

Frequently Asked Questions

1. General Information & Reader Passes

<p>Is everything at the BL historical?</p>	<p>Not at all, as a legal deposit library, UK publishers are obliged to deposit one copy of each new book with us. We also subscribe to contemporary published content in all languages, including journals.</p>
<p>Can I borrow books from you?</p>	<p>As the National Library of the UK, we are unlike a university or public library. We are a reference library only, which means that books cannot be borrowed from our Reading Rooms. We do have a lending collection that can be accessed via document supply. Further information can be found here: https://www.bl.uk/on-demand?_ga=2.32785142.978941510.1610544245-1798518287.1610544245</p>
<p>What is a 'Reader Pass' and what does it offer?</p>	<p>You need to register for a Reader Pass in order to access our Reading Rooms, order books, and access some online content. While pandemic restrictions are in place, Reader Registration may be suspended or by appointment only. Please continue to check our website for the latest information on Reader Registration: https://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-get-a-reader-pass</p>
<p>For those of us who have a Reader Pass already, how is the renewal process done? Is it different this year because of current circumstances?</p>	<p>Yes, while restrictions are in place renewal of Reader Passes is different. Please see this link for the latest information: https://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-get-a-reader-pass</p>
<p>Do you need to be registered in person before you can register for online membership?</p>	<p>You need to register for a Reader Pass to access our collection and the Reading Rooms when we are open. You will need to complete registration in person with the correct ID. Please continue to check our website for the latest information on Reader Registration: https://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-get-a-reader-pass Membership is different to being a Reader. See this link for further information: https://www.bl.uk/membership</p>
<p>Do I have to go to London to get a Reader Pass?</p>	<p>You will need to complete registration in person with the correct ID. This can be done in London or at Boston Spa once we are open again. See this link for further information: https://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-get-a-reader-pass</p>

<p>Could you tell me what's in Boston Spa?</p>	<p>Our Boston Spa site houses a Reading Room, the National Newspaper collection and additional collections storage and services. Some of the items you order may be held there and will be delivered daily once we re-open. Any items held off site usually take 48 hours to be delivered.</p>
<p>When the Reading Rooms are open and assuming that the material is available, how long does it take for it to be delivered to the Reading Room following a request?</p>	<p>Under normal circumstances, if an item is in the building, it takes 70 minutes for delivery to the Reading Room. If it needs to be delivered from Boston Spa to St Pancras, it takes 48 hours. While pandemic measures are in place, delivery will take 48 hours for everything. Please see our website for regular updates on delivery times once we are able to open again. https://www.bl.uk/visit/reading-rooms</p>
<p>I was a registered Reader four or five years ago during my MA. Will I still be registered?</p>	<p>You will need to renew your Reader Pass once we are open again. Reader Registration is by appointment only. When the Library opens again please see this link for further information: https://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-get-a-reader-pass</p>
<p>Do you need to order books for the Reading Room before you arrive on site or from a PC while you are there?</p>	<p>Under normal circumstances you do not need to pre-order, although it is recommended as it saves time. Some items are held off site with a 48- hour delivery time. When the Library opens again, some restrictions will still be in place. This means that you will need to pre-order all items once you have booked a seat.</p>

2. Accessing Collections & Resources

<p>What is the difference between what can be requested to the London site vs the one in Yorkshire? I live much closer to the latter and in the current uncertainty it is much easier for me to get to Boston Spa (when open).</p>	<p>You can order most items to our Boston Spa Reading Room when it is open again. Please be aware that some items, such as Manuscripts, cannot be ordered to Boston Spa.</p>
<p>Can you access the online resources without a Reader Pass?</p>	<p>Without a Reader Pass, you can freely search our catalogue, and access a range of digital collections and resources. If you're a registered Reader, you can access a few Library-subscribed resources remotely. However, owing to licensing restrictions, access to many e-resources is only available to registered Readers in the Library's Reading Rooms. Further information can be found here: https://www.bl.uk/news/2020/march/access-to-the-british-library-during-temporary-closure Please also see the answer to the question below.</p>

<p>With COVID-19 going to have an impact on travelling within the UK and beyond, how likely is it that digitised items which are only available to view in the Reading Rooms will become accessible from home?</p>	<p>Due to legislation and licensing agreements, we are restricted in terms of what digital content we can allow access to. Access to our non-print legal deposit content, as well as many of our electronic resources, is not permitted remotely at this time.</p> <p>This is under constant review and wherever possible we will aim to make content available remotely.</p> <p>Please see this link for resources you can freely access off site: https://www.bl.uk/news/2020/march/access-to-the-british-library-during-temporary-closure</p>
<p>When you reopen, will people who are shielding be able to register remotely as a reasonable adjustment?</p>	<p>Once we reopen, please check our website for the most current information on registering: https://www.bl.uk/help/how-to-get-a-reader-pass</p> <p>After the Library has reopened, please also contact our Customer Services Team with any specific questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone: 0330 333 1144 • Textphone: 01937 546 434 • Email: Customer-services@bl.uk • Outside UK: +44 1937 546 060 <p>You can also email disability-support-officer@bl.uk if you need specific help in visiting the Library.</p>
<p>If I visit the National Library of Scotland, can I access the BL online material only available for readers?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, to access British Library collections and resources you would need to visit our Reading Rooms.</p>
<p>Is there any way to access old newspapers without paying for access to the British Newspaper Archive? Do any universities have subscriptions?</p>	<p>Please check with your university library whether they have a subscription. Some public libraries may also be subscribed.</p> <p>The British Newspaper Archive gives you some free credits when you first register.</p> <p>This link may be useful: https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/british-newspaper-archive</p>
<p>Do you host the BBC archives?</p>	<p>The BBC archives are not held at the British Library but you can access some, via appointment.</p> <p>Please see these links: https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/whats-in-the-bbc-archives/zmvvxy https://www.bl.uk/help/search-the-catalogues-for-radio-recordings</p>
<p>If an item is listed under 'Explore Further', is this something I can only access using the Library computers?</p>	<p>Not necessarily, in fact the opposite may be true: 'Explore Further' is an additional search facet within our catalogue which also searches the internet. What this means is that you may get some results for content which is held externally.</p>

<p>My research involves X – where can I find what you have about this?</p>	<p>To discover more about our collections you can search our online catalogue remotely here: http://explore.bl.uk/ To find out more about our subject guides: https://www.bl.uk/subjects You can also contact the relevant Reference Team https://www.bl.uk/help/reference-enquiry-team To attend one of our PhD Webinars: https://www.bl.uk/news/2020/october/phd-webinars---get-started-with-the-british-library</p>
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3. Images, Copy Service & Document Supply

<p>Is there any possibility to send in a request for scans/copies of manuscripts the BL has in one of their collections that would under normal circumstances be available for studying in Rare Books?</p>	<p>We do have an imaging service, but please be aware that during a lockdown the studios will be closed and that after re-opening they may operate at reduced capacity for a while. For further information please see: https://www.bl.uk/digitisation-services For information on our digital collections: https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/ https://www.bl.uk/catalogues-and-collections/digital-collections (Please be aware a manuscript is a different collection/material type to a rare book.)</p>
<p>Is it possible to obtain digitised copies of hard copy books, research reports, evaluations etc. from the BL at present? I have not been able to access any of these from my uni library since March 2020 & it is causing big problems for my PhD writing.</p>	<p>Currently our copying service is a reduced, but please continue to check the website for updates. Due to copyright legislation, books cannot be copied in full and our eBooks are not available remotely due to licensing regulations. Please see here for remote access to collections: https://www.bl.uk/news/2020/march/access-to-the-british-library-during-temporary-closure</p>
<p>Are loans likely to be allowed any time soon again via our universities?</p>	<p>There may be delays while our sites are closed. You can check with our Document Supply service: https://www.bl.uk/on-demand?_ga=2.129859652.978941510.1610544245-1798518287.1610544245</p>
<p>What's the policy with regards to bringing in mobile scanners (assuming copyright laws are observed)?</p>	<p>You cannot bring a scanner in, but please see this link for further information: https://www.bl.uk/help/can-i-take-photographs-of-british-library-material-myself</p>
<p>How do I obtain permission to use images freely accessible on the website in a journal article?</p>	<p>Copying collection items is subject to any preservation and / or copyright considerations. If you wish to reproduce images obtained from British Library collection items, you will need the Library's permission.</p>

	<p>More information on permissions, including an online permission application form, is available on our website: http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/atyourdesk/permissions/permissions.html</p>
<p>Can we request digitised or photographed resources if we are not registered?</p>	<p>Yes, but please be aware that while pandemic restrictions are in place the imaging studio may be closed. When we reopen, you can request copies via our digitisation services: https://www.bl.uk/digitisation-services</p>
<p>How do I go about accessing online photographs?</p>	<p>Please refer to the following links: https://imagesonline.bl.uk/?_ga=2.37102568.978941510.1610544245-1798518287.1610544245 https://www.flickr.com/photos/britishlibrary/</p>
<p>Can you please remind me how long copyright is?</p>	<p>In the UK, copyright comes to an end 70 years after the author's death. For more information please see: https://www.bl.uk/about-us/terms-and-conditions https://www.bl.uk/help/what-are-copyright-fees</p>

4. E-Theses Online Service (EThOS)

<p>Will my thesis get added to EThOS automatically?</p>	<p>No, it would depend if your awarding institution was a participating university. This link will tell you more: https://ethos.bl.uk/About.do</p>
<p>What does the following mean in regards to viewing theses on the ethos website: “Full text unavailable from EThOS. Restricted access.”</p>	<p>It could be that the relevant thesis is not yet digitised. You may need to contact the awarding university for full details.</p>