

RENAISSANCE®

# What Kids Are READING

WORLD'S LARGEST ANNUAL STUDY OF K-12 READING HABITS: 2019 EDITION

**Research & analysis:**  
**Do our students**  
**read enough?**

**p. 14**

**The key to 7x the**  
**vocabulary growth**

**p. 24**

**Maximize every**  
**minute of**  
**reading practice**

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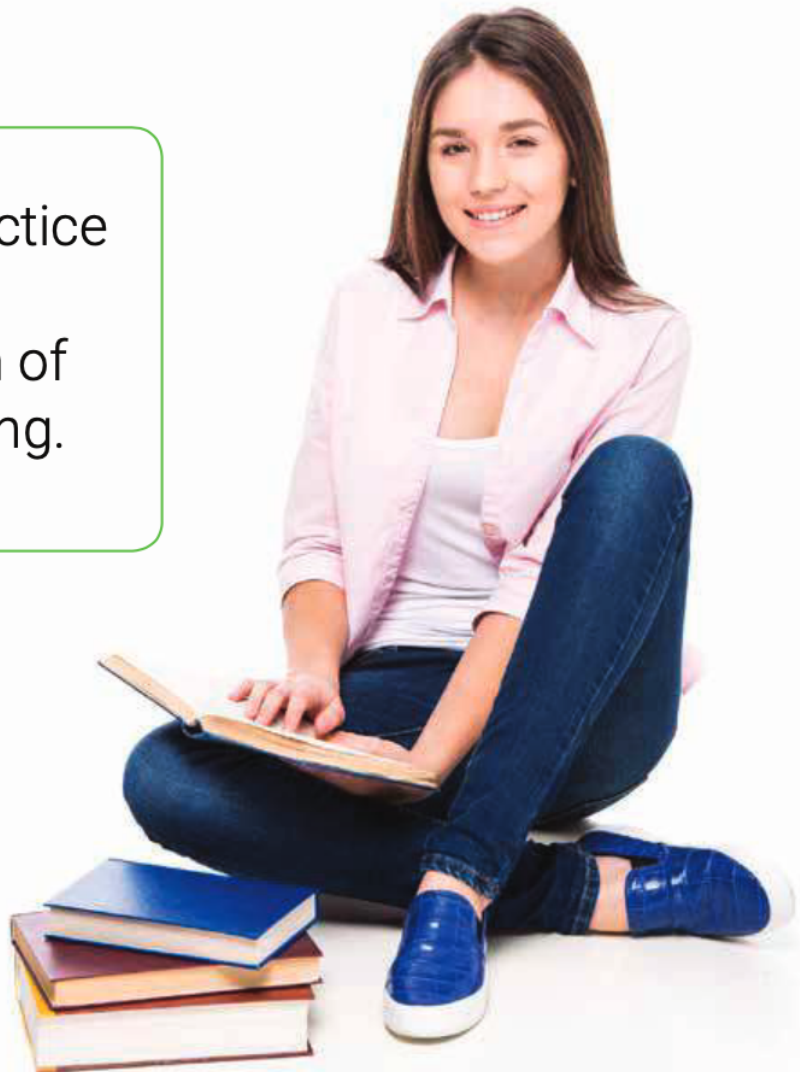
## About the Report

Table 1. Students, books, and words by grade  
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# Introduction

**By Dr. Gene Kerns, Vice President and Chief Academic Officer, &  
Dr. Dianne Henderson, Vice President of Psychometrics, Research,  
and Learning Science**

Reading practice  
is, in and of  
itself, a form of  
active learning.



Reading is more than the act of getting words off the page. It's more than phonics, sight words, and comprehension strategies. More than page count, author name, or chapter title.

Reading practice is, in and of itself, a form of active learning.

Every time kids read, they embark on a new learning adventure. Sometimes they'll visit a new country, another culture, or even a different period in history. Other times they'll explore the world around them—or maybe even travel to the stars. Many times, as they delve into the rich inner lives of characters, both real and fictional, they'll discover new perspectives and perhaps even experience new feelings.

Unfortunately, too many of our kids do not get enough daily reading practice and miss out on this crucial learning.

That's why this year's *What Kids Are Reading*, the eleventh edition of the report, is designed to help educators, families, and community leaders boost learning through reading. In addition to our popular book lists by grade, you'll find carefully curated lists for science, social studies, and social-emotional learning to help students build background knowledge, acquire academic and content-area vocabulary, and gain greater empathy for others.

With computers, tablets, and mobile devices part of our daily landscape, this report also now features popular digital reads. Plus, for the first time, you'll find both ATOS® levels and Lexile® measures for the titles on each list.

For insights into the current state of student reading in the United States—and data-driven tips for helping kids get the most out of reading practice—be sure to turn to the research analyses throughout the report. You can also visit the *What Kids Are Reading* website, [www.renaissance.com/wkar](http://www.renaissance.com/wkar), to find more helpful resources and a tool for building custom book lists.

In closing, we'd like to thank everyone whose hard work made this report possible. Special thanks go out to our Renaissance colleagues: Heather Nagrocki, Amanda Beckler, and Eric Stickney on the research team; Lela Astrom and Ken Stoflet on the communications team; and Ryan Balsiger and Matt Meyer on the website team. We'd also like to thank the good folks at Kella Design and MetaMetrics® for their contributions to this report, as well as the authors who contributed essays: Janell Cannon, James Dean, Gary Paulsen, and Peter H. Reynolds.

Lastly, we want to thank the thousands of educators who encourage and support student reading every day, whose amazing work is reflected by the tens of thousands of books read that form the basis of this report.

We hope that *What Kids Are Reading* will help you get all your kids reading—and succeeding in all areas of school and life.



### Dr. Gene Kerns

Dr. Gene Kerns is a nationally acclaimed speaker on learning progressions, educational standards, and literacy development who serves as Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at Renaissance.



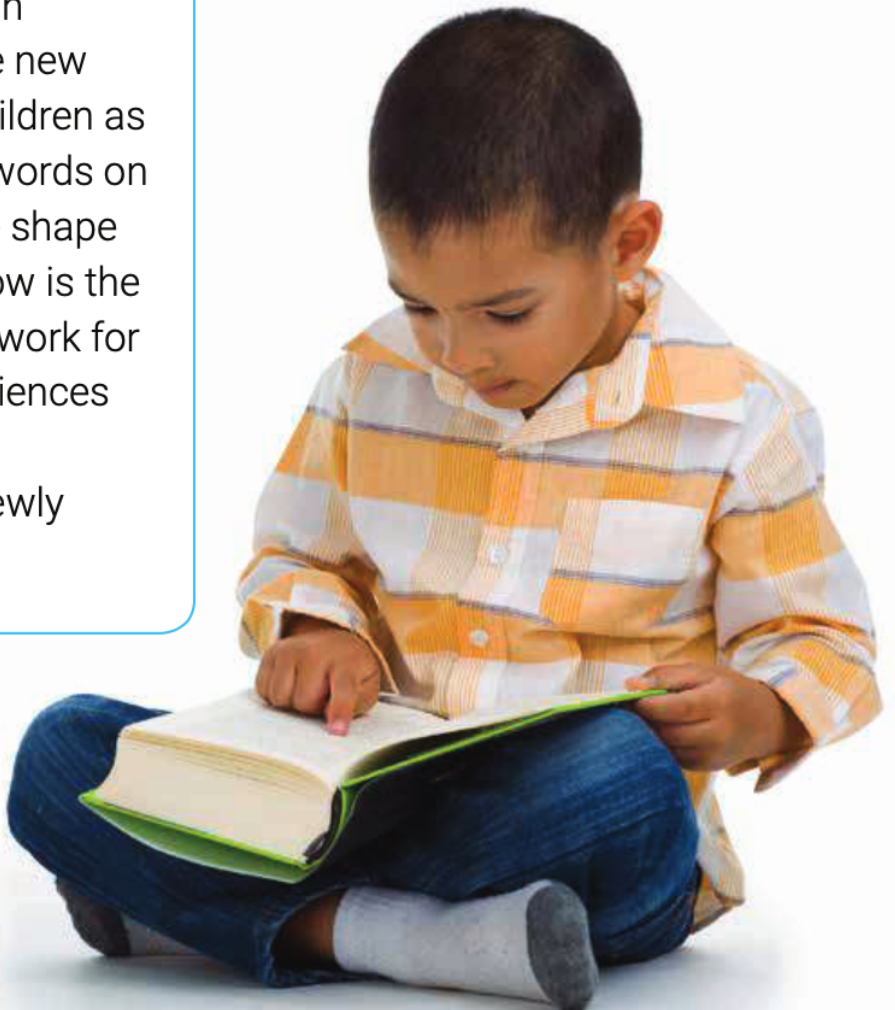
### Dr. Dianne Henderson

Dr. Dianne Henderson is an expert psychometrician who brings her extensive experience creating formative, interim, and summative assessments to her role as Vice President of Psychometrics, Research, and Learning Science at Renaissance.

## What Kids Are Reading

# Grades K-2

In kindergarten through second grade, a whole new world is opening to children as groups of letters and words on the page begin to take shape and have meaning. Now is the time to lay the groundwork for positive reading experiences by building upon their enthusiasm for this newly learned skill.



## Popular K–2 Reads, State by State



Source: Renaissance Accelerated Reader®, 2017–2018 school year

Of the top 100 books read in grades K–2, the book covers displayed in the map represent the books where the reading popularity in a state was in greatest contrast to the nationwide popularity ranking for that book. These are signature books for each state because kids who live there read the book shown far more often than it's read in the nation as a whole.

## About the Books

Encourage students at the beginning of their reading journey by offering an array of books with colorful characters, both real and imagined, to whet their reading appetite. In this section, you'll find three types of book lists for your primary-grade readers:

- For each grade, the top 20 books kids read last school year
- For each grade, 10 popular digital reads
- For the grade range, three cross-curricular lists—focusing on science, social studies, and social-emotional learning topics—each with 10 titles

## How to Use the Lists

Each book list contains information to help hone your book search. Titles that are part of a book series have been grouped as a single entry, to allow as many unique book recommendations as possible. An NF icon **NF** indicates nonfiction titles, while an SP icon **SP** denotes titles also available to read and take quizzes on in Spanish. Each book entry also includes an ATOS® level, Interest level, and Lexile® measure to help guide your readers to books at their individual reading levels.

For more information about the data used for this report, see About the Report, p. 46.

# Grade K

During the 2017–2018 school year, 244,019 kindergartners each read, on average, 22.5 books and 7,628 words. Overall, approximately 47% of books were read to students, 21% were read with students, and 32% were read independently.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Kindergarten

1	<b>Biscuit Series</b> Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.7–1.6, LG, 110L–500L) SP	
2	<b>Dr. Seuss Collection</b> Dr. Seuss (0.6–5.2, LG, 180L–1000L) SP	
3	<b>Elephant &amp; Piggie Series</b> Mo Willems (0.5–1.4, LG, 40L–330L) SP	
4	<b>Pete the Cat Series</b> James Dean (1.2–3.2, LG, 160L–650L)	
5	<b>Pigeon Series</b> Mo Willems (0.7–1.3, LG, 280L–470L) SP	
6	<b>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</b> Eric Carle (2.9, LG, 460L) SP	
7	<b>Big Egg</b> Molly Coxe (0.4, LG, 220L)	
8	<b>David Series</b> David Shannon (0.9–0.9, LG, 210L–210L) SP	
9	<b>Itchy, Itchy Chicken Pox</b> Grace Maccarone (0.7, LG, 280L) SP	
10	<b>Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?</b> Bill Martin Jr. (1.5, LG, 200L)	
11	<b>Clifford, The Big Red Dog Series</b> Norman Bridwell (0.4–4.0, LG, 120L–630L) SP	
12	<b>Sleepy Dog</b> Harriet Ziefert (0.8, LG, 80L)	
13	<b>Big Brown Bear Series</b> David McPhail (0.4–3.2, LG) SP	
14	<b>The Snowy Day</b> Ezra Jack Keats (2.5, LG, 500L) SP	
15	<b>Bugs!</b> Patricia C. McKissack (0.4, LG, 110L)	
16	<b>Come Here, Tiger!</b> Alex Moran (0.3, LG, 150L)	
17	<b>Rick Is Sick</b> David McPhail (0.4, LG, 80L)	
18	<b>Cat Days</b> Alexa Andrews (0.4, LG, 130L)	
19	<b>Tiny Series</b> Cari Meister (0.5–1.3, LG, 180L–220L)	
20	<b>Cat Traps</b> Molly Coxe (0.4, LG, 110L)	

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Kindergarten



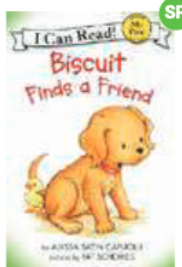
Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **Animals Everywhere**, Ann Corcorane (70L) NF SP
- **City Train**, Adria F. Klein (0.6, LG, 230L)
- **Numbers Are Everywhere**, Ann Corcorane (BR60L) NF
- **Big Trouble in Little Rodentia**, Victoria Saxon (3.1, LG, 640L)
- **Megalodon**, Janet Riehecky (1.6, LG, 450L) NF
- **Gingerbread Man: A Favorite Story in Rhythm and Rhyme**, Susan Sandvig Walker (2.5, LG, 520L)
- **'Twas the Day Before Zoo Day**, Catherine Ipcizade (3.9, LG) SP
- **Bulldozers**, Kathryn Clay (0.9, LG, 250L) NF
- **Hot and Cold**, Ann Corcorane (40L) NF SP
- **A Zoo Full of Birds**, Ann Corcorane (BR50L) NF SP



## Cross-Curricular Connections (K-2)

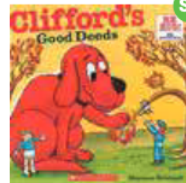
### Social-Emotional Learning: Helping Others



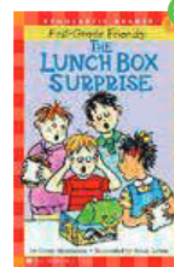
**Biscuit Finds a Friend**, Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.8, LG, 210L)



**The Giving Tree**, Shel Silverstein (2.6, LG, 530L)



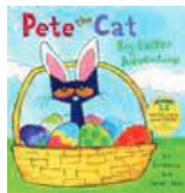
**Clifford's Good Deeds**, Norman Bridwell (2.2, LG, 410L)



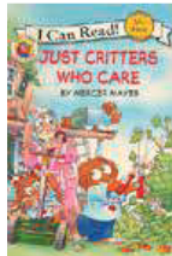
**The Lunch Box Surprise**, Grace Maccarone (1.2, LG, 310L)



**The Berenstain Bears Clean House**, Stan Berenstain (2.0, LG, 380L)



**Pete the Cat: Big Easter Adventure**, Kimberly Dean (1.9, LG, 530L)



**Just Critters Who Care**, Mercer Mayer (1.1, LG, 340L)



**If the Dinosaurs Came Back**, Bernard Most (2.9, LG, 450L)



**Room on the Broom**, Julia Donaldson (3.7, LG, 600L)



**I Can Help!**, Hans Wilhelm (0.5, LG, 240L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

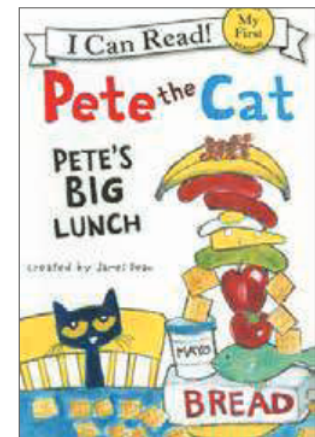
## What I'm Reading... And Why

By James Dean, author of the *Pete the Cat* Series

My father just picked up a brush and started painting portraits when I was in the first grade. He was very good. In fact, it seemed he was good at anything he wanted to do. However, he never seemed to figure out a career and left our family when I was in the seventh grade. Though my father did not teach me about art, he sparked my interest and I absorbed all the art I could find. When it came time for me to decide on a major in college, I chose electrical engineering because it seemed that artists have a really hard time actually making money with their talent. After working as an engineer for 20 years, I decided to walk away from a stable career and retirement to see if I could make a living drawing pictures. My personal conflict with career choice has made me interested in how we decide what we should do with our talents. My favorite books deal with the stories of people who somehow followed their passion even though there was a degree of risk involved.

Some of the books I have enjoyed lately: *The Wright Brothers* (David McCullough), *My Cross to Bear* (Gregg Allman), *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* (Stephen King), and *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear* (Elizabeth Gilbert).

The Wright Brothers thought it was possible for humans to fly! At that time, most intelligent people would say that you were chasing an impossible dream and the odds were that you would actually die in the process. Their day job was selling bicycles, and they used it to support the dream. Gregg Allman and his brother Duane wanted to create southern rock and roll. Gregg actually shot himself in the foot to avoid



# Grade 1

During the 2017–2018 school year, 896,355 first graders each read, on average, 44.3 books and 25,620 words. Approximately 14% of books were read to students, 15% were read with students, and 71% were read independently.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 1

1	<b>Dr. Seuss Collection</b> Dr. Seuss (0.6–5.2, LG, 180L–1000L)	SP
2	<b>Fly Guy Series</b> Tedd Arnold (1.2–2.7, LG, 270L–530L)	SP
3	<b>Biscuit Series</b> Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.7–1.6, LG, 110L–500L)	SP
4	<b>Pete the Cat Series</b> James Dean (1.2–3.2, LG, 160L–650L)	
5	<b>Elephant and Piggie Series</b> Mo Willems (0.5–1.4, LG, 40L–330L)	SP
6	<b>Pigeon Series</b> Mo Willems (0.7–1.3, LG, 280L–470L)	SP
7	<b>David Series</b> David Shannon (0.9–0.9, LG, 210L–210L)	SP
8	<b>If You Give... Series</b> Laura Numeroff (1.0–2.7, LG, 170L–590L)	SP
9	<b>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</b> Eric Carle (2.9, LG, 460L)	SP
10	<b>Click, Clack... Series</b> Doreen Cronin (1.0–2.6, LG, 270L–520L)	SP
11	<b>Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?</b> Bill Martin Jr. (1.5, LG, 200L)	
12	<b>Whistle for Willie</b> Ezra Jack Keats (2.5, LG, 490L)	SP
13	<b>Itchy, Itchy Chicken Pox</b> Grace MacCarone (0.7, LG, 280L)	SP
14	<b>Mittens</b> Lola M. Schaefer (1.2, LG, 280L)	
15	<b>Sleepy Dog</b> Harriet Ziefert (0.8, LG, 80L)	
16	<b>Clifford, The Big Red Dog Series</b> Norman Bridwell (0.4–4.0, LG, 120L–630L)	SP
17	<b>The Snowy Day</b> Ezra Jack Keats (2.5, LG, 500L)	SP
18	<b>The Dot</b> Peter H. Reynolds (1.9, LG, 500L)	SP
19	<b>Goodnight Moon</b> Margaret Wise Brown (1.8, LG, 360L)	SP
20	<b>Little Critter Series</b> Mercer Mayer (0.3–3.7, LG, 170L–900L)	SP

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 1



Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **Animals Everywhere**, Ann Corcorane (70L) NF SP
- **Scooby-Doo! and the Truth Behind Werewolves**, Mark Weakland (2.7, LG, 550L)
- **Fast Cars**, Barbara Alpert (2.9, LG, 710L) NF
- **Trust Me, Hansel and Gretel Are Sweet!**, Nancy Loewen (3.0, LG, 580L)
- **Baby Cats**, Bethany Olson (1.4, LG, 420L) NF
- **Cinderella: A Favorite Story in Rhythm and Rhyme**, Susan Sandvig Walker (2.7, LG, 460L)
- **Coco**, Disney Book Group
- **The Legend of the Zombie**, Thomas Kingsley Troupe (4.0, LG, 680L) NF



## Cross-Curricular Connections (K-2)

### Science: Weather



**The Tiny Seed**, Eric Carle (2.7, LG, 500L)



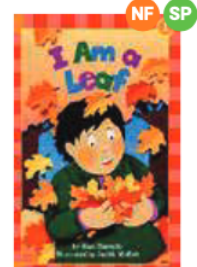
**Snow**, Marion Dane Bauer (2.0, LG, 440L)



**Weather**, Kristin Baird Rattini (2.3, LG, 450L)



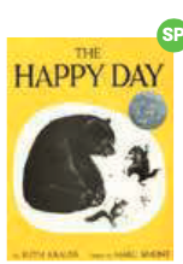
**Storms**, Miriam Busch Goin (2.7, LG, 500L)



**I Am a Leaf**, Jean Marzollo (1.3, LG, 310L)



**Fly Guy Presents: Weather**, Tedd Arnold (3.9, LG, 660L)



**The Happy Day**, Ruth Krauss (1.3, LG, 320L)



**How Do You Know It's Spring?**, Allan Fowler (2.7, LG, 500L)



**The Magic School Bus Rides the Wind**, Anne Capeci (2.1, LG, 480L)



**A Hot Day**, Lola M. Schaefer (1.0, LG, 110L)

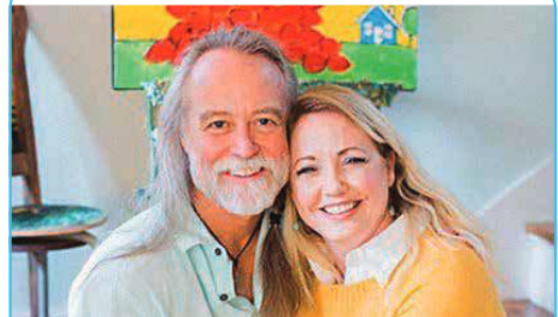
Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## What I'm Reading... And Why

cont'd from p. 9

the Vietnam draft. He always had it in the back of his mind that he would go to college and become a dentist if he gave up on the music career. Can you imagine Gregg Allman as a dentist? Stephen King seemed to know he was destined to be a writer even as a child. Though he had stacks of rejection letters from publishers, he never stopped writing. He was writing in the laundry room of his mobile home and working as a school teacher making \$6,000 a year when he published *Carrie*. He received \$200,000 when the paperback rights were sold.

In *Big Magic*, Elizabeth Gilbert is able to beautifully put into words the relationship we have to our creative desires. There is one chapter called "Your Day Job." I think Elizabeth Gilbert would say that I should not have quit my day job. Perhaps she would be correct.



### James Dean

In 2004, Kimberly and James Dean sat down at their kitchen table to work on a children's book together. Their dream finally became a reality with the release of *Pete the Cat and His Magic Sunglasses*. Both left corporate jobs in the late 90s (James was an electrical engineer, Kimberly worked in the press office of the Governor of Georgia) to pursue their passion for art, and they have experienced

# Grade 2

During the 2017–2018 school year, 1,213,752 second graders each read, on average, 57.1 books and 83,576 words. Approximately 9% of books were read to students, 7% were read with students, and 84% were read independently.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 2

1	<b>Dr. Seuss Collection</b> Dr. Seuss (0.6–5.2, LG, 180L–1000L)	SP
2	<b>Click, Clack... Series</b> Doreen Cronin (1.0–2.6, LG, 270L–520L)	SP
3	<b>If You Give... Series</b> Laura Numeroff (1.0–2.7, LG, 170L–590L)	SP
4	<b>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</b> Eric Carle (2.9, LG, 460L)	SP
5	<b>Officer Buckle and Gloria</b> Peggy Rathmann (3.4, LG, 570L)	SP
6	<b>Fly Guy Series</b> Tedd Arnold (1.2–2.7, LG, 270L–530L)	SP
7	<b>Dog Man Series</b> Dav Pilkey (2.3–2.6, LG, 260L–390L)	SP
8	<b>The Bug Diaries Series</b> Doreen Cronin (2.5–3.2, LG, 490L–510L)	
9	<b>The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs</b> Jon Scieszka (3.0, LG, 510L)	SP
10	<b>Pete the Cat Series</b> Eric Litwin (1.2–3.2, LG, 160L–650L)	
11	<b>Miss Nelson Is Missing!</b> Harry Allard (2.7, LG, 340L)	SP
12	<b>The Giving Tree</b> Shel Silverstein (2.6, LG, 530L)	SP
13	<b>Henry and Mudge Series</b> Cynthia Rylant (0.6–2.9, LG, 130L–560L)	SP
14	<b>There Was an Old Lady Series</b> Lucille Colandro (2.1–3.8, LG, 240L–470L)	SP
15	<b>A Bad Case of Stripes</b> David Shannon (3.8, LG, 610L)	SP
16	<b>Pigeon Series</b> Mo Willems (0.7–1.3, LG, 280L–470L)	SP
17	<b>David Series</b> David Shannon (0.9–0.9, LG, 210L–210L)	SP
18	<b>Biscuit Series</b> Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.7–1.6, LG, 110L–500L)	SP
19	<b>Where the Wild Things Are</b> Maurice Sendak (3.4, LG, 740L)	SP
20	<b>Stellaluna</b> Janell Cannon (3.5, LG, 550L)	SP

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 2



Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **The Legend of the Zombie**, Thomas Kingsley Troupe (4.0, LG, 680L) **NF**
- **Hide and Shriek!**, Sean O'Reilly (2.3, LG, 490L)
- **Coco**, Disney Book Group
- **Fast Cars**, Barbara Alpert (2.9, LG, 710L) **NF**
- **Sugar Hero**, Michael Dahl (2.0, LG, 520L)
- **Cinderella: A Favorite Story in Rhythm and Rhyme**, Susan Sandvig Walker (2.7, LG, 460L)
- **The Story of Iron Man**, Catherine Hapka (400L)
- **Super Scary Stories**, Megan Cooley Peterson (3.6, LG, 600L) **NF**
- **Gingerbread Man: A Favorite Story in Rhythm and Rhyme**,

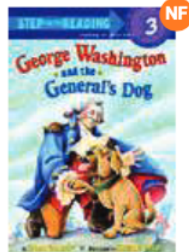


## Cross-Curricular Connections (K-2)

### Social Studies: Colonial Period



**Thanksgiving on Thursday**, Mary Pope Osborne (3.3, LG, 590L)



**George Washington and the General's Dog**, Frank Murphy (2.5, LG, 510L)



**I Survived: The American Revolution, 1776**, Lauren Tarshis (4.6, MG, 660L)



**Benjamin Franklin**, Martha E.H. Rustad (2.3, LG)



**Sarah Morton's Day**, Kate Waters (3.4, LG, 700L)



**School in Colonial America**, Mark Thomas (2.1, LG, 460L)



**Mayflower Treasure Hunt**, Ron Roy (4.1, LG, 610L)



**Food in Colonial America**, Mark Thomas (2.1, LG, 460L)



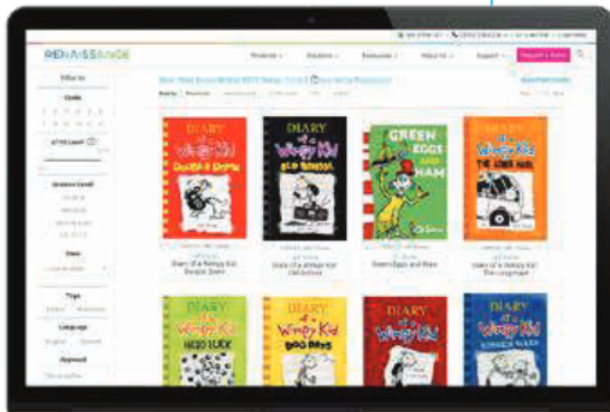
**Fun and Games in Colonial America**, Mark Thomas (1.6, LG, 320L)



**Work in Colonial America**, Mark Thomas (1.9, LG, 420L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Create a Custom Report



Did you know you can use *What Kids Are Reading* data to create custom book lists for individual students or reading groups? Create your own custom report in three simple steps:

1. Visit [www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom](http://www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom) to access the Custom Report Builder tool.
2. Use the filters to select state, grade, reading level, and more.
3. Click "Generate My Report" for a PDF you can save or print.

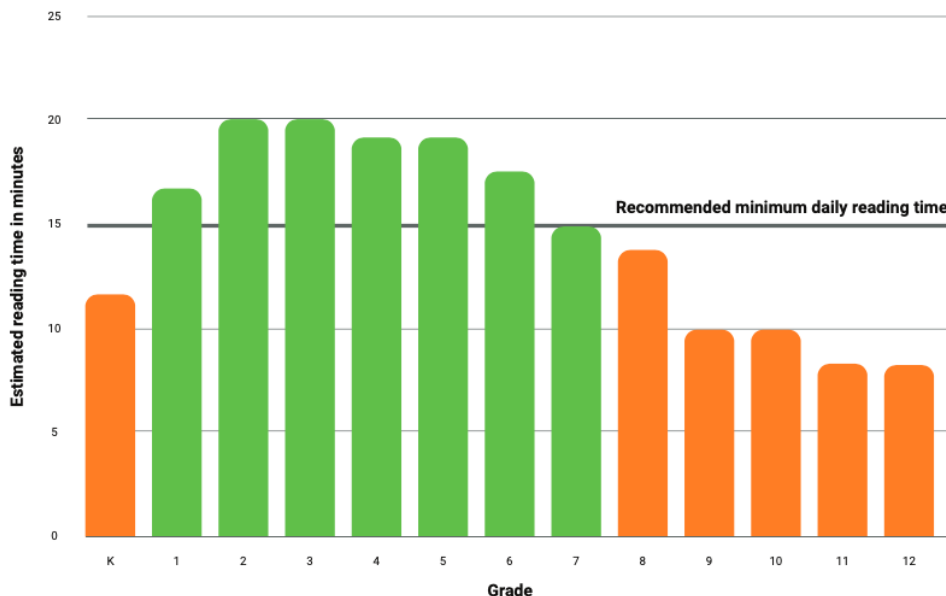
# Research: Most Students Don't Get the Reading Practice They Need

## Quantity: Do students read enough?

Nearly half of students read less than 15 minutes per day—and **reading practice declines sharply in the upper grades**. From elementary through most of middle school, kids generally spend 15 to 20 minutes reading each day. However, reading time starts declining when students enter middle school (grade 6) and continues this downward trend until students are reading just 8 minutes per day (grades 11 and 12).<sup>1</sup>

**What is enough time spent reading?** Research shows students actively engaged in reading for at least 15 minutes per day have notable benefits in general reading ability (Renaissance, 2012), and that reading for 30+ minutes daily can allow for even greater gains (Renaissance, 2017).

### Daily reading time isn't consistent across grades



Only

**51%**

of students read for  
15 minutes or more  
each day



To become proficient readers, students need high-quality instruction and other supports—but reading volume (time) is also nonnegotiable. Having sufficient time and energy devoted to regular practice is one of the hallmarks of skill development in many disciplines (Ericsson, Prietula, & Cokely, 2007; Fogarty, Kerns, & Pete, 2018) and the same is true of reading.

<sup>1</sup> We estimated how long our students are exposed to book-reading by combining number of words read, text difficulty and other data collected by Renaissance.

## Difficulty: Do students read at the right levels?

Students are reading at levels **at the very bottom of the recommended reading ranges for their grades**, and at levels that are **far below real-world materials such as college texts, workforce documents, and popular books and media**.

When the average reading level of all books kids read in each grade in the 2017–2018 school year (blue points on graph) is compared against the recommended reading range for each grade (shaded green area on graph), the data show that students do tend to choose more and more challenging texts as they move from grade to grade—but the increases in difficulty are small and book levels usually hover at the bottom of the recommended reading range.

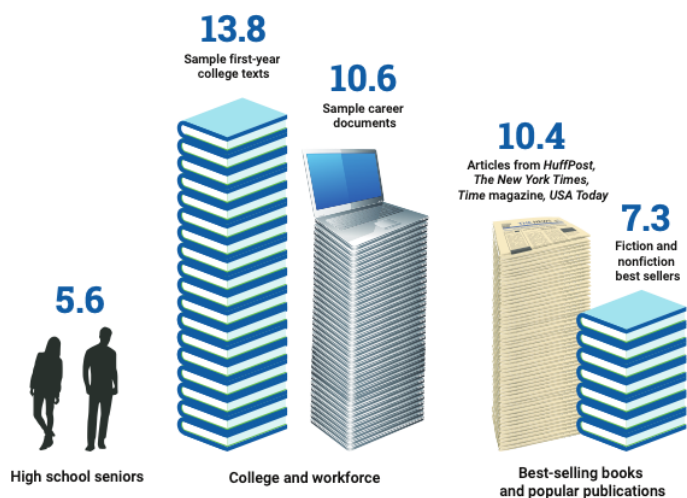
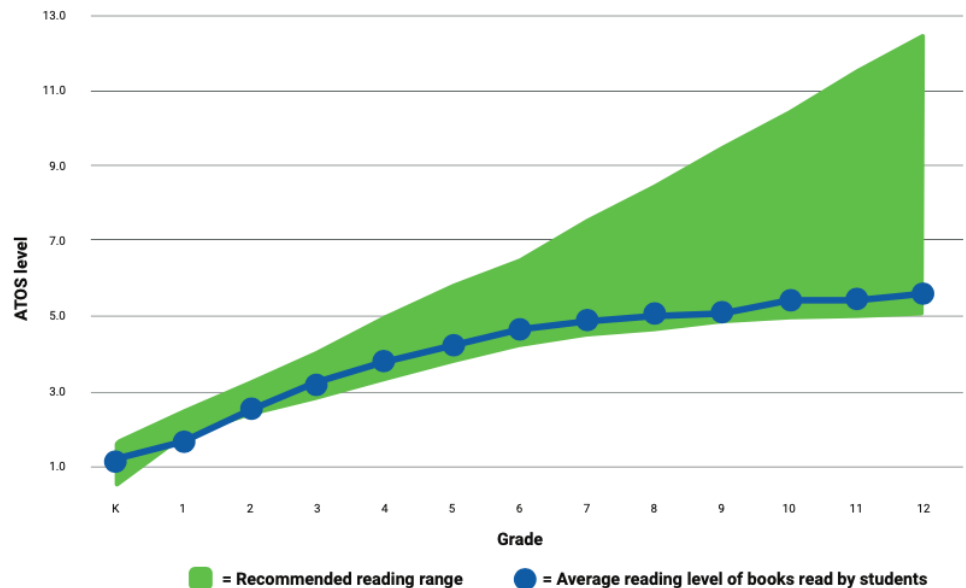
**Challenging academic standards and education advocates (e.g., ACT 2006, 2015), however, place greater emphasis than ever on the challenge level—or text complexity—of what kids read.**

In general, at each grade, the recommended reading ranges tend to get wider, encouraging students to read more challenging texts and to continue reading a breadth of materials within wide ranges of text complexity (Renaissance, 2012). Students need to encounter increasingly complex texts to prepare for future demands, including postsecondary schooling and workplace settings, where prior research has established there exists a substantial gap in difficulty (Williamson, 2006).

In fact, a huge disparity exists between the books high school seniors are reading (ATOS: 5.6), compared to materials they will likely need to comprehend and use upon graduation, such as college texts (13.8), fiction and nonfiction best sellers (7.3), popular media (10.4), and career documents (10.6).<sup>2</sup>

**These two factors studied—quantity (time) and difficulty (reading level)—are key to high-quality independent reading practice.** Research has shown independent reading is most successful when students spend sufficient time reading and are encouraged to read books of appropriate difficulty with comprehension (Borman & Dowling, 2004; Paul, 2003).

### Students read at the low end of recommended grade-level ranges

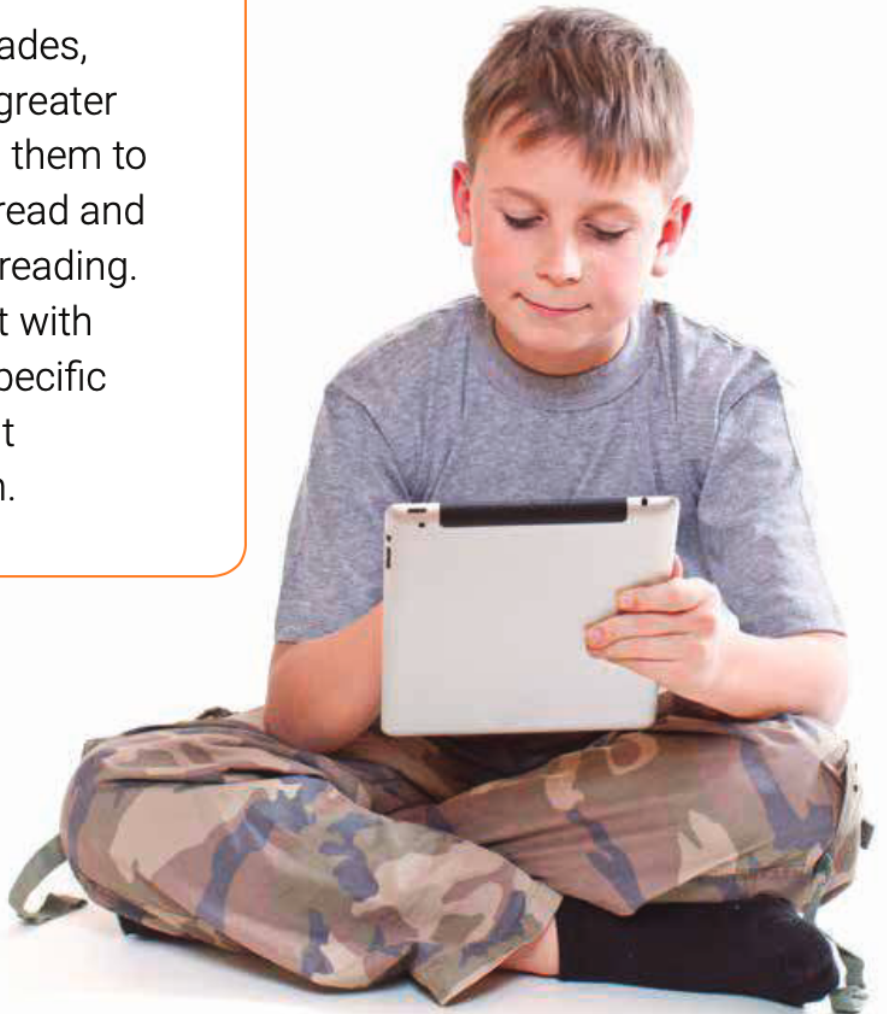


<sup>2</sup> Reading level sources provided in Reference = 51

## What Kids Are Reading

# Grades 3–5

In the intermediate grades, kids are reading with greater automaticity, allowing them to focus less on *how* to read and more on *what* they're reading. They begin to connect with characters, develop specific interests, and seek out additional information.





# Grade 3

During the 2017–2018 school year, 1,338,681 third graders each read, on average, 49.0 books and 186,323 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 3

1	<b>Dog Man Series</b> Dav Pilkey (2.3–2.6, LG, 260L–390L)	SP
2	<b>Charlotte's Web</b> E.B. White (4.4, MG, 680L)	SP
3	<b>Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series</b> Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L)	SP
4	<b>Because of Winn-Dixie</b> Kate DiCamillo (3.9, MG, 670L)	SP
5	<b>A Fine, Fine School</b> Sharon Creech (3.3, LG, 500L)	
6	<b>The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs</b> Jon Scieszka (3.0, LG, 510L)	SP
7	<b>Wolf!</b> Becky Bloom (3.5, LG, 340L)	
8	<b>A Bad Case of Stripes</b> David Shannon (3.8, LG, 610L)	SP
9	<b>Tops &amp; Bottoms</b> Janet Stevens (3.2, LG, 580L)	
10	<b>Dr. Seuss Collection</b> Dr. Seuss (0.6–5.2, LG, 180L–1000L)	SP
11	<b>Captain Underpants Series</b> Dav Pilkey (4.3–5.3, MG, 640L–890L)	SP
12	<b>Stone Fox</b> John Reynolds Gardiner (4.0, MG, 610L)	SP
13	<b>If You Give... Series</b> Laura Numeroff (1.0–2.7, LG, 170L–590L)	SP
14	<b>Bad Kitty Series</b> Nick Bruel (2.8–4.5, LG, 480L–720L)	SP
15	<b>Mrs. Hartwell's Classroom Adventures Series</b> Julie Danneberg (2.4–4.3, LG, 520L–690L)	SP
16	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG)	SP
17	<b>The Trial of Cardigan Jones</b> Tim Egan (3.4, LG)	
18	<b>Miss Nelson Is Missing!</b> Harry Allard (2.7, LG, 340L)	SP
19	<b>The Day the Crayons... Series</b> Drew Daywalt (3.3–3.8, LG, 550L–730L)	SP
20	<b>Alexander Series</b> Judith Viorst (3.4–4.4, LG, 550L–840L)	SP

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 3



Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **Sugar Hero**, Michael Dahl (2.0, LG, 520L)
- **Ninja-rella: A Graphic Novel**, Joey Comeau (3.0, MG, 530L)
- **Tombstone Twins: Soul Mates**, Denise Downer (2.0, MG, 460L)
- **Tom and Jerry: Tiger Cat**, Charles Carney (600L)
- **Titanic**, Melissa Stewart (5.3, LG, 900L) **NF**
- **Zeke Meeks vs the Gruesome Girls**, D.L. Green (3.1, LG, 570L)
- **The Incredibles**, Disney Book Group (530L)
- **The Story of Iron Man**, Catherine Hapka (400L)
- **Bone-Chilling Ghost Stories**, Jen Jones (4.8, MG, 760L) **NF**
- **Haunting Urban Legends**, Megan Cooley Peterson (3.9, MG, 570L) **NF**



## Cross-Curricular Connections (3–5)

### Science: Natural Environments



**Yonder Mountain: A Cherokee Legend**, Robert H. Bushyhead (3.8, LG)



**Follow the Moon Home: A Tale of One Idea, Twenty Kids, and a Hundred Sea Turtles**, Philippe Cousteau (3.2, LG, 590L)



**The Magic School Bus Inside the Earth**, Joanna Cole (3.6, LG, 500L)



**There's No Place Like Space! All About Our Solar System**, Tish Rabe (3.1, LG, 520L)



**Volcanoes!**, Anne Schreiber (4.0, LG, 710L)



**Hottest, Coldest, Highest, Deepest**, Steve Jenkins (4.9, LG, 1000L)



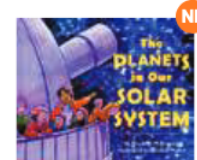
**Cactus Hotel**, Brenda Z. Guiberson (4.7, MG, 860L)



**The Magic School Bus on the Ocean Floor**, Joanna Cole (4.0, LG, 690L)



**The Magic School Bus Blows Its Top**, Gail Herman (3.7, LG, 540L)



**The Planets in Our Solar System**, Franklyn M. Branley (3.4, LG, 480L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## What I'm Reading... And Why

By Peter H. Reynolds, author of *The Dot*

If Cicero were alive today, he might have tweaked his famous proverb to "Bookshelves are a window to the soul."

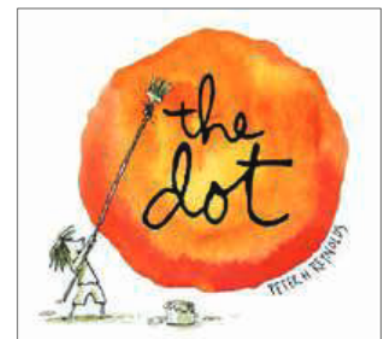
In 50 BC, home libraries were relegated to the wealthy whose collections were tucked away on scrolls often sealed in clay pots to protect from the elements. Today, many of us are lucky to have bookshelves packed with books. These shelves can tell a lot about ourselves. Bookshelves tell stories. Each book is, of course, a story, but also a clue revealing our interests, our experiences, and even our dreams.

The bookshelves in my studio are a collage of the books I have collected and been gifted along my journey. They also are sprinkled with the books I have created (*The Dot*, *Ish*, *The North Star*, *The Word Collector*), including many foreign translations. I have lots of books about art, design, and learning.

I have a few treasured books, including the copy of *Charlie and*

*the Chocolate Factory* in 1970 at age 9, with our own money at Lauriat's bookstore at the Burlington Mall in Massachusetts. This dog-eared, well-loved edition was an important book for me in many ways. All books before this one had been gifts or borrowed from the library.

I was lucky to be born a twin because we both were at the same reading level and almost identical in our interests. Choosing this Roald Dahl book was easy and made even easier because, being a duo, we could split the cost of the handsome, hard-cover edition, which set us back \$3.95. While this "twinvestment" technically belonged to both of us, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* became my book. It became my book with every word I read and every illustration (by the remarkable Joseph Schindelfmann) I poured over.



# Grade 4

During the 2017–2018 school year, 1,356,570 fourth graders each read, on average, 35.2 books and 294,380 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 4

1	<b>Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series</b> Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L)	SP
2	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG)	SP
3	<b>Dog Man Series</b> Dav Pilkey (2.3–2.6, LG, 260L–390L)	SP
4	<b>Fudge Series</b> Judy Blume (3.3–3.6, LG/MG, 470L–560L)	SP
5	<b>Because of Winn-Dixie</b> Kate DiCamillo (3.9, MG, 670L)	SP
6	<b>Captain Underpants Series</b> Dav Pilkey (4.3–5.3, MG, 640L–890L)	SP
7	<b>Smile/Sisters</b> Raina Telgemeier (2.4–2.6, MG, 290L–410L)	NF SP
8	<b>Frindle</b> Andrew Clements (5.4, MG, 830L)	SP
9	<b>Stone Fox</b> John Reynolds Gardiner (4.0, MG, 610L)	SP
10	<b>The One and Only Ivan</b> Katherine Applegate (3.6, MG, 570L)	SP
11	<b>Island of the Blue Dolphins</b> Scott O'Dell (5.4, MG, 1000L)	SP
12	<b>Ghosts</b> Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG, 300L)	SP
13	<b>Shiloh Collection</b> Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (4.4–5.0, MG, 860L–1020L)	SP
14	<b>A Bad Case of Stripes</b> David Shannon (3.8, LG, 610L)	SP
15	<b>The Best Christmas Pageant Ever</b> Barbara Robinson (5.1, MG, 760L)	
16	<b>Dork Diaries Series</b> Rachel Renée Russell (4.2–5.4, MG, 660L–890L)	SP
17	<b>The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs</b> Jon Scieszka (3.0, LG, 510L)	SP
18	<b>Holes</b> Louis Sachar (4.6, MG, 660L)	SP
19	<b>Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series</b> Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L)	SP
20	<b>Charlotte's Web</b> E.B. White (4.4, MG, 680L)	SP

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 4



Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **The Grin in the Dark**, J.A. Darke (4.3, MG, 700L)
- **Jellaby: Monster in the City**, Kean Soo (2.0, MG, 560L)
- **Titanic**, Melissa Stewart (5.3, LG, 900L) NF
- **Because of Winn-Dixie**, Kate DiCamillo (3.9, MG, 670L)
- **Guinea Dog**, Patrick Jennings (3.7, LG, 600L)
- **Hansel & Gretel & Zombies: A Graphic Novel**, Benjamin Harper (2.8, MG, 560L)
- **Zombie Attack!**, Lesley Thompson (410L)
- **Haunting Urban Legends**, Megan Cooley Peterson (3.9, MG, 570L) NF
- **Ninja-rella: A Graphic Novel**, Joey Comeau (3.0, MG, 530L)



## Cross-Curricular Connections (3–5)

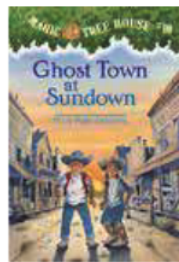
### Social Studies: Pioneer Life



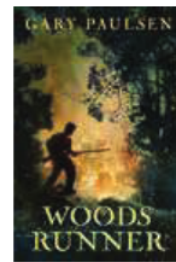
**Sarah, Plain and Tall**, Patricia MacLachlan (3.4, MG, 650L)



**Twister on Tuesday**, Mary Pope Osborne (3.2, LG, 570L)



**Ghost Town at Sundown**, Mary Pope Osborne (3.0, LG, 350L)



**Woods Runner**, Gary Paulsen (5.5, MG+, 870L)



**Davy Crockett Saves the World**, Rosalyn Schanzer (5.0, LG, 1050L)



**What Was the Gold Rush?**, Joan Holub (4.6, MG, 680L)



**Little House on the Prairie Series**, Laura Ingalls Wilder (3.2–6.9, LG/MG, 530L–1080L)



**The Wild, Wild West**, Geronimo Stilton (3.3, MG, 460L)



**Swamp Angel**, Anne Isaacs (5.0, LG, 960L)



**Ranger in Time: Rescue on the Oregon Trail**, Kate Messner (4.5, MG, 690L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## What I'm Reading... And Why

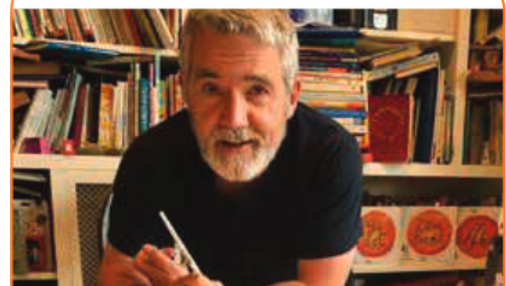
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While reading this book, I remember experiencing, for the first time, the phenomenon I call ILPD (Impending Last Page Dread)—the sudden realization that a book has only a finite number of pages and is about to END! The world the book had conjured—the one I had been a front-row participant in—was about to vanish!

Despite slowing my reading down and savoring each word, the last page appeared. As I read the final words (which were, "Oh, you wait and see!"), another sensation crept in. It was the desire to immediately open the book and begin reading again! The concept of reading a chapter book multiple times hadn't even occurred to me until *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

Scanning someone's bookshelves, while a great peek into the soul, can only reveal so much. There are still stories hidden within. *When did you find this book? How did it end up on your shelf? What did this book make you think and feel?* Perhaps it is a book you bought and never read: *Why haven't you read it yet?*

Your relationship to each book has its own story, making bookshelves



### Peter H. Reynolds

Peter H. Reynolds is a *New York Times* best-selling author and illustrator. Peter's books *The Dot*, *Ish*, *The Word Collector*, *Happy Dreamer*, and soon-to-be-released *Say Something*, among many others, inspire children and "grown-up children" with messages about authentic learning, creativity, bravery, empathy, and courageous self-expression. Peter lives in the Boston area, where he founded The

# Grade 5

During the 2017–2018 school year, 1,306,686 fifth graders each read, on average, 26.4 books and 374,374 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 5

1	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG)	SP	11	<b>Dork Diaries Series</b> Rachel Renée Russell (4.2–5.4, MG, 660L–890L)	SP
2	<b>Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series</b> Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L)	SP	12	<b>The Sign of the Beaver</b> Elizabeth George Speare (4.9, MG, 770L)	SP
3	<b>Number the Stars</b> Lois Lowry (4.5, MG, 670L)	SP	13	<b>Ghosts</b> Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG, 300L)	SP
4	<b>Brian's Saga Series</b> Gary Paulsen (5.5–5.9, MG/MG+, 990L–1140L)	SP	14	<b>The Chronicles of Narnia Series</b> C.S. Lewis (2.8–5.9, LG/MG, 790L–970L)	SP
5	<b>Frindle</b> Andrew Clements (5.4, MG, 830L)	SP	15	<b>Bud, Not Buddy</b> Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG, 950L)	SP
6	<b>Dog Man Series</b> Dav Pilkey (2.3–2.6, LG, 260L–390L)	SP	16	<b>A Series of Unfortunate Events Series</b> Lemony Snicket (6.2–7.4, MG, 980L–1370L)	SP
7	<b>Esperanza Rising</b> Pam Muñoz Ryan (5.3, MG, 750L)	SP	17	<b>Harry Potter Series</b> J.K. Rowling (3.9–8.8, MG/MG+, 500L–1230L)	SP
8	<b>Smile/Sisters</b> Raina Telgemeier (2.4–2.6, MG, 290L–410L)	NF SP	18	<b>Bridge to Terabithia</b> Katherine Paterson (4.6, MG, 810L)	SP
9	<b>Holes</b> Louis Sachar (4.6, MG, 660L)	SP	19	<b>Captain Underpants Series</b> Dav Pilkey (4.3–5.3, MG, 640L–890L)	SP
10	<b>Tuck Everlasting</b> Natalie Babbitt (5.0, MG, 770L)	SP	20	<b>Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series</b> Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L)	SP

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 5



Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **Bone-Chilling Ghost Stories**, Jen Jones (4.8, MG, 760L) NF
- **The Grin in the Dark**, J.A. Darke (4.3, MG, 700L)
- **The Emancipation of Grandpa Sandy Wills**, Cheryl Wills (880L)
- **National Geographic Kids Myths Busted!**, Emily Krieger (1030L) NF
- **Haunting Urban Legends**, Megan Cooley Peterson (3.9, MG, 570L) NF
- **Escape from Alcatraz: The Mystery of the Three Men Who Escaped from the Rock**, Eric Braun (6.2, MG, 890L) NF
- **Sleepover Girls: Delaney vs. the Bully**, Jen Jones (5.2, MG, 790L)
- **The Jungle Book**, Rudyard Kipling (7.5, MG, 1050L)
- **Grimm's Fairy Tales**, Jacob Grimm (9.9, MG, 1060L)

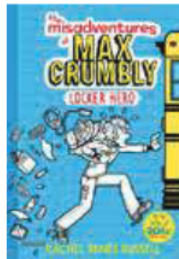


## Cross-Curricular Connections (3–5)

### Social-Emotional Learning: Bullying



**Wonder Series**, R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG)



**The Misadventures of Max Crumbly: Locker Hero**, Rachel Renée Russell (4.6, MG, 660L)



**Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon**, Patty Lovell (3.5, LG, 560L)



**The Recess Queen**, Alexis O'Neill (3.0, LG, 550L)



**The Bully from the Black Lagoon**, Mike Thaler (2.6, LG, 580L)



**Yoon and the Jade Bracelet**, Helen Recorvits (2.9, LG)



**Save Me a Seat**, Sarah Weeks (4.8, MG, 780L)



**Star Wars: The Phantom Bully**, Jeffrey Brown (3.9, MG, 630L)



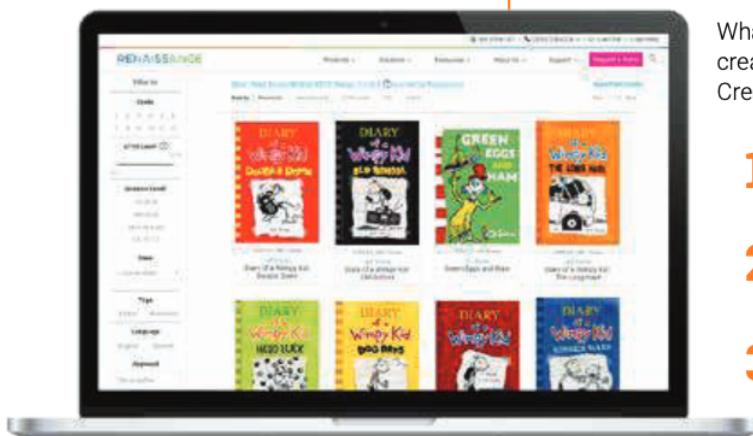
**Restart**, Gordon Korman (5.1, MG, 730L)



**Fuzzy Mud**, Louis Sachar (5.0, MG, 700L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Create a Custom Report



What are kids in your state reading? Find out when you create your own custom *What Kids Are Reading* report! Create your own custom report in three simple steps:

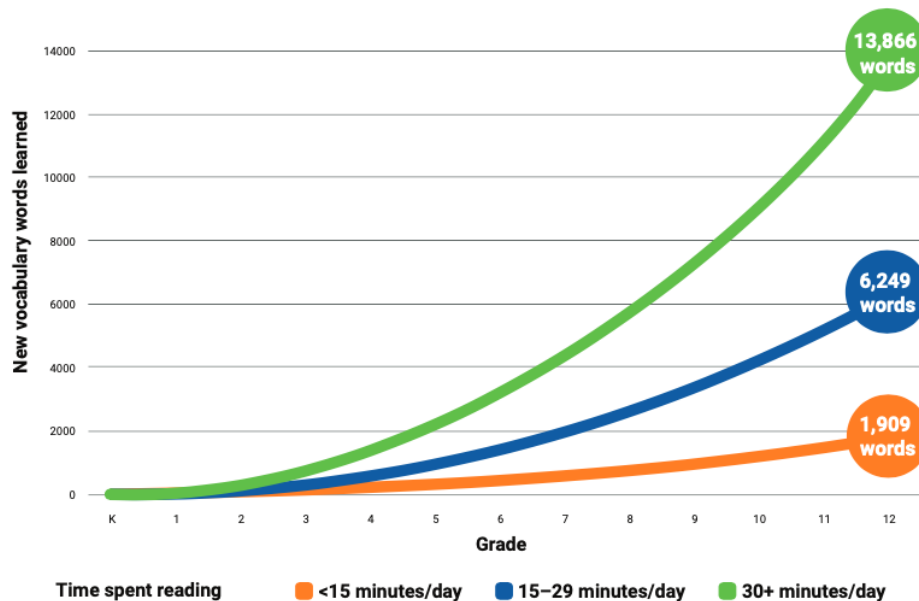
1. Visit [www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom](http://www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom) to access the Custom Report Builder tool.
2. Use the filters to select state, grade, reading level, and more.
3. Click "Generate My Report" for a PDF you can save or print.

# Research: Why Reading Practice Is Essential for Literacy Growth

## More reading equates to greater vocabulary gains...

A huge gap exists between the number of vocabulary words learned by students who read for less than 15 minutes daily versus 30+ minutes per day—a **difference of almost 12,000 words**. Students who read under 15 minutes per day over the course of their schooling learned an estimated 1,909 new words, whereas students who read for 30+ minutes per day learned a whopping 13,866 words.

## More time spent reading spells greater vocabulary growth



**7x**

Students who read 30 or more minutes per day learn seven times more vocabulary words compared to students who read less than 15 minutes per day.

Unfortunately, the data show that the kids who read for a half hour or more daily represent less than 20% of students—about 50% of students read under the 15-minute mark.

**Why is reading time so important?** When kids practice reading, they are not merely repeating the words on the page. They are decoding as they read, sharpening their reading fluency, using context and other clues to determine meaning, simultaneously gaining and using background knowledge, learning about structure and voice, learning new vocabulary, and so forth.

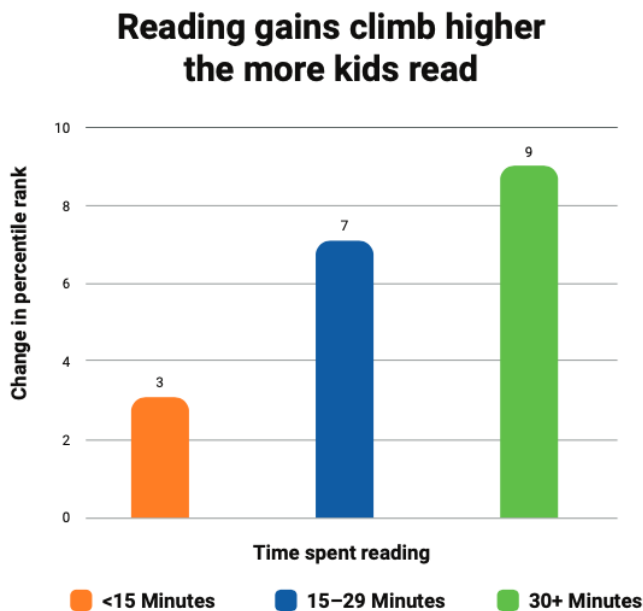
While reading, students will acquire roughly one new vocabulary word for every 1,000 words they read (Anderson & Nagy, 1993). Thus, students learn thousands of words over the course of their schooling from reading practice alone—not from spelling tests or looking up words in a dictionary.

As a result, how much time students spend reading each day determines just how many thousands of words are learned. And learning new vocabulary, in particular, plays a key role in determining whether students understand the text they are currently reading and the texts they will encounter in the future.

## ... and greater gains in reading achievement

**In addition to monumental vocabulary growth, the more time kids spend reading, the higher they score in reading.**

Research has shown "reading volume is actually central to the development of reading proficiencies" (Allington, 2014) and that independent reading helps students improve achievement in reading and other areas of study (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Stanovich & Cunningham, 1993).



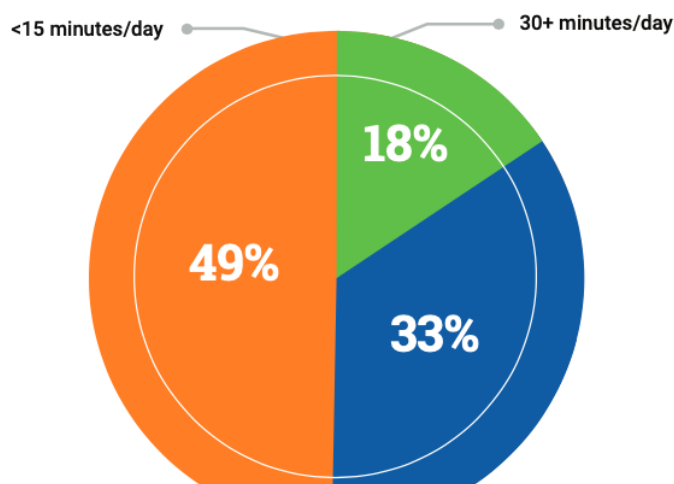
In the 2017–2018 school year, students who read less than 15 minutes per day experienced reading achievement gains of only 3 percentile rank (PR) points (49 PR to 52 PR). Those who read 15 to 29 minutes per day started with the same average PR (49) but ended 7 points higher at 56.

Students who read 30+ minutes per day started with a slightly higher average PR of 50, and then grew 9 PRs to land at 59. These students made triple the gains of the kids who read for less than 15 minutes per day.

**However, only about one in six students read the 30+ minutes per day needed for maximum PR gains, while two in six kids read for 15 to 29 minutes per day.**

- 18% of kids read for 30+ minutes/day
- 33% of kids read for 15–29 minutes/day
- 49% of kids read for less than 15 minutes/day

## Nearly half of all students read less than 15 minutes per day



## What Kids Are Reading

# Grades 6–8

The middle grades are when students' reading time starts to decline, even as grade-level reading expectations steadily rise.<sup>3</sup> Kids who don't read enough don't just miss out on the enjoyment reading can bring; they miss out on gaining new vocabulary, additional background knowledge, a wider world view, and greater empathy for others.



## Popular 6–8 Reads, State by State



Source: Renaissance Accelerated Reader®, 2017–2018 school year

Of the top 100 books read in grades 6–8, the book covers displayed in the map represent the books where the reading popularity in a state was in greatest contrast to the nationwide popularity ranking for that book. These are signature books for each state because kids who live there read the book shown far more often than it's read in the nation as a whole.

## About the Books

Motivation is key for the sustained, daily reading practice students need. In middle school, it's more important than ever to continually help students discover new books or topics that will keep them motivated to read. In this section, you'll find three types of book lists for your middle schoolers:

- For each grade, the top 20 books kids read last school year
- For each grade, 10 popular digital reads
- For the grade range, three cross-curricular lists—focusing on science, social studies, and social-emotional learning topics—each with 10 titles

## How to Use the Lists

Each book list contains information to help hone your book search. Titles that are part of a book series have been grouped as a single entry, to allow as many unique book recommendations as possible. An NF icon **NF** indicates nonfiction titles, while an SP icon **SP** denotes titles also available to read and take quizzes on in Spanish. Each book entry also includes an ATOS® level, Interest level, and Lexile® measure to help guide your readers to books at their individual reading levels.

For more information about the data used for this report, see About the Report, p. 46.

# Grade 6

During the 2017–2018 school year, 869,110 sixth graders each read, on average, 15.9 books and 391,419 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 6

1	<b>Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series</b> Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L)	SP	11	<b>The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963</b> Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG, 920L)	SP
2	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG)	SP	12	<b>Holes</b> Louis Sachar (4.6, MG, 660L)	SP
3	<b>Brian's Saga Series</b> Gary Paulsen (5.5–5.9, MG/MG+, 990L–1140L)	SP	13	<b>Hunger Games Trilogy</b> Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L)	SP
4	<b>Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series</b> Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L)	SP	14	<b>Smile/Sisters</b> Raina Telgemeier (2.4–2.6, MG, 290L–410L)	NF SP
5	<b>Number the Stars</b> Lois Lowry (4.5, MG, 670L)	SP	15	<b>A Series of Unfortunate Events Series</b> Lemony Snicket (6.2–7.4, MG, 980L–1370L)	SP
6	<b>Freak the Mighty/The Mighty</b> Rodman Philbrick (5.5, UG, 930L)		16	<b>Dork Diaries Series</b> Rachel Renée Russell (4.2–5.4, MG, 660L–890L)	SP
7	<b>A Wrinkle in Time Quintet</b> Madeleine L'Engle (4.7–5.2, MG, 700L–850L)	SP	17	<b>Where the Red Fern Grows</b> Wilson Rawls (4.9, MG, 700L)	
8	<b>Tuck Everlasting</b> Natalie Babbitt (5.0, MG, 770L)	SP	18	<b>Harry Potter Series</b> J.K. Rowling (3.9–8.8, MG/MG+, 500L–1230L)	SP
9	<b>Giver Quartet</b> Lois Lowry (4.9–5.7, MG/MG+, 680L–760L)	SP	19	<b>Ghosts</b> Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG, 300L)	SP
10	<b>Bud, Not Buddy</b> Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG, 950L)	SP	20	<b>Walk Two Moons</b> Sharon Creech (4.9, MG, 770L)	SP

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 6



Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **Creepy Urban Legends**, Tim O'Shei (4.0, MG, 640L) NF
- **Ninja-rella: A Graphic Novel**, Joey Comeau (3.0, MG, 530L)
- **Fallout**, Todd Strasser (4.5, MG, 740L)
- **The Grin in the Dark**, J.A. Darke (4.3, MG, 700L)
- **I Funny: A Middle School Story**, James Patterson (3.9, MG, 610L)
- **Ice Dogs**, Terry Lynn Johnson (4.6, MG, 690L)
- **Bone-Chilling Ghost Stories**, Jen Jones (4.8, MG, 760L) NF
- **Paintball Punk**, Sean Tulien (2.5, MG, 520L)
- **A Year Without Autumn**, Liz Kessler (3.8, MG, 570L)
- **National Geographic Kids Myths Busted!**, Emily Krieger (1030L) NF

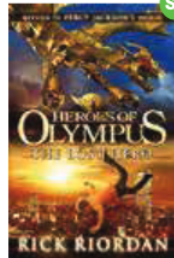


## Cross-Curricular Connections (6–8)

### Social Studies: Ancient Greece



**Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series**, Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L)



**The Heroes of Olympus Series**, Rick Riordan (4.5–5.2, MG, 640L–690L)



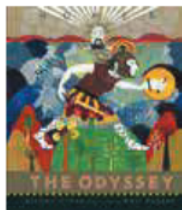
**Trials of Apollo Series**, Rick Riordan (5.1–5.5, MG, 680L–790L)



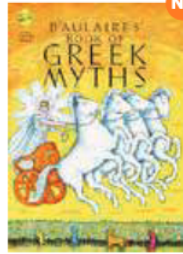
**The Sea of Monsters: The Graphic Novel**, Robert Venditti (2.9, MG, 400L)



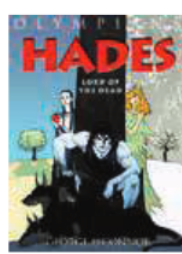
**The Pegasus Mythic Collection**, Kate O'Hearn (4.4–4.8, MG, 620L–650L)



**The Odyssey**, Gillian Cross (5.1, MG, 740L)



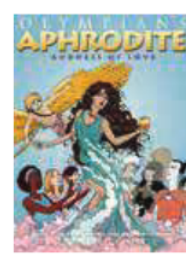
**D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths**, Ingri d'Aulaire (6.6, MG, 1070L)



**Hades: Lord of the Dead**, George O'Connor (4.0, MG, 710L)



**The Greek Gods**, Bernard Evslin (5.6, MG, 840L)



**Aphrodite: Goddess of Love**, George O'Connor (4.3, MG, 660L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## What I'm Reading... And Why

By Janell Cannon, author of *Stellaluna*

I am interested in current events but don't have a TV, so I spend a lot of computer time reading internet news from a diverse range of international, national, and local agencies. I read periodicals such as *Science News*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Funny Times*. I keep many interesting books by the bedside and choose which one to read each night, sort of like choosing a TV channel. Do I have the mental energy to absorb challenging ideas? Or do I just want brain Fritos (i.e., *Funny Times*)?

Currently I am finishing one of the most meticulously written biographies I have ever read, *Jane Goodall: The Woman Who Redefined Man*, by Dale Peterson. It is nearly 700 pages long and covers Dr. Goodall's life from her 1934 birth to the mid-2000s. I will be following this up with Goodall's *Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behavior*, her first major digest of her studies after 26 years of observing chimps in Tanzania. I could dedicate this whole essay to how Dr. Goodall challenged conventional scientific approaches to animal

have emotions, the ability to think, and distinct personalities. I happen to agree, and this is a subject dear to my heart, but I am compelled to include another recently read

book that gave me a much more conscious appreciation of hardcopy books themselves.

In recent years, I thought my faltering memory and increasingly distractible mind were entirely due to aging. However, I have met many young people who describe very similar experiences. I discovered Thomas Friedman's book, *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations*, which describes this syndrome, and



# Grade 7

During the 2017–2018 school year, 607,021 seventh graders each read, on average, 10.7 books and 366,876 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 7

1	<b>Giver Quartet</b> Lois Lowry (4.9–5.7, MG/MG+, 680L–760L)	SP
2	<b>The Outsiders</b> S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG, 750L)	SP
3	<b>Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series</b> Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L)	SP
4	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG)	SP
5	<b>Hunger Games Trilogy</b> Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L)	SP
6	<b>A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story</b> Linda Sue Park (5.0, MG+, 720L)	
7	<b>Freak the Mighty/The Mighty</b> Rodman Philbrick (5.5, UG, 930L)	
8	<b>Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series</b> Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L)	SP
9	<b>Rikki-Tikki-Tavi</b> Rudyard Kipling (5.0, LG, 810L)	SP
10	<b>The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963</b> Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG, 920L)	SP
11	<b>Maze Runner Series</b> James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L)	SP
12	<b>Brian's Saga Series</b> Gary Paulsen (5.5–5.9, MG/MG+, 990L–1140L)	SP
13	<b>A Wrinkle in Time Quintet</b> Madeleine L'Engle (4.7–5.2, MG, 700L–850L)	SP
14	<b>Tangerine</b> Edward Bloor (4.3, MG, 680L)	
15	<b>Divergent Series</b> Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L)	SP
16	<b>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</b> John Boyne (5.8, UG, 1000L)	SP
17	<b>Harry Potter Series</b> J.K. Rowling (3.9–8.8, MG/MG+, 500L–1230L)	SP
18	<b>A Christmas Carol (Unabridged)</b> Charles Dickens (6.7, MG, 560L)	
19	<b>Everything, Everything</b> Nicola Yoon (4.4, UG, 610L)	
20	<b>The Fault in Our Stars</b> John Green (5.5, UG, 850L)	SP

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 7



Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **Beastly Basketball**, Lauren Johnson (2.8, MG, 350L)
- **Creepy Urban Legends**, Tim O'Shei (4.0, MG, 640L) **NF**
- **King of Pop: The Story of Michael Jackson**, Terry Collins (4.4, MG, 590L) **NF**
- **Middle School, The Worst Years of My Life**, James Patterson (4.5, MG, 700L)
- **My Life with the Walter Boys**, Ali Novak (5.0, UG, 750L)
- **The Summer I Wasn't Me**, Jessica Verdi (4.7, UG, 730L)
- **Bone-Chilling Ghost Stories**, Jen Jones (4.8, MG, 760L) **NF**
- **Call Me Hope**, Gretchen Olson (4.6, MG, 720L)



## Cross-Curricular Connections (6–8)

### Science: The Universe



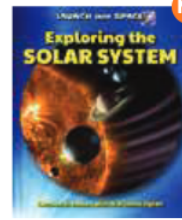
**The Moon**, Seymour Simon (4.4, MG, 730L)



**The Secrets of Earth**, Emma Carlson Berne (5.6, MG, 910L)



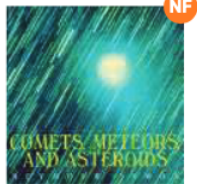
**Galaxies**, Seymour Simon (6.8, MG, 1010L)



**Exploring the Solar System**, Carmen Bredeson (4.3, MG)



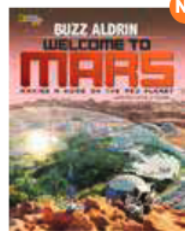
**Solar and Lunar Eclipses**, Ruth Owen (5.7, MG)



**Comets, Meteors, and Asteroids**, Seymour Simon (6.4, MG, 1050L)



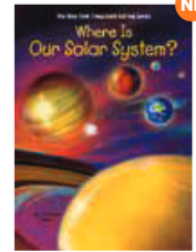
**The Sun**, Danielle R. Stille (5.5, MG)



**Welcome to Mars: Making a Home on the Red Planet**, Buzz Aldrin (6.1, MG, 900L)



**The Milky Way and Other Galaxies**, Megan Kopp (5.1, MG, 740L)



**Where Is Our Solar System?**, Stephanie Sabol (5.3, MG, 780L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## What I'm Reading... And Why

cont'd from p. 29

In short, Friedman takes the reader through a tutorial on Moore's Law—how overall processing power of computers doubles every two years—and tech's role in bringing the entire world's concerns right into our face at warp speed, as well as the increasingly unpredictable and extreme environmental changes that are occurring on our planet. People are on overload, and many are feeling like they cannot keep up.

He concludes with a reminder that cultivating basic human decency—tolerance, inclusiveness, respect, honesty, and trust—is key in steering our powerful new tech tools toward advancement of all that is good in humanity and our environment, rather than its destruction.

Ultimately, Friedman's *Thank You for Being Late* gave me a fresh take on the psychological and emotional sanctuary that a bound book can offer. It is free of hyperlinks that beckon me into infinite rabbit holes, and thus creates a quiet space for a scattered mind to find focus and clarity. I read slowly, often paraphrasing what I've just read vocally, in order to secure an idea into memory that can be accessed later—without consulting Google.



Photo by I.F. Emery

### Janell Cannon

Janell Cannon's picture books have won many awards and are beloved around the world. Before she became a full-time creator of books for children, she was a graphic artist and designed and produced summer reading programs at her local public library. Born and raised in Minnesota, Janell now lives in Southern California.

# Grade 8

During the 2017–2018 school year, 553,289 eighth graders each read, on average, 9.2 books and 370,802 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 8

1	<b>The Outsiders</b> S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG, 750L)	SP
2	<b>Giver Quartet</b> Lois Lowry (4.9–5.7, MG/MG+, 680L–760L)	SP
3	<b>The Tell-Tale Heart</b> Edgar Allan Poe (7.3, UG, 1350L)	
4	<b>Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series</b> Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L)	SP
5	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG)	SP
6	<b>The Diary of Anne Frank</b> Frances Goodrich (3.1, MG, 1020L)	
7	<b>Hunger Games Trilogy</b> Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L)	SP
8	<b>Night</b> Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L)	NF
9	<b>The Monkey's Paw</b> W.W. Jacobs (6.5, UG, 420L)	
10	<b>The Boy in the Striped Pajamas</b> John Boyne (5.8, UG, 1000L)	SP
11	<b>To Kill a Mockingbird</b> Harper Lee (5.6, UG, 790L)	SP
12	<b>Maze Runner Series</b> James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L)	SP
13	<b>Everything, Everything</b> Nicola Yoon (4.4, UG, 610L)	
14	<b>Divergent Series</b> Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L)	SP
15	<b>Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series</b> Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L)	SP
16	<b>The Fault in Our Stars</b> John Green (5.5, UG, 850L)	SP
17	<b>Thirteen Reasons Why</b> Jay Asher (3.9, MG+, 550L)	
18	<b>Harry Potter Series</b> J.K. Rowling (3.9–8.8, MG/MG+, 500L–1230L)	SP
19	<b>The Call of the Wild</b> Jack London (8.0, MG, 1120L)	SP
20	<b>Freak the Mighty/The Mighty</b> Rodman Philbrick (5.5, UG, 930L)	

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 8



Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **Fire and Ice: A Mermaid's Journey**, Julie Gilbert (3.4, MG, 490L)
- **Have a Hot Time, Hades!**, Kate McMullan (3.8, MG, 610L)
- **The Sighting: A Mermaid's Journey**, Julie Gilbert (3.4, MG, 470L)
- **Cellar**, Natasha Preston (4.2, UG, 570L)
- **The Wonderful Wizard of Oz**, L. Frank Baum (7.0, MG, 1030L)
- **Neptune's Trident: A Mermaid's Journey**, Julie Gilbert (3.3, MG, 470L)
- **If You Really Loved Me**, Anne Schraff (4.3, UG, 650L)
- **Broken**, CJ Lyons (5.0, MG+, 750L)
- **Truly, Madly, Deadly**, Hannah Jayne (5.1, UG, 800L)



## Cross-Curricular Connections (6–8)

### Social-Emotional Learning: Grief



**Last Man Out**, Mike Lupica (5.2, MG, 840L)



**Wonderstruck**, Brian Selznick (5.4, MG, 830L)



**Home Team Series**, Mike Lupica (4.9–5.2, MG, 780L–810L)



**The Thing About Jellyfish**, Ali Benjamin (5.0, MG, 740L)



**Lost in the Sun**, Lisa Graff (4.5, MG+, 700L)



**Love & Gelato**, Jenna Evans Welch (4.2, MG+, 640L)



**Wild Life**, Cynthia DeFelice (5.5, MG, 860L)



**Tell Me Three Things**, Julie Buxbaum (4.7, UG, 700L)



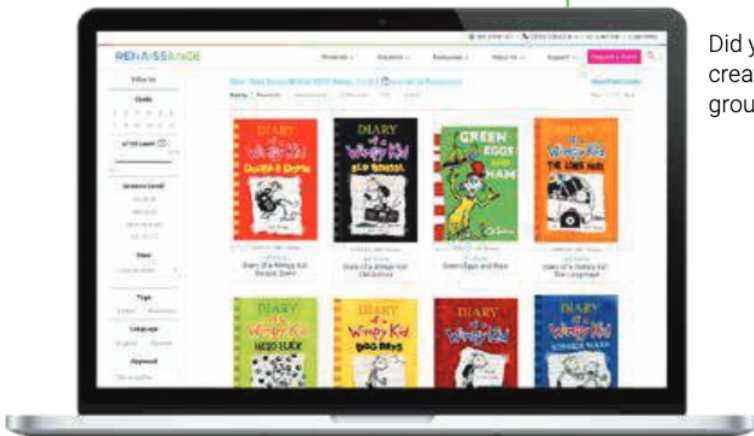
**I Heart You, You Haunt Me**, Lisa Schroeder (3.2, UG, 510L)



**Slob**, Ellen Potter (5.0, MG+, 740L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Create a Custom Report



Did you know you can use *What Kids Are Reading* data to create custom book lists for individual students or reading groups? Create your own custom report in three simple steps:

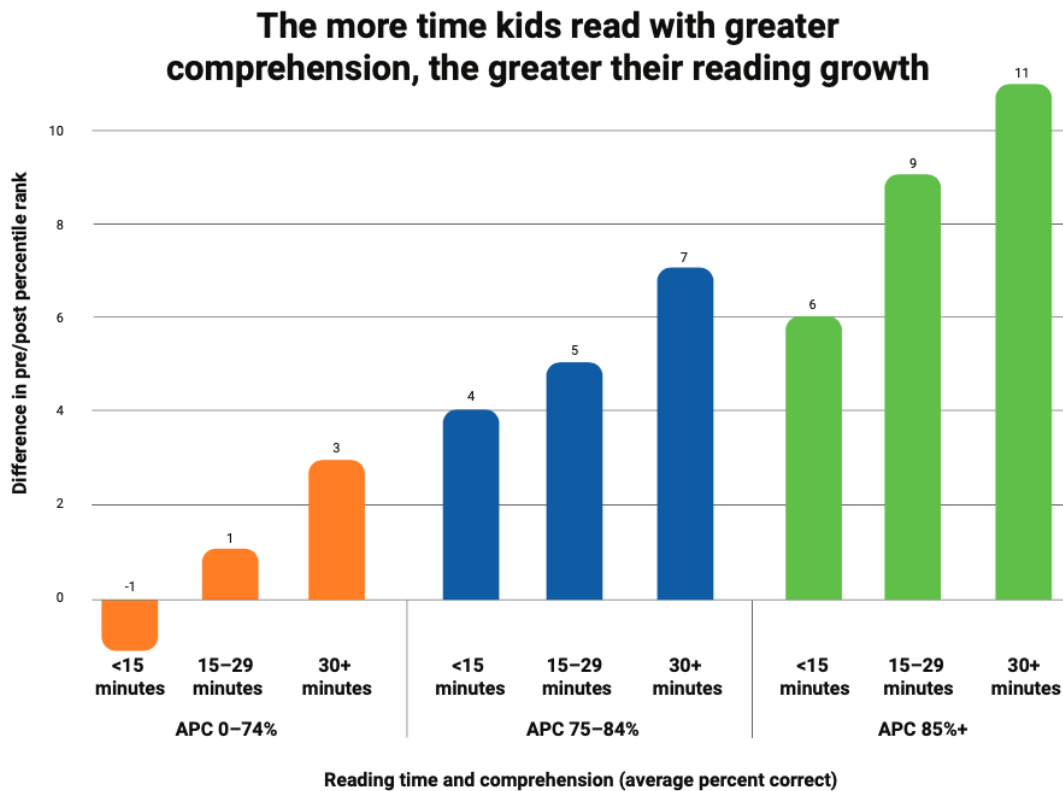
1. Visit [www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom](http://www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom) to access the Custom Report Builder tool.
2. Use the filters to select state, grade, reading level, and more.
3. Click "Generate My Report" for a PDF you can save or print.

# Research: How to Get the Most Out of Reading Practice

## High comprehension maximizes each reading minute

There are only six or seven precious hours in a typical American school day. How can educators help ensure students get the most out of every minute spent reading? To get the most out of student reading practice, educators must ensure students not only put in enough time, but also understand what they read. **When students read for longer and with higher levels of comprehension, reading growth is optimized.**

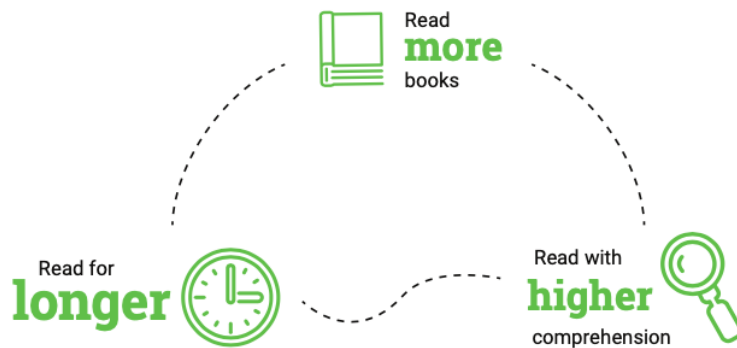
Students who read for the longest time (30+ minutes per day, on average) and with the highest comprehension (average percent correct, or APC, of 85% on short literal comprehension quizzes) had the greatest percentile rank (PR) gains, jumping up 11 PRs. Compare this to the 7 PRs gained by students reading for the same amount of time but with less understanding. Students who read 30+ minutes per day with the lowest comprehension gained even less.



A study by ACT (2006) found that students who had better literal comprehension also had better inferential comprehension (i.e., critical thinking) to the same degree. Another study (Renaissance, 2015) showed that measures of literal comprehension were meaningful predictors of overall reading achievement. These findings suggest that accurately assessing students' reading comprehension can also provide a good sense of their potential for critical thinking and reading growth—and that encouraging students to put effort into reading with high comprehension (and to read materials at the appropriate challenge level) may be among the most powerful activities teachers can do (Renaissance, 2015).

## Students with personalized goals

vs. those without set goals



### Personalized goals maximize student motivation

Kids with set reading goals read and comprehend more—and when they meet their goals, these kids also make gains in reading achievement.

Throughout this report, we've seen that kids who read more make far greater gains in vocabulary development and reading achievement; however, most students don't dedicate enough time to this important task (see p. 25). We've also learned that much of students' reading is within their recommended reading range, but typically just within the lower boundary (p. 15). Students have far to go to meet the reading demands they'll encounter upon graduation.

The simple act of setting goals can prove a powerful way to boost students' reading practice. When comparing students using the same reading practice program (Renaissance Accelerated Reader®), **students with personalized goals read more books, spent more time reading, and scored higher on reading comprehension quizzes.**

To motivate students to obtain the most reading growth, it's important for teachers to set personalized reading goals for each student, monitor their progress, and provide feedback. Research has long shown that these practices are associated with improvements in performance in a wide variety of fields, and reading is no different (Harrison, 2013; MacNamara, Holmes, & Collins, 2006; Shapiro & Gard, 2014; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997). Our own analysis determined that **students who set and met independent reading practice goals demonstrated gains in reading achievement.**



When teachers set goals for their students,

**88% of kids meet their personalized goals**



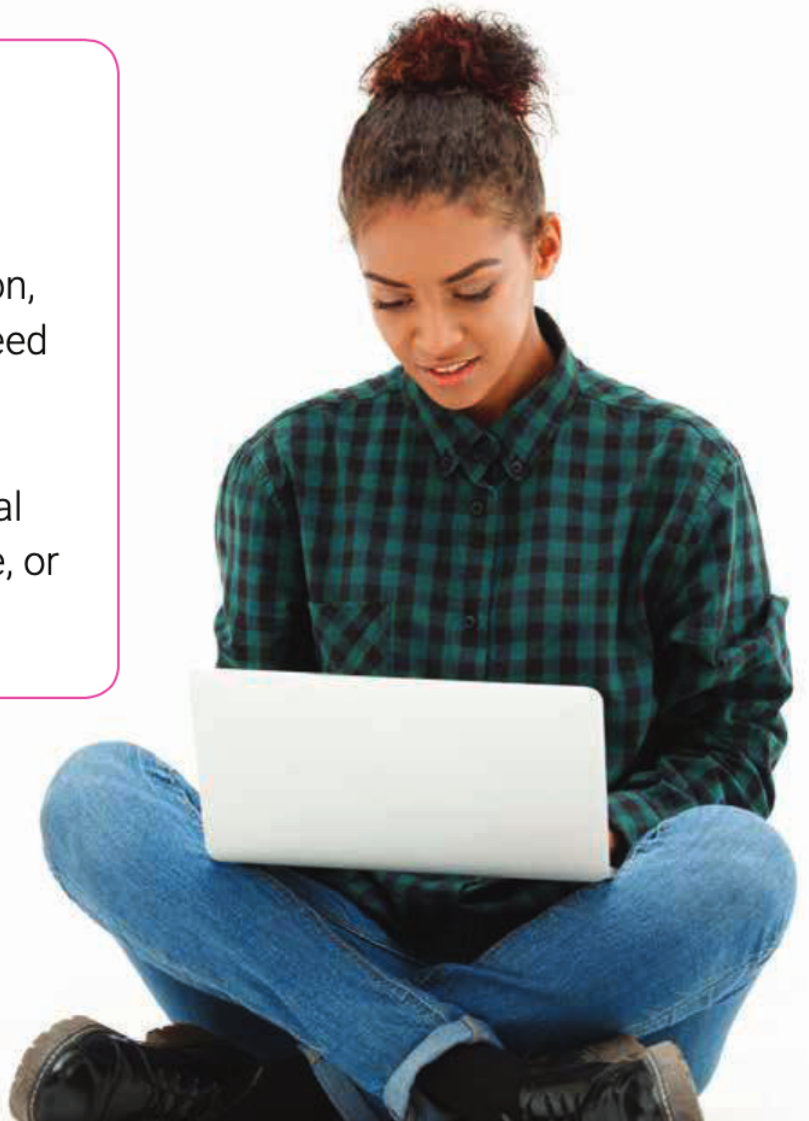
However, more than

**one-third of students have no set goals**

## What Kids Are Reading

# Grades 9–12

In high school, students begin to prepare for their lives beyond secondary schooling. After graduation, these young adults will need the skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of higher education, technical schooling, military service, or the workforce.



## Popular 9–12 Reads, State by State



Source: Renaissance Accelerated Reader®, 2017–2018 school year

Of the top 100 books read in grades 9–12, the book covers displayed in the map represent the books where the reading popularity in a state was in greatest contrast to the nationwide popularity ranking for that book. These are signature books for each state because kids who live there read the book shown far more often than it's read in the nation as a whole.

## About the Books

During high school, students should not only read often with understanding (see analysis, p. 34), but also in ways that stretch their thinking and challenge them at varying levels of difficulty. Yet students often finish school reading at levels far below the materials they'll encounter in college and careers (p. 15). In this section, you'll find three types of book lists for your high schoolers:

- For each grade, the top 20 books kids read last school year
- For each grade, 10 popular digital reads
- For the grade range, three cross-curricular lists—focusing on science, social studies, and social-emotional learning topics—each with 10 titles

## How to Use the Lists

Each book list contains information to help hone your book search. Titles that are part of a book series have been grouped as a single entry, to allow as many unique book recommendations as possible. An NF icon **NF** indicates nonfiction titles, while an SP icon **SP** denotes titles also available to read and take quizzes on in Spanish. Each book entry also includes an ATOS® level, Interest level, and Lexile® measure to help guide your readers to books at their individual reading levels.

For more information about the data used for this report, see About the Report, p. 46.

# Grade 9

During the 2017–2018 school year, 116,360 ninth graders each read, on average, 5.9 books and 265,216 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 9

1	<b>To Kill a Mockingbird</b> Harper Lee (5.6, UG, 790L) SP	
2	<b>Of Mice and Men</b> John Steinbeck (4.5, UG, 630L) SP	
3	<b>Romeo and Juliet</b> William Shakespeare (8.6, UG) SP	
4	<b>The Most Dangerous Game</b> Richard Connell (5.3, UG)	
5	<b>Night</b> Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L) NF	
6	<b>Hunger Games Trilogy</b> Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L) SP	
7	<b>The Outsiders</b> S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG, 750L) SP	
8	<b>Animal Farm</b> George Orwell (7.3, UG, 1370L) SP	
9	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG) SP	
10	<b>Everything, Everything</b> Nicola Yoon (4.4, UG, 610L)	
11	<b>Thirteen Reasons Why</b> Jay Asher (3.9, MG+, 550L)	
12	<b>Maze Runner Series</b> James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L) SP	
13	<b>Giver Quartet</b> Lois Lowry (4.9–5.7, MG/MG+, 680L–760L) SP	
14	<b>The Fault in Our Stars</b> John Green (5.5, UG, 850L) SP	
15	<b>The Cask of Amontillado</b> Edgar Allan Poe (7.3, UG, 700L)	
16	<b>Lord of the Flies</b> William Golding (5.0, UG, 770L) SP	
17	<b>Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series</b> Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L) SP	
18	<b>Fahrenheit 451</b> Ray Bradbury (5.2, UG, 890L) SP	
19	<b>Divergent Series</b> Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L) SP	
20	<b>The House on Mango Street</b> Sandra Cisneros (4.5, UG, 870L) SP	

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 9



Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian**, Sherman Alexie (4.0, UG, 600L)
- **Romeo and Juliet**, Martin Powell (3.1, MG, 450L) SP
- **Cellar**, Natasha Preston (4.2, UG, 570L)
- **Peter Pan**, Blake Hoena (3.0, MG, 520L)
- **Fire and Ice: A Mermaid's Journey**, Julie Gilbert (3.4, MG, 490L)
- **Impact: The Story of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks**, Matt Doeden (4.8, MG, 610L) NF
- **Little Brother**, Cory Doctorow (5.9, UG, 900L)
- **Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**, Robert Louis Stevenson (1010L) SP
- **Dear Nobody: The True Diary of Mary Rose**,



## Cross-Curricular Connections (9–12)

### Social Studies: World War II



**The Book Thief,** Markus Zusak (5.1, UG, 730L)



**Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption,** Laura Hillenbrand (7.7, UG, 1010L)



**Between Shades of Gray,** Ruta Sepetys (3.6, MG+, 490L)



**Farewell to Manzanar,** Jeanne Houston (6.7, MG, 1040L)



**Salt to the Sea,** Ruta Sepetys (4.5, UG, 560L)



**Number the Stars,** Lois Lowry (4.5, MG, 670L)



**I Survived: The Nazi Invasion, 1944,** Lauren Tarshis (5.1, MG, 740L)



**I Survived: The Bombing of Pearl Harbor, 1941,** Lauren Tarshis (4.3, MG, 620L)



**All the Light We Cannot See,** Anthony Doerr (6.2, UG, 880L)



**Catch-22,** Joseph Heller (7.1, UG, 1140L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## What I'm Reading... And Why

By Gary Paulsen, author of the *Brian's Saga* Series

I don't know if it's more accurate to say that I have a short attention span or that I am endlessly curious; both could apply, I suppose, because I am reading about half a dozen books at the moment. I always read a few books at a time, a combination of old favorites that are fresh to me with every read and new titles, both fiction and nonfiction.

I carry dog-eared copies of Patrick O'Brien books with me always. There's a copy or two on the floor of my truck, another title in my suitcase, and at least two more in my laptop case. I've read them multiple times over the years, and I look forward to page 1 each time. They never get old to me; I am as engrossed reading them now as I was the first time years ago, actually decades ago if I stop to think.

I feel the same way about Dickens. Every few years I study one or two of his books. Years ago, the one time I was in London, I had the privilege of eating dinner at his great-great granddaughter's house and she let me use his spoon. I still get a little choked up thinking about that.

Michael Connelly just keeps getting better. I don't usually like crime thrillers, but he's kept me coming back to his books, and I've been pleasantly surprised by how appealing I've found his Lincoln lawyer books and the new female lead, Ballard.



# Grade 10

During the 2017–2018 school year, 90,818 tenth graders each read, on average, 5.2 books and 268,983 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 10

1	<b>Night</b> Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L) <span>NF</span>	11	<b>Things Fall Apart</b> Chinua Achebe (6.2, UG, 890L)
2	<b>To Kill a Mockingbird</b> Harper Lee (5.6, UG, 790L) <span>SP</span>	12	<b>Fahrenheit 451</b> Ray Bradbury (5.2, UG, 890L) <span>SP</span>
3	<b>Of Mice and Men</b> John Steinbeck (4.5, UG, 630L) <span>SP</span>	13	<b>Anthem</b> Ayn Rand (6.1, UG, 880L)
4	<b>Julius Caesar</b> William Shakespeare (10.8, UG)	14	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG) <span>SP</span>
5	<b>Lord of the Flies</b> William Golding (5.0, UG, 770L) <span>SP</span>	15	<b>Divergent Series</b> Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L) <span>SP</span>
6	<b>Animal Farm</b> George Orwell (7.3, UG, 1370L) <span>SP</span>	16	<b>The Metamorphosis</b> Franz Kafka (10.5, UG, 1340L)
7	<b>Hunger Games Trilogy</b> Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L) <span>SP</span>	17	<b>The Fault in Our Stars</b> John Green (5.5, UG, 850L) <span>SP</span>
8	<b>Maze Runner Series</b> James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L) <span>SP</span>	18	<b>Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series</b> Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L) <span>SP</span>
9	<b>Everything, Everything</b> Nicola Yoon (4.4, UG, 610L)	19	<b>The Great Gatsby</b> F. Scott Fitzgerald (7.3, UG, 1010L) <span>SP</span>
10	<b>Thirteen Reasons Why</b> Jay Asher (3.9, MG+, 550L)	20	<b>Macbeth</b> William Shakespeare (10.9, UG)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 10



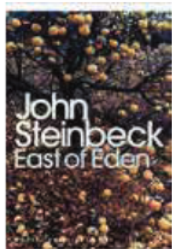
Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **Romeo and Juliet**, Martin Powell (3.1, MG, 450L) SP
- **Bram Stoker's Dracula**, Michael Burgan (2.6, MG, 540L)
- **The Metamorphosis**, Franz Kafka (10.5, UG, 1340L)
- **Muhammad Ali: American Champion**, Michael Burgan (3.8, MG, 570L) NF
- **The Fall of the House of Usher**, Edgar Allen Poe (11.4, UG, 1420L)
- **Great White Sharks: On the Hunt**, Janet Riehecky (3.0, MG, 550L) NF
- **King of Pop: The Story of Michael Jackson**, Terry Collins (4.4, MG, 590L) NF
- **Ghosts: The Unsolved Mystery**, Lisa Wade McCormick (3.7, MG, 610L) NF
- **Creepy Urban Legends**, Tim O'Shei (4.0, MG, 640L) NF



## Cross-Curricular Connections (9–12)

### Social-Emotional Learning: Conflict



**East of Eden**, John Steinbeck (5.3, UG, 700L)



**Breathing Underwater**, Alex Flinn (3.9, UG, 510L)



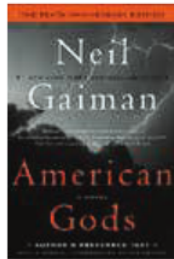
**Among the Brave**, Margaret Peterson Haddix (5.1, MG, 750L)



**Adrift**, Paul Griffin (4.1, UG, 580L)



**The Boyfriend List**: (15 Guys, 11 Shrink Appointments, 4 Ceramic Frogs and Me, Ruby Oliver), E. Lockhart (4.7, UG, 760L)



**American Gods**, Neil Gaiman (5.3, UG, 840L)



**The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things**, Carolyn Mackler (5.3, UG, 790L)



**Bottled Up**, Jaye Murray (3.7, UG, 600L)



**Whale Talk**, Chris Crutcher (6.1, UG, 1000L)



**Hidden Talents**, David Lubar (4.2, UG, 630L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## What I'm Reading... And Why

cont'd from p. 39

Hemingway's *Moveable Feast* and Melville's *Moby Dick* are two more old favorites that I rediscover every few years. I didn't read Shakespeare in high school and I only went to one quarter of college, so his plays and sonnets came to me late in life and I'm making my way through his works one paperback at a time.

I'm a sucker for nonfiction. I can't find enough good biographies and deep dives into history. I have learned from books about the historical significance of salt, various military battles, and the history of aviation—I've always been fascinated by the Wright Brothers, and I count *Fate is the Hunter* by Ernest K. Gann as an all-time favorite. I never did get through *A Brief*

I just finished a genuinely magnificent book, *On Desperate Ground: The Marines at the Reservoir, the Korean War's Greatest Battle*. Hampton Sides wrote it. His wife interviewed me years ago, so I was able to get in touch with him directly and tell him how blown away I was by his work.

Ted Taylor was a friend of mine for years, and I was recently asked to provide a foreword for a new edition of his classic, *The Cay*. I cried as I finished reading that book again because I could hear my old friend's voice.

My old friend. I don't mean just Ted but all the titles I've mentioned, and so many more I couldn't begin to list.



### Gary Paulsen

Gary Paulsen is the three-time Newbery Honor award-winning author of over 200 books for children, teens, and adults. He divides his time between his ranch in the mountains of New Mexico, a sailboat off the coast of California, and his

# Grade 11

During the 2017–2018 school year, 71,330 eleventh graders each read, on average, 4.8 books and 254,687 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 11

1	<b>The Crucible</b> Arthur Miller (4.9, UG)	
2	<b>The Great Gatsby</b> F. Scott Fitzgerald (7.3, UG, 1010L)	SP
3	<b>Of Mice and Men</b> John Steinbeck (4.5, UG, 630L)	SP
4	<b>The Scarlet Letter (Unabridged)</b> Nathaniel Hawthorne (11.7, UG, 1280L)	SP
5	<b>Maze Runner Series</b> James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L)	SP
6	<b>To Kill a Mockingbird</b> Harper Lee (5.6, UG, 790L)	SP
7	<b>Hunger Games Trilogy</b> Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L)	SP
8	<b>Thirteen Reasons Why</b> Jay Asher (3.9, MG+, 550L)	
9	<b>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Unabridged)</b> Mark Twain (6.6, MG+, 980L)	
10	<b>Everything, Everything</b> Nicola Yoon (4.4, UG, 610L)	
11	<b>Divergent Series</b> Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L)	SP
12	<b>The Catcher in the Rye</b> J.D. Salinger (4.7, UG, 790L)	SP
13	<b>A Raisin in the Sun</b> Lorraine Hansberry (5.5, UG)	
14	<b>Fahrenheit 451</b> Ray Bradbury (5.2, UG, 890L)	SP
15	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG)	SP
16	<b>Night</b> Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L)	NF
17	<b>The Fault in Our Stars</b> John Green (5.5, UG, 850L)	SP
18	<b>Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series</b> Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L)	SP
19	<b>Dave Pelzer's Memoirs</b> Dave Pelzer (5.1–6.9, UG, 720L–1130L)	NF
20	<b>The Twilight Saga</b> Stephenie Meyer (4.5–7.6, UG, 670L–720L)	SP

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 11



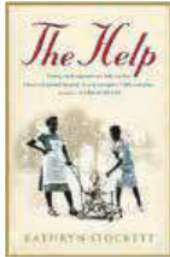
Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **The Fall of the House of Usher**, Edgar Allen Poe (11.4, UG, 1420L)
- **Twilight**, Stephenie Meyer (4.9, UG, 720L)
- **All About the Green: The Teens' Guide to Finding Work and Making Money**, Kara McGuire (1000L) NF
- **Black Beauty**, Anna Sewell (3.8, MG, 650L)
- **The Little Match Girl**, Hans Christian Andersen (4.4, LG, 470L)
- **Heart of Darkness**, Joseph Conrad (9.0, UG, 970L)
- **Jane Goodall: Animal Scientist**, Katherine Krohn (4.4, MG, 650L) NF
- **The Impact of Technology in Music**, Matthew Anniss (1110L) NF
- **Romeo and Juliet**, Martin Powell (3.1, MG, 450L) SP
- **I'm with Stupid**, Geoff Herbach (3.2, UG, 510L)



## Cross-Curricular Connections (9–12)

### Social Studies: Civil Rights



**The Help**, Kathryn Stockett (4.4, UG, 730L)



**Go Set a Watchman**, Harper Lee (5.9, UG, 870L)



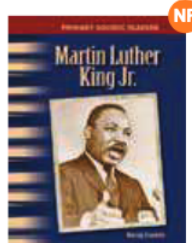
**March Series**, John Lewis (4.6–5.9, MG/MG+, 760L–980L)



**The Civil Rights Movement**, Jim Ollhoff (6.6, MG, 980L)



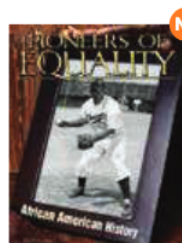
**I Have a Dream**, Karen Price Hossell (7.5, MG)



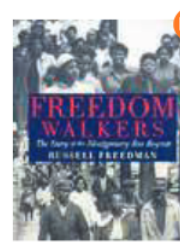
**Martin Luther King Jr.**, Wendy Conklin (5.3, MG, 750L)



**The Silence of Our Friends**, Mark Long (2.7, UG)



**Pioneers of Equality**, Jim Ollhoff (6.3, MG, 930L)



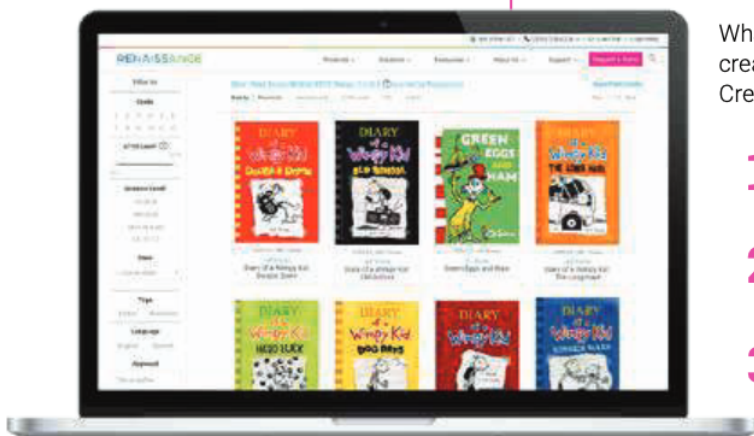
**Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott**, Russell Freedman (7.7, MG, 1110L)



**Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice**, Phillip Hoose (6.8, MG, 1000L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Create a Custom Report



What are kids in your state reading? Find out when you create your own custom *What Kids Are Reading* report! Create your own custom report in three simple steps:

1. Visit [www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom](http://www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom) to access the Custom Report Builder tool.
2. Use the filters to select state, grade, reading level, and more.
3. Click "Generate My Report" for a PDF you can save or print.

# Grade 12

During the 2017–2018 school year, 53,421 twelfth graders each read, on average, 4.7 books and 246,612 words.



## Top 20 Books Overall: Grade 12

1	<b>Hamlet</b> William Shakespeare (10.5, UG)	
2	<b>Macbeth</b> William Shakespeare (10.9, UG)	
3	<b>Frankenstein (Unabridged)</b> Mary Shelley (12.4, UG, 1040L)	
4	<b>Animal Farm</b> George Orwell (7.3, UG, 1370L)	SP
5	<b>1984</b> George Orwell (8.9, UG, 1090L)	SP
6	<b>The Kite Runner</b> Khaled Hosseini (5.2, UG, 840L)	
7	<b>Night</b> Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L)	NF
8	<b>Of Mice and Men</b> John Steinbeck (4.5, UG, 630L)	SP
9	<b>Thirteen Reasons Why</b> Jay Asher (3.9, MG+, 550L)	
10	<b>Hunger Games Trilogy</b> Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L)	SP
11	<b>The Great Gatsby</b> F. Scott Fitzgerald (7.3, UG, 1010L)	SP
12	<b>Brave New World</b> Aldous Huxley (7.5, UG, 870L)	
13	<b>Lord of the Flies</b> William Golding (5.0, UG, 770L)	SP
14	<b>Maze Runner Series</b> James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L)	SP
15	<b>Wonder Series</b> R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG)	SP
16	<b>Everything, Everything</b> Nicola Yoon (4.4, UG, 610L)	
17	<b>Divergent Series</b> Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L)	SP
18	<b>Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series</b> Rick Riordan (2.7–6.7, MG, 370L–990L)	SP
19	<b>The Glass Castle: A Memoir</b> Jeannette Walls (5.9, UG, 1010L)	NF
20	<b>The Metamorphosis</b> Franz Kafka (10.5, UG, 1340L)	

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## Popular Digital Reads: Grade 12



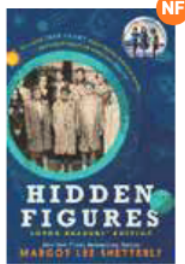
Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

- **Frankenstein**, Emily Hutchinson (4.2, UG, 510L)
- **Aircraft**, Andrew Solway (5.8, MG, 850L) NF
- **Great White Sharks: On the Hunt**, Janet Riehecky (3.0, MG, 550L) NF
- **William Shakespeare**, Jennifer Bassett (590L) NF
- **Macbeth**, Martin Powell (3.3, MG, 600L)
- **Cars and Motorcycles**, John Townsend (6.2, MG, 940L) NF
- **Black Widow Beauty**, Anne Schraff (4.1, UG, 640L)
- **The Fall of the House of Usher**, Edgar Allen Poe (11.4, UG, 1420L)
- **Unsolved Crime Mysteries**, Sean Stewart Price (5.3, MG, 800L) NF
- **All About the Green: The Teens' Guide to Finding Work and Making Money**, Kara McGuire (1000L) NF

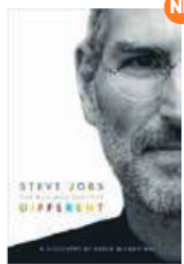


## Cross-Curricular Connections (9–12)

### Science: Technology



**Hidden Figures: Young Readers' Edition**, Margot Lee Shetterly (8.2, MG, 1120L)



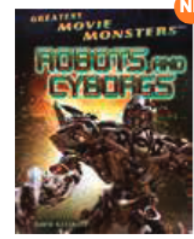
**Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different**, Karen Blumenthal (8.2, MG+, 1110L)



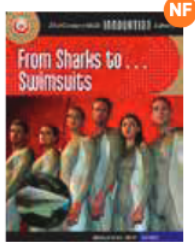
**SCRATCHbot**, Adam Woog (6.5, MG, 930L)



**Discover Drones**, Douglas Hustad (4.7, MG, 760L)



**Robots and Cyborgs**, David Kassnoff (8.2, MG)



**From Sharks to... Swimsuits**, Wil Mara (7.3, MG, 1120L)



**Bill Gates: Microsoft Founder and Philanthropist**, Marylou Morano Kjelle (5.5, MG, 790L)



**The First Moon Landing**, Thomas K. Adamson (4.2, MG, 630L)



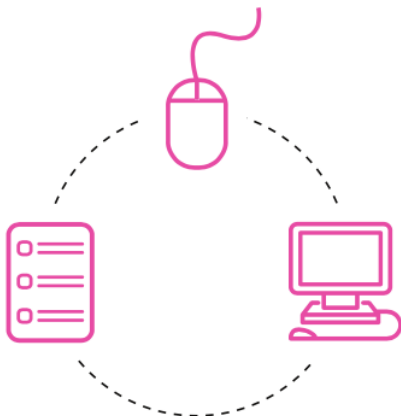
**M1126 Stryker**, David Baker (8.2, MG)



**The Radio**, Louise Spilsbury (6.7, MG, 1080L)

Title, Author (ATOS® level, Interest level, Lexile® measure)

## More Great Resources



- Visit the *What Kids Are Reading* website for our Custom Report Builder tool, additional research analyses, and much more: [www.renaissance.com/wkar](http://www.renaissance.com/wkar).
- Read the Renaissance Blog for the latest education research, practical strategies from fellow educators, and insights from experts: [www.renaissance.com/blog](http://www.renaissance.com/blog).
- Watch free webinars on topics such as English Learners, Response to Intervention (RTI), and personalized instruction: [www.renaissance.com/webinars](http://www.renaissance.com/webinars).

# About the Report

*For more than a decade, the annual What Kids Are Reading report has provided educators, families, and communities insights into students' reading habits.*

This year's report draws from two data sources: Renaissance Accelerated Reader® data, which tracks the books and articles (print and digital) that students have read from start to finish, and Renaissance myON® Reader data, which monitors student reading on a personalized digital library platform. Combined, these two data sources provide insight into millions of students' reading habits.<sup>4</sup>

No other study captures student reading behavior on this scale.

## How to Use This Report

*What Kids Are Reading* is designed to help you find great reads for the students you support—because every text is an opportunity for a child to fall in love with reading.

Start by looking at the book lists for your students' current grade to see which books are most popular with their peers. For readers who are looking for more of a challenge, look ahead to the next grade or two. For students who are reading below grade level, look for titles on their grade-level list with lower ATOS® or Lexile® measures. The cross-curricular connections lists, which include science, social studies, and social-emotional learning titles, are provided for grade bands rather than individual grades, so browse forward and backward a few pages to find all the cross-curricular content for each grade grouping.

Remember that students should play an active role in selecting reading materials. Research has shown that as students grow as readers, it is increasingly important they have a say in what they read (Allington, 2012; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Worthy & McKool, 1996). Choice is motivating for students and helps foster a lasting love of reading.

Students of all ages love a good read aloud—and children are often able to comprehend more complex material when

they hear it read aloud than when they read it independently. Helping students access literature they are interested in but may be unable to read on their own is a great way to foster a positive relationship between students and reading.

In addition to the book lists, the report includes data-driven reading tips and additional insights into student's reading habits. Three research and analysis sections dive into our data to examine the reading experiences of students who started the 2017–2018 school year demonstrating typical performance (with percentile rank scores between 35 and 65).

When perusing this report, we suggest that you and your students consider several factors, including text complexity and Interest level as well as content, structure, student motivation, and background knowledge, when selecting a book to read.

For even more options, use the digital *What Kids Are Reading* tool to create customized book lists by state, language, and other factors. Find the tool at: [www.renaissance.com/wkar](http://www.renaissance.com/wkar).

**Text complexity:** Studies have shown that students learn more when reading texts at or above their independent reading level (Renaissance, 2015). Two of the most popular ways to measure a text's complexity or difficulty level are the Renaissance ATOS Readability Formula and the Lexile Framework® for Reading. Both measures put readers and texts on the same scale to help in matching students with reading materials at their individual levels.

The ATOS Readability Formula considers three important predictors of text difficulty: average sentence length, average word length, and average word-difficulty level. ATOS is reported on a grade-level scale—for example, an ATOS level of 5.4 indicates a text could likely be read by a fifth-grade student in their fourth month of the school year. Texts can be analyzed for free at [www.renaissance.com/products/practice/accelerated-reader-360/atos-and-text-complexity/](http://www.renaissance.com/products/practice/accelerated-reader-360/atos-and-text-complexity/)

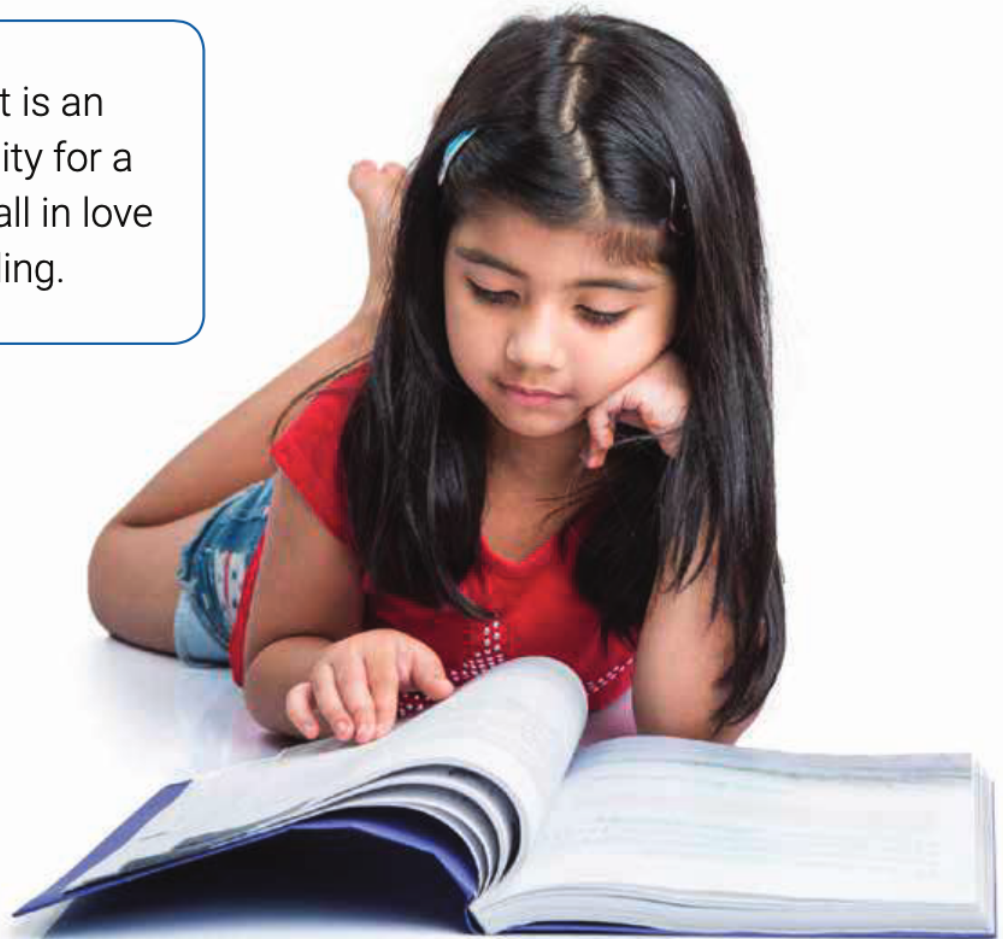
<sup>4</sup> Please note: Renaissance is deeply committed to protecting school and student data. For all publications, we go to great lengths to provide aggregated data that is useful to educators, families, and researchers, but stop well short of releasing information that could identify any district, school, teacher, or student. For more information about our data security and confidentiality practices, see [www.renaissance.com/privacy-policy](http://www.renaissance.com/privacy-policy). We also recognize that not all student reading is

The Lexile Analyzer® evaluates text complexity by measuring text characteristics, such as sentence length and word difficulty. The outcome is a Lexile measure—a number followed by an L, which can range from below 0L for beginning readers to above 1600L for advanced texts. A chart depicting Lexile reader measure ranges according to grade levels is available at [www.lexile.com/educators/grade-range](http://www.lexile.com/educators/grade-range). For more information and to analyze texts for free, visit [www.lexile.com/analyzer](http://www.lexile.com/analyzer).

Lexile measures found in this report were provided by the developer of the Lexile Framework, MetaMetrics®, Inc.

**Interest level:** Interest levels indicate the sophistication and maturity level of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG for lower grades (K–3), MG for middle grades (4–8), MG+ for middle grades plus (6 and up), and UG for upper grades (9–12). While interest levels are based on publisher recommendations, whether a text is appropriate for a student is a local decision best made by educators, parents/guardians, and students. An Interest level is merely a helpful guideline.

Every text is an  
opportunity for a  
child to fall in love  
with reading.



## About the Data: Renaissance Accelerated Reader

Accelerated Reader is a research-based reading practice program that equips teachers with unparalleled insight into independent reading practice, personalized goal-setting tools, activities that span a variety of skills and text types, and a worldwide community of support.

**How Accelerated Reader works:** For independent reading, the teacher first sets personalized reading goals for each student, focusing on key factors for successful reading practice: quantity (time spent reading), quality (comprehension), and difficulty (text complexity level). Students then select and read a book or article; once they are finished, they complete a short Accelerated Reader practice quiz. The digital quizzes provide students with immediate feedback, which is also shared with the teacher, about their comprehension level and number of words read.

With quizzes for nearly 200,000 books and new quizzes constantly being added, Accelerated Reader offers a vast array of reading options. In addition, a book discovery shelf within Accelerated Reader provides personalized suggestions to help students find their next great read.

**The data in this report:** For this report, we studied the Accelerated Reader reading records for 8.7 million students in grades K–12 who read 289 million books during the 2017–2018 school year (see table 1). These students attended 28,321 schools, spanning all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The top books by grade lists and cross-curricular connections lists are drawn from this data set.

**Table 1.** Students, books, and words by grade (Accelerated Reader database, 2017–2018 school year)

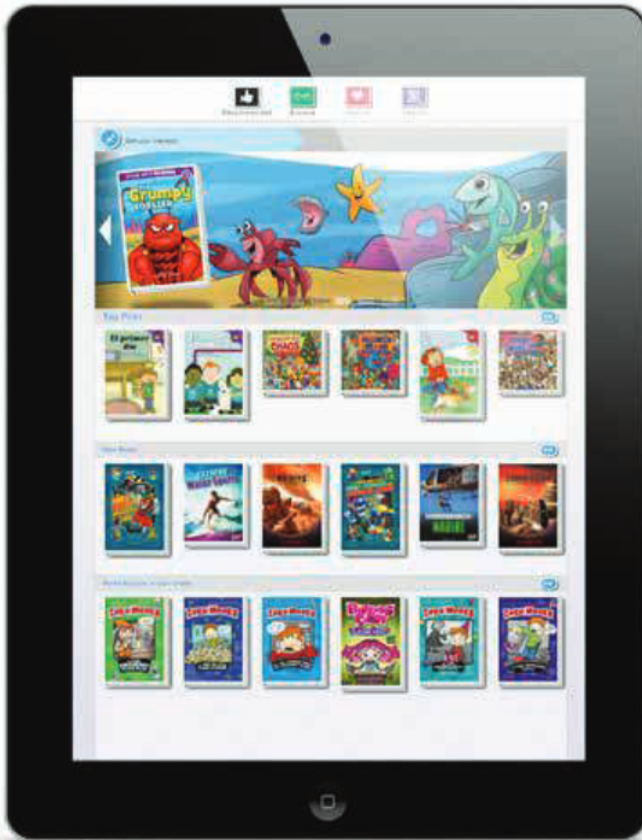
Grade	Students	Books read	Average books read per student	Average words read by students
<b>K</b>	244,019	5,497,941	22.5	7,628
<b>1</b>	896,355	39,679,527	44.3	25,620
<b>2</b>	1,213,752	69,355,447	57.1	83,576
<b>3</b>	1,338,681	65,530,857	49.0	186,323
<b>4</b>	1,356,570	47,744,424	35.2	294,380
<b>5</b>	1,306,686	34,503,969	26.4	374,374
<b>6</b>	869,110	13,806,193	15.9	391,419
<b>7</b>	607,021	6,499,794	10.7	366,876
<b>8</b>	553,289	5,069,121	9.2	370,802
<b>9</b>	116,360	687,779	5.9	265,216
<b>10</b>	90,818	470,705	5.2	268,983
<b>11</b>	71,330	345,699	4.8	254,687
<b>12</b>	53,421	253,680	4.7	246,612
<b>K–12</b>	<b>8,717,412</b>	<b>289,445,136</b>		

This massive Accelerated Reader report sample, although one of convenience, includes a diverse group of students, roughly representative of US schools (see table 2).

**Table 2.** Study demographics reflect national percentages <sup>5</sup>

Race/ethnicity		
	Report sample	US
White	51%	49%
Black	14%	16%
Asian	4%	5%
Indian	1%	1%
Hispanic	30%	26%
Two or more races	–	3%
Free/reduced-price lunch		
	Report sample	US
Yes	55%	52%
No	45%	48%
English Learner		
	Report sample	US
Yes	9%	10%
No	91%	90%
School characteristic: Locale		
	Report sample	US
Rural	30%	19%
Suburban	27%	40%
Urban	25%	30%
Town	18%	11%

## About the Data: Renaissance myON Reader



The myON Reader digital library has more than 13,000 available books from a variety of publishers.

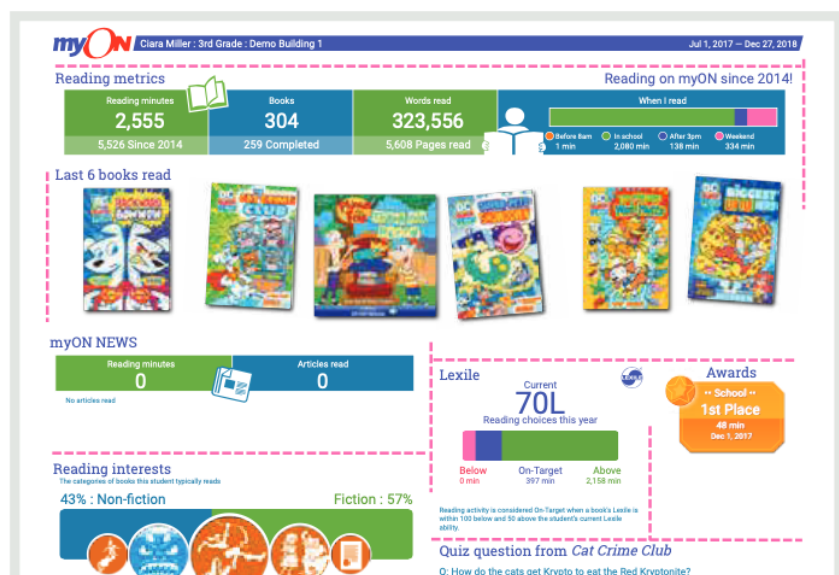
myON Reader is a student-centered, personalized literacy platform that offers unlimited access to thousands of enhanced digital books. We also offer Renaissance myON News, powered by News-O-Matic, which gives students authentic, age-appropriate reporting on timely topics and current events.

**How myON Reader works:** After students take quick assessments that identify their Lexile reading measure and interests, myON Reader matches them with “just-right” books. Teachers can assign books or encourage students to self-select independent reading materials from as many as 13,000 digital books, including graphic novels, picture books, and Spanish-language texts.

Thanks to myON Reader’s robust set of interactive literacy tools, students can interact with myON’s digital texts in ways that would not be possible with shared physical texts or e-book subscriptions. At the same time, teachers can easily monitor students’ engagement and growth to help keep all learners on track for literacy success.

**The data in this report:** For this report, we studied the 102,661,888 books opened in myON Reader over the 2017–2018 school year. Overall, students read over 828,398,618 minutes in myON—approximately 13,806,643 hours, 575,276 days, or 1,576 years of reading. Overall, students read almost 2 billion pages in myON over the school year. The popular digital reads book lists for each grade are drawn from this data set.

In addition to helpful reports for educators, myON includes a Student Profile snapshot for at-a-glance information on individual student reading activity that can be easily accessed by students and shared with families.



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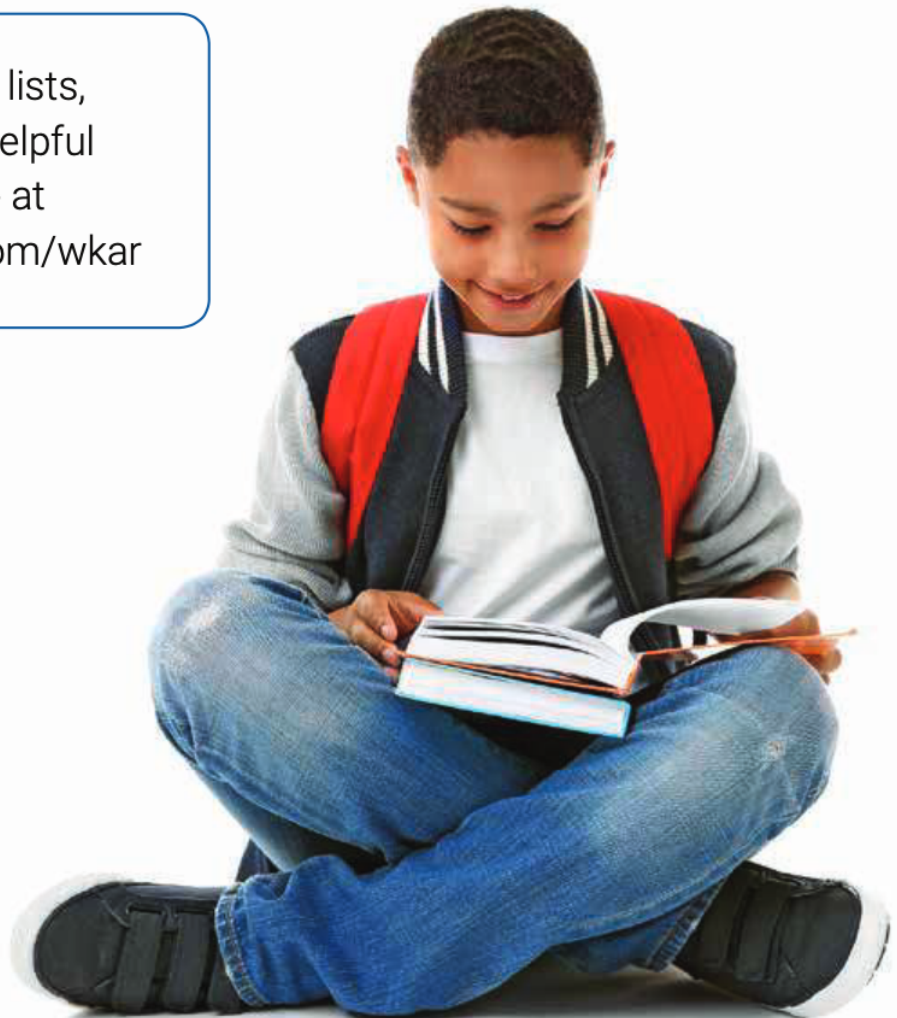
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