

## SCIE258 HW4a: Description of potential artifacts

### Background

Recall that the final goal of HW4 is a research paper based on a document or other artifact that is relevant to the course and housed in the Royal Society, the Wellcome Collection, or possibly some other London museum or archive. Most likely, you will be working with a document of some kind, but we use the word “artifact” from now on, to cover the possibility that you are working with some other kind of item.

### Main task for HW4a

In this part of the assignment, HW4a, you must select *three* suitable artifacts via online searches and submit a brief description of each. At least one of your artifacts must be in the Royal Society archive, and at least one of them must be in the Wellcome Collection. The remaining artifact could be from either of those collections; alternatively, if you have a particular interest in some other item, the remaining artifact could be at some other London museum or archive. For each artifact, provide:

- a) All relevant archival details, such as: which archive it is in, any reference number, title, date and official description provided by the archive, the length or size, and (if appropriate) which language it's in. It is fine to copy and paste a verbatim description from the archive catalog.
- b) A short paragraph (1-3 sentences) describing why this artifact is of interest to you. If you have chosen an artifact that is not in the Royal Society or Wellcome Collection, please give some additional justification and explanation of your preference.

Rank your artifacts according to preference, listing the one you are most interested in first. If you have a strong preference, state this clearly at the top of your assignment and give an explanation. The instructor will assign one of your choices to you based on a variety of factors such as relevance to the course, suitability for a research paper, relevance to your major, and the availability of reading tickets for the Royal Society and the Wellcome Collection.

When choosing artifact, try to avoid items that could easily be obtained via interlibrary loan. The objective here is to do some archival research that would not be possible without being in London to visit the archives themselves. Therefore, the following artifacts are examples that would probably *not* be suitable: a journal article published in a readily accessible academic journal; a DVD or video that is publicly available; a book that is publicly available. On the other hand, note that it *is* acceptable to choose an artifact that is available online in digital form, such as a manuscript that has been digitized. In a case like this, you can perform some of your research on the digitized version, but you will also observe the original in the archive.

Submit your three artifact descriptions to Moodle in PDF format.

## Archives to browse

Here are links and suggestions for the two required collections:

- [Royal Society](#): For keyword searches, make sure to select the “archives” button (by default it is set to “printed works,” which isn’t what you want), and/or use the more specialized “archives search” by clicking the “show archives search” link. However, it may be more productive to initially explore some highlights via the “view the collection” link (right-hand side towards the bottom) or the highlights in the bottom panel.
- [Wellcome Collection](#): You can search by keyword, but the “subject guides” (middle right) may make it easier to find something interesting

Here are links to some other archives that could be of interest if your preference is for another source:

- [Science Museum, London](#): Make sure to choose an artifact that is located in London; the searchable interface includes archives at other locations too.
- [Natural History Museum, London](#): Useful links include [highlights](#), [archives catalog](#), [Wallace letters](#).
- [Bank of England archive](#)

## Techniques for browsing online archives

As noted above, some of the libraries and archives have their highlights organized by subject and this is a good way to get some ideas. Another useful way to browse is to identify a particular scientist you are interested in, use the name of that scientist as a search term, then look for interesting items within the returned results for that scientist.

## Topic suggestions

A good first step for finding a topic is to scan through relevant sections of our Fara textbook (*Science: A Four Thousand Year History*) to identify particular scientists or subjects that may be of interest to you, and use these to seed your explorations. Additional guidance is given below:

- There are plenty of famous [British scientists](#) that could be a starting point.
- Since women are underrepresented in the history of science, you might consider choosing a topic that relates to a British woman scientist: the Royal Society has a list of [10 influential British women scientists](#), and to this I would add Marie Stopes and Ada Lovelace. The optional summer reading book *A Lab of One's Own* includes numerous additional possibilities.
- You might also consider a topic that incorporates multiculturalism. A good starting point here is the Royal Society’s page on [The role of black people in the history of the Royal Society](#).
- As stated above, your artifacts must be “relevant to the course.” For this purpose, a broad definition of relevance will be adopted, so relevant topics include economics, engineering, technology, architecture, business and science-related literature. Suitable people here could include James Watt, John Maynard Keynes, Isambard Brunel, Vera “Steve” Shirley, and Christopher Wren, among many others.