

How to find a book in the Library

There are thousands of books in the Library collection, but once you've found the book in the Library catalogue, how do you locate it on the shelf?

In this short video I'll show you how.

To find a book on the shelf, first you need to find the item on the Library catalogue.

To search the Library catalogue, start at the Library homepage.

It is good practice to sign in with your Bath username and password whenever you use library resources. This allows you to access all the resources that we pay for and to save items you find to your personal folder.

When you have signed in, enter your search terms in the catalogue search box at the top of the page. In this example, I am searching for the book 'Skills for success: personal development and employability' by Stella Cottrell. I do this by entering the first few key words of the book title and the author's surname into the catalogue search box, 'skills for success personal Cottrell', then I click on search or hit enter on the keyboard.

This takes you to a results list in the Library catalogue, where some of the results are articles and book chapters. To remove these from your results and make it easier to see your book in the list, you can select the Books filter from below the single search box at the top of the page.

The book I'm looking for is now second in the results list.

The search result for this title includes linked text that says, '4 related items exist. See all results'. This indicates that we provide multiple versions of this book. This can mean both multiple editions and different formats. Click on the result to see which editions and formats the Library holds in its collection.

In this example, I want to find a print copy of the most recent edition, so I look for the most recently published version that has a 'Copies available' link in the result. The top result is the 4th edition, published in 2021, and it says 'Copies available', which tells me that the Library has this edition of the book in print. Click on this result to find the floor location and the shelf number in the full record for the book.

In the 'Get It' section of the full record you can see the location information. This consists of the Level where the book is shelved and its shelf number, which is at least a 3-digit number followed by a 3-letter suffix. In this example the item is shelved on Level 5 at 650.1 COT. You can click on the location information to see how many copies of the book the Library has and how many are currently available. In this case, there are two copies, both of which are available to borrow.

You can click on the 'Locate' link on the right to open a floorplan. Floorplans are also displayed in various locations across the Library. Now, you know the shelf number and author's suffix for the book you want, you are ready to go to the shelves.

To find the correct shelf, look at the signs at the ends of the shelves. In this example, books with a 650.1 number appear on a shelf where the numbers range from 650 to 657.

You then need to walk along that shelf to find the 650.1 section of books and then find the book with the correct 3-letter suffix. Within a particular number section, the books are shelved from A-Z by author surname with the three letters at the end of the shelf number usually representing the first three letters of the author's surname.

To find the book we want, we need to search the 650.1 section alphabetically to find the COT suffix which represents the author's surname, Cottrell. Then choose a copy of the most recent edition. These are always shelved last in the sequence. When you have found the book you want you can take it to Level 2 to borrow.

If you're having difficulty finding a book on the shelf, please ask a member of staff in the Library to help you. For this or any other help you might need, speak to a member of staff in the Library, or contact the Library team online. You can email library@bath.ac.uk or use the 'Need help?' button on the Library homepage.