
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COLLECTIONS POLICY STATEMENTS

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General Works

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I. Scope

This Collections Policy Statement covers materials in Class A, with the exception of "periodicals of general content" (those classed in AP) which are covered in a separate Collections Policy Statement. General Works includes materials in the following subclasses of A:

- AC Collections, Series, Collected Works
- AE Encyclopedias
- AG Dictionaries and other general reference works
- AI Indexes
- AM Museums, Collections and collecting
- AS Academies and learned societies
- AY Yearbooks, Almanacs, Directories
- AZ History of scholarship and learning

Only books, periodicals, and materials in other formats of a multi-disciplinary nature are in class A. Items relating to a specific discipline are classed with other material in that subject. Thus a dictionary of computer terms is classed with other computer books in class Q; an encyclopedia of American history in class E.

II. Research Strengths

The strength of the Library's collections lies in its breadth and depth. Although many libraries acquire current publications in this class as reference works, especially encyclopedias, almanacs, yearbooks, and dictionaries, few, if any libraries, have such broad universal coverage. The Library retains most superseded reference works, giving it a unique historical collection. What really sets the Library apart in the area of reference works is the sheer size of the superseded reference collection, the quality of the material, and the length of time - 200 years - that the Library has been collecting this material. As such, this material forms a running history of reference sources throughout the decades. Examples include: Encyclopedias and dictionaries in over 75 languages and dating back to 1491; *Encyclopaedia Britannica* sets back to 1778; *Encyclopedia Americana* published in one volume back to 1902; almanacs

back to 1647 or earlier; an almanac in Latin published in 1488; and Boston ephemeris attributed to Cotton Mather - 1683.

III. Collecting Policy

The Library acquires general works published in the United States at Level 5. Such works, published outside the U.S. are acquired at Level 4. An exception is made for major foreign encyclopedias, which are acquired at Level 5. Foreign encyclopedias for juveniles are not collected.

The Copyright Best Edition statement provides guidance for selecting materials for the general works collection.

IV. Acquisitions Sources: Current and Future

Current acquisition of general reference works is through Copyright and CIP and purchase of print and electronic copies as necessary. While the preference is for print copies, the Library should acquire both print and electronic formats of the same work with consideration given to cost and usefulness of the title.

Future acquisition will involve purchasing more electronic sources since there is already a current movement to produce reference works in electronic format with only a limited number of print copies available.

V. Collecting Levels

When two collecting levels are listed, the first one is for U.S. publications; the second one if for foreign publications.

LC Classification		Collecting Level	Comments
AC	Collections, series, collected works	5/4	
AE	Encyclopedias	5/4	All encyclopedias published in the U.S. are collected.
AG	Dictionaries and other reference works	5/4	
AI	Indexes	5/4	The Library does not generally acquire indexes to local newspapers or periodicals not held by the Library unless the index is of value for genealogical research.

AS	Academies and Learned Societies	5/4	The Library collects substantial publications including annual reports and/or membership lists of all but local organizations in the U.S. The Library collects only from national organizations outside the U.S. Conference proceedings are kept but not the programs of annual meetings and not the programs of conferences.
AY	Yearbooks, Almanacs, Directories	5/4	Same as above
AZ	History of Scholarship And Learning	5/4	Same as above

Revised by the Humanities and Social Sciences Division, November 2008.