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