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## **Literature and Language (Classes P-PZ and Sections of Class Z)**

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### **I. Scope**

This Collections Policy Statement refers to materials in the fields of literature and language. The field of literature includes works in the forms of fiction, poetry, drama, the general essay, oratory, and journalism, as well as the historical, theoretical, critical, biographical, and scholarly studies dealing with such works. The field of language includes general works on language as a phenomenon and works on particular languages, including dictionaries, grammars, rhetorics, and histories. The fields of literature and language are covered in a wide variety of formats in the Library of Congress, including traditional printed books and periodicals, books and periodicals issued with CDs or in other multimedia formats, manuscripts, microforms, electronic sources (databases, digitized materials, and born digital resources), audio recordings, motion pictures, and photographs.

Literature and language are treated in Classes P through PZ of the Library of Congress classification system. The present statement deals with all of these classes except that part of class PZ covering juvenile belles lettres, which is covered in the CPS for Children's Literature. In addition, works relevant to the study of literature and language are scattered throughout Class Z (bibliography), in the sections for national bibliography (e.g. Z1224-Z1232, American literature) subject bibliography (e.g. Z5781-Z5785, drama and theater; Z7001-Z7124, philology and linguistics), and personal bibliography, and in such other areas as Z124-Z228 (printing history). What this CPS says about areas of Classes P-PZ is to be understood as applying also to related areas of Class Z.

The following Collections Policy Statements also should be consulted for their application to literature and language: Children's Literature; Comics and Cartoons (Section on the Graphic Novel); Developing Countries (Section on Literature); Electronic Resources, Selection Guidelines; Sound Recordings (Section on Non-Musical Recordings); Fantasy and Science Fiction; Manuscripts; Theater; Translations.

The following Collections Overviews should be consulted for their application to literature and language: American Literature; American Popular Culture; Anglophone/Commonwealth Literature; Area Studies (all); Children's Literature; Linguistics and Languages; Theater.

### **II. Research Strengths**

The Library's collections in literature and language are unrivaled for breadth and depth, both current and historical. The largest group of materials is in the general classified collections of books and periodicals, but many other areas of the Library hold important collections, including the Rare Book and Special Collections Division (first and early editions of major American and British authors; first editions of selected contemporary English-language authors; dime novels, small press books); the Manuscript Division (papers of many American authors; unpublished plays deposited for copyright since 1900); the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division (motion picture, television, and radio materials, the Archive of Recorded Poetry and Literature); the Microform Reading Room (early books and periodicals); and the area studies divisions.

In the area of electronic resources relating to literature and language, the Library's collections have both strengths and weaknesses. Little related to literature has been digitized through the American Memory collections thus far with the exception of some Walt Whitman notebooks, a few Zora Neale Hurston plays, and the Federal Theatre Project. There are a few collections of world literature and languages digitized or collected through the Library's Global Gateway site, including the South Asian Literary Recording Project, Islamic Manuscripts from Mali, and Selections of Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Calligraphy. The Library is collecting some born digital material, notably through the Archive-It project in cooperation with the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO). The Library subscribes to a substantial number of electronic databases, both indexes and full-text sources, with a subject grouping for "Literature & Language" found on the "Databases and E-Resources at the Library of Congress" page.

### **III. Collecting Policy**

The Copyright Best Edition statement provides guidance for selecting materials for the literature and language collection.

#### **1. Language**

The Library collects important reference works, scholarly monographs and serials, bibliographies, and dictionaries. For most of the world's languages, grammar and textbooks are acquired very selectively, except for those titles published in the U.S., which are collected at the Level 5.

#### **2. American Literature**

The Library collects at Level 5 all works of American literature, by both established and new writers, which are regarded as having literary merit or as representing current trends in writing; anthologies and periodicals whose contents consist principally of such writings; new critical and authoritative collections of prominent authors' works; and historical, theoretical, critical, scholarly, and bibliographical studies of American literature. Works of American popular literature are collected, but vanity press and self-published works are not collected, although self-published works of quality may be collected in areas where self-publishing is an important part of the publishing spectrum (e.g., poetry, African American literature). This holds for materials in any language published or distributed in the U.S.

#### **3. Foreign literature**

The Library collects literary works, by both established and new writers, which are regarded as having a high degree of literary merit or as representing important current trends in writing; authoritative or

influential anthologies and periodicals whose contents consist principally of such writings; new critical and authoritative collections of prominent authors' works; and all important historical, theoretical, critical, scholarly, and bibliographical studies. Generally, vanity press and self-published works are not collected. The Library is less selective for works published in developing countries (see the Collections Policy Statement Developing Countries). Unless otherwise stated the Library collects non-English language and literature at the Level 4; popular literature at Level 3 and textbooks and grammars at Level 2.

#### 4. First Editions

First editions, with dust jackets, of major American and British authors (belles lettres, poetry, drama), and a more selected list of Commonwealth authors, are acquired and retained in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

#### 5. Mass-market Paperbacks

Since 1978 the Library has retained (and categorized by genre) mass-market paperbacks received through Copyright. The collection is in the custody of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

### **IV. Acquisitions Sources: Current and Future**

The vast majority of books and periodicals relating to literature and language published in the United States are acquired for the Library's collections through copyright deposit and the Cataloging-in-Publication (CIP) program. While most microform and subscription electronic sources are currently purchased, changing interpretations of "best edition" for copyright purposes may mean that the Library can acquire more materials in these formats through deposit. The Manuscript Division usually acquires authors' papers through gift; although, some purchases are made in that Division. Some foreign material relating to language and literature is acquired through gift or exchange. The bulk of the Library's foreign acquisitions comes from purchases made by the Library's Overseas Offices and through its dealers in countries around the world. Dealers acquire the materials following guidelines established through approval plans based on Collections Policy Statements.

The Internet and electronic "publishing" will drive many changes in future acquisitions at the Library of Congress. Even traditional print methods are subject to change as one can expect that far more material will be printed in very short runs, such as those produced by print-on-demand services. These publishing methods may be ideal for literary material such as poetry, but the Library may need to review its guidelines on self-published or vanity press publications to determine how these definitions work in light of these new means of publishing. A number of scholarly journals are moving from print to electronic publication only. Subscription electronic journals, as well as open source material, must be acquired, cataloged, archived, and made accessible. In recent years, the Library has been more successful at obtaining such material through aggregators than it has been at collecting individual electronic titles or Web sites. The Library must continue to improve its methods of collecting such material. Because born-digital material may not be announced through the traditional published professional and library reviewing literature, Recommending Officers must be more vigilant and creative in locating worthwhile material for acquisitions. A newly established partnership with the Electronic Literature Organization is proving useful for selecting Web sites for archiving. The Library should seek to establish partnerships with other organizations devoted to producing literature and language materials in electronic formats to enhance our collections.

## V. Collecting Levels

The following list indicates the collection intensity levels (0 through 5) to be followed in acquiring literature and language materials. When two levels are listed, the first refers to materials relating to the U.S.; the second to materials having to do with all other areas.

### 1. Philology and linguistics

The Library maintains a Research-Level collection (level 4) of current materials on all the major subdivisions of philology and linguistics, P98-P1091, in the Library of Congress Classification. This includes mass communications, language (general), and philology.

LC Classification		Collecting Level
P98-P1091	Philology; linguistics	4

### 2. General literature

LC Classification		Collecting Level
PN1-PN1551	Serials; criticism; authorship; literary; history; poetry	5/4
PN1560-PN3307	The performing arts; drama	5/4
PN3311-PN5650	Prose; oratory; Journalism	5/4
PN6010-PN6790	Collections of general literature	5/4

### 3. Classical languages and literatures

The Library acquires current and retrospective materials on the ancient Greek and Latin languages and literatures, including early Christian and medieval literature written in Greek and Latin. Classics collections are developed in all formats at Level 4 and include materials on ancient Greek drama as well as Greek and Latin epigraphy. Also developed are collections of Latin and Greek literature which document the textual foundation in the Western world of virtually any subject discipline (e.g. earliest treatises on mathematics, physics). The Library of Congress does not collect translations of classical texts in languages other than English unless the accompanying material represents the work of an internationally acknowledged scholar.

### 4. English language and literature in the English language

LC Classification		Collecting Level
PE	English language	4
PS	American literature	5
PR1-PR8469	English literature	4

PR9180-PR9199.3	Canadian literature	4
PR9210-PR9275	West Indian literature in English	4
PR9340-PR9408	African literature in English	4
PR9420-PR9570	Asian literature in English	4
PR9600-PR9619.3	Australian literature	4
PR9620-PR9639.2	New Zealand literature	4

#### 5. Germanic languages and literatures

The library collects materials in all Germanic languages and literature at the Research Level except for popular literature which is at Level 3 as noted in section III.3.

#### 6. Celtic languages and literature

The Library acquires reference works, the most important monographs, the works of prominent authors, and the major serials for the Celtic languages and literatures. These include the Irish, Gaelic, Manx, Welsh, Cornish, Breton, and Gallic languages and literatures.

#### 7. Romance languages and literatures

The Library collects materials in all Romance languages and literature at Level 4, except as noted in section III.3. and for the following:

- a. Dalmatian languages and literatures - Level 2
- b. Romansch languages and literatures - Level 3
- c. Catalan languages and literatures - Level 3
- d. Galician languages and literatures - Level 3
- e. Cuban literature since the 1959 revolution - Level 5

#### 8. Slavic, Baltic and Albanian languages and literatures

The Library collects materials in Slavic and related languages and literature at Level 4 except as noted in section III.3. and for the following:

- a. Church Slavonic - Level 3
- b. Macedonian - Level 2
- c. Sorbian - Level 3

#### 9. Finno-Ugrian and Basque languages and literatures

The Library seeks to maintain a research-level collection of current materials on the languages and literatures of Finland, Estonia, Sami, Hungary, and the Basque region except as noted in section III.3.

#### 10. Near Eastern languages and literature

The Library collects materials in Near Eastern languages and literature at the Research Level except as noted in section III.3.

#### 11. East Asian languages and literatures

The Library collects at Level 4 current materials on the Asian languages and literatures except as noted in section III.3., with the following exceptions: although the Library acquires at Level 4 current materials on all of the Indonesian languages, it acquires at Level 2 materials on Karen, Siamese,

Mon-Khmer, Munda, Dravidian, Kawi, and Javanese literatures. Nashi Language, Level 5.

12. African languages and literatures

The Library collects materials on African languages, and literatures at Level 4, except as noted in section III.3.

13. Oceania languages and literatures

The Library collects materials in languages and literatures of Oceania at Level 4, except as noted in section III.3.

14. Mixed, artificial, and universal languages

The Library collects materials on mixed languages such as Creole, Gullah, and Pidgin English, and artificial or universal languages such as Esperanto at Level 4 except as noted in section III.3.

15. Other languages

The Library collects materials in any other language not specified above at Level 3 except:

- a. Native-American languages and literature - Level 5
- b. Language of indigenous people in Canada, Mexico - Level 4

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