

Hello, I'm John from VJ Books, and today we're talking books.

What we're going to address today is how to identify a first edition. When I first started collecting, what went on my shelves were primarily what I read. They were from many different sources. It took me years to purge the book club editions, later printings, and paperback out of my collection. As you grow when you're collecting, you'll want to specify what kind of books you collect, or what editions you collect. The first edition, first printing, is the most desirable book for the collector.

We're going to look at a few books now, and I'll help you identify first editions. Hope this is of help. What we're addressing today is the modern first edition. Antiquarian books is a whole other bag of worms, and that's going to take a different skill set than identifying first editions on modern books. What you want to find is the copyright page. It is on the back of the title page. What you see here is the title page, and on the reverse of that page you'll find the copyright page.

This is the copyright page. What you find on it is copyright information, the publisher, and information like that. Look down on the page, you'll find a number line. This number line, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2, indicates that this is a first printing of this book. If the number 1 is present in the number line, it usually, not always, means that that's a first printing.

Now, you have to be careful because some book clubs, like the Book Club of America, will print from the original plates from the publisher, and this page will appear. What will be missing is the price on the jacket. If you've got a jacket with a flyleaf and there's no price on it, even though it may have the number line correct, that's a book club edition, and to be avoided. Different publishers use different conventions. The number line may look different. It'll be located in different places on the page, as in this one from Dutton. This is a John Grisham book. You'll see the number line is from 10 to 1 descending, but the number 1 is clearly visible.

This Putnam book, by Clive Cussler, you'll note that the number line is in the middle of the page, again using a descending order, but the number 1, once again, is present. This Anne Hillerman book from Harper Collins has a number line, and you'll note it's a little bit different. There's numbers here, some letters, and then a descending number line. Again, you'll see the 1 in the number line, indicating that this is a first edition.

As you go through them, you'll see a lot of different variants. It gets easier. This particular book from a Random House imprint Knopf has no number line, but you'll note it says, "First United States edition." That's how this particular publisher identifies it. There is no number line. Similarly, this Knopf title by Anne Rice just says, "First edition." This is a Jonathan and Faye Kellerman book, publisher is Ballentine, and you'll note that there's a number line and the words first edition. Another variant, still identifying a first edition.

One thing to be aware of in some earlier editions by Harper Collins, you will see the words first edition appear, but the 1 is missing from the number line. If it's a 2, it's a second printing, even though it says, "First edition." It'll be a second printing. Always, as you look at the number line, the lowest number that you see in the line indicates the printing. Another Putnam title, you'll see in the middle of the page another number line. 1 is present. First edition.

It gets a little more difficult as you move across the pond. This is a UK edition, a Michael Joseph imprint of a Clive Cussler book. You'll note the numbers in the middle of the page, it is a 0, 0, 1. That indicates a

first edition. A 0, 0, 2 will be a second printing. This 2002 publication of John Sandford's *Mortal Prey* was done by Putnam. You'll notice there's no number line, the words first edition or printing, but let me assure you, this is a first printing. We still haven't been able to find out whether they did this intentionally or by mere accident, but I assure you, this is a first edition. Later printings have a number line. The 1 is not present.

You'll find guides out in the market to help you identify a first edition. I believe that this is the best. Bill McBride publishes it. It's a book for identifying first editions, a simple little paperback book, fits in your pocket or your purse. It is the best guide that I have found. Easy to read, easy to understand. You'll want to have this as you go out scouting for your collection. That's how you identify a first edition. Hopefully this has been helpful. Get the guide, it'll help you out. It'll get easier as you go along. This is John, from VJ books, and we're talking books.