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COMPREHENSION SECTION A TALK The earliest libraries existed thousands of years ago in China and Egypt where collections of records on tablets of baked clay were kept in temples and royal palaces. In the western world, libraries were first established in Ancient Greece. For example, Aristotle once had a research library in the 3rd century B. C The first library in the United States was a private library, which could only be used by authorized readers. In 1633, John Harvard gave money and more than 300 books to a newly-established college in Massachusetts. In return for his generosity, the legislature voted the school be named Harvard College. The librarian there set rules for the new library. Only college students and faculty members could use the books. No book could be lent for more than one month. The earliest public library was established in Philadelphia in 1731. Although this library was open to everyone, all readers had to pay a membership or subscription fee in order to borrow books. Very few subscription libraries exist today. Some book and stationary stores maintain small rental libraries, where anyone may borrow books for a daily charge. The first truly free public library that circulated books to everyone at no cost was started in a small New England town in 1833. Today, there are more than 7,000 free public libraries throughout the US. They contain

about 160 million books which were circulated to over 52 million readers. Historically, the major purpose of free public libraries was educational. They were expected to provide adults with the opportunity to continue their education after they left school. So the function of public library was once described as “less reservoir than a fountain”. In other words, emphasis was to be placed on wide circulation rather than on collecting and storing books. Over the years public library services have greatly expanded. In addition to their continuing and important educational role, public libraries provide culture and recreation, and they are trying to fill many changing community needs. Most libraries offer browsing rooms where readers can relax on comfortable chairs and read current newspapers and magazines. Many also circulate music records. Library programs of films, lectures, reading clubs, and concerts also attract library users. In addition to books, records, periodicals, and reference material, libraries provide technical information such as books and pamphlets on gardening, carpentry and other specialized fields of interests. The largest public library in the US is the Library of Congress. It was originally planned as the reference library for the federal legislature. Today in addition to that important function, it serves as the reference library for the public, and sends out many books to other libraries on inter-library-loan system. Unlike free public libraries, which open to everyone, private libraries can be used only by authorized readers. Many industrial and scientific organizations and business firms have collections of books, journals and research data for their staffs. Several private historical

associations have research collections of special interest to their members. In addition, many elementary and secondary schools operate libraries for use by students and teachers. Prisons and hospitals maintain libraries too. The largest and the most important private libraries are operated by colleges and universities, and are used by students, faculty members, and occasionally by visiting scholars. Many universities have special libraries for research in particular fields, such as law, medicine and education. Recent surveys report that more than 300 million books are available in these academic libraries and they are regularly used by over 8 million students.

SECTION B INTERVIEW (I: Interviewer N: Nancy) I: Hello, Nancy, I know you are one of a few women taxi drivers in the city now, and you drive for a living. What made you want to be a common taxi driver in the first place? N: I took pride in driving well, even when I was young for I have to wait until I have a car to learn to drive. When I finally learned, it was something I really enjoyed and still enjoy. I remember how smart those taxi drivers have seemed driving so well, and dressed so neatly in their uniforms. I thought I'd like to do that myself. I: You really enjoy driving, I see. And how long have you been a taxi driver? N: Eh, altogether 12 years. I: Mm, it's been quite some time already, hasn't it? N: Yeah. I: Then, what did you find the most difficult about becoming a taxi driver? N: I can still remember when I was first learning to drive. It was scary I didn't know yet how to judge distance. And when a big truck came near, it seemed like a wheel was just coming right over me. Anyway, soon I learned to judge distance. I began to look ahead, stopped

worrying about trucks and about what was moving on either side. I: In your opinion, what does it take to become a good taxi driver? N: Eh, besides driving well, the most important thing to a taxi driver needs to know is the streets and I know the city well because I have lived in it for a long time. I know all the main streets, and even the side streets. And of course, you have to keep updating your knowledge of the streets because the city changes. There might be a new road appearing somewhere one day. I: Now, what about annual leaves? Do you have them? N: Oh, yes. When I first started, I had only 10 days. Now I have 3 weeks every year with pay. I: Just out of curiosity. When you go on vacation to another place or city, do you drive there as well? N: In most cases, not. I prefer to be driven by others if I go by car. I would also prefer to go by train or plane, if there is a choice. I have already had too much driving in my life, so when I'm on holiday, I just want to relax. I: Oh, I see. Let's come back to your work. Are there any unpleasant aspects in your job? N: The only serious difficulty in this work is that it's sometimes dangerous to drive at night. But you have choices, and I always choose to work days rather than at night. I: What's the best part of your job? N: I soon found that what I like best about the job was being outdoors, seeing how this city changes from season to season. And there are places of scene I would probably never have seen in another job. And I love all kinds of weather. I like to leave the window down in a fine rain, and, and when I have a long drive, maybe end-of-the-day, I sometimes go past my home to tell my two little children I'll be home soon, when they always want to come

along in my car. I: Do they? I guess kids all like to be taken for a ride sometimes. N: Yes, but you can not take any all along, and thus they pay or you pay for the m. So I ' ve to pay their fares one of these days, and take them out in my taxi, b ecause I really think it is fun out into the country side on the long drive, wit h the fresh air and sun shining. You just seem to want to drive for ever. At lea st that is how it ' s for me. I: Being a taxi driver, you have to meet all kinds of people. How do you feel ab out that? N: I enjoy meeting many different people. I might not have met some of them if n ot for this job. I learned a lot how people behave in these years. I: Can you tell us a bit more about it? N: The biggest advantage is that you come across various characters in your work . Some people are interesting, some rushed, some pleasant, some funny, some talk ative, some so pressed for time that they change clothes in the taxi. Those who are in greatest rush would sometimes forget to pay. I: Have you ever met some people who don ' t like women drivers? N: Yeah. Once a passenger really objected to having a woman driver. That I laugh ed him so much that he stopped his fussing. Although there has been one or two c ases like this, I still think most people are nice to woman drivers. So this is really an interesting part of my work. I: Now my last question. Have you ever thought of changing your job? N: Not yet. I might in a few years time, but not at this moment, because I reall y enjoy my work. And I do get lots of satisfaction out of it. So why should I? I: Ok. Our interview is coming to the end. I ' d like to wind up our interview by wishing you good luck in your job. Thank you very much for your time, Nancy. N: Pleasure. 100Test 下载频

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