



*Enigma Decoder*

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# A guide to understanding the language of the Library

# A guide to Library Language

University libraries are invaluable resources for students but they can seem daunting places at first! This guide is to help you with terms used regularly in the library which may be unfamiliar to you. You may be a new student using a university library for the first time, or you may be an international student who finds that this library is very different to ones you've used before. Here is a list of some of the common words and phrases used by librarians which may need some explanation.

Don't forget, if you are uncertain of anything please ask the library staff – they are here to help you.

## A

**Abstract**                      A summary of a **journal** article or other publication.

**Article**                         Writing published in a **journal**, magazine or newspaper. Sometimes describes research or ideas or expresses opinions.

**Assistive Software and Technology**                      This is special software which provides support for dyslexic students and those whose first language is not English, or who have a visual impairment.

For example, TextHelp includes speech feedback, a phonetic spellchecker, and audio dictionary. SuperNova and ZoomText provide text magnification and screen readers for students with visual impairment.

The software is available on all networked computers and on the designated Assistive Technology Workstation at Headington Library.

**ATHENS**                         A password system used by many **databases** and **electronic journals**. Brookes' staff and students have their own individual Athens username and password. Details of your Athens username and password are available via your **PIP pages**.

**Audio-visual**                      Non-book materials such video and audio cassettes, DVDs, CDs, records and slides. It can also refer to services such as photocopying facilities.

## B

Back issues	Older issues of a <b>journal</b> (see also: <b>current copy</b> )
Bibliographic record	Information given on a <b>Library Catalogue</b> or database describing a source such as book or journal article. Can include an <b>abstract</b> as well as the <b>citation</b> information.
Bibliography	<p>A list of information sources which have been consulted or quoted by an author and which usually appears at the end of a book or <b>article</b> or dissertation or similar piece of writing.</p> <p>Also refers to a list of information sources for a particular subject.</p>
Booking	An arrangement made in advance to use or obtain something. (For example, you can make a booking to use a <b>group study room</b> , or to borrow a <b>short loan</b> book)
Boolean operators	The words 'And, Or, Not' used to extend or narrow down a search. Also sometimes called ' <b>logical operators</b> '.
Boolean Searching	Using <b>Boolean operators</b> to combine <b>search terms</b> . This method of refining a search is used in many <b>databases</b> and <b>search engines</b> to improve the success of the search.
Borrow	To take a book or other item out of the library. (see also: <b>issue</b> )
Borrower number	The number on your <b>Library/ID card</b> just above the barcode.
Bound journal	Several issues of a <b>journal</b> that have been arranged together in one volume, bound with a hard cover.

## C

Carrel	See <b>study carrel</b>
Catalogue	A listing of what materials the library contains. Our Library Catalogue is available via computers in the Library, pooled computer room PCs and via the Web from anywhere. The Catalogue can be searched by various methods e.g. Author, Title, <b>Keyword</b> .
CD-ROM	CD-ROM – (Compact Disc Read-Only Memory) electronic storage device for information, which can include databases.
Classmark	See <b>shelfmark</b>
Copyright	The legal protection given to authors which prevents unauthorised copying of their work. Information about what you are legally entitled to copy is posted up next to the photocopying machines.
Current copy	The most recent issue of a <b>journal</b> which is displayed on stands/racks separate from the earlier issues (see also <b>back issues</b> ).

## D

Database	<p>A collection of information in electronic form. Bibliographic Databases are used to find <b>references</b> to published research. Many are subject based, and some will give you a summary, or <b>abstract</b>, of the contents of the items being referred to.</p> <p>Databases available in the library usually contain bibliographic <b>citations</b> (information about books, articles, government documents, etc.) and sometimes provide the full text of the original documents.</p>
Descriptors	<p>Most databases index their contents according to a set list of words or descriptors drawn from a specialised <b>thesaurus</b>.</p> <p>The descriptors are a shorthand way of describing what the item being indexed is about. The set list ensures that items of a similar nature are described in a consistent way.</p> <p>This allows you to retrieve all the material on a certain topic without having to know who all the authors are or what all the titles may be. Descriptors are similar to <b>subject headings</b> or <b>fields</b>.</p>
Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme	<p>The system of classifying library materials used in this Library. Each item is given a <b>shelfmark</b> indicating what subject it covers and where it is shelved. The system allows books on a similar subject matter to be shelved near to each other.</p>
Discharge	<p>When you bring back an item you have borrowed to the library it is 'discharged' from your account. This shows that you no longer have the item and it has been returned to the library.</p>
Dissertation	<p>Similar to a <b>Thesis</b>, a dissertation is a long formal essay which usually involves a review of current research and a discussion of ideas about a topic. It is usually required in the final year of a degree.</p>
Due date	<p>Date stamped or written on the label inside a book which tells you when you need to return it to the Library. After the due date an item becomes <b>overdue</b> and a <b>fine</b> may be charged to the user.</p>

## E

Edited book	A book with chapters from more than one author.
Eduroam	A service which enables you to connect your wireless enabled computer to the network wherever there is a signal available. Registration is required but is free.
Electronic Journal E-journal	An electronic version of a <b>journal</b> usually available via the Web.
Electronic Library	Section of the <b>Library Web pages</b> which provides access to <b>databases, electronic journals</b> and electronic newspapers.
Enquiry Desk	A place in the Library where you can go to ask questions and get help with using the library or finding information.

## F

Fields	Another name for the categories used to classify items in a database.(see also: <b>descriptors</b> )
Fines	Charge you have to pay if you return an item to the Library late (after the <b>due date</b> )

## G

Gateway	See <b>subject gateway</b> .
Glossary	A list explaining the meanings of words or specialist terms for a particular subject.
Group Study Rooms	Rooms which can be used by groups of students working together on a presentation or similar assignment. You can make a <b>booking</b> for a group study room.

## H

Holdings All the items in a library collection.

## I

Index

- An alphabetical list within a book, giving the names, subjects etc which it covers and indicating the places in the book where these can be found.
- A listing of details of journal articles and other publications in a specific subject area. Many indexes are now available as **databases**.

Internet

- A network that links computer networks all over the world, using telephone and satellite links. It enables users to connect to service networks such as email and the World Wide Web.
- When we refer to something being available 'on-line' we usually mean that it can be accessed electronically via a computer using the internet.

ISBN International Standard Book Number: most books published have one of these unique, identifying, ten or thirteen-digit numbers which helps to identify the publisher, the title and the volume number for book trade and library use.

Issue When you take an item out from the Library, it is **issued** to you. It is then due back at a certain date and time. When you bring it back It is **returned** or **discharged**. Other libraries use terms like "Checking In and Out", "Charged and Discharged".

Issue Counter  
Issue Desk See **Library Counter**

## J

Journal A magazine published at regular intervals e.g. monthly, quarterly. Also known as a **periodical**. Journals in the Library often contain scholarly information and research (see also: **Peer Review**)

Journal Issue                      An edition of a journal. For example, if it is a title which is published monthly you may be asked to look for an article in the “January issue” of a particular year.

## **K**

Keyword                              ***A keyword is a word from a title or subject which sums up the main idea or concept of the material it describes. You can use keywords to search for items in the Library catalogue, or in databases.***  
(see also: ***descriptor, synonym, thesaurus***)

## **L**

Library/ID card                      Your Brookes ID card is also your Library card and you will need it to use many university facilities, including for borrowing books. Students should receive their Library card when they enrol. Staff should receive their card via their department/School.

Library Counter                      Service desk where you can **borrow, return** and **renew** Library materials.

Library Web pages                      Useful pages covering a wide range of information about the Library which can be accessed through the Library Homepage. Information on everything from opening times to subject help.

Literature search                      The act of checking what research has already been done on a subject. Every researcher builds on the work of previous authors and carrying out a Literature search enables you to review what has been done before.

Loan type                              Library materials can be use in different ways: for example, items may be borrowed for one or two weeks, or if **short loan** for 4 or 24 hours; some items are **reference** only and cannot be taken out of the library. The loan type refers to the category of loan that the material is in and shows you for how long it can be borrowed.

Logical Operators                      See **Boolean Operators**

## M

Microfiche	A flat piece of film, containing small photographs of the pages of a book, journal or other publication which can then be viewed using a special machine called a microfiche reader. Microfiches store a lot of material in a very small space and were commonly used for material such as newspaper articles
Microfilm	Similar to microfiche, but here the film is on a roll not a flat sheet.

## N

Network	A system linking computers for the purpose of sharing information. In the Library the Network refers to the shared access to information both within and outside the university such as to the <b>Library Catalogue</b> , email and the <b>internet</b> .
Not on loan	This description on the <b>Library Catalogue</b> means that an item is available for use and should be on the shelf at its <b>shelfmark</b> .

## O

On Loan	This description on the <b>Library Catalogue</b> means that the item is not in the library because someone has borrowed it (taken it out).
On order	When an item is described as 'on order' in the <b>Library Catalogue</b> it means that the item has been ordered but has not yet arrived in the Library.
OPAC	This stands for ' <b>Online Public Access Catalogue</b> '. It is used to describe the computerised catalogue which can be searched to find out what materials are in the Library.
Overdue	The status of an item that has not been returned to the library by its <b>due date</b> . A <b>fine</b> may be charged to a user who does not return library material when it is due.

Oversize Material which is too big to fit the shelves with other items of the same **shelfmark** is shelved separately in the Oversize section. At Headington there are oversize sections on each floor; at Wheatley and Harcourt Hill there is just one in the main part of each library.

## P

Pamphlets Small leaflets or small unbound books. These are often written to give information about a topic or to promote a point of view. They are shelved in a separate sequence at Headington.

Peer Review Peer review refers to the process by which a **journal** or **article** has been checked by an editorial board of experts to ensure that it contains genuine scholarly research. Sometimes peer reviewed articles are referred to as 'academic' or 'scholarly' articles. They are the type of material most often required for reading in preparation for writing assignments, dissertations or discussion in seminars.

Periodical See **journal**

Photocopiers Machines which use a photographic process to produce a copy of something. You can purchase a card to use the machines which are housed in a separate room near the journals room at Wheatley and on the ground floor at Headington and near the main counter and in the School Experience Centre at Harcourt Hill.

PIP pages Personal Information Pages which contain your own student or staff details and details of library passwords. You can access your PIP pages on the Web at [http://kmis.brookes.ac.uk/csms/wprin\\_menu.main](http://kmis.brookes.ac.uk/csms/wprin_menu.main)  
Or, see the link on the Brookes' Homepage.

Plagiarism Failure to recognise the contribution of other people's work to your own. If you copy or quote from someone else's work you must admit it and give them credit by listing their names in your **references** and/or **bibliography**.

PLATO A tutorial available in Brookes Virtual which teaches you about plagiarism and how to avoid it. You can also find information about PLATO from the Quick Links on the Library Homepage.

## Q

**Quick Reference** Collection of books which are intended to be used in the library and which are not meant to be read from cover to cover. For example dictionaries and encyclopaedia which you use to look things up are often placed in Quick Reference.

At Wheatley, these sorts of book are housed in a separate area opposite the Enquiry desk; at Headington they are in the South Library near the Enquiry desk and for individual subjects on each floor; and at Harcourt Hill they are near the entrance to the main reading area. (see also: Subject Quick Reference)

## R

**Recharge** To add to the credit on a photocopier card so that you can continue to use it.

**Received** You may see books described as “received” on the **Library Catalogue**. This means that it is a new item which has just arrived and is being processed for use in the Library. Ask at the **Library Counter** if you want to place a reservation on a ‘received’ item.

**Reference** Items that cannot be taken out of the Library. All **journals** are for reference use only and so are some books. Wheatley dissertations are also reference only.

**References** See **Bibliography**

**Renew** Extending the **due date** of an item so that you can keep it for longer. You can renew items by phone, online through the ‘borrower information’ section of the **Catalogue**, or in person. You will not be allowed to renew an item if someone has placed a **reservation** for it.

**Reservation** A reservation guarantees that when a book is returned to the Library it will be kept for you. You can place reservations via the **Library Catalogue**. You will receive notification via your Brookes’ email when the item is ready for collection, usually within a week, but sometimes if an item is very popular, it may take longer.

**Reserve** To place a **reservation** on a book which is currently **on loan** or at another Brookes’ campus library.

Return To bring an item you have borrowed back to the Library.

## S

Search engine A service which scans documents on the internet using **keywords** and returns a list of documents containing the **search terms** you have entered. Examples of well-known search engines are Google and AltaVista.

Many search engines are commercial, that is, they make money by selling advertising space on their web pages and for this reason they can not be regarded as unbiased.

Search terms Words used to look for items in a **database** or **search engine** to help you locate resources such as books, journal articles or websites. (see also **keywords**)

Self-issue machines You can use these machines in all three campus libraries to **issue** books, CDs and DVDs to yourself or **return** them to the Library.

Shelfmark A series of numbers and letters which indicate what subject a book covers and where it is shelved. Brookes Library uses the **Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme** to classify books by subject and give them a shelfmark.

This ensures that materials on a similar subject are shelved near to each other. Each book has a label on its spine showing its particular shelfmark. This is also sometimes called a **classmark**.

Short Loan Collection of the most popular recommended books, journal articles and other materials which can be borrowed for a limited length of time (3 or 24 hours at Harcourt Hill; 4 or 24 hours at other sites.)

Special Collection A collection of material on a specific topic or the entire library of an individual person which has been given to the Library to look after.

Access to special collections is sometimes restricted to researchers and they are not usually available to browse on open shelves.

Stack	Storeroom at Headington Library or Harcourt Hill Library. Items are available on request. Ask at the Enquiry Desk for items you want from the stack and a member of staff will fetch them for you.
Stand-alone PC	A computer which is not part of the main network and which is usually reserved for running programs on CD-ROM.
Statistics Collection	Sections of the library where you can find mostly <b>reference</b> material covering a wide range of numerical data. For example you can find things such as population and census figures, trade figures and market research information within the statistics collections of the library.
Store	Room at Wheatley Library currently used to keep dissertations. If you want to look at a dissertation ask at the <b>Library Counter</b> .
Study carrel	An enclosed individual desk in the Library available for private study.
Subject gateways	These are sites where Internet resources are collected and (sometimes) evaluated for particular subject areas. They can be a good starting point for tracing quality Internet resources in your subject.
Subject Librarian	A person who has special knowledge of the resources in a particular subject area and who can help with subject enquiries.
Subject Quick Reference	Headington Library has 3 Subject Quick Reference (SQR) collections, one on each floor. These contain specialised <b>reference books</b> covering the subjects shelved on that floor (see also shelved on that floor (see also <b>Quick Reference</b> ))

## **T**

Thesaurus	A thesaurus contains lists of words and their synonyms (words which mean the same as one another). It is useful to consult a thesaurus when starting a search because it allows you to search using as wide a range of <b>search terms</b> as possible. Databases have thesauri which are used to identify the <b>keywords</b> for a particular item in the database. This means that resources covering the same topics can be described in the same way. (see also: <b>descriptors</b> )
Thesis	A piece of original work done as part of a higher (post-graduate) degree.

## U

- URL URL = Uniform Resource Locator, the standard name and address system used for files on the Internet. The URL for Brookes Library is <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/>
- UpGrade Study Advice Service A confidential service to assist students needing help with statistics, maths, information skills and study skills. A drop-in facility is available each day 12-1 in the Headington Library and on specified days on the other sites. For more information you can contact the service via email: [upgrade@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:upgrade@brookes.ac.uk)

## V

- Volume
- Part of a set of books.
  - A set of journals published over a specific period of time, usually a calendar year.