NEWS LESSON

A Library Card for the Great Outdoors



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What would you borrow if a library lent more than books?
2. Would you try a new hobby if you could borrow all the equipment?
3. Which thing do people buy and hardly ever use?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**afford**	☐	A	insects that carry pollen from one flower to another
2	**institution**	☐	B	have enough money to pay for something
3	**landscape**	☐	C	a long, organised trip to a faraway place
4	**pollinators**	☐	D	a strong wish to learn about something
5	**expedition**	☐	E	a large, important organisation, like a library or a school
6	**curiosity**	☐	F	the area around where you live
7	**neighbourhood**	☐	G	in the way things have been done for a long time
8	**traditionally**	☐	H	everything you can see in an area of land

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

A tent, a wildlife camera, a telescope. A Colorado library has decided that outdoor equipment can be lent out like any other resource.

1 A visitor walks into a Colorado library and leaves with a tent. Another borrows a wildlife camera; a family takes home equipment for looking at stars. At the Anythink Nature Library, which opened in Thornton in August 2026, these objects are not unusual extras. They express the institution's main idea: people should be able to experience nature before deciding whether they can afford the equipment.

2 The idea is particularly attractive to families who would like to try camping or birdwatching but cannot justify splashing out on expensive equipment. Alongside its large book collection, the library offers about 850 sets of nature-related equipment, including microscopes, gardening tools, hiking supplies and cameras. Visitors can borrow a kit, learn how to use it and decide whether the activity interests them before spending any money of their own.

3 The building stands on a 15-acre site next to a much larger area of open land. There are walking paths, gardens designed for different plants and animals, and places where children can climb on rocks or play in mud. The library also uses solar panels and geothermal heating and cooling. The building sits within the landscape it invites people to explore.

4 Early visitors have already described the benefits. One family borrowed an outdoor camera and a navigation device before taking their seven-year-old son on a hike. Another borrowed a gardening kit to set up a space that would attract bees and other pollinators. For people unfamiliar with camping or wildlife, access to the right equipment can make an unfamiliar activity feel far less intimidating.

5 There is a wider social argument behind the project. Outdoor activities can involve costs that are easy to overlook: transport, suitable clothing, specialist tools and time away from work. Those barriers mean that green spaces, even when they are technically open to everyone, may not feel equally accessible. The library's director, Mark Fink, argues that experiencing nature need not involve an ambitious expedition. Noticing birds in a local neighbourhood can be a meaningful starting point.

6 The project also asks us to think again about what a public library is for. Libraries have traditionally provided shared access to things individuals might not be able to afford, especially books and information. Lending outdoor equipment follows the same principle, only with a wider understanding of learning. A visitor might leave with a novel, a tent or a new interest in the natural world. The point is that curiosity should not depend on the size of someone's bank account.

Sources: The Guardian. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. The library is built on land that has a much bigger open area beside it. T F NG
2. The equipment is funded by a local outdoor retailer. T F NG
3. The library no longer lends ordinary books. T F NG
4. Mark Fink argues that people must go on an ambitious expedition to experience nature. T F NG
5. Families can find out whether they enjoy an activity without spending their own money. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

affordable	barriers	intimidating	justify	overlook	principle	reluctant	unfamiliar

1. Speaking in front of two hundred people can feel _____ for a first-time presenter.
2. Many households cannot _____ paying a high price for equipment they will use only once.
3. High prices and long journeys are _____ that keep some families away from the countryside.
4. It is easy to _____ small details when you are in a hurry.
5. Visitors who are _____ with camping often need advice.
6. The scheme works on the same _____ as a book library: shared resources for everyone.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time Mia reached the campsite, the rain _____ . (STOP)
2. The gardens at the library _____ for different plants and animals. (DESIGN)
3. Visitors _____ a kit and try it before spending any money. (BORROW)
4. The Anythink Nature Library _____ in Thornton in August 2026. (OPEN)
5. Early visitors _____ the benefits already. (DESCRIBE)

7 Language focus: linking words

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Decide the relationship first: contrast, condition or result. Then check whether a clause or a noun follows the gap, and whether the word can start a new sentence.

although	despite	however	meanwhile	otherwise	therefore	unless

1. _____ the library is new, it already attracts many families.
2. _____ the high cost of tents, many families still want to go camping.
3. A hobby will not become a habit _____ people can try it cheaply first.
4. The equipment is free to borrow. _____ , visitors must return it on time.
5. A lending scheme removes the cost; _____ , more people can try new hobbies.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. What should every neighbourhood be able to borrow?
2. Would you lend something you loved to a stranger through a library?
3. What would turn a library into a place you wanted to spend time?

9 Role-play: borrow it or buy it?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the friend who wants to buy

You want to go camping next weekend. You plan to buy a tent. Explain why owning one feels better, and ask your friend about any problems with borrowing.

Student B · the friend who suggests borrowing

You know a library where you can borrow a tent. Persuade your friend to try borrowing first. Answer their worries and say what you'd do together.

Useful phrases

I was thinking of buying a tent.

Why don't we borrow one first?

What if it's already taken?

That's a fair point, but it's cheaper.

I'd rather try it before I spend money.

Okay, let's give it a go.

Afterwards, tell the class: did your friend decide to borrow or to buy, and why?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 B · 2 E · 3 H · 4 A · 5 C · 6 D · 7 F · 8 G

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 NG · 3 F · 4 F · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 intimidating · 2 justify · 3 barriers · 4 overlook · 5 unfamiliar · 6 principle

6 Verb forms

1 had stopped · 2 are designed · 3 can borrow · 4 opened · 5 have described

7 Language focus

1 Although · 2 Despite · 3 unless · 4 However · 5 therefore

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