Subject and Genre/Form Headings in SCLENDs: Guidelines

This document describes acceptable sources for subject headings (generally fields 600, 650, and 651). Genre/form headings appear in field 655.

Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) and Library of Congress Genre/Form Headings (LCGFT) are the first choice. Supplement with Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc. (GSAFD) as necessary. BIASC headings are acceptable but should not be the only source of headings in a MARC record: make sure that the BIASC headings are also represented by LCSH/LCGFT/GSAFD. Omit Faceted Access for Subject Terminology (FAST) headings.

Using standard sources for subject headings is essential for authority control and consistency in our bibliographic database.

A subject heading describes what a work is about. A genre/form term describes what a work is (what type of work it is).

Tip: when repeating subject/genre fields, two is a minimum number for describing the item. Though these fields are theoretically infinitely repeatable, be cautious about adding too many: this will mean that the item has more potential to show up in unrelated searches.

Here are some examples of what subject and genre/form headings look like in a MARC record:

Library of Congress Subject Headings (650 & 651)
First indicator blank. Second indicator 0.

Field 650 contains “Subject Added Entry—Topical Term.” It is repeatable (e.g., you can input as many 650 fields as you need to in order to make the item findable). In this example, the novel is about brothers and sisters: hence the subject heading (rather than genre/form term). The first indicator is blank (empty). The second indicator is “0,” which means that the source is the Library of Congress. Subfields can be assigned as necessary to make these more precise: in the above example, subfield $v ("form subdivision") designates the work as “fiction.” Search the Library of Congress Authorities here.

Field 651 contains “Subject Added Entry—Geographic Name.” It is repeatable. The first indicator is blank (empty), and the second indicator is “0,” meaning that the source is the Library of Congress. This field will begin with a place name in subfield $a. Choose geographic
names that pertain directly to the work: in the above example, the story takes place in London. Like the 650 field, the 651 field can contain subfields to make the field more precise.

Library of Congress Subject Headings for Children’s Literature (650)

*First indicator blank. Second indicator 1.*

The above example illustrates field 650 as it is commonly seen in children’s books. The first indicator is blank (empty), but the second indicator is “1.” This indicates that the term is a “LC subject heading for children’s literature.” Search LC Children’s Headings here.

Another way to encode juvenile subject headings is to use the appropriate adult LCSH term (note second indicator “0” in above example) and use subfield $v$ to include the juvenile subject subdivision heading. Subfield $v$ is “form subdivision.” Again, we choose subject headings (rather than genre/form terms) because the book is about cats, dance, friendship, and self-acceptance.

Library of Congress Genre/Form Headings (655)

*First indicator blank. Second indicator 7, with source lcgt specified in subfield $2.*

The above example shows a MARC record that makes use of two sources for genre/form terms: GSFAD and LCGFT. LCGFT stands for “Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms.” These terms describe what kind of work something is. In the example above, you can see that the book fits the categories of suspense fiction, detective and mystery fiction, and thrillers: it is a thriller, and it is detective and mystery fiction. Search LCGFT here.
Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc. (655)

First indicator blank. Second indicator 7, wish source gsafd specified in subfield $2.

The above example shows field 655, which is “Index Term—Genre/Form.” It is also repeatable. The first indicator is blank (empty). In this example, the second indicator is “7,” which indicates “source is specified in subfield $2.” In subfield $2, we see “gsafd.” “GSAFD” stands for “Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, etc.” GSAFD is a publication of the American Library Association (ALA) and is another common controlled vocabulary. It is helpful not to limit yourself to one vocabulary for genre/form terms. For example, “Regency fiction” is not an authorized LC genre, but it is a valid GSAFD term. Search GSFAD here.

Bilindex Vocabulary List

First indicator blank. Second indicator 7, with source bidex specified in subfield $2.

Bilindex is a Spanish-English authorized thesaurus. It is currently subscription-only. However, terms from this thesaurus frequently appear in OCLC, BookWhere, vendor, and other imported records. Because it is a recognized thesaurus, preserve these headings for ease of Spanish-language searches. Read about Bilindex here (but note that it is not searchable).

Book Industry Standards and Communications Subject Headings (650)

First indicator blank. Second indicator 7, with bisacsh specified in subfield $2.

The above example illustrates BISAC subject headings. Because this is a 650 subject field, the field is repeatable. The first indicator is blank (empty), and the second indicator is “7,” meaning that “source is specified in subfield $2.” You may see BISAC in vendor records. They are made up of two, three, or four parts (phrases), and each of these is separated by a forward slash (/). The first subject is the main subject, and the subjects that follow are listed in order of importance. The BISAC Committee recommends a maximum of three BISAC headings. BISAC code list found here.
Faceted Access for Subject Terminology

The above example illustrates FAST subject headings. The purpose of FAST is to adapt LCSH in a way that simplifies searching. FAST was created by OCLC and uses the same vocabulary as LCSH, but the syntax is not as complex. It is compatible with LCSH, which is why FAST headings often look redundant when viewed in a MARC record (that is, the information they give has already been expressed in another 6xx field, using LCSH). *SCLENDs recommends removing FAST headings.* [Search FAST here](#).