



Many wartime artefacts are made from paper, which can include letters, documents, maps, books, albums and memorabilia.

The strength and quality of paper can vary greatly depending on how old it is, what it was made from, and how it has been stored and handled. Older papers made from cotton and linen can be quite strong, while modern papers made from woodpulp can contain impurities that weaken and cause damage to the paper.

## Handling

- Excessive handling, especially folding and unfolding paper is a major cause of damage.
- Avoid bending or folding pages within your paper as this can damage the paper fibres and create a weakness along the line.
- Fragile items can be supported on another sheet of paper or thin card to allow them to be handled without causing damage.
- Oils from skin can degrade paper - wash and dry your hands before handling paper artefacts.
- Do not force creased or folded paper items to sit flat.

## Storage

- Archival storage can help to preserve paper by giving it physical support and protecting it from light, pests, abrasion and small knocks. They also minimise changes in temperature and humidity that can be detrimental to some paper-based material.
- Store paper out of direct sunlight, away from pest and damp areas.
- Documents, artwork and pamphlets can be placed in archival plastic sleeves and stored in albums or binders, and books can be boxed.
- Previously folded documents can be stored open to reduce handling and enable easy access to the text.
- Artwork can be stored mounted in window mounts or framed and displayed using archival quality materials. See our fact sheet on the '*Benefits of Mounting and Framing Artworks*' for more information.

- Very large items can be rolled around a cardboard tube with a wide diameter. Archival quality tubes are available from conservation suppliers or a normal tube can be first wrapped layers of acid-free paper.
- Laminating or mounting to a rigid board is not recommended for paper since these processes are difficult to reverse in the future.

## Storage Material

- Paper items should be stored in archival quality materials which will not emit acidic or otherwise damaging vapours. In most cases a buffering agent is recommended to ensure a slightly alkaline pH.
- Cotton-based boards are preferable to woodpulp, but highly purified woodpulp is better than poorer quality materials.
- Safe plastics include polyester, polypropylene, and polyethylene. Archival quality plastics storage options are available from conservation suppliers. Some less expensive products may be labeled 'photo-safe' or 'copy-safe' which are usually reliable.
- Food storage bags made of polyester, polyethylene or polypropylene may be suitable alternatives if you have trouble obtaining archival sleeves.

## Materials to be Avoided

- Poly vinyl chloride (PVC) plastics emit products damaging to many heritage materials including paper.
- Poor quality paper and boards emit acidic

vapours which can degrade paper in when close contact or kept in a sealed environment.

- Rubber bands and metal clasps such as staples or 'bulldog' clips can cause physical damage to the paper as they degrade or rust over time.
- Coloured storage material may stain paper

particularly in a damp environment or if they become wet.

- When labelling storage material, use pencil or permanent pigment-based ink to prevent bleeding or transference.

The greatest risks to paper are excessive handling, exposure to light, humidity and pest, or contamination from poor-quality storage material. Good quality storage and display material are not expensive and can significantly reduce these risks.

## More information

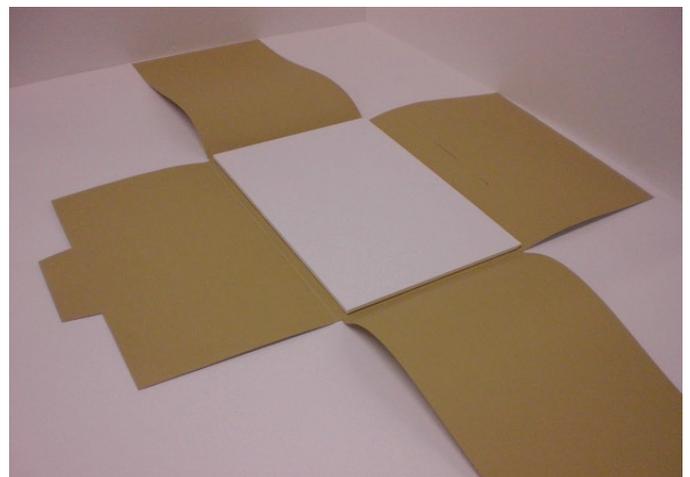
For more information on the care of papers and documents, please see the following resources:

CCI Notes: <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1439925167385>

reCollections: <https://aiccm.org.au/conservation/collection-care>



*Handling a paper item with support*



*Open archival four-flap folder*



*Closed archival four-flap folder*