
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1. These rules aim to provide a consistent and common foundation for the description of archival material within a fonds, based on traditional archival principles.¹ The application of the rules will result in descriptions for archival material at various levels, e.g., fonds, series, file, and item levels, and will aid in the construction or compilation of finding aids of all kinds. The rules cover the description of, and the provision of access points for, all forms of material, e.g., text, graphic material, moving images, commonly found in Canadian archives at the present time. The integrated structure of the text makes the general rules usable as a basis for the description of uncommon material and material yet unknown.

In accordance with the recommendations made by the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards in *Toward Descriptive Standards*,² and the decision of the Planning Committee on Descriptive Standards of the Bureau of Canadian Archivists to make the rules compatible with the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, second edition (1988 revision)³ the rules extend its provisions and translate its language and terminology so as to make it usable for archivists and archival repositories and can be used independently.

¹ Since the rules are based on the archival principle of *respect des fonds* (see 0.22), they do not provide *specific* instructions for the description of collections which are artificial accumulations of documents of any provenance that are brought together on the basis of some common characteristic, e.g., subject, medium, type of document, name of collector. Nor do the rules provide *specific* instructions for the description of discrete items (i.e., items that do not form part of a recognizable fonds). Nevertheless, it is assumed that the same rules used to describe a fonds and its parts can be applied to the description of collections and discrete items in archival custody. Moreover, in the interest of standardizing descriptive practices, it is strongly advised that archivists describe their collections and discrete items in accordance with the practices set out in these rules.

² *Toward Descriptive Standards: Report and Recommendations of the Canadian Working Group on Archival Descriptive Standards*. – Ottawa : Bureau of Canadian Archivists, Dec. 1985.

³ *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* / prepared under the direction of the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR, ... ; edited by Michael Gorman and Paul Winkler. – 2nd ed., 1988 revision. – Ottawa : Canadian Library Association ; London : Library Association Publishing Limited ; Chicago : American Library Association, c1988.

Accordingly, the style used in the rules complies with the prescriptions of *the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules* and, therefore, is in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style* ⁴ and for spellings with *Webster's New International Dictionary*.⁵

Where Webster's gives as a permitted alternative a British spelling (e.g., *catalogue*, *centre*), it has been used in the rules; where the American usage is the only one specified (e.g., *capitalize*), it has been used in the rules. As in AACR2, agreement on terminology has similarly resulted sometimes in the use of an American term (e.g., *membership in*) and sometimes in as British term (e.g., *full stop*).

(0.1. and 0.2.)

STRUCTURE OF THE RULES

0.2. Although most archivists start to gather information about the material to be described during the accessioning process, the rules assume that the material already has been examined, arranged, and the information necessary for description compiled. The rules are, therefore, most usefully applied at the stage when arrangement has been completed and formal description starts.

Part I deals with the provision of information describing the material itself and part II deals with the determination and establishment of headings (access points) under which the descriptive information is to be presented and with the making of references to those headings. The rules define and standardize the description of archival material and their application will result in finding aids of various kinds. The format for the presentation of particular finding aids is a matter of institutional policy and will depend on the type and purpose of the finding aid being prepared.

The introductions to these rules are part of the rules and are numbered accordingly.
(0.3.)

0.3. In both parts the rules proceed from the general to the specific. In part I the specificity relates to the broad class of material being described, e.g., text, graphic material, sound recordings, moving images, to the level of detail required for each element of the description, and to the analysis of the parts of the fonds, e.g., series, file(s), item(s).

(0.4.)

⁴ *The Chicago Manual of Style : for Authors, Editors, and Copywriters*. – 13th ed., rev. and expanded. – Chicago ; London : University of Chicago Press, 1982.

⁵ *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged* / editor in chief, Philip Babcock Gove and the Merriam-Webster editorial staff. – Springfield, Mass. : Merriam-Webster ; Harlow, Essex : Distributed by Longman Group, c1986.

ACCESS POINTS

0.4. In part II the rules are based on the proposition that one or more *provenance access points* are chosen for the fonds as a whole; and that this is supplemented by *additional provenance, author and other non-subject access points* at various levels of description.

(0.5.)

ALTERNATIVES AND OPTIONS

0.5. Some rules are designed as *alternative rules* or as *optional additions*, and some other rules or parts of rules are introduced by *optionally*. These provisions arise from the recognition that different solutions to a problem and differing levels of detail and specificity are appropriate in different contexts. Decide some alternatives and options as a matter of description policy for a particular finding aid or institution and, therefore, exercise them either always or never. Exercise other alternatives and options case by case. All institutions should distinguish between these two types of option and keep a record of their policy decisions and of the circumstances in which a particular option may be applied.

(0.7.)

0.6. The word *prominently* (used in such phrases as *prominently named and stated prominently*) means that a statement to which it applies must be a formal statement found in, or on, one of the prescribed sources of information (see 1.0A) for areas 1 and 2 for the broad class of material to which the unit being described belongs.

(0.8.)

0.7. The rules recognize the necessity for judgement and interpretation on the part of both the person who performs the description and the institution responsible for it. Such judgement and interpretation may be based on the requirements of a particular finding aid or upon the use of the material being described. The need for judgement is indicated in these rules by words and phrases such as *if appropriate, important, and if necessary*. Such words and phrases indicate recognition of the fact that uniform legislation for all types and sizes of finding aids is neither possible nor desirable, and encourage institutions to develop a description policy based on specific local knowledge. This statement in no way contradicts the value of standardization. Apply such judgement consistently within a particular context and record the institution's policy.

(0.9.)

APPENDICES

0.8. Matters of general application (abbreviations, capitalization, and the treatment of numerals) are dealt with in appendices. The instructions given in those appendices are rules and must be applied consistently. A glossary is given as the final appendix.

(0.10.)

STYLE

0.9. In matters of style not covered by the rules and appendices (e.g., matters of punctuation other than prescribed punctuation), follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
(0.11.)

LANGUAGE PREFERENCES

0.10. The rules contain some instances in which a decision is made on the basis of language and in which English is preferred. Users of the rules who do not use English as their working language should replace the specified preference for English by a preference for their working language. Authorized translations will do the same.
(0.12.)

0.11. The ALA/LC romanization tables⁶ are used in examples in which romanization occurs. This usage is based on the recognition that these tables are used by the overwhelming majority of archival institutions and libraries in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Authorized translations will, in examples, substitute romanizations derived from the standard romanization tables prevailing in institutions in the countries or areas for which the translation is intended.
(0.13.)

EXAMPLES

0.12. The examples used throughout these rules are illustrative and not prescriptive. That is, they illuminate the provisions of the rule to which they are attached, rather than extend those provisions. Do not take the examples or the form in which they are presented as instructions unless specifically told to do so by the accompanying text.

Examples often have explanatory notes in italics added to them. Do not confuse them with notes to be added to the description by the person who prepares the description, i.e., the archivist (see 1.8). In part I of the rules, a note to be added to the description is indicated in the examples by Note. Do not add this word to the actual description.
(0.14.)

⁶ *Cataloging Service*, bulletin 118 (summer 1976)-. – Washington : Cataloging Distribution Service, Library of Congress, 1976- .

PART I. DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

0.21. This part of the rules contains instructions on the formulation of descriptions of archival material within a fonds. Those descriptions need (in most instances) headings added to them to make the descriptions accessible. For instructions on the formulation of such access points, see part II.

(0.21.)

0.22. The rules are based on the archival principle of *respect des fonds* and the framework of the General International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD(G)).⁷ They follow that framework exactly in the order of elements and their prescribed punctuation. IFLA has developed, and is developing, specialized ISBDs for specific types of material, also on the basis of the ISBD(G). Close correspondence will therefore exist between chapters in part I and the corresponding ISBD.

(0.22.)

STRUCTURE OF PART I

0.23. The basic rules for the description of archival material within a fonds are to be found in chapter 1, which sets out all the rules that are of general applicability. Then follow rules for broad classes of material at all levels of description (chapters 2-9) and rules of partial generality (chapter 10). There are no chapters numbered 11-20; part II begins with chapter 21, the paragraphs of the Introduction to part II being numbered 20.1, 20.2, etc.

Chapter 1 is a general chapter containing those rules that apply to archival material within a fonds. For example, rule 1.1F deals with the statement(s) of responsibility for the material being described and subsequent chapters in part I refer the user to that rule for guidance on that topic. Where certain classes of material demand specific treatment of a certain element, the general chapter contains only brief guidance and the user of the rules will find specific guidance in the chapter dealing with the particular class of material being described. For example, rule 1.5 contains an indication of the type of information found in the physical description area; and detailed guidance on the physical description

⁷ *ISBD(G) : General International Standard Bibliographic Description : Annotated Text /* prepared by the Working Group on the General International Standard Bibliographic Description set up by the IFLA Committee on Cataloguing. – London IFLA International Office for UBC, 1977.

of graphic material will be found in rule 4.5, on the physical description of moving images in rule 7.5, and so on. Use the chapters in part I alone or in combination as the specific problem demands. The majority of problems, however, can be solved, once the rules have been studied comprehensively, by a single reference to a single rule.

Within the chapters the rule numbering has a mnemonic structure. For example, rule 1.4B is concerned with the date(s) of creation for all types of archival material, rule 3.4B is concerned with the date(s) of creation for textual fonds, and so on. If a particular rule appearing in chapter 1 is not applicable to the material treated in a subsequent chapter, the rule is omitted from that chapter.

(0.23.)

METHODS OF PROCEDURE

0.24. It is a cardinal principle of the use of part I that the description of a unit of material should be based in the first instance on the chapter dealing with the broad physical class(es) of material to which that unit belongs, e.g., text, moving images, sound recording, microform. In other words, the starting point for description is the physical class of material into which the descriptive unit falls; for example, describe text in microform as a microform.⁸ In the case of multiple media fonds, the description should be based in the first instance on the chapter dealing with multiple media fonds (chapter 2) in conjunction with the chapters dealing with the broad classes of material that make up the fonds.

When describing reproductions, there will be need in many instances to consult the chapter(s) dealing with the original form(s) of the material in order to complete the description.

(0.24.)

0.25. The ISBD(G) contains an area of description for details that are special to a particular class of material or type of publication. This is the third area of description, called the *Material (or type of publication) Specific Details Area*. In these rules, this area has been re-named *Class of Material Specific Details Area*. This area is used for cartographic materials (chapter 5) and architectural and technical drawings (chapter 6). Do not use this area for any other materials treated in these rules. Where it is applicable and appropriate, repeat this area.

(0.25.)

⁸ Traditionally, the archivist has focussed on the intellectual characteristics of the material being described. Although, in these rules, the starting point for description is the broad physical class(es) of material into which the descriptive unit falls, this in no way precludes the description of the intellectual content of the material.

OPTIONS AND OMISSIONS

0.26. Although the rules for description are based upon a standard (the ISBD(G)), it is recognized that certain types of material do not require every element of that standard. For this reason there are differences in the treatment of different kinds of material. For example, the accompanying material element is not used for textual records. (0.26.)

0.27. All notes described in the chapters of part I are optional (unless a note is specifically stated to be mandatory) in that their inclusion in the entry depends on the nature of the material being described and the purpose of the entry concerned. In addition, the wording of notes in the examples is not prescriptive (i.e., if desired, choose another wording provided that it meets the general requirements of brevity and clarity). (0.27.)

0.28. All measurements prescribed in part I are in SI.⁹ They are the normal measurements used at this time in archival and other cultural institutions in Canada. (0.28.)

0.29. Rule 1.0D contains a specification of two levels of detail of description. Consider each of these levels as a minimum.¹⁰ When appropriate, add further information to the required set of data. The two levels of detail of description allow archival institutions flexibility in their description policy, because they prescribe an entry that is in conformity with descriptive standards and yet allow some types of material to be described in more detail than others. Use the two levels of detail of description:

- either* a) by choosing a level of detail of description for all types of material being described in the institution at all hierarchical (part-to-whole) levels of description, e.g., a fonds, series, file, and item level
- or* b) by drawing up guidelines for the use of the two levels of detail of description depending on the purpose or type of finding aid for which the descriptions are made.

(0.29.)

⁹ Système International d'Unités or International System of Units.

¹⁰ In practice, institutions may choose a level of detail that falls between the recommended levels in order to accommodate local needs.