



**WHIPPLE  
LIBRARY**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**  
Department of History and  
Philosophy of Science

# **Guidelines for handling fragile printed books**



In keeping with the spirit of the original Whipple bequest, we are glad for our printed rare books and special collections to be used by students and researchers at all levels.

Here are some basic guidelines to follow when handling material from our special collections to ensure it is kept in the best condition possible for others to continue to enjoy and benefit from long into the future.

*Please ask a member of Library staff if you have any questions.*

### **Before you start:**

- Always use clean and dry hands, free of hand cream and other cosmetics.  
Hand washing facilities are available in several places in the Department; please ask a member of staff if you need directions.
- Remove any sharp jewellery or loose clothing likely to get in the way.  
(e.g. loose scarves, rings with open stone settings, loose bracelets/bangles, long heavy pendants, etc.)
- Leave any large bags in a locker or at the staff desk, and only bring in with you what you need.  
Clear plastic bags are available from the staff desk if you need one.

#### ***Will I need to wear gloves?***

No, we don't ask readers to wear gloves when handling books printed on paper. You are less likely to tear pages when handling them carefully with bare hands than when wearing gloves.

### **Setting up:**

The rectangular table on Level 1 is the designated space for reading special collection material at the Whipple. All items fetched from the Store material must be read here unless the Librarian permits otherwise. When the book you've ordered is ready you will either be able to collect it from the staff desk, or a member of staff will bring it to you on Level 1.

**Bottled water may not be used at the rare book table.**

### **Book supports:**

You will be issued with appropriate book supports and weights to help protect the book while it's in use. Please use these as directed, and ask for more supports if you need them.

**Foam wedges**—these support books at a comfortable reading angle.

- Use the smaller wedges to keep the book open at a suitable v-shaped angle.
- Ensure the book's spine is well supported. The long thin foam strips help to support flat backed spines, but round-backed spines need space to open freely.

**Never try to force a book open flat!**

*(Please consult the Librarian if you need to inspect the sewing especially closely.)*

**Book weights/Snakes**—these help to keep pages open without you having to use your fingers.

**Never leave a rare book unattended!**

If you need a break, please return the books to a member of staff for safekeeping while you're away from the desk.

***Taking notes:***

**Always use a pencil or laptop to make notes.**

- Ink pens, biros, etc. should not be used anywhere on the table when rare books are in use.
- If using a laptop with a cable, please ensure the cable and transformer are kept neatly away from the books.
- Never lean on the cover or open pages of a rare book when making notes, and do not attempt to trace direct from the volume.
- Please ask a member of staff for an acid-free bookmark if you need to note pages to return to later. Pages must not be folded or marked in any way.

***Uncut pages:***

Please inform the Librarian if you encounter uncut pages in a volume you're consulting. Please do not attempt to cut the pages yourself.

***Photography:***

You are welcome to take pictures from most special collections material in the Whipple using a small digital camera **for personal research purposes only**. Please check with a member of staff beforehand that the material you are consulting is suitable. If so, you will be asked to fill in a short form for our records. Licences for using images from the Whipple special collections for publication (including on the Web) are negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Please speak to the Librarian if you need to do this.

## In brief

### YES to:



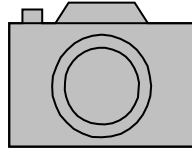
Clean hands, free of hand cream & cosmetics



Pencils & laptops for note-taking



Using book supports and snakes provided



Photography for personal research purposes

### NO to:



Bottled water



Ink of any kind



Leaving books unattended