

DEWEY DECIMAL SYSTEM

TEACH DEWEY WITH A ZOMBIE STORY!

2-PART LESSON

PRINT & DIGITAL

LOW-PREP

GRADES 5-8

CALL NUMBERS



Have you noticed the numbers and letters on library book spines?

A **call number** is a book's address in the library.

It tells us **where the book belongs on the shelf**.

Call numbers can look different from library to library.

In this example, the numbers show the **subject** and the letters are the first three letters of the **author's last name**.

DEWEY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Directions: Answer each question in the space provided below. You are free to explore the library as needed to answer the questions.

1. Why do you think some topics could reasonably fit into more than one Dewey section? Give an example.

Name _____ Teacher _____

2. Which Dewey section might use that section most?

Name _____ Teacher _____

FIND THE DEWEY SECTION: ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE CHALLENGE

Directions: The zombie apocalypse has begun! You have only a few minutes to gather information that could help you survive. Use your library's Dewey section to complete each mission. Write the title and call number of one book you find for each.

MISSION	BOOK TITLE	CALL NUMBER
FIND FOOD: Find a book in the 600 section that can help you find and/or prepare food.		
SURVIVE OUTDOORS: Find a book in the 500s that could teach you something useful about nature, animals, weather, or the outdoors.		
KNOW WHERE YOU ARE: Find a book in the 900s that includes maps or information about a place.		

Libraries sometimes change how they use Dewey to better fit their collections and readers.

For example, a librarian might create a section using books about the zombie apocalypse.

Choose a Dewey section and find a book about the zombie apocalypse.

The Dewey Decimal System was created in 1876.

What problems might librarians run into when using a 150-year-old system to organize books today?

STORY + ACTIVITIES



HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL GET:



2-part lesson presentation



Zombie Apocalypse Survival Challenge



Dewey classification worksheet



4 discussion questions & cards



Book recommendation bookmarks



PowerPoint, Google Slides, and PDF

TWO-PART DEWEY LESSON

PART I

Slides teach the 10 major Dewey classifications and how to read a call number

READING A CALL NUMBER



The purple book has a call number of 398.2 BRY.

The 398 tells us this is a folklore book.

The .2 means this is "folk literature," meaning it is a story.

WHO WAS MELVIL DEWEY?

- Melvil Dewey (1851–1931) was an American librarian who developed the Dewey Decimal Classification system in the 1870s.
- The system organizes books by subject using numbers.
- For example:

590
Animals

777
Cinematography

940
History of Europe

Today, libraries around the world still use the Dewey Decimal Classification system.



PART II

Explains Dewey hundreds sections through an original zombie apocalypse story.

YOU LIVE IN A CAVE

You haven't left your cave—or the area just outside it—since you arrived. You survive on rainwater, plants, and the small insects and worms living near the cave entrance.

The last "person" you saw was a zombie. You haven't seen anyone else since that first night.

You wonder if you are the last person left alive on Earth.



300–SOCIAL SCIENCES

The 300s are about how people live, work, organize, and interact with one another. You may find books about government, laws, careers, the military, customs, social issues, and folktales and fairy tales here.

Because the 300s cover so many topics, this is often one of the largest Dewey sections in a library.

QUESTION: Why do you think fairy tales and folktales are cataloged in this section?



Think: THREE people → 300s → Social Sciences

PRACTICE - EXPLORE - DISCUSS

EXTEND LEARNING WITH PRACTICE, LIBRARY EXPLORATION & DISCUSSION

Name _____ Teacher _____

ZOMBIE DEWEY PRACTICE



000 Books that don't fit into one of the other categories (encyclopedias, libraries, internet)
100 One person: Who am I? How do I feel? (psychology, philosophy, paranormal)
200 Two beings: person and creator (religion, mythology)
300 Three or more people (social sciences, government, crime and punishment, traditional stories)
400 How do we communicate with others? (languages, dictionaries)
500 People notice the natural world (natural sciences: trees, rocks, weather, animals)
600 People use natural science to create things (technology, sciences: building materials)
700 People have extra time or abilities (magic, dance, drawing, sports)
800 People tell stories around campfire (literature)
900 People want to leave a record of all the things they see and do

WHERE WOULD YOU CLASSIFY THESE? WRITE THE HUNDREDS DIGIT.

1. A book about whales _____
2. A book about World War II _____
3. A book about Hinduism _____
4. A play by William Shakespeare _____
5. A fairy tale _____
6. A book about tornadoes _____
7. A Russian-English dictionary _____
8. A book of world flags _____
9. A book about reggae music _____
10. A cookbook _____
11. A book about tarantulas _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____

A FEW MORE CHALLENGING EXAMPLES:

18. A book about Spanish architecture _____
19. A book about growing an herb garden _____
20. A book about the history of libraries _____

DEWEY
DECIMALS
PRACTICE

Name _____ Teacher _____

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SURVIVE OUTDOORS: Find a book in the 500s that could teach you something useful about nature, animals, weather, or the outdoors.		
KNOW WHERE YOU ARE: Find a book in the 900s that includes maps or information about a place.		
UNDERSTAND PEOPLE: Find a book in the 300s that could help you understand people, communities, government, or society.		
STAY ENTERTAINED: Find a book in the 700s that could help your group pass the time.		
YOUR CHOICE: Choose any book from the Dewey Decimal section that you would want during a zombie apocalypse.		

LIBRARY
SURVIVAL
CHALLENGE

The Dewey Decimal System was created in 1876.

What problems might librarians run into when using a 150-year-old system to organize books today?

Libraries sometimes change how they use Dewey to better fit their collections and readers.

For example, a librarian might create a separate "Math" section using books from the 500s or a "Cookbooks" section using books from 641.5.

Do you think libraries should be able to...

Do you think school libraries should create a section for graphic novels? Why or why not?

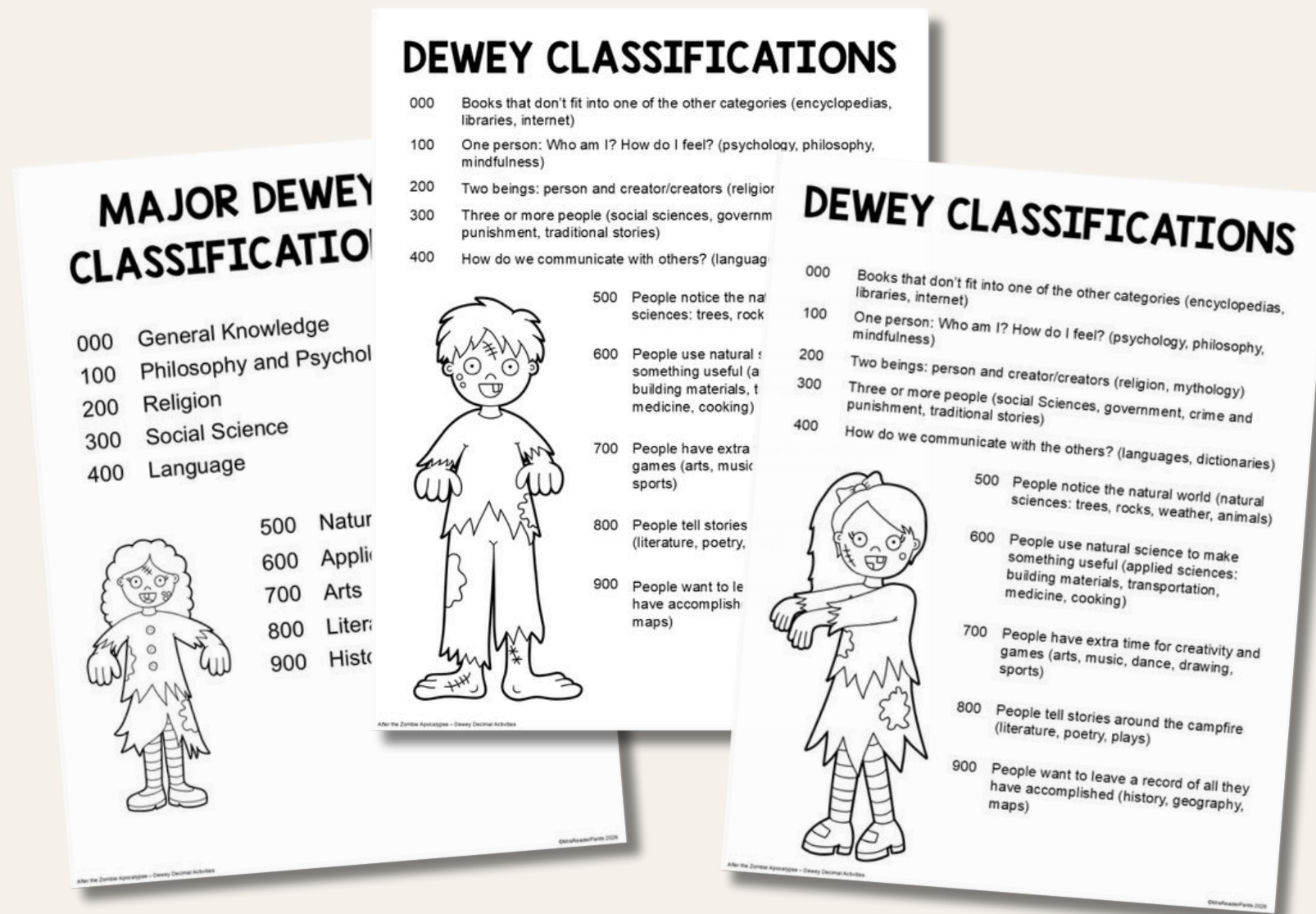
Do you think school libraries should create a section for graphic novels in the 41.5? Why?

DISCUSSION
CARDS

ANSWER KEYS INCLUDED

ALSO INCLUDES

Recommended Zombie Books for Grades 5-8 and Grades 9-12



Dewey Classification Cheat Sheets



WHAT LIBRARIANS ARE SAYING



“This is an awesome resource for the school library. I always feel like teaching Dewey can be so dry, but this resource really engaged students. I would recommend to others!”

— Katie S. | Grade 5



“This is fantastic! What a terrific upgrade from the Caveman Dewey. I like that this is thorough and will definitely capture my students interest. I plan on using this with my 5th graders as well as my middle schoolers.”

— Megan B. | Grade 5 + middle school

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ARE THE ZOMBIES SCARY?

Nope! Zombies provide the story premise, but the focus is on **survival tools** and **Dewey**.

There's just one zombie-hand illustration (see p. 2 of this preview)—no death, no blood, no scary images.

IS THIS EDITABLE?

Yes!
Text is editable in PowerPoint or Google Slides.

HOW LONG DOES THIS LESSON TAKE?

The presentation is designed as a two-part lesson, making it easy to use across **two library visits** with time for checkout.

READY TO SURVIVE THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE?

Teach the Dewey Decimal System with a memorable two-part lesson that gets students learning, exploring, and discussing their library.

[CLICK HERE TO GET STARTED!](#)

