Mountain View Public Library

User Guide

Welcome to Mountain View Public Library! We have a vast collection of fiction and non-fiction items. Additionally, we offer special events and classes through the year on a variety of topics. If you’re new to using a library, sign up for a 45-minute library tour. The tour is offered once a week.

Obtain a Library Card

If you haven’t yet done so, you should fill out an application for a library card. Even young children can get their own cards. With your library card number, you can access your complete account online. You’ll be able to conduct searches, put materials on hold for pickup within the next two weeks, see which materials you have checked out and when they are due, renew materials, and much more. You can even set your profile to send you email alerts three days prior to when an item is due.

Materials must be returned before the library closes on the day they are due. Items returned after the due dates are considered overdue and a fine starts accruing immediately. Fines stop accruing when the item is returned. Most items can be borrowed for three weeks, with the exception of new release DVDs and CDs, which can be borrowed for two weeks. Items can be renewed repeatedly as long as no one has placed a hold request on them. If there is a hold request, the renewal will be denied.

Organization of Material

When you begin browsing the library’s bookshelves, you’ll notice that fiction books are arranged in alphabetical order, while each non-fiction book includes a number on its spine. This number is based on the Dewey Decimal System, which was invented by Melville Dewey. These numbers and letters are used to organize topics at the library.

When you look up an item on the computer or ask a librarian to locate it, notice the numbers and letters that identify that item. Then find the area in the library where that number is located. Each topic has a certain number combination that is the start of each identification number within the section. For example, the number for “Mammals” is 599, so all books about dogs start with 599. Books aren’t the only materials in the library that are marked with numbers—cassettes, CDs, DVDs, and videos all have numbers, too.

Searching for Items

If you’re not sure what you’re looking for, you can just enjoy a leisurely stroll through the library, or you can check out the New Releases shelf. There is also a New Releases section on the library’s website.

One of the easiest ways to find an item is to search on the computer, either at home or in the library. You can browse by subject or search by title, author, or subject. If you are not certain how something is spelled, use the Find It feature on the library’s website. It has been programmed to help find items even if they are misspelled.

If you are looking for a specific issue of a newspaper or magazine or a specific article, you’ll need to know the title and date of the magazine. To view a magazine or newspaper that is more than 20 years old, you may have to use microfilm, which will require some help from a librarian.

Researching Material

Libraries are often used for school research projects. An encyclopedia would be a great place to start. Write down lists of people, places, and events related to your subject, plus any related subjects or book lists. Then consider the requirements of your project:

* How many pages do you need to write?
* How many and what type of resources are you supposed to use?
* Do you need to make a bibliography?

Bring your instructor’s assignment with you to the library. Give yourself plenty of time to do your research, and remember to consult resources other than just books. There is a fee if you need to make copies or print documents.

Computer Access

The branches of Mountain View Public Library are also wonderful places to bring your laptop and do work or conduct research. We have many comfortable desks and chairs. We offer free wireless access. Be aware that the wireless network is not completely secure. Information sent to or from your laptop can be captured by someone else with a wireless device. The library is not responsible for any loss of information or damage to your laptop or PDA that might result from using the wireless network.

All branches of the Mountain View Public Library also have computer stations where you can work online. There is a signup sheet near the computers. If there are people waiting, the librarian may issue a time limit.

Community Events

You might be surprised to learn that the library is more than just a place to read and check out books, CDs, DVDs, magazines, and newspapers. Many events are hosted by the library nearly every day, for all ages and interests. You can either click the Events Calendar on the library’s website or pick up this month’s flyer at your local branch.

The library branches also have several meeting rooms that can be used by the community when not already in use by the library. These are generally intended for civic and cultural activities presented by non-profit organizations. Please submit an application to the library if you want to reserve a room.