Libraries assign “call numbers” to items, such as books or videos, so they can be found later.

Unlike stores (which usually arrange items either to get your attention or to encourage you to browse their aisles indefinitely) libraries are all about efficiency and speed: we want you (as well as our library staff members) to be able to find information as fast as possible!

This is why libraries like Thrall like to use precise “classification systems” to arrange (“classify”) information in areas we can easily refer to later.

Libraries stock not only new books but many old ones as well, as well as newspapers, magazines, journals, CDs, DVDs, and more. In any given library there can be tens to hundreds of thousands of items, so being able to find things quickly and easily is important!

Thrall uses a few different “classification systems” for its collections. We mainly use the “Dewey Decimal System” for non-fiction items, which occupy many of the library’s shelves.

“Dewey Numbers” arrange all knowledge into digits between 000 and 999. That’s quite impressive when you think about it! Designed by Melvil Dewey (a librarian from the 1800s), this system of numbers grows yearly to accommodate new topics and ideas.

Each number in Dewey represents a range of subjects. Here is a list of the “hundreds”:

| 000 - Generalities       | 500 - Natural Science & Mathematics |
| 100 - Philosophy & Psychology | 600 - Technology & Applied Sciences |
| 200 - Religion           | 700 - Arts                            |
| 300 - Social Science     | 800 - Literature                      |
| 400 - Language           | 900 - Geography & History            |

Call numbers based on these can contain “tens,” single digits, and decimals (as in 123.4567) to indicate precisely what a book is about and where it can be found in the library.

At Thrall, Fiction items are arranged according to an author’s last name. If you don’t know an author’s name (or even the title), we can help you at Reference!

Biographies are arranged by the last (or only) name of the person the book is about.

New books, large print works, audiobooks, reference books, and even movies are arranged similarly in their respective areas: nonfiction, fiction, biographies.

Periodicals (magazines, journals) are arranged alphabetically by title.

Thrall also has special collections (which have their own special numbers), such as our jazz and classical music CDs and our Government Documents area.

Best of all, you never have to remember any of this: our library catalog lists call numbers. If you cannot find something, our librarians are ready to help. Our online guides (www.thrall.org/guides) also let you explore the library system simply by clicking on topics.

If you’re not looking for anything specific, we can point you in a general direction — and you are always welcome to browse our shelves and monthly book displays to discover new things!