



Information for creating time-capsules

A **time capsule** is an historic cache of information, usually intended to communicate with future people and to help future researchers or historians. Time capsules are sometimes created and buried during celebrations like the laying of a foundation for a church or building.

If you are considering laying a time capsule at your church or school there are a number of things to keep in mind.

Containers

Stainless steel is the most durable storage container, and will not leach chemicals over long periods of time like plastic would.

Glass jars are archivally sound however they are fragile and can be broken by ground movement or poor handling.

Whatever container you decide to use it must be watertight and where possible airtight. A screw top lid should be sealed with wax or some form of airtight seal. Depending on the capsule, welding the lid shut ensures the contents remain protected from dampness.

Further information

National Archives of Australia 'Creating a time capsule' <http://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/managing-information-and-records/preserving/time-capsules.aspx>

Conservation Supplies is one of many companies that sell archival quality products for printing and storage of various media. <https://www.conservationsupplies.co.nz/products/>

Items inside

Common items included in time capsules are newspaper articles, photographs, medals, coins, booklets. Many items in time capsules provide touchstones to the past.

It is also worth including items that would often not normally survive over long periods of time unused e.g. calculators, phones, watches.

Newspaper articles should be photocopied on to archival paper as newsprint degrades rapidly.

It is important to remove any rubber bands, staples or paper clips from papers. Ideally archival paper should be used or at the very least all items should be separated and interleaved with archival paper or stored in separate mylar pouches or envelopes. This ensures reduced acid levels in the capsule over time and protects the items within.

All items inside a time capsule should be completely dry. You should include some desiccant packs or silica gel which will absorb any moisture present.