

Finding Books in the Library

Have you ever been stuck trying to find a book in the library? This video will help you find physical books at the University of Waterloo library.

Call numbers help us find an item in a specific spot on the shelves, on a specific floor, in a specific library across campus.

uWaterloo library, like most other university and research libraries, uses the Library of Congress Classification System for most of its collections, so this is the system we'll focus on.

Unlike the Dewey Decimal System, the Library of Congress System uses numbers and letters.

You can access the uWaterloo catalogue by going to lib.uwaterloo.ca

Search for the item you want and write down its call number.

For instance, the call number for the book *Where the Wild Things Are* is: PZ138.E53W5 1963

I know this is the one I want because it is a book, and I know the book I want is written by Maurice Sendak.

You can get more information about the book, like a description, by clicking the Details tab.

If you click on the Locations tab, you can find a list of the copies we have of this book, and see the library where it is held.

The library also has a great resource to help you find your books.

Go back to the library homepage and click the "Help and Instruction" link. Now click on "Where is it? Library Floor Plans".

If you click on call number, and enter the call number for your specific book, the interactive resource will direct you to the floor and even the set of shelves where you can find your book.

A call number is given to an item based on its subject matter so that items on similar topics are found together on the shelves.

Generally, call numbers are read left to right, top to bottom on each section of shelving at the library.

Call numbers are shelved in ascending alphabetical and numerical order.

Follow the call number from first section to last. For instance, the first section—PZ—comes after P and PE.

Next, look for the numbers 138, and consider this to be a whole number, so it's 138 instead of 1,3,8.

The section after the decimal place is read like a decimal number. First look for the letter E, then the number 5, then the number 3, and so on.

The last four digits often signify the year the book was published; in this case, 1963.

If you have any trouble finding your books just ask a librarian. We're happy to help!