

# Subject Analysis

NHLA - Technical Services Committee

Angela Brown, Anne Murphy, and, Martha Simmons

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# What is Subject Analysis anyway?

Conceptual analysis to determine....

- What a resource is (physical form)
- What a resource is about (intellectual content, subject matter)
- Aboutness statement

After this process, assign

- Terms/subjects from controlled vocabularies (LCSH, MeSH, LCGFT, etc.)
- Classification notation (DDC, LCC, etc.)

Example: *Bake: my best ever recipes for the classics* by Paul Hollywood

# How to determine what a Work is about

- For most Fiction
  - Read the publisher's description for ideas.
- For Non-Fiction
  - Look at the table of contents.
- Are you reviewing a whole set of something, or an analytical part?
  - For example: is it a collected works, or a single item from a collection?
- Finally, remember LC does not assign headings to every work without a clear subject due to their nature, such periodicals or sacred works.

# Steps to Subject Analysis

- Subject analysis is the process of organizing information.
  - How is that accomplished?
- Can you identify the general category of a work, its major focus?
  - Broad versus narrow headings.
    - For example: Sports
- Can the topic be qualified by geographical location?
  - Sports\$zUnited States
- Can the topic be further qualified by timespan or language?
  - Sports\$zUnited States\$xHistory
- So how many headings are needed?
- If there are multiple topics, are there multiple topics of equal weight?
  - The 60/40 rule.
  - Or use the rule of thirds.

# Controlled Vocabularies: What are they & Why do we need them?

- “A standardized subject language used to describe the contents of resources” arranged to describe hierarchical relationships. ([Library of Congress Subject Headings: Online Training](#))
- Why do we need them?
  - Committees are used to select “preferred” terminology that is consistent, robust, and well-rounded.
- What about keyword searching?
  - Have benefits, especially when they are specific than associated controlled terms, which may increase search results.
  - Limited in areas of complexity and context.

# Controlled Vocabulary features

- Controlled vocabularies:
  - Exist to aid access.
  - Can help focus a search in languages with many synonyms.
  - Provide alternate and related terms for cross-referencing.
- Controlled vocabularies provide tailored terminology
  - In-depth industry terminology [[National Library of Medicine \(MeSH\)](#); [Getty Research Institute Art & Architecture Thesaurus \(AAT\)](#)]
  - Additional language access [[Répertoire de têtes-matière de l'Université Laval \(RVM\)](#)]
  - Access to, and reducing classification scheme bias for, terms not present in LOC or other major vocabularies [[Homosaurus](#); [Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Subject Thesaurus \(IST\)](#)]

# Example

- Accurate subject analysis is important to discovery.

Record without description

```

100 1 #aBennett, Brit,#eauthor.
245 14 #aThe vanishing half /#cBrit Bennett.
246 34 #aVanishing half :#ba novel
264 1 #aNew York :#bRiverhead Books,#c2020.
300 #a343 pages ;#c25 cm
336 #atext:#btxt#2rdacontent
337 #aunmediated#bn#2rdamedia
338 #avolume#bnc#2rdacarrier
650 0 #aTwins#vFiction.
650 0 #aSisters#vFiction.
650 0 #aAfrican American women#vFiction.
650 0 #aIdentity (Philosophical concept)#vFiction.
650 0 #aPassing (Identity)#vFiction.
650 0 #aRacially mixed families#zUnited States#vFiction.
650 0 #aColorism#zUnited States#vFiction.
650 0 #aComing of age#vFiction.
651 0 #aUnited States#x#History#y20th century#vFiction.
655 7 #aPsychological fiction.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aBildungsromans.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aDetective and mystery fiction.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aMystery fiction.#2gsafd
655 7 #aHistorical fiction.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aDomestic fiction.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aNovels.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aFiction.#2lcfgt|
776 08 #iOnline version:#aBennett, Brit,#tThe vanishing half
  
```

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337 #aunmediated#bn#2rdamedia
338 #avolume#bnc#2rdacarrier
520 #a"The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, Southern black community and running away at age sixteen, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Ten years later, one sister lives with her black daughter in the same Southern town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined. What will happen to the next generation, when their own daughters' storylines intersect? Weaving together multiple strands and generations of this family, from the Deep South to California, from the 1950s to the 1990s, Brit Bennett produces a story that is at once a riveting, emotional family story and a brilliant exploration of the American history of passing."--Provided by publisher
650 0 #aTwins#vFiction.
650 0 #aSisters#vFiction.
650 0 #aAfrican American women#vFiction.
650 0 #aIdentity (Philosophical concept)#vFiction.
650 0 #aPassing (Identity)#vFiction.
650 0 #aRacially mixed families#zUnited States#vFiction.
650 0 #aColorism#zUnited States#vFiction.
651 0 #aUnited States#x#History#y20th century#vFiction.
655 7 #aPsychological fiction.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aBildungsromans.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aDetective and mystery fiction.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aMystery fiction.#2gsafd
655 7 #aHistorical fiction.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aDomestic fiction.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aNovels.#2lcfgt
655 7 #aFiction.#2lcfgt
776 08 #iOnline version:#aBennett, Brit,#tThe vanishing half#dNew York : Riverhead Books, 2020.#z9780525536970#w(DLC) 2020005359
  
```

Topics

Location

Genres and Form



# Cataloger's Judgement and Objectivity

- Recognize that everyone has a point-of-view and bias - we are all human after all!
- Although, subject analysis can be subjective, every cataloger should strive for objectivity
- Questions to keep in mind when analyzing an item:
  - What was the author's intent?
  - Is this a work of fiction or nonfiction?
  - What is it for?
  - Who is the audience?



# Resources

- [Basic Subject Cataloging Using LCSH Cataloging Skills \(CCT\)](#)
- [Cataloging and Metadata Management: Using Medical Subject Headings](#)
- [Library of Congress Subject Headings: Online Training](#)
- [Webjunction ABLE 6 - Introduction to Subject Headings](#)
- Joudrey, Daniel N. The Organization of Information, 4th ed. Chapter 9, Subject Analysis (pp. 437-473)

# Questions?

Have more questions? Contact the Technical Services Committee at [techservices@nhlibrarians.org](mailto:techservices@nhlibrarians.org).