

On Libraries

Understanding the text

Answer the following questions.

a. Where could the author be found when he was late for lunch or dinner?

The author is none other than the greatest neurologist and literary figure Oliver Sacks. There was Oliver's favorite room, which was very quiet and beautiful in the house and it was the room of the oak-paneled library. His parents had libraries in the house. So whenever he was late for lunch or dinner he could be found absorbed in a book in the library.

b. What are his first memories?

Oliver was so inquisitive that he was absorbed in a book in his favourite room of library. He even used to get late for his lunch and dinner as he was found to be too absorbed in the books. He learnt to read early in the morning at 4 or 5 o'clock. The beautiful oak panel library and books are his first memories.

c. Why did he dislike school?

He disliked school because he didn't like to obey the instructions from the teachers. He gained better information and knowledge exploring books in the libraries than that from the school. He used to get excellent lessons from the libraries before the teachers taught in the class. He was not a good student but was a better learner. Thus, he disliked school because he liked to learn himself in libraries being free to choose books of his own choice.

d. What did he feel about at the library?

He felt free when he is at the library. It is because he is free to choose any books of his interest out of thousands of books. The atmosphere of the library was so comfortable and quiet that he roamed through the shelves and wondered by the books kept in them. He also used to enjoy the quiet companionship of other readers all like him in the same quest.

e. Why was he so biased about sciences especially astronomy and chemistry?

He was biased about science especially astronomy and chemistry because of the two reasons – The first reason was that all the children used to dream of being astronauts and explore the space at that time. So he must have wished to know about it. The second reason was that he got older and he only needed those books which would support his studies.

f. Why did he become so fascinated by Hook?

He became so fascinated by Theodore Hook because he found the books written by him in the Bodleian library. Actually, Hook was greatly admired for his wit and his genius theatrical and musical improvisation. He was the greatest star in the nineteenth Century for what he had done. He had composed more than five hundred operas on the spot.

g. Describe library at the Queen's College.

The Queen's College is a constituent college of the University of Oxford, England. It has the magnificent building designed in a form of palace by Christopher Wren, who was a great architect. Beneath the college, there were underground large rooms which was the library. There were number of book shelves. There were heating pipes attached to the walls and corners. The design of the library was classical. The books of original prints and editions from Gesner to Darwin were available.

h. Why did the students ignore the bookshelves in the 1990s?

The students ignored the bookshelves in the 1990s because they had access to the digitalized books. The access of books from their computers made them rarely go to the shelves. The books were no longer of their consideration. They felt more comfortable with the new form of reading books in their electronic devices than going to the shelves in the library.

i. Why was he horrified when he visited the library a couple of months ago?

He was horrified when he visited the library a couple of months ago because the books from almost all public libraries were thrown out of the shelves and were digitized. Unfortunately he didn't know how to use the computers. The books, the shelves and libraries were gone one by one and he was deeply saddened in the loss of the centuries of knowledge. Therefore, he was horrified.

Reference to the context

a. The author says, "I was not a good pupil, but I was a good listener." Justify it with the textual evidences.

'On libraries' is an autobiographical essay by one of the 20th century's greatest neurologist and author, Oliver Sacks. In this essay, he describes about his experiences of going to libraries and how successful stories shaped his personality and made his life better. He describes how he developed his deep interest in visiting the libraries till he became a successful figure and how he was deeply affected by the loss of books in the libraries in 1990s.

Oliver Sacks says, "I was not a good pupil, but I was a good listener." That's true. He was always absorbed in the books in the library and he got real education from there. When he was in school, he sat in the classrooms, merely listened to teachers but he couldn't be convinced on what he wanted in depth from the teachers. He listened to them through one ear and blew away their sayings from another ear. However, it doesn't mean he wasn't active in the class. He was not passive either. In terms of doing exercises, submitting assignment he himself considered that he was not a good student (pupil) but he listened to them. Besides going to school, he preferably spent most of his time in the library, where he enhanced his skill of gaining knowledge from the additional books. He used to search the things that he listened from the teachers, compared the lectures with findings, noted down the conclusion in the copies and into his mind. This kind of keen interest of reading in the library made him a good reader, learner even though he consider himself as a poor student in the classroom.

b. A proverb says, "Nothing is pleasanter than exploring a library." Does this proverb apply in the essay? Explain.

The given proverb, "Nothing is pleasanter than exploring a library" is quite appropriate for the essay "On Libraries". Nothing is more satisfying than reading a book in library with a literal companion. Oliver Sacks was a bookworm who used to spend a lot of time in different libraries in different places. He disliked school, sitting in class, receiving instruction; information seemed to go in one ear and out by the other. He had to be active, learn for himself, learn what he wanted, and in the way which suited him best. So he roamed the shelves and stacks of the libraries, had the freedom to select whatever he wanted. His book reading started from his own library at home. All of his family members loved reading books and he was grown up in that environment. The oak-paneled library at his own home was his favourite room. Instead of going to formal school, he preferred to read freely in the library. He especially enjoyed the library environment and the quiet companions of other readers. Best of all, he wants to sit at the library table with a pile of books in front of him. Therefore, he said that he was not a good pupil, but was a good listener who explored different libraries to gain knowledge for his own academic excellence. Hence the above proverb fits for this essay.

c. Are there any other services that you would like to see added to the library?

Yes, there are some other services that I would like to see added to the library. I would prefer different rooms for different age groups such as child, adults and aged people because they prefer books most likely of their interest with their age. The elders may like to read environment, nature, culture etc., the aged people may like to read books related to politics, ethics, philosophy etc. and the kids would like to read stories, comics etc. The other thing I would like to see added in the library is surveillance camera. Many people tear the books or even take them with them due to which other readers are affected. Hence to prevent these bad activities on library, surveillance camera should be fitted. Good furniture to read books on is also an essential thing to be added to the library. Readers may feel bored reading on the tables. So, a small garden in the backyard of the library may be useful to remove the reader's tiredness. I would also like to see a cafe added to the library because people who love reading long hours in the library may get hungry, then they can enjoy reading by eating something, which can quench their hunger. These are the certain services that I would like to see added to the library.

Reference beyond the text

a. Write an essay on Libraries and its uses for students.

Libraries and its Uses for Students

A library is a place where books and sources of information are stored. They make it easier for people to get access to them for various purposes. Libraries are very helpful and economical too. They include books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs, manuscripts and more. In other words, they are an all-encompassing source of information.

Libraries play a vital role in providing students with reliable content. They encourage and promote the process of learning and grasping knowledge. The book worms can get loads of books to read from and enhance their knowledge. Moreover, the variety is so wide-ranging that one mostly gets what they are looking for. Most importantly, libraries are a great platform for making progress. When we get homework in class, the libraries help us with the reference material. This, in turn, progresses our learning capabilities and knowledge. It is also helpful in our overall development. It helps us in learning and expanding our knowledge. We develop our reading habits from a library and satisfy our thirst and curiosity for knowledge. This helps in the personal growth of a person and development. Libraries are very economical. The students who cannot afford to buy new books and can simply borrow books from a library. This helps them in saving a lot of money and getting information for free.

In short, libraries are a great place to gain knowledge. They serve each student differently. They are a great source of learning and promoting the progress of knowledge. One can enjoy their free time in libraries by reading and researching. As the world has become digitized, it is now easier to browse through a library and get what you are looking for. Thus, libraries are found to be very useful for the students. We must not give up on libraries due to the digital age. Nothing can ever replace the authenticity and reliability one gets from a library.

b. Do you have any public library in your locality? If so, do the people in your community use it? Give a couple of examples.

Yes, we have a public library in our locality. The name of the library is 'Bhanubhakta Memorial Library'. It is named after a Nepali writer, poet and translator Bhanubhakta Acharya known by the title Adikavi. Of course, the people in our community use it.

This public library is the biggest treasure present in our society. It has all the resources one can take great benefits from. One can easily find a lot of resources here that are not available anywhere on the World Wide Web. Books are free for everyone and we shouldn't spend a single penny for any book that we borrow. Books from different genres such as science fiction, fiction and a lot more are kept here for people to borrow. One can use the books in the

library for many different purpose. This library helped me to study along with other reference books to help me with my research. The availability of different kinds of books made mine and community people's life easier as we don't have to go looking for books all over the city and can get everything under one roof. Also there is free access to internet due to which its been easier for us to access online books for free. For me this library has become a great place to socialize with my community members, as I can get to know people that have the same interests as I do. This helps me to build relationships with people of similar interests.

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