

2023

Some people enjoy being in a crowded place, while others prefer somewhere quieter with fewer people. Describe your perfect place when you want to relax.

(Singapore–Cambridge ‘O’ Level 1128/01 2022 Q3)

In society, there are a multitude of methods by which a person's character can be judged. This includes how one interacts with those around him, one's posture be it whilst standing or sitting, and even how one walks in a public space. However, in my opinion, there is nothing more indicative of one's true nature than his most preferred place to relax. There is a plethora of places in which one can relax, so much so that the perfect place for him may be nebulous. These places range from one filled with the hustle and bustle of the surrounding crowd to another in a perpetual state of tranquillity. Having visited countless places for my relaxation, I have undoubtedly descried the perfect place whence I alleviate the colossal weight of my onerous work. A place where people are scarce. A place where only the hum of the air conditioner could be heard. A place where I can shut out the unceasing clamour of worries raging in my head, and repose on the soft seats in serenity. This place is none other than the library.

I can name a myriad of reasons why I prefer to seek respite in the library. Yet, there are three paramount factors that make it the ideal place for me to relax. For starters, as all men know, the library is a haven for books. Being an avid reader myself, to me the library is like a church to Christians. There, I can discover and read a surfeit of texts, literature, bibliographies, and more. When I feel blue, I indulge myself in the wonderful world of fiction and fantasy—where I can ride the omnipotent dragons and soar through the azure blue sky without a care in the world. When I feel lethargic, I indulge myself in the enigmatic world of mystery and thriller—where I can walk the paths of mystery alongside my favourite detectives and put together the shards of evidence to ultimately unveil the culprit. When I feel stressed, I indulge myself in the philosophies and self-help books by illustrious philosophers and writers—where I can be enlightened on how to live a more fulfilling life and provoke my thoughts on numerous different topics. Only through this can I truly cleanse myself of negative thoughts and ameliorate my mood.

Furthermore, a library offers only the most conducive and serene environment to rejuvenate us. A place where distractions are few and disruptions are fewer. There, little can be heard; the purr of air-conditioning, the whisper of flipping pages, and the muffled taps of footsteps on the carpeted floor. The silence of the library is so astronomical, that even my thoughts reverberate louder than the sounds my ears pick up. In the library, I lie back on the cushioned seats that were so soft, an illusion of sitting on a cloud could be visualised. Then, I begin to venture into the fantastical worlds of my imagination. The tranquil environment augments my senses in these dream worlds—reposed on a bench at the beach by the sea: The light brush of the sea breeze on my cheeks; the briny smell of ocean wafted through my nose; the beautiful bend of crimson red, lush amber, and pale violet sky that complimented the round golden sun; the splashing sounds of the undulating sea waves beating against the sand. Wandering through these vivid illustrations in my head, my brain takes a step back and relaxes as if it took a bath in a hot spring and got a massage at a famous parlour.

Finally, the sparsity of humans amplifies the soothing nature of the library. It is intuitive that by human nature, we are more inclined to be surrounded by friends and loved ones; to interact and express our thoughts to others. However, after a long week of constant social interactions and pressure, there is nothing more I yearn for than a quiet and desolate place to repose in. Outside, I am demanded to stress myself out on the language I use when speaking to people. Outside, I am forced to entertain acquaintances with banal jokes and insincere comments. Outside, I fear the critical judgements of those around me, ruthlessly catching even the slightest of gaps in my persona. The library is a place where I can take sanctuary. In the library, I can let my thoughts run wild; I can cast aside all my stress and worries; I can revitalise my sense of person, so as not to lose it in the midst of interacting and empathising with others. Only then can I truly pacify myself and lighten my mood.

In conclusion, after a long and arduous day of constant toil and stress, there is no place I want to seek refuge in other than the library. A place isolated from the intolerable cacophony of daily city life. A place more serene than the void of outer space. A place more calming and comfortable than the embrace of my own mother.

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Writer Notes:

Yes, this was written in a library ironically. An unmarked essay I wrote for the sake of practice. I lost motivation towards the end, hence the ostensibly rushed work. Due to my lack of points, I think this essay was rather repetitive. Also, please tell me if I'm using "descried" wrong. Grammarly keeps telling me a typo :(. Anyhow, feel free to let me know what you think though.

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