

Types of Material in a Library

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn more about the different types of resources available in a library.

Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Types of Material in a Library
2. Physical Resources
3. Digital Resources
4. Human Resources

1. Types of Material in a Library

Although libraries are normally associated with books, they have numerous other research resources, many of which are beyond the scope of what is easily accessible at home or on the Internet.

Moreover, while libraries have a plethora of both physical and digital resources, some of their most valuable assets are their human resources.

Librarians are knowledgeable about what information is accessible from each resource and can make your research efforts easier and more efficient.

2. Physical Resources

Libraries house a number of resources that you can locate, handle, and use immediately.

These physical resources include periodicals, magazines, newspapers, maps, and manuscripts, though some may be used only at the library. In addition, many libraries provide media resources, such as films, prints, CDs, cassettes, and videos that you can access during your visit.

Of course, libraries also have books on a variety of subjects and often have book-sharing arrangements with other libraries, too. If you need a book that is not on the shelves, ask a librarian to order it for you, if possible. Some libraries can also arrange inter-library loans of media resources, too.



3. Digital Resources

The advent of digital resources has greatly expanded the walls of libraries. Now, libraries have resources such as e-books and online **databases** which are not limited to physical locations within the library.

Databases, in particular, are useful for researchers because they allow you to search for information by topic, category, author, date or other useful traits. However, many of the best databases are subscription based, so unless you work for a company that has a subscription or attend a university with one, the only practical (and affordable) place to get access is in the library.

Databases may specialize in a certain field such as medicine, business, or engineering. These databases provide access to not only historical information, but also information that is not easily found through search engines like Google. The in-depth and historical information makes these databases one of the most valuable resources in the library.



TERM TO KNOW

Database

A structured collection of data, typically organized to model relevant aspects of reality (for example, the availability of rooms in hotels), in a way that supports processes requiring this information (for example, finding a hotel with vacancies).

4. Human Resources

Because libraries can house and/or access so much information, you may not discover what you need until you have spent a lot of time exploring what is available.

Enlisting the help of a librarian can often save you time because librarians are trained to evaluate all of their libraries' resources, including the best ways for you to access them and whether they are the appropriate

given your specific needs or interests.

Librarians can also help you quickly learn to use technology or software, such as microfiche readers or database search programs, which you may need to complete your research.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the **types of material in a library**. Librarians are **human resources** who can help you determine the best materials to use and introduce you to any technology or software you might need to access them. Libraries have **physical resources**, such as books, maps, manuscripts, and periodicals. Libraries can also provide free access to **digital resources**, such as e-books and databases that are often inaccessible without a subscription.

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