Correct handling of special collections materials will aid in their preservation.

Plan Ahead

1. When consulting outsize material make sure you have a large, clean, level area to consult the material.

2. Have weights ready to hold down the material (these are available from staff).

3. Always make sure you have clean, dry hands before handling any material. You may be asked to wear gloves when handling some material, for example if the item you are looking at was produced using a photographic process.

Moving Material

4. When moving material plan your route, make sure that you have plenty of room and that the item is well supported. Staff are on hand to assist.

Consulting Material

5. Rolled or folded material should be carefully opened out. Use glass or leather weights to hold them open if necessary. Take extra care with any damaged areas. Place weights so that tears do not worsen.

6. If you encounter resistance when unrolling or unfolding an item do not force it as this may cause damage.

7. When you have finished consulting the item work in reverse to refold/reroll the item in the same way. Resist the temptation to knock the end of a rolled item to make the end flat, re-roll it instead.
8. Particularly large or fragile items may require more than one person to open them safely. Staff are on hand to assist.

9. Do not lean or place anything on the item.

10. Use the acid free paper slips provided to mark your place or follow any text. Alternatively large sheets of polyester (Melinex) are available from the reading room, these can be placed over the item.

11. If you find anything that causes you concern, or you inadvertently damage an item, please inform staff so that the problem can be rectified or the item scheduled for repair.