

**CURRICULUM RESOURCE**

**Exploring Your Public Library: A Place for Information, Learning, and Community Support**

**OALCF ALIGNMENT**

Competency	Task Group	Level
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A1. Read continuous text	2
Competency A - Find and Use Information	A3. Extract information from films, broadcasts and presentations	N/A
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B1. Interact with others	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B2. Write continuous text	1
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B2. Write continuous text	2
Competency B - Communicate Ideas and Information	B3. Complete and create documents	2
Competency C - Understand and Use Numbers	C1. Manage money	1
Competency D - Use Digital Technology	N/A	2

**Goal Paths (check all that apply)**

- Employment
- Apprenticeship
- Secondary School Credit
- Postsecondary
- Independence

**Embedded Skills for Success (check all that apply)**

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity and innovation
- Digital
- Numeracy
- Problem-Solving
- Reading
- Writing

**NOTES:**

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The opinions expressed in this report are those of Community Literacy of Ontario and do not necessarily reflect those of our funders.

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# EXPLORING YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY A PLACE FOR INFORMATION, LEARNING, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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## Introduction – For Practitioners

**Exploring Your Public Library: A Place for Information, Learning, and Community Support** has been created to help learners understand that libraries are for THEM and that libraries are not just about books!

Libraries have many programs and services that meet adult learners' practical, creative, and community inclusion needs.

This curriculum resource covers the following topics:

- Welcome to Your Public Library
- Libraries: A Place for Information
- Libraries: A Place for Learning
- Libraries: A Place for Community Support



**Exploring Your Public Library: A Place for Information, Learning, and Community Support** embeds the Government of Canada's Skills for Success model. Tasks and activities are included that align with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework.

This curriculum resource was researched and written by Jette Cosburn and Joanne Kaattari for Community Literacy of Ontario in the autumn of 2023.

**This resource has been designed for learners with Level 2 skills.**

**Exploring Your Public Library** can be used by learners in various settings, including 1-to-1 tutoring, small groups, and classroom learning.

Practitioners are encouraged to supplement this resource with:

- discussions about learner experiences related to the subject matter
- examples that are culturally relevant to the learner
- additional activities as desired

## Skills for Success

In May 2021, the Government of Canada introduced an update to its Essential Skills model. The updated model has been renamed Skills for Success.

There are nine Skills for Success:

- Adaptability
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity and Innovation
- Digital
- Numeracy
- Problem Solving
- Reading
- Writing



Libraries encourage the use of all these skills through their various programs and services. This resource gives several examples to show how the skills for success are important to Ontario's libraries.

To find out more about the Skills for Success, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html>

## Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF)

The OALCF is a competency-based framework that Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills programs use to develop programs for each person receiving literacy support.

For more information, visit the Ontario Government's website at [https://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs\\_oalcf\\_overview.html](https://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/lbs_oalcf_overview.html)

## Section 1 – Welcome to Your Public Library!

Have you visited your local library recently? Libraries have changed a lot in the past 10 years. Many people think libraries are all about books. But libraries are about so much more than just books. Books are just the beginning!

What each library offers will be different. But all libraries provide important free services to anyone in their community.

Here are just a few examples of some of the services available at different libraries:

- Free Wi-Fi
- Access to computers
- Help learning about services in your community
- Early learning programs for children
- Programs for teens
- Learning programs for adults
- Programs for newcomers to Ontario
- Space for community meetings
- Access to a variety of tools and equipment
- DVDs and magazines
- Books!
- And so much more...



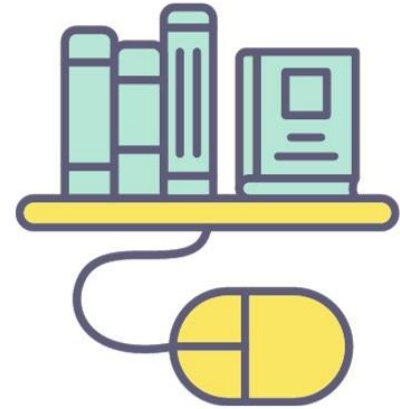
**Libraries are places where everyone is welcome.**

Ontario has many public libraries. In 2022, Ontario had over **1,100** libraries.

This can include:

- the main library
- smaller “branch” locations
- bookmobiles

Libraries also find other creative ways to share library resources. For example, the Barrie Public Library put a tiny library in a hockey arena!



Libraries share many resources with their communities. Libraries materials are available in different formats and languages. The best-known item that libraries share is BOOKS! Books now come in several formats:

- Traditional books
- Audiobooks
- E-books

Libraries share many other materials as well. They share everything from DVDs to free passes to Ontario Provincial Parks.

Libraries also provide information and resources to their communities:

- in person
- over the phone
- online

They all have programs to help people with their daily lives. We will tell you more about that later.



Almost everyone in Ontario has access to library services in their community.

Libraries are located in:

- large cities
- small towns
- rural areas
- First Nations communities
- virtual spaces



To learn about the types of services provided by many libraries today, watch “Libraries Matter: A Visit Will Get You Thinking”.

See:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrYLPgfR1D8>



✓ **Task:**

Watch the “Libraries Matter: A Visit Will Get You Thinking” video.

Make a list of three programs or services discussed in the video that would be useful to you or someone you know. Include why you feel they would be useful.

Discuss this list with your teacher or classmates. Explore if they would also find these services useful.

**\*\*Practitioners: Answer Key: Page 26**

**OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A3, B1.2, B2.2, D.1**

**SFS: Communication, Digital, Writing**



Here is a list of all the public libraries in Ontario. It is a great way to learn about library services!

See: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-public-libraries#section-6>



✓ **Task:**

Visit the list of Ontario's public libraries at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-public-libraries#section-6>

- Click on the link to the library that would be the closest to you.
- Explore their website and find their list of programs.
- Choose one program that looks interesting.
- Share the details of the program with your teacher or classmates and whether or not you would want to participate in that program.

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A1.2, B1.2, D.2  
SFS: Communication, Digital, Reading



## Section 2 – Libraries: A Place for Information

### Libraries are great places to get information!

We live in an information age. Sometimes there is so much information that it is difficult and confusing to find the information you need. Your public library is here to help!

A key goal of libraries is to help people find the information they need. Library staff want to help you with your questions.

- You can ask librarians questions about community services. You can ask librarians anything at all. You can ask questions by:
  - telephone
  - email
  - by going to the library in person
- At the library, to help you find the information you need, you can use:
  - computers
  - digital devices
  - free WiFi
- Often libraries have lists with information on specific topics. This might include lists with information about:
  - housing
  - mental health services
  - volunteer opportunities
  - food banks
- Many libraries have bulletin boards and brochures about community services.
- Some libraries invite people from other organizations to come to the library and share information about their services.



Examples include:

- housing outreach workers
- volunteers to help with free tax filing
- mental health services

## Examples of libraries and information sharing



### Example #1

#### Barrie Public Library

URL: <https://www.barrielibrary.ca/services/information-barrie>

The Barrie Public Library provides a service called **Information Barrie**. Information Barrie is a community information and referral service.

#### Community Information Directory

Information Barrie hosts an online Community Information Directory. This directory contains information on services available in Barrie. It covers many topics, from healthcare services to daycare services, and everything in between.

#### Volunteer Database

Information Barrie also has a Community Volunteer Database. This database helps people find volunteer opportunities available in Barrie.

#### Bulletin Boards and Display Tables

Information Barrie offers nonprofit organizations the chance to promote their organization or event on the library's bulletin board and digital screens. They also allow select local nonprofits to set up display tables at the library. This is a great way for people to learn about services and events in their community.



### Example #2

#### Orillia Public Library

URL: <https://www.orilliapubliclibrary.ca/en/services/human-services-coordinator.aspx>

The Orillia Public Library provides a service called **Human Services Coordinator**. The Human Services Coordinator helps people to understand and find the social services and resources they need. The coordinator is located right at the library.

The Human Services Coordinator helps people learn about services such as:

- housing
- mental health and addiction services
- food programs

## SCENARIO: Using information from your library for problem solving

One of the nine Skills for Success is **problem solving**. Problem solving means you can find solutions when things go wrong. Getting information from your public library can help you with problem solving.

*Anna lives in Ottawa. Anna is disabled and frail and can no longer go to the library. Anna finds it hard to leave her home. Anna loves reading books and magazines. She also likes watching movies. Anna is very sad she can no longer go to the library. Anna feels lonely and isolated.*

*Anna calls the Ottawa library and talks to a librarian. The librarian tells Anna about a program called Homebound Services (<https://bibliooottawalibrary.ca/en/homebound-services>). This free service delivers library materials each month directly to the homes of people with disabilities. Anna signs up for Homebound Services. Anna is feeling better. Anna can't wait to get her books, magazines, and DVDs each month!*

### Homebound services



You can also contact 211 Ontario to get information about programs and services in your community.

You can call 211 or go to their website at <https://211ontario.ca/search/>

 **Task:**

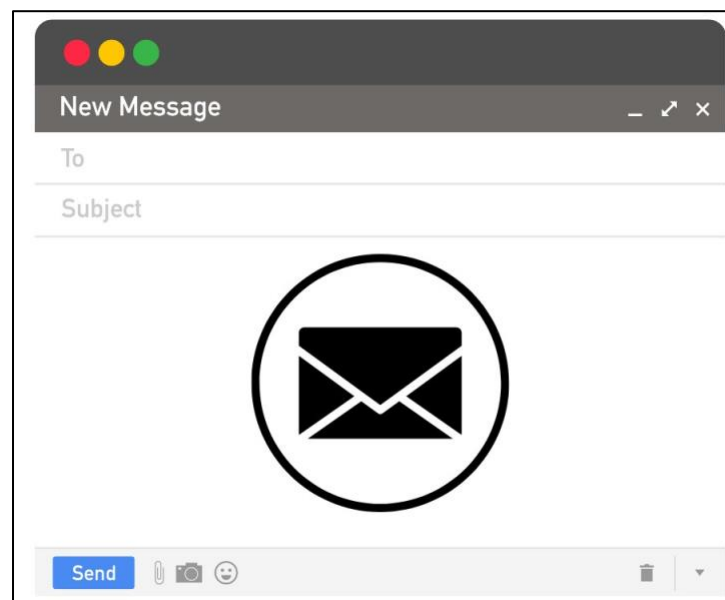
Write an email to a librarian asking for information about the programs that they offer for adults.

In the email ask about the days and times that these programs are offered. Share the times and days that would work best for you.

You can keep the email general, or you can ask about any type of adult program that you might be interested in.

Send the email to your teacher.

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: B2.2, D.2  
SFS: Communication, Digital, Writing



## Section 3 – Libraries: A Place for Learning

### Libraries are great places for learning!

In our fast-paced world of change, lifelong learning is important. Did you know that libraries offer many helpful learning opportunities for people of all ages and skill levels?

A graphic consisting of a yellow speech bubble with a purple tail pointing downwards and to the left. Inside the bubble, the words "UPCOMING EVENTS" are written in white, bold, uppercase letters.

Here are some examples of the learning opportunities found at different libraries. Some are offered in person. Others are offered online.

**Each library has different types of programs.** And there are many types of learning opportunities. Just check your library's website or social media – or visit in person.

Here are a few examples of the learning topics available:

#### Early learning programs on topics such as:

- baby and me
- storytime circles
- musical programs

#### Clubs for learning and enjoyment on topics such as:

- book clubs
- chess clubs
- knitting, sewing, and quilting clubs

#### Online and in-person learning opportunities on topics such as:

- diversity, equity, and inclusion
- digital literacy
- writing resumes and cover letters
- healthy eating on a budget
- internet safety
- parenting
- financial literacy
- the basics of starting a small business
- and so much more...





## Examples of libraries and learning opportunities



### Example #1

#### Lambton County Library – Learning at Home

URL: <https://www.lclibrary.ca/en/supporting-learning-at-home.aspx>

On the **Learning at Home** part of their website, the Lambton County Library has many topics available for online learning. These include:

- Early Learning
- Audiobooks and e-Books
- History and Genealogy
- Language Learning
- Online Courses



### Example #2

#### Greater Sudbury Public Library – Events Calendar

URL: <https://events.sudburylibraries.ca/>

The Greater Sudbury Public Library has a helpful online events calendar where people can find out about various learning opportunities. It is searchable by topic (for example, seniors and youth). It is also searchable by date and by library branch location.

Most libraries will have an events calendar on their website. Search for your library's website and find their events calendar. You may find events that interest you.



 **Task:**

Choose one of the learning topics from the list on Page 13 or from the examples on Page 14 that you would like to know more about.

Talk with your teacher or classmates about some of the topics and whether you would be interested in going to a library to learn more about this topic.

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A1.2, B1.2  
SFS: Communication, Reading

## SCENARIO: Library learning opportunities and adaptability

One of the nine Skills for Success is **adaptability**. Adaptability means you can change your goals when things change around you. Using the learning opportunities at the library can help you adapt to change.

*Tom and Chen live in Ottawa. Times are tough. Rent and groceries costs are increasing. Both Tom and Chen are working fewer hours per week at their jobs at Walmart. They are worried. They know they must adapt, or they won't be able to pay their bills.*

*Tom and Chen sell used records and hockey cards on eBay as a hobby. They start to think maybe they could turn their hobby into a small business. Maybe they could sell other products as well such as DVDs and books to make extra money.*

*Tom and Chen want to learn more about adapting their hobby into a small business. They visit the library for information. Tom and Chen find out that the Ottawa Public Library has an online "Guide to Starting a Small Business in Ontario" (<https://bibliooottawalibrary.ca/en/guide-starting-small-business-ontario>).*

*This guide teaches about the steps involved in starting a small business. Tom and Chen are happy. This guide will tell them more about whether it is a good idea to start a small business.*

## Section 4 – Libraries: A Place for Community Support

All libraries provide safe and inclusive public spaces where **everyone** in the community is welcome. In recent years, libraries have worked hard to find new ways to support people. Times are difficult, and libraries have found new ways to help.

**Each library offers different supports.** You will have to contact your library to find out what is available in your community. Here are some examples of the free support that various libraries provide.



### **Libraries provide welcoming spaces for everyone in the community!**

Libraries have accessible spaces created for everyone in the community. Libraries welcome all people – whether they are readers or non-readers, rich or poor, young or old, new Canadians or long-time citizens.

### **Libraries offer programs to help with social service issues**

Here are some examples:

- Libraries often invite partner organizations to come into the library. This helps people to access social services more easily. Organizations that come to the library might include:
  - housing outreach services
  - employment services
  - health and mental health services
- Libraries help people to find information about the social services they need.
- Some libraries have a community fridge or food pantry to provide food to those in need.



## Libraries and free access to technology

Here are just some of the services libraries provide:

- free WiFi and access to computers and other digital devices
- support to build digital skills
- personalized help



## Social isolation and libraries

Some people feel socially isolated. They may not have family or friends nearby. They may find it hard to meet people. They may feel alone. A library is a great place to connect and reduce social isolation. People can join a club or a class. They can enjoy a group or crafts. They may meet new friends or just enjoy watching people.

## Libraries offer programs to help with financial issues

Here are some examples:

- workshops on topics such as:
  - how to access your financial “entitlements” (government benefits to which a person is entitled but may not know it)
  - how to appoint your power of attorney and the importance of making a will
- clinics where volunteers help low-income people file their taxes

## Library of Things

Libraries lend out practical and **FREE** items that can help people save money.

Here are some examples of free items that various libraries will lend out:

- day passes to Ontario provincial parks
- tools
- musical instruments
- bike repair kits
- fishing kits
- snowshoes
- family fun kits



## Libraries and homework support

- libraries have quiet places for students of all ages to study
- some libraries have homework clubs where students can support each other
- students can ask library staff questions
- library staff can share online resources to help with homework
- and, **very importantly**, some libraries offer space to adult literacy programs for tutoring sessions!



## Support for new Canadians

Libraries are a highly supportive place for new Canadians.

Here are some examples:

- conversational English circles
- workshops designed to meet the needs of new Canadians
- resources to practice for the citizenship test
- information on community programs and services

## Creative spaces (also called Maker spaces)

Libraries have creative spaces with a variety of helpful equipment.

Here are some examples:

- 3-D printers
- sewing machines
- laser tools for engraving
- Cricut machines
- digital tools for photo and video editing



## Examples of libraries and community support



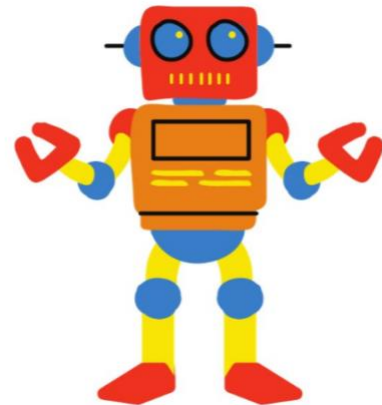
### Example #1

#### Innisfil Idea Lab & Library

URL: <https://www.innisfilidealab.ca/the-library-of-things/>

The Innisfil Idea Lab & Library has an amazing Library of Things. There are many items available to use, including:

- assistive technology
- coding and robotics
- digital media lab
- games, toys, and instruments
- lendable technology



### Example #2

#### Oakville Public Library

URL: <https://opl.ca/Library-Services/Community-Services>

The Oakville Public Library offers many community services, including:

#### **Newcomers to Canada**

The Oakville Public Library provides information, resources, and a variety of programs to newcomers to Oakville. These supports are found on the library's New to Canada webpage: <https://opl.ca/Library-Services/Community-Services/New-to-Canada>

#### **Community Food Programs**

The Oakville Public Library and its partners offer free food to people in need at several of their library locations. This includes fresh food, fruits, vegetables, breads, non-perishable food, and pet food.

#### **Virtual Court**

The Oakville Public Library offers community members a private space to access virtual court sessions. This service is offered in partnership with their local Courthouse.

#### **Heating and Cooling Centres**

People are welcome to shelter from extreme cold or hot weather at the library. This service is provided within regular operating hours during severe weather alerts.



✓ **Task:**

In Section 4, review the different programs that libraries offer to help with social service issues. You could look at the types of programs offered on Pages 16 to 18. Or you could look at the examples on Page 19.

- Would you attend an event featuring an organization or support if it was offered at your library?
- List two reasons why someone might attend.
- List two reasons why someone might not attend.
- Discuss these reasons with your teacher and classmates. Exchange ideas that might help someone overcome their reasons not to attend.

OALCF Competencies, Task Groups, and Level Indicators: A1.2, B1.2, B2.1  
SFS: Collaboration, Communication, Problem Solving, Reading, Writing

## SCENARIO: Using your library's community support services for problem solving

One of the nine Skills for Success is **problem solving**. Problem solving means you can find solutions when things go wrong. Using your library's community support services can help you with problem solving.

*Amira lives in London, Ontario. Amira lost her husband last year. Amira is sad most of the time and finds it hard to get through the day. Amira doesn't have many friends and feels very isolated. Amira knows something is wrong, but she is not sure what to do.*

*One day, Amira sees a sign at the London Public Library. It reads "Welcome Centre". Amira learns she can meet with a social worker from the Canadian Mental Health Association. This meeting can happen at a familiar place – right at the library!*

*Amira gets help from the social worker. Amira learns about community resources to help. Amira starts to go for grief counseling. Amira also joins a support group.*



## Section 5 – Supporting Activity

### Instructions for Practitioners

This **supporting activity** can be used for learners who would like to learn more about libraries and the programs that they offer. It is suitable for one learner or for a small group of learners. It can be changed to meet individual needs.

This activity uses elements of the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework's (OALCF) Competencies with Level 1 and 2 Tasks and Indicators.

The tasks in this activity also include Entry and Intermediate components and elements of a variety of the Skills for Success (SFS). A list of the SFS is available in Section 3 of this resource. Visit the SFS website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html> if you would like more information about the Skills for Success and their level components and elements.

A computer or tablet will be used during this activity.

## Activity

### Introduction to the Activity

Libraries are a valuable resource for communities across Ontario. Their wide range of programs and services are designed to support the everyday needs of people living in cities and towns, large and small, across the province.

This practitioner-led supplementary activity focuses on different skills and competencies required by learners to complete each task in the activity. This activity also gets learners to look more closely at the services offered by libraries.

**Activity: Task 1 – Describe a program to address a community need.**

Write a description of a program that you would like to see at your public library to address a community need. For example, resume writing, accessing food banks, shelters, job search assistance, etc.

- Visit the list of Ontario’s public libraries at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-public-libraries#section-6> and select the website link of the library closest to you.
- Does your library offer this program?
- Share and discuss your program description with your teacher and classmates. Discuss other program ideas shared by your teacher or classmates.

**OALCF B1.2, B2.2 and D.2:****Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information**

- Task Group: Interact with others (B1)
- B1.2: Initiate and maintain interactions with one or more persons to discuss, explain or exchange information and opinions
- Task Group: Write continuous text (B2)
- B2.2: Write texts to explain and describe information ideas

**Competency D: Use Digital Technology**

- Task Group: Not applicable
- D.2 Perform well-defined, multi-step digital tasks

**Embedded Skills for Success:**

- Communication
- Creativity and Innovation
- Digital
- Problem solving
- Writing

**Activity: Task 2 – Create a chart.**

Some people would prefer to attend a library program in person, and others would prefer to attend online.

- Create a chart to show three pros and cons of each way of participating. For example:

	Pros	Cons
<b>In-person</b>	I get to meet people interested in the same things as me.	I don't have transportation.
<b>Online</b>	I won't need a babysitter.	I don't have a reliable computer.

- Share your ideas with your teacher or classmates and discuss some ways that you could overcome some of the cons that you listed for each option.

**OALCF B1.2, B3.2b:**

Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information

- Task Group: Interact with others (B1)
- B1.2: Initiate and maintain interactions with one or more persons to discuss, explain or exchange information and opinions
- Task Group: Complete and create documents (B3)
- B3.2b: Create simple documents to sort, display and organize information

**Embedded Skills for Success:**

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Writing

**Activity: Task 3 – Create an advertising plan.**

Libraries offer great services and supports. What are some ways that you can think of to increase awareness of the services offered by your public library?

- Create a brief plan to advertise your community library. Include the way you would advertise, who you would like to reach with your ad, and why you chose this way of advertising.
- Share your plan with your teacher or classmates and discuss any other ways of advertising to increase awareness.

**OALCF B1.2 and B2.2:**

Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information

- Task Group: Interact with others (B1)
- B1.2: Initiate and maintain interactions with one or more persons to discuss, explain, or exchange information and opinions
- Task Group: Write continuous text (B2)
- B2.2: Write texts to explain and describe information ideas

**Embedded Skills for Success:**

- Collaboration
- Creativity and Innovation
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Writing

**Activity: Task 4 – Make a list.**

In the “A Visit Will Get You Thinking” video on Page 7, it was stated that 95% of members saved money by using the library.

- Make a list of three ways that someone could save money by using the library.
- Share this list with your teacher or classmates.
- Discuss other ways that someone could save money by using the library.

**OALCF B1.2, B2.1 and C1.1:****Competency B: Communicate Ideas and Information**

- Task Group: Interact with others (B1)
- B1.2: Initiate and maintain interactions with one or more persons to discuss, explain or exchange information and opinions
- Task Group: Write continuous text (B2)
- B2.1: Write brief texts to convey simple ideas and factual information

**Competency C: Understand and Use Numbers**

- Task Group: Manage money (C1)
- C1.1: Compare costs and make simple calculations

**Embedded Skills for Success:**

- Communication
- Numeracy
- Problem solving
- Writing



## Section 6 – Answer Key

### Task – Page 7:

Watch the Libraries Matter: “A Visit Will Get You Thinking” video.

Make a list of three programs or services that would be useful to you or someone you know. Include why you feel they would be useful.

Possible Answers – this is an opinion question; however the following are some of the main services and programming mentioned in the video:

- borrowing items
- expertise (answering questions)
- fostering meaningful connections
- new technology (3D printers, early literacy robot, virtual reality stations)
- outreach services (bookmobile)
- programs
  - early literacy
  - nature
  - the arts
  - history
  - culture
  - and more
- resources
- use of computers

Discuss this list with your teacher or classmates. Explore if they would also find these services useful.