

Grade 4 Informational

Finding a Book in the Library

You want to read a book, so you go to the library. You stare at the shelves of books in front of you. You wonder how you will find the book you need. If you know how to use the Dewey Decimal Classification System, this is a simple problem to solve.

The Need for a System

Long ago, books were put on library shelves in any order. Books were not easy to find. People had to look for books in different places each time they went to the library. When new books were added to the shelves, other books were moved to a different place. People could not find what they needed.

Melvil Dewey's Idea

Melvil Dewey was an orderly person. He liked to sort things. He had an interest in math. He went to college and worked in a library to earn money. Dewey noticed that every time he went to a library to find a book, he had to look in a new place. Each library had its own plan.

Dewey invented a system of order for his college library while he was a student. He wanted to make libraries more organized. He used his interest in math and his need for order to invent a new system. He organized books by category. Each category had a number. Within each category, each book had its own number. Books were placed on shelves according to their numbers—in the same order every time. Dewey's idea became known as the Dewey Decimal Classification System. It was invented in 1876, and it created a library revolution.

A Widespread System

Many libraries throughout the world use the Dewey Decimal System today. There are ten main categories of books. Each category has a 3-digit number. For example, all of the books in the history category are numbered in the 900s. All of the books about art are numbered in the 700s. Each category has its own section in a library. Each category is divided into topics. Each book is given a decimal number to indicate its topic. Every book has its own place in a library.

The Dewey system is used for nonfiction books. It can also be used for fiction books. Fiction fits into the 800s section for literature. However, most libraries choose to organize their fiction books by the author's last name instead.

Using the Dewey Decimal System

Most libraries have their entire collection of books listed on a computer program. You can use a computer at a library to search for a book by its title or author. You can also search by topic. The computer tells you the call number, or Dewey Decimal System

number, to look for. Write down the call number on a piece of paper. Next, find the section of the library in which that book is shelved. Look at the signs on the ends of the shelves. Each shelf will list the call numbers that it holds. Search for the call number you wrote down. The call number is on the spine of the book near the bottom. The book you want should be easy to find. What a great system!

Grade 4 Narrative

**Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden*. New York: HarperCollins, 1985. (1911)
From "There's No One Left"**

When Mary Lennox was sent to Misselthwaite Manor to live with her uncle everybody said she was the most disagree- able-looking child ever seen. It was true, too. She had a little thin face and a little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression. Her hair was yellow, and her face was yellow because she had been born in India and had always been ill in one way or another. Her father had held a position under the English Government and had always been busy and ill himself, and her mother had been a great beauty who cared only to go to parties and amuse herself with gay people. She had not wanted a little girl at all, and when Mary was born she handed her over to the care of an Ayah, who was made to understand that if she wished to please the Mem Sahib she must keep the child out of sight as much as possible. So when she was a sickly, fretful, ugly little baby she was kept out of the way, and when she became a sickly, fretful, toddling thing she was kept out of the way also. She never remembered seeing familiarly anything but the dark faces of her Ayah and the other native servants, and as they always obeyed her and gave her her own way in every- thing, because the Mem Sahib would be angry if she was disturbed by her crying, by the time she was six years old she was as tyrannical and selfish a little pig as ever lived. The young English governess who came to teach her to read and write disliked her so much that she gave up her place in three months, and when other governesses came to try to fill it they always went away in a shorter time than the first one. So if Mary had not chosen to really want to know how to read books she would never have learned her letters at all.

One frightfully hot morning, when she was about nine years old, she awakened feeling very cross, and she became crosser still when she saw that the servant who stood by her bedside was not her Ayah.

"Why did you come?" she said to the strange woman. "I will not let you stay. Send my Ayah to me."

The woman looked frightened, but she only stammered that the Ayah could not come and when Mary threw herself into a passion and beat and kicked her, she looked only more frightened and repeated that it was not possible for the Ayah to come to Missie Sahib.

There was something mysterious in the air that morning. Nothing was done in its regular order and several of the native servants seemed missing, while those whom Mary saw slunk or hurried about with ashy and scared faces. But no one would tell her anything and her Ayah did not come. She was actually left alone as the morning went on, and at last she wandered out into the garden and began to play by herself under a tree near the veranda. She pretended that she was making a flower-bed, and she stuck big scarlet hibiscus blossoms into little heaps of earth, all the time growing more and more

angry and muttering to herself the things she would say and the names she would call Saidie when she returned.