

Reading matters

Surveys and campaigns: How to keep and recover readers



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THE NORWEGIAN
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Time for reading

By Edmund Austigaard,
Chair, Norwegian Publishers Association



Photo: Samlaget

Reading is a pillar of our society. Good reading skills develop the linguistic confidence needed for self-expression and full participation in society. Reading provides insight and access to knowledge. Those who can read are invited to our collective world library, and are given the chance to look through the eyes of others. Reading is a practice in the art of understanding the other, and the others. Reading may challenge our beliefs, inspiring us to think and act differently. Our democracy is resting on this foundation. Thus, we must insist on literature in all its forms and across a variety of platforms. The long and the short read. The wide and the narrow. Now more than ever, in an online environment where readers are increasingly guided by algorithms to one extremity or another, we all have a responsibility for allowing thought to meet friction in public discourse.

This report finds that collectively we have read less over the past 20 years. Particularly worrying is the fact that the decrease is most prevalent among young people. However, there is still reason for optimism. The report also shows that the number of non-readers has decreased. What is needed to continue this development? Will young people return to reading? Will they read more in the years to come? The global work on strengthening literacy is important and, alongside reading stimulation initiatives, it gives results.

As an industry, we must be the strongest ambassadors for reading. Through collaboration with international organisations and national governments we can influence and support future developments. One's ability to understand text through reading is a prerequisite for growth and development. It has been demonstrated for hundreds of years, through the concentrated relationship between reader and text. The social mission of the publishing industry is to strengthen and protect freedom of expression. To stimulate reading, reflection and the search for knowledge. A diverse and rich literature inspires reading, and more reading. Presenting rich literature is what we know best of all.



Executive summary

Reading matters. This is why this was chosen as the main slogan for the 33rd International Publishers Congress which was planned to take place in Lillehammer, Norway, in May 2020. For the same reason, IPA and Norwegian Publishers Association have chosen to explore how reading is developing worldwide. The report describes this development by comparing reading surveys from many countries. We have also looked at how organised reading activities in different countries contribute to stimulating reading.

Can new media fulfil the role previously thought to be the domain of traditional reading? Have we still got the ability to immerse ourselves in longer texts? Have screens changed the way we read? Addressing the issue of reading, we have been looking to find research that can shed light on these questions, and to find possible reasons for the assumed decline in reading.

Throughout the making of this report we have come across many terms for the act of reading as well as the physical and mental reading environment: Skim reading. Deep reading. The economics of temptation. Digital disruption.

The aim of the report has been to identify data about reading habits of the population in a selection of countries, then to summarise them. Our hope is that this report will form an empirical base and a starting point for further research and discussions regarding this important topic for the international publishing industry.

The results can be summed up as the following:

- There is a global and clear trend that the traditional reading of books has declined over the last 20 years
- The level of decrease in reading varies from country to country

- In many countries the curve has flattened, and there is now a slight increase
- The decline is strongest in the younger age groups, specifically for older youth and young adults
- Women generally read more than men
- Older readers are the most faithful readers
- More readers read fewer books than before
- More readers read less frequently
- The number of readers who read every day is decreasing, while the number of readers reading several times a week is increasing
- The number of non-readers is declining
- Several countries show an increase in leisure reading
- There are plenty of reading stimulation activities directed at children, fewer for adults
- Reading stimulation activities are often quantitative, such as reading competitions rewarding the highest amount of read pages
- Many reading activities are directed at children and aim to stimulate reading during holidays
- There are also reading measures that have a qualitative focus, for example days focusing on reading out loud, book purchasing or particular dissemination activities
- Book donations are important in many countries in order to augment the selection of books

Methodology

The report describes developments in these principal areas:

- Which population groups read books
- Time and frequency of their reading
- Genres and numbers of books read
- What is needed in order to increase the motivation for reading?

We have looked at tendencies and explanatory models, knowing that these are complex questions whose answers depend both on the commissioner and who is carrying out the survey, as well as the chosen methodology.

There are many surveys in existence that are connected to reading habits, time spent reading and media consumption. There are official reading surveys, library statistics, white papers and independent reports from players within the culture sector and statistics agencies. It is important to keep an eye on who commissions these surveys: are they commercial, ideological or academic players? Are the surveys politically, commercially or academically rooted? We have taken care to explain these aspects in the presentation of the figures. Different players approach the subject matter from different angles and the phrasing of questions may affect the answers.

Most of the surveys forming the basis of this report are qualitative. Researchers mainly used telephone and online interviews on a demographic selection of the population. Each report clearly states the methodology used for the interviews and how the respondents were selected and weighted.

Some parameters are used in most surveys; reading in correlation to gender, education, region and medium. They say something about:

- How many regard themselves as readers
- The frequency of their reading
- Number of books read
- Time spent reading
- Preferred format
- Age distribution of readers and their reading frequency
- Gender distribution of readers and their reading frequency
- Reading in correlation to level of education
- Reading in relation to geographical location

We present surveys which we have found representative, and which give a timely picture of the reading situation in each country. The challenge is that new surveys are constantly emerging and data is often updated on a yearly basis. This report presents surveys from 2015–2020, with the majority of them from 2019–2020.

We have chosen to present the country results in alphabetical order, and not after results. The main reason for this, is that the surveys are different in their approach and focus, and in that way not always overall comparable. Another reason is that there are regularly made new surveys in many countries. The results might change, which makes it difficult to place a country in for instance a “decline” section. There are new surveys on their way in several territories that will not make it into this edition of the report. These considerations made us land on the alphabetical solution, as this will make the report more flexible and ready for changes within a country, and it will also be easier to add more country reports in the future. The overall goal at the moment has been to find surveys, display them, compile results and look for overall tendencies and facilitate and form a basis for more work on this subject in the future.

The report must be read as an attempt to draw a current global picture of reading habits and identify tendencies in the development of reading in different age groups. We have also looked at the digital development and highlighted where this has been included in the surveys. It has not been our aim to cover every country and topic, but we have strived to include results from different parts of the world. It has not been possible to find surveys from every country. We have chosen to include surveys that are recent enough to be relevant. There has not been room to do a systematic validation of all parameters in the surveys, but we have presented the main findings and trends. Links to all surveys are included in the footnotes and provide the opportunity for further reading.

Going forward

Measures, opportunities and future

Even though several countries have reported positive developments in reading behaviour, we cannot help but see that reading overall is showing a downward trend. More media

is competing for users' time, and there are few reasons to believe that the pressure from other sources of entertainment will change any time soon. Still, there is reason for optimism, as many of the respondents say that they wish to read more, and reading continues to hold a strong cultural position. This means that potential readers still exist, and it is possible to entice them back to books.

To achieve this, it is important to keep the focus on reading and measure reading activity over time. At the same time, one should work on strategies and reading activities in order to hold on to readers, or have them return. The strategies should encompass both children and adult readers, and they ought to take into account the changes in reading habits, both in terms of medium and genre. Many are choosing digital reading formats, which again affect the way they read; shorter sessions, more frequent, and often whilst doing other activities simultaneously.

Italy has an interesting approach to how reading could be measured in the future, and how surveys could be tightened to give data that can form a basis for reading stimulation measures. Italy is expanding its definition of reading, which could provide important information on how to reach new groups.

Finding information about reading stimulation measures for children is easy, and it is important work to continue as research shows that adults are now reading less to children. Parents may increasingly turn to audiobooks or other digital media instead of reading to the children themselves. There are several organisations working to promote literacy in children through a strong focus on reading.

When it comes to reading stimulation measures directed at adults, finding good examples is harder. It is important to point out that it is young adult readers who are most at risk, and where the strongest decline occurs, according to the surveys presented in this report. This is an important link that forms a bridge from reading in childhood to adult reading. If these readers are lost, we will see a stable decline in readers world over in the years to come.



Jamba, a librarian in the Mongolian desert. Source: pierremartial.com. Reproduced with permission.¹

¹ https://www.pierremartial.com/Mongolie-Le-chameau-qui-parcourt-le-desert-de-Gobi-pour-apporter-des-livres-aux-enfants_a237.html?fbclid=IwAR13CjWPvPuyrjXo9nLwAYZmFdglJExXXUhmslrzV9C3H-PG97CXOTUTc40, (accessed 22-6-2020)



Source: Stavanger Sentrum AS

A smiling woman with braided hair, wearing a denim shirt, holds a book titled 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' by Maya Angelou. The book cover is light blue with a silhouette of a bird. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting. The entire image has a purple color overlay.

READING SURVEYS - WHAT DO THEY TELL US?

Argentina – Mujeres que leen: a national report on women who read²



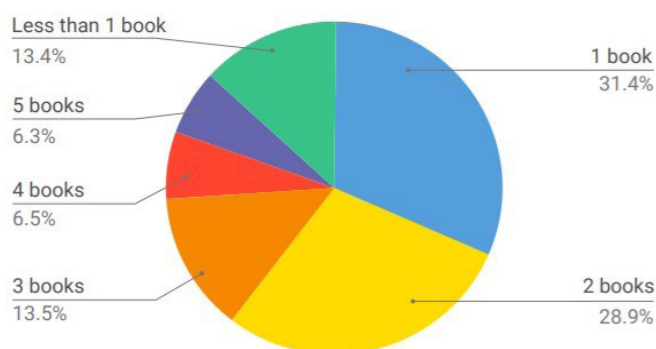
- Paper remains the main book medium for Argentinian women
- 45+ are the most frequent readers, 18–25 the less frequent readers

What and how do women read? What will a survey that only examines the female readership show? In Argentina, a substantial survey in 2019 aimed to provide answers to these questions.

The survey looked at women aged 18+, and was conducted digitally in Argentina over February and March 2019. Distributed through the social, personal and professional networks of the Entre Editores, an organisation initiated by the Argentine publishing industry in an effort to modernise and integrate with world markets, the survey was rolled out in collaboration with Argentinian bookstores. The number of respondents exceeds 5000. The survey consists of two parts; the first shows general data in graphic format, whilst the second part elaborates on this data in age brackets.

Most readers answered that they read 1–2 books per month. They are borrowing more books than they are buying, and reading is primarily a night-time activity. The survey shows an increase in ebook reading, reaching 11.6 percent of the market, and audio increasing to 2.2 percent. Still, paper remains the main book medium for Argentinian women. Women read at every stage of their life; the age group 18–25 being the less frequent readers (19.9 percent), followed closely by those aged 36–46 (23.8 percent), while those aged over 46 are the most frequent readers (27.5 percent) together with the 26–35 year olds (28.8 percent).³

How much do they read each month?



Female reading frequency Argentina⁴

This study is difficult to compare to others, as it is limited to one gender and not conducted through a statistical analysis bureau. Being the only study of its kind, it allows no analysis of how the reading habits of women might have changed over time. It does show, however, that amongst the respondents there exists an ingrained lifetime reading habit.

² Entre Editores, Mujeres que leen. Women Readers, <https://entreditores.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Mujeres-que-leen-Survey-Report.pdf>, (accessed 12.1.2020)

³ Entre Editores, Mujeres que leen. Women Readers, <https://www.mujeresqueleen.com/informe-mujeresqueleen/>, p 5 (accessed 13.1.2020)

⁴ Entre Editores, Mujeres que leen. Women Readers, <https://www.mujeresqueleen.com/download/primer-informe-nacional-mujeresqueleen/>, p 6, (accessed 12.1.2020)

Belgium – Teenagers are hard to reach



- No studies on a national level
- Decline in reading among young people

According to the Association des Editeurs Belges (Flemish Publishers Association, FPA), there have been no studies concerning national reading behaviours in Belgium or Flanders since 2011. Yet a series of smaller studies have been conducted, including research on magazine reading habits, research into reading and local libraries, and research into sales in bookshops.

The FPA reports that the sales of Flemish books are decreasing, and that teenagers are hard to reach as they are not visiting libraries or attending literary events. There is little focus on reading in secondary school, and many parents do not encourage their children as they don't read themselves. There are some successful projects aimed at stimulating reading, that are showing good results, but the lack of attention to the importance of reading in education is a cause for concern to the FPA, who fear an increased decline in reading. However, literature and reading are still held in high regard by the public, and there is substantial focus on literature in the media.

Reading activities

There are several successful organisations and measures in Belgium aiming to promote reading for both children and adults.

- Literature Flanders grants subsidies to organisations that promote reading for immigrants or people in poverty. Literature Flanders also organises author readings, where authors visit schools or libraries to talk about their work.
- De Dagen (The Days) is an organisation that brings people together to talk about literature in an intimate manner. People who live in poverty, people with disabilities and lonely people are invited. The basis is always literature, but participants are encouraged to talk about their own lives as well. That way reading becomes a therapeutic and social activity. The Days focuses on the power of stories, reading, beauty and the importance of connectedness, slowness, solidarity, silence and care for each other. The organisation has specialised in shared reading. A concept devised by The Reader Organisation (VK).
- Iedereen Leest (Everyone Reads) is a reading promotion organisation that develops and coordinates multiple campaigns to improve and promote reading in Flanders. Campaigns include; Bookstart, Reading Week, Book Finder and Youth Book Month.
- Leuven Leest is another recent strategy of reading promotion in Flanders encouraging young teachers to enjoy reading themselves. Student teachers are approached with various reading promotion initiatives.

Brazil – Percentage of readers increasing

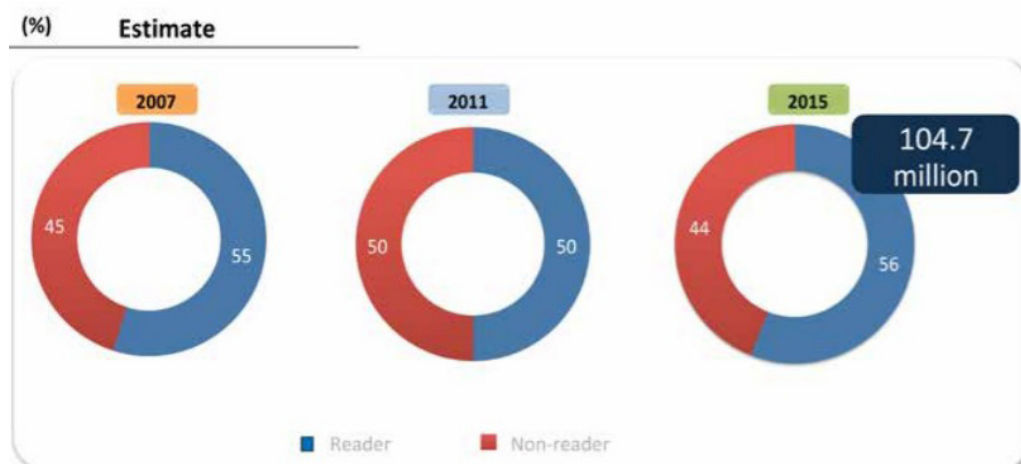


- Increase in readers from all age groups over time
- Percentage of readers declines with age

Reading portraits in Brazil has been issued since 2001. This constitutes the most solid research on a national level that monitors reader behaviour. Compiled by Instituto Pró-Book (IPL), the report aims to examine reader behaviour by gender, age, education, class, region, and medium. It is based on a comparative survey carried out through personal interviews evaluating the development from 2000 to 2015. The respondents are Brazilians from 5012 households. The survey does not specify genre, and included as books are paper and digital books, audiobooks, school materials, manuals, catalogues, brochures, magazines and newspapers.⁵ A new survey is on its way, and will be released in August 2020.

A reader is defined as someone who has read a book, or part of a book, in the last three months. As of 2015, 56 percent of the population are readers by this definition, compared to 50 percent in 2011, an increase seen in both the male and female population. The percentage of readers declines with age, but there is an overall increase in readers from all age groups over time.⁶

Population estimate



Brazilian population with aged 5 or more – 2007 (173 million)/ 2011(178 million)/2015 (188 million) - Base: Sample (5,012)

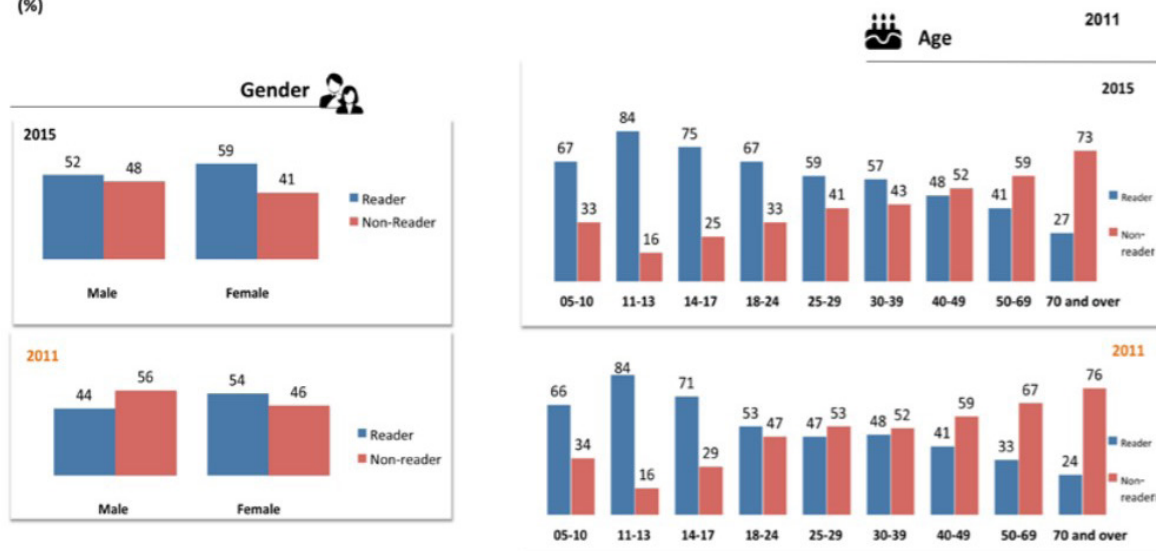
Source: *Reading portraits in Brazil*, 4th edition p 179

⁵ Sextante/Instituto Pró-Livro, <http://cbl.org.br/upload/reading-portraits-in-brazil.pdf>, p 161 (accessed 17.1.2020)

⁶ Sextante/Instituto Pró-Livro, <http://cbl.org.br/upload/reading-portraits-in-brazil.pdf>, p 179, (accessed 25.2.2020)

Reader and non-reader profile - Gender and Age

(%)



Source: Reading portraits in Brazil, 4th edition p 180

Main motivation to read a book: by age group

1.35) What is the main reason for you to read?	TOTAL	AGE GROUP								
		5 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 69	70 and over
Base: Readers	2798	307	204	321	403	254	474	332	439	66
Taste	25	40	42	29	21	20	16	21	23	25
Cultura update or General knowledge	19	9	12	15	20	23	28	22	19	23
Leisure	15	10	16	19	17	17	13	13	12	19
Personal growth	10	4	7	9	14	10	13	13	10	3
Religious reasons	11	3	3	1	4	9	13	16	25	25
School or college requirement	7	22	12	14	8	3	3	2	0	0
Professional update or work requirement	7	1	3	3	9	13	9	8	6	0
Don't know/didn't answer	5	11	4	9	6	4	5	4	5	4

1.35) What is the main reason for you to read?

Low base

Source: Reading portraits in Brazil, 4th edition, p 187

The primary motivation to read a book is taste, followed by search for knowledge and cultural update, leisure and personal growth. From 2011–2015, the number of readers enjoying reading is up 5 percent from 25 percent to 30 percent. 77 percent of the respondents wish they could read more, with lack of time and the preference of other activities taking the blame.⁷

⁷ Sextante/Instituto Pró-Livro, <http://cbl.org.br/upload/reading-portraits-in-brazil.pdf>, p 219 (accessed 25.2.2020)

Reading activities

The Pro Livro Institute (IPL) has created the Pro Livro Platform – a collaborative digital platform for mapping and registering reading promotion projects throughout Brazil. IPL also promotes an annual award for organisations that promote reading. The Award (“Premio IPL”) aims to know, value and disseminate successful projects to promote reading to encourage other organizations to invest in these actions. There are 357 projects registered and 104 awarded and finalist projects in the four editions of the award throughout Brazil.

In 2019, 216 projects promoting reading were registered, 42 were selected as finalists in four categories: libraries, productive chain, media and civil social organizations.⁸ The 12 winners, three from each category, are representing a broad picture from *magazine Pessoa*⁹, presenting literature in Portuguese, to *The contagion by reading*-project, training reading agents, working to promote reading in local communities and the Beija-Flor Network of Small Living Libraries of Santo André.^{10,11}



Source: Instituto Pró-Livro

⁸ IPL Award -Portraits of Reading announces finalists, <https://www.publishnews.com.br/materias/2019/10/29/premio-ipl-retratos-da-leitura-divulga-finalistas>, (accessed 20.5.2020)

⁹ <https://www.revistapessoa.com/>

¹⁰ <http://nossariachodesantana.blogspot.com/2018/12/abertura-da-7-edicao-da-feira-literaria.html>

¹¹ The full list of winners and finalists: <https://portaldooeste.com/rio-grande-do-norte-vence-em-duas-categorias-na-4a-edicao-do-premio-ipl-retratos-da-leitura/>, (accessed 20.5.2020)

Canada – A slight decline in readers reading several times a week or weekly



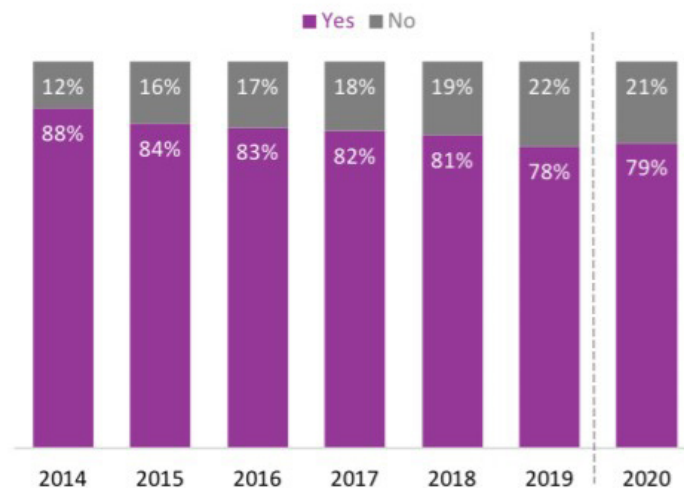
- About 8 out of 10 Canadians are readers (79 percent)
- Most readers are reading daily or weekly
- 64 percent of readers read multiple formats while 45 percent only read digital books

The best source of research on this topic in the English-speaking Canadian market is BookNet Canada. They do an annual report on Canadian leisure and reading.¹² The report is based on online surveys in English of 1266 Canadians in January 2020, the respondents were representative of the Canadian population based on age, gender and geographical region.

The survey identified 1000 readers (read or listened to books at least a few times in the last year) and 266 non-readers. The survey targets the Canadian English language market. The full 2020 report is available [here](#).

According to the survey, number of readers is slightly declining:

Did Canadians read a book last year?

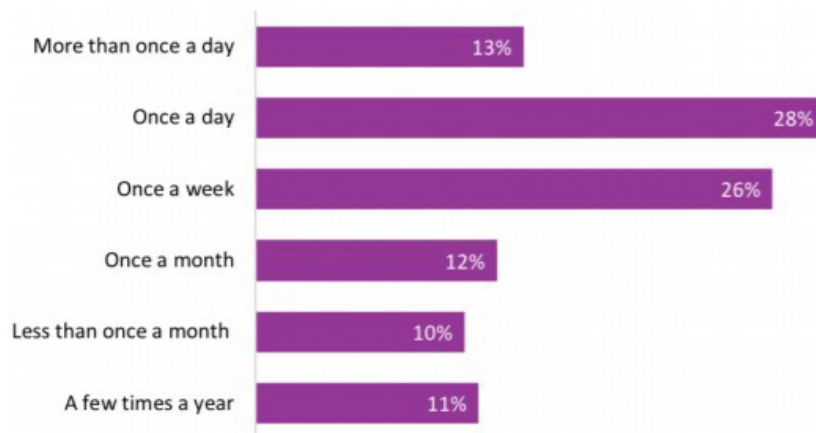


Source: BookNet Canada

In the age group 18–29, 86 percent are readers, declining to 82 percent in the age group 30–44, 80 percent in the age group 45–54, and reaching the lowest rate of 71 percent in the age group 55–64. The percentage increases up to 76 percent in the 65+ group. More readers live in urban areas or cities than in rural areas. The percentage of readers increase with completed education level.

¹² Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2020, <https://www.booknetcanada.ca/canadian-leisure-and-reading-2020>, (accessed 20.4.2020)

How often readers read or listen to books



Source: Booknet Canada, Reading frequency¹³

67 percent of the readers are reading daily or weekly. Readers aged 65+ read the most frequently, 19 percent of them reading more than once a day, followed by 14 percent of those aged 18–29. There are more avid readers (more than 50 books a year) in the 65+ group than in any other age group. Most readers prefer print books, but ebook reading on smartphones is an upward trend.

The Canadian book market is split between the English-language market and the French-language market, with a value of Eur 1.1 billion and Eur 300 million respectively. These trade figures exclude the educational market. According to the book market review, Bilan du marché du livre au Québec 2018, conducted by Gaspard in cooperation with BTLF, sales by Québec retailers increased by 3.3 percent in the period 2017–2018, with the annual sales of French language books increasing by 5.3 percent.¹⁴

Reading activities



Source: cbc media centre

Perhaps the best-known reading promotion in Canada, is Canada Reads, a book competition aired by CBC-network, that has run for the past 18 years. It first aired as a radio show in 2002, and in 2010 it became a TV show, filmed in front of live studio audiences.¹⁵

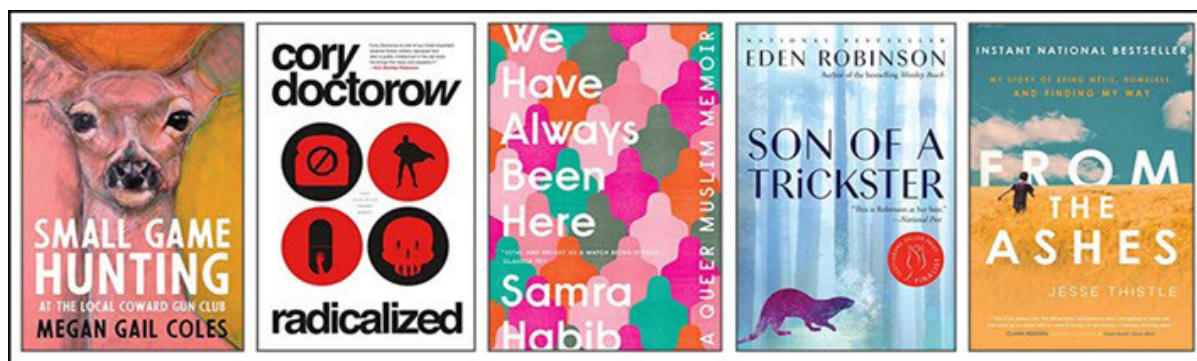
During Canada Reads, five panellists champion five different books, each extolling the virtues of their chosen title. The debate is broadcast over a series of five programmes. At the end of each episode, the panellists vote one title out of the competition until only one book remains. This book is then billed as the book that all of Canada should read.¹⁶ This endorsement has meant that all winners have become instant national bestselling authors, and the five championed books have also become bestsellers. The selected titles are Canadian fiction, poetry and plays.

¹³ BookNet Canada, <https://www.booknetcanada.ca/canadian-leisure-and-reading-2020>, p 12, (accessed 20.4.2020)

¹⁴ Le Bilan Gaspard 2018 du marché du livre au Québec, <http://btlf.ca/produits-services/rapports/>, (accessed 16.1.2020)

¹⁵ CBC, About Canada Reads, <https://www.cbc.ca/books/canadareads/about-1.4025711>, (accessed 26.2.2020)

Among the previous winning titles, you find Michael Ondaatje, Max Eisen, Kim Thúy and Lawrence Hill.



Source: Publishing Perspectives

For an overview of the 2020 Canada Reads contest, there is a full article in [Publishing Perspectives](#) presenting the books and panellists:¹⁷

- Alayna Fender defending *Small Game Hunting at the Local Coward Gun Club* by Megan Gail Coles (House of Anansi Press)
- Akil Augustine defending *Radicalized* by Cory Doctorow (Macmillan / Tor Books)
- Amanda Brugel defending *We Have Always Been Here* by Samra Habib (Penguin Random House / Viking)
- Kaniehtiio Horn defending *Son of a Trickster* by Eden Robinson (Penguin Random House / Vintage)
- George Canyon defending *From the Ashes: My Story of Being Métis, Homeless, and Finding My Way* by Jesse Thistle

There are many events aimed at stimulating reading for teenagers and children in Canada. The publishers association, L'Association nationale des éditeurs de livres (ANEL), highlight several interesting reading events in the French speaking parts of the country. Spontaneously launched a few years ago by two authors on Facebook, August 12 has been successfully established as 'Buy a Québec Book Day'. Furthermore, there are nine book fairs in the Province of Québec, all arranged through the book fair association, [Association québécoise des Salons du livre](#), a non-profit association aiming to promote books, periodicals and reading in general.

The mission of the [Lire. Fondation pour réussir](#) (the Reading for success foundation), launched by the writers' union, is to improve reading habits in order to increase overall literacy levels. Authors serve as ambassadors, arranging reading events and awarding literary prizes. They also promote book club networks, where members receive a selection of 20 novels published in Canada and France, reading, debating and voting for their favorite. The winning authors receive a grant and tour Québec and France to meet their readers.

ANEL publish a quarterly magazine, which promotes French Canadian titles to booksellers, librarians and schools.

¹⁶ Canada Reads, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada_Reads, (accessed 26.2.2020)

¹⁷ Publishing Perspectives, 'Canada Reads: CBC's 2020 Lineup Includes Cory Doctorow's 'Radicalized'', <https://publishingperspectives.com/2020/01/canada-reads-cbcs-2020-lineup-includes-cory-doctorows-radicalized/>

China – Numbers of readers slightly increasing



- Slight growth in reading among adults
- Slight growth in digital reading

On 23 April 2019, the Chinese Academy of Press and Publication released its 16th national survey on Chinese reading habits.¹⁸ Chinese adults read an average of 7.99 books in 2018. This number includes 3.32 digital titles. For children up to 17 years, the number is 8.91 books per year. This is a slight increase from 2017. The demand for printed books remains stable, while there is a slight growth in digital reading. A rise in the use of audiobooks has also been recorded. According to Wei Yushan, director of the Academy, almost one-third of the Chinese population are listening to audiobooks. There is a lower percentage of readers, 14.5 percent, in rural areas.

Among adults, 80.8 percent are readers, which covers all kinds of reading material, both print and digital, a rise of 0.5 percent compared to 2017. 38.5 percent of adults prefer paper books over ebooks, a 6.7 percent decrease from 2017.¹⁹



¹⁸ China Daily, Survey on reading habits released, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201904/16/WS5cb57ff5a3104842260b67f2.html>, (accessed 10.1.2020)

¹⁹ Global Times, Chinese Academy of Press and Publication releases Chinese Adult Reading Survey ahead of World Book Day shows only 38.4 percent of adults prefer paper books over ebooks, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1146496.shtml>, (accessed 25.2.2020)

Denmark – A battle for the attention of media consumers



Denmark carries out frequent reading surveys, publishing the results in annual reports. The report *Læsning i tal: Metoder og resultater fra udvalgte internationale læsevaneundersøgelser* (Reading in numbers: methods and results from a selection of international surveys on reading habits) by Marie Bilde Rasmussen from 2017, was commissioned by **Bog- og literaturpanelet**, the Danish panel on books and literature, and includes statistics from reading surveys in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany and Britain.²⁰ The panel wanted to map reading habits in comparable countries, as well as discussing challenges when comparing such data. The report examines reading frequency by gender, level of education, media type and genre.

Even though the report compiles different reading surveys, and can not be compared number by number, there are prevailing tendencies in all the countries:

- Women read more than men
- The old read more than the young
- Education plays a role in relation to reading

The report calls for a common survey method that can provide greater comparability in terms of numbers.

Provision of books and literature

The annual report from the Danish literary panel, *Bogens og litteraturens vilkår* (Book and literature provision), compiles data from the production, distribution and reading of books. Published annually since 2015, the report is a key reference for the Danish publishing industry.²¹

The Danish literary panel is appointed by the Danish Ministry of Culture, and its mandate is to document developments in the Danish book market. Part of their focus is to follow the evolution of literature in this age of digitalisation. The book panel also collects information on book production, distribution and reading habits.²² Their new annual report was published in November 2019.

The panel states early in the report, “The book market and the literature cycle are characterised by a number of changes in recent years, and as discussed in previous reports, they are generally linked to three long-term processes: digitalisation, commercialisation and globalisation, which in different ways and with different strength affects conditions in Denmark.”²³

There has been an increase in Danish fiction publications, particularly novels for adult readers and storybooks for children. In 2017, 559 more fiction titles were published compared to 2009, an increase of 58 percent.²⁴

²⁰ Bog- og literaturpanelet, Slots-og Kulturstyrelsen: <https://bogen.slks.dk/2016/laesning-i-tal/>, (accessed 17.12.2019)
²¹ Bog- og literaturpanelet, Slots-og Kulturstyrelsen: https://bogen.slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/0_SLKS/Dokumenter/Bogpanel/Faktaark_aarsrapport2018.pdf, (accessed 18.12.2019)

²² Bog- og literaturpanelet, Slots-og Kulturstyrelsen: <https://slks.dk/om-styrelsen/raad-naevn-og-udvalg/bogpanelet/>, (accessed 18.12.2019)

²³ Bog- og literaturpanelet, Slots-og Kulturstyrelsen: https://bogen.slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/0_SLKS/Fotos/Bogpanel/Rapport18/Aarsrapport_2018.pdf, (accessed 18.12.2019)

²⁴ Fakta fra Bog- og literaturpanelets årsrapport, Slots-og Kulturstyrelsen, https://bogen.slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/0_SLKS/Dokumenter/Bogpanel/Faktaark_aarsrapport2018.pdf, (accessed 18.12.2019)

The increase in digital titles borrowed from libraries is between 18 and 30 percent.

The report points out a major shift in reading habits. The amount of time spent reading is falling year by year. The most significant changes are seen in fictional literature and in the age group 30–59 years. The proportion of women who read weekly or more frequently fell by 4.5 percent from 2014 to 2017. Less women are frequently reading fiction, and the number of 30–39 year-olds who read fiction has fallen by 10 percent since 2010.

The report says that “there is currently a battle for the attention of media consumers,”²⁵ and that it is difficult to find enough time for both daily chores, TV, streamed series, social media and books. In the four years that the Danish literary panel has followed the reading habits of Danish readers, they have seen significant changes in how often people read fiction. The proportion of fiction readers is largely unchanged from 2010 to 2017, but the frequency is reduced. The proportion of non-readers is stable. It is particularly women who read less than before. The most eager readers are found in the age group 60 years and up, where 44 percent read weekly or more often. Reading frequency also falls among highly educated readers.

The proportion of weekly readers of fiction decreased by 11 percent for people with medium length further education from 2010 to 2017. For people with further education longer than five years, the decrease is 11.9 percent.²⁶

Academic literature is not hit by the same decrease in frequency as fiction, although the proportion of weekly readers has dropped by 2.2 percent.²⁷

There is slight progress in how many people read ebooks, but the numbers seem to have stagnated for younger readers. For the age group 15–19, there was a decline of 1.8 percent from 2016 to 2017, and for the group 30–39 a decline of 0.4 percent.

For readers 20–29 years old, there is an increase of 1.8 percent, similarly 40–49 year-olds increase by 1.6 percent and 50–59 by 0.2 percent. The numbers do not show a major shift in the reading platform.²⁸

The literature panel's annual report, published 13 November 2019, says that there is a 60 percent increase in the production and borrowing of ebooks, compared to 2017. The borrowing of ebooks increased by 25.6 percent from 2017 to 2018.²⁹

At the same time, 84.6 percent of those who read fiction in the past three months prefer physical books, which appeal to all age groups, but somewhat more to older than younger readers.

²⁵ Bog- og litteraturpanelet, Bogen og litteraturens vilkår 2018, https://bogen.slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/0_SLKS/Fotos/Bogpanel/Rapport18/Aarsrapport_2018.pdf, p 43 (accessed 18.12.2019)

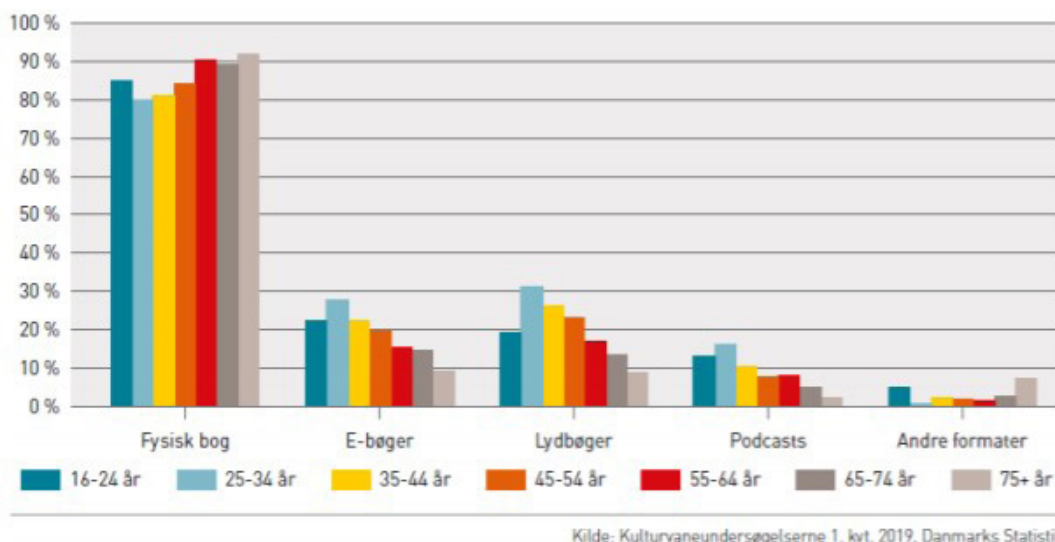
²⁶ Bog- og litteraturpanelet, Bogen og litteraturens vilkår 2018, https://bogen.slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/0_SLKS/Fotos/Bogpanel/Rapport18/Aarsrapport_2018.pdf, p 46 (accessed 18.12.2019)

²⁷ Bog- og litteraturpanelet, Bogen og litteraturens vilkår 2018, https://bogen.slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/0_SLKS/Fotos/Bogpanel/Rapport18/Aarsrapport_2018.pdf, p 47 (accessed 18.12.2019)

²⁸ Bog- og litteraturpanelet, Bogen og litteraturens vilkår 2018, https://bogen.slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/0_SLKS/Fotos/Bogpanel/Rapport18/Aarsrapport_2018.pdf, p 49 (accessed 18.12.2019)

²⁹ Bog- og litteraturpanelet, Bogen og litteraturens vilkår 2019, <https://slks.dk/om-styrelsen/raad-naevn-og-udvalg/bogpanelet/bogpanelet/aarsrapport-2019/>, p 31 (accessed 18.12.2019)

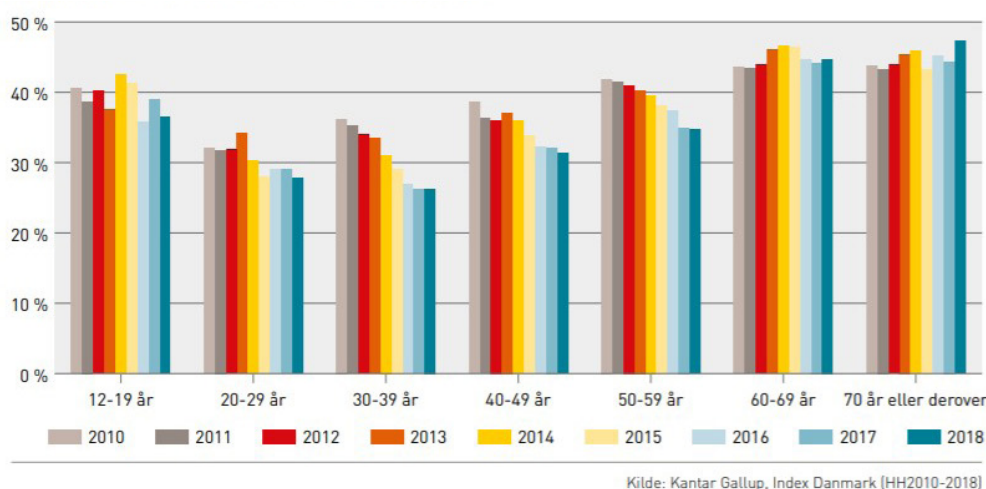
Figur 5.11: Gennem hvilke formater læser eller lytter du til skønlitteratur?



What format do you use for reading fiction? Physical book, e-book, audio book, podcast, other format
Source: Kantar Gallup, Index Danmark (HH2010–2018) from *Bogens og Litteraturens vilkår 2019*³⁰

The number of readers who read weekly or more continues to remain fairly stable at 36 percent from 2017, as does the number of non-readers. The number of readers who read monthly or less frequently has a slight increase. The conclusion is that over the last three years, Danish reading habits have not changed much in the past three years. However, from a nine-year perspective, the trend is clear: people read less often. 40 percent of Danes had not read fiction in the last three months according to the cultural habits survey Q1 2019 from the Danish statistics bureau, Danmarks Statistik, on which the report is based. More readers read less frequently, but 36 percent of Danes over the age of 12 read fiction every week. This is a decline of 3.4 percent since 2009, but at the same time the figure has been stable for the last three years.³¹

Figur 5.4: Læser skønlitteratur ugentligt eller hyppigere



Source: Kantar Gallup, Index Danmark (HH2010–2018) from *Bogens og Litteraturens vilkår 2019*³²
Reading of fiction weekly or more often.

³⁰ Bog- og litteraturpanelet, Bogen og litteraturens vilkår 2019, https://slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/SLKS/ServiceMenu/Om_styrelsen/Raad_naevn_og_udvalg/Bogpanelet/Bogen_og_litteraturens_vilkaar_2019.pdf, p 46 (accessed 18.12.2019)

³¹ Bog- og litteraturpanelet, Bogen og litteraturens vilkår 2019, https://slks.dk/fileadmin/user_upload/SLKS/ServiceMenu/Om_styrelsen/Raad_naevn_og_udvalg/Bogpanelet/Bogen_og_litteraturens_vilkaar_2019.pdf, s 40 (accessed 18.12.2019)

³² Bog- og litteraturpanelet, Bogen og litteraturens vilkår 2019, <https://slks.dk/om-styrelsen/raad-naevn-og-udvalg/bogpanelet/bogpanelet/aarsrapport-2019/>, p 42 (accessed 18.12.2019)

National reading strategy for children.

When it comes to children's reading, the picture looks somewhat different. According to the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), from 2016 and published in 2017, which surveys reading skills in nine year old pupils, they score significantly worse compared to the same survey from 2011. Young Danish readers are above the OECD average, but they are back to the 2006 levels, whereas other countries have improved literacy levels in this age group.

The report *En stærk læsekultur hos børn og unge: Oplæg til en national læsestrategi* (A strong reading culture: Arrangements for a national reading strategy) was published 10 September 2019. The report is written by the library think tank *Tænketanken Fremtidens Bibliotæker* for the Danish association of libraries, and was given to the Danish Minister of Culture on 12 September 2019 as a part of a review process of the national reading strategy.³³

Initially, the report states:

"There is a need for a national reading strategy. The Danish reading culture is challenged. It is that simple. Research shows that both adults and children read less. And they read less because they feel like it. Only 20 percent of Danish pupils say they like to read, compared with 43 percent internationally. Danish school children are weaker readers now than in 2011. It has been going the wrong way for years. One of the reasons is that literature is in sharp competition with the newest series on Netflix, time-robbing computer games and influencer videos on YouTube. The development is neither sensational or new – but that does not make it less important. We are left with a poorer society if reading becomes less relevant in our culture. Reading strengthens the shaping of identities and stimulates critical thought. It sharpens the ability to focus, immerse and further one's knowledge, as well as the obvious benefit of practicing the fundamental ability to read and write. All of these qualities are key in a world where we are bombarded by large amounts of information on a daily basis. However, it is just as important to reopen the eyes to reading as a cultural, good and aesthetic experience – a joy. In literature, we create our own pictures, which make us see the world through the eyes of others. It is a sensory happening, containing both experience and recognition – and everyone deserves to take part in that. Now, it is going the wrong way."³⁴

The Danish Library association and collaborators have therefore developed a national reading strategy for creating a strong reading culture in children and young people.

The strategy has two main aims:

1. More children and young people become more motivated to read, both in their spare time and in school and further education.
2. More children and young people read more because they experience, personally, the benefits of reading.

They have subsequently defined seven areas in which to focus their efforts:

³³ Danmarks Biblioteksforening, *En stærk læsekultur hos børn og unge: oplæg til en national læsestrategi*, <https://nationalstrategi.dk/en-staerk-laesekultur-hos-boern-og-unge-oplaeg-til-en-national-laese-strategi/>, (accessed 18.12.2019)

³⁴ Danmarks Biblioteksforening, *En stærk læsekultur hos børn og unge: oplæg til en national læsestrategi*, <https://nationalstrategi.dk/en-staerk-laesekultur-hos-boern-og-unge-oplaeg-til-en-national-laese-strategi/>, p 3 (accessed 18.12.2019)

Access to literature

Literature should be accessible to children and young people, wherever they are – both physically and digitally. Young people of all ages will be inspired, with the creation of inclusive reading communities and accessible literature.

Continuity in the reading effort of academics

There is a need for a reading-focused red thread from home, to the library, from nursery to primary and secondary school. It requires the upgrading of health care providers, educators, teachers, booksellers and public librarians so that children's reading skills are developed throughout childhood.

Children and young people's culture and communities as a basis for reading

Better understanding of the communities and cultures that engage children and young people will inform the reading strategy. Their interests and media habits are in constant change, and reading efforts must mirror children and young people's communal areas of interest.

Focus on use and development of digital reading technology

The days when reading happened exclusively on paper are long gone. Ebook services, reading apps, streamed audio and other digital reading formats are already a large part of our reading culture. It is therefore suggested that measures are developed, which play into the digital culture, connecting physical and digital materials.

Increase the focus on reading culture in the family

Parents play an important role when it comes to creating a positive reading culture. Unfortunately, many parents don't know how to strengthen their children's reading. Parents will therefore be inspired through guides, knowledge and concrete tools, which will make a real difference for their children.

More research based knowledge

Children and young people's media habits are changing with the speed of light. In order to understand the changes, we will make specific research efforts on reading habits, so that libraries, schools and others can develop new evidence based and qualified measures.

Reading efforts are made a national and local priority

More effort will be taken to link national and local efforts. There are already many reading strategies in existence, although unfortunately, they don't work towards the same goal. It is suggested that steps will be taken to ensure cooperation between national and local reading efforts.³⁵

³⁵ Danmarks Biblioteksforening, En stærk læsekultur hos børn og unge: oplæg til en national læsestrategi, <https://nationalstrategi.dk/en-staerk-laesekultur-hos-boern-og-unge-oplaeg-til-en-national-laese-strategi/>, p 4 (accessed 18.12.2019)

The areas of action result in three specific requests for action:

Funds should be allocated to transform the seven areas of action into a comprehensive strategy with concrete initiatives that can enhance reading across cultural, educational and health policies as well as across educational institutions.

Children and young people must be actively involved in shaping the action plan following the goals of the national reading strategy, in order to get measurable results relating to children's desire to read.

Children and young people's reading and interest in reading is viewed as a priority task in all relevant legal framework, announcements and study schemes, as well as in the public sector across all counties.

The report's primary target group is children aged 0–18 years. However, emphasis is placed on the importance of adult and parent involvement. This report and call to action is highlighting young readers access to literature, continuity in focus on reading from toddlers to young adults and asking to keep focus on youth culture and knowledge of what the young readers are interested in. It is important to involve the kids in buying literature to schools and public libraries. It is important to involve influencers and YouTubers to get the attention from the youth. The report also stresses the use and development of digital reader technology, and is asking for raised family focus on reading. For these strategies to succeed, it is crucial to work together on a local and a national level; i.e. librarians and schools working together in the communities, at the same time joining forces on a national strategic level.

These public measures are a result of a follow-up from two reports from 2017 on children's reading and media habits.³⁶

The main conclusion was based on both qualitative and quantitative research from 8721 children in years 3–7 (8–12 year-olds) and covers analogue and digital reading. Main findings in the report are that children's reading depends on adults reading and dissemination of literature, as well as attitude towards literature. Children generally read less in 2017 compared to what was reported in 2010, a decrease caused by a slight reduction in the number of girls reading. Mothers, friends and librarians are important sources of inspiration for reading, next to teachers.

³⁶ Children's reading habits 2017. Overview and insight. Published by Tænketanken Fremtidens Biblioteker (Future Library Think Tank) as a part of the project En generation af stærke lærere: Greb til leselyst (A generation of strong readers: Steps towards a desire to read). The qualitative research is found in Børns læsning - en kvantitativ undersøgelse af læse- og medievaner i fritiden (Children's reading - quantitative research on reading and media habits outside of school). The report is made by the organisation for teaching aids, Læremiddel.dk, commissioned by the future library think tank as a part of the generation of strong readers project, above.

Finland – Reading still popular but number of non book buyers increasing



- Reading is still a popular spare time activity
- Number of avid readers is decreasing

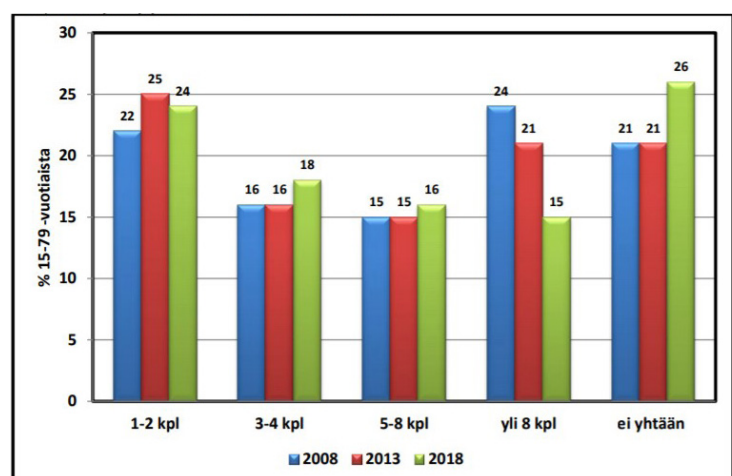
Started in 1995, the Finland Reads survey is rolled out every five years, looking at reading habits and book purchases in Finland. The target group consists of a cross-section of the Finnish speaking population aged 15–79. Commissioned by the Finland Bookstore Association (Kirjakauppaliitto) and the Finnish Publishers Association (Suomen kustannusyhdistys), the 2018 survey was implemented by Taloustutkimus Analytics, who opted to update the research method from a written survey to an online survey.

The research shows the number of purchased books, not the amount of books read.

Reading is still a popular spare time activity in Finland. It is most popular with women and young adults aged 20–39 years. In 2018 Finnish readers between 15 and 79 years bought a total of 18 million books. This is still 3 million less than in 2013. School books and public procurement are not included in these numbers.

In one year, 73 percent of Finns bought at least one book. 24 percent bought 1–2 books, 18 percent bought 3–4 books, 16 percent bought 5–8 books and 26 percent bought no books (ei yhtään). The number of people who did not buy books has increased by 5 percent since 2013, and the number of people who buy more than 8 books has fallen from 21 percent in 2013 to 15 percent in 2018. A decline amongst the most enthusiastic readers. On the other hand, the number of people who buy between 3 and 8 books has increased.

Osti painettuja kirjoja 2008-2018, % 15-79 -vuotiaista



Number of bought books (kpl) between 2008–2018 for readers aged 15–79 years.³⁷ Source: Finland Book Store Association

³⁷ Suomi lukee – ja ostaa kirjoja. Kirjakauppaliitto (Finland Book Store Association)/Finlands Förlagsförening/Taloustutkimus, <https://kirjakauppaliitto.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Suomi-lukee-tutkimus-julk.-7.5.2019-1.pdf>, p 5, / accessed 2.1.2020)

In 1995 the average price of books was 15.86 €, and in 2018 it was 21.10 €. The price of books has not increased in line with the consumer price index. In 2018 book buyers spent an average of 121 € on books, in 2013 they spent 112 € and in 2008, they spent 136 €. The numbers have gone down from 2008, but up since 2013. There is also an increase in the purchasing books for oneself, rather than as presents for others.

Activities to stimulate reading

When it comes to reading on paper, versus screen, the survey finds that people who buy many paper books have not stopped reading on paper, but they have changed some of the paper books for ebooks. Some people have not bought paper books before, but ebooks have been the portal to the world of printed books. The Finnish Publishers Association reports of a general reduction in reading, but mentions several campaigns designed to stimulate more reading. Several organisations have collaborated on a reading campaign, aiming to make autumn half term into a reading holiday. A website dedicated to the campaign gives reading tips to various groups of readers and ages, both in Finnish and in Swedish. The campaign is promoted in schools and libraries.

Lukukeskus, the Finnish Reading Centre, an NGO working to promote literacy and reading among children and young adult in Finland, points out that there are few activities on a national level that stimulate reading among adults. There is much work done for children and schools, but there are no organisations in Finland currently working with adult literacy. A couple of projects are however worth mentioning. The Centre has worked with technical vocational college students through rap-music in their project Words Matter. You can find a video about it [here](#).

At the moment they are working with high school students in the My Storyproject, where creative writing is inspired through spoken word and open mic events.

There are other projects happening as well, and they are all brought together by The Finnish National Agency for Education. The Agency for Education is running a national initiative, started by the Ministry of Education, called The Literacy Movement. Their goal is to bring together different organisations working with similar issues to provide resources for different literacy projects. You can read more [here](#).

France – Increase in light readers, decrease in non-readers



- 60 percent read a lot or occasionally
- Multi-format reading is attracting more readers
- Decline in non-readers

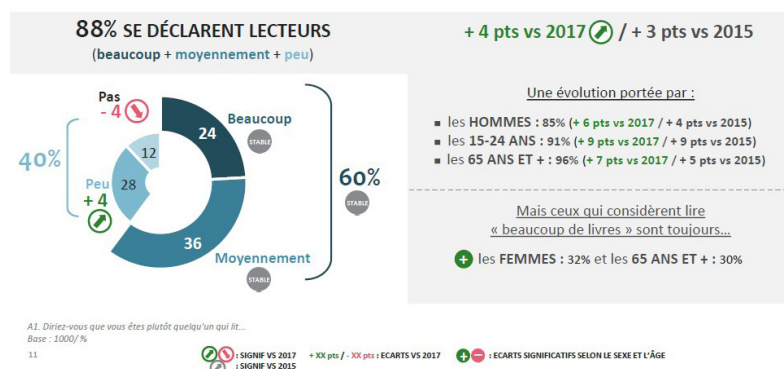
The survey **Les Français et la lecture – 2019** (The French and reading), commissioned by the Le Centre national du livre (National Centre of the Book, CNL) focuses on measuring French reading habits to understand their attachment to reading.³⁸ The survey has been rolled out bi-annually since 2015, with CNL presenting the findings for the third time in 2019. The survey aims to monitor French reading habits over time and better understand the reasons for reading disengagement.

With a target group aged 15 and over, 1000 interviews were conducted, covering questions such as time spent reading, genre, gender, leisure reading, time of reading, paper or digital, where readers get their books, why they read, and why they don't.

You can read the full survey, in French, [here](#).

Do the French read? Yes, they do. But the market seems to be declining. In 2019, French people are more likely to view themselves as light book readers than heavy readers. 88 percent read a lot, occasionally, or a little bit, while 12 percent don't read at all. 60 percent read a lot or occasionally, which is a stable figure compared to the previous years. 28 percent read a little, up 4 percent from 2017. 12 percent don't read, which is down 4 percent from 2017, a positive development driven by men reading more, along with those aged 15–24 and the over 65s. Women continue to read the most books.³⁹ The three favourite genres are novels, practical books and comics.

En 2019, les Français sont plus nombreux à se percevoir lecteurs de livres mais ne se considèrent pas plus grands lecteurs.



Source: Centre national du Livre/IPSOS

³⁸ Les Français et la lecture – 2019, https://www.centrenationaldulivre.fr/fichier/p_ressource/17602/ressource_fichier_fr_les.fra.na.a.is.et.la.lecture.2019.03.11.ok.pdf, (accessed 15.1.2020)

³⁹ Les Français et la lecture – 2019, https://www.centrenationaldulivre.fr/fichier/p_ressource/17602/ressource_fichier_fr_les.fra.na.a.is.et.la.lecture.2019.03.11.ok.pdf, p 11 (accessed 15.1.2020)

The French Publishers Association (SNE), the collective management organisation SOFIA and the French Writers Association (SGDL) have set up an annual survey with the aim of observing changes in the use of digital books. This survey is conducted by Opinion Way and the results are published within the framework of the Digital Book Conference, organised by the SNE.⁴⁰ This information sheds new light on the profiles, practices, motivations and intentions of ebook readers. The evolution and analysis of this data over time provides an important indicator of the changes involving books and reading as a whole.

It has been shown in the survey that multi-format reading is attracting more readers:

- 22 percent of French people say they have read an ebook (an increase of 2 percent), and 14 percent have listened to an audiobook.
- This practice complements their reading on paper, as 29 percent of audiobook users are reading more than 20 books per year and 28 percent of them have also read a book in digital format.

The French Publishers Association (SNE) states that “there is a widespread feeling that there is a lack of time to read on a daily basis, and therefore reading might decrease in France. However, recent studies show that the practice of reading remains steadfast among the French.”

Activities to stimulate reading

Since 2012, the SNE has organised ‘The Little Reading Champions’, an annual national reading aloud competition for children. It targets children in the last year of primary school, from all over France. In 2019, participation increased by 43 percent compared to the previous year, with 46,000 children taking part.⁴¹ This programme invites children in the 5th grade to read aloud a text of their choice, for a period of three minutes. The competition is split into four categories and takes place in March and April each year.



les petits
champions
de la lecture

⁴⁰ SNE, Baromètre sur les usages du livre numérique, <https://www.sne.fr/numerique-2/barometre-sur-les-usages-du-livre-numerique/>, (accessed 15.1.2020)

⁴¹ Les petits champions de la lecture, <https://www.lespetitschampionsdelalecture.fr/>, (accessed 15.1.2020)

Germany – Book Buyer – quo vadis?



- New digital entertainment is a competitor to people's time
- Women read more than men, and the old read more than younger age groups

In 2018, the German Publishers & Booksellers Association – Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, carried out the survey Buchkäufer – quo vadis? (Book Buyer – quo vadis? //Where are you going?). This involved focus groups and workshops for the age group 18–50, which was identified as the group with the largest decrease in reading.⁴²

The main aim was to find out why people are buying and reading fewer books. Does the answer lie in the competition between different media? If so, what makes consumers choose other media? Are they missing books? Is there anything lacking in the book experience or in the process of buying it? And finally, how can feedback from the respondents be used to bring readers back? Read a full summary of the findings in English [here](#).⁴³

The survey contains the following methodological components:

1. A compilation of existing data (24 hour media consumption, reading surveys etc)
2. Focus groups: In several group discussions held in Frankfurt and Leipzig, seven to eight participants, who read and bought fewer books than before, were asked what are the reasons for buying and reading less? What inspires or prevents the buying of books?
3. Workshops with consumers and representatives from the trade, with the aim to generate ideas for improved reading and purchasing experiences, and how to better respond to the needs of book buyers.

Findings were summed up as the following:

- People are stressed out by the obligations, expectations and fast-paced nature of modern life and feel weighted down by growing social pressure to be available at all times (social media, WhatsApp etc.).
- The individuals surveyed felt overwhelmed by our current “multitasking society” and develop a deep yearning for deceleration, relaxation, self-determination, real enjoyment and reliable information.
- A general lack of time and energy leads people to gradually read fewer books.
- TV series have taken over the position that books used to have. In this realm, one finds a great deal of conversation, hype, recommendations and binge-watching.
- All target groups agree that reading is a very positive and intensive way to pass the time. It helps people relax, it provides them with emotional experience, it expands their horizons and encourages them to immerse themselves in other worlds. All respondents regretted that they had increasingly less time to read.

⁴² Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, Studie Buchkäufer – quo vadis?, <https://www.boersenverein.de/markt-daten/marktforschung/studien-umfragen/studie-buchkaeuer-quo-vadis/>, (accessed 9.1.2020)

⁴³ Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, Studie Buchkäufer – quo vadis?, <https://www.boersenverein.de/markt-daten/marktforschung/studien-umfragen/studie-buchkaeuer-quo-vadis/>, (accessed 9.1.2020)

- Books are disappearing from the public discourse as well as from people's personal environments. Conversations about books are increasingly rare, people are less involved in book-related themes, and many simply feel overwhelmed by the large number of choices.
- The result is that people are no longer able to find sufficient orientation on the book market.
- New digital entertainment is a competitor to people's time.

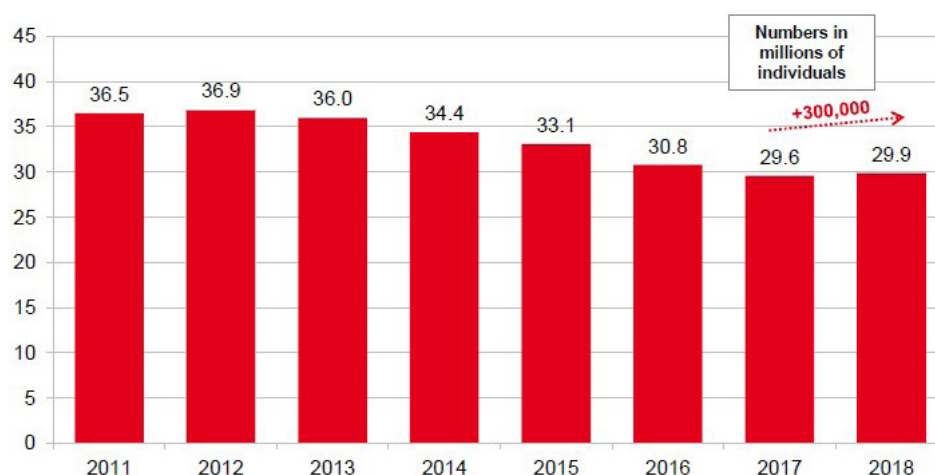
The key needs and desires of people who no longer buy books are:

- *Be made aware of books:* I.e. come into contact with books, gain inspiration, reminders and incentives to read in everyday life and in public spaces.
- *Reliability:* Faced with time shortage, make the path to the next "right" book as short and as quick as possible, a desire for increased orientation.
- *Appreciation:* Experience buying books and reading them as an added value and a reward, experience attention, savings and exclusivity.
- *Unwinding:* Relaxation and releasing tensions, stimulating the imagination.
- *Experience:* Get to know books and authors individually or collectively, experience suspense and entertainment.

When it comes to market figures, the survey confirms that the number of book buyers has declined from 36.5 million in 2011 to 29.9 million in 2018, a reduction of 6.6 million. It is a positive sign that the numbers are on the way up after a dip in 2017.

Book buyer growth

Number of book buyers on the consumer market



Based on key figures; time periods extend from January to December;
German private consumers aged 10 and up; **excluding school books and text books,**
including downloads (audio books and e-books);
Source: GfK Consumer Panel Media*Scope Buch

3

Number of book buyers in the German consumers market. Source: Börsenverein ⁴⁴

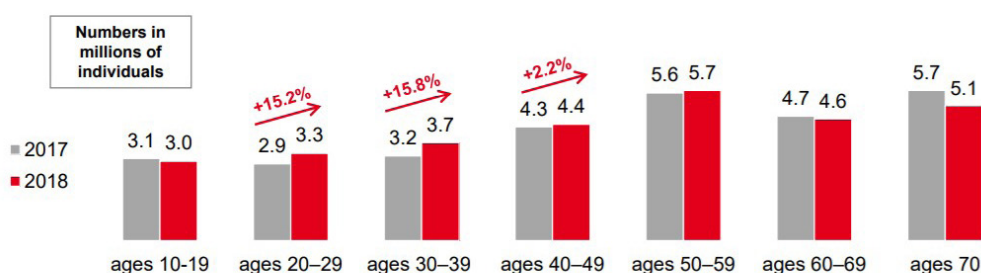
⁴⁴ Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, Back to the readers – Germany's book market in 2018/19, <https://www.boersenverein.de/markt-daten/marktforschung/wirtschaftszahlen/> p 3, (accessed 9.1.2020)

The trend is also positive in terms of age distribution and book purchases:

Book buyer growth 2017/2018

Number of book buyers on the consumer book market by age group

In 2018, the number of book buyers on the consumer book market rose in those age groups (20-to-49-year-olds) that had shown the largest decreases in buyers in recent years.



Number of book buyers in Germany by age group. Source: Börsenverein⁴⁵

The book industry revenues have grown 0,7 percent from 2003–2018, with an 0 percent change from 2017–2018. Numbers from January to May 2019 indicate an increase of 4.1 percent. January 2020, Börsenverein reported an increase of 1,4 percent through central sales channels for 2019.⁴⁶

11,833 fewer titles are published per year compared to 2008. There is no marked decrease in translated titles. The sale of ebooks is relatively stable (5 percent of total turnover in the general market), there is even a slight increase of 0.6 percent from 2018 to 2019. In 2019 less ebooks were sold, but the average price has increased for the first time since the beginning of the time series in 2010. Slightly more people bought ebooks, but the ebook buyer bought less books on average than in the year before.⁴⁷

The market research service Allensbacher Markt- und Werbeträgeranalyse carry out surveys on media consumption in Germany every year.⁴⁸ Respondents are 14 years of age and above, a population mass in Germany of 70,598 million people. 23,318 people were interviewed from autumn to spring 2017–18, and autumn to spring 2018–19. They were not interviewed over the phone.

Figures from 2019 show that 12.8 percent of the German population over the age of 14 read books daily, 18.2 percent about once a week, 9.0 percent about every fortnight, 10.4 percent once a month. 42.5 percent read less often or never. 40 percent read daily once or several times a week, while 42 percent don't read at least once a month. The first group has dropped from 49 percent in 2013, whereas the non-readers group has risen from 33 percent in 2013. This is an 9 percent increase over six years.⁴⁹

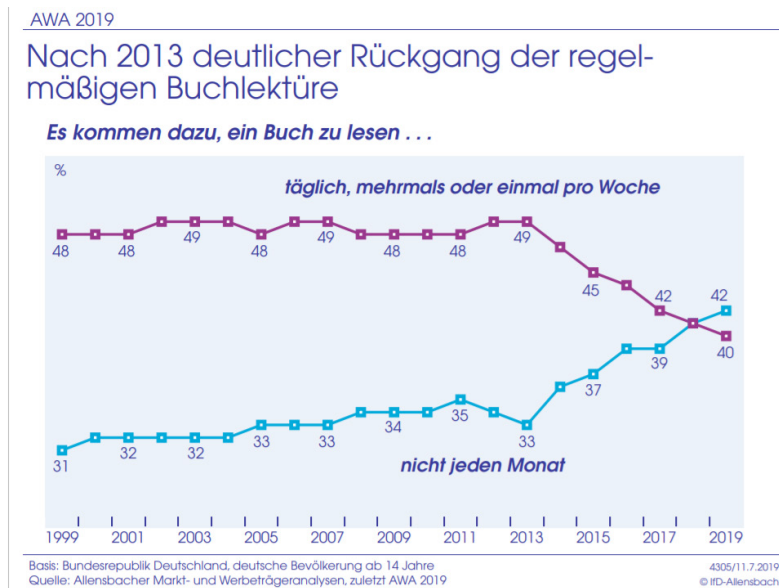
⁴⁵ Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, Back to the readers – Germany's book market in 2018/19, <https://www.boersenverein.de/markt-daten/marktforschung/wirtschaftszahlen/>, p 4, (9.1.2020)

⁴⁶ Börsenverein, Book market 2019 with sales increase: "Relevance of the book unbroken.", <https://www.boersenverein.de/boersenverein/aktuelles/detailseite/buchmarkt-2019-mit-umsatzplus-relevanz-des-buches-ungebrochen/>, (accessed 26.2.2020)

⁴⁷ Börsenverein, Markt & Daten, Ebooks, <https://www.boersenverein.de/markt-daten/marktforschung/e-books/>, (accessed 4.6.2020)

⁴⁸ AWA 2019, Auszug, https://www.ifd-allensbach.de/fileadmin/AWA/AWA2019/Codebuchauschnitt/AWA2019_Codebuch_Kultur_Buecher_Sprachen.pdf, p 64 (accessed 10.1.2020)

⁴⁹ AWA 2019, Dr. Johannes Schneller, Zur Zukunft des Lesens, Nach 2013 deutlicher Rückgang der regelmässigen Buchlektüre, https://www.ifd-allensbach.de/fileadmin/AWA/AWA_Praesentationen/2019/AWA_2019_Schneller_Zukunft_des_Lesens_Handout.pdf, (accessed 10.1.2020)

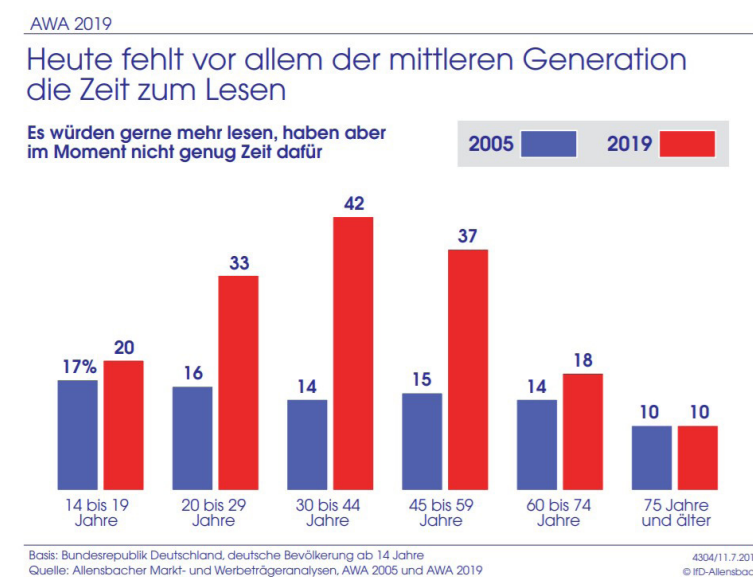


After 2013 significant decline in book reading on a regular basis. Red; daily or several times a week, blue; not each month.
Source: IfD – Allensbach

According to AWA 2019, 53.7 percent bought a book last year. 17 percent bought 1–2 books, 15.6 bought 3–4 books, 11.8 percent bought 5–9 books, 5.7 percent bought 10–19 books and 3.5 percent bought more than 20 books last year.⁵⁰

When it comes to book purchases, we note that another methodology has been used. Whilst AWA surveys the number of purchases per person, Börsenverein looks at the size of the book market/number of buyers.

However, all age groups respond that they would like to read more, given more time. It is only the oldest readers who are on the same level as in 2005.



Today, the middle generations have less time to read: I would like to read more, but don't have enough time. Source: AWA

⁵⁰ AWA 2019, Dr. Johannes Schneller, Zur Zukunft des Lesens, https://www.ifd-allensbach.de/fileadmin/AWA/AWA2019/Codebuchausschnitte/AWA2019_Codebuch_Kultur_Buecher_Sprachen.pdf, p 64 (accessed 10.1.2020)

Reading activities

In Germany, there are numerous activities in bookstores, public readings and reading competitions aiming to stimulate reading – for example:

Vorlesewettbewerb (Reading competition)

Since 1959, Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels (the German Publishers & Booksellers Association) has encouraged reading and reading aloud with the Reading Competition (Vorlesewettbewerb), held in partnership with bookshops, libraries, schools and other cultural institutions. It is the biggest national reading campaign, supported by Ministers of Education in all German counties, with the Federal President of Germany as patron. The competition has the aim to promote reading, with over half of all German 6th graders taking part.

The best reader is determined over several stages: by class, school, county, larger region, federal state and nation. The 16 winners from each federal state come together in Berlin, where the final competition takes place in a TV studio. National television channel, ARD, is reporting on the competition. The reading competition has run for 60 years and is staged every year from October (class competitions) to June (nationwide final). There are approximately 600,000 participants every year.

Vorlesetag (Read Aloud Day)

The nationwide reading day has **been Germany's largest** reading festival **since 2004** and is a joint initiative of newspaper DIE ZEIT, Stiftung Lesen (Reading Foundation) and Deutsche Bahn Foundation. Every year on the third Friday in November, Read Aloud Day sends out a public signal for the importance of reading aloud and inspires children and adults to tell stories.

Everyone who enjoys reading aloud grabs a story and reads something to others. Many actions take place in schools, kindergartens, libraries or bookstores. But unusual reading locations are also popular: from the prison cell, the zoo, museums, planetariums, to readings in the pedestrian zone, everything is included. When the idea for the campaign day was born 16 years ago, just 1,900 people took part. Since then, over 680,000 participants have read and listened all over Germany.

Welttag des Buches (World Book Day)

In the weeks around 23 April, World Book and Copyright Day, children aged 9–11 can obtain a free book from their local bookstore. Organised by Börsenverein, Stiftung Lesen and Random House, in honour of World Book Day, a new title is published and distributed every year, chosen specifically for the target age group. In 2018, 1.2 million copies reached the children and their households. With over 3000 bookstores participating every year, Welttag des Buches is one of the biggest campaign for booksellers in Germany.



Jetzt ein Buch! (Now a book!)

Jetzt ein Buch! (Now a Book!) is a nationwide marketing campaign for the promotion of reading and books, run by Börsenverein. The campaign is multi-faceted, consisting of different modules and activities, some of which stand on their own, while others are individualised by booksellers and other stakeholders in the book industry. The initiative also aims to support local booksellers.



‘The book as a natural part of daily life’, is the philosophy Now a Book! wishes to disseminate with the central #BUCHMOMENT. The basis for this initiative is to inspire more people to read books, in alignment with the core findings of the study Book Buyers – quo vadis?

There are also 14 Houses of Literature in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, all working together as part of the literaturhaus.net network. They promote residency programmes, readings and other activities and literary events.

LitCam

LitCam (Literacy Campaign) is an organisation working for educational equality and integration. Launched in 2006 at the Frankfurt Book Fair, in cooperation with UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and the Bundesverband Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung eV, the initiative has been a non-profit organisation since 2010.



The aim is to raise awareness of the importance of education in all groups of society and to impart life skills through various engaging projects. LitCam wants to improve educational opportunities for everyone, regardless of their material or social requirements. In addition to the nationwide project “Football meets culture”, LitCam, together with the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels and the Frankfurt Book Fair, launched the “Books Say Welcome” initiative, which gives refugees easy access to learning and reading materials.⁵¹



Photo: LitCam

⁵¹ What is the LitCam, Background, <https://www.litcam.de/de/>. (accessed 14.5.2020).

Iceland – Books for Christmas



- 53.4 percent read 1–3 books over the previous 30 days, the mean figure is 2.03 books
- Books as Christmas presents remains a strong tradition

The Icelandic Publishers Association, Félag íslenskra bókaútgefenda, publishes trade statistics in February every year. They have seen a dramatic reduction in book sales and turnover since 2012, with the exception of 2015, recently however the curve has flattened, followed by a slight rise in 2019.

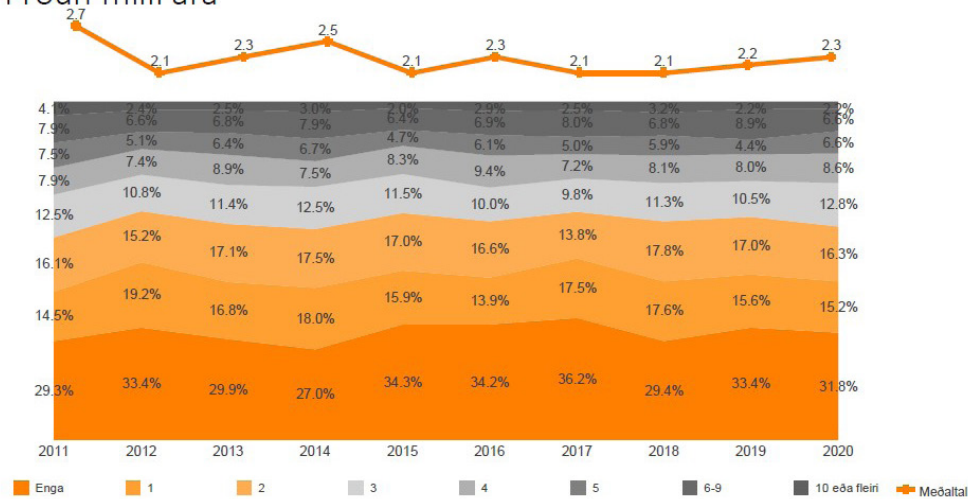
According to Statistic Iceland (statice.is) sales have reduced drastically since 2008. Iceland took a hard hit during the financial crisis of 2008, and inflation sky rocketed. When inflation since 2008 is accounted for, the turnover for 2018 counts 2172 million ISK. Estimated numbers of sold books in 2018 is 1.33 million but was 2.54 million in 2010, a near 50 percent decline in eight years.

The Icelandic Publishers Association carry out annual surveys on national reading habits, in collaboration with the market research company Zenter. They collate information from more than 1000 respondents, aged between 18–65. The survey consists of nine questions, the first six have been asked for several years, but the last three were new in 2018. Questions about reading now include audiobooks, and as the major book sales in Iceland happen before Christmas, this is included in several of the questions.

The survey showed the following results for 2019:

- The respondents received an average of 1.17 books for Christmas, 41.7 percent did not get a book. This is a better result than the 2018 43.8 percent: the mean number is up from 1.1 to 1.2 books.
- Respondents receiving 1–2 books for Christmas is up from 40.9 percent to 43.6 percent.
- 31.5 percent didn't buy any book for Christmas, down from 33.4 percent the previous year. The mean number is 2.23 books bought as Christmas presents, up from 2.15 in 2018.
- 53.4 percent read 1–3 books over the previous 30 days, the mean figure is 2.03 books.
- 53.1 percent of books read over the previous 30 days are fiction, whereas only 4.4 percent are books for children and adults. Bear in mind that this survey targets adults over the age of 18.

Hversu margar bækur keyptir þú til jólagjafa fyrir jólin? -Þróun milli ára

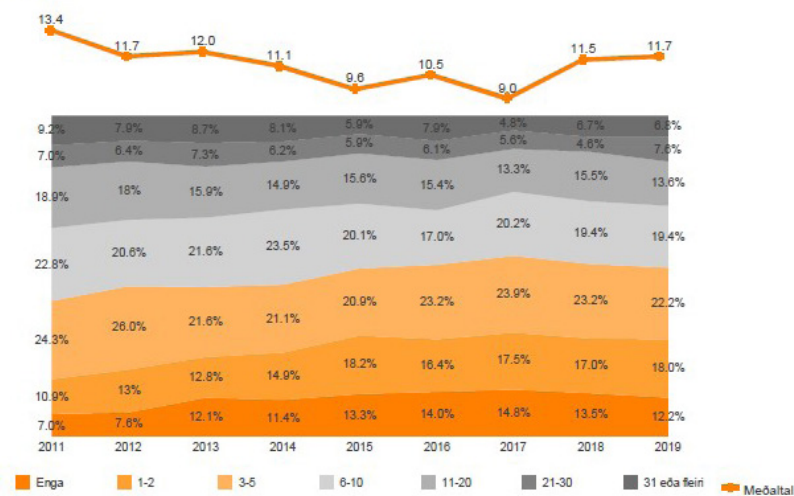


Tölur og myndir sýna hlutföll og fjölda þeirra sem tóku afstöðu.

How many books did you buy for christmas presents? Source: Zenter/Fibut

The 2018 survey went further, asking for the number of books read over the last year. The upward trajectory is confirmed with the 2019 numbers as cited above:

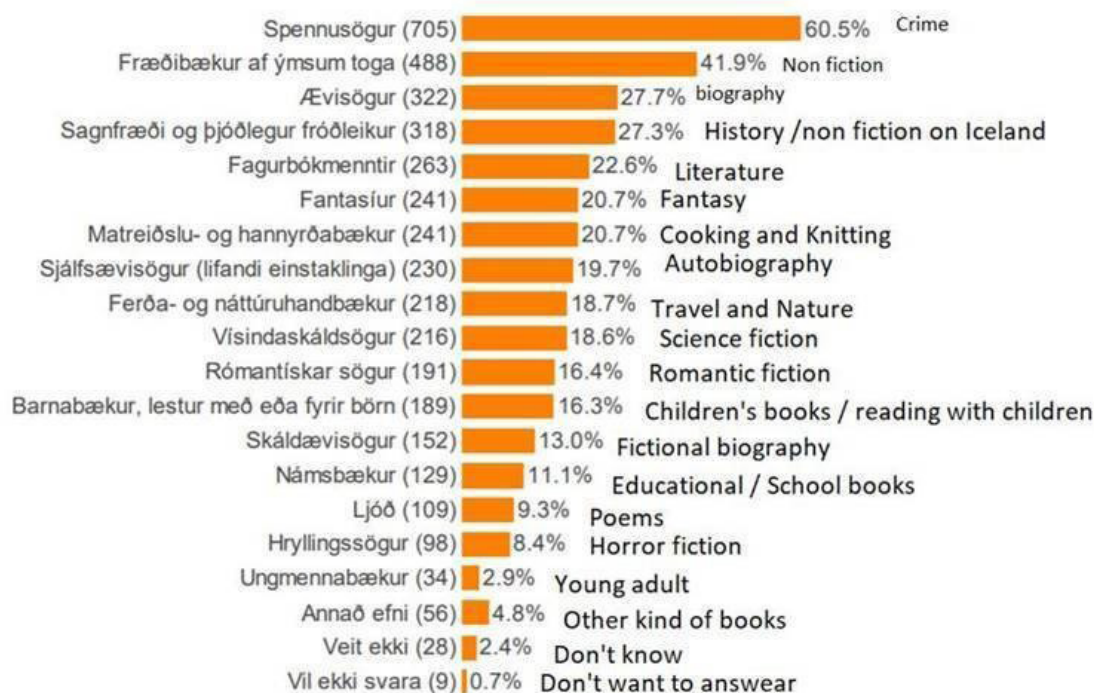
Hversu margar bækur last þú á síðasta ári? -Þróun milli ára



Tölur og myndir sýna hlutföll og fjölda þeirra sem tóku afstöðu.

How many books did you read last year – yearly development. Source: Zenter/Fibut

What kind of books would Icelandic readers be interested in reading more of? Crime was the ultimate winner in 2018, where participants were invited to name up to five different genres. However, the publication of crime stories in Icelandic does not correlate with readers wishes.



Genre wishes of Icelandic readers. Source: Zenter/FIBUT

One new question addressed preferred reading format, with the view to encourage more reading. The answers were in favour of printed books (68.3 percent), followed by audiobooks (41.3 percent) and ebooks (24.2 percent).

Reading activities

The only reading programmes in Iceland, official or otherwise, are aimed at children through the national TV station and The Directorate of Education.⁵² The Institute of Education is working on the implementation of literacy promotion measures, and provides municipalities and schools support and advice on literacy.

⁵² Source: <https://mms.is/laesisverkefni>, (accessed 19.12.2019)

Italy – How to measure reading today?



- Decrease of 2 percent of the population reading books from 2017 to 2018
- A majority of readers read 1–3 books a year
- Digital reading increasing

Does the present climate demand a new type of reading survey? Is it still sufficient to ask interviewees about time spent reading books on paper, and at a pinch, digital books? Or do reading surveys become more relevant once respondents are asked about narrative reading overall? In other words, ought we to extend the meaning of reading to also include the reading of webpages and texts on social media?

The first survey on the reading of books in leisure time by ISTAT (Italian national institute of statistics) dates back to 1957. Reading for pleasure was analysed from the very first survey: a book reader was defined as someone who had read at least one book per year in their free time. Subsequent surveys were carried out in 1965, 1973, 1984 and 1988, then for every year from 1993 to 2017, with in-depth studies every 5–10 years (1995, 2000, 2006, 2015). Since the 1990s, there have also been 5-yearly surveys focussing on the reading of different genres of books: thrillers, sci-fi, fantasy love stories and manuals etc, which were not considered by the respondents as ‘proper’ reading.

Today, ISTAT’s main information sources are two sample surveys: the survey *Aspects of daily life*, which looks at book reading for leisure purposes since 1993, and includes, from 2009, the number of books owned; the survey *People and leisure time*, every 5–10 years, gathers data about book reading and reasons for non-reading.

AIE Observatory on Reading and Editorial Consumption, an initiative by the Italian Publishers Association (AIE), coordinated by AIE Research Department and implemented by Pepe Research, is aimed at monitoring the evolution of reading habits, including new forms on reading on various devices, by means of periodic surveys (every 6 months). The Observatory, which began in 2017, looks at the changing reading habits of a representative sample of respondents aged 15 and over. It has since been launched with the objective to explore reading transformation, by investigating both traditional and new forms of reading on new formats and platforms, and to provide publishers with relevant hints for developing new products and services to address the change.

The survey, presented in the following pages, works towards answering questions such as: “Do Italians read less or do they read differently? And how much of what they read was purchased and how? These are just some of the many themes that were dealt with in the first survey of 2019.”⁵³

A key innovative aspect of the methodology adopted is the introduction of the concept of ‘narrative worlds’, which are found in a wide variety of media platforms and cultural

⁵³ AIE Observatory data (population 15-75 years; reading of books only)

products. Furthermore, these ‘narrative worlds’ are accessible in multiple ways, in traditional and new online formats, including (but not limited to) reading. The survey aims to gather data to explore the transformation of reading habits in an evolving context. It is based on the fact that the meaning of ‘reading’ is changing. Reading is carried out on different devices, and the concept of ‘cross-media narrative worlds’ should be included to get a contemporary take on reading statistics. It also is based on the fact that time spent on reading is challenged by other media, and that publishers should start interacting with these readers that might not read books, but still can be considered leisure readers.

Compared with the ISTAT, the AIE Observatory report includes all genres, paper and digital reading and audiobooks. The questions also include partly read books, as well as engagement in other narrative worlds, such as listening to readings or stories on the radio, blogs, forum, social networks, streaming series, cinema and videogames. The answers are analysed as:

- reading overall (books, ebooks, audiobooks)
- reading of only paper books
- reading of books and digital publishing content
- only digital reading

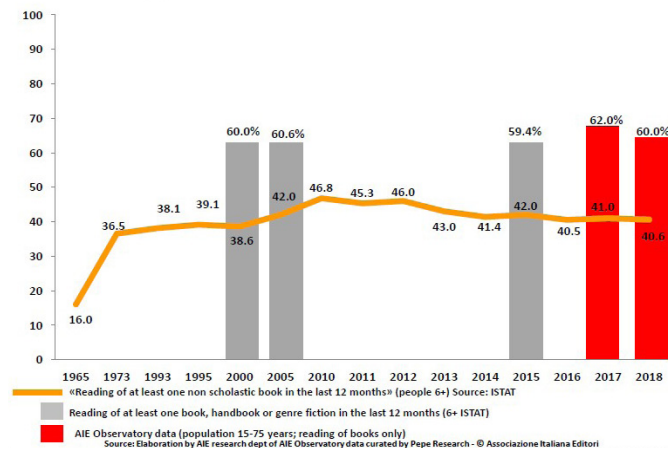
The survey aims to “explore the worlds of reading and to understand how people use their time to access varied content for culture and entertainment.”

Here follows a selection of AIE Observatory’s findings (of 2017–2018 data, referring at representatives aged 15 and over).

What is the status regarding reading in Italy?

Books reading in Italy: 1965-2018

Values in % of the population

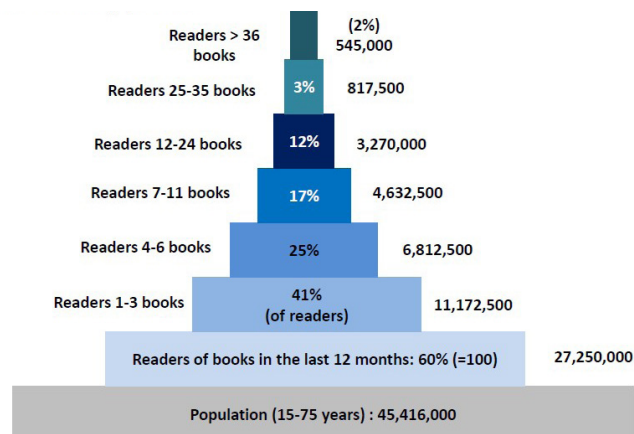


Book reading in Italy 1965–2018. Source: AIE Research Department

In 2018, 41 percent of readers declared they read 1–3 books, 25 percent read 4–6 books. 17 percent read 7–11 books, 12 percent read 12–14 books and 3 percent read 25–35 books, with 2 percent reading over 36 books per year.

The pyramid of reading in Italy: 2018

Values in % of the population



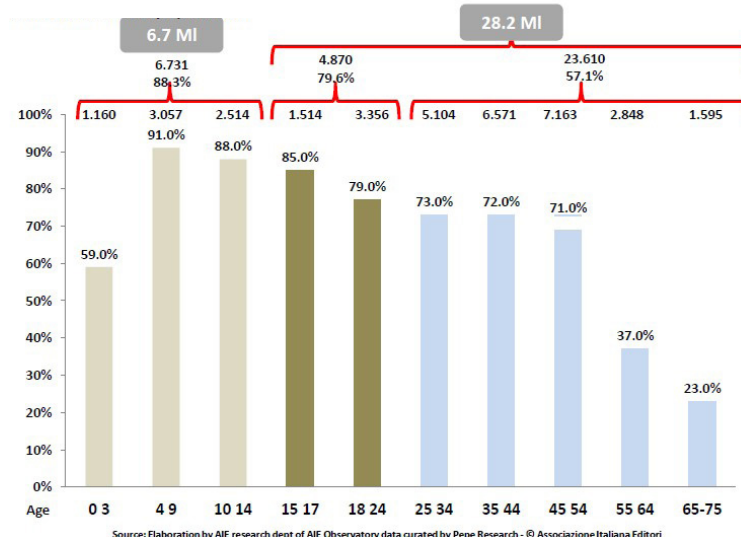
Source: AIE Research Department

In 2018, 62 percent of the Italian population were readers, down from 65.4 percent the previous year. 60 percent read only printed books. The proportion of readers who only read books rose from 56 percent in 2017 to 58 percent in 2018, whilst the proportion of readers who also read ebooks and listen to audiobooks goes up by 4 percent from 36 to

40 percent. The proportion of readers who only read digitally and use audiobooks goes up from 4 to 6 percent. 91 percent of children 4–9 years read, a number decreasing steadily through the age groups:

Reading by age ranges: 2018

Values in % of the population

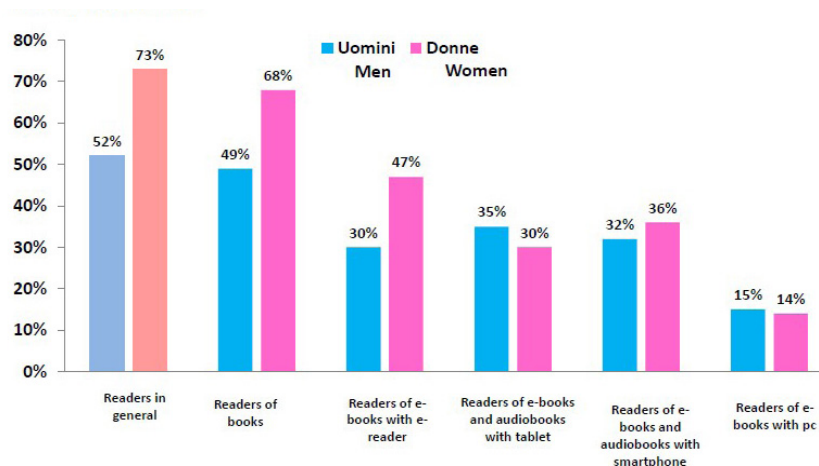


Source: AIE Research Department

Divided by gender it looks like this:

Reading habits by gender (15-75 years): 2018

Values in % of readers



Question: Over the last 12 months, have you read, even only partly, a book of whatever type (novel, thriller, fantasy, non-fiction, manual, travel guide, cookery...) either on paper, in digital format or audiobook? If yes, how many?

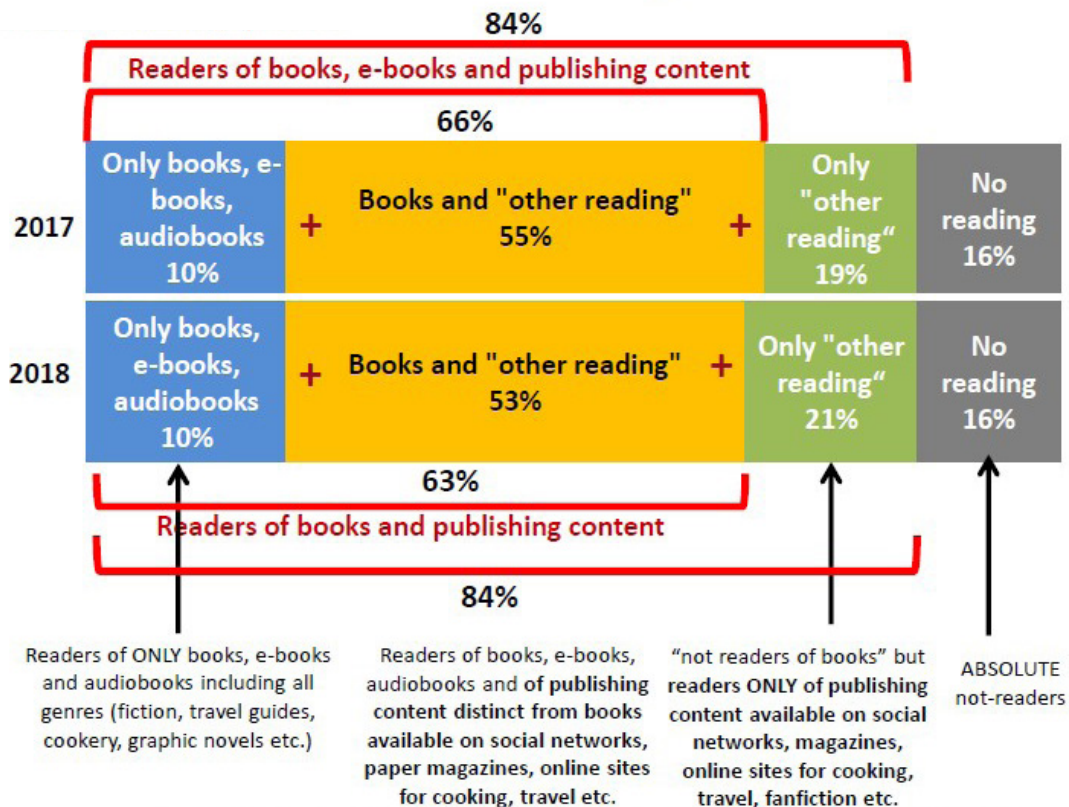
Source: Elaboration by AIE research dept of AIE Observatory data curated by Pepe Research - © Associazione Italiana Editori

Source: AIE Research Department

When including books, ebooks, audiobooks and 'other reading', such as published content available on social networks, magazines, online cooking and travel sites, the picture looks like this:

Trends in new forms of reading: 2017-2018

Values in % of the population



Source: Elaboration by AIE research dept of AIE Observatory data curated by Pepe Research - © Associazione Italiana Editori

Source: AIE Research Department

10 percent of the population read only books, but in a variety of formats and genres. 53 percent read books and other published materials on multiple media platforms. 21 percent do not read books, only content from other platforms such as magazines, and online. It is suggested in the survey report that publishers could work on strengthening loyalty and reading frequency in the first group. For the second group, they could attempt to increase the proportion of books read, creating new and innovative ways of reaching out to them, with an added value. It is important to prevent a decrease in this group. When it comes to the third group, one needs to interact with them on other platforms.

Reading promotion activities



The **AIE reading promotion campaign, #ioleggo perché /#whyIread**, is the most important national campaign promoting books and reading in Italy, focusing on school libraries and their key role in the development of future generations of readers. The initiative involves citizens and publishers donating books to school libraries, stimulating collaboration between libraries, schools and bookshops.

This is a social campaign that helps school libraries grow. During the ten days of the campaign, the public is asked to enter one of their local participating bookshops, to buy and donate a book to a school library. At the end of the campaign, publishers donate an additional amount of 100,000 books to schools.

In the last four years, the campaign has brought 1,050,000 new books to more than 15,000 Italian schools. The project has been growing, starting with 2,408 participating schools in 2016, to 15,253 registered schools receiving 400,000 new books in 2019.




Source: AIE

Mexico – Strong decline in reading in the 18+ population



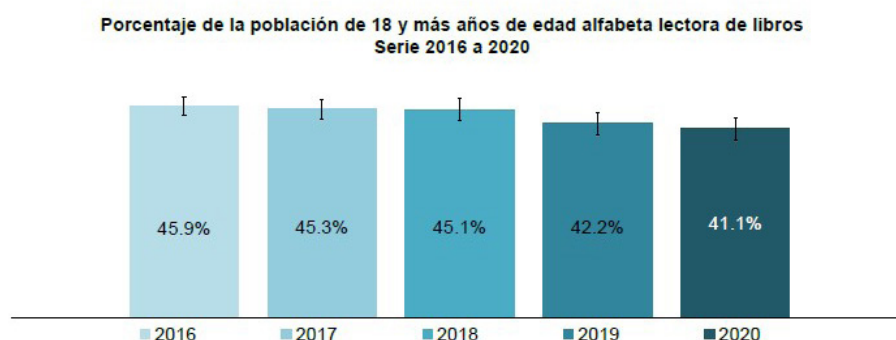
- Overall decrease in reading of 10 percent from 2015 to 2019
- 42.2 percent of the population read a book in 2019

The Reading Module (MOLEC)⁵⁴ was conducted by INEGI in 2015 and 2016 in the months of February, May and August. From 2017, the survey has been conducted once a year in the month of February. MOLEC aims to generate statistical information on the reading behaviour of the Mexican population aged 18 years and up in order to provide useful data on the characteristics of the reading of the said population, and provide elements to encourage the habit of reading.

The latest survey was carried out over 20 days in February 2020, where 2336 households in urban areas were asked to participate.⁵⁵ All types of printed media are defined as reading material for the purpose of this survey, which can be read in full [here](#).

In the literate population over the age of 18, a decline in reading is demonstrated. Looking at the results of the same survey carried out every February since 2016, there is an overall decrease of 8.4 percent from 2016 to 2020 regarding the percentage reading any material surveyed in MOLEC,⁵⁶ from 45.9 percent in 2015 to 41.1 percent in 2020.

De la población de 18 y más años de edad alfabeta, se tiene que, cuatro de cada diez personas, declararon leer al menos un libro en los últimos doce meses.



Fuente: INEGI. Módulo sobre Lectura 2016 a 2020.

Nota: En cada barra se presenta la estimación por intervalo de confianza al 90%.

Percentage of reading at least one book the last 12 months in the 18+ population. Source: INEGI, Module on Reading (MOLEC)⁵⁷

In 2016, 45.9 percent of respondents read at least one book a year, a number which sank to 41.1 percent in 2020, with a decline of 4.8 percent. The number of people reading is directly related to the length of education, and the degree of reading rises with the

⁵⁴ INEGI, Module on Reading (MOLEC), <http://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/molec/>, (accessed 13.1.2020)

⁵⁵ INEGI, Module on Reading (MOLEC), http://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/molec/doc/resultados_molec_feb20.pdf, (accessed 27.4.2020)

⁵⁶ INEGI, Module on Reading (MOLEC), http://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/molec/doc/resultados_molec_feb20.pdf, p 9, (accessed 27.4.2020)

⁵⁷ INEGI, Module on Reading (MOLEC), http://en.www.inegi.org.mx/programas/molec/doc/resultados_molec_feb20.pdf, p 11, (accessed 14.1.2020)

level of education. The number of read minutes is also rising with the level of education. The reading of other types of media, such as magazines, newspapers, cartoons and internet forums, sees a reduction of 7.9 percent over the last four years. There are more women who read books than men, and in terms of genre, fiction has the strongest position, followed by textbooks, books on self-help, religious books and general documentary books. Out of those who read, 87.7 percent read mainly on paper, while 12.3 percent read digital editions, and 4.4 percent read happily both on paper and screen.

The main reason for not reading, is lack of interest and motivation, lack of time and money and a preference for other activities.

Reading activities

There are plenty of initiatives to stimulate reading for children and young people in Mexico, but few are directed towards adults. In Mexico, there are nearly 4000 reading rooms, located all over the country. In these rooms, friends, neighbours and schoolmates can meet to share stories and reading. Readers and mediators meet in these rooms regularly to discuss literature and express ideas.⁵⁸

The Mexican online library Little Bookmates⁵⁹ is a start-up delivering books for children aged 0–12 directly to Mexican households. The library selects up to eight titles, delivers them to homes and after a month exchanges them for new ones. The books are chosen by algorithms. The service delivers books in Spanish and English. The first books are free, then you can subscribe for a semester, or a year for 409 Mexican pesos (about 15 Euros). This saves money for families, and with this system a child will read 100 books a year, which is above average, and will help to develop adult readers. It also strengthens the public's relationship with bookstores, a particular challenge in Mexico. Little Bookmates buys books directly from publishers, and has a stock of 15,000 titles.

⁵⁸ Gobierno de México, The national Reading Rooms Program, 20 years of socializing through the magical art of reading, <https://www.gob.mx/cultura/prensa/el-programa-nacional-salas-de-lectura-20-anos-de-socializar-el-acto-magico-de-la-lectura> <https://www.gob.mx/cultura/es/articulos/salas-de-lectura?idiom=es> (accessed 17.1.2020)

⁵⁹ Adam Critchely, "So That Children Become Reading Adults", <https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/06/little-bookmates-mexico-spanish-english-home-delivery-subscription-lender/>, (accessed 28.2.2020)

The Netherlands – No dramatic change in media use



- Much of Dutch media use remains unchanged
- The Dutch read 12 minutes each day

The Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (Netherlands Institute for Social Research, SCP) in the Netherlands is conducting an annual survey on media time use amongst those aged 13 and over: *Trends in Media: Time*. The latest report was launched 19 December 2019. This publication “focuses on how much time the Dutch spend watching television and video every day, listening to the radio and music, reading and communicating, and what differences in these patterns can be observed between different sections of the population.”⁶⁰ The summary points out that despite the changing media landscape, people are not necessarily changing their media use dramatically. Comparing the numbers from 2013, 2015 and 2018, the survey shows that much of Dutch media use remains unchanged.

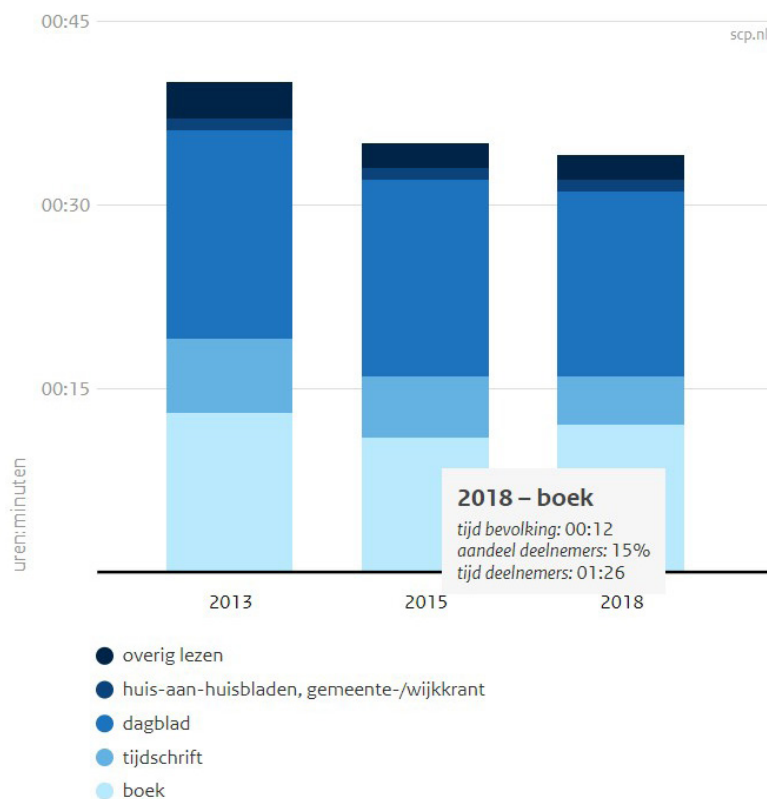
The total media time is stable, just under 8.5 hours per day. The use of digital media has increased, but the whereabouts of media consumption remains stable. There has been a decline in reading activity between 2013 and 2018, but no significant decline between 2015 and 2018. Reading fell from 42 minutes to 36 minutes per day from 2013 to 2018, with only a single minute decrease from 2015. The survey measures the reading of magazines, newspapers, periodicals and books. According to the survey, Dutch people still read about the same quantity of books, and read 12 minutes each day.⁶¹

Women and men differ in their reading preferences. The average reading time per day is 37 minutes for women and 35 minutes for men, but the reading platform tends to differ between the groups. Women read books more often, while men more often read the newspaper.

⁶⁰ SCP, Trends in Media : Time, https://www.scp.nl/english/Publications/Summaries_by_year/Summaries_2019/Summary_Trends_in_Media_Time, (accessed 13.1.2020)

⁶¹ SCP, Trends in Media: Time, <https://digitaal.scp.nl/trends-in-mediatiid/lezen/>, (accessed 13.1.2020)

Reading time from different sources



Source: NLO / NOM / SKO / PMA / SCP (Media: Tijd TBO'18)

Source: SCP

Stichting Marktonderzoek Boekenvak (SMB), an insight agency for the Dutch book trade, monitors Dutch reading habits.^{62,63} KVB Boekwerk is the “knowledge and innovation platform for the book sector,”⁶⁴ and provides insight into consumer research regarding buying, borrowing and reading of books. This research is conducted four times a year and focuses on long-term trends. Consumer research, commissioned by Stichting Marktonderzoek Boekenvak, is carried out by market research agency GfK.

A survey, measuring book reading only and conducted online over the last week of June 2019, was published in August 2019. From a cross-section of the Dutch population aged 14 and over, 93 percent of readers had read a book in the previous 12 months. This is the same as in previous surveys, with 79 percent of these being paper books. Reading frequency shows positive signs, up from 26 percent in January 2017 to 33 percent in August 2019. 21 percent of readers read every day (up from 17 percent in 2015), 12 percent 3–6 times per week, and 15 percent 1–2 times per week.⁶⁵

Find the full presentation of the survey, in Dutch, [here](#). The KVB survey shows the same picture as the SCP survey, that reading is stable or slightly increasing.

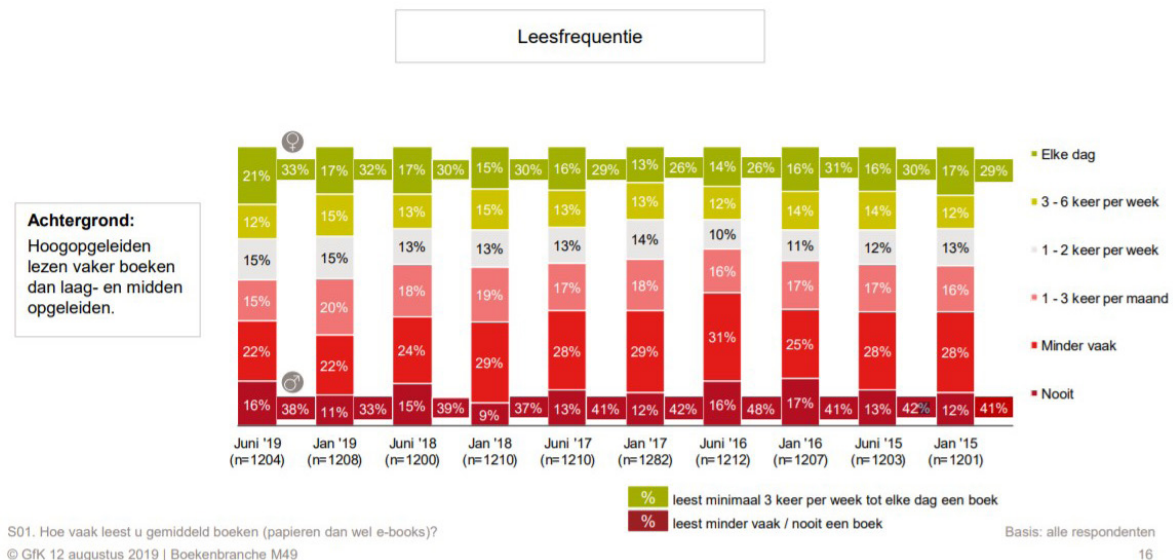
⁶² KVD Boekwerk, Consumer Research, <https://www.kvbboekwerk.nl/consumentenonderzoek/consumentenonderzoek>, (accessed 13.1.2020)

⁶³ KVB Boekwerk presents the research that is being carried out by GfK on behalf of the General Publishers Group, Koninklijke Boekverkoopersbond, Stichting CPNB, Stichting Lezen and Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

⁶⁴ KVD Boekwerk, <https://www.kvbboekwerk.nl/>, (accessed 13.1.2020)

⁶⁵ https://www.kvbboekwerk.nl/app/uploads/2019/11/654743-Boekenbranche-M49-Rapportage_3.0-def.pdf, p 16 (accessed 13.1.2020)

Leesfrequentie neemt licht toe de afgelopen jaren



Reading frequency 2015–2019. Source: GfK: 12 August 2019

Reading activities

Book Week (www.boekenweek.nl) runs for nine days in March, from Friday to Sunday. First held in 1932, it aims to remind the public of the wealth of books available in bookshops year round. In order to do this effectively, the CPNB (Collectieve Propaganda van het Nederlandse Boek) aims for maximum media coverage of Book Week, from just before it starts, all the way to the end.

The 2020 theme is “Rebels and Cross Thinkers.”



The Netherlands Reads (www.nederlandleest.nl) is the largest national reading campaign, taking place in November each year. Since 2016, a single book no longer takes centre stage, but a theme. In 2016 the theme was democracy, robotics in 2017 and in 2018 it was food. In 2019, the campaign focused on sustainability and the author, sculptor and painter Jan Wolkers.



During the campaign, authors travel the country, visiting libraries and bookshops for readings and book signings. Libraries and book clubs hold readings and discussions.

Thriller Weeks / Summer Reading (www.spannendeboekenweken.nl/): Summer! Sun, warmth, wonderful long days at the beach, in the garden or at your dream holiday destination. Finally, plenty of time to read. Your vacation starts with books!

The Exciting Book Weeks focus on the thriller as an ideal holiday read. For 40 percent of Dutch people, the holiday is when to read more books than usual. On average they take around six books on a trip. Crime and thrillers are the most widely read genres, and in the run-up to the summer holidays exciting books account for 37 percent of the total turnover from fiction sales (source: KVB-SMB / GfK).

The Exciting Book Weeks 2019 ran from 1 to 21 June. During that period, bookstores gave one free book to any customer spending a minimum of €12.50 on Dutch-language books.

Book week for young adults (<http://www.boekenweekvoorjongeren.nl/>) is a reading activity especially for young people aged 15 to 18. During Book Week for Young Adults, a team of 21 writers tour the country visiting schools, on 'Literatour'. There they talk directly with students in the upper secondary level of VMBO, HAVO and VWO about reading and what it's like to write a book. Furthermore, in participating bookshops and libraries, young adults can pick up their book week gift – 3PAK, a collection of short stories from a trio of top authors chosen for their appeal to the young adult market. The infamous 'Literatour' campaign has been known for years as the Book Week for Young Adults.

New Zealand – Children and women are steady readers



- Reasons for reading are relaxation, enjoyment, learning, entertainment and quiet time
- 86 percent of New Zealanders over the age of 18 had read or started to read at least one book in 2018

The Read NZ Te Pou Muramura (formerly part of the New Zealand Book Council) is an organisation promoting reading in New Zealand. They deliver reading programmes to schools and run national reading campaigns, as well as commissioning research into New Zealand reading habits.

The Report Book Reading in New Zealand 2018 states that New Zealanders are steady readers who love reading their national literature. However, more than 400,000 New Zealanders didn't read a book in 2017. The survey was conducted by Horizon Research for the New Zealand Book Council and the final report includes data supplied by Public Libraries of New Zealand, National Library of New Zealand, and Nielsen BookScan. 2261 adult New Zealanders responded to an online survey.

The 2018 study reports that:⁶⁶

- 86 percent of New Zealanders over the age of 18 had read or started to read at least one book in the past year, down from 88 percent the previous year
- 14 percent had not read a book the previous year, but had read newspapers or magazines
- 2 percent had not read anything, either on paper or online
- In a survey targeting 108 respondents aged 10–17, 97 percent reported reading over the past 12 months
- 82 percent of children aged 10 and under had read a book the previous year
- The percentage of female respondents reading (91 percent) has remained essentially the same, but there was a decline in the percentage of male readers (81 percent)
- Reasons for reading are relaxation, enjoyment, learning, entertainment and quiet time
- Respondents who have not read a book the past 12 months, say that they had no time to read, don't like it and find it easier to watch movies based on books

A new report from 2019, Reading in a Digital Age, aims to better understand online reading behaviour. The study was prepared for Read NZ Te Pou Muramura by Research First, and presents insights into when, how and what people are reading. The researchers asked, for example, what people were reading at various points across the day and week.

⁶⁶ Horizon Research, Book reading in New Zealand, <https://www.read-nz.org/advocacy/research/>, p 6 (accessed 17.1.2020)

The report concludes that:⁶⁷

- The participants read from more online resources than from print
- Both formats are being read; online reading is displacing traditional reading, not replacing it
- The growth of online resources may be helping to increase reading
- 1 in 3 participants report to read more than before due to online reading
- Women are more avid readers than men, and reading enjoyment increases with age
- Digital content is read by all ages
- Some respondents report being able to concentrate less and being less likely to read longer online content

Reading activities

One reading activity is the **Super Smash Reading Challenge** for school children, bringing together reading and cricket to stimulate holiday reading. The players log the books they read over the summer, along with a rating and a review, reading along with their favourite cricket team. A leader board keeps track of all the Super Smash teams as they move up or down the ranking.

Writers in Schools

The New Zealand Book Council's (Te Kaunihera Pukapuka o Aotearoa) Writers in Schools programme has been at the core of Read NZ's charity work for over forty years. It inspires tens-of-thousands of children and teenagers to develop a love of reading and writing by bringing a writer or illustrator into their classroom, either in person or through a Skype session.



⁶⁷ <https://www.read-nz.org/Images/Assets/59555/1/Read%20NZ%20Te%20Pou%20Muramura%20Reading%20in%20a%20Digital%20Age%20report%202019.pdf>, p 4 (accessed 17.1.2020)



Norway – Stable numbers after decline



In 2019, Norway was the Guest of Honour during the Frankfurt Book Fair, and 2019 was proclaimed to be the Year of Books, with various different initiatives to promote and stimulate reading.

So what is the status when it comes to reading at the moment, and which activities have been proved successful?

Statistics Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå) has been monitoring the state of book reading in Norway annually since 1991. Numbers from their media publication Norsk Mediebarometer (NMB) from 2018, a survey monitoring free time media use, show that reading is stable. The reading of paper books has increased since the millennium: “Toward the end of the 90s and the beginning of the millennium, between 17 and 20 percent of the population were reading daily. Over the last few years, this number has stabilised at about 25 percent.”⁶⁸ The 2018-numbers showed that Norwegians on average spend 14 minutes per day reading paper books, 16 minutes if ebooks are taken into account.

Statistics Norway published the NMB 2019-figures in May 2020, showing the following results, confirming the stability in the reading population:⁶⁹

- 25 percent of the population read paper books in their free time an average day in 2019
- When reading of ebooks is included, or both ebooks and paper books are taken into account, the share is 26 percent in 2019 against 25 percent in 2018
- The time spent on reading in the population is 13 minutes on an average day

⁶⁸ Statistisk sentralbyrå, En av fire leser bøker daglig, <https://www.ssb.no/kultur-og-fritid/artikler-og-publikasjoner/en-av-fire-leser-boker-daglig>, (accessed 2.1.2020)

⁶⁹ Statistics Norway, Norsk mediebarometer 2019, https://www.ssb.no/kultur-og-fritid/artikler-og-publikasjoner/attachment/421056?ts=1722704ab88&utm_source=Nyhetsbrev+OM-liste&utm_campaign=8e03faf311-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_04_03_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_43d902e5f1-8e03faf311-

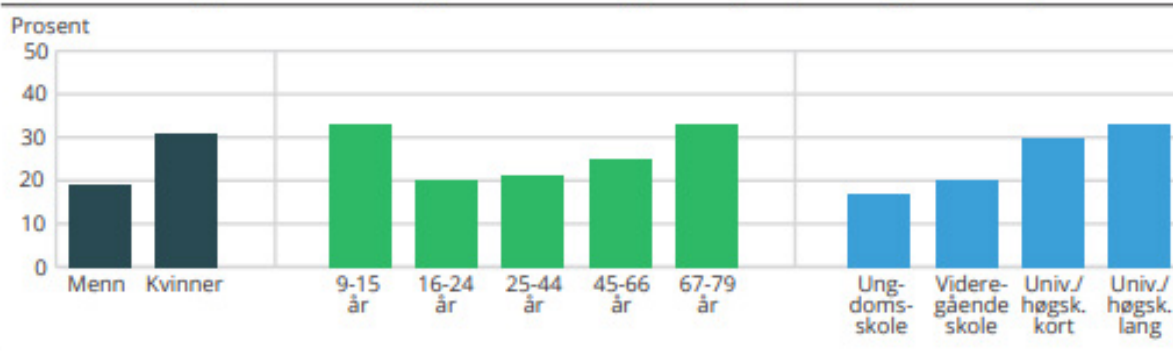
- When ebooks are included, 15 minutes are spent reading an average day
- The average reading time for book readers is 53 minutes an average day. Compared to 2018, there is a decrease of 7 minutes

More young women are reading books, reading increases with level of education, and most readers prefer fiction. The research states that more women are reading than men. In 2019, 19 percent of men and 31 percent of women read paper books. The share of readers is highest in the oldest and the youngest age group. The survey is based on 1660 interviews carried out with an extensive selection of people aged 9–79.⁷⁰

Bøker

Norsk mediebarometer 2019

Figur 21. Andel papirboklesere en gjennomsnittsdag, etter kjønn, alder og utdanning. 2019



Share of readers of paper books an average day, by gender, age and education. 2019. Source: NMB 2019.

New survey shows that reading levels remain stable

The Reading Survey 2020 was conducted by the marketing analysis company Ipsos MMI on behalf of the Norwegian Publishers Association and the Bookseller Association in February 2020. The survey was web-based, and the respondents were from a nationwide representational selection of about 1000 people over the age of 15. The survey is carried out every other year. Educational books are not included in the survey.⁷¹

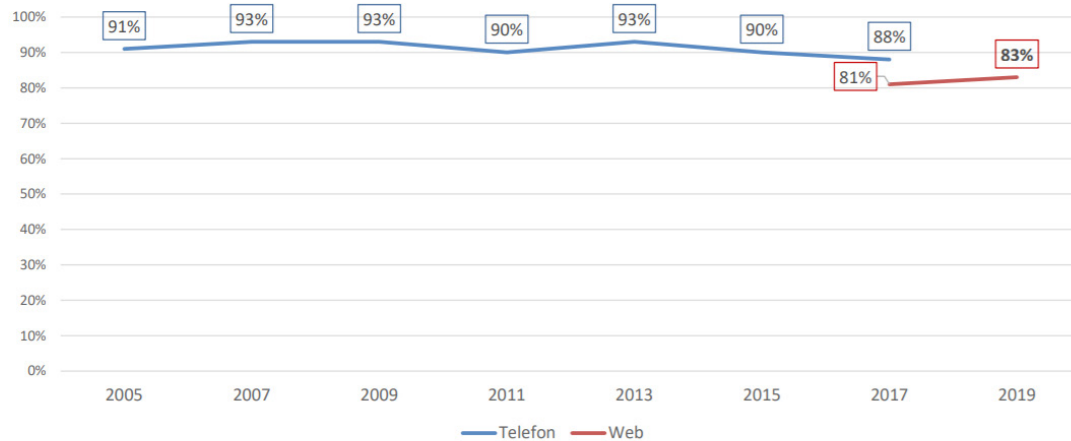
The survey, which was published in June 2020, concludes that reading habits remain stable, and a very high proportion of people are readers; 83 percent of the respondents said that they read at least one book in 2019, against 81 percent in 2017.⁷² Due to a change in methodology from telephone interviews to web surveys, we can't compare the results with historical data from before 2017. However, it is highly probable that the percentage of the population reading books has been stable the last ten years. The population read on average 13.2 books each year, and this is a slight increase from 12.7 in 2017. At the same time, we see that the proportion of avid readers (20 + books a year) is going down slightly. Women read an average of 18.5 books, where men read an average of 7.9 books in 2019, representing an increase for women and a decrease for men. Readers are gradually becoming more digital, reading more books on digital platforms and listening more to audio compared to the 2018 survey.

⁷⁰ Statistics Norway, Norsk mediebarometer 2019, https://www.ssb.no/kultur-og-fritid/artikler-og-publikasjoner/attachment/421056?ts=1722704ab88&utm_source=Nyhetsbrev+OM-liste&utm_campaign=8e03faf311-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_04_03_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_43d902e5f1-8e03faf311-, (accessed 22.5. 2020)

⁷¹ Forleggerforeningen og Bokhandlerforeningen, Leseundersøkelsen 2020, https://forleggerforeningen.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/leseundersokelsen_2020_rapport_kompl_0.pdf, (accessed 22.6.2020)

⁷² Forleggerforeningen og Bokhandlerforeningen, Leseundersøkelsen 2020, (Norwegian Publishers Association and Bookseller Association Reading survey 2020, https://forleggerforeningen.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/leseundersokelsen_2020_rapport_kompl_0.pdf, (accessed 22.6.2020)

Andel av befolkningen som har lest bøker i 2019



NB! Data for 2017 og 2019 er fra webundersøkelser, tidligere år er fra telefonundersøkelser. Tallene for 2017 og 2019 er også vektet for utdanning, det ble ikke gjort i tidligere år.

Leseundersøkelsen 2020. Gjennomført av Ipsos MMI på vegne av Forleggerforeningen og Bokhandlerforeningen

9

The percentage of the population 15+ that read one or more books during a year, is high. Source: The reading survey 2020. Conducted by Ipsos MMI on behalf of Norwegian Publishers Association and the and the Bookseller Association. Source: Norwegian Publishers Association.

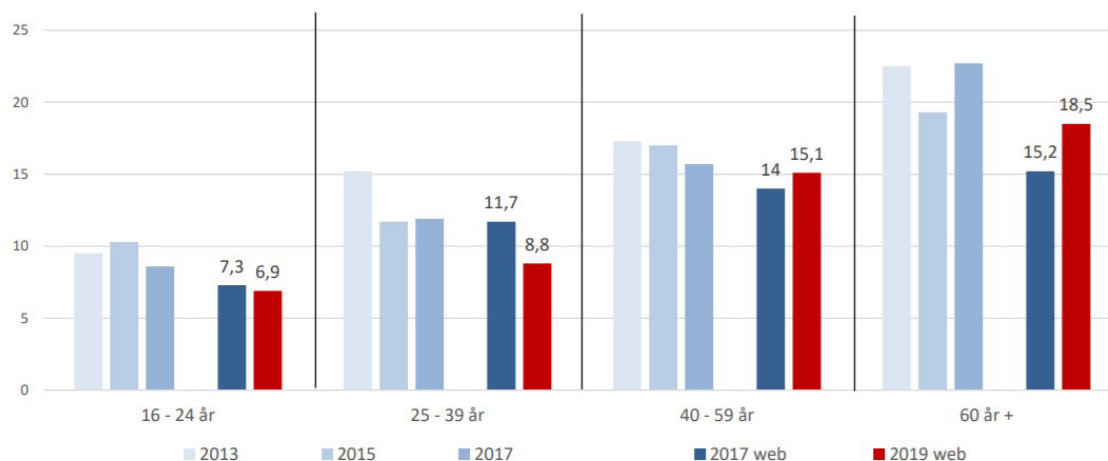
The oldest read the most⁷³

The 40+ population read the most. The mean number of read books has increased with 1.1 in the age group 40-59 years, and 3.3 for the readers 60+. In the age groups 16-24 and 25-39, the mean number of read books has decreased.

⁷³ Forleggerforeningen og Bokhandlerforeningen, Leseundersøkelsen 2020, https://forleggerforeningen.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/leseundersokelsen_2020_rapport_kompl_0.pdf, (accessed 2.1.2020)

Q2: Utvalg: 100 %

Antall bøker lest i snitt per aldersgruppe forrige år



NB! Data for 2017 og 2019 er fra webundersøkelser, tidligere år er fra telefonundersøkelser. Tallene for 2017 og 2019 er også vektet for utdanning, det ble ikke gjort i tidligere år.

Leseundersøkelsen 2020. Gjennomført av Ipsos MMI på vegne av Forleggerforeningen og Bokhandlerforeningen

14

Mean number of read books sorted by age 2019. Source: NPA and NBA

In 2019, 17 percent of the 60+ readers reported reading more than 21 books. The percentage of young readers 16–24 reading more than 21 books was 8. 12 percent of the youngest readers reported reading no books at all, against 5 percent among the 60+.

Norwegians read substantially less to their children than they used to: 46 percent of people with children under the age of ten in the household read to their children daily or at least 2–3 times a week in 2019, back from 76 percent in 2017.

More available time than before is identified as the main reason for reading more books, followed by whether the books are interesting and get you hooked. The lure of watching less TV is another reason people like to read more. The most common reasons for reading fewer books are lack of time, watching more TV/screen, and spending more time with friends and family, at work, studying and socialising. Reasons touching on the content of books come far down on the list. Therefore, it is fair to assume that the quality and array of books on the market are good enough and that readers can find satisfactory reading experiences should they so wish.

Time spent watching TV/screen appears to have an important influencing factor for change in reading behaviour. TV and books compete for the reader's time. One can assume that the competition between TV/screen and the book has tightened as both quality and availability of good stories on screen has changed.

Both the audiobook and ebook are growing in popularity. A larger proportion of book readers listen to audiobooks than before (29 percent in 2019 against 23 percent in 2017), and audiobook listeners listen to more books on average than before. 25 percent of book readers read at least one ebook compared with 21 percent in 2017. The bookreader read the same amount of ebooks in 2019 as in 2017 (two books).

Children and young people's reading

This survey has primarily looked at the reading status among adults. But what about children and young people's reading?

The Norwegian newspaper, *Klassekampen*, ran a series of articles in conjunction with the Year of Books 2019, focusing on challenges relating to children and reading.

Monday 16 September it ran a story on children's books today and the fact that they have little text and big illustrations⁷⁴. Author Bjørn Sortland, who is also a professor in the art of writing at the Norwegian Institute of Children's books, is worried about the mental endurance of children. "Reading for 15 minutes has become like climbing the Himalayas," he says. Over the past years he has visited hundreds of school classes. He has observed that easier books targeted at lower age groups are increasingly read by older children. He observes that crime mystery books, aimed at children aged 10–12, now are read by kids up to 18 years of age. Previous editor in chief of children and youth books at the Norwegian publishers Gyldendal, Marianne Koch Knudsen, is similarly concerned that, "Today's children are used to short books with little text and large illustrations. Many struggle to read a lot of text."⁷⁵

Bjørn Sortland claims that the reading skills of children growing up now are worse than the public realises. He blames the smartphone. "Children learn to skip whenever anything is a bit hard or boring," he says and worries that today's children do not learn to concentrate long enough to get through what was previously regarded as easy-to-read books.

On school visits he often uses Harry Potter to sell literature to the children. "I often say that the wonderful thing about Harry Potter is that you can picture the whole of Hogwarts in your mind. But do you know what response I got recently? A boy said that he tried but didn't manage to. He could not see it in his inner eye. I am honestly worried that the ability to empathise is about to die out."

In a follow-up article Tuesday 17 September school scientist Marte Blikstad-Balas says that the space to read novels in the classroom needs expanding. She supports Bjørn Sortland and says that cognitive endurance declines when only reading short texts.⁷⁶ "Extracts from textbooks and anthologies take a central position in Norwegian education, as opposed to the novel which has not got an established place in any year group." Blikstad-Balas thinks that digitalisation has affected the so-called reading endurance for children as well as adults. "We have become accustomed to being interrupted when we

⁷⁴ Klassekampen, Barn orker ikke å lese langt, <https://www.klassekampen.no/article/20190916/ARTICLE/190919974>, (accessed 2.1.2020)

⁷⁵ Klassekampen, Barn orker ikke å lese langt, <https://www.klassekampen.no/article/20190916/ARTICLE/190919974>, (accessed 2.1.2020)

⁷⁶ Klassekampen, Krever lengdetrening, <https://www.klassekampen.no/article/20190917/ARTICLE/190919968>, (accessed 2.1.2020)

read. Just look at an online news article. Throughout the whole story you are encouraged to stop the reading and click onto another story. All these interruptions make us expect interruptions when we read paper books too,” she says.

Thursday 19 September 2019 the newspaper focused on the use of audiobooks in school. Is the audiobook a sufficient alternative to the paper book in the classroom?

Scientist Bjarte Reidar Furnes thinks that teachers first and foremost must facilitate reading of paper books. The children interviewed also said that they prefer paper books, because it is easier to lose concentration when listening to audiobooks.

Teachers, however, regard the audiobook as an important supplement, but Furnes only partly agrees. “Audiobooks are an important supplement for these pupils, but if it takes time that could have been used to read themselves, we risk that this can become a misunderstood kindness from the teacher,” he says.

Furnes thinks that monitoring is important regardless of what format the pupils choose. “Digital aids cannot help the pupils alone,” he says.⁷⁷

Reading activities



⁷⁷ Klassekampen, Lytte er det nye lese, <https://www.klassekampen.no/article/20190919/ARTICLE/190919960>, (accessed 2.1.2020)

 HELE NORGE LESER




How to make books, literature and reading topical, attractive and more accessible to a generation who lives its life on social media – and who struggle to put the phone away?

Year of the Book 2019 aimed to create enthusiasm for books, literature and reading. *Hele Norge Leser* (Norway Reads), a collaboration between the Norwegian Publishers Association and the Bookseller Association, was one of the largest projects during the year, which chose the digital meeting place to be the arena for its project. The project involved creating an online community where books and readers could meet, with the aim of lifting books and reading into the public discourse, igniting conversations about books at work and in daily life.

The Norway Reads campaign was launched 4 October 2019. The initial campaign consisted of two elements – a reading competition and an online community which was to continue to exist after the competition was over. The site gives the opportunity to search for titles, register reading and reading lists, share comments about books and participate in reading groups. There is information on books, authors, and events relating to books and reading.

The reading campaign was open for everyone who wanted to establish teams and take part in the competition. The main target group for the reading competition consisted of workplace teams, but all book worms were welcome. It was possible to compete as a workplace team, a friendship team or alone.

Reading surveys suggest that readers want to read more, but competition is strong from social media and streaming services. For the project Norway Reads, the publishers and booksellers associations had the idea to connect with readers on a platform more relevant to their daily lives. By offering a social media platform, readers were able to be part of a virtual community where they could easily share their interest in reading. The project, that is still being developed, showed that the age group 25– 54 had the most and most frequent users who read the most pages. There were 32,785 registered users, and 85 percent of the users were female readers.

This campaign was relaunched 19.3.2020 after the COVID-19 outbreak, with an increase in participants. The same platform has been used for a summer reading campaign from June 15th to August 31st.

Association Read! – Foreningen !les

Association Read! is a non-profit association that was established in 1997, at a time where reading was declining in Norway. Their goal is to inspire children, adolescents and adults to read more by:

- making contemporary literature available for target groups
- giving children and adolescents an arena for reading, writing and having an opinion about literature
- giving teachers tools for working with contemporary literature in classrooms and in collaboration with students
- developing an intermediary role in schools and libraries
- drawing attention to reading role models

Through their work this NGO aims to give readers:

- access to quality literature within different genres and in different formats
- channels for expressing their opinions and for critical reading and conversations about literature
- enhanced reading and writing skills
- better skills to reflect upon and put literature into a larger context
- help to establish good reading habits
- tools for making active use of literature in schools and libraries, at workplaces and during free time

Association Read! connects readers and literature. They facilitate literary conversations and reading experiences and work closely with children and adolescents, teachers and librarians, authors and publishers. They also have contact with literary organisations and networks in several European countries.

denboka

thatbook

– a national reading campaign to reach young people

A collaboration between eight literary organisations in conjunction with Year of the Book 2019, thatbook is a project which aims to encourage young people to read more books.

By Silje Tretvoll, CEO of the Association Read!

denboka, (thatbook) forms part of the national initiatives around the Year of the Book 2019. The project received one million norwegian kroner (€89.410) from the National Library and eight other organisations.

Role models spread desire to read

Reading surveys show a significant decline in reading for the age group 15–25 years, but one thing is positive, and that is that young people studying are expressing awareness of the value of reading. With thatbook the aim is to spread the joy of reading and awaken the desire to read in young people. This is done by lifting literature into the young people's arena. A tool in the campaign is a series of short films where inspiring role models recommend a book that made an impression on them. **The aim is to show young people that there are books for everyone, and to communicate that reading gives immediate gratification, and that literature is topical, fresh, relevant, but stories also carry elements of the everlasting and universal.** The films are spread in social media. The main platform is instagram, but the films are also published on a campaign account on Facebook and YouTube, and a web page. The project has entered into a collaboration with the communication company Try Opt, who is helping with publishing and placing paid ads to reach the target group. Throughout 2019, 35 films with famous role models from sports, film, TV and the music industry were published.

Conversations about books

In addition to the films, various events have been arranged, with some of the role models meeting the author of the book they recommended. thatbook was also a partner in the Crownprincess of Norway's book event Bokbane in Oslo, in May, and people aged between 15–25 alongside role models from youth culture were involved in the conversations. During the Norwegian Literature festival, also in May, thatbook arranged two conversations with musician Emilie Nicholas and author Lars Mytting and between musician Fay Wildhagen and author Erlend Loe.

Several other events were organised bringing together authors and role models from actors to athletes.

Facts:

Eight different literature organisations are behind the project thatbook: Bokhandlerforeningen (Booksellers association), Forleggerforeningen (Publishers association), Foreningen !les (Association Read!), Kulturtanken (Culture tank/thought) Leser søker bok (Reader seeks book), Norsk Barnebokinstitutt (Norwegian institute for children's books) Norske barne- og ungdomsboksforfattere NBU, (Norwegian children's book and youth book authors) Norsk forfattersentrum (Norwegian association of authors).

The project is initiated by Norwegian children's book and youth book authors and is administered by association read!

Instagram: @denboka #denboka

Facebook: @denbokanorge

Youtube: denboka



Photo: Foreningen!les

Russia – Digital reading on the way up



- The respondents read an average of 5 books in the last three months of 2019

Regular reading surveys in Russia are carried out by the All-Russian Centre for Information and Public Opinion⁷⁸ (ВЦИОМ in Russian) and Levada-Centre⁷⁹ (the analytic centre of Juri Levada).

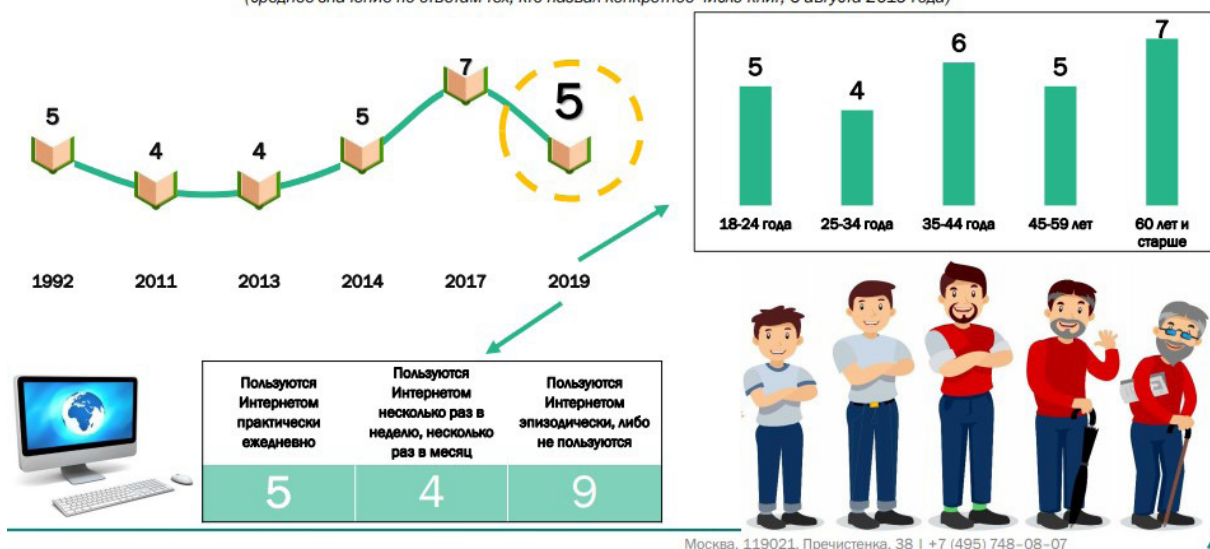
Portrait of the Russian reader 2020,⁸⁰ is a survey conducted by ВЦИОМ spanning the previous two years from 2018 to 2020. 1600 respondents, aged 18 and over, were interviewed over the telephone about their reading habits. The survey provides information such as format preference – paper or digital, and quantity of books read and purchased in 2019. The respondents are representative regarding age, gender and geographical regions.

The respondents read an average of 5 books in the last three months of 2019. This corresponds to the number of books read in 1992, but is down from a peak of 7 books reported in the survey of 2017. The age group 18–24 read an average of 5 books, with the age group 60+ reading an average of 7.

РАСПРОСТРАНЕННОСТЬ ЧТЕНИЯ



Скажите, пожалуйста, сколько книг Вы прочли за последние три месяца?
(среднее значение по ответам тех, кто назвал конкретное число книг, 6 августа 2019 года)



Source: ВЦИОМ

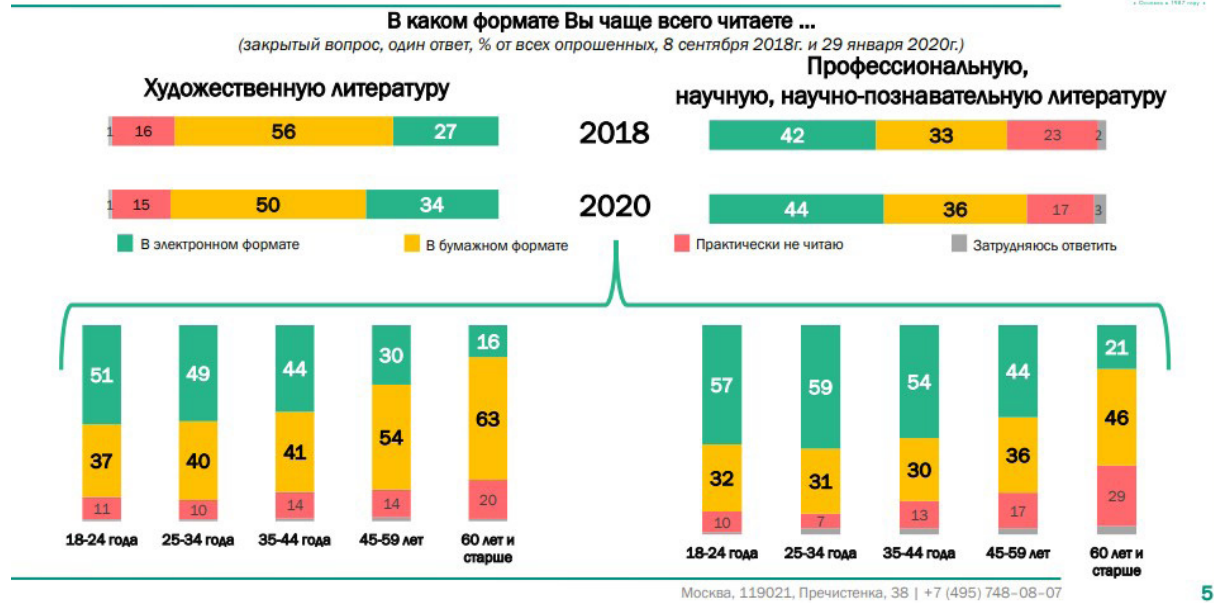
⁷⁸ ВЦИОМ, <https://www.wciom.ru/>, (accessed 16.4.2020)

⁷⁹ <https://www.levada.ru/2019/07/01/dosug-i-razvlecheniya/>, (accessed 16.4.2020)

⁸⁰ General Director Valeri Fjodorov, https://wciom.ru/fileadmin/file/reports_conferences/2020/300120_Knizhnyi_rynok_Rossii.pdf, (accessed 16.4.2020)

With regards to format, the Russian respondents reported that they read more digital books in 2020 than they did in 2018, 34 percent versus 27 percent. Furthermore, on digital devices they tended to read more nonfiction than fiction, 44 percent versus 34 percent.

БУМАГА ИЛИ ЭКРАН?



5

Source: BЦИОМ. On the left-hand side are the numbers for fiction, on the right-hand side numbers for nonfiction. Green represents ebooks, yellow is p-books, red indicates non-readers. Age distribution below.

Regarding their book purchasing frequency, 66 percent of the respondents bought a book last year, 29 percent bought no books. The mean number of bought books is three. 73 percent bought books as presents, whilst 26 percent didn't. Slightly more women than men bought books as presents; for their own children, friends, relatives, colleagues and parents.

Slovenia – Celebrities campaigning



- Decrease in number of readers
- Campaigns to stimulate reading activities

Between 2014 and 2019, the number of readers in Slovenia decreased by 6 percent, according to the Slovenian Book Agency (JAK). Readers are defined as people who have read at least one book in the last twelve months.

According to the results of the PISA study, the reading habits of Slovenians, especially students, are deteriorating year by year. In response to this, JAK initiated the reading campaign Read Books, Move It! with the aim to convince high school students that books are an important part of the globalised entertainment world and that reading in their free time can be as interesting as watching TV or online chat.

As part of Read Books, Move it! Slovenian celebrities talk about their literary role models and provide activities, as part of a unique strategy to encourage young people to read. At high schools, in libraries, bookstores and elsewhere, they participated in setting up reading clubs where teenagers could meet, read and talk about selected books. During the school year, the club would organise several meetings (two of which were visited by a celebrity), and members read at least three books.

The campaign targeted young people between 14 and 24 years.⁸¹

⁸¹ Slovenian Book Agency, Reading promotion in Slovenia, <https://www.jakrs.si/en/reading-promotion-in-slo+venia/read-books-move-it/> (accessed 3.2.2020)

South Africa – 14 percent of the 16+ population committed book readers



- 47 percent of the population read books in their spare time
- 14 percent are committed readers of printed books

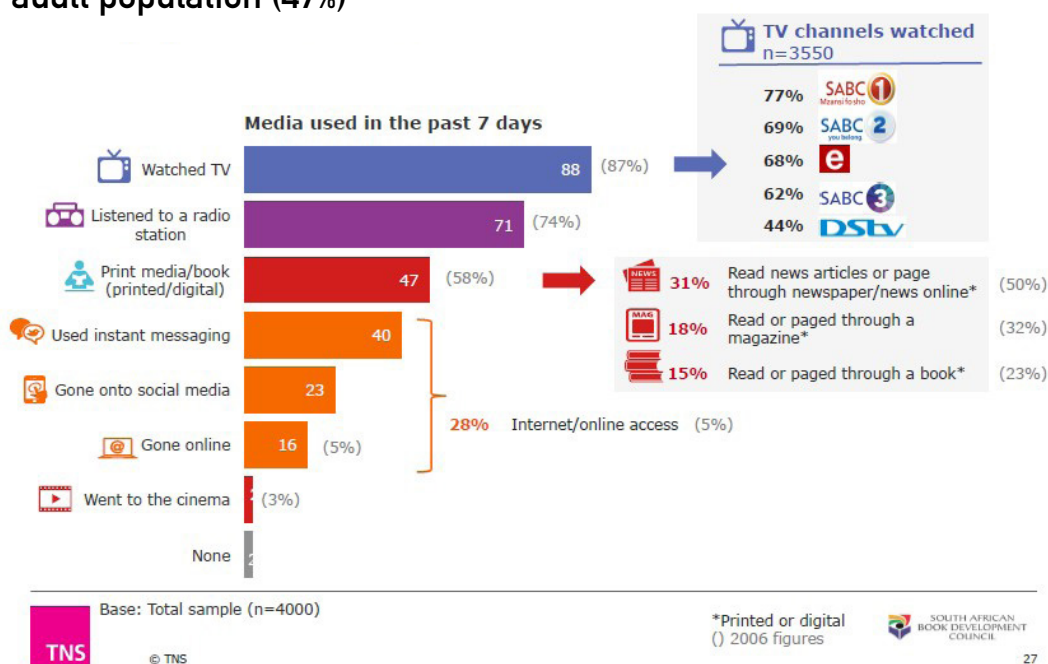
There are only a few up to date reading surveys from the African continent.

In 2016, a reading survey was conducted in South Africa, commissioned and managed by the South Africa Book Development Council. It explored reading during spare time in the population above 16 years, and analysed reading by gender, age, living conditions and education. 4000 random respondents were interviewed 35 minutes through computer aided interviews.

Sizing the reading landscape, 70.5 percent say they have at least once read in their spare time. Out of these, 41.1 percent were currently reading at the time of asking.

When asked about media used in the past seven days, 47 percent of the respondents reported reading printed material and books, a decrease by 11 percent, when compared to an equivalent survey from 2006.⁸²

Incidence of reading print media/books has dropped since 2006 (58%) to just below one-half of the SA adult population (47%)



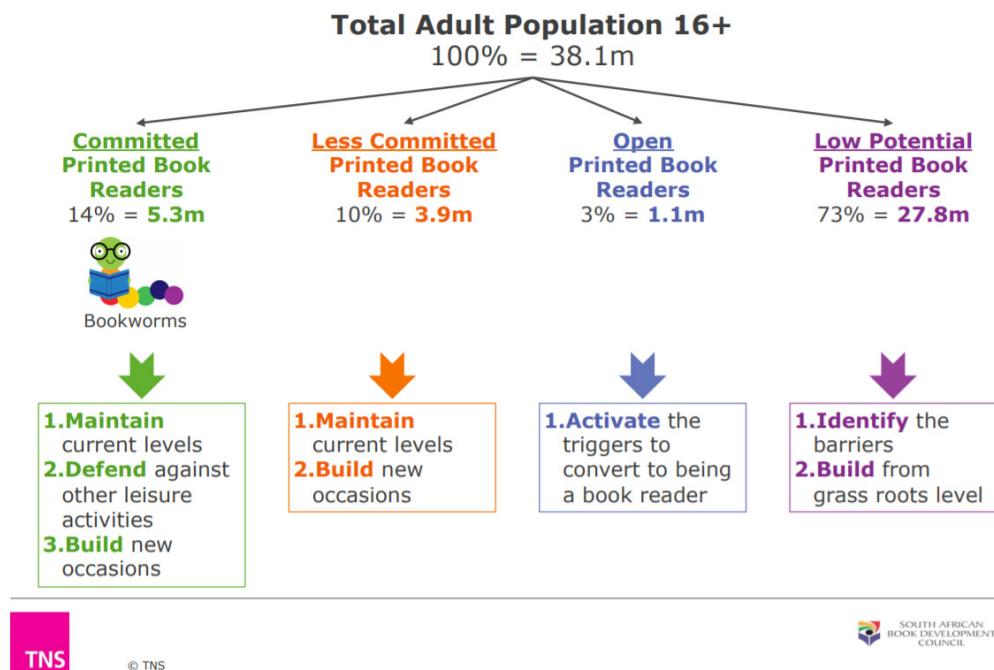
Reading of print media 2016.⁸³ Source: South African Book Development Council

⁸² South African Book Development Council, National survey into the reading and book reading behaviour of adult South Africans 2016, <https://sabookcouncil.co.za/wp-content/uploads/Final-Report-NRS-2016.pdf>, (accessed 14.1.2020)

⁸³ <https://sabookcouncil.co.za/wp-content/uploads/Final-Report-NRS-2016.pdf> p 27, (accessed 14.1.2020)

Out of the total population aged 16 and over, which in 2016 was 38.1 million people, 14 percent are committed readers of printed books, while 73 percent are less avid readers of printed books.⁸⁴

Book reading segments: strategy



Source: TNS/South African Book Council

In terms of collective media consumption in their spare time, reading held fifth place in the ranking of spare time activities conducted over the last month, after radio, TV, shopping and socialising. However, time spent on reading declined from 65 percent in 2006 to 43 percent in 2016, filling 6.2 percent of the leisure activities the past week, the equivalent of four hours per week. For the purpose of this survey, platforms for reading are defined as books, magazines and newspapers, both printed and online. Since the survey was conducted in 2006, more spare time activities have become available such as social media, internet and mobile games. The increased number of activities available in 2016, means that reading has more competition for scarce leisure time, underlined by the fact that reading held the third place in 2006.

This surveys also report on literacy, stating that 97 percent of respondents could read the introductory card with text, while 3 percent could not, down from 8 percent in 2006.

The South African Book Fair (SABF), managed by the South African Book Development Council (SABDC), is part of the National Book Week in September each year. National Book Week aims to stimulate reading in South Africa with the help of several campaigns such as the #BuyABook campaign, which works with book donations, the promotion of Indigenous language reading festivals, as well as the SABF with its consumer based programme focusing on South African and African literature.

⁸⁴ South African Book Development Council, National survey into the reading and book reading behaviour of adult South Africans 2016, <https://sabookcouncil.co.za/wp-content/uploads/Final-Report-NRS-2016.pdf>, p 4, (accessed 14.1.2020)

Spain – Reading curves pointing upwards



- A collective reader increase of 6 percent
- 85.2 percent of children aged 6 to 9 read non-textbooks
- Reading rates continue to improve

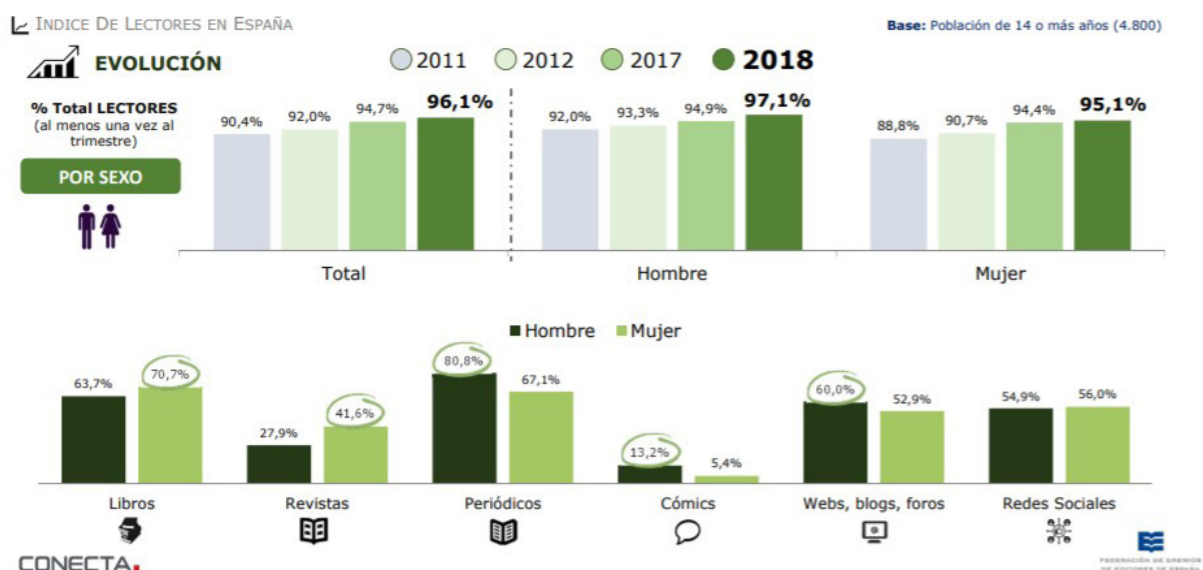
Reading is on the increase in Spain. This is the conclusion of a large survey carried out by the market analysis company Conecta Research and Consulting, commissioned by the Spanish Publishers Association (Federación de Gremios de Editores de España). The research comprises 5004 respondents, primarily aged 14 and over, who are living on Spanish mainland, the Balearic Islands and Canary islands. The report also contains a separate survey on children's reading. The survey was undertaken in October and November 2018.

You can read the full report [here](#). The survey covers Spanish reading habits from 2012 to 2018. The total number of people reading on any medium or media platform increased from 90.1 percent in 2008 to 96.1 percent in 2018. This is a collective increase of 6 percent. The proportion of male readers increased from 92 percent to 97.1 percent, and female readers increased from 88.8 percent to 95.1 percent. The number of male and female readers is levelling out.

- Women read more books, magazines and on social networks.
- Men read more press, comics and on websites, blogs and forums.

Se iguala el porcentaje total de lectores hombres y mujeres.

- Las mujeres leen más libros, revistas y en redes sociales.
- Los hombres leen más prensa, cómics y en webs, blogs y foros



Total amount of reading divided by gender in Spain.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Conecta, Federación de Gremios de Editores de España, Hábitos de Lectura y Compra de Libros en España 2018, <https://www.federacioneditores.org/lectura-y-compra-de-libros-2018.pdf> p 18, (accessed 3.1.2020)

The total proportion of book readers has increased from 60.3 percent in 2010 to 67.2 percent in 2018. Reading of newspapers and magazines/journals decreased by 14 percent and 4.2 percent respectively in the same period. Websites, blogs and online forums have increased by 19.3 percent. With the exception of newspapers and magazines, to a greater or lesser extent, the percentage of readers descend as age increases.

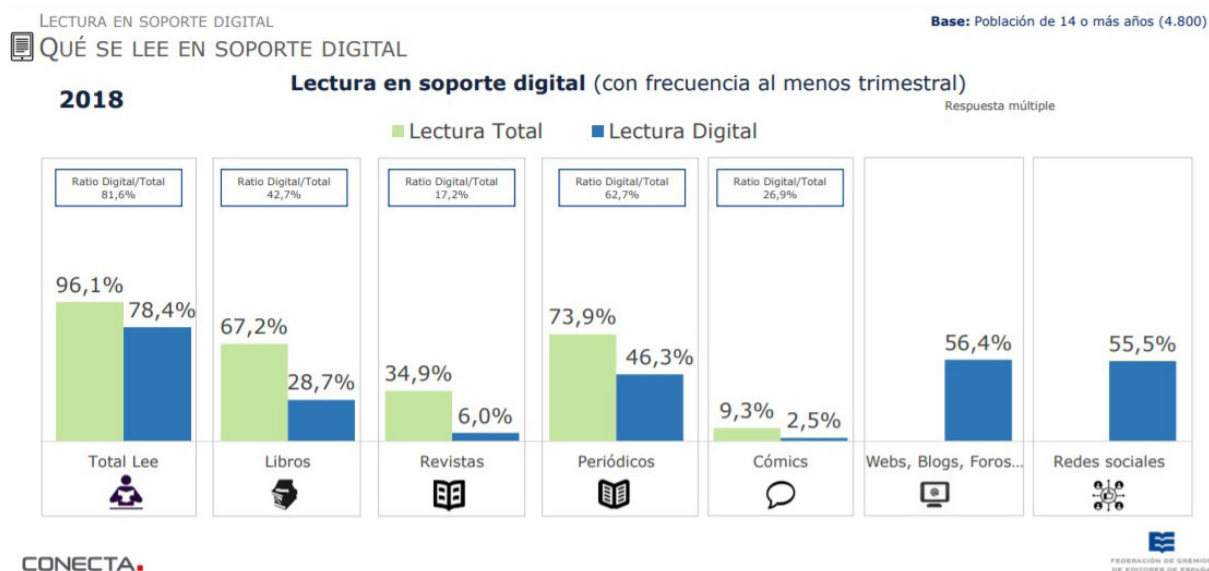
When it comes to children and reading, 3 out of 4 households with children under 6 years old are reading less to their children when compared to the previous year.

- 85.2 percent of children aged 6 to 9 read non-textbooks, a similar figure to the previous year, although the weekly reading time seems to have decreased.⁸⁶

Digital reading is also on the rise

Reading digital content of any kind remains on an upward trajectory, growing from 47.8 percent in 2010 to 78.4 percent in 2018. In the last eight years, book readers reading on screens have gone from 5.3 percent in 2010 to 28.7 percent in 2018. The mobile and the computer are the main devices used to read books digitally.

- Redes sociales, webs y periódicos** son los contenidos **más leídos en soporte digital**.
- La lectura digital de libros** (con frecuencia al menos trimestral) **sigue en ascenso y alcanza un 28,7%** entre le población de 14 o más años.



Digital reading in Spain⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Conecta, Federación de Gremios de Editores de España, Hábitos de Lectura y Compra de Libros en España 2018, <https://www.federacioneditores.org/lectura-y-compra-de-libros-2018.pdf>, p 91 (accessed 3.1.2020)

⁸⁷ Conecta, Federación de Gremios de Editores de España, Hábitos de Lectura y Compra de Libros en España 2018, <https://www.federacioneditores.org/lectura-y-compra-de-libros-2018.pdf>, p 46 (accessed 3.1.2020)

Main findings⁸⁸

- The total percentage of readers reaches 96.1 percent among the population aged 14 or over. The total proportion of readers has increased, and frequent readers reach a score of 93.1 percent.
- Book reading continues to rise. In 2018 the reading of books for leisure has increased
- The reading of websites, blogs and online forums is also growing
- On the contrary, the reading of press and magazines descend
- 61.8 percent of the population over the age of 14 read books in their free time. This is 7.2 percent more than 10 years ago.
- The vast majority, eight out of ten, are frequent readers, mainly readers who read daily or almost every day
- A book recommendation by friends or relatives is identified as the main source of book promotion
- The book as a gift: 55 percent of readers have gifted a book in the last year, with an average of 3 gifted books per year

2019 results

Reading rates in Spain continue to improve. In February 2020, the Federación de Gremios de Editores de España (Federation of Spanish Publisher's Guilds) presented an updated survey, the Barometer of Reading habits 2019, prepared by Conecta Research & Consulting.⁸⁹

The survey states that the number of readers of books in Spain continues to rise steadily. 68.5 percent of the respondents report that they have read at least part of a book in 2019, for leisure or educational purposes, a number slightly up 1.3 percent since 2018. This makes an increase of 8.2 percent from 2010.⁹⁰

62.2 percent claim to read books for leisure, in their free time (up from 61.8 percent, a figure that presents an upward trend in recent years) and 27.5 percent say they read books for reasons of work or study.⁹¹ 50 percent are frequent readers and read at least once or twice a week.

⁸⁸ Conecta, Federación de Gremios de Editores de España, Hábitos de Lectura y Compra de Libros en España 2018, <https://www.federacioneditores.org/lectura-y-compra-de-libros-2018.pdf>, p. 108 (accessed 3.1.2020)

⁸⁹ Publishing Perspectives, Spain's New Bookish Habits Report: 68.6. Percent Reading, <https://publishingperspectives.com/2020/02/spain-new-reading-habits-report-digital-reading-up-29-percent/>, (accessed 25.2.2020)

⁹⁰ Conecta, Federación de gremios de Editores de España, Hábitos de Lectura y Compra de Libros en España 2019, <https://www.federacioneditores.org/img/documentos/210220-notasprensa.pdf>, p. 2, (accessed 25.2.2020)

⁹¹ Conecta, Federación de gremios de Editores de España, Hábitos de Lectura y Compra de Libros en España 2019, <https://www.federacioneditores.org/img/documentos/210220-notasprensa.pdf>, p. 3, (accessed 25.2.2020)

El 62,2% afirman leer libros por ocio, en su tiempo libre (cifra que presenta una tendencia ascendente en los últimos años) y **un 27,5% dice leer libros por motivos de trabajo o estudios**.

LECTURA DE LIBROS

Base: Población de 14 o más años (4.800)



EVOLUCIÓN



CONECTA.

FEDERACIÓN DE GREMIOS
DE EDITORES DE ESPAÑA

Development of leisure reading and leisure/work/educational reading in Spain. Source: Federación de Gremios de Editores de España 2019.⁹²

Other main findings in the 2019 reading barometer:

- 32 percent report that they read daily, 31.5 percent never or rarely read
- 50 percent of the readers read daily or once or twice a week
- For 73.3 percent of the readers, the last book read was fiction
- 68.3 percent of women are considered to be readers, 56 percent of men. This gap is narrowing in the older age groups
- Young people aged 14–24 are the most frequent readers, and then there is a significant drop from 25–34 years of age
- Spare time reading is up 5.2 percent since 2010
- The percentage of digital readers of books is up to 29.1 percent from 28.7 percent in 2018
- The main reason for reading is entertainment, and lack of time is the biggest reason not to read (49.1 percent), while lack of interest in reading is given as a cause by 29.4 percent of the respondents⁹³

⁹² Conecta, Federación de gremios de Editores de España, Hábitos de Lectura y Compra de Libros en España 2019, <https://www.gremieditores.cat/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/200221PRE-FGEE-Ha%CC%81bitos-lectura-presentacio%CC%81n.pdf>, p 3, (accessed 25.2.2020)

⁹³ Conecta, Federación de gremios de Editores de España, Hábitos de Lectura y Compra de Libros en España 2019, <https://www.federacioneditores.org/img/documentos/210220-notasprensa.pdf>, (accessed 25.2.2020)

LECTURA DE LIBROS RAZONES DE NO LECTURA EN TIEMPO LIBRE



CONECTA.

Base: no lectores de libros o lector ocasional (2.352)

Reasons not to read in your spare time: Lack of time, no interest in reading, prefer other entertainment and health reasons.
Source: Federación de Gremios de Editores de España

Sports, TV and walking are activities that compete the strongest with reading.

Reading activities

Día de las Librerías (www.diadelaslibrerias.com), the Spanish Bookshop Day, is organised by CEGAL, the Spanish Booksellers Association every year. During that day, bookshops in Spain offer a rich programme of activities through which they want to share their passion. The date celebrating Día de las Librerías varies, however, it always takes place within the first fortnight of November. All activities are published on the event website, while readers can actively participate through social networks with the hashtag #DíaDeLasLibrerías. On that special day, bookshops are open until 10pm and offer a 5 percent discount to all customers.

In Spain, the day of San Jordi in Catalonia and the Book Fairs that are held in spring in all the cities and communities, are very important. Especially the one that takes place in El Retiro in the city of Madrid is very important.

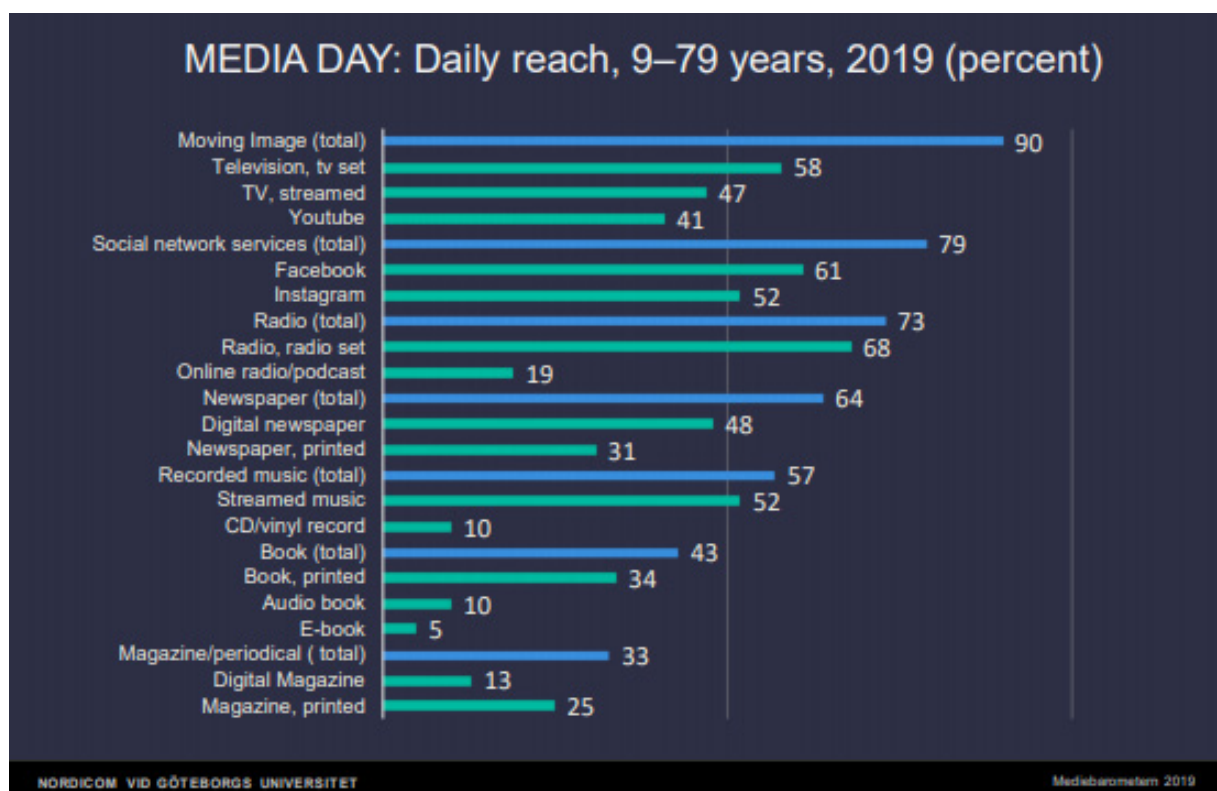
Sweden – Strong increase in digital subscription services



There are several surveys regarding reading and book consumption in Sweden, measuring different aspects of reading. The Swedish Media Council (Statens medieråd) measures time use among children and young adults, whilst the agency Nordicom⁹⁴ survey The Media Barometer measures time use on an average day in the whole population aged 9 and over. The Media Barometer has been measuring this since the end of the 1970s, and the methodology is unchanged; phone interviews with a random selection of people aged 9–85.⁹⁵

The latest report, published in May 2020, shows that book reading remains at a stable level.⁹⁶ On average, 43 percent of the population read a book every day, 34 percent of them read a paper book. All genres are included in the survey. Fiction was the most commonly read genre, followed by educational and specialist books. This confirms that the printed book remains popular in Sweden. Ebooks and audiobooks are included in the statistics, accounting for 5 percent and 10 percent of the total number, respectively. The average usage time was longest for audiobooks.

The number is almost back at 1995-level, where 44 percent reported reading a book every day, and has been climbing after a low point in 2012 at 34 percent.

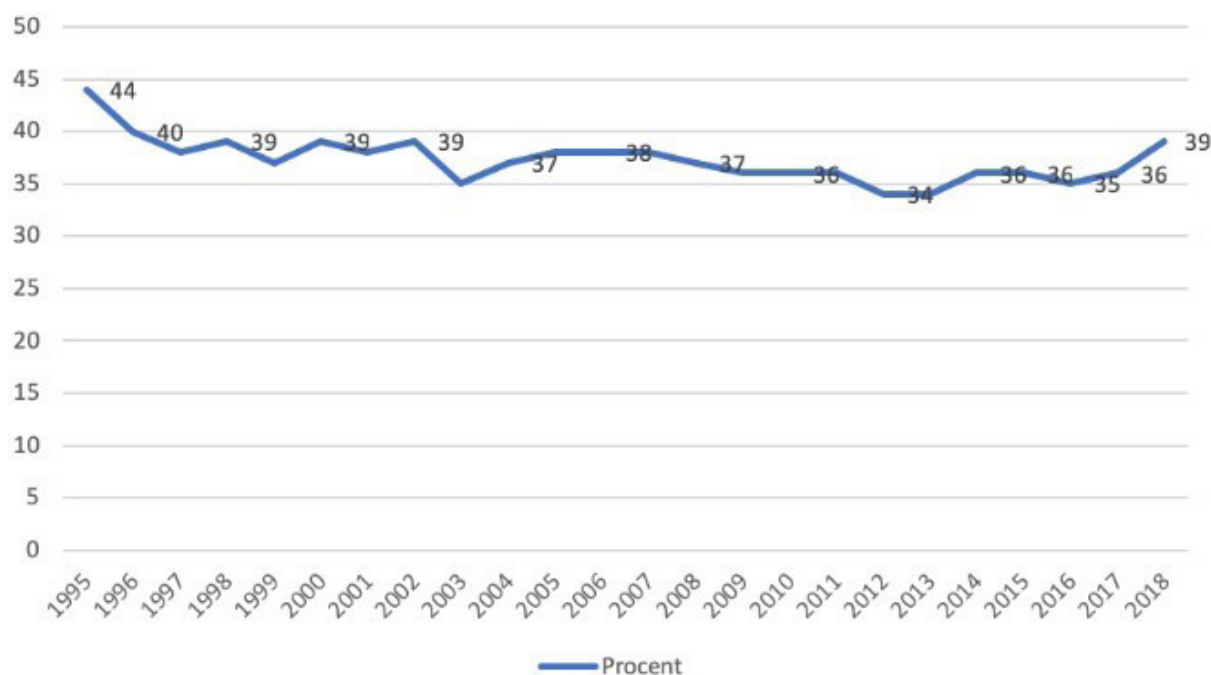


Source: Nordicom-Sweden's Media Barometer 2019

⁹⁴ At the University of Gothenburg

⁹⁵ Nordicom. Mediebarometern, <https://www.nordicom.gu.se/sv/mediebarometern-2019>, (accessed 23.4.2020)

⁹⁶ Nordicom, The Media Barometer, <https://www.nordicom.gu.se/en/media-barometer-2019>, (accessed 3.7.2020)



Percentage of book reading an average day age 9–79, 1995–2018. Source: Mediebarometern/Swedish Publishers Association

There is a significantly larger proportion of women than men who read, 46 percent women compared to 33 percent men. The age group 9–14 reads the most, with a sinking tendency until aged 64, when reading picks up again. Over time there has been a significant decline in reading in the next but youngest age groups, 9–14 and 15–24, but the tendency is changing for both age groups and the curve is currently on its way up.⁹⁷

Trade statistics from 2019 were published in February 2020 by the Swedish Publishers Association and the Swedish Booksellers Association. The 2019 report, covering the period 2018 to 2019, is the first one to include audiobooks and ebooks streaming and download figures. Primarily it shows sales statistics and indicates the following:⁹⁸

- Total book sales increased slightly in terms of turnover by 1.1 percent
- Digital subscription services increased 36.2 percent
- Turnover in sales through grocery stores reduced by 9.9 percent
- Turnover through online sales from bookshops and book clubs reduced by 5.2 percent
- Turnover in physical book shops reduced by 4.4 percent
- Total sales in volume increased 4.9 percent in 2019
- Increase can be attributed to digital subscription services, with an increase of 22.9 percent in download and streams
- Number of items listened to or read is 25 million
- Sales volume through physical bookstores is down 5.5 percent

⁹⁷ Svenska Förläggareföreningen. Bokläsningen, <https://www.forlaggare.se/boklasningen-0> (accessed 3.7.2020)

⁹⁸ Svenska Förläggareföreningen. Bokförsäljningsstatistiken. Helåret 2019. https://www.forlaggare.se/sites/default/files/bokfors_statistik_helar_2019_ny_0.pdf, (accessed 23.4.2020)

Reading activities

The reading movement: Give your children a language

Since its conception in 2000, the Läsrörelsen has tirelessly worked to stimulate reading in many new ways and in new arenas, implementing both opinion-forming campaigns and multiple direct reading projects. One example is the *Book Happy Meal* at all McDonald's restaurants over six weeks every autumn, where children's picture books in Swedish or Finnish are provided with every purchase. In 2019, 1 million copies were given away with meals. Since the start of the project in 2000, a total of 22.9 million books have been given away.

The new project *Narrative storytelling and the art of reading pictures* began in 2019 and continues through 2020. Also in 2020, *READ! READ! READ!* is one of three main themes at the Gothenburg Book Fair, and Läsrörelsen is responsible.

Every autumn, Swedish children have a school holiday, which over the last few years has been promoted as the Reading Holiday. Events are put on all over the country, such as book swaps, writer's workshops, movies and other activities, all aimed to stimulate reading. The Reading Holiday continues to build on its success, running as a cooperation between student organisations, libraries, bookshops, sport clubs and other cultural institutions and corporations.

Switzerland – JAMES survey on adolescence media use



The JAMES study⁹⁹ from Switzerland has, since 2010, provided information on young people's media use in Switzerland. The survey is conducted by ZHAW Zürich University of Applied Sciences, Department of Applied Psychology.¹⁰⁰

The latest survey was conducted in April–May 2018, and the net sample included 1174 respondents from 12–19 years of age.¹⁰¹ They participated in the written survey from the three biggest language regions of Switzerland. The survey took place in the classroom during school lesson, and the main focus was the use of different media. You can read the full English version of the survey [here](#).

When it comes to media leisure activities, 11 percent of respondents reported that they are reading books every day. 15 percent read several times a week, and 9 percent once a week. Book reading declines with age. 45 percent of the 12–13 year-olds read books, compared to 29 percent of the 14–15 year-olds, 23 percent of the 16–17 year-olds and 14 percent of the 18–19 year-olds¹⁰². There is no gender difference.

The 2018 results show that the number of young people between the ages of 12 and 19 who read books has decreased from 29 percent in 2010 to 25 percent in 2014 and 2016. In 2018, the figure rose again to 26 percent. The figures for ebooks are low and stable between 3–5 percent, which is in contrast to other media such as television and daily newspapers, that have declined rapidly.

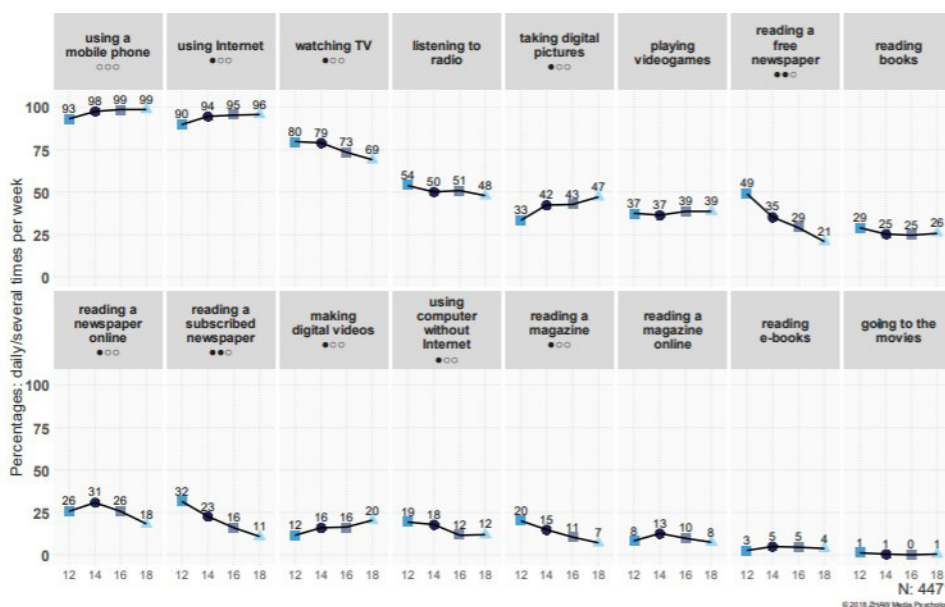


Illustration 24: Media leisure time over time 2010-2018

Media leisure time over time 2010–2018.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ James stands for Jugend, Aktivitäten, Medien – Erhebung Schweiz/Youth, Activities, Media – Swiss Survey

¹⁰⁰ James Study 2018, <https://www.zhaw.ch/en/psychologie/research/media-psychology/media-use/james/#c115034>, (accessed 8.1.2020)

¹⁰¹ James Study 2018, https://www.zhaw.ch/storage/psychologie/upload/forschung/medienpsychologie/james/2018/Report_JAMES_2018.pdf, p 5 (accessed 8.1.2020)

¹⁰² James Study 2018, https://www.zhaw.ch/storage/psychologie/upload/forschung/medienpsychologie/james/2018/Report_JAMES_2018.pdf, p 29 (accessed 8.1.2020)

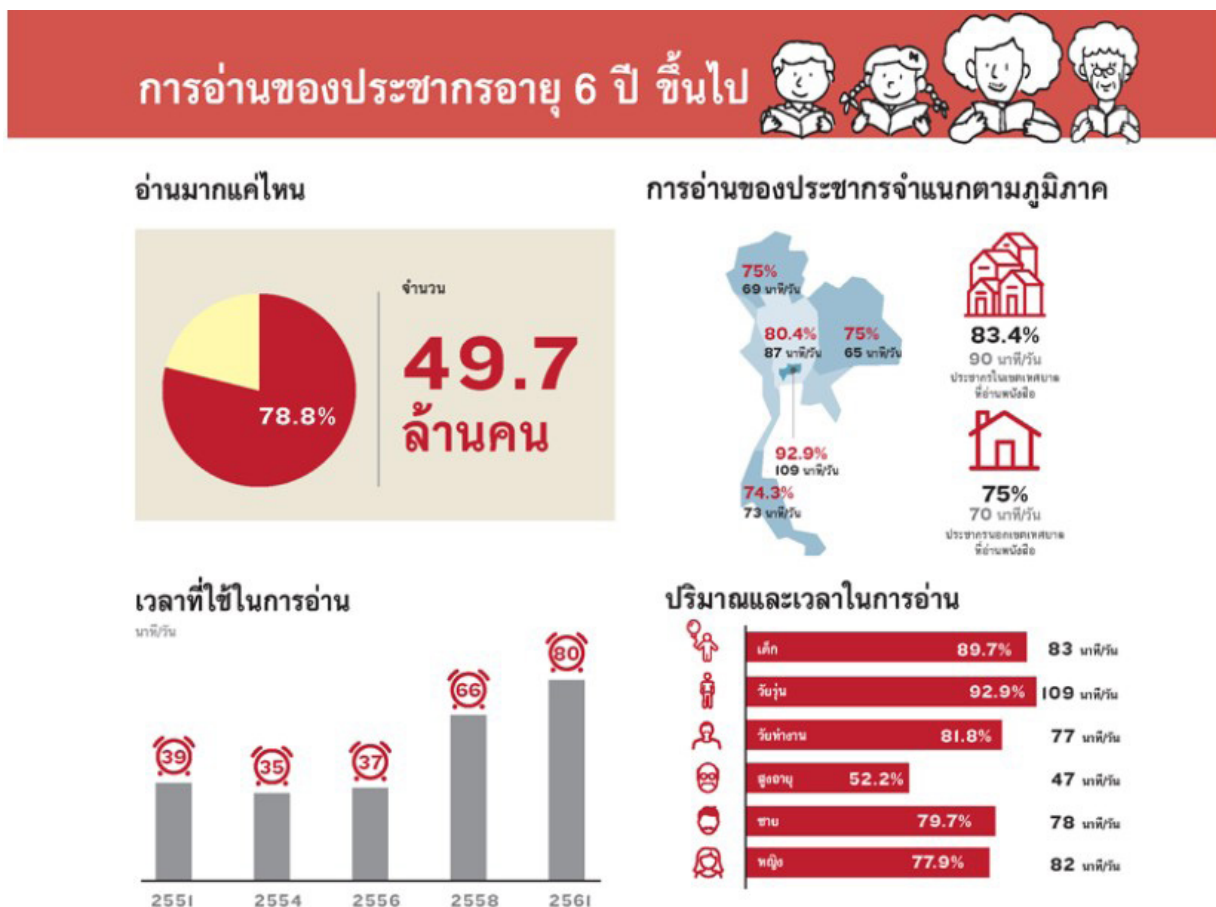
¹⁰³ https://www.zhaw.ch/storage/psychologie/upload/forschung/medienpsychologie/james/2018/Report_JAMES_2018.pdf, p 31 (8.1.2020)

Thailand – Young people are the most dedicated readers



The Thailand Knowledge Park (TK Park) and the National Statistical Office published 3 April 2019 the results from the 2018 national survey on reading habits.¹⁰⁴ 55,920 families from all over the country were asked about their reading habits. The goal was to gather information on reading habits from 2009 to 2018 and included the reading of newspapers, journals, textbooks and general literature, as well as online reading.

How much does the Thai population read? Out of a population of 49.7 million people aged 6 and over, 78.8 percent read. The survey shows that 83.4 percent of the population in cities and towns read more than 90 minutes each day and that 75 percent of the rural population read for 70 minutes each day. The time they spend on reading has increased from 39 minutes in 2008 to 80 minutes in 2018. Young people, aged 15–24, are the most keen readers clocking up 109 minutes of reading each day, and there is a slight preponderance of men reading every day compared to women. 26.1 percent of men say they read books, out of which 88 percent read them on paper.



Source: TK Park

¹⁰⁴ TK park, Reading population survey 2018, https://www.tkpark.or.th/eng/articles_detail/407/ ผลสำรวจการอ่านของประชากร-2561 (accessed 14.1.2020)

Those who do not read give the following reasons:

- They have no books
- They have no time
- They are ill or have a disability
- It is difficult to get hold of a book
- They are illiterate
- They can't afford books
- They prefer listening to the radio and watching TV instead

Reasons given for reading are education, improving skills and knowledge, entertainment, curiosity and some said reading was a hobby.

Within the age group 25–59, 81.8 percent read out of this age population of 28.5 million, with an equal division between men and women. The amount of minutes has increased from 37 minutes in 2008 to 77 minutes in 2018. People over 60 years, read 47 minutes in 2018 against 29 minutes in 2008. Reading frequency declines with age.

Thailand Book Publishers Association reports that reading is on the increase.

Reading activities

The Publishers and Booksellers Association of Thailand (PUBAT) has started a reading project, “One Read, One Million Awaken Project” in collaboration with The Library Association of Thailand, among others. Their main priority is to provide children in poor areas with books. Even though books are viewed as an affordable and accessible medium, they are an expense, and many rely on book donations to give children access to literature. It is, however, a problem that most donated books are poor quality, dated and broken, and are not suitable to promote reading activities.¹⁰⁵

This campaign works to improve the quality of donated books, focusing on books with a more topical subject matter, which can then be distributed in areas of need.

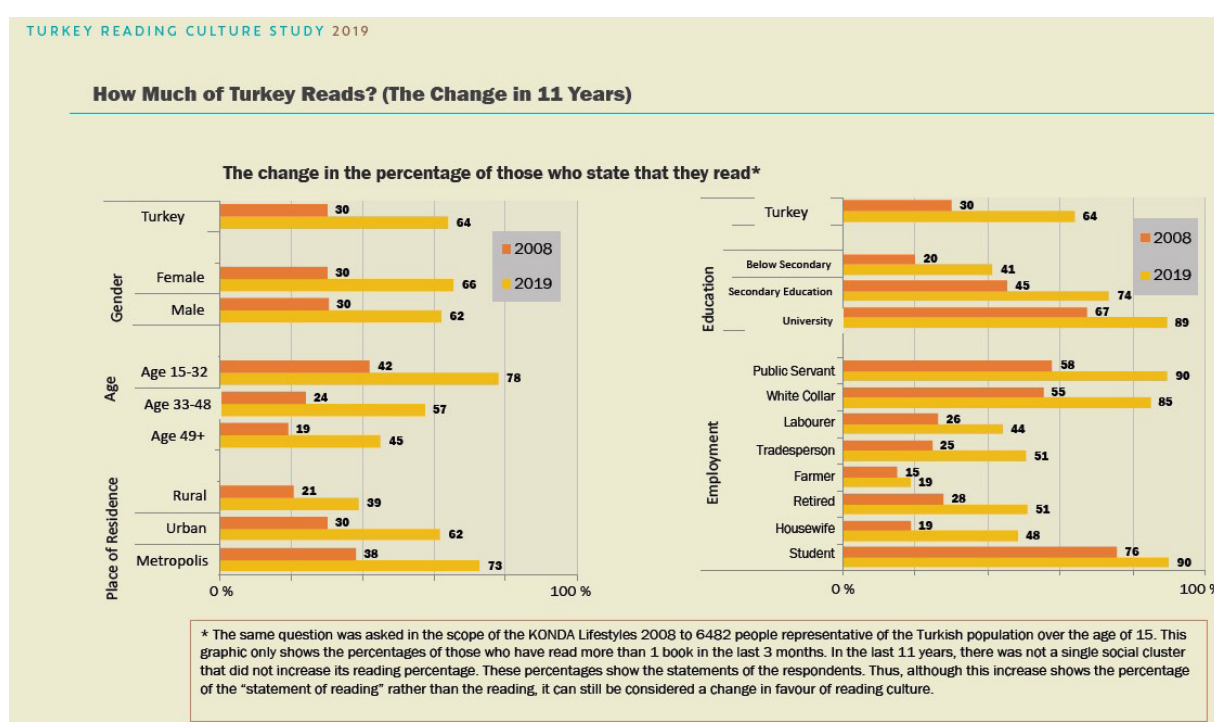
¹⁰⁵ PUBAT, <https://pubat.or.th/โครงการ-๑-อ่าน-ล้านต้น/> (accessed 14.1.2020)

Turkey – Reading increasing



The Turkey Reading Culture Study 2019, presents results of surveys on reading habits and preferred genres, Turkish reading and purchasing behaviour, social media and television habits in the population aged 15 and over. The survey aims to define practical ways to strengthen the reading culture in Turkey.¹⁰⁶ Their fieldwork was carried out over 14–15 September 2019, with 2929 face to face interviews. You can read the full study here.

The previous study was conducted in 2008. The data shows that the number of readers in Turkey have increased, and that there is a big cluster of possible readers.



Source: Okuyay Platform

The number of readers in Turkey has increased by 34 percent since 2008. The gender difference is smaller than in other countries. Reading declines with age and rises in urban and city areas, and with the level of education. In 2008, 70 percent of the respondents had not read a book, a number decreasing to 26 percent in 2019.¹⁰⁷

Fiction is the preferred genre, with 73 percent. Books are chosen by topic and recommendations, and bookstores are the preferred place to buy them. Readers prefer printed books over ebooks by far, and 70 percent of all respondents disagree with the statement that "books will not be read anymore as there is so much to see on the internet," whereas 84 percent of the readers disagree.¹⁰⁸

Overall, this gives a very uplifting picture of the increasing status of reading in Turkey.

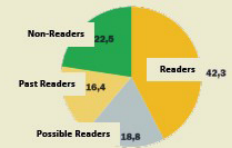
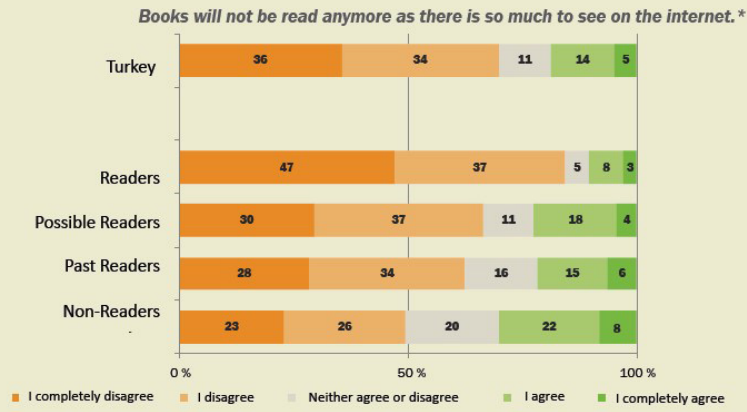
¹⁰⁶ The study was conducted by KONDA Research and Consultancy Company in cooperation with the Turkish Publishers Association

¹⁰⁷ OKUYAY Platform, Turkey Reading Culture Study 2019, <http://okuyayplatformu.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/readingculturestudy.pdf>, p 12, (accessed 6.3.2020)

¹⁰⁸ OKUYAY Platform, Turkey Reading Culture Study 2019, <http://okuyayplatformu.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/readingculturestudy.pdf>, p 44, (accessed 6.3.2020)

TURKEY READING CULTURE STUDY 2019

Digital Sphere, Preference of Media and Reading Culture



44

Source; Okuyay Platform

UAE – Arab Reading Index 2016



The Arab Reading Index has been produced through a partnership between Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation and United Nation Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States. The index aims to track the status of reading in the Arab World. You can read the full report [here](#), and also check the website <http://www.knowledge4all.org/en/Home> for the Global Knowledge Index.

The Arab Reading Index (ARI) is aiming to answer the following questions:

- How is printed media surviving in the competition from audio-visual media?
- To what extent is the environment in the Arab countries conducive to reading?
- Which strategies encourage reading?

The Arab world is facing different challenges than, for instance, European readers. The infrastructure regarding books might be weak, with a lack of public and school libraries, and no access to buying books.

There are few research reports on reading from this region of the world, and the ones that exist might be unprecise regarding measurement methods, and are covering different countries within the region. According to the ARI, “several reports suggest that reading rates and book sales in the Arab region have declined dramatically in recent decades.”¹⁰⁹ The index also claims that “some reports describe the reading crisis in the Arab region as ‘severe’ and requiring an immediate response from all stakeholders, including governments, intellectuals and the public.”¹¹⁰ As reading is a crucial tool for knowledge and innovation, there has been a need for the development of a tool to monitor the state of reading in Arab countries and that can identify related challenges.

The ARI examines the access to reading opportunities in each country on three levels:

- Extent of reading: paper or digital, educational and work related or not: How much reading?
- Access and availability: Family, educational institutions or society: Who is supplying books?
- Personal attributes: Skills, attitudes and motives for reading: Why do I read?

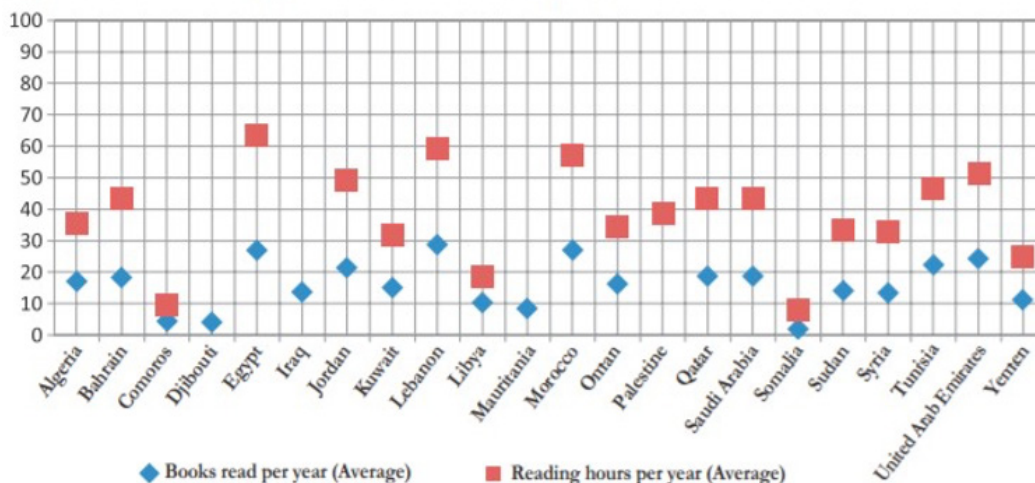
The survey was conducted through an electronic questionnaire consisting of 44 statements related to the parameters above. The total number of responses was 148,294, 60,680 from students at various educational levels and 87,614 from non-student respondents with different educational and professional background.

Extent of reading: The findings are more positive than previously assumed. The average number of reading hours per year varied between 7.78 hours in Somalia to 63.85 hours in Egypt. The Arab average was 35.24 hours of reading per year. The average number of books read per year varied between 1.74 and 28.67, with an average of 16.08.

¹⁰⁹ Arab Reading Index, <http://knowledge4all.com/admin/uploads/files/ARI2016/ARI2016En.pdf>, p 4 (accessed 9.1.2020)

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*

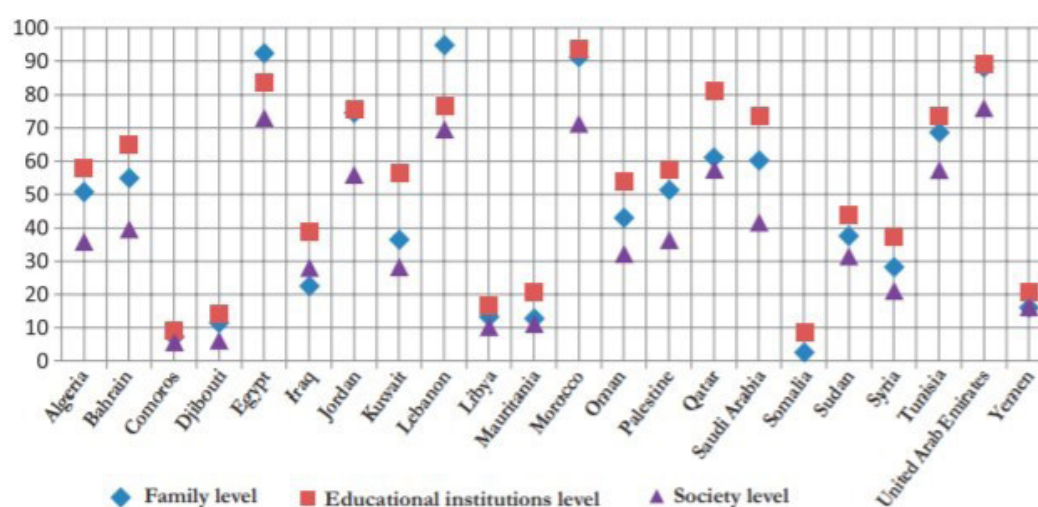
Figure 2:
Average number of reading hours and books read per year in Arab countries



Extent of reading ARI¹¹¹

The comparison between time spent reading printed versus ebooks and documents shows a higher average for the ebooks when it comes to extent of reading by medium; 19.45 hours for ebooks and 16.03 hours for printed material.¹¹² Books read in Arabic have a score between 1.23 books in Somalia and 20.4 books in Lebanon. The Arab average was 10.94 books per year, and the annual average of reading in foreign languages like French or English reached an average of 5.9 books per year.

Figure 4:
Access and availability sub-pillars: Results of Arab countries



ARI Access and availability of books

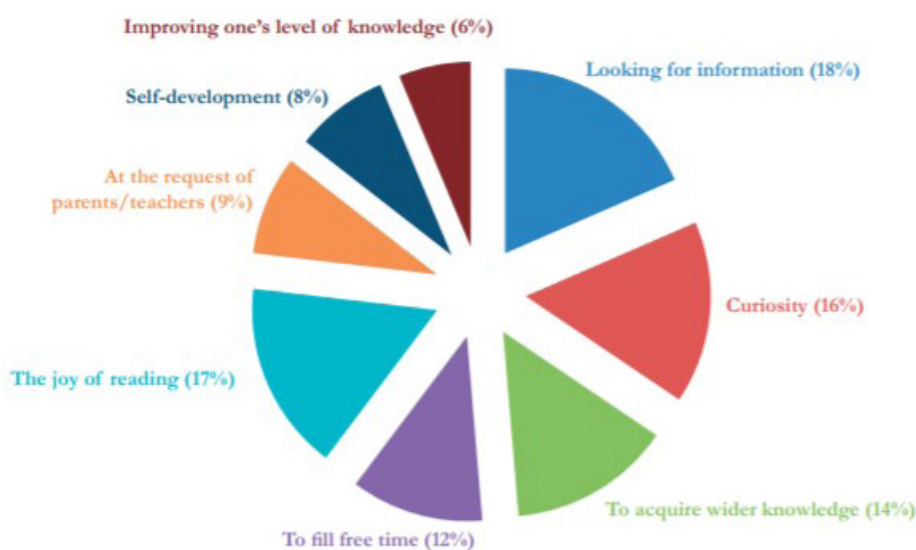
¹¹¹ Arab Reading Index, <http://knowledge4all.com/admin/uploads/files/ARI2016/ARI2016En.pdf>, p 16 (accessed 9.1.2020)

¹¹² Ibid p 17

Educational institutions are the largest suppliers of books with an average score of 52.02, followed by family (46.6) and society (36.56).¹¹³

Why do people read? The ARI respondents were asked to identify their main reason to read from eight possible options. The main motives for reading turned out to be the search for information, the joy of reading, curiosity and acquiring knowledge:

Motives for reading across the Arab region



Reasons for reading

The survey concludes that there are reasons for optimism regarding reading in the Arab region. The UAE Publishers Association responded in the IPA survey that there is an increase in reading, and that activities like the Sharjah Book Fair and the Abu Dhabi Book Fair contribute strongly to this. It is pointed out that there are several initiatives regarding children's books and fiction. The culture of reading appears to be gaining popularity as readers use social media to celebrate reading and turn it into a trend.

Emirates Publishing Association (EPA), with the support of the Ministry of Culture has recently initiated a study into reading habits in the UAE. Figures will be ready by June 2020.

¹¹³ Arab Reading Index, <http://knowledge4all.com/admin/uploads/files/ARI2016/ARI2016En.pdf>, p 20 (accessed 9.1.2020)

United Kingdom – Children reading less frequently and enjoy reading less than in the past



The National Literacy Trust's (NLT) research report, published February 2020, shows that fewer children say they enjoy reading and fewer report reading daily in their free time. Still, attitudes towards reading have remained largely unchanged.^{114,115}

The NLT has asked children about their reading habits since 2005, starting their Annual Literacy Survey in 2019. The 2019 survey took place from January to March 2019, with 56,906 participating 9–18 year olds, and 3748 children aged 5–8.

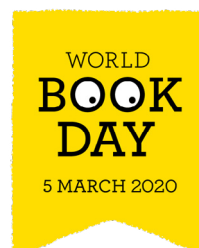
Key findings:

- 53 percent of children and young people say they enjoy reading, the lowest level since 2013.
- 25.8 percent of children and young people say they read daily in 2019. This is the lowest level since the survey started in 2005, when 38.1 percent read daily.
- Attitudes towards reading have remained stable over the last couple of years. 52.3 percent of children and young people would be happy to get a book as a present, while 34 percent of them can't find interesting things to read.
- More girls than boys enjoy reading, with the age group 14–16 enjoying reading the least (40.2 percent), numbers increase again from the age of 16–18.
- Other time-consuming activities are suggested as the reasons for this development. However, the continuing positive attitudes towards reading allow the NLT to continue their work on enjoyment and positive behaviours around reading.

Reading activities

There are several charities and organisations working with the promotion of reading and reading activities in the UK. The main focus for many of them is children and reading, but also on working with families to raise reading awareness and prevent illiteracy.

World Book Day, a charity event held annually in the UK and Ireland, will this year call on readers of all ages to “share a million stories” by reading aloud or listening to a story for at least 10 minutes a day with friends and family. World Book Day is a charity funded by publishers and booksellers in the UK and Ireland. This charity works by having more than 15 million £1 tokens (Ireland €1.50) distributed to children and young people in partnership with schools all over the UK and Ireland.¹¹⁶ Tokens are valid during World Book Day month from February 27 to March 29 this year.



¹¹⁴ National Literacy Trust. Children and young people's reading in 2019, <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2019/>, (accessed 7.3.2020)

¹¹⁵ See also: <https://publishingperspectives.com/2020/03/uk-2020-world-book-day-reading-in-sharp-decline-national-literacy-trust/>

¹¹⁶ Publishing Perspectives, The UK's 2020 World Book Day: 'Reading in sharp decline', <https://publishingperspectives.com/2020/03/uk-2020-world-book-day-reading-in-sharp-decline-national-literacy-trust/>, (accessed 6.3.2020)

The Reading Agency is working to stimulate reading, from toddlers to adults; from summer reading challenges for children to reading suggestions for adults. This charity also arranges World Book Night every 23 April. They work in partnership with publishers, libraries, learning and health professionals.

Book Trust, UK's largest reading charity, reaches 3.9 million children each year with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading.¹¹⁷ The Bookstart campaign, gives a book to every child in England and Wales from 0–5 years. Pori Drwy Story, is a bilingual programme to support children's literacy in Wales. And Pyjamarama, is celebrated on 5 June, asking children in schools, nurseries and at home to spend a fun day in Pyjamas and donate £1 to help children get access to books.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/>

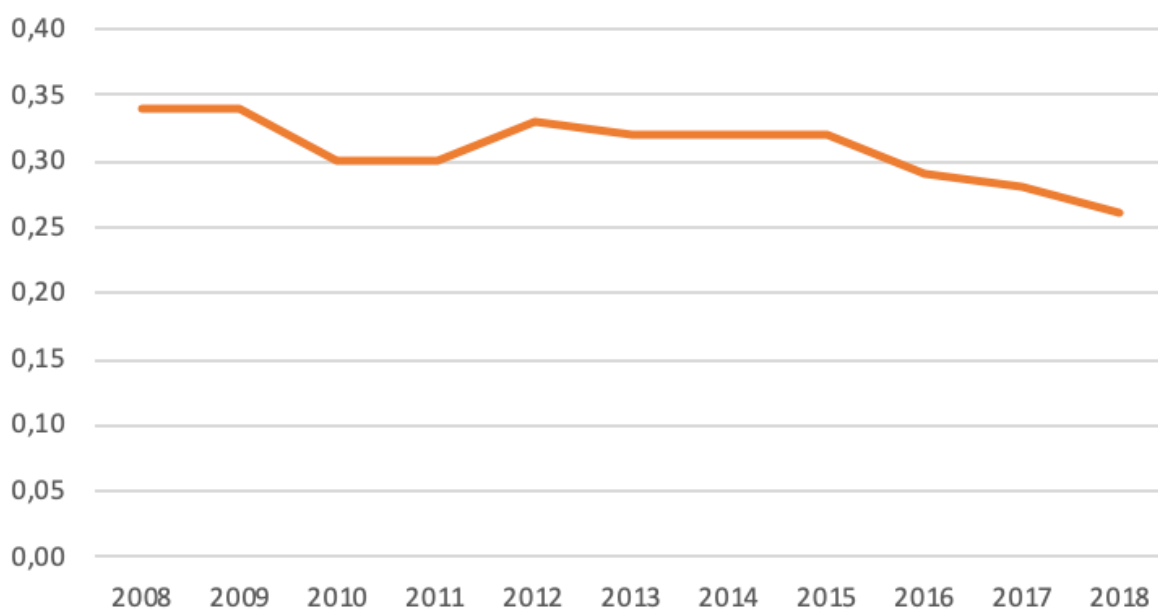
USA – Decline in daily average hours spent reading



The American Time Use Survey (ATUS) is the Nation's first federally administered, continuous survey on time use in the United States. The goal of the survey is to measure how people divide their time among life's activities. The survey is sponsored by the Bureau of Labour Statistics and is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. ATUS covers all residents living in households in the United States that are at least 15 years of age.¹¹⁸ The survey is based on interviews with more than 26,000 individuals. The development in the period 2008–2018 shows a decline in the average hours spent per day reading in the US population. From an estimate of 0.34 in 2008, the score in 2018 is 0.26. This is a decline from 20.4 minutes to 15.6 minutes during a ten year period.

The ATUS 2019 states that "Time spent reading for personal interest varied greatly by age. Individuals age 75 and over averaged 48 minutes of reading per day whereas individuals aged 15 to 54 read on average 10 minutes or less per day."¹¹⁹ This survey includes all sorts of leisure reading, not only books. According to the survey, men spend 14.4 minutes per day on reading and women 17.4 minutes. Regarding race and ethnicity, white scores an average of 17.4 minutes, Hispanic or Latino 4.2 minutes, Black or African American 7.2 minutes and Asian 13.8 minutes. Hours spent reading inclines with educational level.¹²⁰

Average hours per day



ATUS 2008–2018 Reading for personal interest 15 years and over¹²¹ (graphics NPA)

The decline is greater regarding women, with a decline from 0.40 to 0.29 hours over a ten year period.

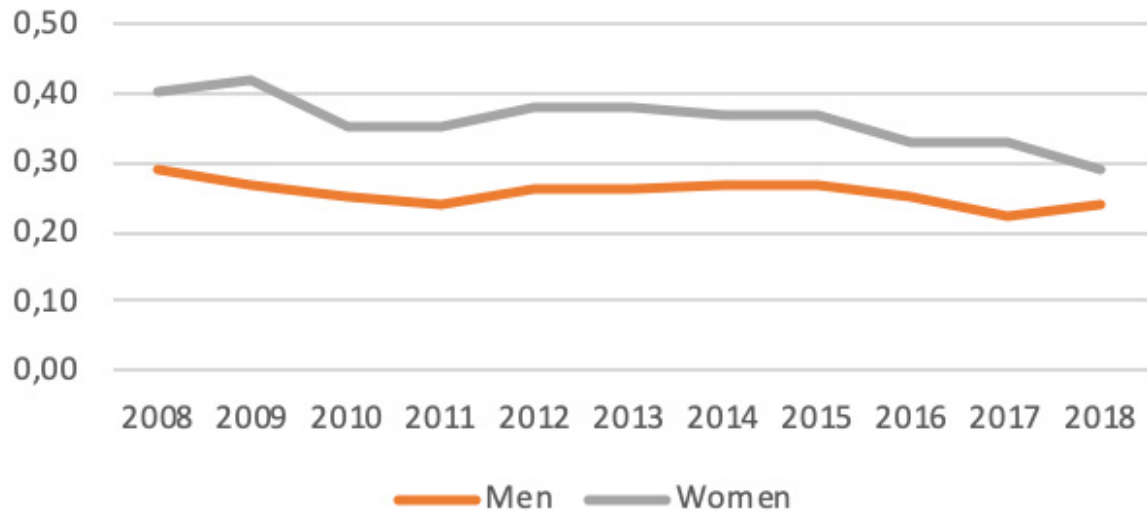
¹¹⁸ American Time Use Survey User's Guide. June 2019, <https://www.bls.gov/tus/atususersguide.pdf>, (accessed 15.1.2020)

¹¹⁹ U.S. Bureau of labor statistics, American Time Use Survey Summary, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.nr0.htm>, (accessed 15.1.2020)

¹²⁰ U.S. Bureau of labor statistics, Table 11A, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus.t11a.htm>, (accessed 15.1.2020)

¹²¹ U.S. Bureau of labor statistics, Data Retrieval: ATUS, <https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/tustab11a.htm>. Data retrieved 15.10 2020 by Asfrid Hegdal.

Average hours per day by gender



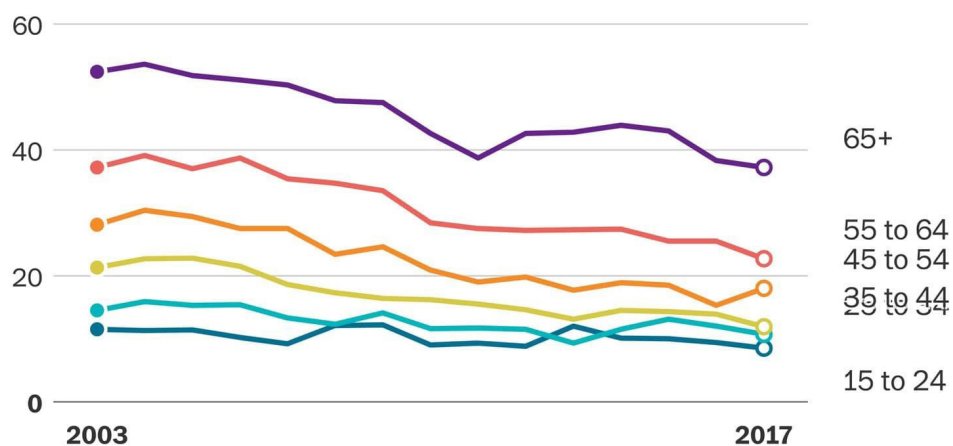
ATUS 2008–2018 Reading for personal interest by gender 15 and over¹²² (graphics NPA/ÅH)

In *Washington Post* 29 June 2018, Christopher Ingraham comments on the ATUS 2018:

“The share of Americans who read for pleasure on a given day has fallen by more than 30 percent since 2004, according to the latest American Time Use Survey from the Bureau of Labour Statistics. In 2004, roughly 28 percent of Americans age 15 and older read for pleasure on a given day. Last year, the figure was about 19 percent. That steep drop means that aggregate reading time among Americans has fallen, from an average of 23 minutes per person per day in 2004 to 17 minutes per person per day in 2017.”¹²³

Reading declines among all age groups

Percent reading for personal interest on a typical day



Source: American Time Use Survey

WAPO.ST/WONKBLOG

¹²² U.S. Bureau of labor statistics, Data Retrieval: ATUS, <https://www.bls.gov/webapps/legacy/tustab11a.htm> Data retrieved 15.10.2020 by Asfrid Hegdal.

¹²³ Washington Post, Leisure reading in the US is at an all time low, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/06/29/leisure-reading-in-the-u-s-is-at-an-all-time-low/?noredirect=on>, (accessed 15.1.2020)

Given the 2018 data, the numbers are declining further. The proportion of people engaged in reading for personal interest in 2018 is 17.5 percent, down from 19 percent. The average hours per day used for reading in the civilian population is 0.26, down from 0.28 in 2017.

However, it is interesting to observe that The Association of American Publishers (AAP) 2019 StatShot report shows that book sales are up 3.6 percent in the year from October 2018 to October 2019. The data is reported revenue for all tracked categories, including Trade, K-12 Instructional Materials, Higher Education Course materials, Professional Publishing and University Presses.¹²⁴ These figures are not comparable as the ATUS only measures leisure reading. It is however interesting to point out that the total trade revenue is up 3.2 percent from October 2018 to October 2019, from 909.5 million USD to 938.7 million USD.¹²⁵ Mass market is facing a decline of -37.3 percent, physical audio -24.7 percent and ebooks -8.9 percent. Paperback and download audio are formats on the rise, showing a change in consumer behaviour.

According to a global survey by GfK, March 2017, *Frequency of reading books*, 30 percent of American respondents read books every day, and 25 percent at least once a week.¹²⁶ Women also read more than men, and reading frequency increases with age and income. The survey concentrates on books only, inquiring if the respondents read books every day or most days, at least once a week, at least once a month, less often or never. This survey only presents its 2016 figures, so it doesn't show developments in reading habits.

In a survey conducted over January and February 2019 by Pew Research Centre, 27 percent of the 1502 respondents had not read a book in the past 12 months.¹²⁷ The survey included print, electronic and audiobooks. This number is up 9 percent since December 2011, where 18 percent reported not reading any books in the given period. The percentage of respondents reading from one up to more than twenty books is fairly stable in the same period, with a variation of up to 2 percent.¹²⁸ More men than women report not reading books, as do Hispanic respondents, people in the 50+ age group and people with education to high school level or less.

¹²⁴ AAP, AAP October 2019 Statshot Report: Industry up 3.6% year-to date, <https://newsroom.publishers.org/aap-october-2019-statshot-report-industry-up-36--year-to-date/>, (accessed 15.1.2020)

¹²⁵ See also <https://publishingperspectives.com/2020/01/aap-statshot-for-october-2019-mixed-report-childrens-books-up-college-materials-down/>, (accessed 16.1.2020)

¹²⁶ GfK, Frequency of reading books, <https://www.gfk.com/global-studies/global-studies-frequency-of-reading-books/>, (accessed 15.1.2020)

¹²⁷ Who doesn't read books in America?, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/26/who-doesnt-read-books-in-america/>, (accessed 29.4.2020)

¹²⁸ https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FT_19.09.25_NonBookReaders_Methodology_Topline.pdf, p 3, (accessed 29.4.2020)

How can we summarise the findings?

Many questions arise after reviewing reading surveys from a number of countries.

Is it possible to draw lasting conclusions? Do the surveys vary so much in terms of methodology that it is difficult to come up with correct answers or see clear trends? Or do they examine the same conditions and attitudes towards reading, and give us a direction on the evolution of global reading patterns?

As we have seen, some countries carry out reading surveys in the population frequently, whilst others do them less often, yet fairly regularly. Some countries survey reading habits sporadically. The answers one gets are dependent on the questions asked. Some surveys focus on the sale of books, distribution channels and preferred formats, whereas others focus on time spent and preferred genre. Some surveys are directed at children, some at adults. Some are completely descriptive, whereas others aim to uncover reasons for, for example, a decline in reading.

Some parameters are used by most surveys; reading in correlation to gender, education, region and medium. We have chosen to present surveys which we have found representative, and which give a timely picture of the reading situation in each country. The challenge is that new surveys are constantly emerging and data is often updated on a yearly basis.

This report focuses on adult reading habits; how much they read, gender division, age division and development over time. We have mainly looked at time spent reading, but some industry statistics have also been included to say something about reading over time and changes in preferred formats.

Lost readers on their way back?

So, is there a drastic decline in reading? Or is there primarily a shift happening in how we read, rather than how much we read?

There is a distinct global trend that reading has declined over the last 20 years. However, there are large variations in the level of decrease, and which age groups have the greatest decline. In a number of countries there are indications that this downward trajectory has been reversed. In Spain and Turkey, for example, reading is significantly strengthened. Whereas in Mexico and Norway, there is a decline. In other countries we see a strong shift towards the digital format, such as in Sweden.

What is consistently clear, on the other hand, is that women read more books than men, and that the decline in reading is strongest in the younger age groups.

An interesting aspect is the correlation between age and reading. In some countries, such as Brazil, Thailand and Spain, reading declines with age, whereas the opposite

is true in other countries, like in Norway, Denmark, Iceland, France and Canada, where reading increases with age. One of the reasons for reading still standing strong among the older age groups may be that the elderly spend less time on other media, and thus remain faithful to the book.

The reviewed surveys show the following tendencies:

- More readers read fewer titles than before

The number of heavy readers is declining. Long-standing avid readers are still reading a lot, but report reading fewer titles than before.

- The number of readers reading several times a week instead of every day is increasing

The reading frequency is slightly declining. Readers report reading less often. Lack of time is the main reported reason.

- The figures regarding a decline in the number of readers vary widely:

Denmark: 36 percent read fiction every week (-3.4 percent since 2009, with stable figures over the last three years)

Canada: 79 percent read a book the previous year (-9 percent since 2014)

Mexico: 41.1 percent read a book the previous year (-8.4 percent since 2016)

Netherlands: 93 percent of 14 + read a book in the last 12 months

Norway: 83 percent read a book the previous year (-10 percent since 2013)

New Zealand: 86 percent of those aged 18+ read a book the previous year

Russia: 66 percent bought a book the previous year

South Africa: 47 percent read a book the previous year

Spain: 68.5 percent read a book or part of a book the previous year

Italy: 62 percent of the population are readers in 2018, down from 65.4 percent in 2017

USA: 17.5 percent engaging in reading for personal interest, down from 19 percent in 2017

- The number of non-readers is declining and several countries show an increase in leisure reading

Less respondents report overall that they are not reading. This can be due to an increase in online reading behaviour.

Brazil: Non-readers down from 50 percent in 2011 to 44 percent in 2015, with both men and women reading more.

Turkey: Percentage of readers rises from 30 to 64 percent between 2008 and 2019. In 2008, 70 percent of the respondents had not read a book in the last three months, in 2019 the number was reduced to 36 percent.

Spain: Increase in leisure reading rises by 5.2 percent from 2010. 68.5 percent read at least part of a book in 2019, up 1.3 percent from the previous year.

Measures, opportunities and future

Even though several countries have reported positive developments in reading behaviour, the conclusion is that reading overall is showing a downward trend. More media is competing for the users' time, and there are few reasons to believe that the pressure from other sources of entertainment will change any time soon. Still, there is reason for optimism, as many of the respondents say that they wish to read more, and reading continues to hold a strong cultural position. This means that potential readers still exist and it is possible to entice them back to the books.

To achieve this, one should develop strategies and reading activities in order to hold on to the readers, or have them return. The strategies should encompass both children and adult readers, and they ought to take into account the changes in reading habits, both in terms of medium and genre. Many are choosing digital reading formats, which again affect the way they read; shorter sessions, more frequent, and often whilst doing other activities simultaneously.

Italy has an interesting approach to how reading could be measured in the future, and how surveys could be tightened to give data that can form a basis for reading stimulation measures. Italy is expanding their definition of reading, which could provide important information about groups who only read on other platforms, rather than physical books. This is a group that will be important for publishers to reach in the future, with a view to providing them with content in other narrative worlds.

Finding information about reading stimulation activities for children is easy. There are several measures in the countries we have looked at. Many of them have elements of reading competitions and rewards after certain numbers of pages read, and are projects that often run over a space of time. There are also concentrated efforts on given dates during the year, such as World Book Day, or more quantitative measures, like forums and reading circles. This is important work to continue as research shows that adults are now reading less for children. Parents may increasingly turn to audiobooks or other digital media instead of reading to their children. There are several organisations working to promote literacy in children through a strong focus on reading.

When it comes to reading stimulation measures directed at adults, finding good examples is harder. It is important to point out that it is young adult readers who are most at risk, and where the strongest decline occurs, according to the surveys presented in this report. This is an important link that forms a bridge from reading in childhood to adult reading. If these readers are lost, we will see a stable decline in readers world over in the years to come.

Reading matters

Surveys and campaigns: How to keep and recover readers



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