

How to Read a Call Number

In order to find a book in the library you'll have to have its call number.

A call number looks like this: (TR 685 .P7318 2006).

If you've ever looked for a book in the school, or public library, you've used call numbers before.

Call numbers in a university library look a little bit different. This is because they're made up of a combination of numbers and letters.

Don't worry if you don't understand what they mean, you just need to know how to read them.

But wait, what the heck is a call number?

A call number is like an address for a book. It tells you where that book lives on the shelf.

Books are found in different locations in the libraries depending on their call number. This is why you have to write down the call number before you go searching for a book.

You can find the locations of particular books using the book locator found online, or at the help desk.

And before you ask, yes, the way you read the call number is important. You should always be reading from left to right.

Alright, alright, enough of the background information.

Let's find this book: (HQ 1090.7 G7T66 2005).

The first thing I do is to go to the section of the library where the H's are shelved. Then you'll read the first section of the call number in alphabetical order.

This means you'll want to go down the row of shelves until you find the HQ's.

The second part should be read as a whole number.

So you'll search this section for books with HQ 1000, then you'll look for books that have HQ ten-ninety.

Once you've found these books you'll look in this section for books that have the number HQ ten-ninety point seven.

I know what you're thinking, this is taking forever, but I swear these last parts are important.

Now you'll read the third section alphabetically, and then numerically.

Once you've found the HQ ten-ninety point seven books you'll look for ones that have an HQ ten-ninety point seven point G seven.

Once you find those books look for ones that have an HQ ten-ninety point seven point G7 T66. There may be a few books with this combination so you'll want to pay attention to the last section- it's the year of the book's publication and should be read numerically.

Look for the book published in 2005.

Phew! That took a while, but here it is!

Always double check the title and the call number to make sure you got the right book.

And don't worry, with practice it will become easier to read these numbers and soon you'll be zipping all over the stacks.

Don't forget you can always double check with the signage in the library, or ask a member of the library staff if you need help. We're here for you!