

6. Making an Accession Register

When you have sorted through and familiarised yourself with existing stock, or if you are setting up a completely new library and have chosen and received a supply of new books, the next task is making an accession register.

What is an accession register?

An accession register is a record of items of stock in the library in the order in which the library receives them. If you are starting your accession register with a large shipment of books, enter them into the accession register as you unpack them. They do not have to be in any particular order. For example, you might unpack a book and enter it. Later on, in another box, you might find another copy of the same book, but in the meantime you have entered many other books. That is fine – the order in which the books are entered does not matter. Every item of stock should be given a unique number when it arrives at the library. This number must be written down both in the accession register and on the item of stock. It is essential that you give all books an accession number and enter them into the accession register.

Why have an accession register?

The accession register shows the librarian what stock is owned by the library. This is particularly important if the library has several books with the same title, such as with textbooks. Because every book is given a unique accession number, it will always be possible to identify a particular book. 'This means a borrower cannot say they have returned the book just because another book, with the same title, is on the shelf,' says Cynthia Stirrup, who worked in The Gambia. The accession register therefore makes stocktaking easier.

How do you make an accession register?

The detailed instructions below explain how to make and maintain an accession register.

right-hand side of the first page. It is best to write all accession numbers in the same place in every book. For some items, such as audio-visual stock, you may need to use a marker pen to write the accession number on the tape or reel.

- Take another library book. This will have accession number 2. Follow steps as above.
- Give each item in your library stock a different accession number. This is especially important if there are several copies of the same book, as is likely to be the case with textbooks.
- If you remove any stock from your library, remember to cross out the entry in the accession register.

All stock will have a title, but some will not have an author. If you are making an accession register entry for a book like this, just leave the author column blank.

Acc No	TITLE	AUTHOR	PUBLISHER
001	TIGER RISING	KATE DICAMILLO	CAMBRIDGE
002	RAIN GOD	IAN GORDON	MACMILLAN
003	ABACUS EVOLYE	RUTH MERTENS	MACMILLAN

Figure 6.2. Beginning an accession register (Malawi). Notice that this librarian is numbering the books 001, 002, etc. instead of 1, 2, etc. Either method is fine.

LIBRARY TIP

If readers are helping you make an accession register, you may need to help them identify the difference between a title and an author. At some libraries, the librarian will write a list of books, underlining the title and author in different

colours. You may feel that underlining the title and author's name in different colours seems to take a great deal of time, but it will ensure that the accession register is accurate, that readers begin to understand the different parts of the book, and that readers are involved in making the library right from the start.

Nameplates with return date labels

When all your books have their own accession number, you will need to glue the school or library nameplate (or stamp the school information) and glue a return date label on to the first page (or alternatively the back page) of the book. It is important that all books are seen to belong to the library. When you make nameplates, it is useful to include the library address. If you have a rubber stamp, you should also stamp the book in two places – once on the inside back cover of the book and once on a page in the middle of the book. This means that if the book is lost, it has a better chance of being returned to the library.

Which books need a return date label?

All books that the library is going to lend need a return date label. This tells the borrower when the book is due to be returned. Reference books, such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and atlases, are not usually lent by the library and therefore do not need a return date label. They do, however, need the stamp or a nameplate and address glued on to one of the first pages.

Before you give a book a return date label, you must decide what method of lending books you plan to have at your library. (The two methods are described in chapter 11.)

If you plan to lend books using the exercise book method (see chapter 11), all stock will need a place where you can stamp the date it should be returned. It is recommended that you do this by making a combined nameplate and return date label as described below, but you will not need to make your nameplate with a card pocket.

If you plan to lend books using the book ticket system (again, see chapter 11), you must make a joint nameplate and return date label with a pocket as described below.

How do you make a nameplate and return date label with a pocket?

Nameplates and return date labels with a pocket can be made by taking a half sheet of A4 paper and folding up approximately one-third, as shown in figure 6.3. Glue down the pocket edges and then glue the top edge of the return date label into the book. At the top of your return date label, write or stamp the library's name and address.

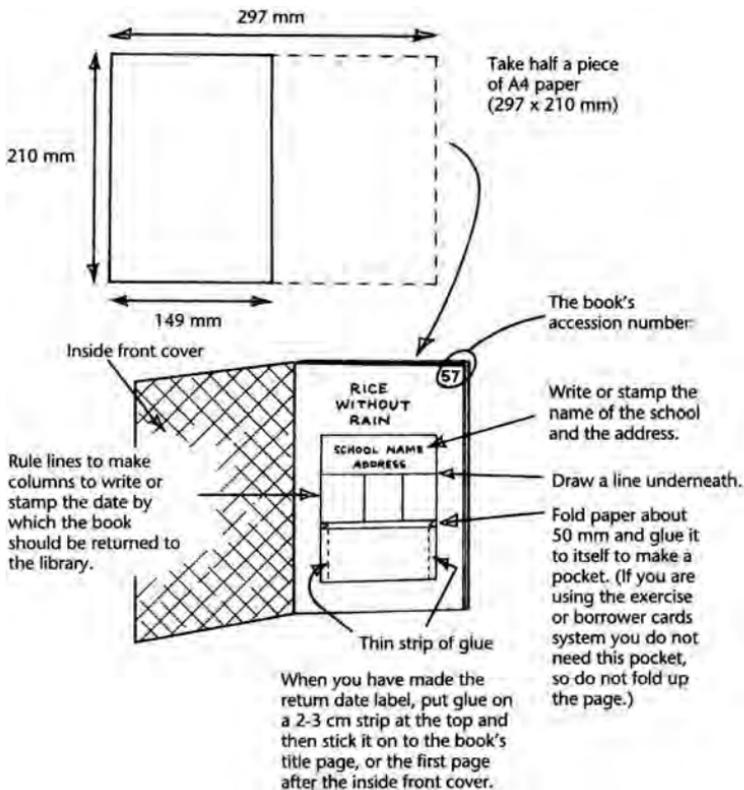


Figure 6.3. How to make a nameplate and return date label.

If you have access to a stencil, this might save you time, as Christine George, working in Sierra Leone, found: 'Return

date labels can also be made by typing a stencil, which makes about nine labels, and having them run off on duplicating paper.'

The next task is to separate your fiction books from the other books. The library's information books can then be divided into subjects. This task, known as classification, is explained in the next chapter.

LIBRARY TIP

It is important to process new books as soon as you can. If your library is sent a large number of books at the same time, it may be useful to keep two or three of them off the shelves in order to show the next group of library monitors, volunteers, or club members exactly how to add a book to the accession register and where to glue in the return date label.



Figure 6.4. The right book can capture a student's interest (Ghana).