



lingoda

The future of libraries

READING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_4067R_EN

LANGUAGE
English



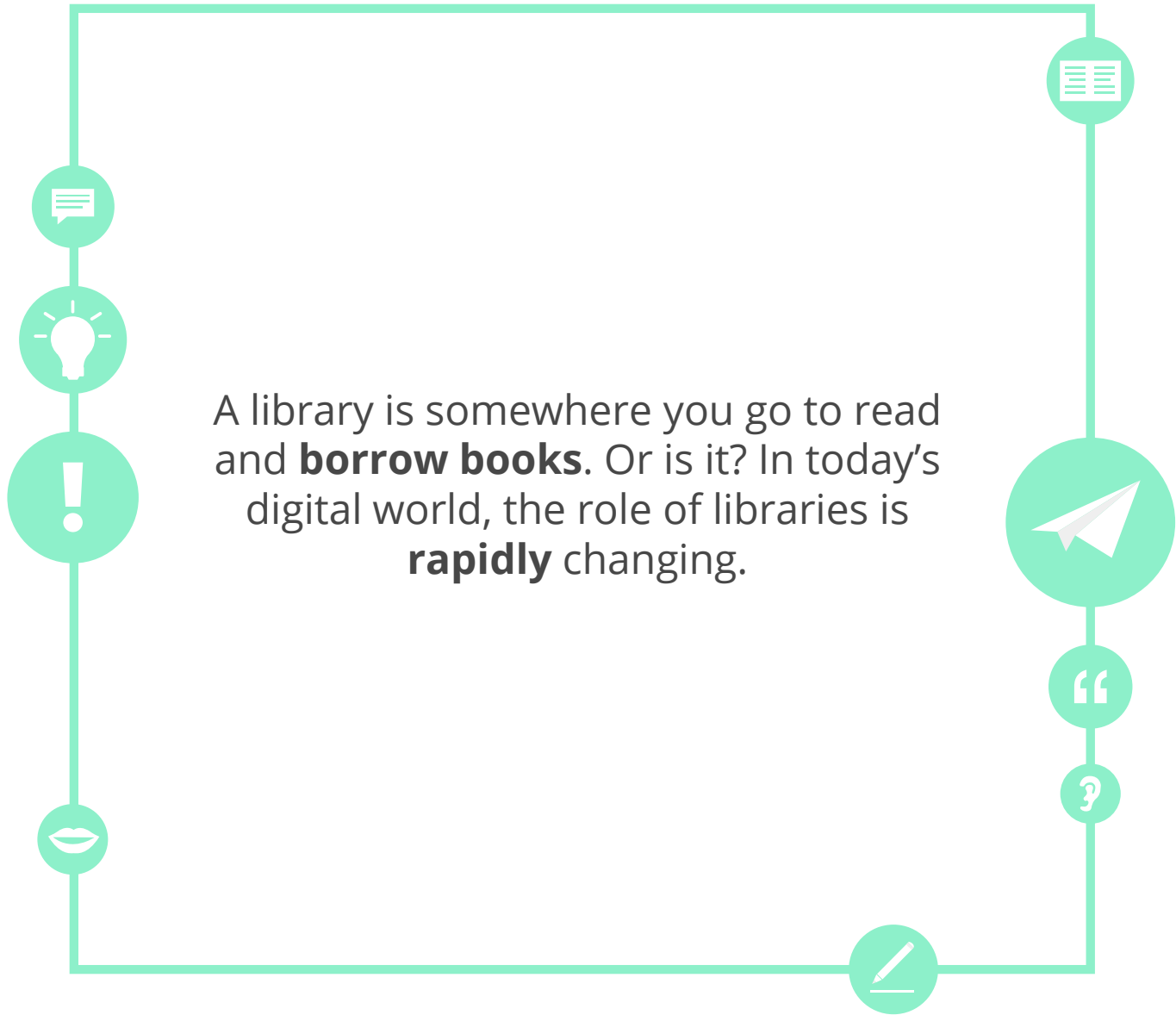


Goals

- Can read and understand a complex text about the concept of a library.
- Can explain the role a library plays in today's society and evaluate some new concepts for it.



A library is somewhere you go to read and **borrow books**. Or is it? In today's digital world, the role of libraries is **rapidly** changing.





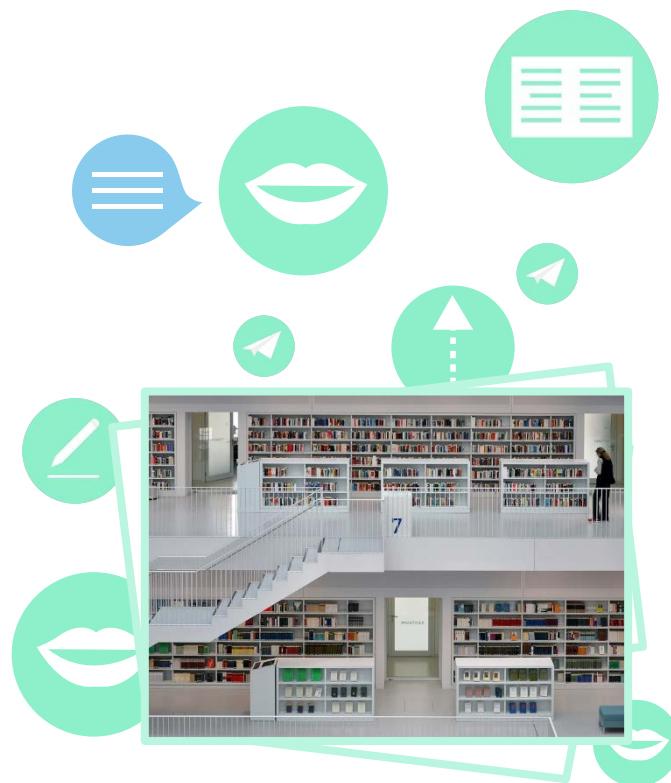
What is a library?

Read the definition below. Do you agree with it? Explain your answer.

//

A library is a place containing items such as books and **periodicals** that can be borrowed by either the **public** or members of a specific **institution** (e.g. a university).

//





Which of these items would you expect to find in a library?

e-readers

co-working spaces

Wi-Fi

café

beanbags

roof garden

meeting rooms

printers

24/7 service



Discuss with your teacher

**When was the last time you went to a library?
Why did you go?**





Libraries today

Traditionally, we think of a library as a place to read and borrow books. In today's world, libraries can be seen as almost **obsolete**: in our increasingly digital world where most information can be found **at the click of a button**, there does not seem to be any real need for libraries. In fact, library visits in the UK are declining **at a rapid rate**, and 105 libraries closed in 2016 alone.

However, the most popular libraries in the UK receive over one million visitors **annually**. Birmingham Library, for example, received 1.6 million visitors in 2016, making it one of the most popular attractions outside London. The question is: what are these popular libraries doing differently?



Libraries today

Thinking of libraries as dark, dusty places full of old books and **archives** only considers one role of the library. However, libraries do not merely lend books. Libraries are also often used as a study, work or creative space, **equipped with** technology such as computers, Wi-Fi, printers and scanners, as well as desks and **bookable** meeting rooms. This makes them particularly useful for students who need somewhere quiet to study or who need somewhere to work on a group project.

Many libraries are now **catering to** students by **implementing** measures such as **24/7** opening hours. Some libraries are also making **cutbacks** to their **collections** in order to make more room for **collaborative work spaces**.



Libraries today

Libraries also play a **societal role** within the **community**. Many libraries **host** community events, particularly ones relating to books or aimed at children, and library cafés allow libraries to become social meeting places. Libraries are also often **centres of education**, providing adult education classes, **job-seeking** assistance and training opportunities.





What do these words mean?

societal role

to implement

archive

to make cutbacks
to

obsolete

to be equipped
with



Write three sentences

Now that you know what these words and phrases mean, choose three of them and write a sentence for each one.

societal role

to implement

archive

to make
cutbacks to

obsolete

to be equipped
with

A notebook page with horizontal lines and faint circular icons, intended for writing sentences.



Share your opinion

**What do you think of
libraries being open
24/7?**

necessary

waste of money

encourages
library use



Share your opinion

**Do you think it is
acceptable that some
libraries are spending
less money on books
and more money on
cafés and work spaces?**



co-working



social meeting place



The design of libraries

The traditional image of the library is that of a **shadowy**, silent room full of dusty books, yet the **interior** of many libraries today is actually quite different. Most libraries in the UK are light and airy and have modern interiors. **Library users** are sometimes **provided with** sofas and beanbags so that they have the most comfortable experience possible.

In general, libraries often try to **create an atmosphere** that is pleasant for library users and therefore encourages them to stay longer.





The design of libraries



For some libraries, the interior and **architectural design** is the main way in which they attract visitors. Birmingham Library in the UK was recently built after the old library was **demolished** and completely redesigned. The architect was even chosen via an international design competition run by the Royal Institute of British Architects.

The new design includes a **book rotunda**, a huge circular space in the middle of the library with shelves of books covering the wall, and two roof gardens with views over the city. As well as making the library a tourist attraction, this **revitalised** design has arguably **revived** the role of the library within Birmingham's local community.



Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps with the correct preposition. If you are unsure of the answers, read the *Libraries today* and *The design of libraries* texts again.

1. Libraries are often equipped _____ technology.
2. Many libraries cater _____ students.
3. Some libraries are making cutbacks _____ their collections.
4. Library users are sometimes provided _____ sofas.





Talk about where you are from

We've mostly talked about libraries in the UK. What are libraries like in your country? Are they more modern or traditional?





Share your opinion

Do you think the architecture or interior design of a library is important? Write a short text justifying your answer.

Personally, I consider the interior design of a library to be of the utmost important because...





Share your opinion

Which roles do you think libraries play in today's society? Use the examples below to help you.

providers of comfortable reading spaces

tourist attractions

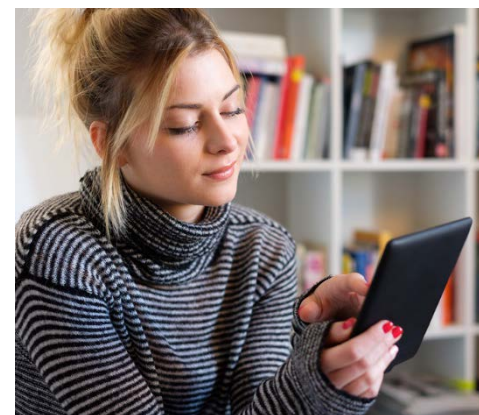
education providers

community centres



Libraries and technology

The more libraries **adapt** to today's digital society, the more they are thought of as places that allow local communities to access technology and that help increase **digital literacy**. Libraries are increasingly becoming **hubs of technology**, not only by **providing access for** library users but also by making use of new technologies for learning, research and information, such as advanced **digital data management**. Other recent **technological innovations**, like e-books and self-service machines for returning and borrowing, are also regularly seen in libraries.





Libraries and technology



The structure of libraries is rapidly changing. This **begs the question**: would people miss more traditional-style libraries if they were to disappear completely? In fact, studies have shown that, while e-books are **on the rise**, printed books still dominate reading. Perhaps it is possible that, as technology becomes ever-more **pervasive** in our everyday lives, people will begin to miss the places where you can be surrounded by books and escape from technology.



Grammar

Did you notice these phrases in the texts? Explain the difference to your teacher. Use at least four examples in your explanation.

to provide someone *with* something

- Libraries **provide** library users **with** sofas.

to provide something *for* someone

- Libraries **provide** sofas **for** library users.



Have you ever used any of these in a library or on a library's website? Describe your experience of using the items below.

self-service
machines

book delivery
service

borrowable
laptops

free Wi-Fi

e-books

an app to borrow
books



Share your opinion

**How can libraries
adapt to today's
changing world?
Should they
implement the
things mentioned
on the previous
page?**



borrowable
laptops



free Wi-Fi



Roleplay

Debate with your teacher or classmate: what should the library of the future look like?



Student A (or teacher): You believe that libraries should be paperless in the future. You also think that libraries should be as technologically advanced as possible.



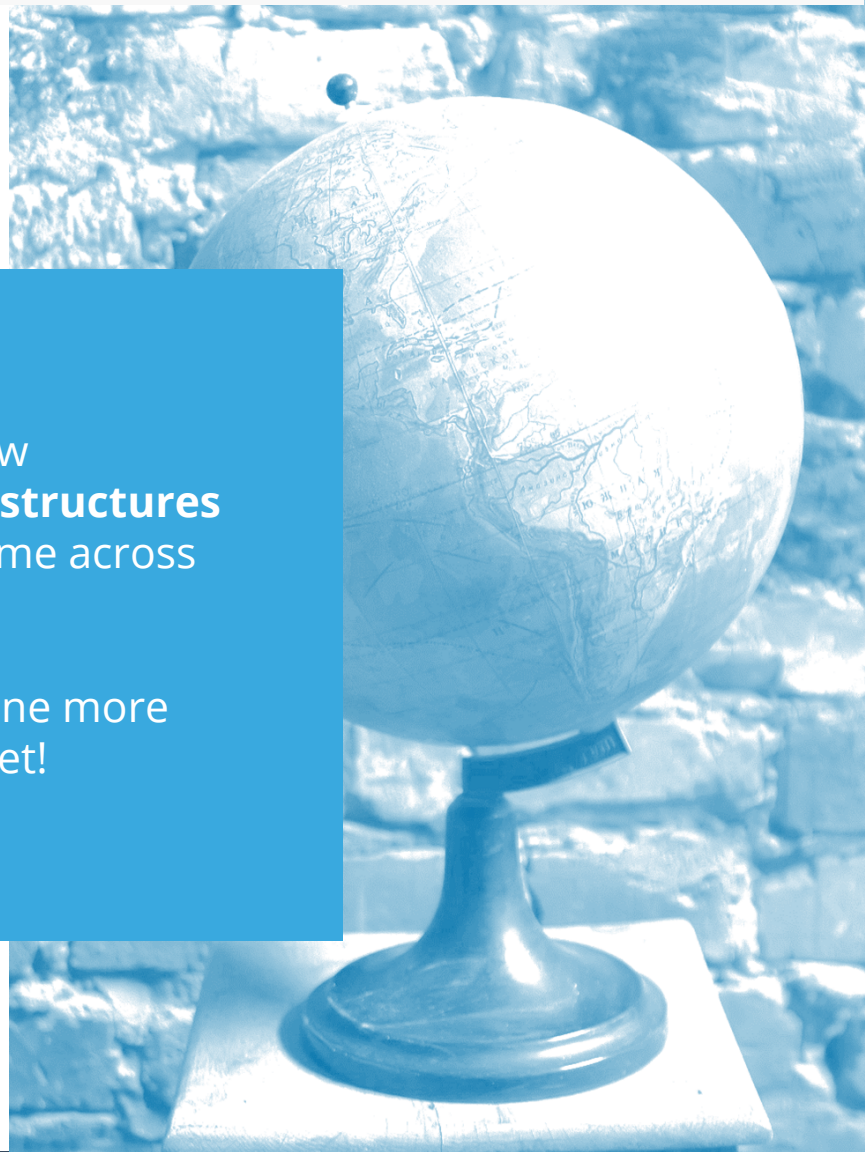
Student B (or teacher): You believe that a library should always contain lots of books. Additionally, you are against any further implementation of technology in libraries.



Reflect on this lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!

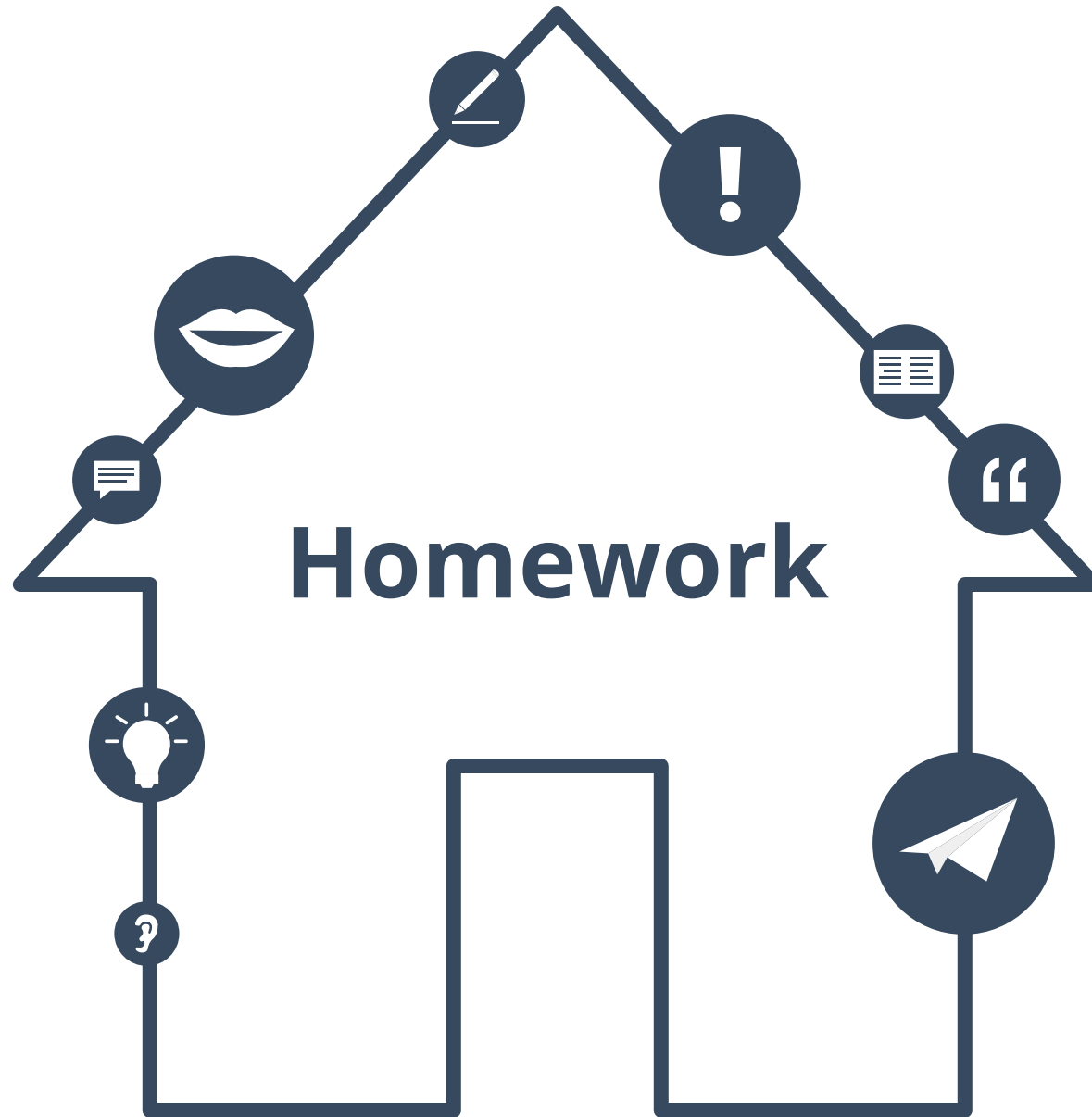




Answer key

p. 16

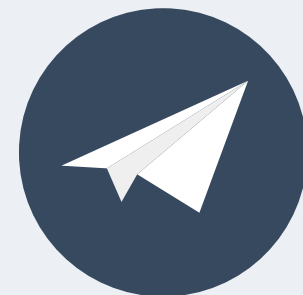
1. Libraries are often equipped **with** technology.
2. Many libraries cater **to** students.
3. Some libraries are making cutbacks **to** their collections.
4. Library users are sometimes provided **with** sofas.





List some pros and cons of paperless libraries

Pros	Cons





What would you do?

If you needed a book, would you go to a library, buy it from a bookshop or buy it online? Justify your answer in at least 200 words.

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