

Sears List of Subject Headings

18th Edition



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Preface

The year 2003 marked the eightieth anniversary of the Sears List of Subject Headings. For eight decades the Sears List has served the needs of small and medium-sized libraries, suggesting headings appropriate for use in their catalogs and providing patterns and instructions for adding new headings as they are required. The successive editors of the List have faced the need to accommodate change while maintaining a sound continuity. The new and revised headings in each edition reflect developments in the literature and in the use of the English language, while the changes in the form of the headings and in the structure and display of the List reflect shifts in the prevailing philosophy of subject cataloging.

There are three major features of this new edition of the Sears List. The first is the inclusion of five hundred new subject headings. The second is the revision of the classification numbers to conform to the usage of the 14th edition of the *Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification* (2004). The third is a small but important addition to the Principles of the Sears List.

The Principles of the Sears List, which follows this Preface, is intended both as a statement of the theoretical foundations of the Sears List and as a concise introduction to subject cataloging in general. It has been expanded in this edition to provide guidance to libraries that choose to assign topical and geographic headings to individual works of fiction, drama, and poetry. This difficult area of cataloging has been much discussed in recent years in the library community and in the committees and subcommittees of the American Library Association.

The List of Commonly Used Subdivisions, which was omitted in the previous edition of the Sears in favor of a more exhaustive treatment of subdivisions within the body of the List, has been restored in this edition and renamed List of Subdivisions Provided for in the Sears List. It now lists, for the purpose of easy reference, every subdivision for which there is a provision in Sears, no matter how specialized. At the same time, for every subdivision there is an entry in the alphabetical List with full instructions for the use of that particular subdivision.

A History of the Sears List

Minnie Earl Sears prepared the first edition of this work in response to demands for a list of subject headings that was better suited to the needs of the small library than the existing American Library Association and Library of Congress lists. Published in 1923, the *List of Subject Headings for Small Libraries* was based on the headings used by nine small libraries that were known to be well cataloged. Minnie Sears used only *See* and “refer from” references in the first edition. In the second edition (1926) she added *See also* references at the request of teachers of cataloging who were using the List as a textbook. To make the List more useful for that purpose, she wrote a chapter on “Practical Suggestions for the Beginner in Subject Heading Work” for the third edition (1933).

Isabel Stevenson Monro edited the fourth (1939) and fifth (1944) editions. A new feature of the fourth edition was the inclusion of Dewey Decimal Classification numbers as applied in the *Standard Catalog for Public Libraries*. The new subjects added to the List were based on those used in the Standard Catalog Series and on the catalog cards issued by the

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H.W. Wilson Company. Consequently, the original subtitle “Compiled from Lists used in Nine Representative Small Libraries” was dropped.

The sixth (1950), seventh (1954), and eighth (1959) editions were prepared by Bertha M. Frick. In recognition of the pioneering and fundamental contribution made by Minnie Sears the title was changed to *Sears List of Subject Headings* with the sixth edition. Since the List was being used by medium-sized libraries as well as small ones, the phrase “for Small Libraries” was deleted from the title. The symbols *x* and *xx* were substituted for the “Refer from (see ref.)” and “Refer from (see also ref.)” phrases to conform to the format adopted by the Library of Congress.

The ninth edition (1965), the first of four to be prepared by Barbara M. Westby, continued the policies of the earlier editions. With the eleventh edition, the “Practical Suggestions for the Beginner in Subject Heading Work” was retitled “Principles of the Sears List of Subject Headings” to emphasize “principles,” and a section dealing with nonbook materials was added.

The thirteenth edition (1986), prepared by Carmen Rovira and Caroline Reyes, was the first to take advantage of computer validation capabilities. It also responded to the changing theory in subject analysis occasioned by the development of online public access catalogs. This effort was taken further in the fourteenth edition (1991) under the editorship of Martha T. Mooney, who reduced the number of compound terms, simplified many subdivisions, and advanced the work of uninverting inverted headings.

In accord with a suggestion of the Cataloging of Children’s Materials Committee of the American Library Association, many of the headings from *Subject Headings for Children’s Literature* (Library of Congress) were incorporated into the Sears List with the thirteenth edition. Since the Sears List is intended for both adult and juvenile collections, wherever the Library of Congress has two different headings for adult and juvenile approaches to a single subject, a choice of a single term was made for Sears. In cases where the Sears List uses the adult form, the cataloger of children’s materials may prefer to use the juvenile form found in *Subject Headings for Children’s Literature*.

In the fifteenth edition (1994), the first edited by Joseph Miller, the interval between publication of editions was shortened to provide a more timely updating of subject headings. In keeping with prevailing thinking in the field of library and information science, all remaining inverted headings were canceled in favor of the uninverted form. Likewise, the display of the List on the page was changed to conform to the NISO standards for thesauri approved in 1993. While Sears remains a list of subject headings and not a true thesaurus, it uses the labels BT, NT, RT, SA, and UF for broader terms, narrower terms, related terms, See Also, and Used for. A List of Canceled and Replacement Headings was added to facilitate the updating of catalogs, and the legend “[Former heading]” was introduced within the List to identify earlier forms of headings. Also in the fifteenth edition many headings were added to enhance access to individual works of fiction, poetry, drama, and other imaginative works, such as films and radio and television programs, based on the *Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, etc.* prepared by a subcommittee of the Subject Analysis Committee of the ALA.

In the sixteenth edition (1997) the suggested classification numbers were revised to conform to the 13th edition of the Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification, further instructions were added for the application of subdivisions, and the headings in the field of religion were extensively revised to reduce their exclusively Christian application and make them more useful for cataloging materials on other religions.

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The major feature of the seventeenth edition (2000) was the revision of the headings for the native peoples of the Western Hemisphere. The headings **Indians**, **Indians of North America**, **Indians of Mexico**, etc., were cancelled in favor of **Native Americans**, which may be subdivided geographically by continent, region, country, state, or city. Subdivisions formerly used under **Indians of North America** for classes of persons, such as *Women* or *Children*, and for things distinctly ethnic, such as *Medicine* or *Music*, were canceled in favor of phrase headings, such as **Native American women**, **Native American children**, **Native American medicine**, and **Native American music**. Subdivisions for things not of an ethnic nature, such as *Housing* or *Social conditions*, remain subdivisions under **Native Americans**. The heading **Native Americans** is now the pattern heading for all ethnic groups

In further revisions in the seventeenth edition, many headings that formerly incorporated the word “modern” were simplified and clarified, such as **Modern history** and **Modern art**, and headings for government policy were revised and regularized, so that all headings for policies are either phrase headings, such as **Economic policy** and **Environmental policy**, or topics subdivided by *Government policy*, such as **Homeless persons—Government policy** and **Genetic engineering—Government policy**, all subdivided geographically.

The Scope of the Sears List

No list can possibly provide a heading for every idea, object, process, or relationship, especially not within the scope of a single volume. What Sears hopes to offer instead is a basic list that includes many of the headings most likely to be needed in small libraries together with patterns and examples that will guide the cataloger in creating additional headings as needed. New topics appear every day, and books on those topics require new subject headings. Headings for new topics can be developed from the Sears List in two ways, by establishing new terms as needed and by subdividing the headings already in the List. Instructions for creating new headings based on the pattern in Sears and sources for establishing the wording of new headings are given in the Principles of the Sears List. The various kinds of subdivisions and the rules for their application are also discussed in the Principles of the Sears List.

It is only by being flexible and expandable that Sears has been able over the years to fill the needs of various kinds of libraries. The degree or level of specificity required for a collection depends entirely on the material being collected. While a small library is unlikely to need very narrow topics of a technical or scientific nature, it is not at all unlikely that a small library might have a children’s book on a single concept such as **Triangle** or a gardening book on **Iris**. Neither of these terms is in Sears, but the first would be added as a narrower term under **Shape** and the second as a narrower term under **Flowers**.

New Headings in this Edition

The abundance of new subject headings in the present edition represents a major enhancement to the List. The new terms reflect developments in many different areas, especially computers, personal relations, politics, and popular culture. Among the new headings in the field of technology are **Bar coding**, **Digital cameras**, **Digital libraries**, **DVDs**, **Intranets**, **MP3 players**, **Nanotechnology**, **Optical scanners**, **V-chips**, and **Web databases**. Among the new headings in other fields are **Alien labor**, **Aromatherapy**, **Braids (Hairstyling)**, **Cheating (Education)**, **Fanzines**, **Fetal alcohol syndrome**, **Journaling**, **Pilates method**, **Racially mixed people**, **Test bias**, **Tree houses**, and **Word problems (Mathematics)**. In many cases the new headings in Sears conform to the usage of the Library of Congress Subject Headings, while in other cases, such as **Tattling for Talebearing**, or **Mountain biking for All terrain cycling**, the Sears form varies from the form found in LCSH. In other cases, such as **Hearing in animals** and **Fractured fairy tales**, the concept is not represented in LCSH.

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Many of the headings new to this edition were suggested by librarians representing various sizes and types of libraries, by commercial vendors of bibliographic records, and by the catalogers, indexers, and subject specialists at the H.W. Wilson Company.

Revised Headings in this Edition

Revisions to existing headings have been kept to a minimum in this edition. The most significant is the replacement of the subdivision *Description* by *Description and travel*. In the 17th edition of the Sears List the subdivision *Travel* was established, to be used under names of individuals and categories of persons. The subdivision *Description and travel* under names of places, replacing the subdivision *Description* in all cases, should now be an unambiguous descriptor for both geographic descriptive material and various forms of travel writings about countries, regions, cities, etc.. It also conforms to the usage of the Library of Congress Subject Headings and other thesauri.

As in previous editions, certain headings of decreasing interest and some unnecessary examples, such as **Margarine**, **Van life**, and **Iran-Contra Affair, 1985-1990**, have been deleted from the List. Such headings are not invalid and may be maintained in the catalog. Other headings that have been deleted are no longer valid and are now used as cross-references to other headings. Earlier forms of headings revised in this edition appear in the alphabetical List after the UF [Used for] label under the established headings with the label “[*Former heading*]” and also in the List of Canceled and Replacement Headings

Form of Headings

It was the policy of Minnie Sears to use the Library of Congress form of subject headings with some modification, chiefly the simplification of phrasing. The Sears List still reflects the usage of the Library of Congress unless there is some compelling reason to vary, but those instances of variation have become numerous over the years. A major difference between the two lists is that in Sears the direct form of entry has replaced the inverted form, on the theory that most library users search for multiple-word terms in the order in which they occur naturally in the language. In most cases cross-references have been made from the inverted form and from the Library of Congress form where it otherwise varies.

Scope Notes

As in previous editions, all the new and revised headings in this edition have been provided with scope notes where such notes are required. Scope notes are intended to clarify the specialized use of a term or to distinguish between terms that might be confused. If there is any question of what a term means, the cataloger should simply consult a dictionary. There are times, however, when subject headings require a stricter limitation of a term than the common usage given in a dictionary would allow, as in the case of **Marketing**, a term in business and economics, not to be confused with **Grocery shopping**. Here a scope note is required. Some scope notes distinguish between topics and forms, such as **Encyclopedias and dictionaries** for critical and historical materials and the subdivisions **–Encyclopedias** and **–Dictionaries** under topics for items that are themselves encyclopedias or dictionaries. There are also scope notes in Sears that identify any headings in the area of literature that may be assigned to individual works of drama, fiction, poetry, etc.

Classification

The classification numbers in this edition of Sears are taken from the 14th edition of the *Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification* (2004). The numbers are intended only to direct the cataloger to a place in the DDC schedules where material on that subject is often found. They are not intended as a substitute for consulting the schedules, notes, and manual of the DDC

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itself when classifying a particular item. The relationship between subject headings and classification is further discussed in the Principles of the Sears List.

Usually only one number is assigned to a subject heading. In some cases, however, when a subject can be treated in more than one discipline, the subject is then given more than one number in the List. The heading **Chemical industry**, for example, is given two numbers, **338.4** and **660**, which represent possible classification numbers for materials dealing with the chemical industry from the viewpoints of economics and technology respectively. Classification numbers are not assigned to a few very general subject headings, such as **Charters, Exhibitions, Hallmarks, and Identification**, which cannot be classified unless a specific application is identified. The alphabetic notation of B for individual biographies is occasionally provided in addition to Dewey classification numbers for such materials. Numbers in the 810s and 840s prefixed by a C are given as optional numbers for topics in Canadian literature.

The Dewey numbers given in Sears are extended as far as is authorized by the *Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification*, which is seldom more than four places beyond the decimal point. When an item being classified has a particular form or geographic specificity, the number may be extended by adding form and geographic subdivisions from the Dewey tables. Only a few examples of built numbers are given in Sears, such as **940.53022** for **World War, 1939-1945—Pictorial Works**. No library should feel the need to extend classification numbers beyond what is practical for the size of the library's collection. For a discussion of close and broad classification and for instructions on building numbers from the Dewey tables, the cataloger should consult the introduction to the most recent edition of the *Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index*.

Style, Filing, Etc.

For spelling and definitions the editor has relied upon *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged* (1961) and the *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd ed., revised and updated (1997). Capitalization and the forms of corporate and geographic names used as examples are based on the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, 2nd ed., 2002 revision. The filing of entries follows the *ALA Filing Rules* (1980).

Every term in the List that may be used as a subject heading is printed in boldface type whether it is a main term; a term in a USE reference; a broader, narrower, or related term; or an example in a scope note or general reference. If a term is not printed in boldface type, it is not used as a heading.

Acknowledgments

The editors wish to acknowledge with gratitude the contributions to this edition of the individual catalogers, reference librarians, and vendors of cataloging services who have offered suggestions for headings to be added to the List.

The Cataloging of Children's Materials Committee of the American Library Association has been, as ever, an important source of advice in the editorial work on the Sears List. ALA's Subject Analysis Committee, especially its subcommittee on Fiction Guidelines, has provided useful guidance in the revision of the Principles of the Sears List in this edition.

Thanks are extended to the editors and catalogers of the H.W. Wilson Company; especially to Patricia Kuhr, Editor, Subject Authority Files, for her help in formulating subject headings, and to Jan Borodkin, Assistant Editor, Bibliographic Index, for his research and editorial assistance.

Very special thanks are extended to Frances E. Corcoran, a long-time friend of the Sears List, for sharing with us her cataloging problems and solutions in a school environment. She is now the librarian at the St. Andrew's Priory Elementary School in Honolulu, where she continues to be one of the world's most thoughtful and innovative catalogers.

The classification numbers given in this edition of Sears conform to the *Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification Edition 14*, published in 2004, by OCLC. We extend special thanks to Joan S. Mitchell, editor in chief of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), for providing advance information that made it possible for us to include the most recent Dewey numbers in this edition of the Sears List. The assistant editors of the DDC, Julianne Beall, Winton E. Matthews, Giles Martin, and Gregory R. New, have also been generous and helpful in this endeavor.

Every edition of the Sears List represents the work of many hands, especially those of the previous editors over the years. The contributions of the users of the List have also been invaluable. Every comment, suggestion, question, or request from a user represents an opportunity for improvement and is greatly valued.

J. Miller

Principles of the Sears List of Subject Headings

Certain principles and practices of subject cataloging should be understood before an attempt is made to assign subject headings to library materials. The discussion that follows makes reference to the *Sears List of Subject Headings*, henceforth referred to as the Sears List or the List, but the principles are applicable to other lists of subject headings as well.

1. THE PURPOSE OF SUBJECT CATALOGING

All library work is a matter of the storage and retrieval of information, and cataloging is that aspect of library work devoted to storage. The best cataloging is simply that which facilitates the most accurate and complete retrieval. The two basic branches of cataloging are descriptive cataloging and subject cataloging. Descriptive cataloging makes possible the retrieval of materials in a library by title, author, date, etc.—in short all the searchable elements of a cataloging record except the subjects. Only by conforming to the standards for descriptive cataloging can a librarian assure the user accurate retrieval on the descriptive elements, and those standards are codified in the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, which is now in its second revised edition (commonly known as *AACR2*).

Until the second half of the nineteenth century, descriptive cataloging was the only library cataloging that was found necessary. Libraries were much smaller than they are today, and scholarly librarians then were able, with the aid of printed bibliographies, to be familiar with everything available on a given subject and guide the users to it. With the rapid growth of knowledge in many fields in the course of the nineteenth century and the resulting increase in the volume of books and other library materials, it became desirable to do a preliminary subject analysis of such works and then to represent them in the catalog in such a way that they would be retrievable by subject.

Subject cataloging deals with what a book or other library item is about, and the purpose of subject cataloging is to list under one uniform word or phrase all the materials on a given topic that a library has in its collection. A subject heading is that uniform word or phrase used in the library catalog to express a topic. The use of authorized words or phrases only, with cross-references from unauthorized synonyms, is the essence of bibliographic control in subject cataloging. The purpose of a subject authority, such as the Sears List, is to provide a basic vocabulary of authorized terms together with suggestions for useful cross-references.

The two most common types of subject authorities are the thesaurus and the subject heading list. A true thesaurus, in the realm of information science, is a comprehensive controlled vocabulary of discrete unit terms, called descriptors, arranged in such a way as to display the hierarchical and associative relationships among terms. It is usually limited to a particular realm of knowledge, as in the case of the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*. The American national standards for thesauri are spelled out in the *NISO Guidelines for the Construction, Format, and Management of Monolingual Thesauri*. A subject heading list, such as the Sears List or the *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, is simply an alphabetical list of terms that have been established over time as warranted by the materials being cataloged. A subject heading list also indicates relationships among terms but does not attempt to establish any comprehensive hierarchies. In addition to simple descriptors, a subject heading list can include pre-coordinated strings composed of subject terms with subdivisions.

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The *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, which in print now comprises five large volumes, is primarily a list of headings that have been used in the Library. Likewise *Medical Subject Headings* derives from the holdings of the National Library of Medicine. The Sears List is unique among subject heading lists in that it does not attempt to be a complete list of terms used in any single library but only a list of headings most likely to be needed in a typical small library and a skeleton or pattern for creating other headings as needed. By using the Sears List as a foundation, the cataloger in a small library can develop a local authority list that is consistent in form and comprehensive for that library. This has proven over the years to be a practical and economical solution to the cataloging needs of small libraries. In other ways, such as the use of uninverted headings only and of popular rather than technical vocabulary, the Sears List is specifically tailored to the needs of small libraries of any kind, including school libraries, small public libraries, church libraries, etc.

Because the Sears List is not a complete authority list, the cataloger using the Sears List must take an active part in developing a larger vocabulary of terms. As an aid in this process we offer the following discussion of the basic principles of subject analysis and the construction and control of subject headings.

2. DETERMINING THE SUBJECT OF THE WORK

The first and most important step in subject cataloging is to ascertain the true subject of the material being cataloged. This concept of "aboutness" should never be far from a subject cataloger's thoughts. It is a serious mistake to think of subject analysis as a matter of sorting through material and fitting it into the available categories, like sorting the mail, rather than focusing first on the material and determining what it is really about.

Many times the subject of a work is readily determined. **Hummingbirds** is obviously the subject of a book entitled *The Complete Book of Hummingbirds*. In others cases the subject is not so easy to discern, because it may be a complex one or the author may not express it in a manner clear to someone unfamiliar with the subject. The subject of a work cannot always be determined from the title alone, which is often uninformative or misleading, and undue dependence on it can result in error. A book entitled *Great Masters in Art* immediately suggests the subject **Artists**, but closer examination may reveal the book to be only about painters, not about artists in general. After reading the title page, the cataloger should examine the table of contents and skim the preface and introduction, and then, if the subject is still not clear, examine the text carefully and read parts of it, if necessary. In the case of nonbook materials, the cataloger should examine the container, the label, any accompanying guides, etc., and view or listen to the contents if possible. Only after this preliminary examination has been made is it possible to determine the subject of a work. If the meaning of technical terminology is not clearly understood, reference sources should be consulted, not only an unabridged dictionary and general encyclopedia, but specialized reference books as well.

Only when the cataloger has determined the subject content of a work and identified it with explicit words can the Sears List be used to advantage. The List is consulted to determine one of three possibilities. If the word the cataloger chose to describe the subject content of the work is an established heading in the List, then that heading should be assigned to the work. If the word the cataloger chose is a synonym or alternate form of an established heading in the List, then the cataloger forgoes the word that first came to mind in favor of the term from the List. A third possibility is that there is no heading in the List for the subject of the work at hand, in which case the cataloger must formulate the appropriate heading, add it to the library's subject authority file with its attendant references, and then assign it to the work.

Many books are about more than one subject. In that case a second or third subject heading would be necessary. Theoretically there is no limit to the number of subject entries that could be made for one work, but in practice an excess of entries is a disservice to the user

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of the catalog. More than three subject headings should be assigned to a single item only after careful consideration. The need for more than three may be due to the cataloger's inability to identify precisely the single broader heading that would cover all the topics in the work. Similarly, a subject heading should not be assigned for a topic that comprises less than one third of a work. The commonest practice, known as the Rule of Three, may be stated as follows: As many as three specific subject headings in a given area may be assigned to a work, but if the work treats of more than three subjects, then a broader heading is used instead and the specific headings are omitted. A work about snakes and lizards, for example, would be assigned the headings **Snakes** and **Lizards**. If the work also included material on turtles, a third heading **Turtles** would be added. But if the work discussed alligators and crocodiles as well, the only subject heading assigned would be **Reptiles**.

Subject headings are used for materials that have definite, definable subjects. There are always a few works so indefinite in their subject content that it is better not to assign a heading at all. Such a work might be a collection of materials produced by several individuals on a variety of topics or one person's random thoughts and ideas. If a cataloger cannot determine a definite subject, the reader is unlikely to find the item under a makeshift or general heading. The headings **Human behavior** and **Happiness**, for example, would be misleading when assigned to a book titled *Appreciation*, which is a personal account of the sources of the author's pleasure in life. The book has no specific subject and so it should be assigned no subject headings.

3. SPECIFIC AND DIRECT ENTRY

The principle of specific and direct entry is fundamental in modern subject cataloging. According to that rule a work is entered in the catalog directly under the most specific subject heading that accurately represents its content. This term should be neither broader nor narrower but co-extensive in scope with the subject of the work cataloged. The principle was definitively formulated by Charles A. Cutter (1837-1903) in his *Rules for a Dictionary Catalog*. Cutter wrote: "Enter a work under its subject-heading, not under the heading of a class which includes that subject." His example is: "Put Lady Cust's book on 'The Cat' under Cat, not under Zoology or Mammals, or Domestic animals; and put Garnier's 'Le Fer' under Iron, not under Metals or Metallurgy." The reason this principle has become sacred to modern cataloging is simply that there is no other way to insure uniformity. In subject cataloging uniformity means simply that all materials on a single topic are assigned the same subject heading. If the headings **Cats**, **Zoology**, **Mammals**, and **Domestic animals** were all equally correct for a book on cats, as they would be without Cutter's rule, there would be no single heading for that topic and consequently no assurance of uniformity. One cataloger could assign the heading **Cats** to Lady Cust's book, another cataloger could assign the heading **Mammals** to another book on cats, and a third cataloger could assign the heading **Domestic animals** or **Pets** to yet another book on cats. There would then be no simple way to retrieve all the materials on cats in the library's collection.

The principle of specific entry holds that a work is always entered under a specific term rather than under a broader heading that includes the specific concept. This principle is of particular importance to the cataloguer using the Sears List, since the heading of appropriate specificity must be added if it is not already there. If, for example, a work being catalogued is about penguins, it should be entered only under the most specific term that is not narrower than the scope of the book itself, that is, **Penguins**. It should not be assigned the heading **Birds** or **Water birds**. This is true even though the heading **Penguins** does not appear in the List. When a specific subject is not found in the List, the heading for the larger group or category to which it belongs should be consulted, in this case **Birds**. There the cataloger finds a general reference that reads: "SA [See also] types of birds, e.g. **Birds of prey**; **Canaries**; etc. {to be added as needed}." The cataloger must establish the heading **Penguins** as a narrower term under the heading **Birds** and then assign it to the book on penguins. In many cases the most specific entry will be a general subject. A book entitled

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Birds of the World would have the subject heading **Birds**. Even though **Birds** is a very broad term, it is the narrowest term that comprehends the subject content of that work.

Having assigned a work the most specific subject heading that is applicable, the cataloger should not then make an additional entry under a broader heading. A work with the title *Birds of the Ocean* should not be entered under both **Birds** and **Water birds** but only under **Water birds**. To eliminate this duplication, the *See also* references in the public catalog direct the user from the broader subject headings to the more specific ones. At **Birds**, for example, the reference would read: "See also **Birds of Prey; Canaries; Pelicans; Penguins; Water birds,**" etc.

The principle of direct entry holds that a subject heading should stand as a separate term rather than as a subdivision under a broader heading. If the reader wants information about owls, the direct approach is to consult the catalog under the heading **Owls**, not under the broader subject **Birds** subdivided by the narrower topic **Owls**. In other words, the cataloger has entered the book directly under **Owls**, not indirectly under "Birds—Owls," or under "Birds—Birds of prey—Owls." The latter two subject strings are both specific, but they are not direct.

4. TYPES OF SUBJECT HEADINGS

There are four types of subject headings: topical headings, form headings, geographic headings, and proper names.

4. A. TOPICAL HEADINGS

Topical subject headings are simply the words or phrases for common things or concepts that represent the content of various works. In choosing the word or phrase that makes the best subject heading several things should be considered. The first and most obvious is the literary warrant, or the language of the material being cataloged. The word most commonly used in the literature is most likely the word that best represents the item cataloged. If nine out of ten books on the subject use the phrase "Gun control," there is no reason to use any word or phrase other than **Gun control** as a subject heading, so long as that phrase meets certain other criteria.

A second consideration, and one of the criteria that a subject heading should meet, is that of common usage. In so far as possible a subject heading should represent the common usage of the English language. In American libraries this means current American spelling and terminology: **Labor** not **Labour**; **Elevators** not **Lifts**. (In British libraries these choices would be reversed.) Foreign terms such as **Film noir** are not used unless they have been fully incorporated into the English language. By the same token contemporary usage gradually should replace antiquated words or phrases. The heading **Blacks**, for example, replaced **Negroes** as common usage changed. In time the heading **African Americans** was added to the Sears List for greater specificity, as the use of that term stabilized. What is common usage depends, in part, upon who the users of a library are. In most small libraries the popular or common word for a thing is to be preferred to the scientific or technical word, when the two are truly synonymous. For example, **Desert animals** is preferable in most small libraries to **Desert fauna**. In such a case the scientific term should be a *See* reference to the established term.

In order to maintain uniformity in a library catalog two things are necessary. The first is abiding by Cutter's rule of specificity, and the second is choosing a single word or phrase from among its synonyms or near-synonyms in establishing a subject heading. If **Desert animals** and **Desert fauna** were both allowed as established headings, the material on one subject would end up in two places. Sometimes a single word or phrase must be chosen from among several choices that do not mean exactly the same thing but are too close to be

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easily distinguished. In the Sears List, for example, **Regional planning** is an established heading with *See* references from County planning, Metropolitan planning, and State planning. The term chosen as the established heading is the one that is most inclusive.

Another important consideration in establishing topical subject headings is that they should be clear and unambiguous. Sometimes the most common term for a topic is not suitable as a subject heading because it is ambiguous. Civil War, for example, must be rejected in favor of **United States—History—1861-1865, Civil War**, since not all civil wars are the American Civil War. The term **Civil war** could itself become a heading, if it were needed for general materials on rebellions or internal revolutions.

When a single word has several meanings, that word can be used as a subject heading only when it is somehow rendered unambiguous. The word Depression, for example, can mean either an economic or a mental state, but as subject headings one is formulated **Depressions** and the other **Depression (Psychology)**. Stress can mean either stress on materials or stress on the mind, and the two headings are **Strength of materials** and **Stress (Psychology)**. Notice that the ambiguous word is qualified even when the other meaning is expressed in other words. Furthermore, an ambiguous term such as Feedback should be qualified, **Feedback (Psychology)**, even when the other meaning, **Feedback (Electronics)**, does not yet exist in the catalog. Whenever identical words with different meanings are used in the catalog, both require a parenthetical qualifier, which is usually either a broader term or discipline of study, as in the case of **Seals (Animals)** and **Seals (Numismatics)**.

In choosing one term as a subject heading from among several possibilities the cataloger must also think of the spelling, number, and connotations of the various forms. When variant spellings are in use, one must be selected and uniformly applied, such as **Archeology** rather than Archaeology. A decision also must be made between the singular and plural form, which will be further discussed under Grammar of Subject Headings below. Sometimes variant forms of words can have different connotations, as with Arab, Arabian, and Arabic. It may seem inconsistent to use all three forms in subject headings, but, in fact, they are used consistently in the following ways: Arab relating to the people; Arabian referring to the geographical area and to horses; and Arabic for the language, script, or literature.

4. B. FORM HEADINGS

The second kind of heading that is found in a library catalog is the form heading, which describes not the subject content of a work but its form. In other words, a form heading tells us not what a work is about but what it is. Form in this context means intellectual form of the materials rather than the physical form of the item. The physical forms of such nonbook materials as videorecordings, electronic resources, etc., are considered general material designations (GMD), a part of the descriptive cataloging, rather than subject headings.

Some form headings describe the general arrangement of the material and the purpose of the work, such as **Almanacs, Directories, Gazetteers, and Encyclopedias and dictionaries**. These headings are customarily assigned to individual works as well as to materials about such forms. Theoretically, at least, any form can also be a topic, since it is possible for someone to write a book about almanacs or gazetteers.

Other form headings are the names of literary forms and genres. Headings for the major literary forms, **Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Essays**, are usually used as topical subject headings. As form headings they are used for collections only rather than for individual literary works. Minor literary forms, also known as genres, such as **Science fiction, Epistolary poetry, and Children's plays**, are much more numerous and are often assigned to individual literary works. These headings will be discussed at greater length below under Literature. The distinction between form headings and topical headings in literature can sometimes be made by using the singular form for the topical heading and the plural for the

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form heading. **Short story**, for example, is topical, for materials about the short story as a literary form, while **Short stories** is a form. Likewise, **Essay** is topical, while **Essays** is a form. The peculiarities of language, however, do not always permit this distinction.

4. C. GEOGRAPHIC HEADINGS

Many works in a library's collection are about geographic areas, countries, cities, etc. The appropriate subject heading for such a work is the name of the place in question. Geographic headings are the established names of individual places, from places as large as **Africa** to places as small as **Walden Pond (Mass.)**. They signify not only physical places but also political jurisdictions. These headings differ from topical subject headings in that they refer to a unique entity rather than to an abstraction or category of things.

The Sears List does not attempt to provide geographic headings, which are numerous far beyond the scope of a single volume. The geographic headings that are found in Sears, such as **United States, Ohio, and Chicago (Ill.)**, are offered only as examples. The cataloger using the Sears List must establish geographic headings as needed with the aid of standard references sources. Some suggested sources are the most current editions of *The Columbia Gazetteer of the World*; *National Geographic Atlas of the World*; *Statesman's Year-book*; *Times Atlas of the World*; and *Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary*. The geographic headings and geographic subdivisions found in Sears follow the form of abbreviation for qualifying states, provinces, etc., found in Appendix B (Abbreviations) of AACR2.

4. D. NAMES

Still other materials in a library's collection are about individual persons, families, corporate bodies, literary works, motion pictures, etc. The appropriate heading for such material is the unique name of the entity in question. The three major types of name headings are personal names, corporate names, and uniform titles. Individual or personal name headings are usually established in the inverted form, with dates if necessary, and with *See* references from alternate forms. The heading **Clinton, Bill**, for example, would require a *See* reference from "Clinton, William Jefferson," and if the library had material about any other person called Bill Clinton, the name heading for the president would need to take the form **Clinton, Bill, 1946-**. Corporate name headings are the commonly established names of corporate bodies, such as business firms, institutions, buildings, sports teams, performing groups, etc. Materials about a corporate body, such as **Rockefeller Center** or **Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show**, are entered directly under the corporate name heading as a subject. Uniform titles are the established names of sacred scriptures, anonymous literary works, periodicals, motion pictures, radio and television programs, etc. Materials about a particular motion picture or about an anonymous literary work, for example, are entered directly under the uniform title, such as **Gone with the wind (Motion picture)** or **Beowulf**, as a subject. Materials about a literary work with a known author are entered under a name-title heading consisting of the author's name followed by the title, such as **Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. Hamlet** for a book about Shakespeare's play.

Like geographic headings, name headings are numerous beyond the scope of the Sears List and must be established by the cataloger as needed. Suggested sources for personal and corporate names are *Who's Who*; *Who's Who in America*; *Merriam-Webster's Biographical Dictionary*; *The Dictionary of National Biography*; and the *Encyclopedia of Associations*. General encyclopedias and standard reference works limited to specific fields are also useful sources for names.

5. THE GRAMMAR OF SUBJECT HEADINGS

While many subject headings are simple terms like **Reptiles** or **Electricity**, other subjects can be very complex, in some cases involving several levels of subdivision. In order to construct

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subject headings consistently the cataloger should understand the grammar of subject headings.

5. A. THE FORMS OF HEADINGS

5. A. i. Single Nouns

A single noun is the ideal type of subject heading when the language supplies it. Such terms are not only the simplest in form but often the easiest to comprehend. A choice must be made between the singular and plural forms of a noun. The plural is the more common, but in practice both are used. Abstract ideas and the names of disciplines of study are usually stated in the singular, such as **Biology** or **Existentialism**. An action, such as **Editing** or **Child abuse**, is also expressed in the singular. Headings for concrete things are most commonly in the plural form, when those things can be counted, such as **Playgrounds** or **Children**. Concrete things that cannot be counted, such as **Steel** or **Milk**, obviously remain in the singular. In most cases common sense can be relied upon. In some instances both the singular and the plural of a word can be subject headings when they have two different meanings, such as **Theater** for the activity and **Theaters** for the buildings. In the case of **Arts** and **Art**, the one means the arts in general, while the other means the fine and decorative arts specifically.

5. A. ii. Compound Headings

Subject headings that consist of two nouns joined by “and” are of several types. Some headings link two things because together they form a single concept or topic, such as **Bow and arrow** or **Good and evil**; because they are so closely related they are rarely treated separately, such as **Forests and forestry** or **Publishers and publishing**; or because they are so closely synonymous they are seldom distinguished, such as **Cities and towns** or **Rugs and carpets**. Other headings that link two words with “and” stand for the relationship between the two things, such as **Church and state** or **Television and children**. Compound headings of this type should not be made without careful consideration. Often there is a better way to formulate the heading. A heading like “Medicine and religion,” for example, is less accurate than the form established in Sears, which is **Medicine—Religious aspects**. (There is not likely to be material on the medical aspects of religion.) One question that arises in forming compound headings is word order. The only rule is that common usage takes precedence (no one says “Arrow and bow”), and, where there is no established common usage, alphabetic order is preferred. Whatever the order, a *See* reference should be made from either the second term or from the pair of terms reversed, as in *Forestry, See Forests and forestry*, or *Children and television, See Television and children*.

5. A. iii. Adjectives with Nouns

Often a specific concept is best expressed by a noun with an adjective, such as **Unemployment insurance** or **Buddhist art**. In the past the expression was frequently inverted (*Insurance, Unemployment; Art, Buddhist*). There were two possible reasons for inversion: 1) an assumption was made that the searcher would think first of the noun; or 2) the noun was placed first in order to keep all aspects of a broad subject together in an alphabetical listing, as in a card catalog. In recent years these arguments have been abandoned in favor of the direct order because users have become more and more accustomed to searching in the order of natural language. The only headings that have been retained in Sears in the inverted form are proper names, including the names of battles and massacres.

5. A. iv. Phrase Headings

Some concepts that involve two or more elements can be expressed only by more or less complex phrases. These are the least satisfactory headings, as they offer the greatest variation in wording, are often the longest, and may not be thought of readily by either the maker or the

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user of the catalog, but for many topics the English language seems to offer no more compact terminology. Examples are **Insects as carriers of disease** and **Violence in popular culture**.

5. B. SUBDIVISIONS

Specific entry in subject headings is achieved in two basic ways. The first, as noted above, is the creation of narrower terms as needed. The second is the use of subdivisions under an established term to designate aspects of that term, such as **Birds—Eggs** or **Food—Analysis**, or the form of the item itself, such as **Agriculture—Bibliography**. The scope of the Sears List can be expanded far beyond the actual headings printed through the use of subdivisions. Some subdivisions are applicable to only a few subjects. *Eggs*, for example, is applicable only under headings for oviparous animals. Other subdivisions, such as *Analysis*, are applicable under many subjects. Still other subdivisions, such as *Bibliography*, are applicable under nearly any heading. The Sears List does not attempt to list all possible subdivisions, but all those that are most likely to be used in a small library are included. For every subdivision included there is an instruction in the List for the use of that subdivision. Some subdivisions are also headings, such as **Bibliography**, and in such cases the instruction is given in a general reference as part of the entry for that heading. Other subdivisions, such as *Economic aspects*, are not themselves headings, and in such cases the instruction for the use of the subdivision is a free-standing general reference in the alphabetical List.

5. B. i. Topical Subdivisions

Topical subdivisions are those subdivisions that brings out the aspect of a subject or point of view presented in a particular work. A work may be a history of the subject, as in **Clothing and dress—History**; or it may deal with the philosophy of the subject, as in **Religion—Philosophy**; research in the field, as in **Oceanography—Research**; the laws about it, as in **Automobiles—Law and legislation**; or how to study and teach the subject, as in **Mathematics—Study and teaching**. The advantage of subdivisions over phrase headings for complex subjects is that uniformity can be more readily achieved with subdivisions. Once the subdivisions have been established, they can be appended to any applicable subject heading without guessing or straining the language for a suitable phrase. Subject strings with topical subdivisions can be read backwards: **Clothing and dress—History**, for example, means the history of clothing and dress, and **Oceanography—Research—Ethical aspects** means ethical aspects of research in the field of oceanography.

5. B. ii. Geographic Subdivisions

Another aspect of subjects that can be brought out in subdivisions is geographic specificity. The unit used as a subdivision may be the name of a country, state, city, or other geographic area. A topical heading with a geographic subdivision means simply that topic in a particular place. **Bridges—France**, for example, is the appropriate subject string for a work on bridges in France, and **Agriculture—Ohio** for a work on agriculture in Ohio.

Not every topical heading lends itself logically or practically to geographic subdivision. Some topics, such as **Internet addresses** or **Intuition**, are either non-physical or too abstract to have a geographic location. Other headings, such as **Pet therapy** or **Parenting**, are unlikely to be dealt with geographically, at least in works that would be found in a small library. Still other headings, such as **Exploration** or **Church history**, are not subdivided geographically because the same term is used instead as a subdivision under the geographic heading, as in **Arctic regions—Exploration** or **United States—Church history**.

Many subject headings in the Sears List are followed by the parenthetical phrase (May subdiv. geog.). In application this means that if the work in hand deals with that subject in general, only the heading itself is used; but if it deals with the subject in a particular place, the heading may be subdivided geographically. Some small libraries limit the use of geographic subdivision to countries other than the United States, since most of their material