

The Care and Feeding of Library Materials

by

Toby Murray

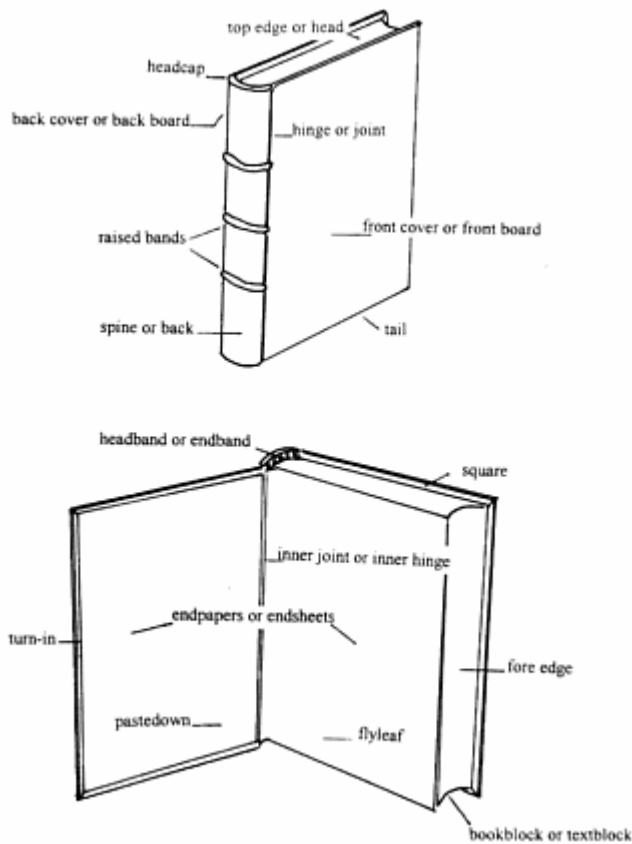
**Preservation/Conservation Librarian, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
and**

Roberta DeBuff

Adult Services Librarian, West Charleston Library, Las Vegas Clark County Library District

It is important to handle library materials with care, ensuring the existence of the items for many years to come.

Parts of a Book



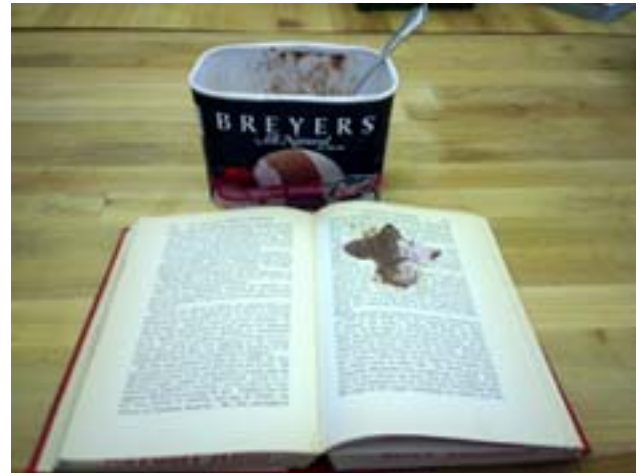
Lower Hudson Conference. 1999. Parts of a Book, Emergency Planning and Recovery Techniques.
[http://www.lowerhudsonconference.org/empart/Appendix/Parts of a Book/parts_of_a_book.html](http://www.lowerhudsonconference.org/empart/Appendix/Parts%20of%20a%20Book/parts_of_a_book.html)

Here are a few pointers on how to handle the materials you use in the library:

Toby's Top Ten Terrors

1. If you...

...spill food or liquid on a book,



then we...

...must remove whatever was spilled. This may involve the use of chemicals or toxic materials. In extreme circumstances, we would have to rebind or replace the item.

You should...

...NEVER eat or drink near books and other library materials.

2. If you...

...drop a book into the bathtub or any other pool of water,



then we...

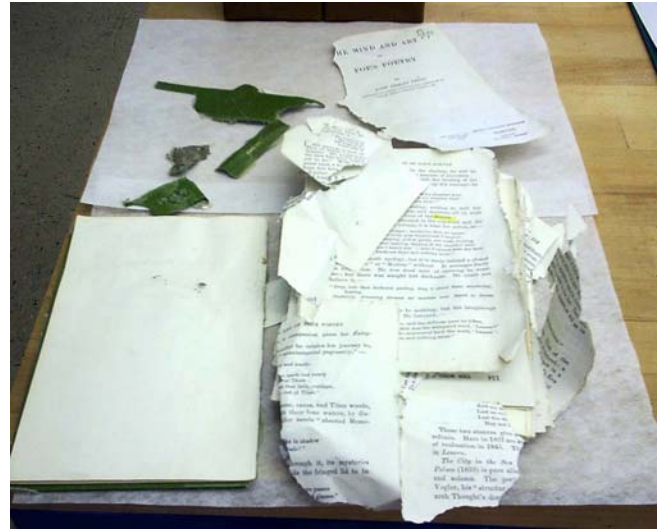
...would first have to dry the item. The next step is to flatten it, using presses and weights. If the damage is severe enough, we would have to rebind or replace it.

You should...

...NEVER read or handle books in or around water. When a book gets wet it will double in size, which can break the spine and weaken the fibers, causing irreversible damage.

3. If you...

...let your pets or teething children play with the library's materials,



then we...

...have to replace pages and/or rebind the book. In most cases, the item will have to be replaced because damage caused by chewing and tearing is irreversible.

You should...

...keep books out of the reach of children and pets.

4. If you...

...highlight, underline, or write in library materials,



then we...

...have to replace the pages. This damage is irreversible.

You should...

...NEVER write in library materials.

5. If you...

...turn or handle pages too roughly,



then we...

...have to repair the damaged pages with acid-free mending tissue, or other archivally approved procedures. This is a time-consuming and labor-intensive process.

You should...

...remember that the materials used to make a book are paper, which rips easily. Pages should be turned gently.

6. If you...

...rip or cut a page or article from a book or journal,



then we...

...have to locate another copy of the same edition of the book, make copies of the missing pages, and attach them to the book. If too many pages are missing, we would have to replace the book.

You should...

...NEVER remove pages from a book or journal.

7. If you...

...place unnecessary pressure on the spine, either while reading or photocopying,



then we...

...have to repair the front and/or back hinges, reattach the textblock to the covers, and/or repair the damaged pages.

You should...

...be gentle.

...look for photocopiers that are book-friendly, like the one pictured below.



8. If you...

...use the headcap or endband as a handle,



then we...

...have to replace the entire spine. This is a time-consuming and labor-intensive process.

You should...

...place your fingers on both sides of the spine (see image below) and pull gently to remove a book from a shelf.



9. If you...

...use an inappropriate method for holding your place in a book,



then we...

...have to spend lengthy time periods repairing the damage. This may involve cleaning and/or flattening pages that have been “dog-eared.” In some cases, the damage may be so extreme that we would have to replace pages and/or rebind the book.

You should...

...use bookmarks, preferably made of acid-free paper, like the one shown below. Bookmarks can be found at library service desks and are FREE.



10. If you...

... “help” us repair our materials,



then we...

...have to repair the damages caused by tape. This is a time-consuming and labor-intensive process, and involves the use of solvents and/or toxic chemicals.

You should...

...NEVER apply tape or glue to library materials.

...remember: “tape” and “glue” are four-letter words, and should never be used in or on books and other library materials.

Some examples of repaired books...



New spine



New pamphlet binding



Paperback to hard binding



Marbled endleaves in a new binding