1873 and 1876.

The principle is that the books are numbered according to their intellectual content. This allows more flexibility with locations. This system is called Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC).

Dewey notation

DDC uses only Arabic numerals. All classification numbers contain at least three digits. Where more than 3 digits are needed, a decimal point follows the third digit.

At the National Library of New Zealand, we now primarily use the online version of the Dewey Decimal Classification 23rd edition (WebDewey). The print version is also available for consultation.

At this point, log in to WebDewey.

Main parts of DDC 23

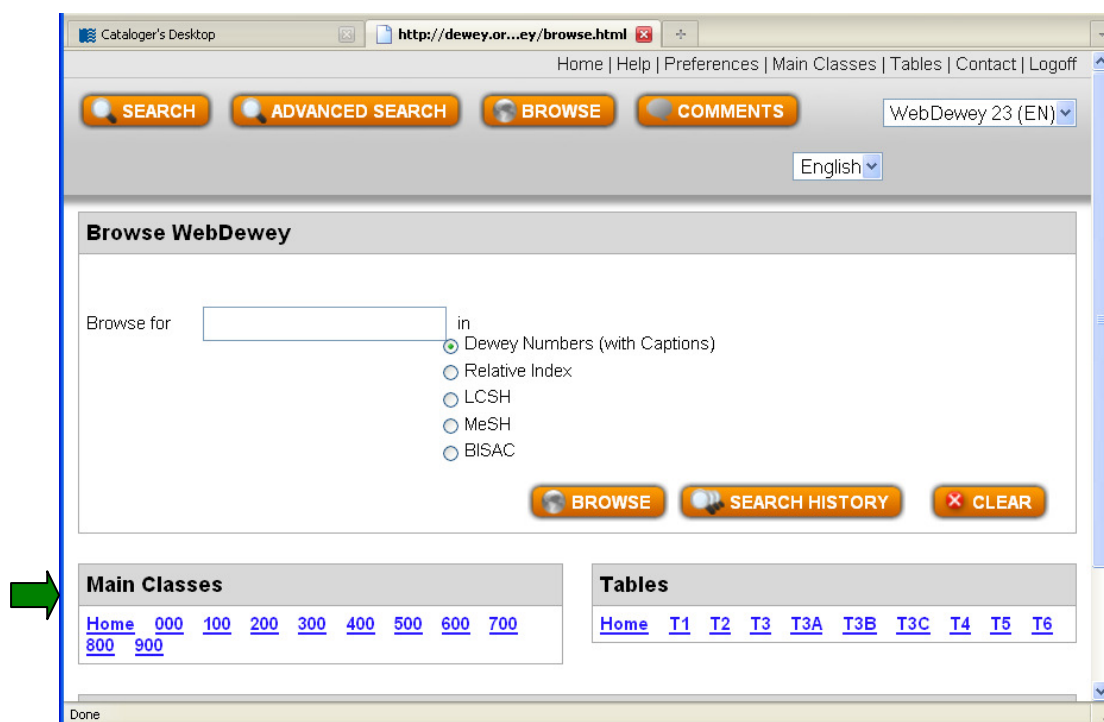
Introduction Glossary Manual Tables Main classes Schedules Relative index

DDC is a hierarchical classification, proceeding from general to the specific in terms of discipline and subject relationships.

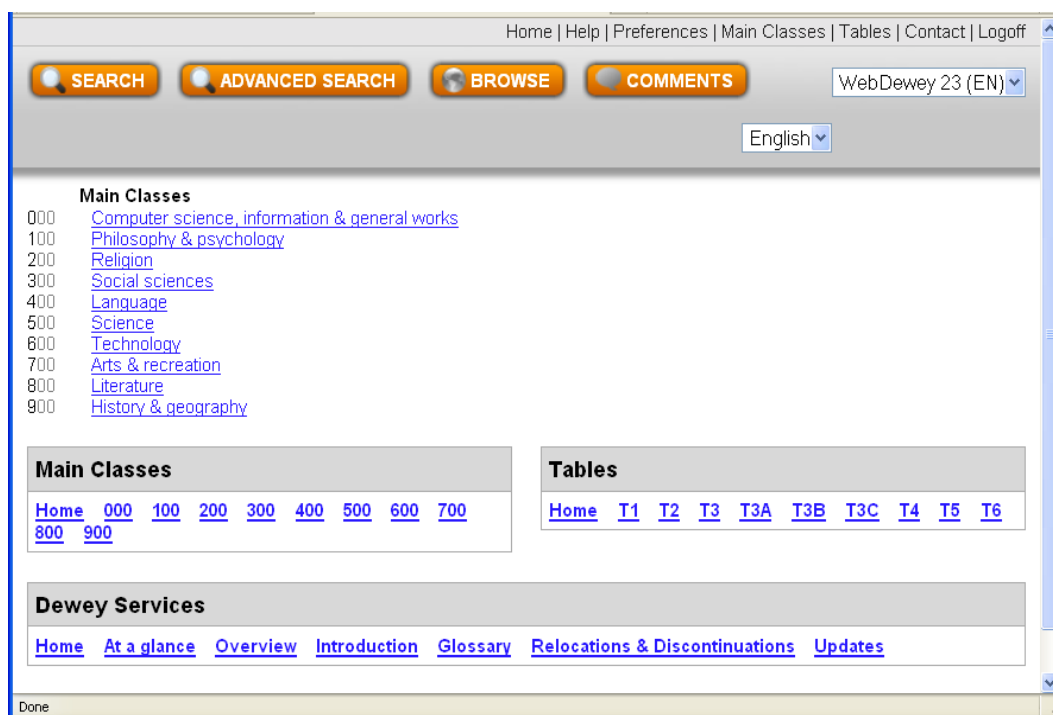
1. The principle of hierarchy

The basic arrangement is by discipline. The universe of knowledge is divided into 10 main classes.

These ten main classes of Dewey can be accessed by clicking on the “Home” link under the “Main Classes” heading at the bottom right of the WebDewey screen when you log on.



Now you can see the ten main divisions according to Dewey:



Each of the classes from 100 to 900 represents a broad discipline or group of disciplines.

The exception is the 000 class, which contains general subjects which are not necessarily related disciplines, like newspapers, encyclopaedias, computers, library science.

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Each class has 10 divisions, represented by the second digit of the notation.

Each division has 10 sections, represented by the third digit of the notation.

This hierarchical structure is continued and incorporated in the notation, which is lengthened by one digit for each more specific aspect of the subject.

For example:

600 Technology (Applied sciences)
640 Home and family management
646 Sewing, clothing, management of personal and family life
646.7 Management of personal and family life
646.72 Care of hair, face, skin, nails
646.724 Care of hair
646.7248 Wigs

The structural hierarchy of DDC means that all topics, except for the ten main classes, are subordinate to and part of the broader topics above them.

For example:

500 natural sciences and mathematics
520 Astronomy and allied sciences
523 Specific celestial bodies and phenomena
523.4 Planets, asteroids and other objects
523.43 Mars

2. The same subject may appear in a number of disciplines

For example, 'Clothes' as a subject can be found in three different classes

391 Costume
646 Home economics and sewing
687 Commercial manufacture
746.92 Arts and fashion design

3. The Relative Index - an introduction

No one class can cover all aspects of a subject. For many subjects, different aspects are located in different classes. The Relative Index brings together (relates) the different aspects of a topic and the different classes in which they are to be found.

Try looking up these examples from the Relative Index:

Clothing

Music

Oats

We'll look at tips on how to use the Relative index later.

4. Interdisciplinary number

An interdisciplinary number is a number used for works covering a subject from the perspective of more than one discipline. It is often identified by a 'class here interdisciplinary works' note. The interdisciplinary number for a subject always appears first, next to that subject in the relative index. For example, Clothing has several different Dewey numbers depending on the discipline. The interdisciplinary number for Clothing is 391. An important consideration in using such an interdisciplinary number is that the work must contain significant material on the discipline in which the interdisciplinary number is found – interdisciplinary numbers are not absolute, they are to be used only when applicable.

5. Classifying with DDC

This definition comes from the Introduction, paragraph 5.1:

“Classifying a work with the DDC requires determination of the subject, the disciplinary focus, and if applicable, the approach or form (see paragraph 8.3)”¹

How to classify a work

There are four steps in this process

- A. Determine the subject of the work
- B. Select the appropriate discipline
- C. Find the most specific number for the subject
- D. Add to the number using DDC's number building features, if appropriate. [this is covered in the next session]

A. Determine the subject of the work

Some useful guidelines are found on page 19 of *Mary Mortimer's Learn Dewey Decimal Classification (Edition 22)*.²

B. Select the appropriate discipline

The guiding principle of the DDC is that a work is classed in the discipline for which it is intended, rather than the discipline from which the work derives. This enables works that are used together to be found together. For example, a general work by a zoologist on agricultural pest control should be classed in agriculture, not zoology, along with other works on agricultural pest control. (Introduction, paragraph 5.4)

The following example illustrates the process of ensuring you have selected the appropriate discipline.

EXAMPLE

Camels kept for domestic purposes (Beasts of burden)

Process

- Work through the main classes, drilling down till you can go no further
- Check the relative index

Steps

- Click on the “Home” button under the “Main Classes” heading to see a summary of the main 10 classes and what they represent. From this work out which classes do not apply. From this summary we can say that classes 100-400 and 700-900 are very unlikely to cover the topic camels as domestic animals, leaving classes 000, 500 and 600 as possibilities.
- Click on 000 – Computer science, information & general works. From the more detailed information under this summary we can see that the 000 class is not relevant.
- Click on 500 — Science. From this you can see that 590 is a possibility
- Click on 600 — Technology. You can see that 630 is also a possibility. Agriculture is likely to be a suitable area, and so 630 is a number to look at in more detail. However if we were still uncertain we could also look at 590 before making a final choice between these two broad numbers.
- If you go back to 500 and then click on 590 Animals (Zoology), you can see that the 590 numbers are very science orientated and do not suit our topic.
- However if you go back to 600 and click on 630 Agriculture, we pick up 636 animal husbandry, which confirms our choice of discipline.
- Click on 636 Animal husbandry, then 636.1-636.8 Specific kinds of domestic animals. Camels are related to cattle, so click on 636.2 Cattle and related animals. You will see that “Other large ruminants and Camelidae” are classed at 636.29. Click on 636.29 and you will see the number for camels – 636.295.
- For further confirmation, check the Relative index. Click on Browse, then enter “Camels” in the Browse box, and press enter. Note that 636.295 appears first in the Relative index and is therefore the interdisciplinary number.
- If we were in doubt between 599.6362 and 636.295 we would choose 636.295 as it is the interdisciplinary number.

C. Finding the most specific number for the subject

Finding the number

Work through the main classes as above and then follow the final choice (or choices) into the schedules to find a suitable number.

OR

Look up the topic in the relative index and then check the number (or numbers) to make sure that it matches the original topic.

- Check your chosen number by **browsing** WebDewey for the number, regardless of which of the above methods you used to find your number. To do this, click on the **Browse** tab, then entering the number that you are looking up in the Browse box. Make sure that the button for **Dewey Numbers (with Captions)** is ticked, and then click on the Browse button.

Home | Help | Preferences | Main Classes | Tables | Contact | Logoff

SEARCH ADVANCED SEARCH BROWSE COMMENTS WebDewey 23 (EN) English

Browse WebDewey

Browse for in

- ☒ Dewey Numbers (with Captions)
- ☐ Relative Index
- ☐ LCSH
- ☐ MeSH
- ☐ BISAC

BROWSE SEARCH HISTORY CLEAR

Main Classes

[Home](#) [000](#) [100](#) [200](#) [300](#) [400](#) [500](#) [600](#) [700](#)
[800](#) [900](#)

Tables

[Home](#) [T1](#) [T2](#) [T3](#) [T3A](#) [T3B](#) [T3C](#) [T4](#) [T5](#)
[T6](#)

Dewey Services

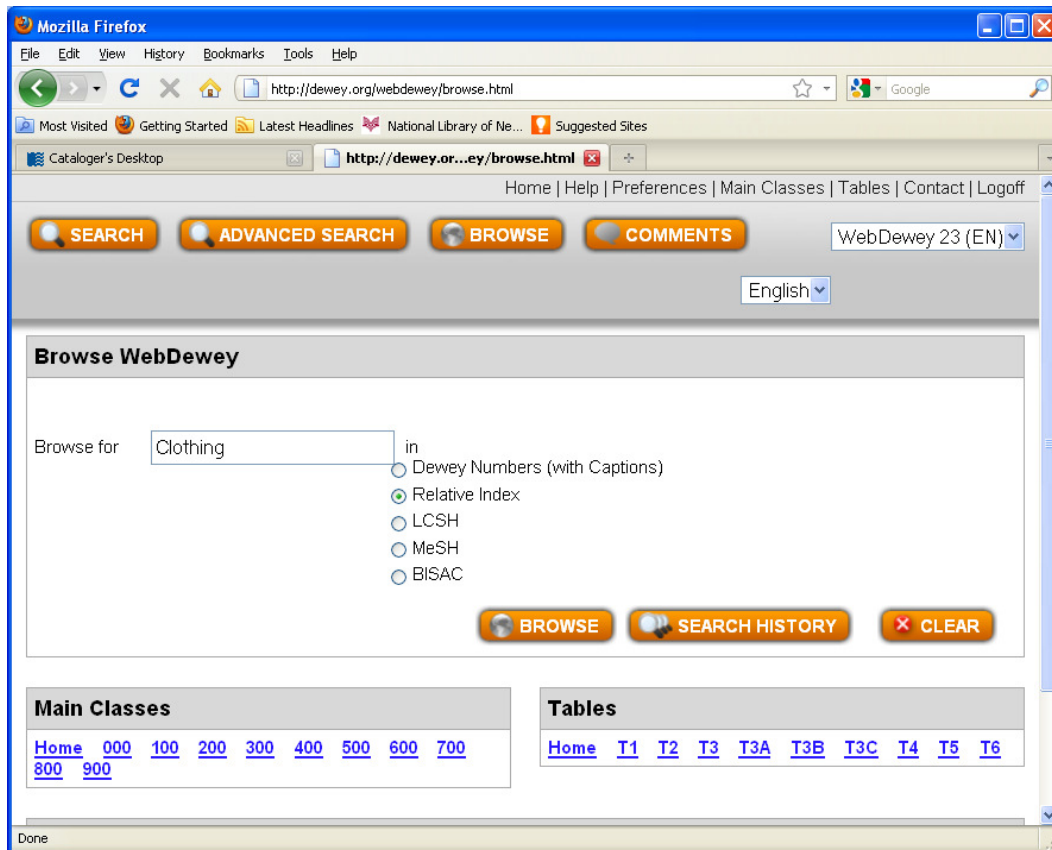
[Home](#) [At a glance](#) [Overview](#) [Introduction](#) [Glossary](#) [Relocations & Discontinuations](#) [Updates](#)

Done

- Look at the other topics around your chosen number. Does your topic fit in here?
- Look at your own library's collection on your library catalogue and see what else has been classed at or near your chosen number. This will ensure consistency in your collection.

The Relative Index - Using the relative index

To search the relative index in WebDewey, click on the orange 'Browse' tab. Enter the term you are looking for (e.g. Clothing) in the box on the left, and click on the "Relative Index" button.



Click on **Browse**.

You can see from your search results that the first number listed for Clothing is **391**. This is the interdisciplinary number.

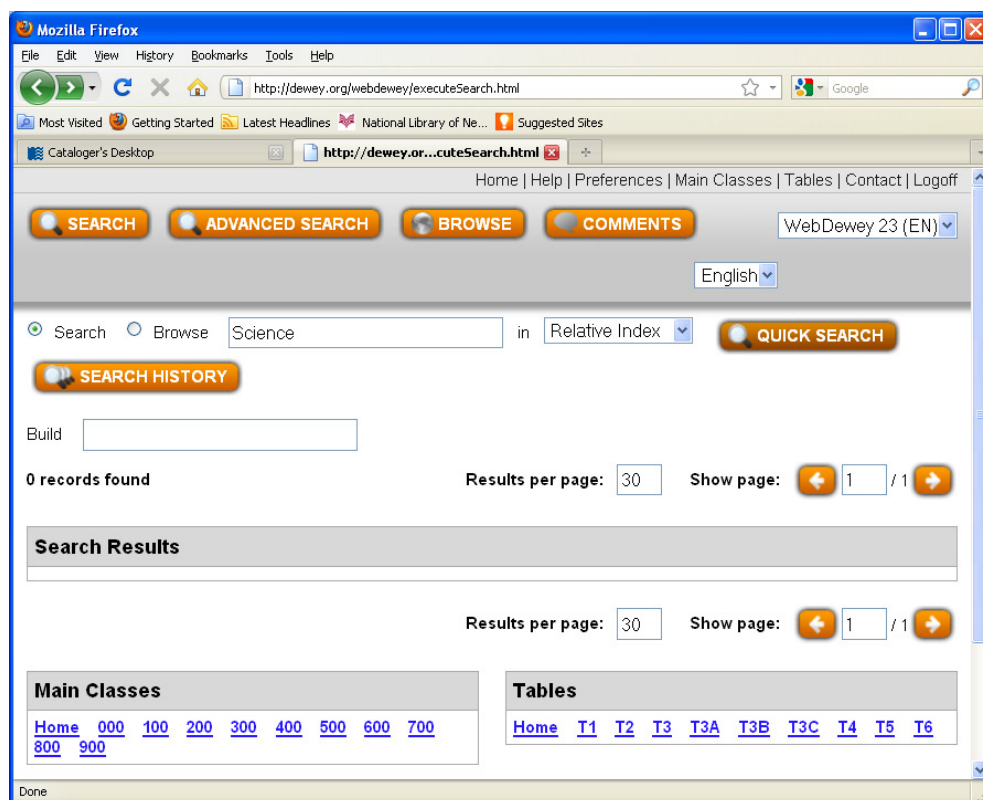
The index in DDC is called relative because it relates subjects to disciplines. Subjects are listed alphabetically in the index and listed under each subject is an alphabetical list of the disciplines in which the subject is found.

The Relative index is accessed by selecting the "Relative index" option from the drop-down box when searching or browsing for terms.

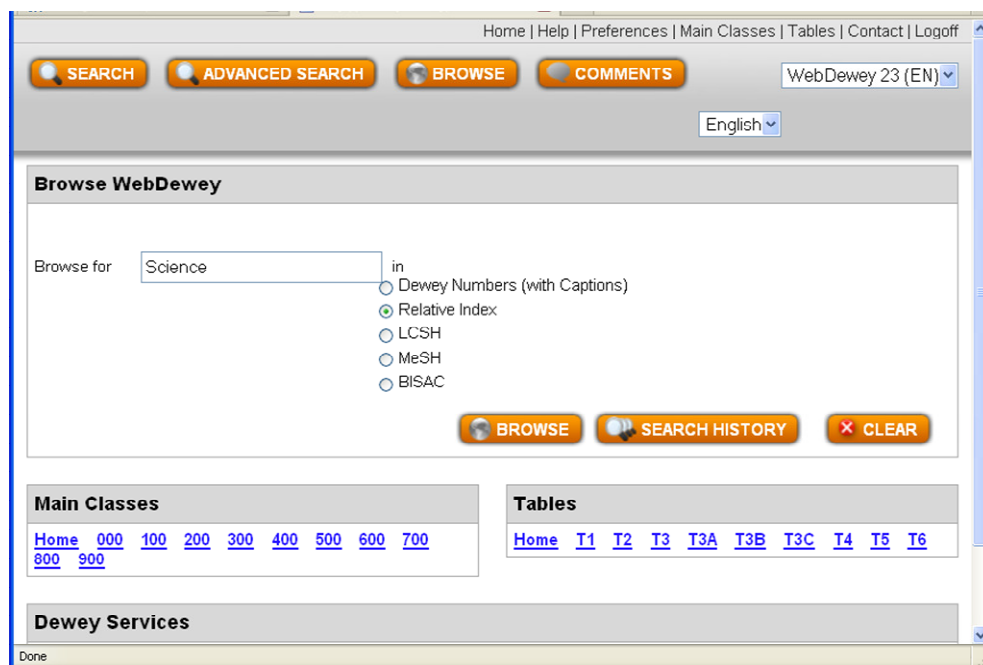
Initially, it is probably more useful to **browse** rather than **search** the Relative index, as if you search the index you are likely to end up with an overwhelming number of results, and you may have difficulty identifying the interdisciplinary number.

Try **searching** the Relative index with the term "Science".

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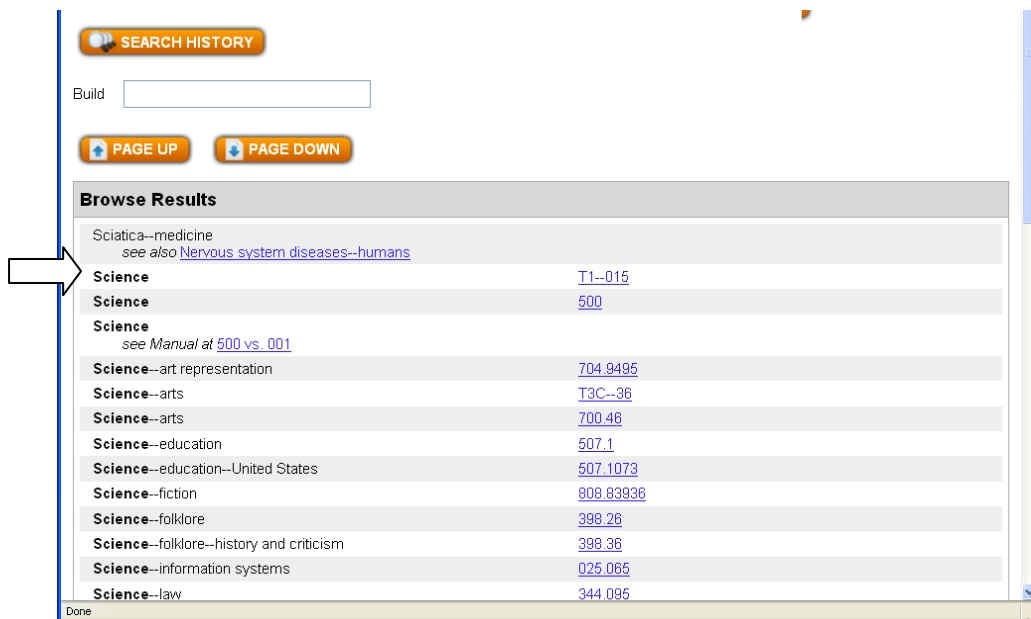
Compare your results to those you see when **browsing** the Relative index for the term “Science”.



When you **browse** (rather than search) the Relative index, the first number(s) that appears may be a **table number**, which will have a prefix and look something like T1—015. We will explore table numbers next week.

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For now, remember that the first number **without a prefix** appearing next to the subject is always the interdisciplinary number. In the example below, the interdisciplinary number for “Science” is 500.



The screenshot shows a web interface for the DDC 23 Training Programme. At the top, there is a 'SEARCH HISTORY' button. Below it is a 'Build' input field. Further down are 'PAGE UP' and 'PAGE DOWN' buttons. The main section is titled 'Browse Results'. It lists various subjects with their corresponding DDC numbers. A white arrow points to the 'Science' entry, which has the number 500. Below it, the number 500 is also listed. The list continues with other subjects and their numbers.

Subject	DDC Number
Sciatica--medicine	
see also Nervous system diseases--humans	
Science	T1--015
Science	500
Science	
see <i>Manual</i> at 500 vs. 001	
Science --art representation	704.9495
Science --arts	T3C--36
Science --arts	700.46
Science --education	507.1
Science --education--United States	507.1073
Science --fiction	808.83936
Science --folklore	398.26
Science --folklore--history and criticism	398.36
Science --information systems	025.065
Science --law	344.095

More than one subject in the same discipline

A work may cover multiple aspects of one subject or more than one subject in a single discipline. The following guidelines are suggested.

More than one subject in the same discipline

- **Rule of application** If one subject is applied to another class with the subject acted upon. e.g. An analytical work of Shakespeare's influence on Keats would be classed with Keats.
- **Two subjects:** Class a work on 2 subjects with the subject receiving fuller treatment. e.g. A book on growing herbs for cooking (641.6) and medicinal purposes (635)
- **First of two rule:** If subjects receive equal treatment then class with the subject whose number comes first in the schedules, e.g. A book on Hares (636.9328) and Rodents (636.935) would be classed with Hares at 636.9328.
- However disregard this rule when the two topics are the major subdivisions of a subject. e.g. a book on donkeys (636.182) and mules (636.183) would be classed with Other equines (636.18)
- Also disregard this rule if there are specific instructions, eg. At 598, the note "class comprehensive works on warm-blooded vertebrates in 599".
- **Rule of three:** If there is equal treatment of three or more subjects that are all subdivisions of a broader subject, classify the work at the first highest number that includes them all. e.g. a book on pond ecology (577.63), wetland ecology (577.68), seashore ecology (577.69) would be classed with Aquatic ecology (577.6)

What to do when there is more than one discipline covered in a work?

More than one discipline on the same subject

Use the interdisciplinary number provided in the relative index or schedules. Refer to the manual for guidance. If there is no interdisciplinary number, class with the discipline given the fullest treatment in the work.

EXAMPLE

A book on doll making contains information on porcelain doll making (as a ceramic art) 738.83, handicraft, 745.59221 and commercial manufacture of dolls 688.7221.

Think about which number you would classify this work at.

Comprehensive works – treat a subject from various points of view within a single discipline

Comprehensive works may be stated or implied in a ‘class-here note’

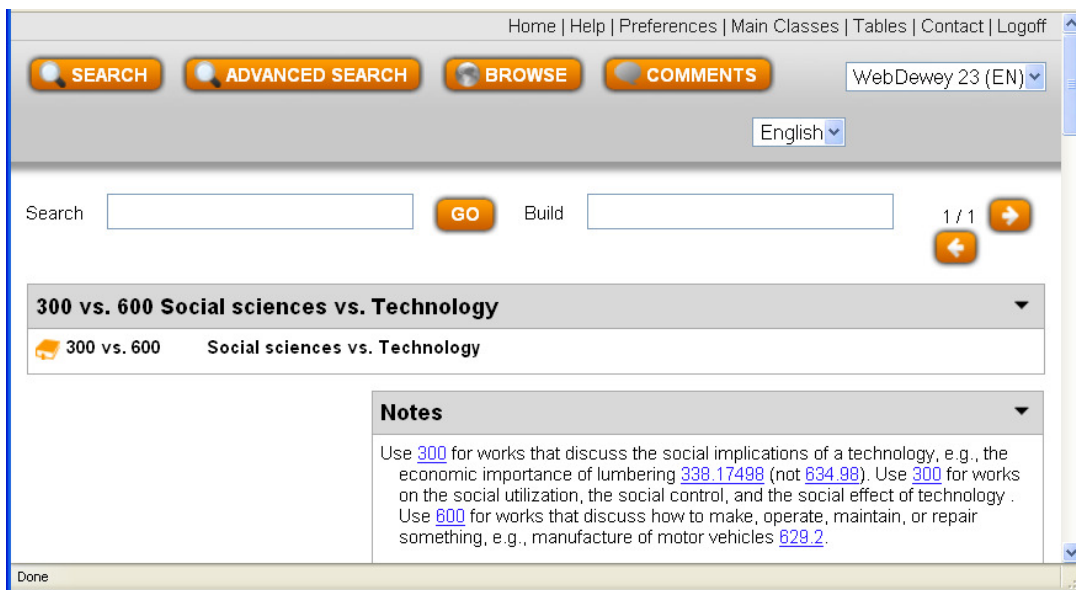
For example:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 641.815 | Breads and bread-like foods
Class here yeast breads, comprehensive works on baked goods
(stated) |
| T2--4115 | Highland
Class here *Scottish Highlands
(implied) |

Using the manual in DDC 23

Choosing between two numbers in disciplines can sometimes be difficult. Sometimes there is extra information in what is called the manual – this is a set of extra notes which are integrated with the rest of online Dewey. If you get stuck, it is always a good idea to look to see if there is a link to a note in the manual, which may help to clarify which number to choose. In Web Dewey, notes in the manual are identified by a small orange icon showing a book with a bookmark hanging out.

For example, there is a very useful section in the manual on deciding between 300 Social Sciences and 600 Technology numbers.



To recap

Consider the following example: Elephants

Works about elephants as animals will go with works about other animals in the zoology discipline – DDC division 590.

A book of folktales about elephants will go with the other books of folktales, in the folklore discipline – DDC division 390.

The subject of domesticated or working elephants is classed alongside other domesticated animals, in the agriculture discipline DDC division 630.

A book of paintings and sculpture of elephants will go with other art books in the arts discipline – DDC class 700.

...and so on. So where your books on elephants end up will depend on what's happening to the elephant or the activity involved.

Points to remember!

DDC is organised by disciplines or field of study, not by subjects.

When thinking of disciplines, remember that a discipline is a field of study - something that can be taught. For example, Horticulture can be taught, so it is a discipline, whereas 'strawberries', cannot be taught, so they are a subject.

Application hints

Using the main classes is a very useful way of ensuring you are classing your subject in the correct discipline. One approach to finding numbers is selecting a discipline, then drill down through classes until you find the exact number needed. If it's not there, start again!

Navigation hints

The ten main classes of DDC can be accessed by clicking on the 'Home' link under the 'Main classes' heading at the bottom right of the WebDewey.

Homework

1. Learn the 10 main classes
2. Read the Introduction to WebDewey
3. Exercises

i) Exercise 4.1 on p. 24-25 of Mortimer – First Summary - the ten main classes³

The following notes may help:

Once you have identified the subject of a work, you need to place it in one or other of the ten classes below.

The screenshot shows the WebDewey 23 (EN) website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Home | Help | Preferences | Main Classes | Tables | Contact | Logoff. Below this is a search bar with buttons for SEARCH, ADVANCED SEARCH, BROWSE, and COMMENTS. A dropdown menu shows 'WebDewey 23 (EN)' and a language selector shows 'English'. The main content area is divided into three sections. The first section, 'Main Classes', lists ten classes with their corresponding Dewey numbers and links: 000 Computer science, information & general works; 100 Philosophy & psychology; 200 Religion; 300 Social sciences; 400 Language; 500 Science; 600 Technology; 700 Arts & recreation; 800 Literature; 900 History & geography. The second section, 'Main Classes', contains a table with links for Home, 000, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, and 900. The third section, 'Tables', contains a table with links for Home, T1, T2, T3, T3A, T3B, T3C, T4, T5, and T6. The fourth section, 'Dewey Services', contains a table with links for Home, At a glance, Overview, Introduction, Glossary, Relocations & Discontinuations, and Updates. The bottom of the page shows a status bar with the text 'Done'.

Main Classes										
Home	000	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900

Tables										
Home	T1	T2	T3	T3A	T3B	T3C	T4	T5	T6	

Dewey Services						
Home	At a glance	Overview	Introduction	Glossary	Relocations & Discontinuations	Updates

For example:

subject	discipline	class
logic	philosophy	100
Buddhism	Religion	200
economics	Social sciences	300
Latin grammar	language	400
chemistry	Natural science	500
engineering	technology	600
sculpture	The arts	700
poetry	literature	800
History of Indonesia	History	900

ii) Exercise 4.2 on p. 26-27 of Mortimer – Second Summary – the hundred divisions⁴

Using the first 100 divisions of Dewey, write down the number of the division in which each of the following topics belongs.

First decide the class by clicking on the “Home” button under the Main Classes.

The screenshot shows the WebDewey 23 (EN) interface. At the top, there are buttons for SEARCH, ADVANCED SEARCH, BROWSE, and COMMENTS, along with a language dropdown set to English. Below this is a section titled "Main Classes" with a list of 100 divisions (000 to 900) and their corresponding subjects. The "Main Classes" section also includes a "Home" button and a list of links for 000, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, and 900. The "Tables" section includes a "Home" button and a list of links for T1, T2, T3, T3A, T3B, T3C, T4, T5, and T6. The "Dewey Services" section includes a "Home" button and a list of links for At a glance, Overview, Introduction, Glossary, Relocations & Discontinuations, and Updates.

Then, click on each of the main classes to see the ten divisions immediately below. Decide which division is most appropriate. NB sometimes you will have to click on the subordinate links to see all ten subdivisions – e.g. for the history of a specific continent you would need to click on the link next to 930-990.

The screenshot shows the WebDewey 23 (EN) interface. At the top, there are buttons for SEARCH, ADVANCED SEARCH, BROWSE, and COMMENTS, along with a language dropdown set to English. The main content area displays the 'Main Classes' section for 'History & geography'. It lists the following classes: 900 History, 910 Geography & travel, 920 Biography & genealogy, and 930-990 History of specific continents, countries, localities; extraterrestrial worlds. Below this, there are two tables: 'Main Classes' and 'Tables'. The 'Main Classes' table has links for Home, 000, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, and 900. The 'Tables' table has links for Home, T1, T2, T3, T3A, T3B, T3C, T4, T5, and T6. At the bottom, there is a 'Dewey Services' section with links for Home, At a glance, Overview, Introduction, Glossary, Relocations & Discontinuations, and Updates. The footer contains copyright information for OCLC and a disclaimer.

iii) Exercise 4.3 on p. 28-29 of Mortimer – Third Summary – the thousand sections⁵

By clicking one level further down in the hierarchy, you can decide the section in which each of the following topics belongs. First click on the Main class, then drill down two more levels to find a more precise three-digit number.

The screenshot shows the WebDewey 23 (EN) interface. At the top, there are buttons for SEARCH, ADVANCED SEARCH, BROWSE, and COMMENTS, along with a language dropdown set to English. The main content area displays the 'Main Classes' section for 'Manuscripts & rare books'. It lists the following classes: 000 Computer science, information & general works, 090 Manuscripts & rare books, 090 Manuscripts, rare books, other rare printed materials, 091 Manuscripts, 092 Block books, 093 Incunabula, 094 Printed books, 095 Books notable for bindings, 096 Books notable for illustrations and materials, 097 Books notable for ownership or origin, 098 Prohibited works, forgeries, hoaxes, and 099 Books notable for format. Below this, there are two tables: 'Main Classes' and 'Tables'. The 'Main Classes' table has links for Home, 000, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, and 900. The 'Tables' table has links for Home, T1, T2, T3, T3A, T3B, T3C, T4, T5, and T6.

¹ Introduction to the Dewey Decimal Classification, *WebDewey*, accessed July 19, 2012, <http://www.oclc.org/dewey/versions/print/intro.pdf>

² Mary Mortimer, *Learn Dewey Decimal Classification (Edition 22)* (Canberra: DocMatrix, 2004), 19.

³ Ibid, 24-25.

⁴ Ibid, 26-27.

⁵ Ibid, 28-29.