

Interim Music Library Association Best Practices for Form of Musical Notation in Fields 348 \$c and 546 \$b

In the MARC updates for June 2021, a subfield for form of musical notation was added to field 348 and the description of field 546 was amended to the following:

Textual information on the language or notation system used to convey the content of the described materials. A description of the alphabet, script, or other symbol system (e.g., arabic alphabet, ASCII, bar code, logarithmic graphing) may also be included, **but for musical notation system terms, prefer field 348 (Notated Music Characteristics)**. Coded language information is contained in fields 008/35-37 (Language) and/or 041 (Language code).

In order to comply with this change in MARC, for current cataloging MLA recommends following the draft Best Practices for the element Expression: [form of musical notation](#) in official RDA, which do not conflict with original RDA.¹ This supersedes the Best Practices for original RDA (which cannot be updated as the original RDA Toolkit is frozen).

For field 546 \$b, continue to follow current conventions for capitalization and punctuation.

Summary Updated Best Practices

In MARC: Record as a structured description using field 348 subfield \$c. Do not add punctuation or capitalize terms unless capitalized in the chosen vocabulary encoding scheme. Record terms from different vocabulary encoding schemes in separate instances of field 348. Record multiple terms from the same vocabulary encoding scheme in separate instances of field 348 or in separate instances of subfield \$c within the same field 348, as preferred by local or consortial policy.

If required by local policy: Record as an unstructured description using field 546 subfield \$b in addition to field 348 \$c. If no appropriate controlled term is available: Record as an unstructured description using field 348 \$c and/or 546 \$b.

Prefer terms from the [RDA Form of Musical Notation](#) vocabulary when possible and indicate the source of using field 348 subfield \$2.² Generally do not record identifiers in field 348 subfield \$d.

¹ The language in the March 23, 2022 RDA Toolkit update and the examples in v0.91 of the MLA RDA Metadata Guidance differ slightly from what is presented here. They will be updated to match in the June 2022 Toolkit update.

² Be aware that the MARC source code for this vocabulary (`rdafmn`) is extremely similar to that for RDA Format of Notated Music (`rdafnm`), which used in field 348 \$a. Using a macro or text string to add these codes is recommended to avoid data entry errors.

Updated Examples

348 ## \$c tablature \$2 rdafmn

348 ## \$c staff notation \$c tablature \$2 rdafmn

546 ## \$b Staff notation; \$b Tablature.

Or

348 ## \$c staff notation \$2 rdafmn

348 ## \$c tablature \$2 rdafmn

546 ## \$b Staff notation; \$b Tablature.

Field 546 also recorded to support local discovery system needs. OCLC prefers that multiple controlled 348 terms be entered in separate fields.

348 ## \$c verbal instructions

Or

546 ## \$b Verbal instructions.

Controlled term not available.

348 ## \$c staff notation \$2 rdafmn

348 ## \$c chord symbols \$c guitar chord diagrams

Or

348 ## \$c staff notation \$2 rdafmn

546 ## \$b Chord symbols; \$b Guitar chord diagrams.

Resource is a "piano-vocal-guitar" score; mixed controlled and uncontrolled terms.

348 ## \$c chord symbols \$c guitar chord diagrams

546 ## \$a English, French, Italian and Azerbaijani words.

Or

546 ## \$a English, French, Italian and Azerbaijani words.

546 ## \$b Chord symbols; \$b Guitar chord diagrams.

Not

546 ## \$a English, French, Italian and Azerbaijani words; \$b Chord symbols; \$b Guitar chord diagrams.

Uncontrolled terms recorded alongside a language note.