

Teacher Librarian interview questions

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What to expect

Teacher Librarian interviews usually combine a general teaching interview with questions that probe your library-specific knowledge. Panels may include a principal, a deputy, a head of curriculum and sometimes a library coordinator. Expect a mix of process, behavioural and scenario questions, with a focus on how you collaborate with teachers and manage the library as a learning hub.

- **Process and systems:** Questions about cataloguing, collection management, budgeting and the library management systems you have used, such as Oliver or Follett Destiny.
- **Teaching and information literacy:** How you plan and teach research skills, and how you assess student learning in the library context.
- **Collaboration and stakeholder management:** Working with classroom teachers, school leadership and library staff to resource the curriculum and promote reading.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of managing competing demands, supervising staff or handling a difficult situation.
- **Scenario and judgement:** How you would respond to a budget cut, a challenged book or a request to support a new curriculum unit at short notice.

The interview typically starts with an introduction and a tour of the library. Then a panel asks a series of structured questions, often with a mix of teaching and library-specific scenarios. You may be asked to describe a lesson or program you have delivered. Some schools include a short practical task, such as reviewing a resource list or outlining an information literacy lesson. The interview usually finishes with your questions for the panel.

1. Tell me about a time you collaborated with a classroom teacher to embed information literacy into a unit of work.

Why they ask

This shows how you work with teachers and whether you understand the library's role in the curriculum.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation and the teacher's goal, the task you agreed on, the actions you took together, and the result for students.

Example answer

"In my last school, a Year 10 History teacher was concerned that students were copying from the first page of search results. I met with her to map the research task against the information literacy continuum. We agreed I would teach two lessons on evaluating sources and using EBSCO databases. I co-designed a graphic organiser for note-taking and set up a LibGuide with curated links. The teacher then reported that students' bibliographies were more varied and better annotated. I followed up by sharing the approach with the English faculty, who adapted it for their own research tasks."

2. How would you manage the library budget if you were asked to cut spending by a significant amount?

Why they ask

Budget management is a core part of the role, and this tests your judgement and ability to prioritise.

How to structure your answer

A judgement-under-pressure structure: acknowledge the constraint, outline your priorities, explain how you would consult and communicate, and describe how you would monitor the impact.

Example answer

"I would start by reviewing current subscriptions and standing orders against usage data, looking for resources that are rarely accessed. I would then meet with faculty heads to identify core curriculum needs that must be protected. I would propose a phased reduction, perhaps pausing new non-fiction purchases for a term and renegotiating database renewals. I would communicate clearly with staff about what is changing and why, and set up a simple request process for urgent needs. Throughout, I would keep the principal informed and monitor borrowing and database usage to see if the cuts are affecting teaching and learning."

3. What is your process for selecting and cataloguing new resources?

Why they ask

This tests your technical library skills and how you maintain a relevant, accessible collection.

How to structure your answer

A process walk-through: describe the steps in order, from needs analysis to shelving.

Example answer

"I begin by checking curriculum requests and reviewing the collection for gaps, especially in areas like First Nations histories or STEM. I read reviews in journals and check supplier catalogues. Once items are approved and ordered, I catalogue them using Oliver, following current RDA standards. I add subject headings, reading levels and genre stickers so students can find them easily. I also create a display or a LibGuides entry to promote new titles, and I share a list with teachers so they know what is available."

4. Describe how you promote reading for pleasure across the school.

Why they ask

Reading engagement is a key part of the role, and this shows your creativity and student focus.

How to structure your answer

Use a practical STAR: the situation (need to lift reading engagement), the task (design a program), the action (what you did), the result (impact).

Example answer

"At my current school, library borrowing had been declining in the middle years. I introduced a reading challenge where students logged books and earned small rewards, and I worked with the art department to create student-designed displays. I also started a lunchtime book club and invited staff to share their favourite reads. Over two terms, borrowing in Years 7 to 9 increased noticeably, and the book club grew to around 20 regular members. More importantly, I saw students recommending books to each other, which is a sign that reading for pleasure is becoming part of the culture."

5. A parent challenges a book in the collection and asks for it to be removed. How do you handle this?

Why they ask

This tests your understanding of collection policies, intellectual freedom and professional communication.

How to structure your answer

A scenario response: show you listen respectfully, explain policy, follow procedure, and maintain a calm, professional tone.

Example answer

"I would thank the parent for raising their concern and listen to their perspective without becoming defensive. I would explain that the school has a collection policy and a formal reconsideration process, and that I cannot remove a book based on a single request. I would provide them with the

policy and the form to request a review. If they wanted to discuss it further, I would offer to arrange a meeting with the principal or the library coordinator. My aim is to respect the parent's view while upholding the school's commitment to providing a broad range of resources."

6. How do you use data to inform your teaching and library programs?

Why they ask

This shows you are reflective and evidence-based, and that you can evaluate the impact of your work.

How to structure your answer

A technical/behavioural hybrid: describe the data you collect, how you analyse it, and how you acted on it.

Example answer

"I collect several types of data: borrowing statistics from Oliver, database usage reports from EBSCO, and feedback from students and teachers. For example, I noticed that Year 11 students were not using the online databases for their research projects. I analysed the LibGuides analytics and saw that the subject-specific pages had low views. I responded by running a targeted lesson with the English faculty and embedding the database links into their assessment task. In the following term, database use in that year group rose, and teachers reported that students were citing more scholarly sources."