

Victoria's  
Amazing Guide  
To  
*Descriptive  
Bibliography*

# Table of Contents

LOCATION NUMBER.....	3
LOCATION NOTES.....	3
CONDITION.....	4
EXTERNAL DATABASE.....	5
AUTHOR.....	5
TITLE.....	6
PRINTER/PUBLISHER.....	6
PRINT/PUB LOCATION.....	7
PRINT/PUB DATE.....	7
FORMAT.....	7-8
PAGINATION/VOLUME.....	8-9
COLLATION FORMULA.....	9-11
DIMENSIONS.....	11
BINDING.....	12
PROVENANCE.....	12-13
READER'S MARKS.....	13
CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION.....	13-14
LANGUAGE.....	14
ILLUSTRATIONS/MAPS.....	14
OTHER FEATURES.....	15
DESCRIBED BY.....	15
DESCRIBED DATE.....	15

## Location #

What it is: The location number is unique to each book in the Clark University Archives, and this is how you can find your book in the Jonas Clark database.

Where to find it: You should be able to find the location number on a long, white strip of paper, and it is just a pound key with a number attached (example #122). If your book instead has the letter “NJC”, this means it is not from the Jonas Clark collection, and it will the location number will be under “NJC”.

## Location Notes

What it is: The location notes give further information about where the exact location of each book should be placed. It is unique to each book. It typically starts with the letter “A” (meaning archives), followed by three numbers. The numbers mean column, shelf, and which place from left to right, respectively.

Where to find it: The location notes of your book should be on a long, white strip of paper inside of your book, most likely under your location number. For example, it should look like A-4-2-5.

If it is the case that there are no location notes, consult Moodle→Resources→Jonas Clark Bibliography or Fordyce.

## Condition

What it is: The condition is pretty much what it sounds like it would be; it is how you would describe the condition of the book-both the binding and the text block. This is important as it will help future people looking at the book to stay away from precarious parts of the book through your description of the condition.

Where to find it/How to do it: First of all, **PLEASE BE CAREFUL WITH ALL BOOKS.**

Always err on the side of caution with handling any books, and ask Fordyce if you are unsure on how to proceed with a book you feel is in bad condition. Also, it may be helpful for you to wait until you have done the collation formula to do the condition, for you might find irregularities while going through pages. Now here are the real instructions:

1. Inspect the spine, binding, and text block for any irregularities that may be dangerous for a future student or archival staff member. You may have to go through leafs as well, as you should note if any stick together or have been left uncut.
2. If you find any irregularities that may jeopardize the usage of the book, note where it is as well as what part of the book it is in.
3. If you do not find any irregularities, describe the book as “stable”.

Example: “Damage the spine head, otherwise stable“

## External Database

What it is: The external database is the evidence of the book being in a place other than the Clark University book collection (so in other places in the world). It often shows past descriptions of the books, and it can be a useful guide if you have any questions about the book you are describing.

Where to find it: For this, you just need to find it if it already has been described on the foreign databases. To find this, you just need to go to Moodle→Foreign Databases. When you do find your book, just make note of the database. There are many databases on this section Moodle, and it is possible that your book will be in multiple.

## Author

What it is: The person who wrote the book you are looking at. Obviously.

Where to find it: Finding the author of a book can either be really difficult or easy, depending on when the book was made. Typically, the older the book was made, the harder it is to find the author. This can be especially difficult if the book is in another language. Here are a few tips:

- Look in both the beginning pages and last pages for signs of the author
- Make sure it is actually the author's name, not the publishers name (this can be harder to distinguish than you might think)
- Use the text block, not the spine or binding, to find the author. Sometimes, the binding can be from a different book than the text block.
- All else fails, you can either search for it on the original database on Moodle (the one for Clark) OR
- Visit the reference librarians in the Goddard Library! They are helpful!

## Title

What is it: The title of the book!

How to find it: The title of the book is usually easier to find than the author. Make sure to look at the text block rather than the binding or spine to find the title. If you need any help, always consult Fordyce or the databases on Moodle.

## Printer/Publisher

What is it: The publisher and printer who printed the book.

How to find it: This can be a bit difficult, though many times, a printer and publisher were more prominently placed on the book than the author, especially in the early printing press days. Some hints:

- Look at the text block, not the binding.
- Look at both the beginning and ends of the text blocks.
- Illustrations, especially on title pages, sometimes have the publisher's/printer's name within them. That may be a good indicator or a way to check your work.
- Be aware of any inconsistencies. Piracy in books is always a problem, and many times, the text block might say one thing and be another. Always keep this in mind. Looking at watermarks and chain lines might help you catch a counterfeit book.

### Print/Pub Location:

What it is: Where the book was published. It is also the place where the publishing house is.

How to find it: Some books may tell you exactly where it was published in either the title page or at the end of the text block. However, some may be more difficult, so you may have to consult google or a reference librarian in order to find where a specific publishing house resided during the time your book was made.

### Print/Pub Date

What it is: When your book was published!

How to find it: Many books do have dates within the text blocks, so many times, this is one of the easier ones to find. However, because counterfeit books do exist, double check all dates and note any consistencies. **Also, ignore any book dealer's marks (typically at the beginning of the text block)! If anyone is going to lie, it is going to be a book dealer attempting to rip off a costumer!**

### Format:

What it is: The imposition (or folding) of a book. For example, folio, quarto.

How to find it: If you are already at the descriptive bibliography point, you can probably figure out the format of most books pretty easily. However, here are just a few hints and reminders:

- Always check chain lines (but do not confuse these with wire lines!) and make sure they are consistent with the type of format you think the book was formatted in. For instance, books folded in folio ALWAYS have vertical chain lines.
- Always check watermarks and make sure that they are in the correct places for the folding that you think it is in. However, be careful with checking watermarks in the gutter!
- Look at the signature marks to see how the books were gathered. While this is not always a clear indicator of how a book was folded, it might help you if you are really stuck to look at this.
- Look at the size of the text block and leafs. The larger the book, the less times it was probably folded. Therefore, an insanely big book is much more likely to be a Folio than a duodecimo.
- Look at the Gaskell book! Pages 88-105 give examples of all of the types of imposition in existence, and this definitely helps!

## Pagination/Volume

What it is: Pagination: Pagination is how you would describe the pagination (the page numbering) of the book you are describing.

Volume: This is what volume the book is if the book you are looking at is a part of a series of similar books.

How to find it: Pagination: You will need to look through the leaves of the books and note how the pages are numbered. If the pages are pretty normal, noted 1-234, the pagination you would



put would be merely “234”. However, if there are Roman Numerals within the pagination—for instance, the first 12 pages are in Roman Numerals, but then they resume with the normal numbers up until page 234, it would be noted as “xii 234”

Volume: If your book is part of a volume set, it should tell you pretty clearly which volume it is. However, if you need help, consult Fordyce or the external database. If your book is not a part of a volume set, you may leave this blank.

### Collation Formula

What it is: Collation formula is a set way to describe the folding and gathering of books! Our class uses the collation formula designed by Fredson Bowers in his book *Principles of Bibliographical Description*.

How to find it/Use it: Collation formula is most likely the most difficult part of descriptive bibliography. It is also the most time consuming, and it can sometimes take hours for you to find out the descriptive bibliography of just one book. It is also complicated to describe on paper. So, make sure you have a comfy chair! Here are a few things you MUST do and note before you find out the collation formula.

1. Find out the format of the book. Read the section “Format” of this manual (pages 7-8) to remind you how to find the format.
2. Go through each leaf and find the signature marks of each. The signature marks are usually at the bottom center of the recto leaf. Most go through alphabetical order and then have a number, in numerical order, next to it (example: h4). Note any irregularities in the alphabet, irregularities in the numbers, or any unsigned leafs that are out of place.

WARNING: unsigned leafs are completely ok if there seems to be a repetition of it.

Many leafs, if they are gathered in more than 3 leafs, no longer have signature marks.

However, they should resume once they go to a different gathering (for instance d4, d5, and d6 may not have a signature mark, but if e1 does, then that is normal as long as it seems the norm in the book).

3. The capitalization of the alphabet typically does matter! So be aware when noting them in your collation formula. There is a difference between an “A” and an “a”.
4. The letters i/j and u/v are interchangeable. Most signature marks have one or the other, not both, so you do not note the skipping of those letters as long as their counterpart is there.
5. Most title pages do not have signature marks. This is also completely normal, and you do not need to note it in your collation formula.
6. Collation formula always deals with an “ideal copy”. Therefore if your book is missing pages, you must still attempt to collate what the original formula would be. However, this can sometimes be difficult if you do not have access to the missing leafs. If this is the case with your book, please contact Fordyce or another foreign database.
7. For pages that do not have any signature marks, their notes depend on the location of the leafs. If there are missing signed pages at the beginning of the text block before any signed signature marks, then they are noted with a pi symbol ( $\pi$ ). However, anytime within the text block other than the before the first signature mark, it is noted with a chi symbol ( $\chi$ ).

8. Pages with only illustrations typically do not need to be a part of your collation formula, as they are added in after. While this is rare, in books that are very illustration heavy, like map books,

Ok, now it looks like you are ready to start your collation formula! How exciting!

Because it is difficult to give you exact how to guide on how to do collation formula, I will instead do it through example.

A folio book gathered in 2s with only 2 pages of unsigned signature marks, with pretty regular alphabetizing would look like this:

2°: A4-K4,  $\chi$ 2, L-YYY3

Also, note that I do not interrupt the formula when the alphabet starts over again!

For more information on collation formula, visit pages 191-268 in Bower's book. Or ask Professor Neuman.

Dimensions:

What it is: The dimensions of the book are the measurements of the book, width by height.

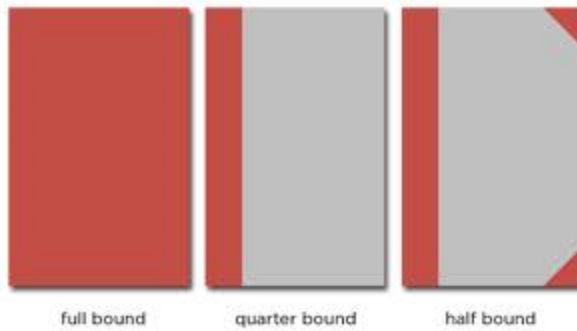
How to do it: Use a ruler, and measure in centimeters, the width and height of the book. It should look something like "19cm X 28cm".

## Binding

What it is: The material that covers the text block is the binding.

How to do it: Describe the binding in clear and concise detail. Some question to ask yourself when you are describing the binding:

- Is it half bound or quarter bound?



- What is the material used? Calf skin, fabric, etc. Remember that certain materials, such as sheep skin, damage differently than other materials, so always look at places where the book is damaged for information on this.
- Is it dyed?
- Embossed or tooled?

## Provenance

What is it: Provenance marks are the evidence marks of previous owners. Many are signatures of past owners, or even stamps or stickers.

How to find it: Usually, provenance marks are found at the very beginning of the text block, such as on the title page. However, we do not count any “Jonas Clark” stamps or Clark University stickers as provenance marks because every JC collection book has them. Please write the place

and what it says. If it illegible, write the location and that it is illegible. However, if you do not have any provenance marks in your book, you may leave this blank.

### Reader's Marks

What is it: Reader's marks are marks that a person put in the book, either underlines or text.

They can be any place in the text block. Some books have many, some have none.

How to find them: Reader's marks are typically easy to find for they are not in type, but are typically handwritten and clearly visible. You can note specific reader's marks in your descriptive bibliography that you find interesting. Otherwise, you can describe their amount as so:

- None- No reader's marks to be found in the text block
- Few- 2-4 small reader's marks to be found.
- Scattered-5-10 reader's marks to be found
- Many- 10 plus, readers marks to be found.

### Contextual Info

What it is: Contextual information is added information about the text block that will help future descriptive bibliographers understand the book and its importance.

How to find it: For this, you will most likely need google's help. In some cases, you will need to see the reference librarian, for it may not be a common book or google's information might be

insufficient. However, you only need to write two sentences or so, such as what type of book it is (history, a book of maps) etc.

## Language

What it is: The language of the book is what language the book was written in.

How to find it: Most times, the language will be pretty obvious. Latin is a very common language in older Jonas Clark collection books. However, if you do not know the language, you can also google some words in order to help you. You may even ask the advice of Fordyce or Professor Neuman.

## Illustrations/Maps

What it is: Illustrations or maps are usually drawings or stamps that are within the text block.

How to find them: Illustrations or maps are pretty easy to find. We note them by the amount.

You can also note any specific illustrations you find interesting. Describe them as follows:

- None- No illustrations to be found in the text block
- Few- 2-4 illustrations to be found.
- Scattered-5-10 illustrations to be found
- Many- 10 plus illustrations to be found.

Other features

What it is/How to use it: You can use this to add any other details of interest that you have found.

This may include fold-out illustrations, pieces of paper found slipped in, any irregularities.

Described By:

What it is: THIS IS YOUR NAME! Take credit for your hard work!

Described Date:

What it is: The date that you worked on the book in the rare books room.

CONGRATULATIONS ON FINISHING YOUR DESCRIPTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY!