

2017

AP[®]

CollegeBoard

AP English Language and Composition

Free-Response Questions

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SECTION II

Total Time—2 hours, 15 minutes

Question 1

Suggested reading and writing time—55 minutes.

It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes reading the question, analyzing and evaluating the sources, and 40 minutes writing your response.

Note: You may begin writing your response before the reading period is over.

(This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

As the Internet age changes what and how people read, there has been considerable debate about the future of public libraries. While some commentators question whether libraries can stay relevant, others see new possibilities for libraries in the changing dynamics of today's society.

Carefully read the following six sources, including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize material from at least three of the sources and incorporate it into a coherent, well-written essay in which you develop a position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future.

Your argument should be the focus of your essay. Use the sources to develop your argument and explain the reasoning for it. Avoid merely summarizing the sources. Indicate clearly which sources you are drawing from, whether through direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary. You may cite the sources as Source A, Source B, etc., or by using the descriptions in parentheses.

Source A (Kranich)

Source B (calendar)

Source C (Shank)

Source D (charts)

Source E (Siegler)

Source F (ALA)

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Source A

Kranich, Nancy. Interview by Cecilia M. Orphan.
American Democracy Project Blog. American
Democracy Project, 4 January 2011. Web.
27 June 2014.

The following is an excerpt from an interview with Nancy Kranich, former president of the American Library Association (ALA), the main professional organization for librarians in the United States.

An informed public constitutes the very foundation of a democracy; after all, democracies are about discourse—discourse among the people. If a free society is to survive, it must ensure the preservation of its records and provide free and open access to this information to all its citizens. It must ensure that citizens have the skills necessary to participate in the democratic process. It must allow unfettered dialogue and guarantee freedom of expression. All of this is done in our libraries, the cornerstone of democracy in our communities.

Benjamin Franklin founded the first public lending library in the 1730's. His novel idea of sharing information resources was a radical one. In the rest of the civilized world libraries were the property of the ruling classes and religion. The first significant tax-supported public libraries were organized in the mid-19th century, conceived as supplements to the public schools as well as “civilizing agents and objects of civic pride in a raw new country.” (Molz and Dain 1999, p. 3). . . . Sidney Ditzion (1947, p. 74) noted that late nineteenth century public libraries continued “the educational process where the schools left off and by conducting a people’s university, a wholesome capable citizenry would be fully schooled in the conduct of a democratic life.” By the 1920's, Learned (1924) popularized the idea of libraries as informal education centers, followed by an American Library Association (ALA) report establishing a Board on Library and Adult Education (Keith 2007, p. 244). During World War II, President Roosevelt (1942) equated libraries and democracy, heralding their role in creating an informed citizenry.

After the war, librarians joined civic groups, politicians, and educators to rejuvenate the democratic spirit in the country. The New York Public Library, describing itself as “an institution of education for democratic living” (“Library Bill of Rights” 1948, p. 285), led a nationwide program of discussions about the meaning of the American democratic tradition and actions on issues of local concern. These programs were described by Ruth Rutzen, Chair of ALA’s Adult Education Board, as ideal opportunities for libraries to assume a leadership role in their communities, proclaiming, “Let us all make our libraries active community centers for the spread of reliable information on all sides of this vital issue and for the encouragement of free discussion and action” (Preer 2008, p. 3). In 1952, ALA joined a national effort to increase voter turnout by distributing election information and organizing discussion groups and other activities in public libraries. . . . As civic programs evolved in libraries, “the group setting offered an experience of democracy as well as a consideration of it” (Preer 2001, p. 151). Just as important, libraries defined themselves as community spaces where citizens were encouraged to discuss important matters.

Repositioning libraries as informal civic learning agents fits the theory and practice of community inquiry conceived a century ago by John Dewey (1916). Dewey believed that people need the opportunity to share ideas through multiple media in order to understand and solve everyday problems together. To this formulation, libraries bring their role as boundary spanners. Whether face-to-face or virtual, libraries build learning communities that bring people with mutual interests together to exchange information and learn about and solve problems of common concern.

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Librarian of Congress Archibald Macleish (1940, p. 388) once avowed that “Librarians must become active not passive agents of the democratic process.” With renewed interest in promoting civic literacy and deliberative democracy around the country, libraries are poised to grasp this cause, build civic space, and reclaim their traditional role. As Dewey once wrote, “democracy needs to be reborn in each generation and education is its midwife” (1916, p. 22). If libraries are to fulfill their civic mission in the information age, they must find active ways to engage community members in democratic discourse and community renewal. For, as [political scientist Robert] Putnam has stated parsimoniously, “Citizenship is not a spectator sport” (2000, p. 342).

American Association of State Colleges & Universities (AASCU)

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Source B

Calendar of Events. Orland Park Public Library, June 2014. Web. 27 June 2014.

The following is an excerpt from an Illinois public library's calendar of events.

JUNE 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o All Day-Paws to Read Summer Reading Challenge o 9:00 AM-10:00 Books Before Kindergarten! o 1:00 PM-Paws to Read Summer Reading Kick-off Celebration! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o All Day-Junior Page Volunteer Program Registration Begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 9:30 AM-Stories at the Village of OP Sportsplex o 10:00 AM-Terrific Tales for Toddlers o 11:00 AM-Babies & Books o 1:00 PM-Once Upon a Time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 9:30 AM-Orland Township/Orland Cultural Center Senior Visits o 7:00 PM-Pilates with Melanie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 10:00 AM-Toddler Art o 11:00 AM-Once Upon a Time o 6:30 PM-Night Owls Storytime o 7:00 PM-Microsoft Excel 2010 Part I o 7:00 PM Writer's Group for Adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 9:30 AM-Orland Township Senior Drop-in Visit o 10:00 AM-Stories at the Farmer's Market o 4:00 PM-(E=MC2) EnvironMental Club 2 o 6:15 PM-Teen Inc. o 7:00 PM-Animal Figurine Craft Night o 7:00 PM-Cozy Corner Bedtime Storytime o 7:00 PM-Meet the Artist - Kathleen Garness - Cancelled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o All Day-July Computer Volunteers Registration Begins o 10:00 AM-Bright Starts Family Storytime
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 2:00 PM-Sunday Film Series: Edward, My Son 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 9:30 AM-Nursing Home Visits o 7:00 PM-Friends of the Orland Park Public Library Board Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 9:30 AM-Nursing Home Visits o 10:00 AM-Terrific Tales for Toddlers o 11:00 AM-Babies & Books o 1:00 PM-Once Upon a Time o 6:30 PM-Family Dance Party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 10:00 AM-Remember When with Autumn Leaves o 7:00 PM-Pilates with Melanie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 10:00 AM-Music Makers o 11:00 AM-Once Upon a Time o 2:00 PM-Corduroy the Bear o 6:30 PM-Night Owls Storytime o 7:00 PM-Canine Basic Obedience Class o 7:00 PM-Microsoft Excel 2010 Part II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 10:00 AM-Stories at the Farmer's Market o 11:30 AM-Library Ebooks for Kindle o 2:00 PM-Dig Those Divas Storytime o 4:00 PM-(E=MC2) EnvironMental Club 2 o 7:00 PM-Book Appetit o 7:00 PM-Cozy Corner Bedtime Storytime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 10:00 AM-Bright Starts Family Storytime

Source C

Shank, Jenny. "What Is the Role of Libraries in the Age of E-Books and Digital Information?" *MEDIASHIFT: Your Guide to the Digital Media Revolution*. Public Broadcasting Service, 1 May 2012. Web. 27 June 2014.

The following is excerpted from an article on the Web site of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), the largest public-funded network in the United States.

A recent Pew Research Center report uncovered a digital divide in the use of e-books. People less likely to use e-books include Hispanics, those without a high school diploma, the unemployed, rural Americans, and those with household incomes of less than \$30,000.

[Michael] Crandall* said, "Without libraries, the division would be even greater, since for many people they serve as the only access point for digital information and services. Our study of library computer use found that for 22 percent of library computer users (age 14 and older), the library was their only source for access to computers and the Internet. This would suggest that similar restricted access would apply to e-books without libraries in the mix."

[Jorge] Martinez noted that libraries are finding creative ways to meet demand despite budget challenges. "In Philadelphia they are placing equipment and trainers in community organizations to make these valuable services available to their patrons at these sites, even when their regular locations are closed due to budget cutbacks. In other places, they have recreated the old bookmobile as mobile digital centers that take training, computers and Internet access to parts of their communities where there are no [library] buildings."

A recent Op-Ed put out by the Knight, Gates, and MacArthur foundations cited several other innovative uses of library resources:

"Bookmobiles have been supplemented by mobile computer labs—visiting minority communities in St. Paul to teach digital literacy classes in Spanish, Hmong, and Somali, for example. In Dover, Mass., the library has installed QR codes around town that link signs at the market and playground to community information and services. Seattle Public Library offers live chats with librarians 24 hours a day getting answers to reference questions and live homework help."

It also mentioned an initiative at the main Chicago library called YOUmedia that "lets any teen with a city library card have in-house access to computers plus video and audio recording equipment to create their own content with the help of a mentor. At another YOUmedia space in Miami, workshops help teens think critically and creatively about their lives, by teaching them to publish an autobiographical digital story, or to visualize their favorite books."

[Samantha] Becker said, "Libraries are definitely in the middle of all this [digital] action, both working very hard to provide access to e-reading materials, as well as helping patrons enter into the e-reading marketplace by exposing them to e-reading devices through lending and device petting zoos and helping them learn to use new devices in classes and one-on-one sessions with librarians."

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Crandall said his study found that two-thirds of the library computer users asked a librarian for help in using the technology. “The ability to use the new technology may seem intuitive to many,” he said, “but clearly for many others it is not, and having a community resource that is able to help people understand how to use digital technology and information, and why they might want to use it to improve the quality of their lives is something that libraries have taken on as a transformation of their traditional mission.”

Martinez said the Knight Foundation’s library funding will focus on “innovative projects and leaders that help to show what the library of tomorrow should be.”

* Crandall, Martinez, and Becker are library and information science researchers. Crandall and Becker are at the University of Washington; Martinez is with the Knight Foundation.

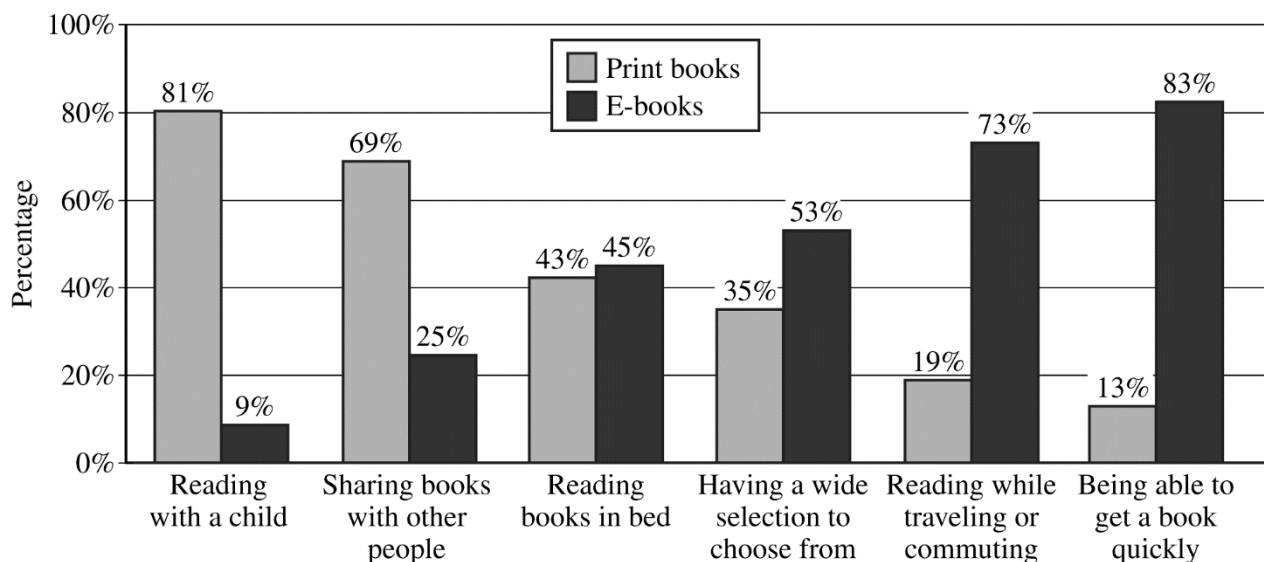
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Source D

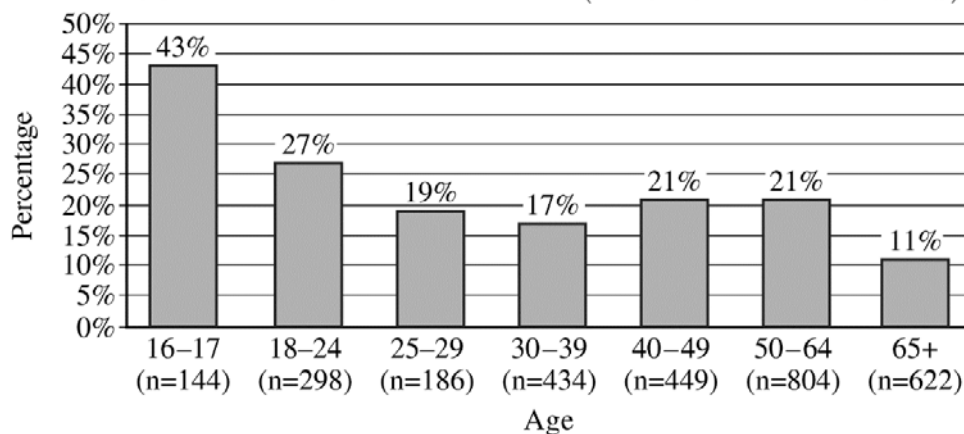
Rainie, Lee. "Libraries Transformed: Research on the Changing Role of Libraries." *Pew Research Internet Project*. Pew Research Center, 23 October 2012. Web. 27 June 2014.

The following charts were published in a report by the Pew Charitable Trust, a national research organization.

PERCENTAGE OF AMERICANS AGE 16 AND OVER WHO HAVE READ BOTH E-BOOKS AND PRINT BOOKS IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS



GOT HELP FROM A LIBRARIAN (AMONG LIBRARY USERS)



In this chart, n represents the number of people who were surveyed in each age group.

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Source E

Siegler, M. G. "The End of The Library." *TechCrunch*.
TechCrunch, 13 October 2013. Web. 12 May 2016.

The following is excerpted from an article posted on the Web site of an online publisher of technology industry news.

It's hard for me to even remember the last time I was in a library. I was definitely in one this past summer in Europe—on a historical tour. Before that, I think it was when I was in college. But even then, ten years ago, the internet was replacing the need to go to a library. And now, with e-books, I'm guessing the main reason to go to a library on a college campus is simply because it's a quiet place to study. . . .

The point is, times have changed. And things continue to change with increasing speed. So where does that leave libraries?

Undoubtedly, some of the largest, most prestigious libraries will live on. But the people lurking in them may increasingly look like Gandalf in the bowels of Minas Tirith looking through the scrolls of Isildur.*

Meanwhile, some other spaces currently known as libraries may live on as cultural and/or learning centers. Others like the notion of using libraries as some sort of newfangled technology demo pits. Tablets over here! 3D printers over here! One article even likened them to Apple Stores. . . .

All of these prospects for the future of libraries sound nice on paper (figuratively, not literally, of course). But I'm also worried that some of us are kidding ourselves. These theoretical places are not libraries in the ways that any of us currently think of libraries.

That's the thing: it seems that nearly everyone is actually in agreement that libraries, as we currently know them, are going away. But no one wants to admit it because calling for the end of libraries seems about as popular as the Dewey Decimal System.

It's almost like some people want to interpret anyone talking about the end of libraries as talking about the end of learning—and, by extension, the end of civilization. The reality is that learning has evolved. It's now easier than ever to look something up. And the connected world has far better access to basically infinitely more information than can be found in even the largest library—or all of them *combined*. This is all a good thing. A very good thing. Maybe the *best* thing in the history of our civilization. Yet we retain this romantic notion of libraries as cultural touchstones. Without them, we're worried we'll be lost and everything will fall apart.

So we're coming up with all these other ways to try to keep these buildings open. Co-working spaces! Media labs. Art galleries? We'll see. But it's impossible to see a world where we keep libraries open simply to pretend they still serve a purpose for which they no longer serve.

I'm sorry I have to be the one to write this. I have nothing but fond memories of libraries from my youth. Of course, I also have fond memories of bookstores. And we all know how that has turned out. . . .

* Gandalf is a fictional wizard and Isildur a fictional king in J. R. R. Tolkien's "Middle-earth" stories and novels. Minas Tirith is a fictional city and castle located in Middle-earth.

Techcrunch.com

Source F

American Library Association. *The 2012 State of America's Libraries Report*. American Library Association, April 2012. Web. 27 June 2014.

The following is excerpted from a report by the American Library Association.

Libraries persevere through cumulative, ongoing funding cuts

Overall, funding for public libraries continues to be suppressed in 2011–2012 budgets, with 5% more states reporting decreased state funding for public libraries than in 2010–2011. The cumulative impact of cuts to public library funding at the state and local levels since 2008–2009 has led public libraries to continuous budget-rebalancing and tough choices regarding continuity of services.

An online survey of chief officers of state library agencies in November 2011 elicited responses from 49 of 50 states and the District of Columbia. Among the findings:

- Twenty-three states reported cuts in state funding for public libraries from 2010–2011 to 2011–2012. For three years in a row, more than 40% of participating states have reported decreased public library funding.
- Only two states reported increased funding, but one did so with a caveat. This state had experienced two cuts the previous year, followed by a legislative action to reset its program to a lower funding level.
- Seven states and the District of Columbia do not provide state funding.
- Sixteen states reported there had been no change in funding from 2010–2011 to 2011–2012.
- Only nine states anticipated decreased funding for 2012–2013 — 21% of last year's respondents, compared with 37% of the previous year's. That may be the light at the end of the tunnel . . . or a train coming.

Used with permission from the American Library Association. www.ala.org

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Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

Inside:

- ✓ Free Response Question 1
- ✓ Scoring Guideline
- ✓ Student Samples
- ✓ Scoring Commentary

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2017 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

General Directions: This scoring guide is designed so that the same performance expectations are applied to all student responses. It will be useful for most of the essays, but if it seems inappropriate for a specific essay, assistance should be sought from the Table Leader. The Table Leader should always be shown books that seem to have no response or that contain responses that seem unrelated to the question. A score of 0 or — should not be assigned without this consultation.

The essay's score should reflect an evaluation of the essay as a whole. Students had only 15 minutes to read the sources and 40 minutes to write; the essay, therefore, is not a finished product and should not be judged according to standards appropriate for an out-of-class assignment. The essay should be evaluated as a draft, and students should be rewarded for what they do well. The evaluation should focus on the evidence and explanations that the student uses to support the response; students should not be penalized for taking a particular perspective.

All essays, even those scored 8 or 9, may contain occasional lapses in analysis, prose style, or mechanics. Such features should enter into the holistic evaluation of an essay's overall quality. In no case should a score higher than a 2 be given to an essay with errors in grammar and mechanics that persistently interfere with understanding of meaning.

9 – Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for the score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in development, or impressive in their control of language.

8 – Effective

Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** develop a position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future. They develop their position by effectively synthesizing* at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations appropriately and convincingly support the student's position. The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

7 – Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for the score of 6 but provide more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

6 – Adequate

Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** develop a position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future. They develop their position by adequately synthesizing at least three of the sources. The evidence and explanations appropriately and sufficiently support the student's position. The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 – Essays earning a score of 5 develop a position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future. They develop their position by synthesizing at least three sources, but the evidence and explanations used to support that position may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The student's argument is generally clear, and the sources generally develop the student's position, but the links between the sources and the argument may be strained. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas.

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2017 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1 (continued)

4 – Inadequate

Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** develop a position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future. They develop their position by synthesizing at least two sources, but that position may be inappropriately, insufficiently, or unconvincingly supported by the evidence and explanations used. The sources may dominate the student's attempts at development, the link between the argument and the sources may be weak, or the student may misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify the sources. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may be inconsistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

3 – Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for the score of 4 but demonstrate less success in developing a position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the sources, or the evidence and explanations used may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

2 – Little Success

Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in developing a position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future. They may merely allude to knowledge gained from reading the sources rather than citing the sources themselves. The student may misread the sources, fail to develop a position, or substitute a simpler task by merely summarizing or categorizing the sources or by merely responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated or inaccurate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control.

1 – Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for the score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, weak in their control of writing, or do not allude to or cite even one source.

0 – Indicates an off-topic response, one that merely repeats the prompt, an entirely crossed-out response, a drawing, or a response in a language other than English.

— Indicates an entirely blank response.

* For the purposes of scoring, synthesis means using sources to develop a position and citing them accurately.

Sample 1A

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 Benjamin 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 E-books for digital readers (Source B).

Public libraries are also known for their incredible resources and librarians. In the past, when working on a project, students would frequent the public library, 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 computer 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, one of the most fundamental but often overlooked resources 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 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 E). 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 people will be able to adapt to new technology on their own without assistance, and libraries can take on a new role in service 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 adopted. The changing world is an opportunity for public libraries to take on an additional role in the community.

Sample 1B

Throughout my elementary and middle school years, I spent almost every day in the school library. It was my place to go for school research, interact with my librarian, and to seek out the biggest book I could find. While I may not take a trip to the book section of my school library very often now, I of course still have my own connection to the local library in my town. There are endless possibilities for what the future of libraries holds. For as long as public libraries stand, they will continue to be a bedrock for communities to exchange information and encourage discussion, to allow 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, said that "an informed public constitutes the very foundation of a democracy." In a democracy, we are allowed the freedom of expression, and are encouraged 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 book. It's important to have this backbone to rely on in your community. To sit down in a library and solve and understand the issues that you may be facing.

Today's very young children don't carry around E-books or laptops; they don't sit in their bed 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 "1000 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 Mondays" and "Environmental Club" help 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? It's unfair to those who don't make more than \$30,000 a year, or are unemployed, to have possibly their careers and only source of internet 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 said 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 the sound of education and the love of books.

Libraries will always be valuable to our society. Without them, we would be at a great loss. They are changing every day as our society changes, and they will forever be the cornerstones of democracy in our communities.

Sample 1C

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, graphs, budget cuts, and the use of libraries in today's society.

Libraries cannot stay relevant with the increasing demand for e-books and online activity. It's stated that "libraries are finding creative ways to meet demands" (Source C), but how so? When citizens of the community, ages 16-65+, were asked about attending the library and receiving 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 significant budget cuts and being able to access "more information" online than in "all libraries combined" (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 Library," recalls, "it's 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, but there are also not many using print books either. In a survey of people aged 16 and over, in two-thirds of the categories, they preferred e-books over print books (Source D). This use of e-books over print books results in the decreasing relevance of libraries, which adds to their perceived 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 at libraries, it is observed that the use of libraries is decreasing, therefore, becoming non-existent in the future.

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2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Overview

As in past years, Question 1, the synthesis question, asked students to compose an argument using at least three of the sources provided as well as the students' own knowledge of the world. In other words, the purpose of the question was to see how well students can integrate other people's arguments into their own. Additionally, the question intended to see if students can cite, either parenthetically or textually, ideas other than their own. The students' arguments should be original, not repeated summaries of the arguments within the sources. Within the students' responses, the students' positions should drive the responses' logic. The sources should either provide evidence for the students' claims or create an intellectual dialogue in which the students' arguments participate. In other words, students do not necessarily have to agree with the sources; students can argue with the sources. However, in so doing, students need to analyze the strength of the sources provided, and if students cite and disagree with a source, mere contradiction or denial of the source's position is inadequate. Specifically, this year's synthesis question asked students to develop a position on the role, if any, that public libraries should serve in the future. For the purposes of scoring, "synthesis means using sources to develop a position and cite them accurately" (Scoring Guide). Students seemed to find the prompt accessible and most had much to say.

Sample: 1A

Score: 8

This essay effectively develops an appropriate and convincing position, describing the present moment as "a new opportunity for libraries to become even more prevalent in our lives and adapt to the changing times." The student uses four sources and effectively synthesizes them into the argument. In the second paragraph, the student's treatment of Sources A and B argues convincingly that public libraries have a long history of adaptation to changing times, thus making it "perfectly feasible to hope that [they] will be able to persevere for a long time." The third and fourth paragraphs effectively synthesize material from Sources C and D to argue for the library's crucial role as a mediating "bridge" between "'old' and 'new'" technological worlds, providing access and mentorship for populations that may otherwise be left behind: "Libraries will serve as a community resource to help people adapt to the digital technology and information that may still be confusing for many." While not flawless, the essay's prose consistently demonstrates control of a wide range of elements of effective writing.

Sample: 1B

Score: 6

This essay adequately develops the position that libraries "will always be valuable to our society," sufficiently synthesizing three sources to do so. The essay opens with a personal anecdote, which appropriately leads to a clearly stated thesis that ends the first paragraph. Despite some repetitive language, the second paragraph makes adequate use of Source A to argue for public libraries as a community resource for accessing and sharing information. The third paragraph further develops this idea, using Source B to adequately argue for the library's role in community outreach (e.g., "Events . . . helps [*sic*] other members of the community to stay educated and share the information they have learned with others"). The fourth paragraph appropriately uses Source C to demonstrate the library's crucial role in providing access to underserved populations (e.g., "Not everyone is as fortunate to access technology in their own home"). Overall, the essay develops and sustains an argument that is somewhat repetitious but ultimately sufficient and adequate. The student shows an understanding of the sources, and the prose is generally clear despite some lapses.

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2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1 (continued)

Sample: 1C

Score: 3

This essay meets the criteria for a 4 but demonstrates less success in developing a position. The opening paragraph contains an imprecise restatement of the prompt (“Although it is sad but true, e-books are taking over”) and four overly broad terms for discussion (“statistics, graphs, budget cuts, and the use of libraries in today’s society”). The second and third paragraphs string together a series of quotes and paraphrased sources, an indication of how much the sources dominate the student’s attempt at development; what little explanation appears (mostly in the third paragraph), however, is especially limited and simplistic (e.g., “Because of the efficiency of e-books, there is no use for a library”). The essay uses four sources and shows some understanding of them but demonstrates less success in developing them in support of a position. The prose also shows less maturity in control of writing than that of an essay scored a 4.