

BERTHA BARTLETT PUBLIC LIBRARY
Story City, Iowa

REFERENCE POLICY

The Bertha Bartlett Public Library's reference policy is to try to meet the needs of every citizen of the community. All patrons are assisted in their search for information and treated with utmost courtesy, respect, strict confidentiality and no censorship.

Statement of Procedure:

In helping patrons in their search for information librarians and aides must determine the need of the user by conducting a reference interview.

I. REFERENCE INTERVIEW:

ESTABLISH:

1. Specific needs of patron
2. Recommend sources in addition to books, vertical file material, computer and on-line reference.
3. Assist in finding materials
 - a. Show where books are on the shelf---do not point.
 - b. Follow up to make sure that patrons are getting what they need.
4. Remain objective

Know that each patron feels his or her request is legitimate and important even though it may not seem so to the interviewer.

Conduct service on a "first come, first served basis" whether by telephone or walk-in patron.

Give patrons prompt attention.

If patron is wandering around the room, librarian should offer assistance. Judgment is necessary here...some patrons want to browse and do not want to be interrupted or bothered. Others may be hesitant about asking for help.

II. Homework:

Because homework assignments are usually made for the purpose of teaching students, the process of finding information, the library sees as its primary role the instruction in the use of library tools rather than the provision of "answers".

III. Contest Questions, Quiz Programs, Crossword Puzzles:

These questions are not answered but the patron is directed to sources from which he may seek his/her answers unless questions may be answered as a quick fact.

IV. Medical Questions:

Factual information can be provided from medical dictionaries and books, but questions that involve interpretation and opinion cannot be answered.

V. Legal Questions:

Citation from codes can be given and other legal resources suggested but legal advice and/or explanation cannot be offered.

VI. Genealogy Research:

- a. The library provides genealogy books for patron use, both loan materials and for in library use.
- b. Postage for any materials ordered through Interlibrary Loan Services should be governed by the regulations of the agreements for Interlibrary Loan, Open Access and Access Plus.

VII. Reference Books:

- a. Reference books are not circulated except for older editions or at the librarians' discretion.

VIII. Internet Sources:

- a. Help direct patron to established, unquestionable sites, using resources like the Gale Database, Credo Reference or Ebscohost sources whenever possible. If locating information for patron reference question, be sure to include the site location where you found the answer.

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