What is an archives?

Photograph in the stacks at the opening of the Social Security exhibit at the National Archives, 9/25/1964

Reproduction of the stacks in the Boeing Learning Center
What is a record?

Birth certificate for John F. Kennedy

President George H.W. Bush, First Lady Barbara Bush, President George W. Bush, and First Lady Laura Bush

President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, their daughters Malia and Sasha, and their dogs, Bo and Sunny
The condition of War Department records stored in the White House garage (1920s) illustrate the need for a National Archives.

Stacks at the National Archives in Washington, DC

Why do we need the National Archives?
Professions at the National Archives

National Archives employees preserve the records of the U.S. Government and make them available to the public. They do this in different ways, but mostly as archivists, archives technicians, conservators, and records managers.

Yonjoo Strum is a conservator at Archives II in College Park, MD

Kate Mollan is an archivist with the Center for Legislative Archives at Archives I in Washington, DC

Sheila Mayo is an audio-visual archivist at the Jimmy Carter Library in Atlanta, GA
What can you do at the National Archives?

- Research our National History Day presentation or other school project
- Become a citizen archivist and help tag and transcribe original records online
- Explore historic records in the National Archives Catalog
- Visit one of our 14 Presidential Libraries and Museums
- Volunteer!