Special Collections Research, Step-by-Step

1. **Find items on your topic in MERLIN (or ask a librarian for help).**
   You can limit your MERLIN search to Special Collections materials, if you’d like. See our search guide at [http://libraryguides.missouri.edu/specollsearch](http://libraryguides.missouri.edu/specollsearch). Or email us at SpecialCollections@missouri.edu.

2. **Come to the Special Collections reading room.**
   The reading room is located in room 401, fourth floor west of Ellis Library. If you take the elevator, go to 3 (not 3R), turn left, and take the stairs or lift up to the reading room.
   
   Hours are *9am – 5pm, Monday-Friday.*

3. **Stow your stuff.**
   For security reasons, everyone must put backpacks, bags, coats, jackets, and other belongings on the shelves to the left of the reading room door. Please silence your cell phones, and leave your beverages and food in the lockers outside the room.
   
   You can have a pencil, notebook paper, and/or a laptop computer with you at the reading tables.

4. **Fill out a short form.**
   Librarians will ask you to fill out a short form (called a *call slip*) for each book or item you want to see. You’ll need to provide your name, address, telephone number, and a photo ID. It’s helpful if you also have the call number or title of the item you wish to see, but librarians can help you look it up.

5. **Special Collections staff will get your books.**
   Special Collections has non-browsing stacks, which means that staff members will bring books to the reading room for your use. This process usually takes 5 minutes or less. You can get settled at one of the reading room tables while you wait.

6. **Research to your heart’s content.**
   You can read the books at the reading room tables. Handle books with great care:
   
   - Leave any marks in the books alone (and don’t make any new ones).
   - No tracings or rubbings may be made without specific written permission.
   - Leave books on the table while reading them. Use the cradles supplied.
   - Don’t put anything on top of the materials or lean on them.
   - Special Collections staff may request readers to wear cotton gloves.
   - Readers must return materials to the desk before leaving the room.

   Photocopies can be made by staff, if the book’s condition permits. Readers can take photos *without flash.*

   The vast majority of books cannot be checked out, but they can be put on hold in the reading room.