

CAT TALES™



Knowledge right off the shelf...

A public library is not just a building, but a collection of information, traditionally in books, organized and available for anyone to use. Modern libraries include maps, artwork, and other information on microfilm, audio tape, CD, DVD, videotape and even the internet.

The first libraries were actually what we would now call “archives”. As early as 5,000 years ago, they were used to store records of legal rulings, commercial transactions and inventories. Private libraries made up of fiction and non-fiction books instead of civic records began appearing in classical Greece.

In Ancient Rome, almost anything Greek became popular—hairstyles, fashion, food and even libraries. Wealthy Roman merchants and statesmen often included a

library in their villas because it was fashionable, even though many of them could not read the books and scrolls they collected.

Seneca, a philosopher, playwright and tutor of young Roman Emperor Nero, criticized this practice as a means to show off: “by now, like bathrooms and hot water, a library is got up as standard equipment for a fine house.”

Roman emperors opened the first public libraries. These were two-room bilingual libraries with Latin and Greek parchments and scrolls in separate rooms. These libraries were usually attached to a public bath, which were cultural centres in Roman life.

Who invented libraries?

There's no real way to know for sure who invented libraries. As long as people have been able to write, they have collected information and recorded it. Almost all ancient civilizations included some kind of library. A collection of clay tablets, an ancient form of "book", found in ancient Mesopotamia is more than 5,000 years old. Papyrus scrolls from early Egyptian tombs are more than 3,300 years old. The ancient Romans are credited with the idea of making libraries open to the public, about 2,500 years ago. Before that, libraries were private collections of scrolls or books. Classical Greek philosopher Aristotle had a large collection of books, and is said to have taught the kings of Egypt how to arrange a library.



- Q. Why did the librarian slip and fall?
A. Because she was in the non-friction section!
- Q. Why is your library book always in the last place you look for it?
A. Because once you've found it, you stop looking!
- Q. Why don't elephants ever pay overdue book fines?
A. They always bring their books back on time. An elephant never forgets!
- Q. What building has the most storeys?
A. The library, of course!
- Q. What sort of bait does the librarian use when she goes fishing?
A. A bookworm!

FAT CAT® Fun Page



Joan and John have stopped at the library on their way home from school. Joan has chosen a history book about ancient wars. John has a book about owls. Colour them and draw in their faces, showing what they feel about what they are reading. For example, Joan might be sad and John amazed. How do you think they feel?



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