

'A shell of the place it used to be': the importance of libraries – and their fragile future

Level 2: Intermediate

Article summary: This article discusses the importance of libraries and their future.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Verb forms – present simple, past simple and present perfect

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. Write the word "Library" on the board. Ask students to call out words or phrases they associate with libraries (e.g., books, quiet, study, community). Have students work in pairs and write as many words as possible in 2 minutes on the word cloud in their worksheets. Elicit answers from students and write their responses on the board to complete the word cloud.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups.

Key:

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. j |
| 2. h | 7. g |
| 3. b | 8. i |
| 4. d | 9. f |
| 5. c | 10. e |

- b. Before reading the article carefully, students use some of the key words to fill the gaps in the sentences to ensure that they understand and know how the words are used in context.

Key:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. rational | 5. harassed |
| 2. encounter | 6. stack |
| 3. threat | 7. budget |
| 4. blurred | 8. shortsighted |

3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to work individually to decide who said each of the statements and write the corresponding name next to them. Encourage students to highlight the evidence in the text. Once finished, give them a few minutes to check in pairs before checking answers with the whole class.

Key :

1. LC
2. MT
3. JP
4. SR
5. MT
6. GT

4. Key language

- a. Students work in pairs again, this time to complete sentences from the article with the correct form of the verbs provided in brackets. Encourage students to underline the words and phrases that helped them decide if the sentence refers to the present or past and which verb form should be used in each case.

Key:

1. In 1980, he was an unemployed graduate wondering what sort of career he might have.
2. For Maanuv Thiara, a 30-year-old writer and actor, his local library was a similar escape growing up. "I felt safe in libraries," he says.
3. Thiara now lives in south London and uses the libraries there.
4. Tooting library's opening hours have reduced since he moved there five years ago.

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- b. Ask students to work in pairs and match each sentence in task a with its corresponding explanation.

Key:

- a. 3
- b. 1, 2
- c. 4

- c. Students work in pairs and complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets (present simple, past simple or present perfect). Once again, encourage them to underline the words and phrases which helped them decide.

Key:

- 1. go (on Monday mornings – present routine)
- 2. went / met (last Tuesday – actions that started and finished in the past)
- 3. have noticed / have abandoned (lately – indefinite past / recent past)
- 4. do / visit (how often – present routine)
- 5. studied (when was the last time – action that started and finished in the past)
- 6. has helped (throughout the years – action that started in the past and continues up to the present)

5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the statements and provide reasons for their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

6. In your own words

- a. Ask students to work in groups and do some online research on the libraries available in their local area and the services they offer.
- b. Give students time to prepare a presentation to share their findings with the group, highlighting the advantages of visiting these libraries and any problems they have found.
- c. Encourage students to listen to their classmates' ideas and propose ways to improve these libraries.

- d. Once all groups have presented their findings and possible solutions / improvements have been discussed, ask students to write a proposal for the local council presenting a summary of their findings and offering suggestions to help local libraries regain popularity.