

How to Use a Finding Aid

- What is a **finding aid**?
 - A **finding aid** is a written guide used in archives to describe the contents of an archival collection. It is called a finding aid because it *aids* researchers and archivists in *finding* materials within a collection.

- What **elements** make up a finding aid?
 - All finding aids include several **elements** that **describe** the collection including:
 - A unique combination of letters and/or numbers used to identify the collection known as a **unique identifier**
 - A title related to the creator(s) of the collection
 - A written description of the materials that make up the collection known as a **scope and content note**
 - The **creator(s)** of the collection
 - The **date(s)** of when the collection was created
 - The amount of space that the collections takes up is known as the **physical extent**
 - The **name** and **location** of the archive or library where the collection is held
 - The **language** which the materials are in
 - Rules known as **conditions governing access** which determine who can access the collection
 - Some finding aids may also contain:
 - A written description containing information about the creator of the collection known as a **biographical history or note**

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