

### Accessing the Library

by Diane McCargar

**Literacy Objective** - Students will be able to select and borrow a book from the library.

**Computer Objective** - Students will be able to use a computer to find information about a book in the library.

**Level** - This lesson is appropriate for intermediate to advanced literacy students. Students should be able to read words such as those found in a library database.

**Materials** - This lesson plan requires a computer with access to a library's electronic catalogue. Many libraries allow you to access their catalogue using a computer, a communications program (e.g. Terminal - Windows, ClarisWorks - Macintosh), a modem and a phone line. This type of connection doesn't require you to have access to the Internet.

If you do have Internet access, you can often connect to a library's online catalogue through their Web page. Your Web browser will need to be linked to a telnet program. (If this is not setup in your browser you need to go to Options, General Preferences, Applications and indicate the location of the telnet program on your computer. In Windows 95, Telnet is in the Windows folder.)

Here are the Web page addresses of four Canadian libraries that provide this type of access: Ottawa Public Library - <http://www.opl.ottawa.on.ca/>, Vancouver Public Library - <http://www.vpl.vancouver.bc.ca/>, Toronto Public Library - <http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca/> and Bibliotheque de Montreal - <http://www.ville.montreal.qc.ca/biblio/pageacc.htm>.

**Preparation** - Before this lesson students should be introduced to vocabulary associated with identifying books: title, author, publisher, subject, ISBN, and Call Number. In groups students could be asked to fill out index cards for the books in their class. These cards could then be organized into a card catalogue. Prior to this, students may also need to practice alphabetical and numerical order. Description of Task

As a class, students would run the communications program or Internet browser and connect to library database. They would then look for the books they use in the class. Students often want to bring classroom books home, but this usually isn't allowed. Signing the books out of the library is a good alternative. Students should be given practice looking up the books by title and author. For each of the books the class would discuss the status of the book (checked in, on loan, on hold) and its location (fiction, nonfiction, paperback, juvenile, reference, etc.). If you can get a map of your local library students could be asked to locate the area of the library where the book would be found. Next, still working as a class, students could do a more general search for books on a specific subject, one they have been studying in class.

Finally, students would be given a worksheet to complete independently or in small groups. The worksheet would begin with questions like a scavenger hunt, asking students to find various information about books in the library. For example:

#### Library Scavenger Hunt

1. List three books by Tana Reiff.
2. What is the call number of the book "Mandinko Life"?
3. Does the library have any books about sewing?
4. Is the book titled "The Ontario Readers" in the library?
5. How many pages does the book "My Happiest Moment" have?

The worksheet should include one question asking students to identify a subject they are interested in and a book from the library on this topic. It might be helpful to provide students with a list of topics to choose from.

**Extensions:** If possible, this lesson could finish with a visit to the library to borrow the book they have chosen. If students don't have library cards it might be helpful to have students fill out application forms in class before visiting the library. You may also want to ask about going on a tour of the library.

**Note:** For more ideas on introducing libraries to literacy students refer to the *Come to the Library Series* developed by the BC Library Association for the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and the National Literacy Secretariat. The series includes "Welcome to the Library", "May I help You?", "Getting a Feeling for Public Libraries and Books" and "Trying Out Your Library's Computer, Microfiche or Card Catalogue". For information about this series contact the Marketing Department, Open Learning Agency, 4355 Mathissi Place, Burnaby, BC, V5G 4S8, Tel. 1800-663-1653, or email: [catalogue@ola.bc.ca](mailto:catalogue@ola.bc.ca).