



# Public Places and Services

Multiple choice: public services | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

## 1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. What services should a modern library provide?
2. Do people still need public libraries?
3. How can public spaces help teenagers?
4. What makes a place feel welcoming?

### Exercise 4 at a glance

Read one longer text and answer six multiple-choice questions. Choose A, B or C. The correct answer may depend on attitude, purpose or a detail across a whole paragraph, not just one matching word.

## 2. Read for overall understanding

Read the article. What did Nina realise about the new library?

### A library that changed its role

by Nina Costa

When our town library closed for renovation, I did not understand why people complained. I used the internet for homework and rarely borrowed books. Six months later, the library reopened with glass doors, a small cafe and posters about digital workshops. I expected it to feel less like a real library and more like an office. Instead, it made me notice how many different people needed the same public space for different reasons. The posters made the building look busy before I had even stepped inside, which challenged my old idea of libraries as places where nothing much changed.

The biggest change was the study area for teenagers. Before the renovation, students were often told to be quiet or move away from the children's section. Now there were tables with charging points and a booking system during exam weeks. It was not perfect; the room became crowded after school, and some students used it mainly to chat. But it was still the first place in town where teenagers were clearly expected, not merely tolerated. Having to book during exam weeks also made the space feel fairer, because one group could not simply occupy every table for hours.

My grandmother liked the new library for a different reason. She attended a workshop about using online health services, which helped her book appointments without asking my mother every time. I had assumed such workshops were basic, but she said the patient instructor made her feel less foolish. That changed my view of public services. A service is not only useful if it is advanced; sometimes it is useful because it helps people do ordinary tasks independently. It also reminded me that digital services are only useful if people have somewhere to learn how to use them.

Some residents missed the old library. They said the cafe made it noisier and that too many computers had replaced shelves. I understood their complaint when I wanted a quiet corner and found a group practising interview questions. But the librarians had kept one silent room, and they said borrowing had actually increased because more people were entering the building. The library had not abandoned books; it had found more ways to bring people in. The complaint was not silly; it showed that improving a public place often means deciding which needs can exist beside each other.

Now I use the library more than before. Sometimes I borrow a book, sometimes I print homework, and sometimes I meet classmates to revise. The building is not as silent as the old one, but perhaps silence was never the only purpose. A good public place has to serve people whose needs do not all match. That is difficult, but it is also why the library feels alive. I now think the renovation succeeded because it added uses without completely removing the old ones.

### 3. Strategy focus

#### Track a change in thinking

Some questions ask how the writer's view changes. Compare what the writer thought at first with what they understand later.

### 4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

For each question, choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

#### Question 1

Why did Nina initially not understand complaints about the library closure?

- A She thought the old building was unsafe.
- B She preferred studying in cafes.
- C She did not use the library very much.

#### Question 2

What does Nina suggest about the teenage study area?

- A It solved all behaviour problems after school.
- B It made teenagers feel included in the public space.
- C It was designed mainly for younger children.

#### Question 3

Why does Nina mention her grandmother's workshop?

- A to show that simple support can increase independence
- B to argue that health services should leave libraries
- C to prove that older people prefer online appointments

#### Question 4

What is Nina's view of residents who missed the old library?

- A She thinks they dislike young people.
- B She believes they never used the library before.
- C She partly understands their concern.

#### Question 5

How did librarians defend the changes?

- A The cafe paid for new books.
- B More people were entering and borrowing.
- C Computers were more important than shelves.

#### Question 6

What does Nina conclude about public places?

- A They must balance different needs.
- B They should always remain quiet.
- C They work best when one group uses them.

### 5. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: What public place in your area could be improved?
2. Strategy: For one difficult question, write the paragraph where you found the evidence.
3. Writing: Write suggestions for improving a library, park or sports centre.
4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to public services, facilities and community spaces.

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## 2. Read for overall understanding

Suggested answer: She realised that a library can be a flexible public service, not only a quiet place for books.

## 4. Exam-style multiple-choice questions

1. C; 2. B; 3. A; 4. C; 5. B; 6. A

1. C - She used the internet and rarely borrowed books.
2. B - Teenagers were expected there, not merely tolerated.
3. A - The workshop helped her grandmother manage ordinary tasks independently.
4. C - She understands when she wants quiet and finds interview practice.
5. B - They say borrowing increased because more people entered the building.
6. A - She says a good public place serves people with different needs.