

## Preparation for Cataloging

See also:

[Additional Guidelines: Beinecke](#) [1]

Determine whether full or preliminary level cataloging is appropriate. Preliminary cataloging may be used for unprocessed collections or partially-examined single items, such as recent accessions, or retrospective conversion. Generally, all other cataloging should be full level. See [Encoding Level](#) [2] in fixed field definitions and [Appendix B: Preliminary Records](#) [3].

Determine sources of information for manuscripts as follows (for more information, see DACS 2.3.1-2.3.2):

For collections with a finding aid, the finding aid is the chief source of information.

For collections without a finding aid, the chief source of information may be either provenance and accession records, the materials themselves, or outside reference sources. Always edit differing forms of descriptive information found in these sources to conform to cataloging standards.

For single manuscripts, the chief source of information is the manuscript itself, its housing or accompanying documentation, or any reliable reference source.

Perform additional background research as appropriate, such as:

Identifying related materials already in the repository, including cataloged and backlog materials.

Reviewing accession files.

Compiling historical or biographical notes to place materials in context, or for use in creating authority records.

Verifying literary manuscripts against published versions.

Generally, consult basic reference sources, as needed, for an overview of names and events pertaining to the material being cataloged. Extensive research should be the exception rather than the rule. Consult with a staff member with knowledge of the subject matter, as appropriate.

---

Return to:

[Preparation for Cataloging top](#)

[Manuscript](#) [4] [Cataloging Guidelines](#) [4]

[Appendix A: Single Manuscript Instructions](#) [5]

[Beinecke Manuscript Cataloging Manual](#) [6]

---

**Source URL:**<https://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/manuscript/preparation-cataloging>

### Links

[1] <https://msu-cataloging-manual.beinecke.library.yale.edu/preparation-cataloging> [2]

[http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/manuscript/variable-control-fields#encoding\\_level](http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/manuscript/variable-control-fields#encoding_level) [3]

<http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/manuscript/appendix-b-preliminary-records> [4]

<http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/manuscript> [5] <http://web.library.yale.edu/cataloging/manuscript/appendix-single-manuscript-instructions> [6]

<https://msu-cataloging-manual.beinecke.library.yale.edu/>