

Daniel Kang

Dr. Gingrich

AP Lang

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Protect the Books; Preserve Our Future

My fragile heart was broken not by a girl, but by the destruction of the tranquil [library](#) at Cambridge High School. When my precious print sanctuary was demolished, my ephemeral hopes and dreams evaporated quicker than minute water droplets on a baking, sunny day. Nothing was left for me but despair.

While the glory of the sun set on printed books, the moon rose to shine the way for digital technology. But the dim moon never came close close to the radiance of the [tangibly](#) warm sun. The value of the [printed text](#) far outweighs the tempting appeal of electronic reading because [e-books](#) cannot offer the same authentic, soft, crisp, papery, genuine connection that is characteristic of paperback works.

Despite notable dissenters, the ultimate reformation of the Cambridge library into the digital Student Center was initially met with delight by much of the student population. Last August, a student-led statistical survey found that at least two in every three students expressed approval of the new technological powerhouse. Among students, Danae Antoine, Elek Kozma and Elizabeth Phillips, both Antoine and Kozma favored the new Student Center, while Phillips missed the former library.

Antoine, an avid [kindle](#) reader, argued that, “An intense burden has been lifted from my shoulders. Now, instead of being overwhelmed by the onerous burden of paperback novels in my

meant-to-be lightweight bag, I can simply download multiple readings from the Student Center database.” Cambridge High School’s patronizing of electronic books has ushered in an era of convenience for the sedulous student population. After all, isn’t it much more convenient to download ten electronic files on a surface tablet, instead of lugging ten paperback books in a small bookbag? The massive load of textbooks, entertainment novels and other texts is eliminated simply by the digital age but is it really worth the ultimate sacrifice? No, it is not worth it because an artificial, insulative, indium oxide, glass screen does not offer the same intimacy as carefully handbound paper. Nothing beats a real relationship-not even a computerized library.

I peruse over my physically touchable books with the faith that I will be able to return to the same adventure the next day. This is the kind of reassurance that is not granted by an e-book. A downloaded file, a downloaded deal, an ephemeral deal, is not built to last. Soon that precious *A Separate Peace* is doomed to be [shelved into the cloud](#). It will vanish from the device and not a single bit of authentic imagery will be spared, save for the dull memories in one’s mind. A reader will barely recall the ominous tree from which Finny so ungracefully descended. The pangs of his broken heart will be lost to the shallow recollections of e-bookers. On the other hand, a printed copy will bestow upon readers, the privilege of revisiting Finny’s tragic fall from the tree. Finny’s crushed spirit and tragic betrayal will be imprinted into the vivid imaginations of literary admirers. Why is this? How can a single function piece of paper stimulate more of a connection than a multifunction device? Because the act of annotating-shedding feelings, showering love, imprinting memories-on physical text takes more intimacy than the simple swipe of an electronic screen.

Printed books provide readers with a warm, papery, feasible, unforgettable connection. Despite the increasing popularity of the e-book, much hope still remains for the physical text. According to a *Wall Street Journal* statistic, 46% of people within the United States read only printed books. This substantial percentage is a lighthouse of hope, but it is not enough to ensure lasting survival. To continue on the fundamental print tradition, we must start with our children and teach them of the treasures that only words on paper can offer. This past week, I had the privilege to volunteer at the Milton Library, reading folktales to young children. The simplest act of reading a paperback book allowed me to develop a mutual connection with not only the text itself, but also with the kids. Each time I uttered a simple word on the page, the children inched forward in excitement. As I continued to read about the rabbit on the moon, they grew increasingly interested and began to ask cute, innocent questions ranging from, “How did the rabbit get up there?” to “Will we see the rabbit tonight?” I took moments to answer and my equally childish responses made them crack beaming smiles, lighting up the dark room with beaming sunshine. We were engaged in an interactive analysis of the physical text—a pastime more rewarding than even the silent reading of a book with oneself. As we read on, I flipped the book so that the kids could see what I was seeing: the radiant illustrations on the page and the rich flow of words like honey. I allowed each individual child to flip the page and experience the soft touch of real paper. The sheer joy and love these youngsters possessed for printed books melted my sensitive heart and mended the damage done by my school library’s destruction. The world out there is being overwhelmed by the digital age, but there is always hope in the printed book. When the joyous occasion came to a close, none of the kids wanted to go home. Everyone insisted on staying to read one more word from the precious treasure. After a long struggle

between parent and child, the battle ended when each child went home with a newly borrowed book from the library.

There is still hope left for traditional books but in order to keep the flame from being snuffed out permanently by digital forces, we must instill in our children the value of reading a physical book. Otherwise, the physical text will fade away with our generation. We must protect the beloved printed book industry not just for our own generation's needs, but for the future of our beloved children.

Mentor Editorials

In [“Paper Books Alive and Well”](#) and “Protect the Books; Preserve Our Future,” the Editorial Board and I base our claims on researched evidence to establish the credibility of our respective arguments. The Editorial Board claims that nothing beats a physical connection to a book by citing a Baron research sample, in which one out of every ten students in a college expressed fondness for the physical feel of books. To encourage the continuation of the print age, I refer to a *Wall Street Journal* study that reveals that 46% of people in the nation still only read the physical text. By providing tangible facts, we establish credibility, which in turn notifies the audience that our claims are rooted in solid evidence, not just opinion. The supplying of evidence strengthens the believability and basis of the claim. Additionally, this establishment strikes down possible refutations from the opposition. Because of the unmistakable data from the *Wall Street Journal* and Baron survey, it cannot be argued anymore that few people care about, or read, printed books. The facts are right there. One in every ten people care about books and almost fifty percent of people read only print. This concrete evidence can’t be denied. It is the establishment of credibility that allowed both the Editorial Board and I to empower our believability and defeat our opposition.

Both [“Books to Have and to Hold”](#) and “Protect the Books; Preserve Our Future” elucidate their arguments through a brisk pacing. Klinkenborg and I introduce our belief in the superiority of physical books right away. He immediately starts by contrasting the fleeting nature of digital e-books to the everlasting state of physical books, while I quickly impose a banging statement praising the genuinity of print. The very brisk pacing serves to introduce the audience to the argument right away. By delivering the claim first, Klinkenborg and I reveal our issues

without creating excess suspense. Not only are readers notified of the claim right away, they are interested from the start. Focused analysis is a byproduct of fast pacing. If Klinkenborg and I had moved at a sluggish pace, we could have lost the audience's attention before even reaching our claim. Due to the rapid introduction, interest is stimulated in the beginning and the attention is kept throughout at a quick rate. Klinkenborg and I get to our points while the readers are still paying attention to us and making sense of our validity. Before they know it, we have successfully convinced them to go out and support the paper book industry, simply through the gunfire pacing of our claims.