



Public Places and Services

Note-taking: mobile library vans | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. Who might find it difficult to visit a library building?
2. What services should a modern library offer?
3. Can a van be a useful public service?
4. How could libraries encourage teenagers to read more?

Exercise 3 at a glance

In this activity, you will read one factual text and complete notes using information from the text. In the exam, this task is usually worth 7 marks. This practice version includes extra notes to help you build confidence. Use short words or phrases from the text, not your own ideas.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the text. Why do some areas use mobile library vans?

Mobile Library Vans

Mobile library vans visit villages, housing estates and care homes where people cannot easily reach a library building. They bring books, digital support and community information to residents who might otherwise miss out. Some vans follow a weekly route, while others visit schools or community events on request. The service is especially useful in areas with limited public transport. For older residents, the regular visit can become part of the week. Some people choose books quickly, while others stay to ask questions, talk to staff or find out about local activities.

The van usually carries a small but carefully chosen collection. There may be picture books, exam revision guides, large-print novels and books in different languages. Librarians also take requests, so a reader can ask for a book to be delivered on the next visit. Because space is limited, popular items change regularly. This keeps the collection fresh without making the van too crowded. The service can also support schools. A van may visit before holidays so students can borrow books for independent reading. Librarians sometimes prepare topic boxes linked to history, science or exam revision.

Modern mobile libraries offer more than reading materials. Staff may help people fill in online forms, download e-books or book appointments for local services. Some vans provide Wi-Fi for students who need to complete homework. Others run short storytelling sessions for young children or reading groups for older residents. These activities make the van feel like a small community centre. Digital support is increasingly important because many services have moved online. Residents may need help resetting a password, finding a council form or understanding how to use an e-book app safely.

There are practical challenges. Vans need fuel, repairs, trained staff and safe places to park. Bad weather can delay visits, and narrow roads may limit which areas can be reached. Librarians also need to advertise the timetable clearly so residents know when the van will arrive. When the service is reliable, it can reduce isolation and keep learning accessible for people of different ages. Mobile libraries are most successful when communities trust the timetable. If visits are cancelled often, people stop waiting for the van. Clear communication, reliable routes and friendly staff are therefore as important as the books themselves. Feedback forms help staff adjust routes when demand changes.

3. Strategy focus

Group services by user need

A mobile service may help different groups in different ways. Use the note heading to decide which detail is needed.

4. Practice note-taking task

Complete the notes using information from the text. Use short words or phrases from the text. Do not add your own ideas.

Notes	Write short answers
Places vans may visit	- - -
Books and materials carried	- - -
Digital and community support	- - -
Practical challenges	- - -

5. Vocabulary notebook

Underline five useful words or phrases from the text. Check their meaning, then record them in your vocabulary notebook.

6. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: Which group in your area would benefit most from a mobile library?
2. Strategy: Choose three answers and decide which user need each one supports.
3. Writing: Write a short notice about a mobile library visit.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to libraries, public services and access.

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Note-taking: mobile library vans

2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: to bring books, digital support and community information to people who cannot easily reach a library building.

4. Practice note-taking task

Places vans may visit

- villages
- housing estates
- care homes

Books and materials carried

- picture books
- exam revision guides
- large-print novels

Digital and community support

- fill in online forms
- download e-books
- book appointments for local services

Practical challenges

- fuel
- repairs
- safe places to park

Notes for checking

This is an extended practice version of the IGCSE ESL note-taking task. The live exam normally has fewer marks, but this version includes extra notes to build confidence and selection skills.

Accept short phrases that keep the same meaning.

Learners should avoid copying a whole sentence if a shorter note answers the heading.

Some answers need more than one or two words, especially when the key detail is a phrase.