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## **INFLUENCE OF BOOK READING ON ONE'S PERSONALITY**

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## Index

0	Introduction	2
1	Why is reading important?	4
1.1	Benefits of book reading	4
2	Difference between a reader and a non-reader	11
2.1	Who is a reader?	11
2.1.1	Categories of a reader	11
2.2	A non-reader	12
3	Influencing factors in reading	14
3.1	Physical inadequacies	14
3.2	Physiological factors	14
3.3	Family influence	15
3.4	The influence of society	15
3.5	The influence of school	16
3.6	The influence of media	16
4	Independent reading and school achievement	19
4.1	What is independent reading?	19
4.2	Effects of Independent Reading on Learners	20
4.2.1	Preschool	20
4.2.2	Primary and Elementary Grades	20
4.2.3	Middle school and young adults	21
5	Favourite book genre effects on your personality	25
5.1	Book genre and your personality	25
5.2	Reading only specific kind of genre	29
6	Do girls read more than boys?	31
6.1	Specific genre for boys and girls	33
7	Will technology replace books?	34
7.1	Arguments in favour of technology replacing books	34
7.2	Arguments against technology replacing books	36
8	Conclusion	39
9	Bibliography	41
	Annexes	

## Introduction

### Personal motivation:

I am sure that all 2nd year high school students will agree with me when I say that one of the most difficult parts of a research work is to choose the subject. I was extremely confused at first because I didn't have any idea about what topic I should choose. Then, one day, I was reading a book and I realized that I've always been curious about some questions. For example:

Everyone knows that reading is important, but have you ever asked yourself why that is so? Have you ever wondered what exactly the effects of books on your personality are?

These questions have fascinated me for so long that I decided to choose them as the topic for my research work. When I explained my idea to my tutor, Eva Marti, we realized that we both shared the same feelings for this topic. So, at the end, I decided that my topic would be "Influence of book reading on one's personality."

### Introduction of the topic:

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body (figure 1). This amazing quote describes the importance of reading in just one line.

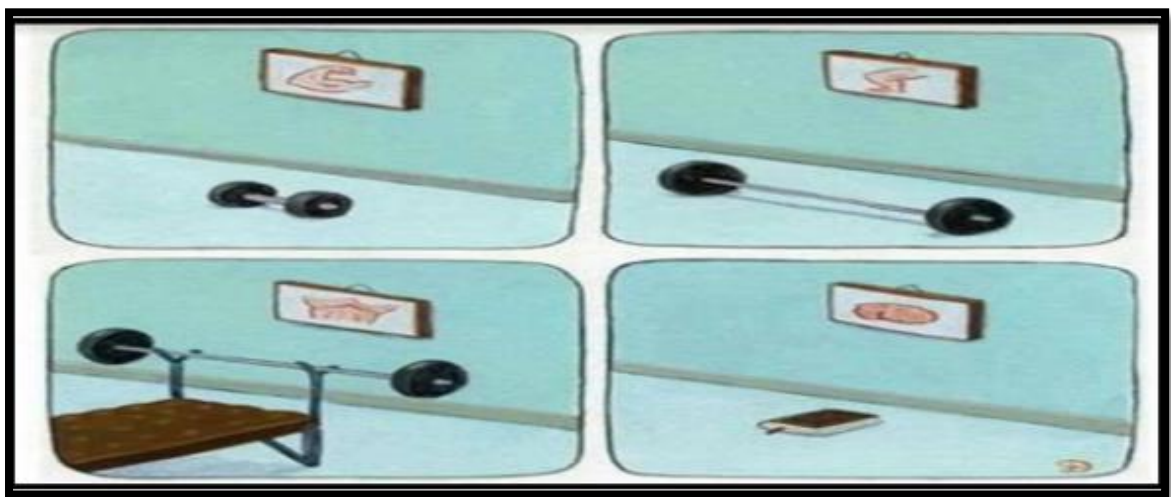


Figure 1

But I would rather say the joy of reading cannot be expressed in words. It's something which can be understood only by experience.

“Reading is a starting step of many things, which build a more solid stairs for you to climb up achieving something big out there.”

Book reading is something that surrounds us and affects us in many areas of life and makes us think questions such as:

- Why is reading important?
- Does reading affect our academic records?
- Does our favourite book genre have an effect on our personality?
- Will technology replace books?

These are some of the questions that I've stated in my work and my objective is to try to find answers for them.

### **Methodology and elaboration process:**

After choosing my topic, I started searching information (on the Internet) and books that are related to my subject. It wasn't easy because I couldn't find any good book written exclusively on this matter. So, I decided that for each section of my work, I'll explain a little bit, study international researches and then, I'll prove them by carrying out a survey. The biggest difficulty that all work based on statistics has is in obtaining data. In my case, I have spent many hours to analyse the outcome of my survey. At the end, I think the effort was worth it because the survey was answered by 160 students of Calamot. Thus, I've obtained solid results that cannot be denied easily. The computer packages used in my search have been Microsoft Word and Excel.

I also visited *Fundació Orienta*<sup>1</sup> and did an interview with a psychologist, Joan Romeu, to have his opinion about how books affect us (see Annex).

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<sup>1</sup> Fundació Orienta: is an institution with more than 40 years of specialization in the integral attention to the mental health of children, adolescents and families.

# **1 Why is reading important?**

There are so many reasons why people read. Thus, what follows is simply an initial summary of potential reasons for reading. Many people read for reasons they themselves cannot identify. Those who read are often perceived as well-educated people who prefer to engage in more demanding cultural activities rather than watching TV or spending time in other passive activities. In fact, people who do not read often find excuses for not reading. For example, they may say they do not have enough time. These people are aware of the social prejudice which exists against non-readers and prefer to avoid this label. Although people are not always conscious of the implicit high status enjoyed by those who read, it is quite likely that many people who would not care to admit to watching TV for three hours a day would be quite happy to admit to reading for that amount of time. Therefore one might say that in the eyes of the public, books are an indicator of high cultural status: to read is a high social educational class activity. Book reading indicates that one is a literate person with intellectual interests.

Reading is something which helps you in creation, understanding better, improving yourself, relaxation, judging, killing boredom, gaining experience from other people, connecting your brain and most important gives a meaning to your life.

## **1.1 Benefits of book reading**

To improve creativity

Reading books help you imagine many things which you wouldn't have even thought of before. Creativity is something which increases every time a person reads a new book. When you read something your mind starts creating scenery of it in front of your eyes.

To understand better

When you keep on reading new books with new information, you start learning and experiencing new things. And you start understanding better and much faster than before. You start seeing things in a new way, your point of view changes, in fact I

can say improves. According to André Maurois<sup>2</sup>,

*“The art of reading is in great part that of acquiring a better understanding of life from one’s encounter with it in a book”*

To improve yourself

Reading different books in itself is a journey. When you are a kid you start with story books, then educational, technical, management, spiritual and so on. Books help you turn your journey growing up into a journey where you start improving yourself and learning new things. According to Charles W. Eliot<sup>3</sup>,

*“Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers”*

A good book can really change our lives. As shown in figure 2:

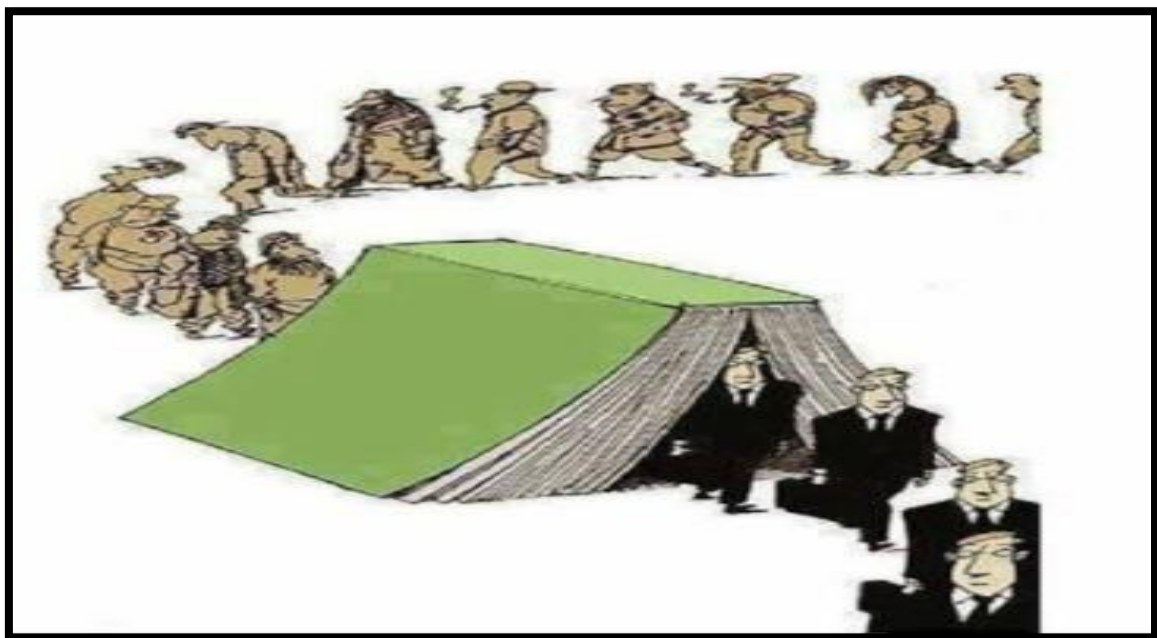


Figure 2

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<sup>2</sup> André Maurois was a writer, essayist, historian and member of the French Academy.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Eliot was an American academic who was selected as Harvard's president in 1869. He transformed the provincial college into the preeminent American research university. Eliot served until 1909, having the longest term as president in the university's history.

To relax

In our daily routine, everyone gets so tired. And when we get even a bit of relaxation we always prefer to give relaxation to our body. But we always forget even our mind needs rest. Reading is something which makes us forget all our stress and gives complete relaxation to our mind, just like Yoga.

To kill boredom

Everyone in summer or vacations complains about being bored, especially children. We use that spare time in playing, roaming or using the latest technologies. Reading books is something which helps us not only to kill boredom but also to use our time productively rather than wasting it.

To judge better

When we get a chance to read new books, we start differentiating between books. We start analysing and categorizing them. We can easily understand which book is bad, good and the best. And then the same happens with humans, it helps us to judge better. Books can increase our sympathy for others and our social understanding. According to a study, published in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, young people who read the *Harry Potter*<sup>4</sup> series and identify with the main character or protagonist are less likely to be biased or prejudiced against minority groups.

To gain knowledge and experience

When you are reading, you are actually gaining the knowledge and experience of someone. It can help you to face challenges and it can hasten your success towards a goal (as shown in figure 3).

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<sup>4</sup> *Harry Potter* is a series of fantasy novels written by British author J. K. Rowling.

According to A.P.J. Abdul Kalam<sup>5</sup>,

“Learning gives creativity –Creativity leads to thinking. Thinking provides knowledge- Knowledge makes you great”

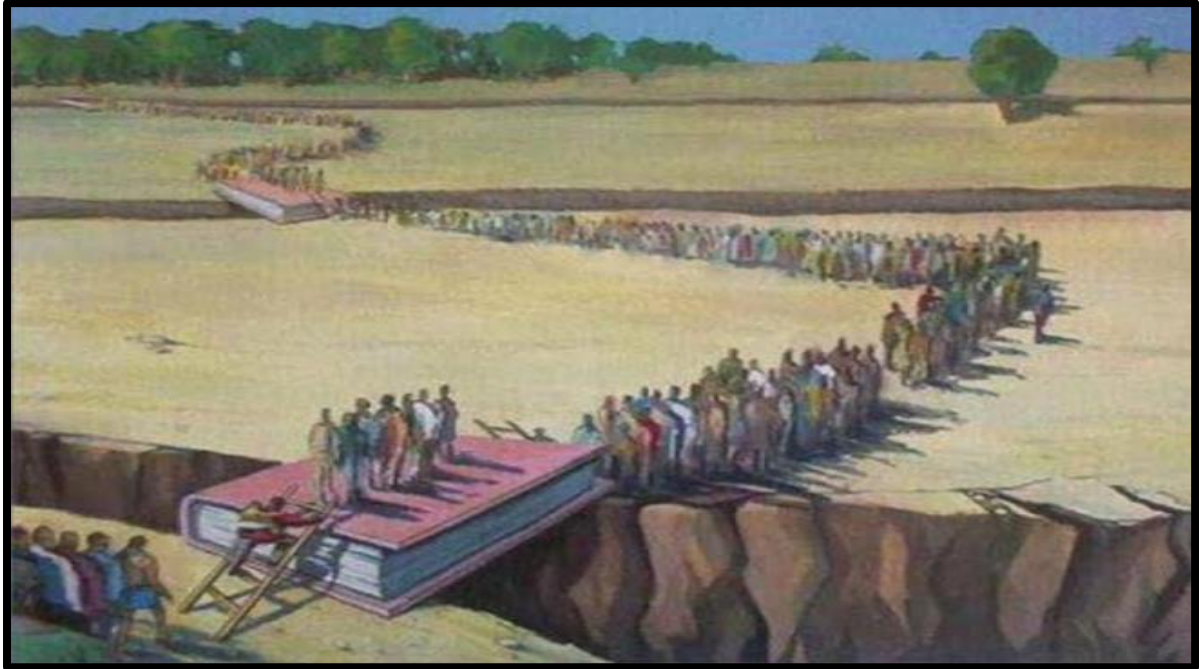


Figure 3

To connect your brain

When reading, you're in full silence because reading connects directly to your brain. In silence, you seek for more; in silence, your brain is clear and focuses. Thus, you learn and grow and you shape a better self.

To give our life a meaning

As reading gives us many qualities, it improves our entire life. It provides us new qualities and enhances the old ones. It helps to remove negativity from our life and also saves us from negative people. It just gives an entirely new and complete meaning to our life.

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<sup>5</sup> Abdul Kalam was an Indian scientist and politician who played a leading role in the development of India's missile and nuclear weapons programs. He was president of India from 2002 to 2007.



As the quote says:

“The meaning of life is to give some meaning”

As we can see in figure 4, Books help us to see a whole new world. Without them, we'd have no way to face our difficulties in our paths.

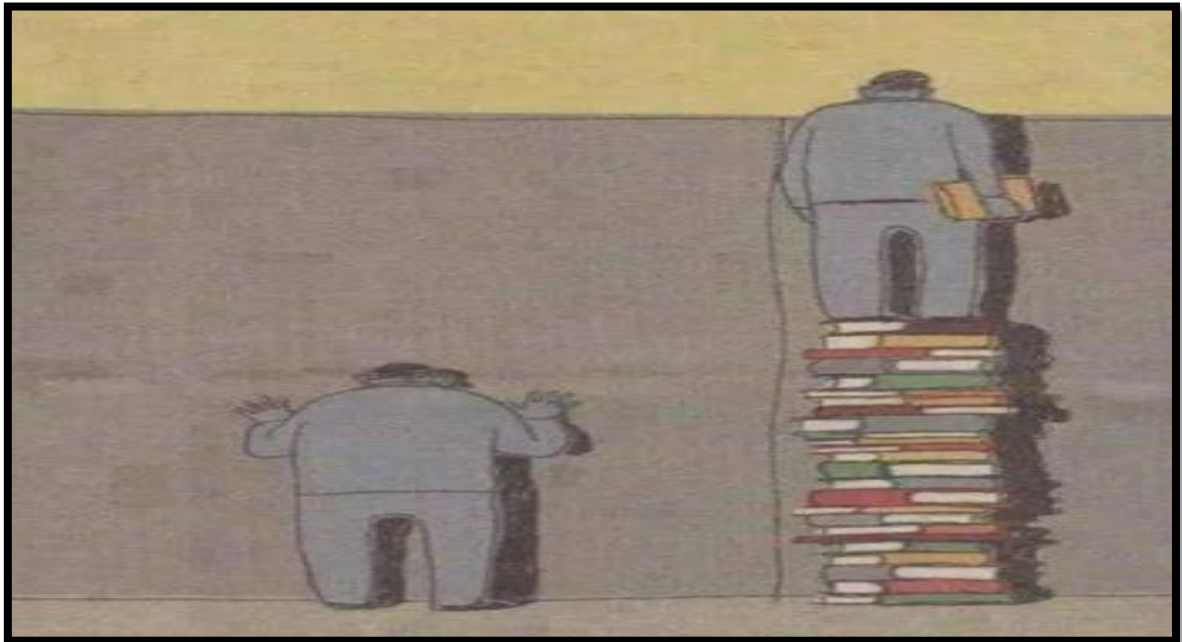


Figure 4

### Mental stimulation

When it comes to reading books, mental stimulation is the first benefit people think about. According to the studies conducted in the field, reading can slow down (or even prevent) Dementia<sup>6</sup> and Alzheimer's<sup>7</sup> If you keep your brain busy. Think of the brain as a regular muscle in the body. If you exercise, it will stay strong and fit. As the phrase says:

"Use it or lose it".

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<sup>6</sup> Dementia is a broad category of brain diseases that cause a long-term and often gradual decrease in the ability to think and remember that is great enough to affect a person's daily functioning.

<sup>7</sup> Alzheimer is a chronic neurodegenerative disease that usually starts slowly and worsens over time.

### Spiritual activity

A great way to let off some steam is to just grab a book and sit outside in the shade. The atmosphere, scenery and fresh air will allow your mind more freedom to become immersed in the book rather than just reading at the library. Take into account all the factors of what makes reading a spiritual activity and you can use your reading time much like meditation for your soul.

### To expand your vocabulary

The mechanism is quite simple: the more frequently you encounter some words, the sooner you will introduce them in your vocabulary. Expressing yourself clearly will help you both in your personal and professional life not to mention that it will give you a boost of self-confidence.

### To improve your memory

The people wondering about the importance of reading books in our life might be concerned about their memory. For sure you don't want to become senile when you get old, so your memory is crucial. Studies have shown that when you read a book you have to remember a range of characters, their ambitions, history, and backgrounds along with sub-plots. This is a lot, if you come to think of it, but the brain has amazing powers when it comes to remembering even vast amounts of information. Every new memory creates new synapses and strengthens the existing ones, improving short-term memory.

### Entertainment for free

One of the best things about reading is that it offers free entertainment. Once you buy the book, you can read it as many times as you'd like. There is also the option of reading books online.

I asked this question in my survey to find the real reason why the students of Calamot read books and these are the results (see figure 5):

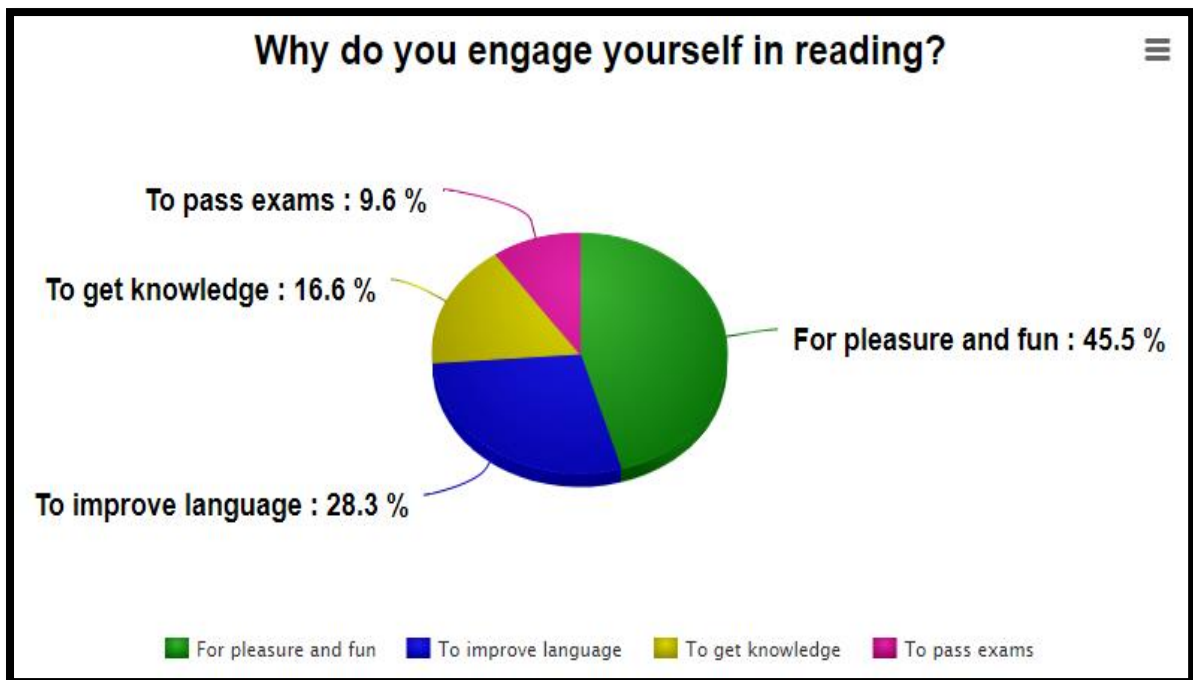


Figure 5

The results of this question are quite similar to what I had thought at first. As you can see in figure 5, most people just read for pleasure and fun. As I have mentioned before, books are a great source of entertainment. They not only help us to relax our mind after a hard day but also kill boredom.

## **2 Difference between a reader and a non-reader**

Once we have mentioned the benefits and advantages of book reading, the second thought or question that comes to our mind is what the main difference between a reader and a non-reader is. Can we recognise a reader by his/her lifestyle? But before explaining the difference I'd like to clarify the concepts of a reader and a non-reader.

### **2.1 Reader**

We can't call a person a reader just because he reads a book. Otherwise, everyone is a reader because we all have to read books that can be school books or any other kind of magazines in our life. According to psychologist, a reader is a person who reads or who is fond of reading. They read with pleasure, because of their own will and not because they are forced to do it.

#### **2.1.1 Categories of a reader**

There are lots of readers and everyone is different. We read differently and for different purposes. Some people can just leaf through the pages, while others pay attention to every single word and analyse them carefully. Some people read books in order to be educated and intelligent, while others do it just for the sake of pleasure. There are people who read only when it is needed and, unfortunately, there are still those who cannot read and write at all. Each person takes what they need out of reading. According to William Phelps<sup>8</sup>,  
"I divide all readers into two classes: Those who read to remember and those who read to forget"

According to international researches, we can divide readers into 4 categories.

Involved Reader

You don't just love to read books; you love to read about books. For you, half the

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<sup>8</sup> William Phelps was an American author, critic and scholar.

fun of reading is the thrill of the chase - discovering new books and authors, and discussing your finds with others.

### Exacting Reader

You love books but you rarely have as much time to read as you'd like - so you're very particular about the books you choose.

### Serial Reader:

Once you discover a favourite writer you tend to stick with him/her through thick and thin.

### Eclectic Reader

You read for entertainment but also to expand your mind. You're open to new ideas and new writers, and are not wedded to a particular genre or limited range of authors.

## **2.2 Non-reader**

A non-reader lacks the skills of a fluent reader. They read below grade level and struggle with comprehension, phonics and vocabulary.

Now, I'll mention some differences between a reader and a non-reader that I've concluded after consulting with psychologist.

- A reader has a more active mind than a non-reader and thus is more productive.
- A reader is quicker to find solutions to practical problems because they have gone through similar problems through their readings and thus know how they must act in similar situations. So, they correlate their day to day life with the incidents from all those books that they have read.

- Readers are more active in their curricular activities and because of their love for reading they end up reading extra articles about the topic being taught in class. This way they gain a better understanding of the topic and do tasks that non-readers cannot do.
- Readers demonstrate deeper empathy for others than their non-reader peers. Research by US social scientists has shown that reading literary novels (particular ones with strong social messages) actually helps improve a reader's understanding of the feelings, emotions, and experiences of others.
- In the same vein as the increased empathy many readers demonstrate, readers are also more likely to consider context and backstory before making snap judgments. After spending so much time in fictional worlds, where you're privy to not only the actions of characters but their innermost thoughts as well, readers know that for every action there is a complicated context and backstory to go with it.

### **3 Influencing factors in reading**

Reading is both physical and physiological. Functions such as vision, hearing and thought are possible only through the organs of the body. No direct relationship may be said to exist between reading disability and physical health. However, it is obvious that a child who is ill is not able to do well in school.

#### **3.1 Physical inadequacies**

Physical inadequacies may result in lowered vitality, depletion of energy, slower physical development and therefore, mental retardation. Studies have shown that children who are hungry and malnourished have difficulty learning because they cannot concentrate. Severe malnutrition in infancy may lower children's IQ scores. The lack of protein in an infant's diet may adversely affect his or her ability to learn. Other studies have found that food additives may be deterrent for learning for certain children. A child who is ill does not usually do well in school because of the illness itself but because the child is out of school so often. He or she misses a lot of learning opportunities. Learning to read is difficult enough for those children.

#### **3.2 Physiological factors**

Physiological factors play an important role in the reading performance of children. Without the presence of the necessary organs, reading will not take place. Parents and teachers should be sensitive enough to determine the needs as well as the difficulties of the children. They need to help provide the necessary interventions. The teacher should refer the child to the medical personnel and discuss the child's behaviour with his/her parents. See for instance, the voice is articulated by the lips and tongue. If these physical features have defects, the voice cannot function well. Hence, a person cannot articulate sound the way it should. For example: a person with cleft lip and palate may not be able in or may have a hard time producing nasal sounds, fricatives, labials, sibilants and other types of sounds in pronouncing letters. There are sounds that are produced with a corresponding place of

articulation. It is a challenge for teachers to teach the right articulation to students who have problems in their vocal apparatuses.

### **3.3 Family influence**

Research has shown that family support for reading – including reading aloud to children – has a major impact on reading success.

Children whose early encounters with literacy are enjoyable are more likely to develop a predisposition to read frequently and broadly in subsequent years. Young children's self-initiated interactions with print at home are important behavioural indexes of emerging motivations for reading. Shared storybook reading plays an important role in promoting reading motivations. A child who grows up in a home where reading is supported, viewed as important and where reading material is available may often develop stronger skills as well as a love for reading than a child from a family that can't afford to buy the books, so these kids only depend on the reading materials provided by the teacher in the classroom or from the school library.

### **3.4 The influence of society**

It assumes that the human being is formed by his society. Society, through the family and school, socializes a child by the skillful use of rewards and punishments. It is possible that a child who wants to read a book and explore the magic within it could be stopped by society. For example, someone who reads a lot and is so imaginative. In this case, he/she can be a victim of bullying because others with no interest in books just think that it is a stupid thing to do. So, as they don't do it themselves, they try to make fun of others to overcome the fear that they are inferior from readers.

As a result, when nobody appreciates this ability of a child, he/she gets disappointed and can leave this habit.



### **3.5 The influence of school**

A teacher plays a major role to build reading interest among the students. I found that some of the teachers overlook the importance of reading. They just let the pupils read the reading materials alone without any guidance and they just focus more on how to answer the comprehension questions or, in another words, the teacher only does the intensive reading. They make the reading session dull and boring. Meanwhile, the students also do not take any action to enhance their reading skills. They are supposed to look for other reading materials from outside. Teachers should encourage them to do extensive reading. Teachers could trigger their interest by having brainstorming or sharing feeling or thoughts towards the stories or the books that they have read. These may motivate them to read more and make the reading activities fun and enjoyable.

### **3.6 The influence of the media**

Due to technological development, reading habits are changing. In our society today, while technology is slowly taking a steady control over individual lives, the reading habit is fast vanishing into thin air. Students now lack the skill of reading. Instead, they spend more hours on electronic media (see figure 6). Browsing the net, playing with funky handsets and passing non-stop SMSs seem to be the order of the day, so reading a book or any other piece of written material in a quiet or peaceful corner of a library or home become an archaic idea for most school children and adults. Obama<sup>9</sup> (2008), in his speech, pinpointed that children cannot achieve unless they raise their expectations and turn off television sets.

Figure 6 shows a bitter reality of our world. Overall, in the world, students are rarely interested in reading for pleasure and enjoyment. Instead, they read only to pass examinations. The declining interest in reading culture among our children (especially those in primary and secondary schools) is a cause for alarm and a challenge to all. Something needs to be done to alleviate this yawning problem. Unfortunately, reading is not taught or included in school curriculum. Reading is

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<sup>9</sup> Barack Obama is an American politician who served as the 44th President of the United States from 2009 to 2017.

not a subject and cannot be taught separately as most other subjects in the curriculum rather it is subsumed in every other subject and is regarded as a tool facilitating many other types of learning. Nowadays, due to the rat race syndrome, parents pay little or no attention to their children's reading ability, parents themselves lack the skill and the culture of reading such that some do not read to their kids.

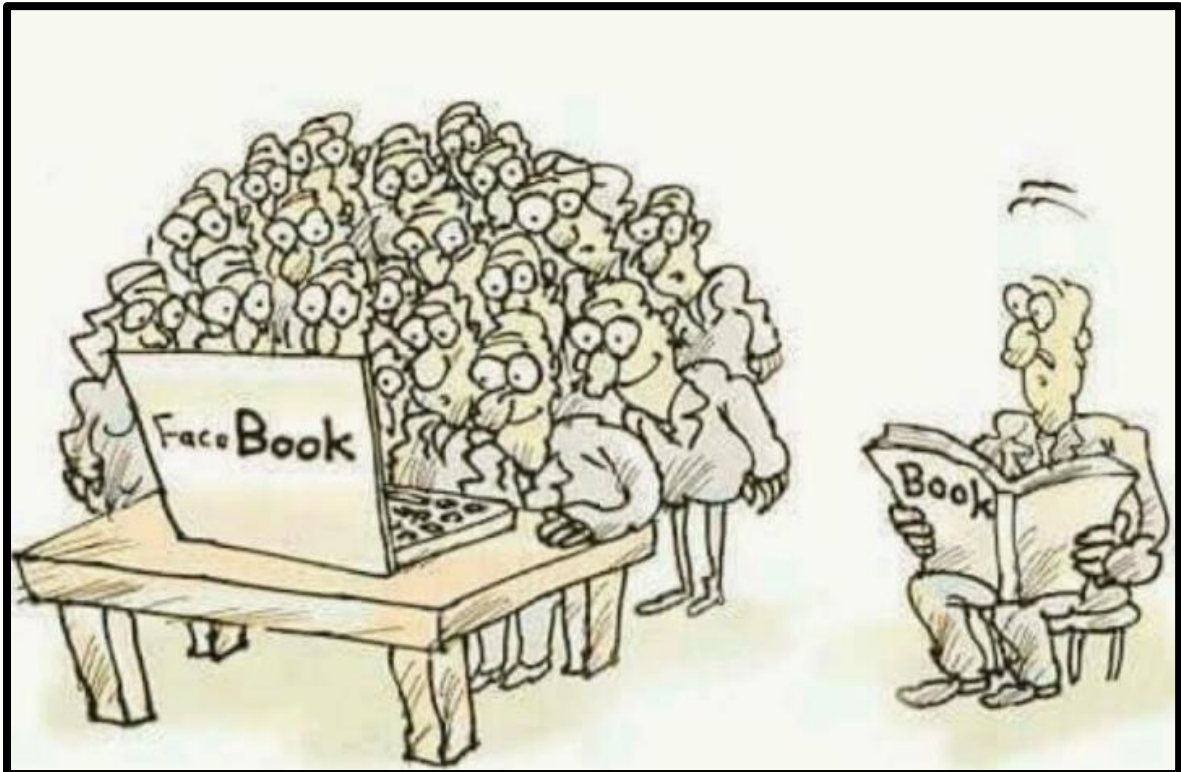


Figure 6

According to my survey, students spend a lot of their free time visiting social media sites. As you can see in figure 7, the ratio of book reading is quite low as compared with watching films or listening to music.

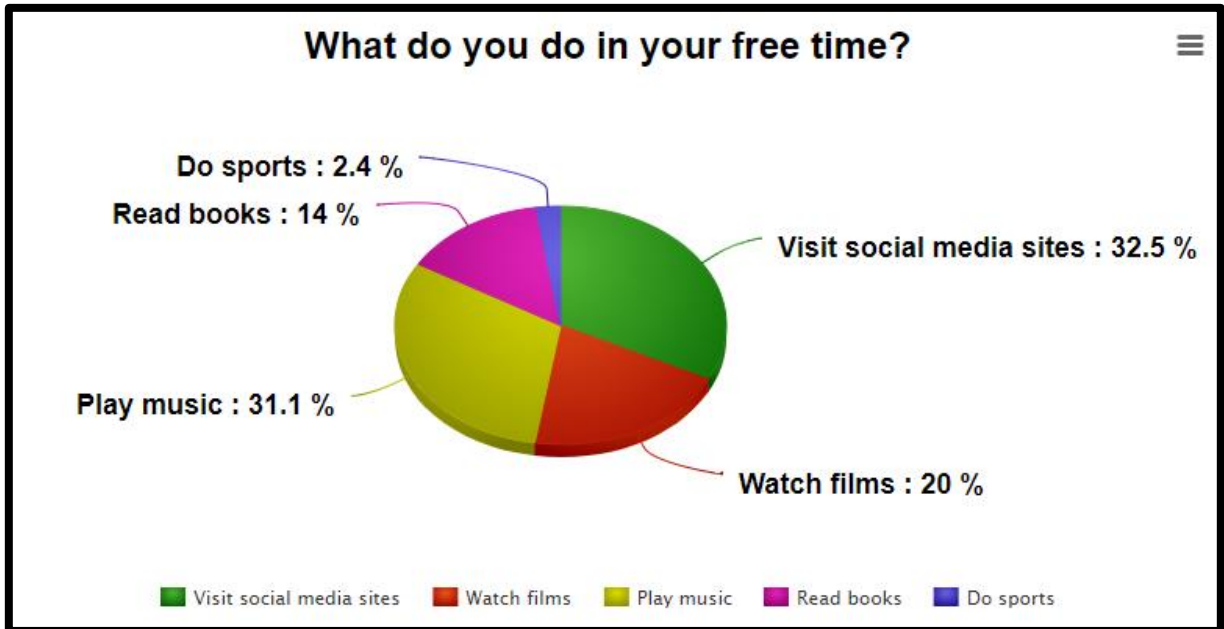


Figure 7

## **4 Independent Reading and School Achievement**

### **4.1 What Is Independent Reading?**

Independent reading is the reading students choose to do on their own. It reflects the reader's personal choice of the material to be read as well as the time and place to read it. Independent reading is done for information or for pleasure. No one assigns it; no one requires a report; no one checks on comprehension. Independent reading is also called voluntary reading. Voluntary reading involves personal choice, reading widely from a variety of sources, and choosing what one reads. People who have the ability to read but choose not to, miss just as much as those who cannot read at all. Individuals read to live life to its fullest, to earn a living, to understand what is going on in the world, and to benefit from the accumulated knowledge of civilization. Even the benefits of democracy and the capacity to govern ourselves successfully depend on reading. Thomas Jefferson<sup>10</sup> believed that informed citizens are the best safeguard against tyranny. He believed that every citizen must know how to read, that it is the public's responsibility to support the teaching of reading, and that children should be taught to read during the earliest years of schooling.

Research indicates, however, that many students do not choose to read often or in great quantities. In recent years, scholars from a variety of disciplines have studied the amount of time students choose to read and the effect of literacy on cognitive functions. There are a series of studies involving hundreds of students. In 1980 a study found that fifth-grade students spent only 5.4 percent of their out-of-school free time engaged in reading, and 23 percent of them chose not to read at all. In 1986 researchers found that very few preschool and primary grade children chose to look at books during free-choice time at school. After 2 years, a study done in 1988 found that students spent less than 2 percent of their free time reading. Furthermore, as students get older, the amount of their reading decreases.

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<sup>10</sup> Thomas Jefferson was an American statesman, one of the founding fathers of the United States and the principal author of the Declaration of Independence. He served as the third President of the United States.

## **4.2 Effects of Independent Reading on Learners**

The amount of free reading done outside of school has consistently been found to relate to growth in vocabulary, reading comprehension, verbal fluency, and general information (it is proved by different studies conducted by Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding 1988; Greaney 1980; Guthrie and Greaney 1991; Taylor, Frye, and Maruyama 1990). Students who read independently become better readers, score higher on achievement tests in all subject areas and have greater content knowledge than those who do not. Now, I'll review different researches on the status of independent reading and how it develops across age levels.

### **4.2.1 Preschool**

Researchers analysed the preschool experiences of 138 gifted and 92 nongifted children and the background information of their parents. He found that daily experiences with books help all children succeed in school and that gifted children were more likely to read daily, have books and reading areas in their homes, and go to the library more than once a month. He concluded that primary caregivers influence a child's development and learning.

The preschool years are the crucial ones for children's language and literacy learning; what happens during those years has a lasting effect on all learning. In all socioeconomic levels, some children who have access to print and construct meaning from it learn to read prior to school entrance. Early experiences with language, stories and print are formative. Children need access to print, but they also need someone to mediate between their own language and the language of the text. This person models reading and helps the child to construct meaning from print.

### **4.2.2 Primary and Elementary Grades 1–5**

The amount of independent reading students do significantly influences their level of reading performance. In a series of studies considered to be benchmark indicators of children's exposure to print, Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988)

asked fifth-grade students to record their activities outside of school. In one study, fifty-three students kept logs of free-time activities for eight weeks, and in the second study, 105 children kept logs for twenty-six weeks. In both investigations children averaged ten minutes per day reading books—little more than 2 percent of their time but enough to make a significant difference in reading achievement scores. Fifty percent of the children read from books four minutes a day or less. Thirty percent read two minutes a day or less. Almost 10 percent reported never reading any book on any day. For the majority of children, reading books occupied 1 percent or less of their free time.

Anderson, Fielding, and Wilson (1988) compared the amount of student reading with their scores on achievement tests. The number of minutes spent in out-of-school reading, even if it was a small amount, correlated positively with reading achievement. The more students read outside of school, the higher they scored on reading achievement tests.

Krashen (1993, 1995) also examined the results of out-of-school studies in which participants gave self-reports of their free voluntary reading. The results of these studies confirm the in school studies: more reading results in better reading comprehension and related literacy skills. Students' reading ability and desire to read are affected by the structure of the texts they read.

Collectively, research supports the fact that during primary and elementary grades, even a small amount of independent reading helps increase students' reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, spelling facility, understanding of grammar, and knowledge of the world. Research also shows that a variety of means can be used to measure exposure to print, such as diary records of amount of time spent reading, author recognition, title recognition, and activity preference checklists. Whereas these measures appear to be good predictors of verbal outcomes when used individually, they are stronger when used in combinations.

#### **4.2.3 Middle School and Young Adults: Grades 6–9 and 9–12**

Age level is a primary factor that shapes why people read, what they read, how much they read, and what they do with what they read. Furthermore, when

students started to read affects their subsequent school experiences and reading competence. Developmental influences are strong.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)<sup>11</sup> is administered every five years to a sample of nine-, thirteen-, and seventeen-year-old students across the United States. Researchers(1985) analysed NAEP data and found that age is a determining factor in how much time students spend watching television and how much time they spend doing spare-time reading. Time spent watching television as well as doing spare-time reading declines as children reach adolescence. Moffett and Wartella (1992) found that after a decline in mid-adolescence, reading increases again during eleventh and twelfth grades. Grunwald (1996) cited a study showing that young people's use of computers shifts away from games and toward accessing information as they get older. Students who use computers watch TV less frequently than those who do not use computers. People in households with computers spend just as much money on reading material as those without computers (Rawlinson 1996). The early trends are promising, but further study needs to be done on the effect of computer use on the amount of reading done. In two surveys using self-report by subjects, McCoy et al. (1991) found a decrease in recreational reading during middle school years. In one study, one hundred students in college level developmental (remedial) reading courses reported a marked decrease in recreational reading during middle school. In a second survey, a majority of 159 seventh- and eighth-grade students reported reading independently up to seventh grade but practically ceasing to read anything not required or assigned after that. Recreational reading ranked lowest among their preferences for independent activities. Feitelson and Goldstein (1986) found that light reading provides motivation for more reading. Students who read books in series (several books written about the same characters) developed reading fluency and the linguistic competence necessary to read higher quality material. They gained knowledge of the world, learned story structures and became aware of literary devices by reading series books. Light reading became a

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<sup>11</sup> The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. Assessments are conducted periodically in mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography, U.S. history, and in Technology and Engineering Literacy.

stepping stone to further reading. Increased reading proficiency and fluency makes it possible for students to read more complex material. They often choose light reading for independent reading because they enjoy it and they become more fluent readers in the process. Adults who encourage students to develop the reading habit through light reading can lead them to further reading. Students must take the first step of developing reading fluency before they can take the second step of becoming avid readers.

In short, we can say that scholars from a variety of disciplines have attempted to specify the effects that reading has on cognitive functioning, but it is difficult to document specific behavioural outcomes associated with reading. Spurious correlations may arise because literacy levels correlate with many other desirable behaviours. It is well known that exposure to print is a good predictor of spelling, vocabulary knowledge and general world knowledge. Even when the variance attributable to general ability and phonological decoding are controlled, measures of exposure to print correlate significantly with spelling, vocabulary, verbal fluency, and general information. Research shows that the amount of time spent reading varies by age level.

As you can see in figure 8, those students who have a habit of reading normally achieve high marks.

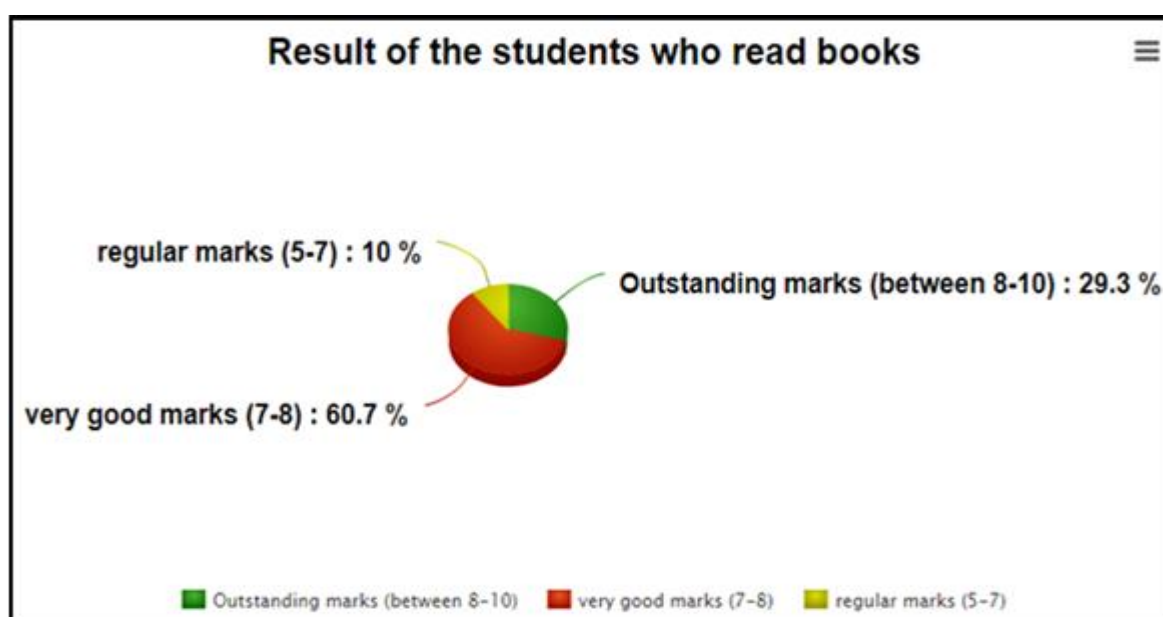


Figure 8



Now let's compare it to the students who don't read books (see figure 9).

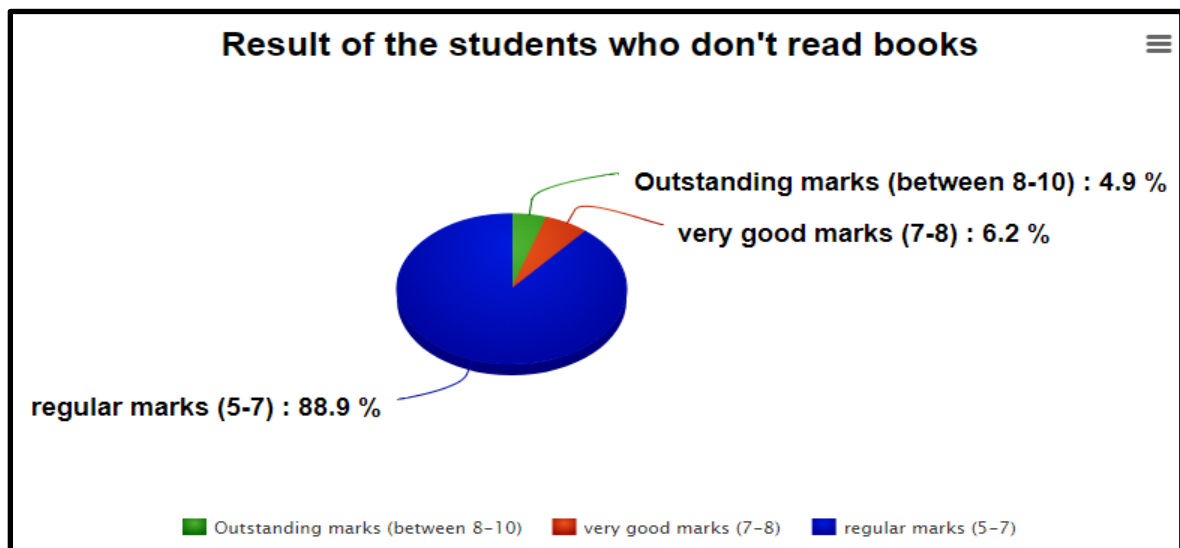


Figure 9

The difference between the academic results of the students is clearly visible through these graphs (figure 8 and figure 9).

Thus, it is proved by my survey that book reading does have an effect on our result. It is because of the benefits mentioned above, for example: it improves our memory, it gives us a better understanding of the world in general, etc.

## 5 Favourite book genre effects on your personality

Take a look at your bookshelf and you'll probably have no problem determining your favourite genre. The rows of multiple Harry Potter books and the collection of *A Song of Ice and Fire* probably mean you're a big fan of fantasy. Or, when you visit your local bookstore, do you find yourself roaming toward the sci-fi section? Perhaps you drift toward the middle where the literary classics are.

The book genre you love most definitely says a lot about who you are as a person. Books can shape you, so it's only natural that you learned from the characters within, whether they were fairies, aliens or your average human.

Better than your zodiac sign, your most loved book genre will reveal your true personality.

Now I'll mention some book genres and what kind of personality you have after reading them. The results are based on my observation and on my survey.

### 5.1 Book genre and your personality

#### Classics

You have and will reread just about every classic there is. Jane Austen<sup>12</sup> and Sylvia Plath<sup>13</sup>, Ernest Hemingway<sup>14</sup> and John Steinbeck<sup>15</sup> — this is the crew that will always be your favourite writers. You were the kid in high school who actually read all of the mandatory books and enjoyed them. You prefer getting to know one person deeply, rather than knowing a couple people on the surface. You tend to cherish the simplicities in everyday life more than anything else.

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<sup>12</sup> Jane Austen was an English novelist known primarily for her six major novels, which interpret, critique and comment upon the British landed gentry at the end of the 18th century.

<sup>13</sup> Sylvia Plath was an American poet, novelist, and short-story writer.

<sup>14</sup> Ernest Hemingway was an American novelist, short story writer, and journalist.

<sup>15</sup> John Steinbeck was an American author. He won the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature.

## Fantasy

You prefer to read about huge and complex worlds where your imagination can roam as it pleases. Ever since you were a child, you've been more interested in mythology than anything else. You're a daydreamer and often zone out while at school or work thinking of the next great adventure you'll go on (see figure 10). When it comes to your friends, you've got some of the best and you'll never treat them wrong because you know how valuable true friendship is after reading *The Lord of the Rings*<sup>16</sup> and *Harry Potter*.

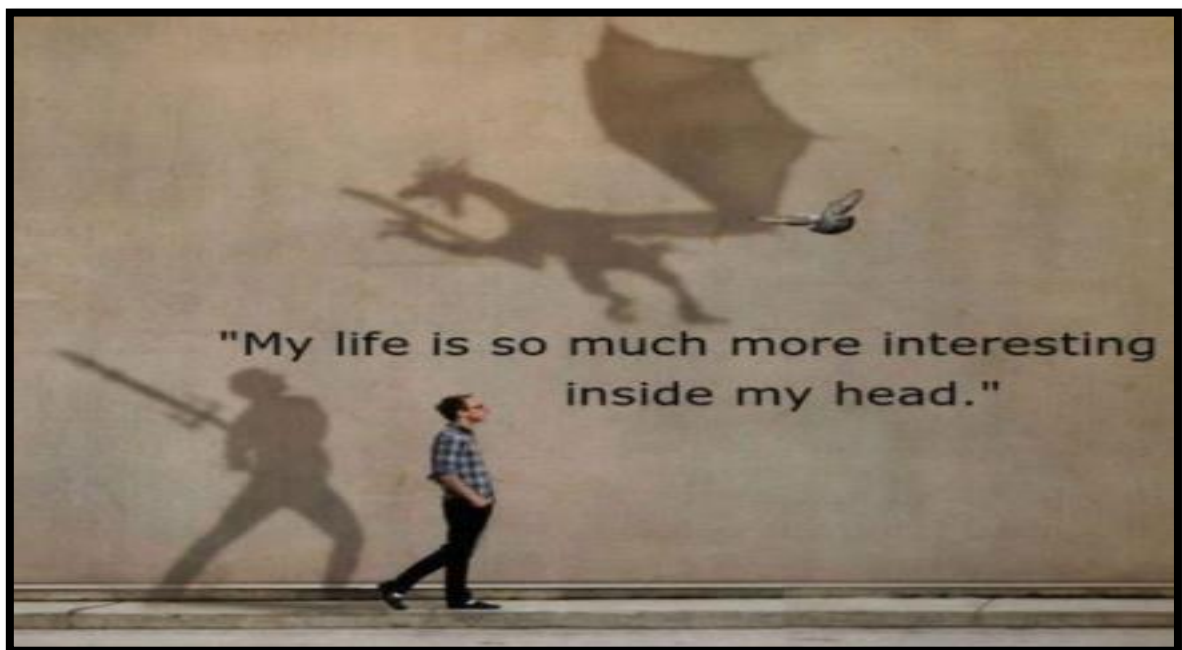


Figure 10

## Historical Fiction

You love fiction — but you also love fact. You like knowing what's going to happen and aren't a big fan of surprises. You have a very detailed planner on you at all times, but every so often aren't afraid to indulge in a few spontaneous activities. You have a sharp eye for detail and are sometimes (more like all the time) called

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<sup>16</sup> *Lord of the Rings* is an epic high fantasy novel written by English author and scholar J. R. R. Tolkien.

a perfectionist in your work. You're a people-watcher, and enjoy listening to your friends and family tell you stories of their past.

## Horror

Like Stephen King<sup>17</sup>, you believe everyone should read more horror books. You aren't scared easily and the feeling of adrenaline rising in you is almost addicting. You're the risk-taker in your friend group and when you go to an amusement park, you're the first one in line for the wildest rides. You're one heck of a storyteller and your friends know that when you pull out the flashlight at a bonfire, they're in for a story that'll haunt them for the rest of the week.

## Literary Fiction

You prefer reading about common life problems and troubles that are relatable to just about everyone. You love to learn about people, and the ones you don't know, you find yourself making up their life stories as you pass by them on the streets or on your morning commute. You're a deep thinker and when it comes to problem solving, you're probably a pro. You like to look at your life as if it was a movie and are always wondering when the next complicated situation will unfold.

## Mystery/Thrillers

You couldn't stop thinking about a book for weeks. You're exceptionally talented at picking up on foreshadowing and clues, so your friends tend to stay away from you to avoid spoilers. You look at life as a mystery itself and are always searching for the bigger meaning in things. You're a little quieter than the rest, but that's only because you genuinely enjoy being a mystery yourself.

## Nonfiction

You always have the newest memoir or autobiography in-hand before anyone else does. You're a great listener and enjoy getting to know someone by their odd

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<sup>17</sup> Stephen King is an American author of horror, supernatural fiction, suspense, science fiction, and fantasy.

quirks and anecdotes. You are often looking for new ways to improve yourself and the lives around you. You love making big gestures because you desire to live a great life worth telling someday.

## Romance

For you, no book is a great book without a powerful love story included. Your tastes range from *Gone with the Wind*<sup>18</sup> to *Fifty Shades of Grey*<sup>19</sup> and everything in between. You're a passionate person at heart and always go the extra mile to satisfy someone you love. You always manage to keep a positive outlook on life, even if you've hit rock bottom. You're caring "Consuls," who always provide a shoulder to cry on. Your positive attitude and depth of emotion can make you huge romantic with high expectations.

## Science Fiction

You love reading about intergalactic adventures and futuristic events that could one day happen. When you were a kid, you didn't always fit in because you were thinking about new worlds and characters bigger than the boring middle school you were stuck in. You often have really great ideas but are sometimes afraid to speak up. With your smart wits, you and everyone around you knows you'd be the one to live through any apocalyptic event.

## Comic

You want to protect people. You're analytical yet sensitive, introverted yet social and deeply committed to making the world a better place.

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<sup>18</sup> *Gone with the Wind* is a novel by American writer Margaret Mitchell, first published in 1936.

<sup>19</sup> *Fifty Shades of Grey* is a 2011 erotic romance novel by British author E. L. James,

## **5.2 What happens if someone only reads a specific kind of genre?**

As readers, it's easy to stick with one genre that we enjoy, especially if we have a favourite author. While there's nothing wrong with having a favourite genre or author, it can be beneficial to break the cycle and try something new every once in a while since there are so many books to explore.

If you read only one kind of genre, then, it's quite limiting. In order to be a good writer, you must be a good reader. What do I mean by that? I mean that you need to read a wide-range of creative pieces.

Here are some of the benefits of reading outside of your favourite genre:

### **Makes you more intelligent**

Reading different genres of books is a great way to improve your vocabulary. For example, historical fiction novels may use different vocabulary than science fiction books. Enhancing your vocabulary will improve both written and spoken communication skills. Reading different genres can also allow you to comment more intelligently in casual conversation, which is never a bad thing.

### **Broadens your worldview**

Stepping out of your comfort zone and reading books outside of your favourite genre allows you to learn more about the world around you since the books may be about people, lifestyles, ways of thinking and cultures that you might not interact with in your everyday life.

### **Might encourage you to try new things**

Reading different genres can introduce you to new worlds. It can be an eye-opening experience that may encourage you to try new things or take risks in life that you may never have considered otherwise.

### **Improves your writing**

If you're a writer, reading books in a variety of genres will make you a stronger writer. It is limiting to read only books in the genre that you write. Reading outside

of your genre allows you to read as a reader and not as a writer. Instead of focusing on the author's style, you can simply enjoy the experience of reading. While it's true that reading of any kind is wonderful, reading outside of your favourite genre helps you mature as a reader. According to R.L.Stine<sup>20</sup>,

“Read. Read. Read. Just don't read one type of book. Read different books by various authors so that you develop different styles.”

We should always prefer quality over quantity. Better to read one great book than hundred mediocre ones.

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<sup>20</sup> R.L Stine is an American novelist, short story writer, television producer, screenwriter, and executive editor.

## 6 Do girls read more than boys?

You may have heard that girls read more than boys. Normally, people say that boys have more tendency towards video games or sports. Is it true? If yes, what are the reasons?

Boys of every age, no matter the nature of the literature before them, typically read less thoroughly than girls.

They take less time to process the words, lazily skipping parts with abandon. And they choose books that are too easy for them, meaning they fail to move on to tougher material, it is claimed.

Girls have overtaken boys in the literacy stakes when it comes to reading, both in their ability to understand what they read and in their tendency to read for pleasure.

UK-based newspaper The Guardian recently reported on studies conducted by Keith Topping, professor of educational and social research at the University of Dundee. In his study, the professor analysed the reading habits of nearly three quarters of a million students in 3,306 schools across the UK. The study used data collected by Accelerated Reader, a school computer program which tracks a pupils' reading progress as well as their thoughts on the book. When pupils read a book, either at school or at home, they then answer questions which assess how well they have understood the contents of the book.

Professor Topping concluded that the reading habits of boys aged five to 18 was: "not particularly good – and they are lagging behind."

Of the first study, Topping told The Guardian that: "The males were significantly worse on the outcome measures, didn't gain as much in performance on reading tests and their average percentage correct in the tests was low." He went on to suggest that this was because boys of all ages tended to miss sections out of pages or skipped some completely when reading, a trait less pronounced in girls.



So, according to the international researches and my survey (see figure 11), I can say that girls do read more than boys. The main reason isn't very clear. According to the psychologist's opinion, it is because normally boys are a little bit more restless than girls by nature. Generally, boys or men find it extremely hard to sit calmly at a place without doing anything or just reading a book. They can read something for a short period of time and then, they'll get bored and they'll start looking for something else to do. It is same as when girls spend hours talking with each other while boys get bored after half an hour and then they want some action. It could be because of the society's influence as boys are actively encouraged to pursue sports by their friends and people around them whereas something like reading poetry would not be given the same kind of approval.

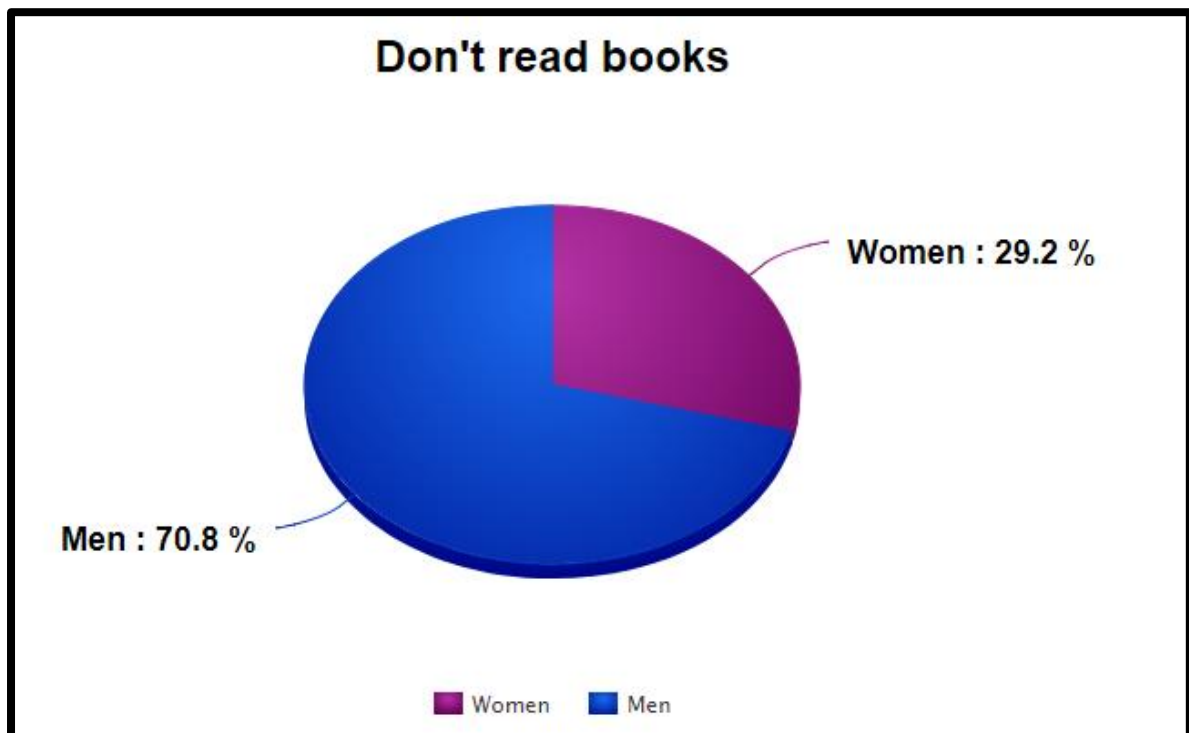


Figure 11

## 6.1 Is there any genre specific for girls or specific for boys?

I have observed that boys differ from girls in the choices they make of reading material. To prove this, I asked them questions about their genre preferences. The results are shown in figure 12.

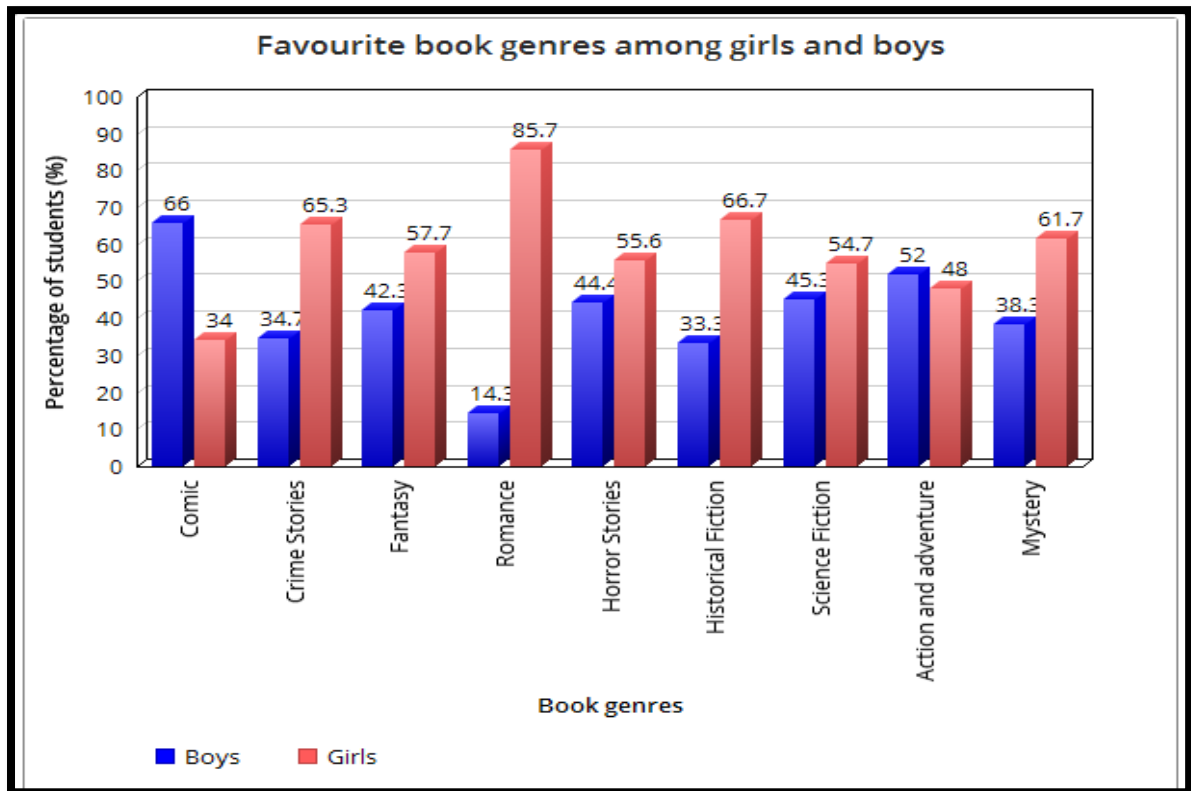


Figure 12

As we can see in figure 12, there is a difference of favourite book genres among girls and boys. The main difference we can find is the genre Romance.

It is not surprising because everyone knows that girls are more likely to read love stories. Boys normally don't read such kind of stories or just skip the pages. Boys also tend to resist reading stories about girls, whereas girls do not tend to resist reading stories about boys.

## **7 Will technology replace books?**

Though many people say that technology has replaced books, I don't think so. Technology can never replace books, no matter how advanced it gets. Books are always a source of mental peace and mental satisfaction but only for the people who think they are. Some people say that we were in a need to rely upon books when we were in the past. Now we are in 2018...An era of computers, even where each and every field of science directly or indirectly need computers. They have made our works so easy by saving our precious time. For instance, if we need to learn any language, there are so many online courses; to sell our things, we have many websites, etc.

Now, I'll try to explain some for and against points of this argument: "Will books ever be replaced?"

### **7.1 Arguments in favour of the technology replacing books:**

Digital media is replacing the old media in other areas:

Music CDs replaced records and MP3s are replacing music CDs. Terrestrial TV has been mostly replaced by digital TV. Books themselves descended from parchment, which descended from papyrus scrolls and before that, stone tablets. Digital publications are the next technological step and so if the pattern is uniform, they will also replace the last step almost entirely. We used to write with our hands until the computer came out. Now people prefer typing in computer than writing themselves.

E-books use up far less storage space:

Books take up a lot of physical space. Files take up no more space than the storage device does. File sizes are also becoming smaller and smaller as are external storage devices and computers in general.

There are internet archives, even digital books can be preserved. E-books are better preserved/durable/long-lasting.

Cheaper and easier to share information:

E-books cost much less to produce and less to buy than physical books. The information in a digital format can be shared easily by email or by copying the files onto someone else's computer. It is also easier to edit the information. This makes it overall more convenient for students who might not be able to afford one copy of a book each and who don't want to make notes and underline points.

Much easier to search for information:

Even a simple search tool on a word processor is much more efficient than trying to find information in a book, even if the index is really well written.

The opposite point about dedication is a straw man argument at best, dedication is not simply shown through the acceptance and use of outdated technology but the application and use of whatever technology is available. Time organisation is no longer taught because it is implied and made so simple by the advances in technology. That is not to be abhorred but rather cherished.

Textbooks are getting more and more expensive whilst universities are bringing the goods online:

Free information means free/'at least cheap' education. Sites like <http://www.rapidlibrary.com>, Google and Google books, permit students with a limited budget to get what they want without having to spend exorbitant amounts of cash.

<http://www.youtube.com/edu> is also a great source of information, people who cannot afford tuition fees at prestigious universities like Stanford (or aren't smart enough to get in) can access lectures online without an accreditation for taking these courses (as you're not paying tuition fees). It doesn't make sense to buy a bunch of expensive tangible textbooks. Free e-books make education accessible and cheap. Thus, more widespread.

Go Green with e-books:

E-books can reduce the usage of paper. It is one of the best ways to go green and it is also easier to read when all the books are stored in one small device.

## **7.2 Arguments against technology replacing books**

Reading a screen isn't as comfortable:

People like to sit down and read a book from cover to cover. Staring at a screen for that long feels uncomfortable, damages your eyes and gives you neck cramps. A book can be held in the hand more easily than a laptop, even a netbook, because paper is a flexible material.

Also, if you don't have a laptop, you have to sit at the computer desk. Many people enjoy reading a book while lying in bed before sleeping because it is more relaxing.

Vision problems have skyrocketed due to increased time spent staring at a computer screen. In addition to being uncomfortable, reading a book on a computer screen actually has a serious negative effect on the health and abilities of your eyes.

Books are more durable than computers:

A book dropping off a table isn't a concern, whereas it might seriously damage a laptop that is open and switched on. A laptop can't be safely operated while walking around holding it. Information inside a book also doesn't get corrupted, accidentally deleted or affected by power shortages.

Digital media has too many copyright issues and is less trustworthy:

Replacing books with e-books will entirely create a similar problem to that faced by the music industry with MP3s. Digital information is entirely too easy to copy and redistribute for free. Academic publications can be hacked and plagiarised easily and with online material being continuously updated and the copyright laws not

entirely clear with digital material, it will make it difficult to prove that the work was plagiarised. In general, information found on the Internet is generally from unverifiable sources and may be extremely biased or incorrect. It is not useful for writing essays.

Books do not need constant maintenance and repair is cheaper:

If you keep your book away in your attic and completely forget about it, it is more likely to be found in its previous condition (though a little dusty) by your grandchildren than an Ipad or laptop you haven't used in 35 years. If you tear your paperback, the repair might cost a few bucks while a malfunctioning laptop or Ipad will cost way more than that.

Old versions of e-books may not be compatible with new software systems:

Technology is currently in a constant state of improvement. New software for electronics is continually being developed and is often incompatible with data from other software systems. For example, computers that have old versions of Microsoft Word, or Adobe Reader, cannot open or read files from the new versions. This would be the same for e-books, as they are data and file-based, meaning that they may have to be re-loaded or re-purchased as software improves. This makes e-books inefficient and potentially more costly than printed books.

Once I have explained all for and against arguments, it is necessary to prove it by a survey. This way, we can have everyone's opinion on this matter. According to my survey, the result is that students prefer physical books to electronic ones (see figure 13). However, it seems quite surprising because generally it is assumed that the young generation like to work with new technology and they are more likely to forget the old ways. However, the results proved that this general concept is incorrect.

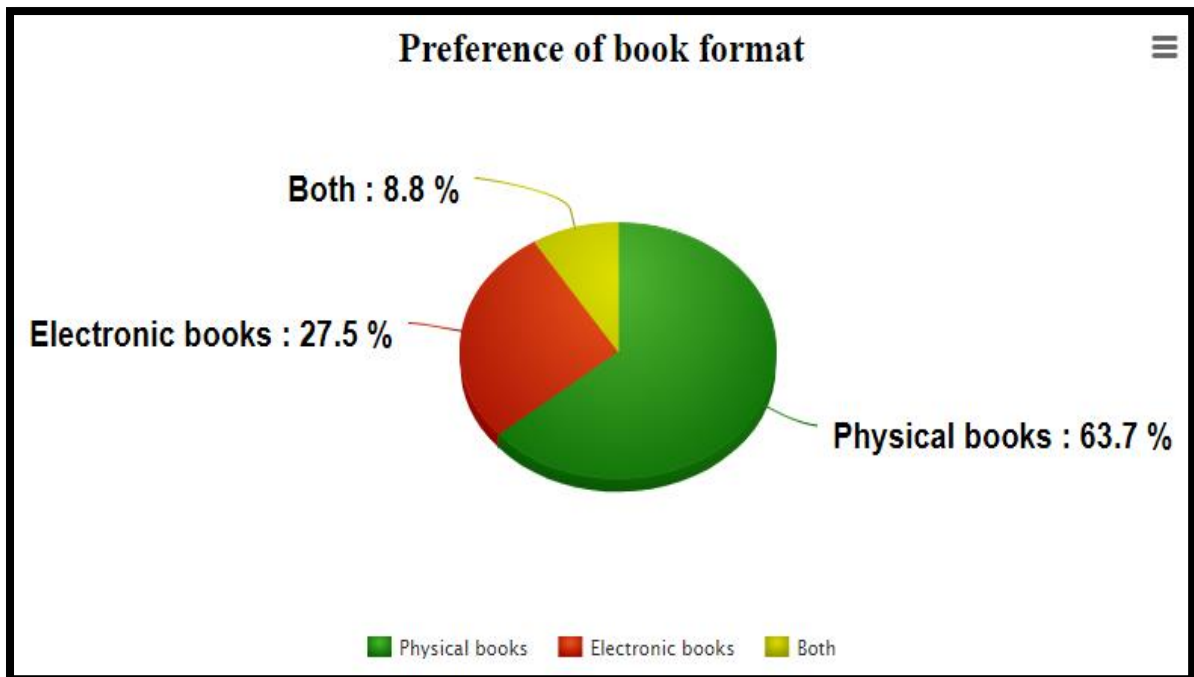


Figure 13

The reasons stated by students for this preference are:

“Books have a more real existence – you can literally touch, smell it and it’s quite portable, whereas e-books are digital, providing plenty of options for browsing, but you depend on a device to open and explore them. The paper book still has its potential. It is proved that the level of comprehension and perception is higher than in the e-books. This is because each book is unique in colour, texture, size and the reader doesn’t have problems with formats and software.

## 8 Conclusions

One of the main conclusions that I have drawn from this study is how book reading affects us and what its advantages are.

We live in a fast-paced world that encourages mental speed, agility, and multi-tasking; it is for this reason that we believe reading books is a good habit. Unfortunately, reading as a hobby and its advantages are lost and discouraged for something more challenging. In fact, kids reading books is considered the next wonder of the world. While readers fully well understand the benefits of reading for pleasure, very few are actually aware of the great benefits of reading books. The importance of reading books is that it is giving you time to take a break from all your troubles. Another one of the advantage is that it makes you smarter. If you are an avid book reader and have a wide choice of genres means you have knowledge on different aspects and topics. Before doing the survey I wasn't sure if book reading actually makes us more intelligent. But after having the answers, I was shocked to see that those students who normally achieve highest marks read at least 3 to 4 kinds of books per month. Mostly they read fiction, action and adventure, science fiction, crime stories, mystery, comic and romance. By comparing kinds of books they read with their results, it got proved that the more genres you read, the better your communication and writing skills will get because you'll have a rich vocabulary and knowledge about different perspectives of life. Therefore, you could speak in any conversation. Otherwise, if you only read one kind, then it would be quite difficult for you to comment on different situations. Reading a vast kind of books automatically leads you to become a good writer because you have knowledge and you can have a say about different subjects.

Another point that I've concluded is that technology cannot replace the benefits that book reading provides us. It seems a little bit rare because nowadays everybody depends too much on the latest technology, especially the young generation. They use it even to do the easiest chores of their daily routine. But, after analysing the results of my survey, I can say that no matter how many electronic devices students use, they still get more benefit if they read books on paper format.



Thanks to this work, I have realized the importance of books. Sometimes, we neglect how books affect us in every aspect of our lives.

Finally, this research work has helped me to learn to find information, summarize it, write it down and finally draw conclusions.

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## Annex I

### SURVEY (ENGLISH VERSION)

#### Importance of book reading

It's a survey about reading habits among people and its influences on their lives. It's for my school project and I shall be very grateful for your participation.

**Note:** If you choose "other" option in any question, then please specify it.

- 1) Gender
  - Male
  - Female
  
- 2) Age
  
- 3) Where do you live? (name of your city and country)
  
- 4) What is your profession?
  
- 5) Describe your personality in few words.
  
- 6) Do you read books?
  - Yes
  - No
  
- 7) What are your reading habits (frequency of reading books)?
  - I don't read books
  - 1 book per year
  - 1 book every six months
  - 2 books per month
  - 3 to 5 books per month
  - Other
  
- 8) In case you don't read books, what's the reason?
  - I don't have time
  - I am not interested in reading
  - It's boring
  - Laziness
  - Home environment (book reading isn't viewed as important at your home)
  - Other

- 9) Do you think a reading habit has effects on academic records?
- Yes
  - No
  - Maybe
- 10) If you are a student what are your average marks? Or what used to be your marks when you were in school?
- 11) Do you read in different languages? If yes, name them.
- 12) What kind of material do you study when you visit library?
- I don't go to library.
  - Textbooks
  - Lecture notes
  - Different kinds of books
  - Other
- 13) What kind of books do you read?
- Crime stories
  - Fantasy
  - Science fiction
  - Action and adventure
  - Romance
  - Mystery
  - Horror
  - Comic
  - Other
- 14) Why do you engage yourself in reading?
- To pass exams
  - To gain knowledge
  - To improve spoken and written language
  - For pleasure and fun
  - Other
- 15) What's your opinion about reading? Reading is .....
- Difficult
  - Enjoyable
  - Interesting
  - Boring
  - Other

16) Do you think reading novels and fiction is important? If yes, why?

- It has no importance
- To improve self-expression
- To learn new things
- To improve imagination
- To complement our studies
- To kill boredom
- To relax
- Other

17) What do you do in your free time?

- Visit social media sites
- Watch film
- Listen music
- Read different kinds of books
- Do sports
- Other

18) Do you prefer reading physical books or Ebooks? Why?

19) Do you know someone who is obsessed with books? If yes, explain his/her condition.

## Annex II

### SURVEY (SPANISH VERSION)\*

#### Importancia de la lectura de libros

Es una encuesta sobre el hábito de leer entre las personas y sus influencias en sus vidas. Es para mi proyecto de investigación y estaré muy agradecido por su participación.

**Nota:** Si elige la opción "otro" en cualquier pregunta, especifíquela.

- 1) Género
  - Hombre
  - Mujer
  
- 2) Edad
  
- 3) ¿Dónde vive? (nombre de su ciudad y país).
  
- 4) ¿Cuál es su profesión?
  
- 5) Describa su personalidad en pocas palabras.
  
- 6) ¿Lee libros?
  - Si
  - No
  
- 7) ¿Cuáles son sus hábitos de lectura (frecuencia de lectura de libros)?
  - No leo libros
  - 1 libro al año
  - 1 libro cada seis meses
  - 1 libro por mes
  - 2 libros por mes
  - 3-5 libros por mes
  - Otro
  
- 8) En el caso de que no lea libros, ¿cuál es la razón?
  - No tengo tiempo
  - No estoy interesado en la lectura
  - Me da pereza
  - Nunca me lo inculcaron
  - Otro

---

\* I translated my survey into Spanish in order to reach more people.

- 9) ¿Cree que un buen hábito de la lectura tiene efectos sobre el expediente académico?
- Si
  - No
  - Tal vez
- 10) Si es estudiante, ¿cuáles son sus notas medias? ¿O cuales solían ser sus notas cuando estaba en la escuela?
- 11) ¿Lee en diferentes idiomas? En caso afirmativo, nómbralos.
- 12) ¿Qué tipo de material estudia cuando visita la biblioteca?
- Yo no voy a la biblioteca
  - Libros de texto
  - Notas de lectura
  - Diferente tipos de libros
  - Otro
- 13) ¿Qué tipo de libros lee?
- Historias de crimen
  - Fantasía
  - Ciencia ficción
  - Acción y aventura
  - Romance
  - Misterio
  - Horror
  - Cómic
  - Otro
- 14) ¿Por qué lee?
- Para aprobar los exámenes
  - Para obtener conocimiento
  - Para mejorar el lenguaje hablado y escrito
  - Por placer y diversión
  - Otro
- 15) ¿Cuál es su opinión sobre la lectura? Leer es .....
- Difícil
  - Agradable
  - Interesante
  - Aburrido
  - Otro

16) ¿Cree que leer novelas y ficción es importante? Si es así, ¿por qué?

- No es importante
- Es importante para mejorar la autoexpresión
- Es importante para aprender cosas nuevas
- Es importante para mejorar la imaginación
- Es importante para complementar nuestros estudios
- Es importante para matar el aburrimiento
- Es importante para relajarse
- Otro

17) ¿Qué hace en su tiempo libre?

- Usar las redes sociales
- Ver películas
- Escuchar música
- Leer diferentes tipos de libros
- Hacer deporte

18) ¿Prefiere leer libros físicos o libros electrónicos? ¿Por qué?

19) ¿Conoce a alguien obsesionado con los libros? En caso afirmativo, explique qué le hace pensar que esa persona está obsesionada con la lectura.



## **Annex III**

Audio of my interview with psychologist Joan Romeu.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ybzd8oBit-oKuNQMtJgvlSIlpw5FCDYk/view?usp=sharing>

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