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**EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW**  
(or not know)  
**ABOUT BISAC CODES**  
**AND SHELVING CATEGORIES**

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NBN Brown Bag Lunch Webinars



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- In an industry that produces almost 400,000 new titles each year, it is more important than ever to target your ultimate consumer – and to make it as easy as possible for that consumer to locate your specific title that meets their information and entertainment needs.

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# HOW DO I HELP THE PROCESS FOR MY BOOKS?

- You can make sure your books are categorized properly and appear in searches by providing us with up to **3 BISAC codes** that **specifically** define every individual title on your list.
- Listing the first specific BISAC code is **mandatory**, but the second two are optional.

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# WHAT DOES BISAC STAND FOR?

- BISAC stands for **Book Industry Subject and Category** codes
- BISAC are created, maintained and revised by the **Book Industry Study Group (BISG)**
- **All** publishers use these codes
- There are over 3,000 codes

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# DECIPHERING THE CODE

- The **BISAC Subject Headings List** is an electronic standard used by almost every major account to categorize books based on content.
- The code is 9 characters long.
- The first three are alpha.
- The last six are numeric.
- For example, CKB000000 is a general cookbook, but CKB048000 is Cooking/Regional & Ethnic/Japanese.

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# WHO USES BISAC CODES and HOW ARE THEY USED?

- **National Accounts** – to identify which buyer will be responsible for buying a specific title.
- **Bricks and Mortar retailers** – to help them determine where a book will be shelved.
- **Wholesalers** – to determine the genre(s) under which a book can be found in an internal database.
- **Bookscan** – to help them build their category best seller lists.
- **Online retailers** – to help with the search process.

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# HOW DO THE ACCOUNTS GET BISAC CODES?

- NBN sends the codes electronically in ONIX feeds **6 months before a title is scheduled to be published.**
  - Accounts receive the feeds to populate their databases.
  - Many accounts require this information be added to their databases before they will allow sales reps to schedule presentations.
  - Accounts **may not set up titles** unless the BISAC codes are supplied.

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# WHEN ARE PUBLISHERS REQUIRED TO SUPPLY THESE CODES TO NBN?

- BISAC codes are now **mandatory** according to the industry.
- Thus, NBN now requires BISAC codes when you are supplying catalog copy and tip sheets using the online Submission forms  
([www.nbnbooks.com/production/catalog\\_copy/index.shtml](http://www.nbnbooks.com/production/catalog_copy/index.shtml))  
and  
([www.nbnbooks.com/production/tipsheets/TipSheetTemplate.shtml](http://www.nbnbooks.com/production/tipsheets/TipSheetTemplate.shtml))

# CATALOG COPY SUBMISSION FORM

National Book Network: Catalog Copy Submission Form - Mozilla Firefox

http://www.nbnbooks.com/production/catalog\_copy/

**NBN** National Book Network

national book network

catalog search

Site Map  
Home  
About NBN  
Prospective Publishers  
NBN Publishers  
Our Publishers  
NBN Kids  
Advertising  
Author Appearances  
Award Submissions  
Book Sense  
Gift Market Program  
Industry Resources  
Print on Demand  
Marketing Advice  
Tip Sheet Form  
NBN Calendar  
Catalogs/Production  
Title Updates  
Tip Sheet Form  
Catalog Copy Form  
Categories  
Comparison Titles  
NBN Logos  
Production Desk


### Catalog Copy Submission Form

Required fields in **red**

<b>Page size:</b>	<input type="radio"/> half <input type="radio"/> full <input type="radio"/> custom
<b>Does this replace an earlier submission?</b>	<input type="radio"/> yes <input type="radio"/> no
Expected Advance:	<input type="text"/>
<b>Title:</b>	<input type="text"/>
Subtitle:	<input type="text"/>
Author: (specify if Edited by, Illustrated by, etc.)	<input type="text"/>
Now in Paperback!	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
<b>If yes, supply ISBN of Cloth Edition:</b>	<input type="text"/>
Is this an Updated or Revised Edition?	<input type="radio"/> yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no
<b>If yes, specify what Edition:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>If yes, specify ISBN of Previous Edition:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Description:</b>	<input type="text"/>
	Author bio: <input type="text"/>
Max word count: <input type="text"/>	Current word count: <input type="text"/>
Marketing information:	

Find:  Next Previous Highlight all Match case

Done



# CATALOG COPY SUBMISSION FORM

National Book Network: Catalog Copy Submission Form - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.nbnbooks.com/production/catalog\_copy/

Most Visited MailAdm NBNMailAdm Spam NBN Spam RoundCube Hotmail iGoogle NBN NBN Blog PubAlley iPage BookScan AWBC Amazon Intranet OnlineRPTs E Z Mailing List FTP Vendor Central


National Book Network: Catalog Copy...

- Comparison Titles
- NBN Logos
- Production Packet
- Sales Materials
- Sample Flyer
- Publicity Update Form
- Publisher Services
- Booksellers
- NBN Fusion
- Educators/Parents
- Sales Conference
- Trade Shows
- NBN International
- News Breaking Now
- Staff/Reps
- Employment Opportunities
- FAQs
- Contact Us

Max word count:	<input type="text"/>	Current word count:	<input type="text"/>
Marketing information:			
		Co-op available:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<input type="text"/>			
	<b>Pub month:</b>	<input type="text"/>	
	Category #1:	<input type="text"/>	
	Category #2:	<input type="text"/>	
(Refer to: www.blisg.org)	<b>BISAC #1:</b>	<input type="text"/>	
(Refer to: www.blisg.org)	BISAC #2:	<input type="text"/>	
(Refer to: www.blisg.org)	BISAC #3:	<input type="text"/>	
	Page count:	<input type="text"/>	
	Trim size: (width x height)	<input type="text"/>	
	Carton qty:	<input type="text"/>	
	# B&W photos:	<input type="text"/>	
	# B&W illustrations:	<input type="text"/>	
	# Color photos:	<input type="text"/>	
	# Color illustrations:	<input type="text"/>	
	Other: (include type with amount)	<input type="text"/>	
	10-digit ISBN with dashes:	<input type="text"/>	
	13-digit ISBN:	<input type="text"/>	
	Price:	<input type="text"/>	
	Format:	<input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If "other" include type in additional comments

Find:      Match case

Done



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# WHERE CAN I FIND THE BISAC CODES?

- The complete BISAC subject headings list is available online for one-to-one title lookup:

<http://www.bisg.org/what-we-do-20-73-bisac-subject-headings-2008-edition.php>

# BISG WEBSITE

The screenshot shows the BISG (Book Industry Study Group) website in a Mozilla Firefox browser. The browser's address bar displays the URL: <http://www.bisg.org/what-we-do-20-73-bisac-subject-headings-2008-edition.php>. The website header includes the BISG logo and navigation links for HOME, RSS FEED, CONTACT, and members area. A search bar with a 'find' button is also present. Below the header is a blue navigation bar with links for Become a Member, About Us, What We Do, Committees, Publications, Resources, Events, and News. The main content area is titled 'What We Do' and features a large image of colorful books with the text 'Classification Schemes' overlaid. To the left is a navigation menu with links for What We Do, Standards & Best Practices, Barcodes & Labels, Classification Schemes, Digital Protocols, EDI & E-Commerce, Identifiers, Product Metadata, Benchmarking, Certification, and Policy Statements. To the right is a 'RELATED INFO' section titled 'LATEST IN News' with links to 'BISG Annual Meeting Looks again to New Leadership', 'Talk of Change Dominates BISG Annual Meeting', and 'Meet the Mega MetaMess'. Below this is a 'What We Do' section with links for 'BookDROP 1.0', 'A Concise Guide to Book Industry Product Identifiers', and 'Roadmap of Identifiers'. The main article, 'BISAC Subject Headings (2008 Edition)', includes a 'NEW' icon and text: 'Watch out for the 2009 Edition of the BISAC Subject Headings List, coming November 2009. The BISAC Subject Headings List is a standard used by many companies throughout the supply chain to categorize books based on topical content. The'. At the bottom left, there is a search bar with the text 'Done' and a 'Match case' checkbox.



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# HOW DO I LOCATE THE CORRECT CODE?

- Let's walk you through the process...
- As an example – let's say you are publishing a title “Best Perennial Plants of the Mid-West.”

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## Step 1:

- Go to the Book Industry Study Group on-line list of BISAC CODES
- [http://www.bisg.org/what-we-do-20-73-bisac - subject-headings-2008-edition.php](http://www.bisg.org/what-we-do-20-73-bisac-subject-headings-2008-edition.php)

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## Step 2:

- Find the major categories in the BISAC SUBJECT/HEADING LIST.
- There are two sections – covering 50 major categories:
  - Section A-J and Section K-Z

# Step 2: A-J BISAC CODES

Standards & Best Practices | Classification Schemes | BISAC Subject Headings | BISAC Subject Headings List (A-J) | Book Industry Study Group, Inc. - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.bisg.org/activities-programs/activity.php?n=d&id=44&cid=20

Most Visited MailAdm NBNMailAdm Spam NBN Spam RoundCube Hotmail Google NBN NBN Blog PubAlley Page BookScan AWBC Amazon Intranet OnlineRPTs E Z Mailing List FTP Vendor Central

Standards & Best Practices | Classifi...

Subjects to find an alternate code or use our [Contact Form](#) to suggest revisions to the next version of the list.

**Step 1:** Determine the major heading which best describes the content of your book. Click on a heading below for more specific headings within that category.

An asterisk (\*) denotes a heading that is new for the 2008 Edition.

- ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES
- ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- BIBLES
- BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY
- BODY, MIND & SPIRIT
- BUSINESS & ECONOMICS
- COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS
- COMPUTERS
- COOKING
- CRAFTS & HOBBIES
- DESIGN\*
- DRAMA
- EDUCATION
- FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS
- FICTION
- FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY
- GAMES
- GARDENING
- HEALTH & FITNESS
- HISTORY
- HOUSE & HOME
- HUMOR
- JUVENILE FICTION
- JUVENILE NONFICTION

If your title does not have subject content, i.e. a blank book, please use the Non-Classifiable term below. Otherwise, use the Subject/General term in the closest descriptive area.

NONoooooo NON-CLASSIFIABLE

Please note that the BISAC Subject Headings List is governed by the following

**TESTIMONIAL**

"Barnes & Noble has long been a supporter of BISG because of its many..."

> view all

Done

Find: [ ] Next Previous Highlight all Match case

# Step 2: L-Z BISAC CODES

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the BISAC Subject Headings List (K-Z) page. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://www.bisg.org/activities-programs/activity.php?n=d&id=498&cid=20>. The page content includes:

**Step 1:** Determine the major heading which best describes the content of your book. Click on a heading below for more specific headings within that category.

An asterisk (\*) denotes a heading that is new for the 2008 Edition.

- LANGUAGE ARTS & DISCIPLINES
- LAW
- LITERARY COLLECTIONS
- LITERARY CRITICISM
- MATHEMATICS
- MEDICAL
- MUSIC
- NATURE
- PERFORMING ARTS
- PETS
- PHILOSOPHY
- PHOTOGRAPHY
- POETRY
- POLITICAL SCIENCE
- PSYCHOLOGY
- REFERENCE
- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SELF-HELP
- SOCIAL SCIENCE
- SPORTS & RECREATION
- STUDY AIDS
- TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING
- TRANSPORTATION
- TRAVEL
- TRUE CRIME

*If your title does not have subject content, i.e. a blank book, please use the Non-Classifiable term below. Otherwise, use the Subject/General term in the closest descriptive area.*


NONoooooo NON-CLASSIFIABLE

Please note that the BISAC Subject Headings List is governed by the following copyright notice.

© 2008 Book Industry Study Group, Inc.

On the right side of the page, there is a green callout box with the text: "As a corporation in the middle of the supply chain, serving publishers,..." and a link: > view all

The browser's search bar at the bottom left contains the text: Find: [ ] Next Previous Highlight all Match case Done



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## Step 2:

- Using our example – click on the **Gardening** section.
- The General Category is GAR000000, but you want to drill down deeper than the General Category.
- **Only** use the General Category if there is nothing more specific to use.

# Step 2: GARDENING, GENERAL CATEGORY BISAC

Standards & Best Practices | Classification Schemes | BISAC Subject Headings | BISAC Subject Headings List (A-J) | Book Industry Study Group, Inc. - Mozilla Firefox

http://www.bisg.org/activities-programs/activity.php?n=d&id=44&cid=20#GARDENING

## GARDENING

Use subjects in this section for works on practical operations in the cultivation of fruits, vegetable, flowers, and ornamental plants. For works on the commercial cultivation of fruits, vegetables, nuts, and ornamental plants, use "SCIENCE / Life Sciences / Horticulture". For works aimed at farmers or agronomists, use subjects beginning with "TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING / Agriculture".

Under the "Regional" subheading, state abbreviations have been provided as a guide, but users should not feel constrained by them. For example, CA is found in the "West (AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, UT, WY)" subsubheading, but a book dealing specifically with northern California could be assigned the "Pacific Northwest (OR, WA)" subsubheading. Similarly, all of Canada is covered by one subsubheading, but a book dealing with British Columbia could also be assigned the "Pacific Northwest (OR, WA)" subsubheading.

An asterisk (\*) denotes a heading that is new for the 2008 Edition.

*Step 2:* Once you have selected your major heading, determine the specific term which describes your book.

GAR000000	GARDENING / General
GAR027000	GARDENING / Climatic / General
GAR027010	GARDENING / Climatic / Desert
GAR027020	GARDENING / Climatic / Temperate
GAR027030	GARDENING / Climatic / Tropical
GAR001000	GARDENING / Container
GAR002000	GARDENING / Essays
	GARDENING / Flower Arranging see CRAFTS & HOBBIES / Flower Arranging
GAR004000	GARDENING / Flowers / General
GAR004010	GARDENING / Flowers / Annuals
	GARDENING / Flowers / Azaleas see Shrubs
	GARDENING / Flowers / Bulbs

Find:  Next Previous Highlight all Match case Done

# Step 3: GARDENING, SPECIFIC CATEGORIES

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying a list of gardening categories. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://www.big.org/activities-programs/activity.php?n=d&id=44&cid=20#GARDENING>. The browser's title bar reads "Standards & Best Practices | Classification Schemes | BISAC Subject Headings | BISAC Subject Headings List: (A-J) | Book Industry Study Group, Inc. - Mozilla Firefox".

The list of categories is as follows:

GAR004000	GARDENING / Flowers / General
GAR004010	GARDENING / Flowers / Annuals
	GARDENING / Flowers / Azaleas <i>see</i> Shrubs
GAR004030	GARDENING / Flowers / Bulbs
GAR004040	GARDENING / Flowers / Orchids
GAR004050	GARDENING / Flowers / Perennials
GAR004060	GARDENING / Flowers / Roses
	GARDENING / Flowers / Violets <i>see</i> Flowers / Annuals
GAR004080	GARDENING / Flowers / Wildflowers
GAR005000	GARDENING / Fruit
GAR006000	GARDENING / Garden Design
GAR007000	GARDENING / Garden Furnishings
GAR008000	GARDENING / Greenhouses
GAR009000	GARDENING / Herbs
GAR010000	GARDENING / House Plants & Indoor
	GARDENING / Hydroponics <i>see</i> Techniques
	GARDENING / Indoor <i>see</i> House Plants & Indoor
GAR013000	GARDENING / Japanese Gardens
GAR014000	GARDENING / Landscape
GAR015000	GARDENING / Lawns
GAR016000	GARDENING / Organic
GAR017000	GARDENING / Ornamental Plants
GAR018000	GARDENING / Reference
GAR019000	GARDENING / Regional / General
GAR019010	GARDENING / Regional / Canada
GAR019020	GARDENING / Regional / Middle Atlantic (DC, DE, MD, NJ, NY, PA)
GAR019030	GARDENING / Regional / Midwest (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI)
GAR019040	GARDENING / Regional / New England (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)
GAR019050	GARDENING / Regional / Pacific Northwest (OR, WA)
GAR019060	GARDENING / Regional / South (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
GAR019070	GARDENING / Regional / Southwest (AZ, NM, OK, TX)
GAR019080	GARDENING / Regional / West (AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, UT, WY)

Two green arrows point to the first and second items in the list: "GARDENING / Flowers / Annuals" and "GARDENING / Flowers / Azaleas *see* Shrubs".

The browser's search bar at the bottom left contains the text "Find:" and "Done".



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## Step 3: SUB CATEGORIES

- GAR004050 Gardening/Flowers/Perennials – gives a much more targeted subject area.
- Enter this code in the 1st BISAC category line.
- Still using our gardening example – you can see there is a regional code.
- GAR019030 Gardening/Regional/Midwest.
- Enter this code in the 2nd BISAC Category line.
- Lastly, GAR006000 offers Gardening/Garden Design.
- Enter this code in the 3rd BISAC Category line.

# Step 3: CATALOG COPY SUBMISSION FORM


National Book Network: Catalog Copy Submission Form - Mozilla Firefox

http://www.nbnbooks.com/production/catalog\_copy/

Most Visited MailAdm NBNMailAdm Spam NBN Spam RoundCube Hotmail iGoogle NBN NBN Blog PubAlley iPage BookScan AWBC Amazon Intranet OnlineRPTs E Z Mailing List FTP Vendor Central

National Book Network: Catalog Copy...


- Comparison Titles
- NBN Logos
- Production Packet
- Sales Materials
- Sample Flyer
- Publicity Update Form
- Publisher Services
- Booksellers
- NBN Fusion
- Educators/Parents
- Sales Conference
- Trade Shows
- NBN International
- News Breaking Now
- Staff/Reps
- Employment Opportunities
- FAQs
- Contact Us

Max word count:	<input type="text"/>	Current word count:	<input type="text"/>
Marketing information:			
		Co-op available:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<input type="text"/>			
	<b>Pub month:</b>	<input type="text"/>	
	Category #1:	<input type="text"/>	
	Category #2:	<input type="text"/>	
	(Refer to: ww.bisg.org) <b>BISAC #1:</b>	<input type="text"/>	
	(Refer to: ww.bisg.org) BISAC #2:	<input type="text"/>	
	(Refer to: ww.bisg.org) BISAC #3:	<input type="text"/>	
	Page count:	<input type="text"/>	
	Trim size: (width x height):	<input type="text"/>	
	Carton qty:	<input type="text"/>	
	# B&W photos:	<input type="text"/>	
	# B&W illustrations:	<input type="text"/>	
	# Color photos:	<input type="text"/>	
	# Color illustrations:	<input type="text"/>	
	Other: (include type with amount)	<input type="text"/>	
	10-digit ISBN with dashes:	<input type="text"/>	
	13-digit ISBN:	<input type="text"/>	
	Price:	<input type="text"/>	
	Format:	<input type="text"/>	

If "other" include type in additional comments

Find:      Match case

Done



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# TIPS FOR SELECTING THE BEST BISAC CODES

- Think about your competition and identify the top three titles that compare to yours.
- Look up the competition on BookScan – Bookscan lists the BISAC of each title.
- Visit a bookstore and see where the competitive title is shelved.
- Ask your local bookseller.
- Ask your account manager for assistance.

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# HOW OFTEN IS THE BISAC CODE LIST UPDATED?

- The master list is revised annually.
- Change the names of some codes.
- Add new codes, especially in hot and growing subject areas.
- Retire old codes.
- The next update is scheduled for Nov. 2009.
- We will send a reminder email when the new lists are posted.

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## HOW DO THE BISAC CODES DIFFER FROM THE “CATEGORIES” NBN REQUESTS ON THE CATALOG COPY SUBMISSION FORM?

- The BISAC codes are mandatory for the sell in process.
- The shelving categories are extremely important at the bookstore level.
- The shelving category should be printed on the back of the book.
- In Cyberspace there are no store clerks, so BISAC codes guide people to your title.

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## HOW DO THE BISAC CODES DIFFER FROM THE “CATEGORIES” NBN REQUESTS ON THE CATALOG COPY SUBMISSION FORM?

- The NBN category list reflects the general shelving for 55 categories you'll find at most national accounts and independents.
  - They help the store clerk properly shelve new titles.
  - They help the store staff direct customers to general areas of interest.

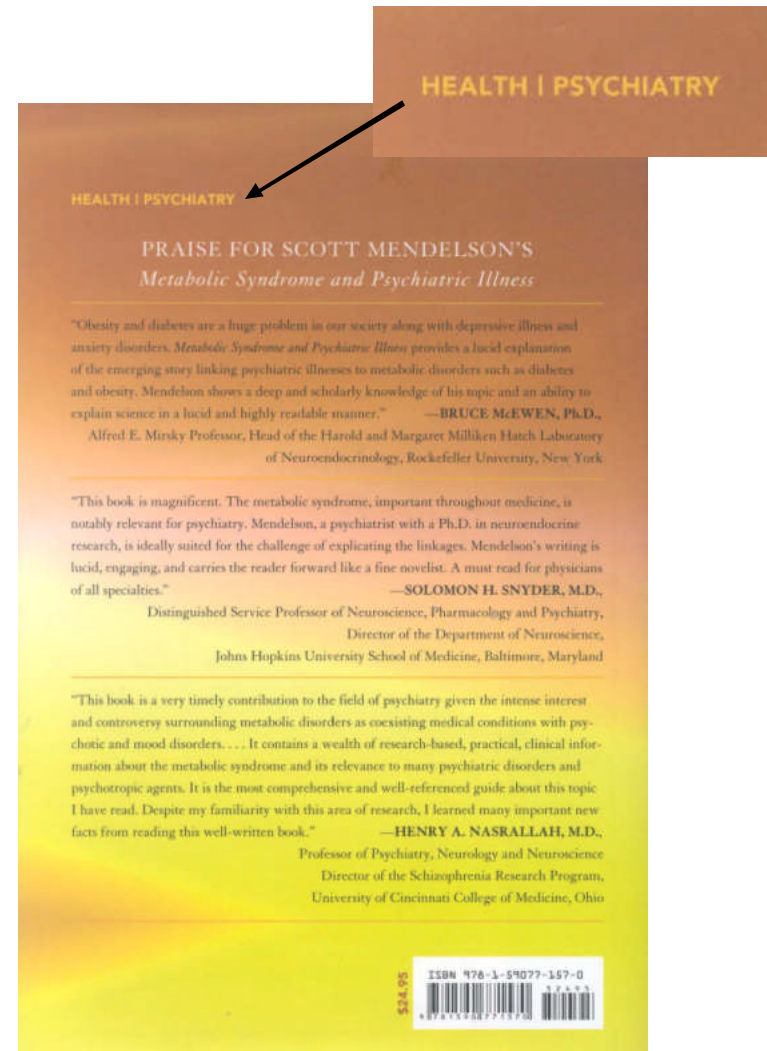
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# HOW DO I PICK THE RIGHT SHELVING CATEGORIES?

- You'll find the NBN Shelving Category list online at [www.nbnbooks.com/production/](http://www.nbnbooks.com/production/) (click on the “categories” bullet).
- From the 55 General Category headings, pick the one that most closely reflects the content of your book.
- Then choose one from the recommended sub-categories.
  - Always list the general category first, then the subcategory
  - Gardening/Perennials
  - Fiction/Suspense
- Please note, the sub-category list is not exhaustive and BISAC has a more extensive list.

# EXAMPLE: Beyond Alzheimer's - BISAC vs. Shelving

- **BISAC:** HEA039140  
Health & Fitness/  
Diseases/  
Alzheimer's &  
Dementia
- **Shelving Category:**  
Health/ Alzheimer's
- **On Book:**  
Health/Psychiatry



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# ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS?

- Consumers appreciate it when titles include “age ranges”
- Standard age ranges
  - Baby & Toddler (Ages 2 - 4)
  - Early Reader (Ages 4 - 8)
  - Middle Reader (Ages 8 - 12)
  - Teens (Ages 13 - 16)
  - All Ages (example, *Oh, The Places You'll Go*)

- 
- In this day and age of few knowledgeable floor clerks to help direct eager consumers, you can be the best advocate and marketer for your title by spending just a bit of time finding the best shelving categories and BISAC codes for your new books.

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## RECAP:

- You must supply at least one BISAC code.
- The code should include the major category and at least one sub-category.
- We recommend putting the category and sub-category on the back of the book.

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■ Q&A  
*Forthcoming*