



Chapter 7

Class

Class

7.1 ABOUT CLASS

7.1.1 Discussion

The Class element is used to relate a specific work to others with similar characteristics, often based on the organizational scheme of a particular repository or collection. The purpose is to place the work within a broader context, categorizing it on the basis of similar characteristics, including materials, form, shape, function, region of origin, cultural context, or historical or stylistic period. Class terms may represent a hierarchy, a typology, or some other grouping of items, implying similarities among works within the logic of the classification.

Assigning a Class Designation

Using Class to place the work within a broader context and relate it to other works in a collection helps end users browse groupings of works that are related or share characteristics. The class scheme can be a useful starting point in the discovery of works contained in the collection. It introduces the collection and indicates both its organizational structure and its general focus.

Terms entered in this element should be assigned based on local guidelines pertinent for the individual collection. For example, in museum collections, the class of an object may correspond to the collection of a particular curatorial department (for example, *decorative arts, furniture, paintings, sculpture, prints and drawings*); in visual resources collections, it may be based on art historical periods or styles, such as *Prehistoric, Egyptian, Romanesque, Renaissance*. A work may belong simultaneously to different classes in different schemes, depending on the scheme used or the point of view.

The Class element may refer to a category within the collection arrangement of the owning institution as described, or it may refer to organizational schemes applied to visual resource collections, union catalogs, and shared cataloging initiatives. For example, when an image of a work of art from a museum is used in a visual resources collection, it may be classified differently from the museum's classification, depending on the scope and use requirements of the visual resources collection. In a shared cataloging initiative or union catalog, yet another classification may be required. In such situations, however, it is useful to end users to include the original class designation of the art work's repository as well.

Class carries no connotation of quality; it is not a categorization of objects according to grade or value. For a more complete discussion of class as a cataloging element, see *Categories for the Description of Works of Art: Classification*.

Specificity

The level of specificity to which a work is classified (for example, in the case of a Brewster chair, whether more broadly as *decorative arts*, or more specifically as *furniture* or *chairs*) will depend on the perspective of the cataloging institution and the requirements of end users. More general terms than those recorded in Work Type should be recorded in Class. For example, if a work is identified as a carpet in Work Type, it could be classified as *decorative arts* in Class. Ideally, Class does not duplicate information in the Work Type element, though such overlap may sometimes be necessary or even inevitable.

Organization of the Data

Class should be recorded in a repeatable controlled field. Terminology should be controlled by an authority file or controlled list. Terms may be taken from published or unpublished sources; they may derive from ordered systems of categories or from published, hierarchically structured thesauri. The scheme for Class should be documented with a statement describing the purpose, intended audience, and focus of the collection. Terms should be defined so that it is clear which kinds of works belong to a particular class.

Recommended Elements

This chapter discusses the display and indexing fields for Class. Display may be a free-text field or concatenated from controlled fields.

Class display

Class

About the Examples

The examples throughout this chapter are for illustration only. Local practice may vary.

7.1.2 Terminology

7.1.2.1 Sources for Terminology

Terminology should be controlled by using an authority file or controlled lists. Although the scheme for Class is locally defined, terms to populate that scheme

may be taken from ordered systems of categories or from a published or local hierarchically structured thesauri, or they may be based on common usage within a particular institution or discipline. Sources of terminology may include the following:

Getty Vocabulary Program. *Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT)*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 1988-. http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/aat/. (Especially the Objects facet).

Library of Congress. Prints and Photographs Division. *Thesaurus for Graphic Materials: Genre and Physical Characteristics Terms*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Cataloging Distribution Service, 1995. <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/print/tgm2>.

Library of Congress Authorities. *Library of Congress Subject Headings*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2005. <http://authorities.loc.gov/>.

Chenhall, Robert G. *Revised Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging: A Revised and Expanded Version of Robert G. Chenhall's System for Classifying Man-made Objects*. Edited by James R. Blackaby, Patricia Greeno, and The Nomenclature Committee. Nashville, TN: AASLH Press, 1988.

Genre Terms: A Thesaurus for Use in Rare Book and Special Collections Cataloging. 2nd ed. Prepared by the Bibliographic Standards Committee of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (ACRL/ALA). Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 1991.

Paper Terms: A Thesaurus for Use in Rare Book and Special Collections Cataloging. Prepared by the Bibliographic Standards Committee of the Rare Book and Manuscripts Section (ACRL/ALA). Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 1990.

Lavell, Cherry. *British Archaeological Thesaurus: For Use with British Archaeological Abstracts and Other Publications with British Archaeology*. London: Council for British Archaeology, 1989.

Tozzer Library Index to Anthropological Subject Headings. Harvard University. 2nd rev. ed. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981.

7.1.2.2 Choice of Terminology

7.1.2.2.1 CONSISTENCY

Using consistent terminology in this element is strongly recommended.

7.1.2.2.2 USE OF AN AUTHORITY RECORD

If possible, Class element terminology and definitions (for example, scope notes) should be stored in an authority file linked to the Work Record. Define the purpose and intended audience of the Class scheme. Class terms may also be stored in the Concept Authority described in Part 3. On the other hand, given that there will be a limited number of Class terms, some institutions may instead choose to control Class with a simple controlled list.

7.2 CATALOGING RULES

7.2.1 Rules for Class

7.2.1.1 *Brief Rules for Class*

Record one or more terms that relate the work to other works with similar characteristics, including materials, form, shape, function, region of origin, cultural context, or historical or stylistic period, based on the organizational scheme of a particular repository or collection.

Singular vs. Plural

Generally use the plural form of nouns, because classifications represent groups of similar items, not an individual item.

Examples

- Class:** paintings
- Class:** prints and drawings
- Class:** religious objects
- Class:** manuscripts
- Class:** graphic arts
- Class:** decorative arts

When the term refers to a broad type and the plural form is not appropriate, use the singular.

Examples

- Class:** sculpture
- Class:** architecture
- Class:** costume
- Class:** furniture
- Class:** performance art

Compound Concepts

Use compound concepts for the Class element when appropriate for a particular collection. Compound concepts are terms composed of multiple concepts such as *European paintings*. This is unlike the AAT or other standards-compliant thesauri, in which each record represents a single concept.

Examples

- Class:** European paintings
- Class:** Maya ceremonial objects

Capitalization and Abbreviations

Capitalize the proper names of culture, nationality, period, or style where appropriate. For other terms, use lowercase. Avoid abbreviations.

Examples

- Class:** textiles
- Class:** ceramics
- Class:** Pre-Columbian textiles
- Class:** American paintings
- Class:** African art
- Class:** Baroque paintings

If your institution uses a classification scheme made up of abbreviations or numeric or alphanumeric codes that might seem meaningless to an end user, map these to controlled terms that will be meaningful in a display. In an online database or kiosk system, for example, a local classification code such as *P20FR* should be translated to *20th-century French paintings*.

7.2.1.2 Additional Recommendations for Class

7.2.1.2.1 SPECIFICITY

If possible, do not duplicate any term used in the Work Type element. When the Class term is based on Work Type, select a term that categorizes the work more broadly than the term used in Work Type, if possible. In the examples below, the Work Type field is included to clarify the relationship between it and Class. See Chapter 1: Object Naming for a discussion of Work Type.

Examples

- Controlled fields:**
 - Work Type:** temple
 - Class:** architecture
- Controlled fields:**
 - Work Type:** drum
 - Class:** musical instruments
- Controlled fields:**
 - Work Type:** lithograph
 - Class:** prints

In some cases, however, it is impossible to avoid duplicating the Work Type term.

Example

- Controlled fields:**
 - Work Type:** painting
 - Class:** paintings

7.2.1.2.2 VARIOUS TYPES OF COLLECTIONS

Use terms and an overall scheme that will facilitate browsing or retrieval at a level of specificity consistent with the depth of the collection and the needs of the intended users. The example illustrates how the same work type, *cartonnier*, could be classified with class terms that are more or less specific, depending on the scope of the collection.

Examples

Work Type: cartonnier
Class: furniture

Work Type: cartonnier
Class: French decorative arts

Work Type: cartonnier
Class: decorative arts

7.2.1.2.3 MULTIPLE CLASS DESIGNATIONS

Assign multiple Class designations, if necessary.

Example

Work Type: magic scroll
Class: works on paper • medicinal objects • Ethiopian works

7.3 PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

7.3.1 Display and Indexing

For a discussion of when and why separate free-text and controlled fields are recommended, see Part 1: Database Design and Relationships: Display and Indexing.

A repeatable controlled field for Class should be used for indexing. A free-text display field for Class may be included, but is generally not required. Where multiple designations of Class occur, if a display is desired, it can be constructed by concatenating data from the repeatable controlled field. The example below illustrates a work with multiple Class designations.

Example

[for a painted Chinese screen]

Free-Text Class display field or Concatenated display of Class:

Asian art; furniture; paintings

Controlled field (repeatable):

Class: Asian art • furniture • paintings

7.3.2 Examples

Examples of Work Records are included below. For additional examples, see the end of Part 1, the end of each chapter, and the CCO Web site. In the examples, *controlled* refers to values controlled by an authority file, controlled list, or other rules (for example, rules for recording dates). *Link* refers to a relationship between a Work Record and an Authority Record or between two Work Records. All links are controlled fields. In the examples that follow, Related Work Records are abbreviated for the sake of brevity. All Work Records should be as complete as possible. See the various chapters for discussions of individual metadata elements, whether they should be controlled, and the respective advantages of an authority file or a controlled list. In all examples in this manual, both within and at the end of each chapter, data values for repeatable fields are separated by bullet characters.

Figure 37

Work Record Linked to an Authority Record for Class: Globe¹
Required and recommended elements are marked with an asterisk.

Work Record

- **Class** *[link]*: decorative arts • furniture • scientific instruments • European art
- ***Work Type** *[link]*: globe
- ***Title**: Terrestrial Globe | **Title Type**: preferred
- ***Creator display**: globe made by Jean-Antoine Nollet (French, 1700-1770); map engraved by Louis Borde (French, active 1730s-1740s); wood stand painted with vernis Martin (possibly applied by the Martin brothers' studio)
 - Extent** *[controlled]*: globe | ***Role** *[link]*: creator | *[link]*: Nollet, Jean-Antoine
 - Extent** *[controlled]*: map | ***Role** *[link]*: engraver | *[link]*: Borde, Louis
 - Extent** *[controlled]*: stand | **Qualifier**: possibly by | ***Role** *[link]*: painters | *[link]*: Martin brothers
- ***Creation Date**: 1728
 - [controlled]*: **Earliest**: 1728; **Latest**: 1728
- ***Subjects** *[links to authorities]*: object (utilitarian) • Earth • geography • cartography
- ***Current Location** *[link]*: J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, California, United States) | **ID**: 86.DH.705.1
- ***Measurements**: 109.9 (height) x 44.5 (diameter of globe) x 31.8 cm (depth of the stand) (43 1/4 x 17 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches)
 - [controlled]*: **Value**: 109.9; **Unit**: cm; **Type**: height | **Value**: 31.8; **Unit**: cm; **Type**: diameter | **Value**: 31.8; **Unit**: cm; **Type**: depth
- ***Materials and Techniques**: papier mâché, printed paper, and gilt bronze on a wooden (poplar, spruce, and alder) stand painted with vernis Martin
 - Material** *[link]*: papier mâché • paper • bronze • poplar • spruce • alder
 - Technique** *[link]*: vernis Martin
- **Inscriptions**: dedication to duchesse du Maine, wife of Louis XIV's first illegitimate child
- **Description**: The globe and its pendant were designed by the popular scientist who taught physics to the royal children. Owning a globe was very fashionable in the 18th century, and considered essential for the libraries of the aristocracy.
- **Description Source** *[link]*: J. Paul Getty Museum online. <http://www.getty.edu> (accessed February 10, 2004).
- **Related Work**:
 - Relationship type** *[controlled]*: pendant of
 - [link to Work Record]*: *Celestial Globe*; globe; Nicolas Bailleul le jeune (French, active 1740-1750); 1730; J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, California, United States); 86.DH.705.2



CREDIT: The J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, California). Globe made and assembled by Jean-Antoine Nollet, scientist; Map by Louis Borde, engraver. *Terrestrial Globe*. 1728. Wood painted with vernis Martin; papier mâché; printed paper; bronze. 109.9 x 44.5 x 31.8 cm (43 1/4 x 17 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches). 86.DH.705.1. © The J. Paul Getty Trust.

Authority Record

- ***Term**:
 - decorative arts (preferred)
- ***Note**: Designation for those arts involving the creation of works that serve utilitarian as well as aesthetic purposes, or involving the decoration and embellishment of utilitarian objects.
- ***Source** *[link]*: *Art & Architecture Thesaurus* (1988-).

Figure 38

Work Record Linked to an Authority Record for Class: Medieval Building
Required and recommended elements are marked with an asterisk.

Work Record

- **Class** [*link to authority*]: [architecture](#)
- ***Work Type** [*link*]: [basilica](#)
- ***Title**: Prato Cathedral | **Title Type**: preferred
 Title: Duomo di Prato | **Title Type**: alternate
 Title: Cattedrale di Santo Stefano | **Title Type**: alternate
 Title: Santo Stefano di Borgo al Cornio | **Title Type**: former
- ***Creator display**: architect: Guidetto da Como (Italian, 13th century) from 1211, other unknown architects
 ***Role** [*controlled*]: [architect](#) | [*link*]: [Guidetto da Como](#)
- ***Creation Date**: original church dates from 10th century, current church was begun in 12th century, façade and campanile date from 12th-15th century
 [*controlled*]: **Earliest**: 1100; **Latest**: 1499
- ***Subjects**: [*link to authorities*]: [architecture](#) • [Saint Stephen](#) • [cathedral](#) • [worship](#)
- ***Current Location** [*link*]: [Prato \(Tuscany, Italy\)](#)
- ***Materials and Techniques**: bearing masonry construction, green and white striped marble façade
 Material [*link*]: [masonry](#) | **Technique** [*link*]: [bearing walls](#) | **Extent** [*controlled*]: [façade](#) | **Material** [*link*]: [marble](#) • striped pattern
- **Style** [*link*]: [Romanesque](#) • [Gothic](#)
- **Description**: The current church is an enlargement of a 10th-century parish church. The cathedral was a pilgrimage site noted for the relic of the Virgin Mary's belt, the Sacro Cingolo, and important 15th-century frescoes.

Authority Record

- ***Term**: [architecture](#) (preferred)
- ***Note**: Designation for the built environment, including structures, parts of structures, landscape architecture, and city planning.
- ***Source** [*link*]: [Art & Architecture Thesaurus](#) (1988-).



CREDIT:
Prato Cathedral, Prato, Italy
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Note

1. This example is intended to illustrate fields discussed in this manual. Field names and data values in the example do not necessarily represent the record for this object in the Getty Museum's collections information system.