

*Dear Students*

Do you like to solve mysteries and finding answers to intriguing questions? Or would you like to be a custodian of something precious and historic? Then a career in keeping records may be just the thing for you! Let's learn more on how to become an Archivist.

*- Martina*

## ARCHIVIST

An archivist appraises records and documents to determine their importance or potential value to the organization for which he or she works. He or she then preserves and catalogs these materials so that people can access them in the future. They are also known as manuscript librarians. They are responsible for the care and preservation of valuable materials including documents, maps, photographs, microfilm, films, videotapes, and sound recordings.

## WHY IS AN ARCHIVIST SO IMPORTANT?

Since many of the materials in an archivist's care are irreplaceable, proper preservation of them is probably the most important part of the job. Archivists are required to keep abreast of the latest techniques for filing, indexing and storing materials so that they are easily accessible to researchers and conserved for future generations. Record management, control of material kept, and regular evaluation of the material to determine whether it is of temporary or permanent significance is also part of archival work.

## ASPECT OF THE JOB INVOLVES

Archivists study records and documents that are no longer regularly used and provide advice on which records have archival value. They sometimes make decisions about which materials are to be kept and which are to be destroyed. They are involved with the storage and repair of archive materials.

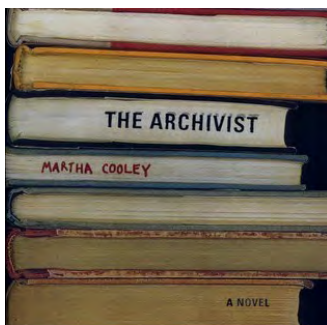
Some archivists develop new information management systems to control and access archives. They advise on and provide a suitable environment and storage for materials.

They help people find information and guide them to areas that help their research, and answer written and telephone enquiries. They might organise displays, guide tours around archival displays or exhibitions and be involved in public speaking engagements in the community.

Another aspect of the job involves the publication or dissemination of information to scholars and other potential researchers in order to familiarise them with the archives in the archivist's custody.

### Inside this issue:

1. Why is an Archivist so Important?
1. Aspects of the Job
2. Skills and competencies
3. Requirements
4. Interesting facts



## ARCHIVIST SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Archivists should know about different record-keeping methods, information systems, and methods of organising, storing and finding information in archives. They need to keep up to date with information on archives and records management. It is important that they know about different kinds of databases and how to use the Internet.

They need to know the historical value and the potential research value of materials to be archived. They may need knowledge of the country's history and the cultures of various population groups and possibly government departments.

Archivists use computers, filing systems, documents and materials, microfilm scanners, videos, film equipment and special document storage cabinets or shelves.

## PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Keen interest in history and research
- Sound analytical and research skills
- Ability to organise large amounts of information
- Good communication and people skills
- Problem-solving skills and organisational /administrative ability
- An eye for detail
- Well - organised and methodical worker
- Ability to keep information private
- Ability to work well under pressure
- Ability to read other languages is useful.



## REQUIREMENTS

### Secondary Education

Possession of at least a **HIGCSE/NSSCH** Grade 12, or equivalent qualification, with matriculation exemption is required to be admitted to South African universities, and a HIGCSE/NSSCH or outstanding **IGCSE/NSSCO** Grade 12, or equivalent qualification, to be enrolled by a South African technikon. **UNAM** requires a HIGCSE/NSSCH/IGCSE/NSSCO Grade 12, or equivalent qualification, with passes in five subjects and a minimum of 25 points on the UNAM point evaluation scale.

### Recommended subjects

History and Languages (South Africa)

### Tertiary Education

A **B.A.** degree with one of the following subjects: History, Political Science, Public Administration, Languages and Cultural History can be studied at UNAM as well as South African universities. The **B. Degree** in Library Science and Records Management can also be completed at UNAM. The National Certificate: Archival Studies and National Higher Certificate: Archival Studies are offered at the Cape Peninsula Univ. of Technology (CPUT) South Africa. Students can also complete a **N. Dip.** in any field at any technikon in South Africa. This is a prerequisite for the **B. Tech.** in Archival Studies offered by CPUT. An archivist can specialise in various directions such as records management, audio-visual archives, preservation and restoration .

### Personality

The prospective archivist must have a keen interest in history, political science, and public administration, and good administration skills. The individual must also have an inquiring mind, be patient and versatile, and must be service-oriented.

### Work Opportunities

Archivists can be employed by the National Archives of Namibia, institutions of higher learning or at private institutions



## [Archivist interesting facts](#)

### **What's up with the white gloves?**

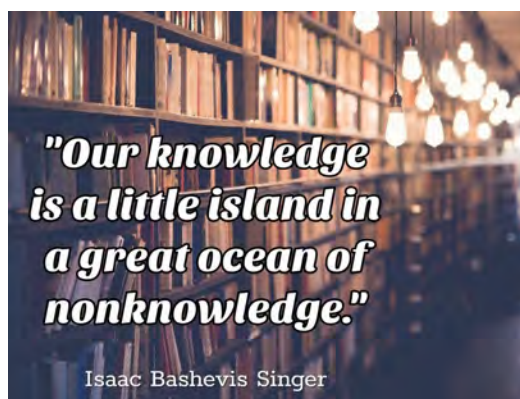
Okay, first, white gloves are SUPER controversial in the archival world. Seriously, if you want to get a room full of archivists riled up (and who wouldn't?) ask them their opinion on white gloves. To answer the question, you first have to know the difference between an archives and a library (if getting a room full of archivists riled up is not enough and you want to actually drive them into an old-fashioned lather, say that archives are the same as libraries).



Most libraries deal with books, which come in multiple copies. If you drop your library book into the bath tub and bring it back all puffy, the librarian is going to look at you sternly over her pince-nez, but she will not accuse you of destroying the building blocks of history, or tampering with one of the foundational safeguards of democracy.

Archives, by their very nature, contain unique items. As such, one of an archivist's key duties is to safeguard and preserve them. That means mitigating the disaster caused by the great grubby unwashed pawing through lovely, pristine records. Which brings us to the gloves. Your hands are revolting ... Just ask a clean person. When your disgusting grunge rubs off on the document you're examining, not only does it soil the item, it can actually damage it. Maybe not immediately, but multiple handlings over decades will deteriorate the record to the point that it is no longer readable.

The tricky thing with gloves, though, is that slipping your hands into those cotton bad boys makes you much clumsier. Without the tactile feedback you get through actually touching a fragile document, you can end up being a little mini-paper shredder.



References : <https://www.thebalance.com> ; <http://www.thehairpin.com> ; [gostudy.net](http://gostudy.net) ;  
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