



HARRY RANSOM
CENTER

The University of Texas at Austin

Reading and Viewing Room (RVR) Orientation

After you have checked in at Reception, Reference staff are available to help you understand how to use the Reading and Viewing Room (RVR). Although the required Orientation Video provides a brief introduction, it may not reflect all current policies and handling procedures. Please consult RVR staff if you have questions.

NOTE: Current practice is to page in advance of a visit. There is no onsite paging from noon to 2pm, or after 3:30pm.

- **Function of the blue slip:** The blue slip is your passport to go in and out of the RVR.
 1. When you enter the RVR, and before you find a table, turn the blue slip in at the Circulation desk where you confirm requests for the day.
 2. You may take breaks to the restroom or your locker without the slip, but be sure to let the Reception Desk know. Show them anything you bring out of or intend to take back into the RVR.
 3. Leaving the RVR for a break outside, for lunch, or for the entire day? Retrieve your blue slip from the Circulation desk and turn it in at the Reception Desk before you go to your locker and before you exit the reception area.

- **Manuscript and Book Patrons:**
 1. Turn the blue slip in at the Circulation Desk.
 2. Consult with the Circulation assistant to manage requests and hold materials.
 3. For multiple requests, you may prioritize materials in the order you wish to view them, or request materials that have not yet been paged.

- **Visual Materials Patrons:**
 1. Turn the blue slip in at the Visual Materials Desk.
 2. If you are using visual materials from archival collections, you may be asked to work at these tables.
 3. Staff will alert patrons to protocols for when to wear gloves, and how to handle photographs, oversize art, etc.

- **Handling materials at tables:**
 1. Requested materials will be paged to your table or to the hold shelving in the RVR. Staff will direct you to the hold shelving or bring them to your table.

2. You are allowed one box or one folder and seven books at one time at your table.
3. Place the box in the indicated space marked on the table.
4. Remove **only one folder from the box at a time**, marking its place with an out card. Out cards are available at the Circulation desk.
5. Place books and bound materials in appropriate sized cradles. If you are unsure of the correct size, ask RVR staff for assistance.
6. Turn all pages gently, do not remove pages from folders, and keep the folder contents in the order in which they arrived. If you suspect something is out of order, please bring it to the attention of the Reference Desk so that an archivist can assess the situation.
7. Do not shuffle papers, spread them out, or bang them on the table to straighten the edges. If you notice any issues or problems with the materials you are using, please alert reference staff.
8. Return finished materials to the Circulation or Reference desk or to the hold shelf for further research.

- **Reference Desk: Orientation to Resources and Policies**

1. Reference staff are available to orient you to RVR policies, and to resources for navigating, exploring, and requesting collection materials.
2. Reference staff can provide more information if you inform them of the nature of your research. Questions you may be asked include: How long are you visiting? What is your research topic? Have you explored our online resources?
3. Computers are available for patrons, as is wireless access. These provide access to useful resources, including some not accessible offsite. Patrons can also use these to request materials using their Research Account.
4. Reference staff are available to orient you to the onsite Card Catalog, New Acquisitions binder, Sound Recordings, Vertical File, Bookdealers Catalog databases, and "Other Digital Images," as well as other onsite resources.
5. NOTE that the Moving Images Database provides descriptive information for previously digitized recordings, but there is limited access to the preservation copies unless converted from FLASH. See staff for more details.
6. Pencils, yellow paper, and the photoduplication policy and forms are available at the Reference desk.
7. Book snakes and cradles should be used with books or other bound materials. Staff can advise on best options and offer handling assistance at any time.
8. If requesting manuscripts, pull only one folder at a time from its box and place it on the table or a large, flat cradle. Keep all pages in order, do not remove mylar without consulting staff, and return all folders in order to the box.
9. Return completed boxes, folders, and bound materials to Circulation when completed. Advise upon return if materials are needed for a forthcoming photoduplication order.
10. Return boxes, folders, and bound materials for future use to the hold shelves.

- **Making new requests in the RVR**

1. Login to your Research Account. Forgot your login details? Staff at the Reference Desk can reset your password and look up your username.
2. Although requests can be entered manually in your research account, you may find it easier to request materials by using the checkboxes that appear next to Box, Folder, and related descriptions in finding aids and many databases. Unless requesting just a single folder, request at the Box or Container level. Staff can assist new patrons with this.
3. Be sure to alert the Circulation Staff member when you've submitted new requests, as staff will not otherwise know of your need.