

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

1 1A
(1 of 3)

In today's modern society, we can observe the fastest rate of growth in many areas: population, production, and especially technology. In the last two decades, cell phones went from a rare, textbook-sized item, to an everyday product we can fit in our back pocket. One issue that arises with modern technology is the impact it has, and will have, on items and ideas of "the past", such as public libraries. Amidst the debate about whether libraries can stay relevant in the upcoming years, I believe that this is a new opportunity for libraries to become even more prevalent in our lives and adapt to the changing times.

Public libraries first found their place in the US with Ben Franklin's first library in the 1730s (Source A). For around 300 years, they have persevered through changing society, and still remain key to the academic world today. Many changes have taken place over the last 3 centuries, and there will likely be more to come in the future. Our history has shown that it is perfectly feasible to hope that our libraries will be able to persevere for a long time. In fact, there is already evidence that libraries are rapidly adjusting to the change. They now offer classes on technology such as Microsoft Excel, and offer Ebooks for digital readers (Source B).

Public libraries are also known for their incredible resources and librarians. ~~if~~ In the past, when working on ~~to~~ a project, students would frequent the public library,



1

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

1A
(2 of 3)

trusting that there would be something there that could help them. Now, people can instantly search for answers on the Internet in shorter amounts of time. But what about those people who don't have access to the Internet? A recent study showed that there are certain demographics who are less likely to use digital forms of reading, such as Hispanics and the unemployed (Source C). This can most likely be attributed to a lack of opportunities to access modern technology. This is where public libraries can step in. Already, it is shown that 20% of library computer users' only access to the computers is at the library (Source C). Some people believe that libraries only serve as a storage for books, but they are wrong. Libraries serve as the center for academic discourse, a resource for many, and a storage for information in all its forms. There is lots of potential for public libraries to serve as the bridge between the "old" and "new" world, separated by the new and rapid introduction of technology.

Lastly, ~~libraries~~ one of the most fundamental but overlooked ^{libraries} resource of ~~libraries~~, is the librarians themselves. In a world where communication is a skill that is being increasingly valued, librarians can serve as the connection between people and technology. In a very recent survey, it showed that the percentage of people that receive



Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

1 1A
(3 of 3)

help from a librarian is actually increasing through younger age groups (Source D). This shows that our reliance on librarians is actually going up, not down, contradictory to those who say the function of libraries is diminishing. Another study showed that two-thirds of library computer users asked a librarian for help (Source C). Libraries will serve as a community resource to help people adapt to the digital technology and information that may still be confusing for many. It is ridiculous to assume that the people will be able to adapt to new technology on their own without assistance, and libraries can take on a new role in serving as a mentor to those who are still adapting.

Libraries can definitely stay relevant in contemporary and changing society. In fact they will be able to play a key role as a bridge between those who are still adapting and those that have adapted. The changing world is an opportunity for public libraries to take on additional role in the community.

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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

1 1B
(1 of 3)

Throughout my elementary and middle school years I spent almost everyday in the school library. It was my place to do school research, interact with my librarian, and to seek out the biggest book I can find. While I may not take a trip to the book section of my school library very often, I of course still have my own ~~library~~ cards to the local library in my town.

There are endless possibilities for what the future of libraries hold. For as long as public libraries are around, they will continue ~~provide~~ for communities to exchange information and encourage discussion, to allow for people of all ages to remain educated through events that take place, and to educate others on the use of digital media through libraries.

Libraries contain all the information that we need to know. From books about our favorite animals to books written by our most valuable politicians and educators. It is important for people to stay informed about the current events and to discuss these important matters. Nancy Kranich, the ^{former} president of the American Library Association, once said that "an ~~in~~ informed public constitutes the very foundation of a democracy." (source A) In a democracy, we are allowed the freedom of expression, and are encouraged



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to participate in our democratic process. In a library you can find all the records and resources you need to do this. In a library you can share mutual interests and build bonds through just a discussion of a good book. It's important to have this backbone to rely on in your community. To go sit down in a library and solve and understand the issues that you may be facing,

toddlers and young children don't carry around e-books or iPhones, they don't sit in their beds and read from their laptop while drinking a cup of coffee. They need story time, with pictures of their favorite princesses or cars, they need interaction.

In source B, we are shown many events that are taking place in a public library. Many like "Terrific Tales for toddlers" or "Books before kindergarten!"; children are allowed to go with their families to their library to enjoy a terrific tale with other children. They get to interact with other people and can see the pages and pictures face-to-face, but these aren't the only things that take place. Events like "music makers" and "Environmental club" helps other members of the community to stay educated and share the information they have learned with others.

Even in 2017, many people don't have access to the internet. Shocking, right? ~~and so on~~



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1 1B
(3 of 3)

~~It's~~ It's unfair to ~~many~~ people who don't make more than \$30,000 a year, or are unemployed, to have possibly their ~~only~~ only source of internet to be taken away. According to source C, these people along with hispanics and those without a diploma, are less likely to use an e-book. Also as Michael Crandall said, "82% of library computer users ^{the} library was their only source for access to computers and the internet". Not everyone is as fortunate to access technology in their own home, and it's unfair to take away to source of education, and their love of books.

Libraries will always be valuable to our society, ~~and~~ and without them we would be at a great loss. They are changing everyday while our society changes, and they will forever be the cornerstone of democracy in our communities.

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Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

1 1C
(1 of 2)

In the recent debate about the future of public libraries, some argue whether they will stay relevant or not. Although it is sad but true, e-books are taking over through examples of statistics, ~~and~~ graphs, budget cuts, and the use of libraries in today's society.

Libraries can not stay relevant with the increasing demand of e-books and online activity. It's stated that "libraries are finding creative ways to meet demands ~~that are being met~~", (source C) but how so? When citizens of the community, ages 16-65+, were asked when attending the library, received help from a librarian, each category of ages, was less than 50%. (source D). With budget cuts, libraries are struggling to find new ways to keep up with today's society. "Twenty-three states reported cuts in state funding. For three years in a row, more than 40% of states reported decreased funding." (source F). Including the suspending budget cuts and being able to access "more information" online than "all libraries combine" (source E), the use of libraries is decreasing.

In today's society, the attendance at libraries is decreasing. Siegler, author of "The End of The



1

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

1C
(2 of 2)

Library" recalls, ~~it's~~ "it's ~~is~~ hard for me to even remember the last time I was in a library." Because of the efficiency of e-books, there is no use for a library. Not only are people not attending libraries, there are not many using print books either. In a survey of people 16 and over, in ~~a~~ two-thirds of the categories preferred e-books over print books (source D). This ~~is~~ use of e-books over print books ~~is~~ ^{results} ~~resulting~~ ~~in~~ the decreasing of libraries which adds to their uselessness in the future.

I align my views with Siegler that "the point is, times have changed." (source E). Due to the numerous examples of statistics, budget cuts, and low attendance of libraries, it is observed that the use ~~of~~ of libraries is decreasing, therefore, non-existent in the future.

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