

Borrowing More Than Books

B1 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary + Discussion | 50-60 minutes

BEFORE YOU READ

Talk with a partner. Think about things you own but use only a few times each year. Would you prefer to borrow some of them? Why or why not?

1. Match the words (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

- | | | |
|---------------|-------|--|
| 1. borrow | _____ | A. keep something in good condition |
| 2. membership | _____ | B. all the people living together in one home |
| 3. household | _____ | C. use or throw away something carelessly or unnecessarily |
| 4. affordable | _____ | D. take and use something for a time, then return it |
| 5. maintain | _____ | E. not too expensive for most people |
| 6. waste | _____ | F. the state of belonging to a group or organisation |

2. Read the article. The bold words are the vocabulary from Activity 1.

1. Most people have objects at home that they use very rarely: a drill for putting up a shelf, a tent for one holiday, or a carpet cleaner after a party. Buying these things can feel necessary at the time. Later, they sit in a cupboard for years. A growing number of communities are asking a simple question: do we all need to own everything we use?

2. A Library of Things works like a normal library, but it lends objects instead of books. Members can **borrow** tools, kitchen equipment, games, camping gear and many other useful items. Some libraries are run by local councils, while others are organised by volunteers. The basic idea is that one useful object can serve many people instead of one **household**.

3. For members, the service can be more **affordable** than buying an item for a single job. A family might borrow a cake tin for a birthday, for example, or a person moving home might borrow a trolley. The service can also help people try an activity before they spend money on their own equipment. A low annual **membership** fee often covers basic costs.

4. Running the library is not always easy. Objects must be checked, cleaned and returned on time. Someone has to **maintain** the tools, arrange repairs and deal with lost items. Libraries also need enough popular items, so that people do not have to wait too long. However, supporters say these practical problems are worth solving because shared objects can reduce **waste** and save storage space in small homes.

5. A Library of Things will not replace every shop. People may still want to own items they use every day. But it offers another choice for occasional needs. More importantly, it can bring neighbours into contact with one another. When people borrow, return and talk about useful objects, a simple service can become part of a stronger local community.

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UNDERSTAND, DISCUSS AND WRITE

3. Comprehension. Answer in complete sentences. Use the article to help you.

1. What question are communities asking in Paragraph 1?

2. How is a Library of Things different from a normal library?

3. Give two examples of why a member might borrow an item.

4. What work is needed to run a Library of Things?

5. According to the article, what benefit can the library have beyond saving money and space?

4. Discuss. Talk in small groups. Give reasons and examples.

- Which three things would be most useful to borrow in your area?
- Would you trust other people to return borrowed items in good condition? Why or why not?
- Should a Library of Things be free, or should members pay a small fee?
- What other services could a local library offer besides books?

5. Homework: Write an opinion paragraph.

Would a Library of Things work in your town, school or neighbourhood? Write 120-150 words. Explain what people could borrow, how the service could be organised, and one possible problem with your solution.

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ANSWER KEY AND TEACHING NOTE

Vocabulary matching

1. borrow - D
2. membership - F
3. household - B
4. affordable - E
5. maintain - A
6. waste - C

Comprehension answers

1. What question are communities asking in Paragraph 1?

They are asking whether everyone needs to own everything they use.

2. How is a Library of Things different from a normal library?

It lends useful objects such as tools and equipment instead of books.

3. Give two examples of why a member might borrow an item.

A member might borrow an item for a single job, such as making a cake or moving home, or try an activity before buying equipment.

4. What work is needed to run a Library of Things?

Items must be checked, cleaned, returned on time and repaired when necessary. The library also needs enough popular items.

5. According to the article, what benefit can the library have beyond saving money and space?

It can bring neighbours into contact and help build a stronger local community.

Teaching note

Compare vocabulary answers before reading. Help learners plan a borrowing service: useful items, organisation and a possible problem. Accept accurate comprehension paraphrases and supported personal responses.