

First things first:

Before visiting an archive, it's important to know what to expect. While specific rules and policies may vary depending on the archive you're visiting, here are some general guidelines to keep in mind:

- **Research in advance:** Before visiting, research the archive's hours, location, and any specific requirements or restrictions they may have, such as pre-registration or limited access to certain collections.
- **No food or drinks:** Most archives do not allow food or drinks inside the reading room or research area. Finish any snacks or beverages before entering.
- **Pencil only:** To protect the collections, most archives only allow the use of pencils for note-taking.
- **Pens and markers are usually prohibited.**
- **Bags and coats:** You may be asked to store your bags, coats, or other personal items in a designated area before entering the reading room. Check in advance to see if the archive provides lockers or storage options.
- **Handling materials:** When handling archival materials, follow the specific guidelines provided by the archive staff. This may include wearing gloves, using book supports, or not opening fragile items.
- **Respect the materials:** Remember that the archival materials you are researching are often unique and irreplaceable. Handle them with care and respect and follow any instructions provided by the archive staff for handling or copying materials.
- **To begin your research, consult secondary sources to contextualise the topic or event you're researching.** Consult existing publications' bibliographies to locate previously used sources, including reference codes. Prepare as much as possible before going to the archives or using their online collections.