

I Love My
LIBRARY
because there
I find

THE BEST
MOUSE COOKIE



The
Bigger
the
drop
the
louder
the
Plop.

Matti, age 4

My Love of a Public Library

In the warm folds of summer I seek refuge in the depths of the public library. Cool air hits my face, but this is not the reason I come. It relieves me to hear the musical notes of paper brushing paper and the closing of books. The heavenly smell of new untouched pages. Any thirst that I carry is quenched and I feel stronger than before.

I can retreat into another's world. I can sink into a chair and never be alone as the books are my companions. They seem to have empathy and they travel with me, faithful until the end. Creatures of fantasy leap from page to page. Mysteries creep through chapters. Action keeps you balancing on your toes. When you read you experience the wonders of the library; a place to rest from a long journey or the suspense of being so close to the answer.

Mere black-printed text becomes a gorgeous meadow or a stark battle field. The strategic words and rhythm inspire passion and imagination. It is so strange that one book can encourage the most hopeless people in life to be ambitious and do something with their lives. Reading and Writing have changed the course of history, both great and small.

The public library is a sanctuary for me. No mocking laughter and no "must do's" at all. The library is bliss. Our own school library seems depleted and we must read to earn points. What if you want to read a book but it isn't worth points? But here I can explore my limits and stretch my mind more than I can at school.

The atmosphere is wonderful in the library, the smiles, meaningless murmuring, and the widening of eyes. The laughter of innocent children that wander, not quite understanding the joy hidden throughout the proud shelves, warms my heart--to know that they will find love for some of the same things I do.

Imagine people treasuring their books; yet there are millions of people who cannot afford to have one and are robbed of that joy. Here anyone can explore the wonders of reading and ownership. The public library belongs to us all.

I can compare the library to many beautiful things but that would take too long so here is a poem I have written for the library.

Love, dreams, hope, and
Dangerous ideas;
Housed in a place so wonderfully strange.
The Buildings so often ordinary a face.
Without such places the world would fall
Into anger and despair, and
Into the unchanging human.
Inspiration comes from a sanctuary
Where a new future would originate:
The Library

Natalya, age 10

The Worlds within Words

Oh the library, our Sunday tradition. After church we would head over, and sit on the soft green grass and wait for the doors to be unlocked. As soon as the doors swung open, we would rush in and over to the children's books. In the beginning, we lived in the children's section, moving from children's book to children's book. From *Good Night Moon* to *Where The Wild Things Are*, from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to *The Giving Tree*. Each book was a new magical world I escaped to when my mom read them aloud. I always checked out the maximum number of books you possibly could, always wanting more. Sometimes even stashing books in secret places, just so I could make sure they were there the next Sunday. But as I grew I moved up to the next book section, exploring the next stage of growing up, the youth section. This held the short novels, *Junie B. Jones* and the *American Girl* books. I felt so grown up, reading the big kid books, I just liked sitting there, knowing I could actually read this many words. After awhile, yet again, the books began to seem shorter and shorter, and I moved up the idolized teen section. Oh, the mysterious books held there, they even were on a different floor than the children's books! The covers all beautifully illustrated, many books I checked out just for the covers, the saying, "You can't judge a book by its cover" did not apply to me.

Each section was a stage of growing up and maturing to me, like when you mark your height on the door frame, well the library was my door frame. I have spent countless hours within or outside the walls of my library, and it has made me love books. I love them for the papery smell, for the lovely covers, and for the magical worlds I escaped to. Those worlds were where I could go when I was bored with my everyday life. In the books, I could have wings, breathe underwater and travel the world in a few chapters. The library opened up a new world for me, and showed me worlds I could escape to, worlds within words.

Alex age 16

I Love My Library

I love my library because when I walk through the door, I get to decide who I want to be. In real life, I am a single mom, teacher, and grad student who likes to knit, cook, ski, hike, and walk my dog. But when I go to the library, I often shed my everyday skin for a few blessed moments and escape.

Sometimes I go to places that are wishful daydreams: I analyze a book of sweater patterns that would take thousands of dollars and millions of hours to knit; I flip through a cookbook that features ridiculously unhealthy desserts; I page through a magazine with exotic ski destinations and people doing crazy tricks on the hill that make others gawk jealously; I gaze at a beautiful sunrise and imagine that I am standing with my bare feet being licked by the gentle salty waves as a new day begins.

Sometimes I go to places that are blissful what-ifs: a moss-covered castle in Ireland; a safari in Africa with lions, elephants, and giraffes in plain sight; a stainless steel kitchen with everything neatly in its place; an effortless active and healthy lifestyle; a blooming garden with perfect flowers and succulent vegetables; a five-star hotel room with wine chilling on the table and a view of the ocean; a shaded tree house with a comfy reading chair.

And sometimes I keep my everyday skin at the door. These moments, too, are blessed. I help my kids find a book they heard about in school; I look for a resource to deepen my students' understanding of a topic in class; I take a moment to send an email to my parents back home; I watch toddlers playing on the literacy structure and older kids playing on the computers; I say, "Hey! How have YOU been?" to friends I haven't seen in a long time; I choose a CD that I would never buy, but reflects my mood of the moment; I post on the discussion board of my online class and comment on the reflections of a classmate; I scour for a fun and cheap crafty activity to try on the weekend with my kids; I indulge them with checking out as many books as they want; I find a non-fiction book about something I've always wanted to know more about; I grab a fiction book and hope that the vocabulary will be so rich that I'll need a dictionary at least once every other page.

But the best moments—the ones that make me love my library the most—are spent when I relax in a comfy spot flanked by my children and I read out loud an old favorite picture book or a new classic, and we are enveloped by love for each other and our love for reading. I hold on to those moments the most, because I know they won't be around much longer, but they will have a profound and lasting effect on us forever.

Jill, age 40

I Love My Library

I love my library because it is sanctuary.

Coming through the door of my library, I smell old paper drying in the air. Simply that smell causes me to remember the libraries, the sanctuaries, of my childhood.

I move to the stacks, for they are my barricade against the noise and confusion of other people making *their* day in the library. From ceiling to floor, the books are assembled in front of me and behind me, making a straight row to the far wall. Overhead, neon lights bounce a suffused light from metal racks and the spines of books. Here in the stacks, that old dry paper smell is stronger and then strongest when I pull a book from the shelf, sending the dust motes flying. I am neither hurried nor harried as the stacks open then close behind me as I move from one to another, pausing to open this book, then that book, then another, searching for the perfect book for that day, searching for *the* book, the one I will take home to comfort me there.

I love my library for it is a place where the chattering of the world is subdued so the whispering of the books may be heard. The sentinels of my sanctuary, the librarians, stand guard between me and those who would assault my safe haven with a lack of kindness or a lack of etiquette, but not from the abundance of noise from the children. My sanctuary is not so sacrosanct a place it would not include the laughter of children as they go about their discovery of why they love their library. The laughter of children in my sanctuary transports me in time to the libraries of my childhood where I, too, laughed out loud at the glory of the books and was shushed for speaking loudly to a friend of a wonderful find. I love my library in this day for it is a place where none shush the yelp of a child.

I love my library for it is the place I stand against the shadows of ignorance. The diversity of the books lining the shelves proves one vision is not more truthful than another. In sanctuary with my friends, the authors, I assert: those who choose the darkness of ignorance are vanquished by those who choose the bright noon-day sun of enlightenment. My library is sanctuary for me, but also it stands bastion against ignorance for all of us.

Finally, there is this: I love my library because it is shelter from being alone. Where there are books, there are people who love books. Where there are people who love books, there are people who love others. At that place, there is sanctuary, not loneliness.

I love my library.

Richard, age 62