



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2013**

**Grade 11
Writing**

Writing

Response to Informational Text

As you read this article, think about the effects that each author's position may have on students' reading, research, and learning. Then write a response to the prompt that follows.

Do School Libraries Still Need Books?

YES

An online library cannot replace the unique collection of resources that I—like many school librarians—have built over a period of years to serve the specific needs of my students, faculty, and the school's curriculum.

One of my primary responsibilities as a librarian is to teach information-literacy skills—including defining research questions, selecting and evaluating sources, avoiding plagiarism, and documenting sources. In my experience, this works best face-to-face with students. That personal interaction is supported by the electronic availability of materials but is not replaced by it.

Librarians also encourage reading, which is crucial to student success. Focused, engaged reading is more likely to occur with printed books than with online material.

Today's students, digital natives all, shouldn't miss out on the unique pleasure of getting lost in a physical book. Research shows that the brain functions differently when reading online versus reading a book, and different formats complement different learning styles. Books help develop longer attention spans, the ability to concentrate, and the skill of engaging with a complex issue or idea for an uninterrupted period of time.

Unlike an e-reader or a laptop, which may provide access to many books but is limited to a single user, a printed book is a relatively inexpensive information-delivery system that is not dependent on equipment, power, or bandwidth for its use.

One of the beauties of libraries is that we keep up with new technologies, but we also hold on to the old things that work well. We don't have to choose between technology and printed books, and we shouldn't.

—LIZ GRAY, LIBRARY DIRECTOR
DANA HALL SCHOOL, WELLESLEY, MASS.

NO

Traditional libraries must be reimagined to remain vital and better reflect the way students learn and conduct research today. That's why Cushing Academy decided last year to give away most of our 20,000 print books and transform our library into a digital learning center.

A small collection of printed books no longer supports the type of research required by a 21st-century curriculum. We wanted to create a library that reflects and fosters the reality of how students do research—a library that goes beyond stacks and stacks of underutilized books.

Cushing's library can now deliver thousands of Web-based electronic books and authoritative database content directly to our students' laptops. The library also encourages offline reading by providing immediate access to hundreds of thousands of downloadable electronic books delivered to our nearly 200 electronic readers.

Our library is now the most used space on campus, with collaborative learning areas, screens for data feeds from research sites, and more reference and circulation stations for our librarians. It has become a hub where students and faculty gather, learn, and explore together.

Cushing Academy today is awash with books in all formats. It is immaterial to us whether students read Chaucer and Shakespeare in print or electronically. In fact, Cushing students are checking out more books than before, making extensive use of e-readers in our library collection. I hope Cushing's success will inspire other schools to think about new approaches to education in this century.

—JAMES TRACY, HEADMASTER
CUSHING ACADEMY, ASHBURNHAM, MASS.

1 Do school libraries still need books? Explain your answer, using information from the article to support your response.

Before writing, consider

- *the focus/controlling idea of your response*
- *the supporting details/references to the passage in your response*
- *how your response will connect the passage to the larger world*

A complete response to the prompt will include

- a clear purpose/focus
- coherent organization
- details/elaboration
- well-chosen language and a variety of sentence structures
- control of conventions

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