



Fact Sheet:

READING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

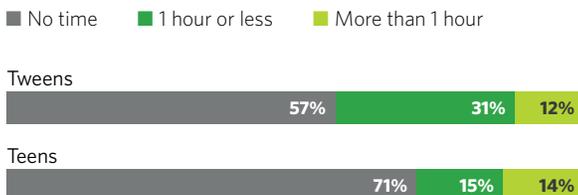
The Common Sense Census: Media Use by Tweens and Teens

In addition to asking about young people’s use of screen media and music, *The Common Sense Census* also explored reading among tweens and teens. Despite the influx of new technologies, reading continues to be an important and pleasurable part of many young people’s lives. All findings below concern reading for pleasure outside of school and not as part of a school assignment.

Popularity of and time spent reading

- Many tweens (41 percent) and teens (30 percent) say they enjoy reading “a lot,” although they enjoy other media activities more (watching TV, listening to music, playing video and mobile games, and—for teens—using social media).
- When young people are pushed to name their “favorite” media activity, 16 percent of tweens and 10 percent of teens name reading. Reading ranks second after playing video games among tweens and is tied for third with using social media among teens, after listening to music and playing video games.
- Despite the plethora of other activities available to them, both tweens and teens still read for fun. One in four (27 percent) tweens and one in five (19 percent) teens report reading for fun “every day.”
- Teens who report that they read on any given day read for an average of 1:37, compared with 1:07 among tweens who read. Among all young people, this averages out to about a half hour a day of reading for fun (:29 among tweens and :28 among teens).

ON ANY GIVEN DAY, PERCENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO READ FOR ...



Print vs. electronic reading

When it comes to reading for fun, print books still dominate among both tweens and teens. Very few young people read ebooks.

ON ANY GIVEN DAY, TIME SPENT READING PRINT OR ELECTRONIC MATERIALS



Note: In the survey, online reading (on a computer, tablet, or smartphone) was defined as “articles, stories, news, or blogs.” It is likely that respondents also encounter text online in other venues, which could also be considered “reading,” such as when they read a post on a social-networking site and browse websites. Print includes books, magazines, and newspapers.

Age and reading

- Reading for pleasure is a more popular activity among 8- to 12-year-olds than it is among teenagers. The proportion who enjoy reading “a lot” is lower in the teen years (41 percent of tweens vs. 30 percent of teens), as is the percent who read “every day” (27 percent vs. 19 percent) and on any given day (43 percent vs. 29 percent).
- When teens do read for pleasure, they spend a longer time doing so than their younger counterparts—about a half hour more per day.

Gender and reading

- Starting at a young age, and continuing through the teenage years, girls enjoy reading more than boys do, and they do it more often.
- Among tweens, half (50 percent) of girls say they enjoy reading “a lot,” compared with 33 percent of boys; among teens, 41 percent of girls and 19 percent of boys enjoy reading “a lot.” On any given day, girls are more likely to read for fun than boys, by a margin of 13 percentage points among tweens (50 percent vs. 37 percent) and 10 percentage points among teens (34 percent vs. 24 percent).
- Among those tweens and teens who do read for fun, boys and girls spend an equal amount of time doing so—just over an hour a day among tweens and a little over an hour and a half a day among teens.

READING ENJOYMENT AND USE, BY GENDER

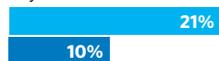
PERCENT OF TWEENS WHO ...

- Girls
- Boys

Enjoy reading “a lot”



Say it is their “favorite” activity



Read “every day”



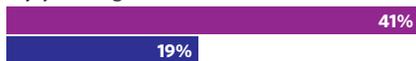
Read on any given day



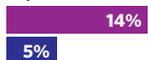
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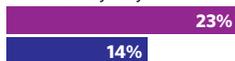
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Read “every day”



Read on any given day

