

# Patent Classification and Search key

Japan Patent Office

- I. IPC
- II. FI
- III. F-term
- IV. Reference tool

## I. IPC

II. FI

III. F-term

IV. Reference tool

## A. History - 1/4

- In the past, patent documents were classified according to different classification systems originally developed in each individual country.
- In 1971, the Strasbourg Agreement Concerning the International Patent Classification was sealed, and it came into effect in 1975.
- The IPC had been revised almost every five years, up to the seventh version, to address technological innovations and increased documents.

## A. History - 2/4

The first edition of the Classification was in force from September 1, 1968 to June 30, 1974.

IPC ver. 2	July 1, 1974 to Dec. 31, 1979
IPC ver. 3	Jan. 1, 1980 to Dec. 31, 1984
IPC ver. 4	Jan. 1, 1985 to Dec. 31, 1989
IPC ver. 5	Jan. 1, 1990 to Dec. 31, 1994
IPC ver. 6	Jan. 1, 1995 to Dec. 31, 1999
IPC ver. 7	Jan, 1, 2000 to Dec. 31, 2005
IPC ver. 8 (IPC 2006.01 -)	Jan. 1, 2006 to the present

## A. History - 3/4

### IPC Reform (2006)

#### Advanced level

Large-scale patent  
offices

70,000 items

As needed

Main targets

No. of class. Items

Interval of revision

#### Core level

Small/middle-scale  
patent offices

17,000 items

Every 3 years

Example: A61K31/00 Preparation of drugs containing organic active components

31/01 ▪ hydrocarbon

31/015 ▪ ▪ cyclic

31/02 ▪ halogenated hydrocarbon

31/025 ▪ ▪ carbocyclic

31/03 ▪ ▪ ▪ aromatic

31/04 ▪ nitro compound

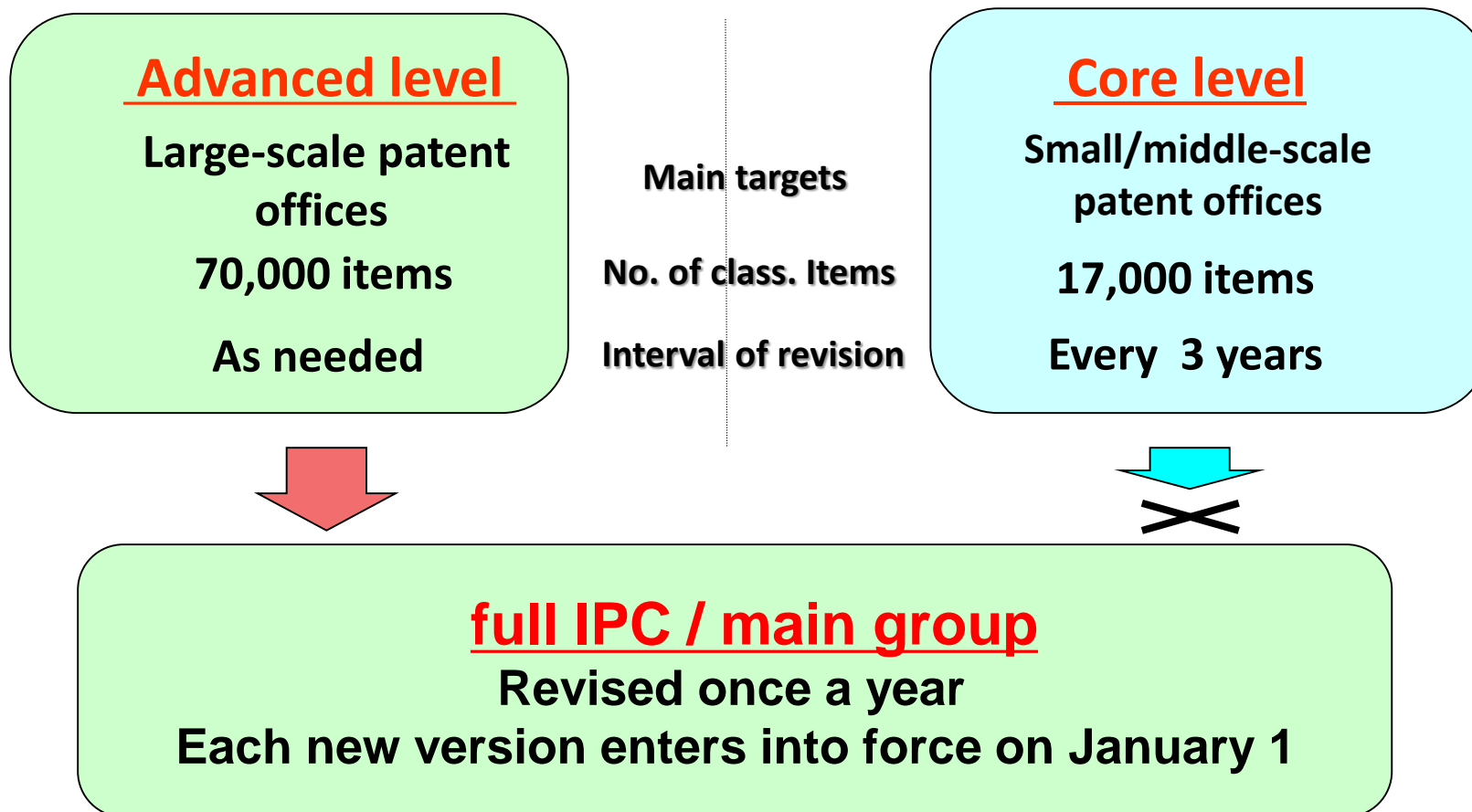
→ 31/01 ▪ hydrocarbon

→ 31/02 ▪ halogenated hydrocarbon

→ 31/04 ▪ nitro compound

## A. History - 4/4

### IPC Simplification (2011)



## B. Layout of classification symbols – 1/2

**A01G 3/02**

complete classification symbol; consists of different components

A ..... Section (A, B, ... H)

A01 ..... Class (any 2 digits)

A01G ..... Subclass (any letter)

A01G 3/02 ..... Group

Main group part

Subgroup part



## B. Layout of classification symbols – 2/2

Two types of groups:      Main groups  
                                 Subgroups of main groups

A01G 3/00      ..... Main group      xxx/00

A01G 3/02      ..... Subgroup      xxx/yy    (yy ≠ 00)  
   xxx/yyyyyy

## C. Hierarchical structure – 1/3

section	subsections
<b>A: HUMAN NECESSITIES</b>	<b>AGRICULTURE; FOODSTUFFS/TOBACCO; PERSONAL OR DOMESTIC ARTICLES; HEALTH/LIFE-SAVING/AMUSEMENT</b>
<b>B: PERFORMING OPERATIONS; TRANSPORTING</b>	<b>SEPARATING/MIXING; SHAPING; PRINTING; TRANSPORTING; MICRO-STRUCTURAL TECHNOLOGY/NANO-TECHNOLOGY</b>
<b>C: CHEMISTRY; METALLURGY</b>	<b>CHEMISTRY; METALLURGY; COMBINATORIAL TECHNOLOGY</b>
<b>D: TEXTILES; PAPER</b>	<b>TEXTILES OR FLEXIBLE MATERIALS NOT OTHERWISE PROVIDED FOR; PAPER</b>
<b>E: FIXED CONSTRUCTIONS</b>	<b>BUILDING; EARTH OR ROCK DRILLING/MINING</b>
<b>F: MECHANICAL ENGINEERING; LIGHTING; HEATING; WEAPONS; BLASTING</b>	<b>ENGINES OR PUMPS; ENGINEERING IN GENERAL; LIGHTING/HEATING; WEAPONS/BLASTING</b>
<b>G: PHYSICS</b>	<b>INSTRUMENTS; NUCLEONICS</b>
<b>H: ELECTRICITY</b>	

## C. Hierarchical structure – 2/3

■ section

A: HUMAN NECESSITIES

■ subsection:

AGRICULTURE

■ class:

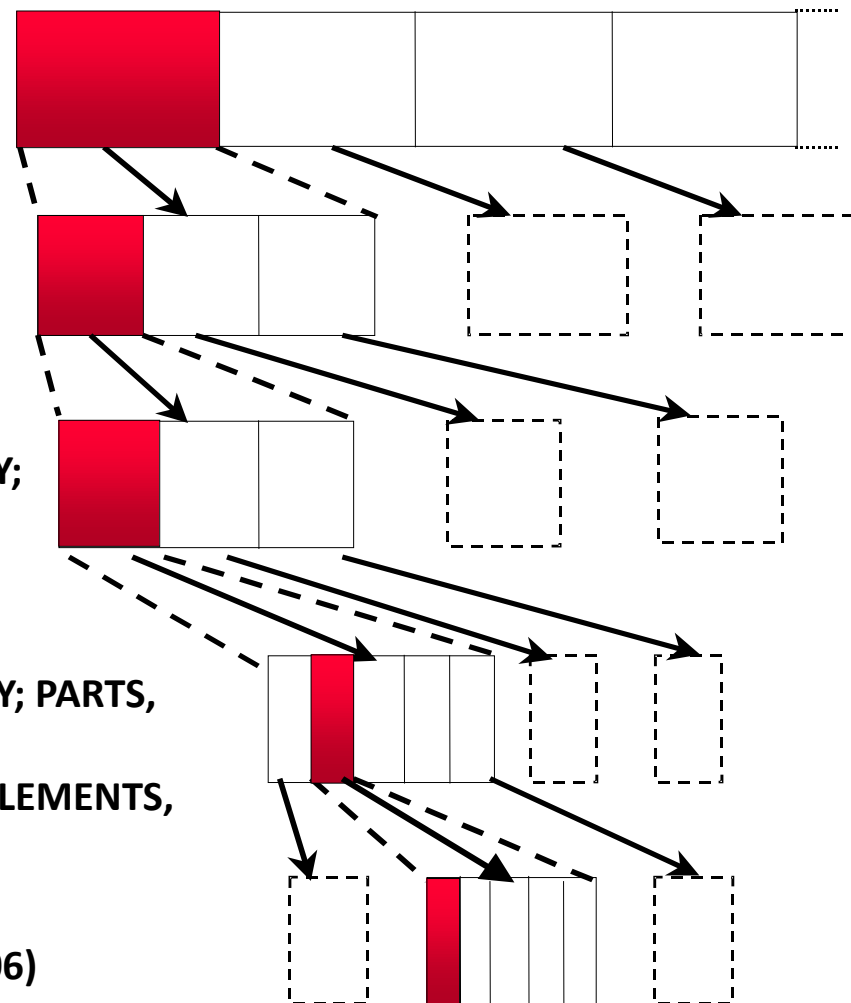
A01: AGRICULTURE; FORESTRY; ANIMAL HUSBANDRY;  
HUNTING; TRAPPING; FISHING

■ subclass:

A01B: SOIL WORKING IN AGRICULTURE OR FORESTRY; PARTS,  
DETAILS, OR  
ACCESSORIES OF AGRICULTURAL MACHINES OR IMPLEMENTS,  
IN GENERAL

■ main group:

1/00: Hand tools (edge trimmers for lawns A01G 3/06)



## C. Hierarchical structure – 3/3

### (Main group)

**A01B 1/00** Hand tools (edge trimmers for lawns A01G 3/06)

### (Subgroups)

**1/02** ▪ Spades; Shovels

**1/04** ▪ ▪ with teeth

**1/06** ▪ Hoes; Hand cultivators

**1/08** ▪ ▪ with a single blade

**1/10** ▪ ▪ with two or more blades

**1/12** ▪ ▪ with blades provided with teeth

**1/14** ▪ ▪ with teeth only

**1/16** ▪ Tools for uprooting weeds

**1/18** ▪ ▪ Tong-like tools

**1/20** ▪ .....

**1/22** ▪ .....

: .....

### (Main group)

**1/00**

### (Subgroups)

**1/02**

**1/04**

**1/06**

**1/08**

**1/10**

**1/12**

**1/14**

**1/16**

**1/18**

**1/20**

**1/22**