

Pokémon Go: Get off the Couch!

Most people are familiar with Pokémon. Many children and teens who grew up in the 90s enjoyed the video game in which players are transported to a fictional world to collect mythical creatures called Pokémon. Pokémon was released on the Nintendo Game Boy System in 1996, and children were hooked with magazine contests, trading cards, and anime series as well as the game itself. Over the years, various Pokémon games have been released. While the games are each unique, the method of playing stays the same: sitting down and looking at a screen.

However, that all changed when Nintendo partnered with Niantic Labs to create Pokémon Go. Released in July 2016, the game was downloaded over fifty thousand times within 24 hours of its release. Pokémon Go stays true to the basis of the old games—catching Pokémon, battling gyms, and evolving your creatures—but this new game is vastly different than its Poké-predecessors. This app

is played on a smartphone and combines the real world with the virtual. This means that instead of simply pressing a button on a controller in your living room, you have to actually go outside and find the Pokémon.

I hadn't been a fan of Pokémon growing up but decided to test the app out with my husband who was a devoted fan growing up. We walked to Walmart and it was exciting to see that the screen shows your avatar walking down the street too and your avatar follows your movements. You'll be walking somewhere, and then a Pokémon will appear right next to you.

Here is where it gets fun. If you click on the Pokémon, your phone will switch to display through your camera and you will see a wild Pokémon on your phone through your camera lens. The first time I set up the game, I clicked on a Pokémon and the screen changed to show a Bulbasaur sitting on our living room couch next to my husband. Once the game shows the Pokémon through your camera lens, you fling a Pokéball at the creature to try to capture it.

As you level up through the game, you can choose a team to join. Then you can take control of a Pokémon gym and other teams will try to take the "gym" back from you. Of course, I haven't gotten that far at Level 4.

One of the things I really like about the game is how it uses the city you are in to make the game more interesting. Notable or popular buildings are Pokéstops where you can purchase items for your Pokémon or receive prizes. There are a lot of Pokéstops in Huntsville from the



post office and fast food chains to the Huntsville Public Library and City Hall.

I think the best thing about the game is it gets people moving. You can't just sit around your house to play. You have to go somewhere! Also, this game encourages people to exercise who might not be as inclined to get a gym membership or play a sport. I am not a fan of exercise, but my husband

and I walked around Huntsville for two hours one evening and had a wonderful time.

The game has reached such heights of popularity that various experts have taken notice. The game producers as well as law enforcement officials have urged the public to only use the game in a safe manner. Being aware of your surroundings, playing in a group, not trespassing, and not using the game while driving are all smart pieces of advice to keep in mind when playing on your smart phone.

In a recent article with Engadget.com, Dr. John Grohol, notable expert in the realm of mental health, stated that Pokémon Go has actually helped people with depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. "Twitter is flooded with stories about *Pokemon Go's* impact on players' anxiety and depression, with thousands of people lauding the game for getting them out of the house and making it easier to interact with friends and strangers alike. These simple acts are crucial milestones for anyone struggling with depression," Grohol says, "The challenge has always been, if you're

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GED Prep Classes in Huntsville

Lone Star College is offering General Equivalency Diploma (GED) Prep classes in Huntsville at Mance Park Middle School from 5 to 9 p.m.

Although classes won't begin until October, students must register and attend orientation on Friday, September 2.

Then, they must return on Tuesday, September 6 for further testing.

Classes are available at no cost on a first come, first served basis.

All students must present a valid photo ID with birth date on it at the time of Orientation/Registration/Testing.

For further information, please contact the Lone Star College Continuing Education Department at a campus near you or Marilyn Smith at Marilyn.K.Smith@lonestar.edu.

This program is for students of all ages.

If you are between the ages of 17 and 24, Workforce Solutions offers a free online GED preparatory program.

General Equivalency Diploma (GED®) Prep classes



They will pay for your test and offer free transportation assistance.

Call (832) 919-5730 or (936) 234-3439 for more information.

—Mary Kokot, Adult Services

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Preparing for the ACT and SAT...

It's that time of year for high school students to be thinking about applying for colleges. One of the things that are not taught in schools is the standardized testing for colleges called the SAT and the ACT.

The SAT reasoning test is a measure of the critical thinking skills needed for academic success in college. The SAT assesses how well a student analyzes and solves problems. The ACT measures a student's overall educational development and the ability to complete college-level work.

Both tests have a math, reading, and writing component (although the ACT writing component is optional) but the ACT also includes a science section. The ACT tends to have harder math concepts while the SAT has a stronger emphasis on vocabulary.

The ACT does not have a guessing penalty; the SAT currently does. While both tests are timed, for many students, the ACT is time pressured while the SAT is not.

Colin Gruenwald, Director of SAT and ACT programming at Kaplan Test Prep

explains, "The SAT has 4 sections that are 35-60 minutes each, while the ACT has 10 sections that are 10-25 minutes each. The SAT has short sprints but changes from topic to topic."

Students have a choice of what test to take, most take the SAT because society thinks this is the test that colleges want. Honestly students should practice for both tests before making a decision on a specific one.

Test prep can be done many ways. Some students can do fine just studying on their own with a prep book, while others benefit from online prep, a group class or private tutoring.



All students will benefit from taking practice tests under timed conditions either at home or at a tutoring center that offers practice testing.

The best time to start taking these practice tests is the summer after sophomore year.

The Huntsville Public Library has databases like **Texshare** and **LearningExpress Library**. **Texshare** offers an extensive set of free online databases for library cardholders. Categories include academic research, books and literature, science and technology, homework help, genealogy and history, and health and medicine. **LearningExpress Library** features nearly 1,000 online tutorials, practice tests, and eBooks to help patrons of all ages. It offers job search and workplace skills improvement, skill building in reading, writing, math, and basic science, career certification and licensure exam prep, college and grad school entrance test prep, GED® test prep, and more. These databases are a great way to start studying for free.

—Ashley Newsome, Teen Services

pronunciator:

Psst, Wanna Learn a New Language?

Here at Huntsville Public Library, we always strive to bring you quality programs and content, to provide the community with tools to educate and improve, from an exhibit with a preserved trilobite to children's movie nights, from inter library loans to online databases, and of course, a wide selection of books, DVDs and more in house. But one online database in particular caught this reporter's eye recently, a language learning program recently added to our collection called **Pronunciator**.

Accessed through HPL's website adult databases and **TexShare**, **Pronunciator** is a language self-study program that boasts the ability to teach eighty languages, including English as a second language to over 50 non-English languages. Between Afrikaans and Xhosa, around the world and back again, languages such as Dutch, Hebrew, Spanish and Portuguese in different dialects each, Hatian Creole, Japanese, German, Basque, and even Welsh can be found! This wide selection has earned **Pronunciator** Along with the language programs, citizenship and naturalization courses are also offered



to help prepare new Americans.

A myriad of techniques and methods for learning languages are available on the website and through apps, meaning almost any type of learner has an opportunity to gain from this program. And it isn't just for adults, courses for children as young as three are available, offering a progression from childhood through any skill level up to advanced courses. Along with traditional structured self-study courses where words and phrases are presented through flashcards, drills and quizzes there are also live, teacher-led conversation classes, interactive full-length feature films, hits by major recording artists in radio, interactive virtual con-

versations and even poetry and plays to help learn the nuances of the language. There is even a course designer to allow teachers to create their own language courses and distribute them to an unlimited number of students.

Pronunciator is accessible from almost any device or browser bringing this extensive learning tool to anyone's fingertips. In the library, **Pronunciator** can be accessed without signing up, simply by clicking the link in our **TexShare** database listing under our adult databases. To access the service outside of the HPL, an account will be needed, but requires little other than an email address and a few minutes. There is also an app you can download to take your language learning on the go!

To learn more come in or contact Mary Kokot, Adult Services Coordinator at (936)291-5471, or you can explore our website at www.MyHuntsvilleLibrary.com.

I am already loving **Pronunciator** and can't wait to learn more languages!

- Peirs Anderson, Circulation

Sayounara!

Video game streaming war

For many years there was one mainstream site dedicated to video game streaming, Twitch.tv.

This past year Google sought to contend in the video game streaming business when it started to allow streamers to use YouTube as a medium of delivering their broadcasts.

Enter August 2016, and Facebook is now a player in this wildly popular video consumption business.

Facebook and Blizzard Entertainment have partnered together. Many of Blizzards newer PC games will be able to connect to a

Facebook account and can be broadcasted live using Facebook Live.

I believe this will change the game again for video game broadcasting. These videos will show up on your friends Facebook feeds and they will be able to share your content with more people than ever.

This will also get your aunts, uncles, and anyone who is not familiar at all with video game broadcasting a chance to view some of your work.

Facebook is going to be a big disruptor in the coming years for



video game streaming. With more competition than ever before in this market, I expect to see great innovation coming from this sector of the video game industry. Do you think watching video game streams on Facebook is a good idea? Let us know on Facebook and Twitter!

- Drew Nevlud,
Tech Coordinator



A will, sometimes called a "last will and testament," is a document stating a person's final wishes. Upon death a jurisdictional court of law (typically a county court) will apply probate rules to insure that the deceased's final wishes are carried out. The estates of persons dying without a will (intestate) are distributed according to the findings of the court.

The will and the probate record often provide a wealth of information about the deceased. From the documents we may learn the deceased's full name, names of spouse and children, estate inventories including land and valuable holdings. We will also learn of the distribution of assets, guardianship of minor children and a list of heirs and their relationship to the deceased. Debts and the names of creditors may be included in the record. Dates of death and other details of the probate are given. The names of the executors and witnesses to the will often give clues to other relationships.

Fortunately, today's family historians may not need to travel across country to access historic wills. Many



wills, probate records and summaries have been published in print, microfilm and digital formats and are frequently found in genealogical centers and libraries and online

Wills and probate records help family historians clarify and resolve questions of genealogy. Histories of American families prior to the 1850 census often become muddled. The 1850 census was the first census, with the exception of persons held in bondage, to include names and ages of household members. African-American researchers are often able to use a combination of the 1870 Federal Census, the 1850 and 1860 Slave Schedules and the wills of slaveholders to extend the family tree beyond the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the American Civil War.

Wills and probate records are legal

documents, but they also give insight into the deceased's character, their standing in the community and their wealth. Early American wills are of particular interest to this writer. They often begin with language similar to the following, "In the name of God Amen, I _____ of the County of _____ and the State of _____ being of sound mind and memory and knowing that it is appointed to all men once to die, do make, publish, ordain and state this to be my last will and testament, hereby revoking all other former wills by me heretofore made. Imprimis (in the first place) I lend to my beloved wife _____ during her natural life the land whereon I now live ..."

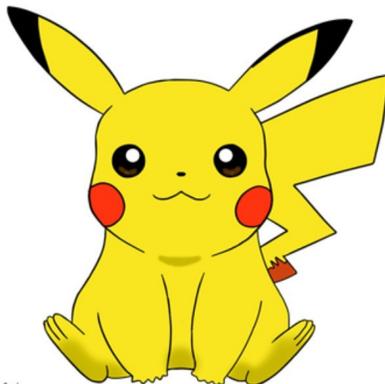
My beloved wife, my beloved daughter, and my beloved son are frequent familial endearments. Humble appeals to the Almighty are common. There seems to be an expectation of the living that the end of life document needed to be undertaken with sincerity, reverence and a final resolution of life's toils.

- Richard Lane, *Genealogy*

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depressed, your motivation level is nonexistent. So, you want to go out and get some fresh air, or even take a shower, and it can be a very difficult thing to even comprehend, much less do. I think the impact of something like this, this game, can really be beneficial." Pokémon Go can help get people out of the house but Grohol explicitly cautions that this is a game that happens to help people, not a diagnostic tool or a substitute for receiving help from a professional.

I think that Pokémon Go is a wonderful game for people to play. It's a great way to get exercise and explore the city you live in. So come to the Huntsville Public Library, check out some books, and hunt down a Pokémon. It's still true: You Gotta Catch 'Em All!

—Rachel McPhail, *Children's Coordinator*



Check out the exciting Children's Programs at the Huntsville Public Library!

- Mother Goose Lapsits, 10:30 Mondays**
- Storytime, 10:45 on Wednesdays AND Fridays**
- Read with the Dogs, 2nd Monday of the Month**
- Family Movie Night, 5:30, 2nd Friday of the Month**

Complete listings of events at www.myhuntsvillelibrary.com

For more information, contact Children's Coordinator Rachel McPhail, at 936-291-5910.