

Archives are Important!

This learning activity introduces students to archives and what items from the past can teach us. In the classroom, real materials would be used to show how people communicated through paper before cell phones and computers. For at home study, copies of original documents have been supplied.

Samples of materials commonly found in Saanich Archives are provided, including newspapers, letters, receipts, and photographs. Students are encouraged to look, touch, and make observations.

Materials for activity

- Photographs
- Correspondence
- Receipts
- Miscellaneous documents
- Newspapers

Instructions

- This activity can be done by scrolling through the photos on the computer or by printing and cutting out the documents
- Ask students to study the documents and make observations. Zoom in (or use a magnifying glass if you have one) to get a closer look at the handwriting. Is there fine print in the margins or writing on the photographs?
 - Note: In the classroom, each student would be given a pair of white cotton gloves and it would be explained that original photos must always be handled with gloves to prevent damage from fingerprints. At home, you can remind students that were these original documents, they would be asked to handle items with care and emphasize they are fragile because they are old.

Ideas for Discussion

- What is this – can you tell us something about it?
- How old do you think it is, and why?
- Who might have owned this (newspaper, correspondence, receipt, or portrait)
- Who is the creator and who was the intended audience? (Does the intended audience change how the document should be interpreted?)
- How different is it from a (newspaper, correspondence, receipt, or portrait) made today? Observe and discuss something unique about subject or content
- Why do you think it was saved? Why do you think it should continue to be saved by the Archives?