

How to Conduct Archival Research



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:



Describe how to locate archives



Learn how to identify archives relevant to your research



Discover how to gain access to archival materials

STEP ONE: LOCATE THE ARCHIVES

Search engines like Google, WorldCat, or other searches through your library's website.

Look through bibliographies in scholarship based on your topic and find where their information came from.

Talk to experts in your topic and discover where they researched.

Consult a reference librarian or archivist.

Visit one of the many sites containing archives and information, such as: [ArchiveFinder](#), [ArchiveGrid](#), the [Library of Congress](#), or the [National Archives and Records Administration](#) (plus many more)



STEP TWO: NARROW DOWN YOUR SEARCH AND CHOOSE THE ARCHIVE WHERE YOU WANT TO CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH

Check the websites of the archives
to discover:

Catalogs and databases of the materials held in the archives

Finding aids (an inventory of the contents of a collection)

Digital Collections

Speak to Archivists and discuss your topic - they may give you information that you could not glean from the website.



STEP THREE: ACCESS MATERIALS REMOTELY (if unable to visit in person)

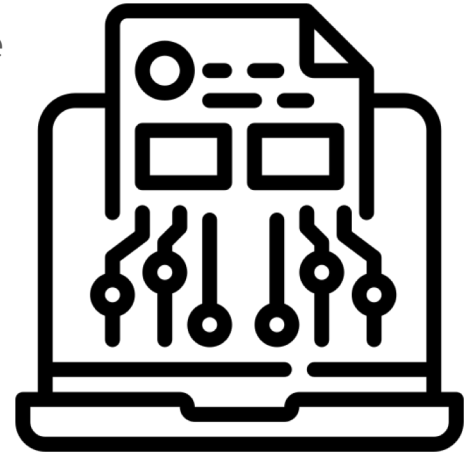
Interlibrary loan : Archival material is sent to a library close to you (rare)

Find out if a **local library has the same or similar materials** if you are unable to visit the archive you chose in person - use WorldCat or talk to a reference librarian or archivist.

Hire a research assistant in the area of the archive.

Ask an archivist to answer your research questions.

Use the **digital collection** : many archives have digitized material that may be useful to your research.



STEP FOUR: ACCESS MATERIALS IN PERSON

Be Prepared to:

Register with proper ID

Remove any bulky coats, bags

Have no food, drink, or gum

Use pencil only - in case any marks get on the archival material

Review the Archives guidelines on any other questions you might have.



TEST WHAT YOU LEARNED: [TAKE THE QUIZ!](#)

REFERENCE

<https://www2.archivists.org/usingarchives>