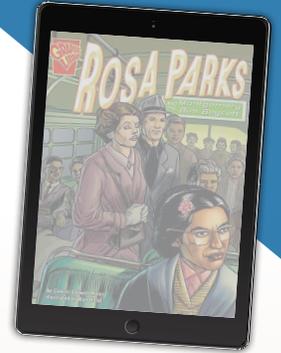


RENAISSANCE®

What
Kids
Are
Reading
2020 EDITION

Featuring
digital nonfiction
titles at every grade



**Exploring
Nonfiction Reading**

P. 14

**Establishing
Background Knowledge**

P. 24

**Making
Career Connections**

P. 34

Foreword

More than ever, as so many worldly distractions and face-timing devices compete for our children's attention, the concept of sitting still to hold and enjoy a book is far down their want-to-do lists.

Books compete with all the social media amusements, the latest games, and the TV remote. Sitting still to read a book? Later. Much later. Perhaps not at all. And that's too bad.

But there's plenty of hope for young readers. We've seen kids toss aside their phones and grab a book, run to a shade tree, and dive in. The secret to this enthusiasm? Literacy delight!

Back in 2013, I founded Madison Reading Project, a nonprofit organization with a goal to do whatever it takes to get kids fired up about enjoying reading. I saw the book vs. everything else distractions with my two kids and knew it was everywhere. Something needed to be done.

The key to success came quickly. Give kids a choice of new, current titles that they could take home—free of charge—and keep and share with their siblings and friends. Offer guided selection and encouragement. Take time to read them a story. Get creative with literacy crafts. Then, stand back and watch in amazement how a new love for books is kindled.

Pete the Cat, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, and Pigeon became beloved series; Eric Carle, David Shannon, and Mercer Mayer their literary heroes.

This past spring we launched our Big Red Reading Bus—an oversized van retrofitted with shelves for over 2,000 books. Thanks to robust fundraising efforts, our staff of part-time educators and volunteers gave away 45,000 free books and held 176 literacy-related programs for 23,000 kids as we motored to summer school programs, family festivals, day camps, food pantries, neighborhood centers—anywhere kids gathered—throughout South Central Wisconsin. We took a special interest in reaching underserved kids and children of color, to grow their home libraries and offer as many diverse books as we could.

Educators can use the lists in *What Kids are Reading* and indeed conquer the distractions and create literacy delight. It worked for us!

Rowan Childs
Founder/Executive Director
Madison Reading Project



Photo by Tom Kobinsky



Rowan Childs

Rowan is a lover of books, kids reading, and making things fun no matter what she does. Her parents raised her to cherish books, and that is what she hopes for all children, no matter what topic or author inspires them. A degree in literacy and art perhaps set Rowan up for starting her own nonprofit to help children in Wisconsin increase book ownership and to inspire kids to read more after learning about the disparity rates in her state.

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03/20

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WHAT KIDS ARE READING

Introduction

Spreading
reading joy is
what getting kids
hooked on reading is all about.

Why is the sky blue? How do airplanes fly? Why do zebras have stripes?

Children are born with a natural curiosity about their world, and their frequent, varied questions are evidence of that. Books featuring baby animals, how things work, snakes, sharks, and weird-but-true scenarios spark many of these questions and are a natural starting point for finding their answers.

All books, but especially nonfiction titles—complete with awesome, graphic illustrations—serve as powerful vocabulary builders and provide key information that students' eager minds gobble up. Encounters with new words and knowledge provide a solid foundation for students' learning, first as a precursor to making meaning of the words on a page, and later as the basis for learning and retaining information from reading.

As a third-grade intervention teacher, I am constantly on the hunt for books to help motivate my students to read, and to increase the time they spend reading outside of school. I have discovered a fantastic resource to do just that—the *What Kids Are Reading* report.

This annual report aggregates national reading data to provide lists of books kids are reading most in every grade, along with the book with distinct popularity in each state for the grade range. *What Kids Are Reading* also features cross-curricular lists, by grade range, of nonfiction and fiction reading pairs of increasingly more challenging text on science, social studies, and arts topics.

As a nonfiction enthusiast, my favorite part of the report is this year's emphasis on nonfiction, such as the lists of 10 digital nonfiction books for each grade. My students—especially reluctant or resistant readers—gravitate toward nonfiction because they relate to real-life people, places, and events. Easy access to nonfiction is so important for all kids to learn about the world around them, but it's key for children with limited experiences or exposure to the external world. Nonfiction is their portal to learning about

a wide variety of topics, and interesting revelations about our world, history, and the people who impact our lives.

Reading nonfiction aloud to kids is especially impactful to model good reading habits and to help them access information at higher reading levels than they could read on their own. And because nonfiction is a favorite genre of mine, students “catch” the excitement I bring to each nonfiction lesson!

Sparking students' interest and helping them unlock the information they are interested in helps to expand their world view and lay a strong foundation of background knowledge, both of which will help kids develop the critical reading skills they'll use to tackle their independent reading.

Three Research Spotlights tucked between the report's book-list sections examine students' data beyond what they are reading to explore nonfiction reading, probe into how students gain background knowledge, and discuss readying students for the reading they'll do in occupations beyond schooling.

A hidden gem of this report, for educators and students alike, are the essays from popular authors—most of whom write nonfiction!—Cari Meister, Drew Daywalt, Melissa Stewart, Isabel Thomas, and Janet Riehecky.

Spreading reading joy is what getting kids hooked on reading is all about. When this report comes out every year, I simply show my students the books trending for their grade level. I don't have to do much of a “sales pitch” for these titles because I've found that my students love to read what other kids their age are reading. (Think positive peer pressure!)

I hope the 2020 edition of *What Kids Are Reading* helps to spark the same enthusiasm for you and your students.

Mary Brown

Reading Intervention Specialist
Duncan Falls Elementary School, Duncan Falls, Ohio

Mary Brown is a grade 3 reading intervention specialist at Duncan Falls Elementary School in Ohio. She has more than 30 years of experience in elementary education, and holds an M.Ed. in Reading Supervision. She is also a member of the Renaissance Royals community of educators.



WHAT KIDS ARE READING

Grades K-2

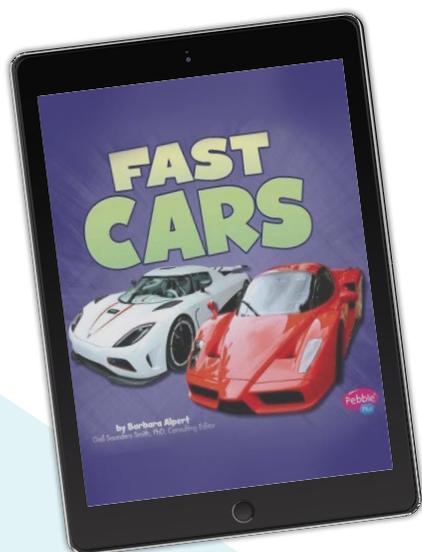
In kindergarten through second grade, a whole new world is opening to children as groups of letters and words on the page begin to take shape and have meaning. Now is the time to lay the groundwork for positive reading experiences by building upon students' enthusiasm for this newly learned skill.

Grade K

During the 2018–2019 school year, 231,799 kindergartners each read, on average, 22.4 books and 7,234 words. Overall, approximately 45% of books were read to students, 22% were read with students, and 33% were read independently.

Top 20 Books Read: Kindergarten

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | Biscuit Series
Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.7–1.6, LG, 140L–500L) SP | 11 | Sleepy Dog
Harriet Ziefert (0.8, LG, 80L) |
| 2 | Dr. Seuss Collection
Dr. Seuss (0.6–5.2, LG, 180L–1000L) SP | 12 | Clifford Series
Norman Bridwell (0.4–4, LG, 130L–630L) SP |
| 3 | Pete the Cat Series
James Dean (1.2–4.3, LG, 160L–640L) | 13 | Big Brown Bear Series
David McPhail (0.4–3.2, LG, 140L) SP |
| 4 | The Very Hungry Caterpillar
Eric Carle (2.9, LG, 460L) SP | 14 | Cat Days
Alexa Andrews (0.4, LG, 130L) |
| 5 | Elephant & Piggie Series
Mo Willems (0.5–1.4, LG, 40L–330L) SP | 15 | Cat Traps
Molly Coxe (0.4, LG, 110L) |
| 6 | Pigeon Series
Mo Willems (0.7–1.5, LG, 280L–470L) SP | 16 | Come Here, Tiger!
Alex Moran (0.3, LG, 150L) |
| 7 | Big Egg
Molly Coxe (0.4, LG, 220L) | 17 | Rick Is Sick
David McPhail (0.4, LG, 80L) |
| 8 | David Series
David Shannon (0.9, LG, 210L) SP | 18 | Bugs!
Patricia C. McKissack (0.4, LG, 110L) |
| 9 | Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Bill Martin Jr. (1.5, LG, 200L) | 19 | Tiny Series
Cari Meister (0.5–1.3, LG, 180L–220L) |
| 10 | Itchy, Itchy Chicken Pox
Grace Maccarone (0.7, LG, 280L) SP | 20 | The Snowy Day
Ezra Jack Keats (2.5, LG, 500L) SP |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Kindergarten myON NF

- Fast Cars**, Barbara Alpert (2.9, LG, 710L)
- Megalodon**, Janet Riehecky (1.6, LG, 450L) SP
- Dogs**, Martha Rustad (3.3, LG, 620L)
- Football ABC**, Mark Weakland (2.2, LG, 360L)
- Hot and Cold**, Ann Corcorane (40L)
- Let's Clean Up!**, Jenna Laffin (BR)
- Gumball**, Dr. Jean Feldman & Dr. Holly Karapetkova
- Over in the Meadow**, Dr. Jean Feldman & Dr. Holly Karapetkova (440L)
- Bunnies**, Colleen Sexton (1.0, LG, 320L)
- The Alphabet Forwards and Backwards**, Dr. Jean Feldman & Dr. Holly Karapetkova

My Favorite Character

By Cari Meister,
author of the *Tiny Series*

As I think about this topic, it's dumping snow—which always reminds me of Little Bear. Sweet, imaginative Little Bear. I read Little Bear so many times as I was learning to read that the lines still run through my head. "It is cold. See the snow. See the snow come down." The pairing of Sendak's charming illustrations with the recognition that Little Bear was so much like me—flawed, but earnest— instantly drew him to my six-year-old heart, where he remains. But is Little Bear my favorite?

As I watch my athlete sons in the kitchen trying to convince themselves that salad is far superior to cookies, I immediately think of Frog and Toad. I don't tie string around the cookie box, or climb a ladder to put the cookies on a high shelf, but I do hear Frog clearly summoning me with, "Hey, birds, here are cookies!" I must heed Frog's call, so I leave my desk and eat all the cookies. I feel a strange sense of accomplishment helping my boys with their willpower and seriously consider naming Frog and Toad my favorite.

I stay in the wetlands awhile and think about Toad in his bathing suit—oh how I related to Toad! Growing up, my sister was Frog—long and lithe. I, on the other hand, was Toad. But it's the end of that story that left its mark.

"Toad climbed out of the river. . . The turtle laughed. The lizards laughed. The snake laughed. The field mouse laughed, and Frog laughed. 'What are you laughing at, Frog?' said Toad. 'I am laughing at you, Toad,' said Frog, 'because you do look funny in your bathing suit.' 'Of course I do,' said



continued on p. 11

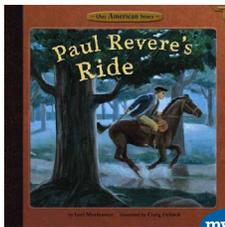
Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades K-2

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

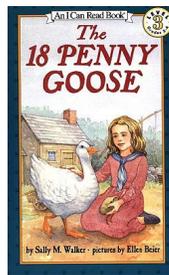
Social Studies: Colonialism

Nonfiction **NF**

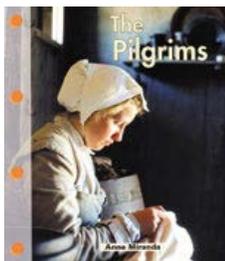
Fiction



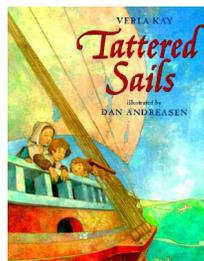
Paul Revere's Ride
Lori Mortensen
(3.2, LG, 520L)



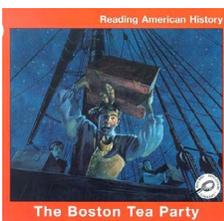
The 18 Penny Goose
Sally M. Waker
(2.7, LG, 370L)



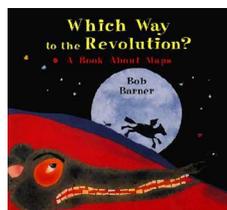
The Pilgrims
Anne Miranda (2.9, LG, 520L)



Tattered Sails
Verla Kay (2.4, LG)



The Boston Tea Party
Melinda Lily (1.4, LG)



Which Way to the Revolution? A Book About Maps
Bob Barner (1.4, LG, 420L)

Advanced

Intermediate

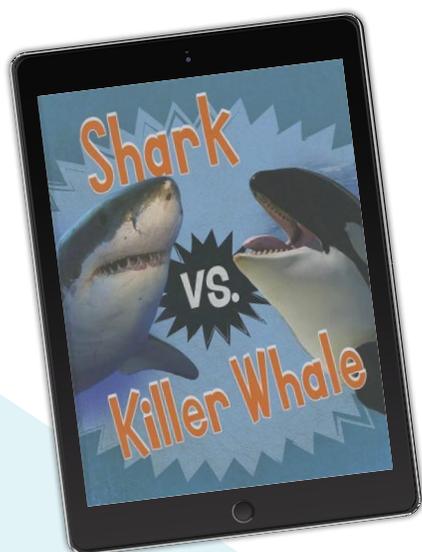
Beginning

Grade 1

During the 2018–2019 school year, 798,874 first graders each read, on average, 46.8 books and 27,971 words. Overall, approximately 15% of books were read to students, 15% were read with students, and 70% were read independently.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 1

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|----|--|----|
| 1 | Dr. Seuss Collection
Dr. Seuss (0.6–5.2, LG, 180L–1000L) | SP | 11 | Click, Clack... Series
Doreen Cronin (1.0–2.7, LG, 290L–490L) | SP |
| 2 | Fly Guy Series
Tedd Arnold (1.2–2.7, LG, 270L–530L) | SP | 12 | Whistle for Willie
Ezra Jack Keats (2.5, LG, 490L) | SP |
| 3 | Biscuit Series
Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.7–1.6, LG, 140L–500L) | SP | 13 | There Was an Old Lady Series
Lucille Colandro (2.1–3.8, LG, 240L–540L) | SP |
| 4 | Pete the Cat Series
James Dean (1.2–4.3, LG, 160L–640L) | | 14 | The Dot
Peter H. Reynolds (1.9, LG, 500L) | SP |
| 5 | Elephant and Piggie Series
Mo Willems (0.5–1.4, LG, 40L–330L) | SP | 15 | Sleepy Dog
Harriet Ziefert (0.8, LG, 80L) | |
| 6 | Pigeon Series
Mo Willems (0.7–1.5, LG, 280L–470L) | SP | 16 | Itchy, Itchy Chicken Pox
Grace Maccarone (0.7, LG, 280L) | SP |
| 7 | David Series
David Shannon (0.9, LG, 210L) | SP | 17 | Mittens
Lola M. Schaefer (1.2, LG, 280L) | |
| 8 | If You Give... Series
Laura Numeroff (1.0–2.7, LG, 170L–590L) | SP | 18 | Clifford Series
Norman Bridwell (0.4–4.0, LG, 130L–630L) | SP |
| 9 | The Very Hungry Caterpillar
Eric Carle (2.9, LG, 460L) | SP | 19 | Goodnight Moon
Margaret Wise Brown (1.8, LG, 360L) | SP |
| 10 | Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
Bill Martin Jr. (1.5, LG, 200L) | | 20 | Little Critter Series
Mercer Mayer (0.3–3.7, LG, 170L–900L) | SP |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 1 myON NF

- **Shark vs. Killer Whale (Animal Rivals)**, Isabel Thomas (3.5, LG, 610L)
- **Arctic Fox**, Katie Marsico (3.2, LG, 680L)
- **Kings of the Oceans**, Jody S. Rake (3.5, LG, 650L)
- **Rosa Parks**, Erin Edison (2.9, LG, 460L)
- **All about Chihuahuas**, Erika L. Shores (2.0, LG, 530L)
- **Peaceful Leader: Martin Luther King Jr.**, Bruce Bednarchuk (3.4, LG, 710L)
- **Cats vs. Dogs**, Elizabeth Carney (4.1, LG, 770L) SP
- **Baby Cats**, Bethany Olson (1.4, LG, 420L)
- **Baby Dogs**, Kari Schuetz (1.1, LG, 360L)
- **Penguins!**, Anne Schreiber (3.8, LG) SP

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades K-2

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

Science: The Jungle

Nonfiction **NF**

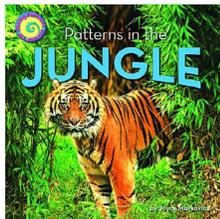
Fiction



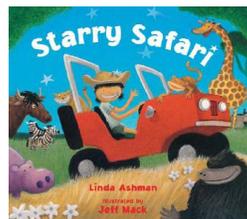
Kings of the Jungles
Lisa J. Amstutz
(3.4, LG, 640L)



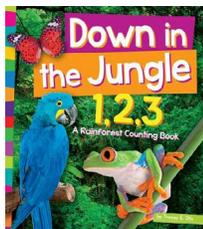
Once Upon a Jungle
Laura Knowles
(2.0, LG, 300L)



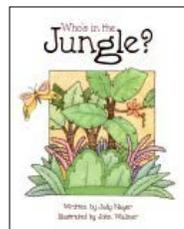
Patterns in the Jungle
Joyce Markovics
(2.2, LG, 460L)



Starry Safari
Linda Ashman
(1.6, LG, 190L)



**Down in the Jungle
1, 2, 3: A Rain Forest
Counting Book**
Tracey E. Dils
(1.5, LG, 440L)



Who's in the Jungle?
Judy Nayer (0.9, LG)

Advanced

Intermediate

Beginning

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

continued from p. 9

Toad. Then he picked up his clothes and went home." Poor Toad! For a long time, I skipped that chapter—it bothered me too much. But one day, I read it again. And I accepted it—the animals were right. Toad DID look funny in a bathing suit. Yet how did Toad react? Did he cry or scream or act mean? No. He simply "picked up his clothes and went home." In a very big way, it bolstered me to just be me. Yes, I absolutely adore Frog and Toad, but are they my favorite?

I walk over to my bookshelf and stop instantly. Of course! How could I forget? The yellow book with the daisy wallpaper jacket! If I could go back to my elementary school library, I would know exactly where to look to check it out for the 100th time (third row on the left, about two sections in, on the bottom shelf).

My favorite characters are... the hilarious... the ginormous... the remarkably human... George and Martha!

It dawns on me why I write for the youngest readers—this is where I found all my best friends.



Photo by Steve Henke

Cari Meister

Cari Meister lives in Vail, Colorado, with her husband and four sons. She has written over 200 books for young readers, including the Tiny Series, the Fairy Hill Series, and the Three Horses Series. Cari loves visiting schools and libraries to talk about reading, writing, and the limitless power of the imagination.

Grade 2

During the 2018–2019 school year, 1,076,623 second graders each read, on average, 60.6 books and 87,287 words. Overall, approximately 10% of books were read to students, 7% were read with students, and 83% were read independently.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 2

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|----|--|----|
| 1 | Dr. Seuss Collection
Dr. Seuss (0.6–5.2, LG, 180L–1000L) | SP | 11 | The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs
Jon Scieszka (3.0, LG, 510L) | SP |
| 2 | Click, Clack... Series
Doreen Cronin (1.0–2.7, LG, 290L–490L) | SP | 12 | The Giving Tree
Shel Silverstein (2.6, LG, 530L) | SP |
| 3 | If You Give... Series
Laura Numeroff (1.0–2.7, LG, 170L–590L) | SP | 13 | Miss Nelson Series
Harry Allard (2.7–3.0, LG, 320L–560L) | SP |
| 4 | The Very Hungry Caterpillar
Eric Carle (2.9, LG, 460L) | SP | 14 | A Bad Case of Stripes
David Shannon (3.8, LG, 610L) | SP |
| 5 | Dog Man Series
Dav Pilkey (2.3–2.6, LG, 280L–390L) | SP | 15 | Henry and Mudge Series
Cynthia Rylant (0.6–2.9, LG, 370L–560L) | SP |
| 6 | Officer Buckle and Gloria
Peggy Rathmann (3.4, LG, 570L) | SP | 16 | Pigeon Series
Mo Willems (0.7–1.5, LG, 280L–470L) | SP |
| 7 | Fly Guy Series
Tedd Arnold (1.2–2.7, LG, 270L–530L) | SP | 17 | Stellaluna
Janell Cannon (3.5, LG, 550L) | SP |
| 8 | There Was an Old Lady Series
Lucille Colandro (2.1–3.8, LG, 240L–540L) | SP | 18 | David Series
David Shannon (0.9, LG, 210L) | SP |
| 9 | Pete the Cat Series
James Dean (1.2–4.3, LG, 160L–640L) | SP | 19 | Where the Wild Things Are
Maurice Sendak (3.4, LG, 740L) | SP |
| 10 | The Bug Diaries Series
Doreen Cronin (2.5–3.2, LG, 490L–510L) | SP | 20 | Magic Tree House Series
Mary Pope Osborne (2.6–5.1, LG, 380L–800L) | SP |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 2 myON NF

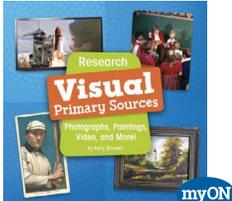
- **Scorpion vs. Tarantula (Animal Rivals)**, Isabel Thomas (3.7, LG, 580L)
- **Scooby-Doo! and the Truth Behind Ghosts**, Terry Collins (3.2, LG, 600L)
- **Scooby-Doo! and the Truth Behind Mummies**, Mark Weakland (3.3, LG, 540L)
- **Teasing Isn't Funny: What to Do About Emotional Bullying**, Melissa Higgins (2.3, LG, 300L)
- **How Do Animals Give Us Food?**, Linda Staniford (2.7, LG, 460L)
- **Puppies**, Colleen Sexton (1.0, LG, 230L)
- **Kittens**, Colleen Sexton (1.0, LG, 280L)
- **Dolphins**, Melissa Stewart (3.7, LG, 680L) SP
- **Sharks!**, Anne Schreiber (3.0, LG, 520L) SP
- **Dogs**, Cari Meister (0.9, LG, 80L)

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades K-2

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

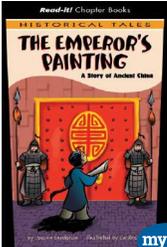
Arts: Painting

Nonfiction NF

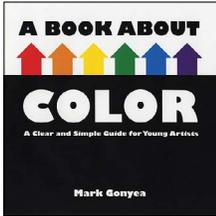


Research Visual Primary Sources: Photographs, Paintings, Video, and More!
Kelly Boswell (3.9, LG, 730L)

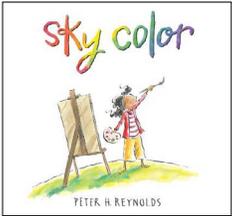
Fiction



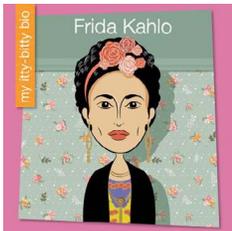
The Emperor's Painting: A Story of Ancient China
Jessica Gunderson (3.8, LG, 500L)



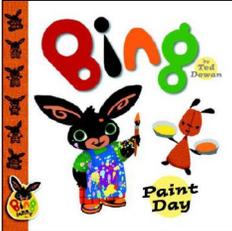
A Book about Color: A Clear and Simple Guide for Young Artists
Mark Gonyea (2.6, LG)



Sky Color
Peter H. Reynolds (2.2, LG, 550L)



Frida Kahlo
Czeena Devera (1.3, LG, 400L)

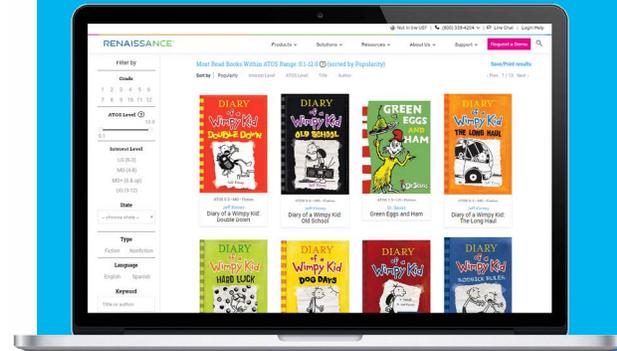


Paint Day
Ted Dewan (1.0, LG)

Advanced

Intermediate

Beginning



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:



Visit www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom to access the Custom Report Builder tool.



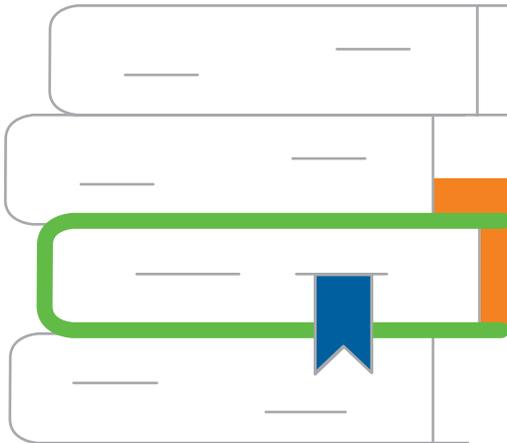
Use the filters to select state, grade, reading level, and more.



Click "Generate My Report" for a PDF you can save or print.

Research Spotlight

Exploring Nonfiction Reading



How much nonfiction do students read?

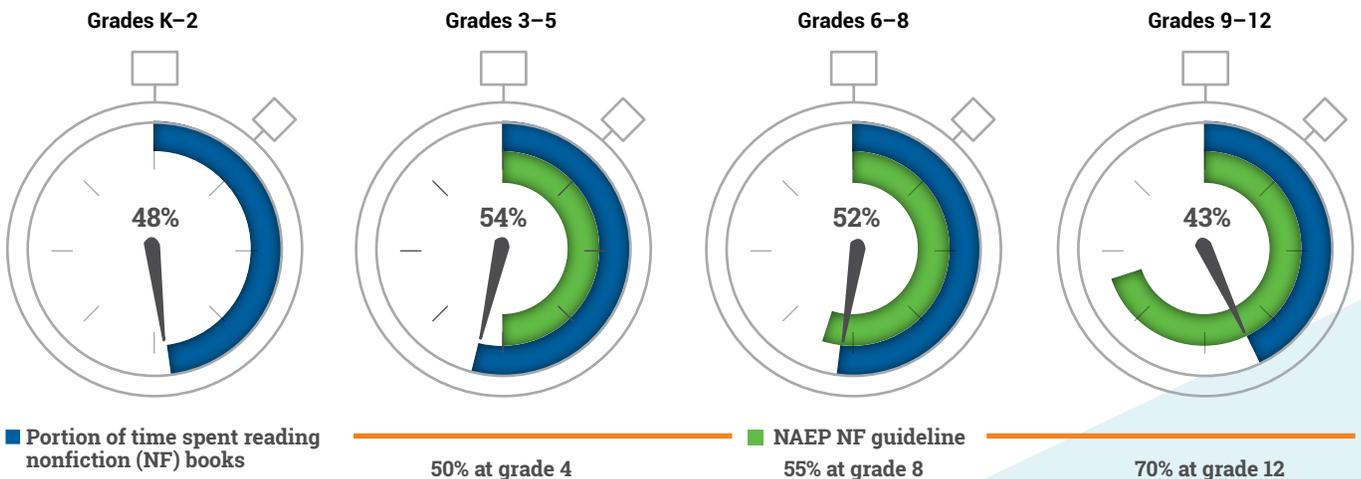
Nonfiction books and informational texts cover topics both great and small and far and wide to satisfy kids' endless curiosity or dazzle them with fresh new facts.

1 in 4 books read in grades K–12 is nonfiction.

With a digital library, what portion of time do students spend reading nonfiction books?

With easy access to a variety of texts at students' fingertips in myON, the time students spend reading nonfiction mirrors the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) informational text passage guidelines for 4th (50%) and 8th (55%) grade, but falls short of the high school recommendation (70%).

Students spend about half their time on nonfiction with digital access



Our success as students, citizens, and workers depends in large part upon our ability to read and understand informational or nonfiction texts. The extent to which students of all ages have access to those texts and are encouraged to read them is critical. When students engage with these texts, they not only build content-area knowledge about their natural and social world, they also practice key skills such as citing evidence and evaluating arguments.

How does the text difficulty of nonfiction versus fiction books stack up?

Overall, nonfiction books are written at a higher difficulty level due to the vocabulary and subject matter they contain, so their reading levels are higher than fiction books.

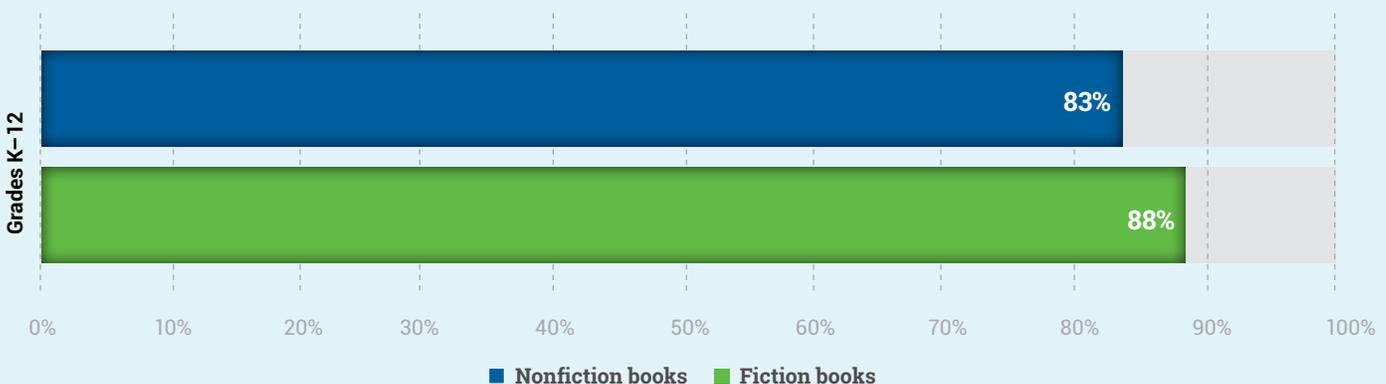
Nonfiction is written at higher difficulty levels than fiction, a gap that grows by grade



Do students understand nonfiction texts as well as they do fiction?

Although nonfiction is sometimes perceived as more difficult to comprehend than fiction, students actually pass the majority of quizzes taken on either type of book.

Passage rates on quizzes for fiction books are only slightly higher than for nonfiction



WHAT KIDS ARE READING

Grades 3–5

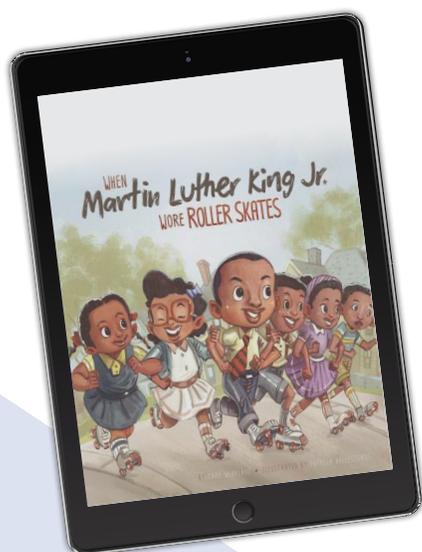
In the upper elementary grades, kids are reading with greater automaticity, while focusing less on *how* to read and more on *what* they are reading. At this stage, they begin to connect with characters, develop specific interests, and seek out answers.

Grade 3

During the 2018–2019 school year, 1,158,568 third graders each read, on average, 52.3 books and 195,000 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 3

1	Dog Man Series Dav Pilkey (2.3–2.6, LG, 280L–390L)	SP	11	Stone Fox John Reynolds Gardiner (4.0, MG, 610L)	SP
2	Charlotte's Web E.B. White (4.4, MG, 680L)	SP	12	If You Give... Series Laura Numeroff (1.0–2.7, LG, 170L–590L)	SP
3	Because of Winn-Dixie Kate DiCamillo (3.9, MG, 670L)	SP	13	Mrs. Hartwell's Classroom Adventures Series Julie Danneberg (2.4–4.3, LG, 520L–690L)	SP
4	A Fine, Fine School Sharon Creech (3.3, LG, 500L)		14	Bad Kitty Series Nick Bruel (2.8–4.5, LG, 480L–720L)	SP
5	The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs Jon Scieszka (3.0, LG, 510L)	SP	15	The Giving Tree Shel Silverstein (2.6, LG, 530L)	SP
6	A Bad Case of Stripes David Shannon (3.8, LG, 610L)	SP	16	The Trial of Cardigan Jones Tim Egan (3.4, LG)	
7	Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L)	SP	17	Miss Nelson Series Harry Allard (2.7–3.0, LG, 320L–560L)	SP
8	Wolf! Becky Bloom (3.5, LG, 340L)		18	The Day the Crayons... Series Drew Daywalt (3.3–3.8, LG, 550L–730L)	SP
9	Tops & Bottoms Janet Stevens (3.2, LG, 580L)		19	Alexander Series Judith Viorst (3.4–4.4, LG, 550L–840L)	SP
10	Dr. Seuss Collection Dr. Seuss (0.6–5.2, LG, 180L–1000L)	SP	20	Captain Underpants Series Dav Pilkey (4.3–5.3, MG, 640L–890L)	SP



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 3 myON NF

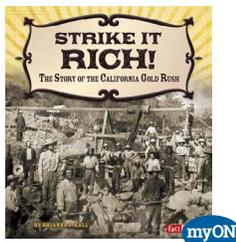
- **When Martin Luther King Jr. Wore Roller Skates**, Mark Weakland (4.2, LG, 660L)
- **Escaping Titanic: A Young Girl's True Story of Survival**, Marybeth Lorbiecki (3.9, MG, 710L)
- **Scooby-Doo! A Science of Energy Mystery: The High-Voltage Ghost**, Megan Cooley Peterson (3.5, MG, 540L)
- **Why Rabbits Eat Poop and Other Gross Facts About Pets**, Jody Sullivan Rake (3.1, LG, 670L)
- **Sometimes Jokes Aren't Funny: What to Do About Hidden Bullying**, Amanda F. Doering (3.0, LG, 550L)
- **John Cena: Pro Wrestling Superstar**, Daniel B. Aiwei (3.7, LG, 660L)
- **Dolphins**, Ann Herriges (1.8, LG, 320L)
- **Sharks**, Colleen Sexton (2.2, LG, 530L)
- **Animal Helpers: Aquariums**, Jennifer Keats Curtis (3.7, LG, 910L) SP
- **The First Lady of Civil Rights: Rosa Parks**, Bruce Bednarchuk (3.1, LG, 530L)

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 3–5

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

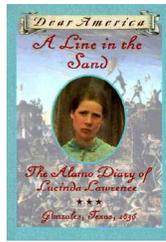
Social Studies: Pioneer Life

Nonfiction **NF**



Strike It Rich! The Story of the California Gold Rush
Brianna Hall
(5.8, MG, 950L)

Fiction

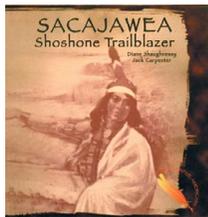


A Line in the Sand: The Alamo Diary of Lucinda Lawrence
Sherry Garland
(5.6, MG, 960L)

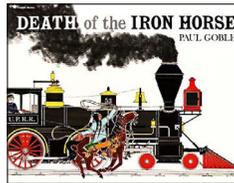
Advanced

Intermediate

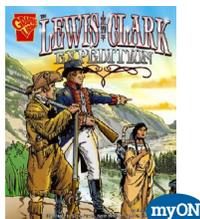
Beginning



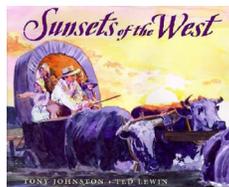
Sacajawea: Shoshone Trailblazer
Diane Shaughnessy
(4.0, LG, 950L)



Death of the Iron Horse
Paul Goble (4.5, LG, 630L)



The Lewis and Clark Expedition
Sarah Gunderson
(3.5, MG, 480L)



Sunsets of the West
Tony Johnston
(2.7, LG)

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

My Favorite Character

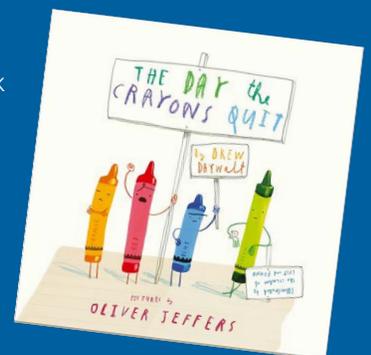
By Drew Daywalt,
author of *The Day the Crayons Quit*

My knee-jerk response might be Dorothy Gale, or maybe Bilbo Baggins or even James Henry Trotter, but upon further reflection, it isn't any of them, although they make fine runners-up.

The winner of this mental exercise, strangely, doesn't even have a name. As a matter of fact, he didn't even have his own book when he first graced me with his presence. You see, he's the main character of an obscure picture book story by Dr. Seuss called "What Was I Scared Of?" He was in the last story, in a cluster of stories, in the 1961 book *The Sneetches and Other Stories*.

"What Was I Scared Of?" tells the tale of a prototypical Seussian character who happens to take lots of walks in deserted places at night. And to his horror, he always runs into the same ghostly apparition... a pair of pale green pants with no one inside them. The pants would run past our main character, animated and occupied as if by an invisible person. Our nameless main character, who I will simply call the narrator, does everything in his power to avoid bumping into these animated pants in his nocturnal sojourns, but inevitably the pair seem destined to meet over and over again. Eventually, the story ends with the narrator learning that the pants are just as scared of him as he is of them, and they end up becoming quite good friends.

Why is this unnamed picture book character my favorite literary character? Well there are the



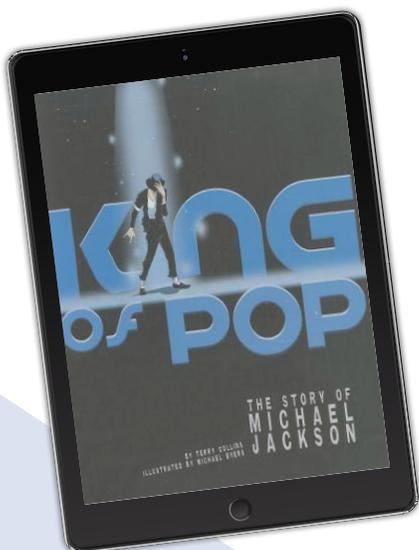
continued on p. 21

Grade 4

During the 2018–2019 school year, 1,173,798 fourth graders each read, on average, 38.2 books and 306,272 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 4

1	Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910–1060L)	SP
2	Dog Man Series Dav Pilkey (2.3–2.6, LG, 280L–390L)	SP
3	Fudge Series Judy Blume (3.3–3.6, LG/MG, 470L–560L)	
4	Because of Winn-Dixie Kate DiCamillo (3.9, MG, 670L)	SP
5	Wonder Series R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG, 790L)	SP
6	Smile/Sisters/Guts Raina Telgemeier (2.4–2.6, MG, 290L–480L)	NF SP
7	Frindle Andrew Clements (5.4, MG, 830L)	SP
8	Stone Fox John Reynolds Gardiner (4.0, MG, 610L)	SP
9	Island of the Blue Dolphins Scott O'Dell (5.4, MG, 1000L)	SP
10	Captain Underpants Series Dav Pilkey (4.3–5.3, MG, 640L–890L)	SP
11	A Bad Case of Stripes David Shannon (3.8, LG, 610L)	SP
12	The Best Christmas Pageant Ever Barbara Robinson (5.1, MG, 760L)	
13	Ghosts Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG, 300L)	SP
14	Shiloh Collection Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (4.4–5.0, MG, 860L–1020L)	SP
15	Holes Louis Sachar (4.6, MG, 660L)	SP
16	The One and Only Ivan Katherine Applegate (3.6, MG, 570L)	SP
17	I Survived... Series Lauren Tarshis (3.8–5.1, MG, 590L–740L)	SP
18	Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series Rick Riordan (4.1–6.7, MG, 590L–790L)	SP
19	The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs Jon Scieszka (3.0, LG, 510L)	SP
20	Dork Diaries Series Rachel Renée Russell (4.2–5.4, MG, 660L–890L)	SP



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 4 myON NF

- **King of Pop: The Story of Michael Jackson**, Terry Collins (4.4, MG, 590L)
- **Haunted Hotels Around the World**, Megan Cooley Peterson (5.0, MG, 750L)
- **For the Right to Learn: Malala Yousafzai's Story**, Rebecca Langston-George (4.9, MG, 720L) SP
- **Dangerous Diseases: Scary Illnesses That Frighten the World**, Kristine Carlson Asselin (5.4, MG, 790L)
- **Totally Amazing Facts About Outrageous Inventions**, Cari Meister (770L)
- **Titanic**, Melissa Stewart (5.3, LG, 900L)
- **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, Kitson Jazyuka (3.9, LG, 630L)
- **Deadliest Animals**, Melissa Stewart (5.3, LG, 940L) SP
- **Carolina's Story: Sea Turtles Get Sick Too!**, Donna Rathmell (3.6, LG, 700L) SP
- **Transportation Then and Now**, Jacqueline Martin (810L)

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 3–5

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

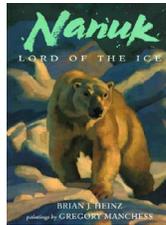
Science: The Arctic

Nonfiction **NF**

Fiction



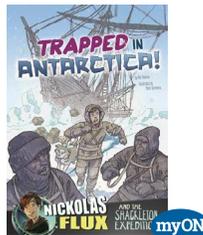
Polar Bears' Search for Ice: A Cause and Effect Investigation
Gillia M. Olson
(5.6, MG, 910L)



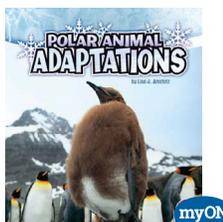
Nanuk: Lord of the Ice
Brian J. Heinz (5.2, LG)



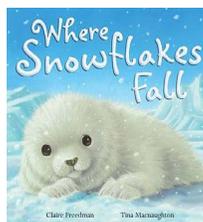
Helen Thayer's Arctic Adventure: A Woman and a Dog Walk to the North Pole
Sally Isaacs (4.2, MG, 580L)



Trapped in Antarctica! Nickolas Flux and the Shackleton Expedition
Nel Yomtov (4.0, MG, 580L)



Polar Animal Adaptations
Lisa J. Amstutz
(3.3, LG, 600L)



Where Snowflakes Fall
Claire Freedman (3.4, LG)

Advanced

Intermediate

Beginning

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

continued from p. 19

obvious reasons: he's easily relatable (I mean who wouldn't be terrified of animated pants running around the woods at night), and he's amusing (he flees pants; c'mon, that's funny), and he's in a story that strongly underscores empathy, friendship, and understanding.

But mostly, I chose this obscure Dr. Seuss character as my favorite literary character because he was my *first* favorite literary character. Without him, it's possible that I would not have developed a love for reading, and without a love of reading, I would never have met any of my other beloved characters. Heck, for that matter, I doubt I'd even be a writer today.

So thank you Dr. Seuss, and thank you unnamed narrator character in the last story in a grouping of B-sides to *The Sneetches*. It's because of you, I fell in love with reading.



Photo by Tyler Weinberger

Drew Daywalt

Originally from Ohio and the youngest of six children, Drew Daywalt grew up and went off to college in Boston, where he attended Emerson College and was mentored by children's writer Jack Gantos. Daywalt is best known for his *New York Times* number one bestselling picture book *The Day the Crayons Quit*, which has been on the list for six years (and counting).

Grade 5

During the 2018–2019 school year, 1,153,475 fifth graders each read, on average, 28.7 books and 388,397 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 5

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|-------|----|--|----|
| 1 | Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series
Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L) | SP | 11 | Chronicles of Narnia Series
C.S. Lewis (2.8–5.9, LG/MG, 790L–970L) | SP |
| 2 | Wonder Series
R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG, 790L) | SP | 12 | Harry Potter Series
J.K. Rowling (3.9–8.8, MG/MG+, 500L–1230L) | SP |
| 3 | Brian's Saga Series
Gary Paulsen (5.5–5.9, MG/MG+, 960L–1140L) | SP | 13 | Dork Diaries
Rachel Renée Russell (4.2–5.4, MG, 660L–890L) | SP |
| 4 | Number the Stars
Lois Lowry (4.5, MG, 670L) | SP | 14 | The Sign of the Beaver
Elizabeth George Speare (4.9, MG, 770L) | SP |
| 5 | Dog Man Series
Dav Pilkey (2.3–2.6, LG, 280–390L) | SP | 15 | Bud, Not Buddy
Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG, 950L) | SP |
| 6 | Frindle
Andrew Clements (5.4, MG, 830L) | SP | 16 | Ghosts
Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG, 300L) | SP |
| 7 | Esperanza Rising
Pam Muñoz Ryan (5.3, MG, 750L) | SP | 17 | Series of Unfortunate Events Series
Lemony Snicket (6.2–7.4, MG, 980L–1370L) | SP |
| 8 | Holes
Louis Sachar (4.6, MG, 660L) | SP | 18 | Bridge to Terabithia
Katherine Paterson (4.6, MG, 810L) | SP |
| 9 | Tuck Everlasting
Natalie Babbitt (5.0, MG, 770L) | SP | 19 | Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series
Rick Riordan (4.1–6.7, MG, 590L–790L) | SP |
| 10 | Smile/Sisters/Guts
Raina Telgemeier (2.4–2.6, MG, 290L–480L) | NF SP | 20 | I Survived... Series
Lauren Tarshis (3.8–5.1, MG, 590L–740L) | SP |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 5 myON NF

- **Great White Sharks: On the Hunt**, Janet Riehecky (3.0, MG, 550L)
- **Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott**, Connie Colwell Miller (4.7, MG, 730L)
- **Escape from Alcatraz: The Mystery of the Three Men Who Escaped from the Rock**, Eric Braun (6.2, MG, 890L)
- **Helen Keller: Courageous Advocate**, Scott R. Welvaert (3.7, MG, 580L) SP
- **Police Dogs**, Tammy Gagne (5.1, MG, 840L)
- **National Geographic Kids Myths Busted!**, Emily Krieger (1030L)
- **Martin Luther King Jr.**, Wendy Conklin (5.3, MG, 750L)
- **Astro: The Steller Sea Lion**, Jeanne Walker Harvey (4.5, LG, 790L) SP
- **Wild Cats**, Rachel Bladon (460L)
- **Expanding the Nation**, Jill K. Mulhall (4.8, LG, 650L)

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 3–5

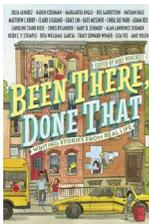
Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty



Arts: Writing

Nonfiction **NF**

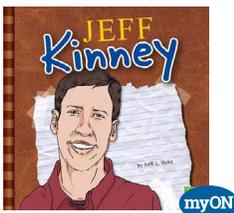
Fiction



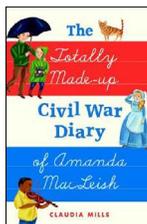
Been There, Done That: Writing Stories from Real Life
Mike Winchell
(5.3, MG, 860L)



Cilla Lee-Jenkins: Future Author Extraordinaire
Susan Tan
(5.2, MG, 940L)



Jeff Kinney
Kelli L. Hicks (4.1, LG, 770L)



The Totally Made-up Civil War Diary of Amanda MacLeish
Claudia Mills
(4.7, MG, 730L)

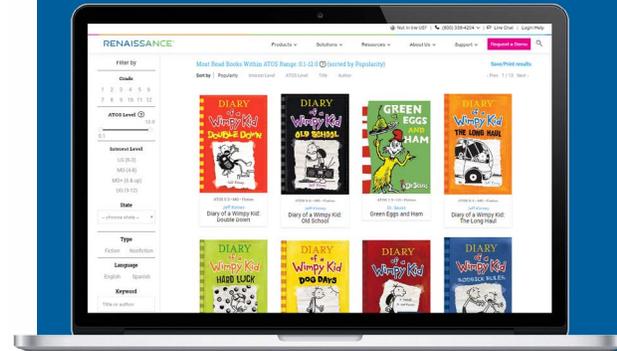


Once Upon a Time: Writing Your Own Fairy Tale
Nancy Loewen
(3.6, LG, 570L)



The Absent Author
Ron Roy (3.4, LG, 510L)

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 in three simple steps:



Visit www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom to access the Custom Report Builder tool.



Use the filters to select state, grade, reading level, and more.



Click "Generate My Report" for a PDF you can save or print.

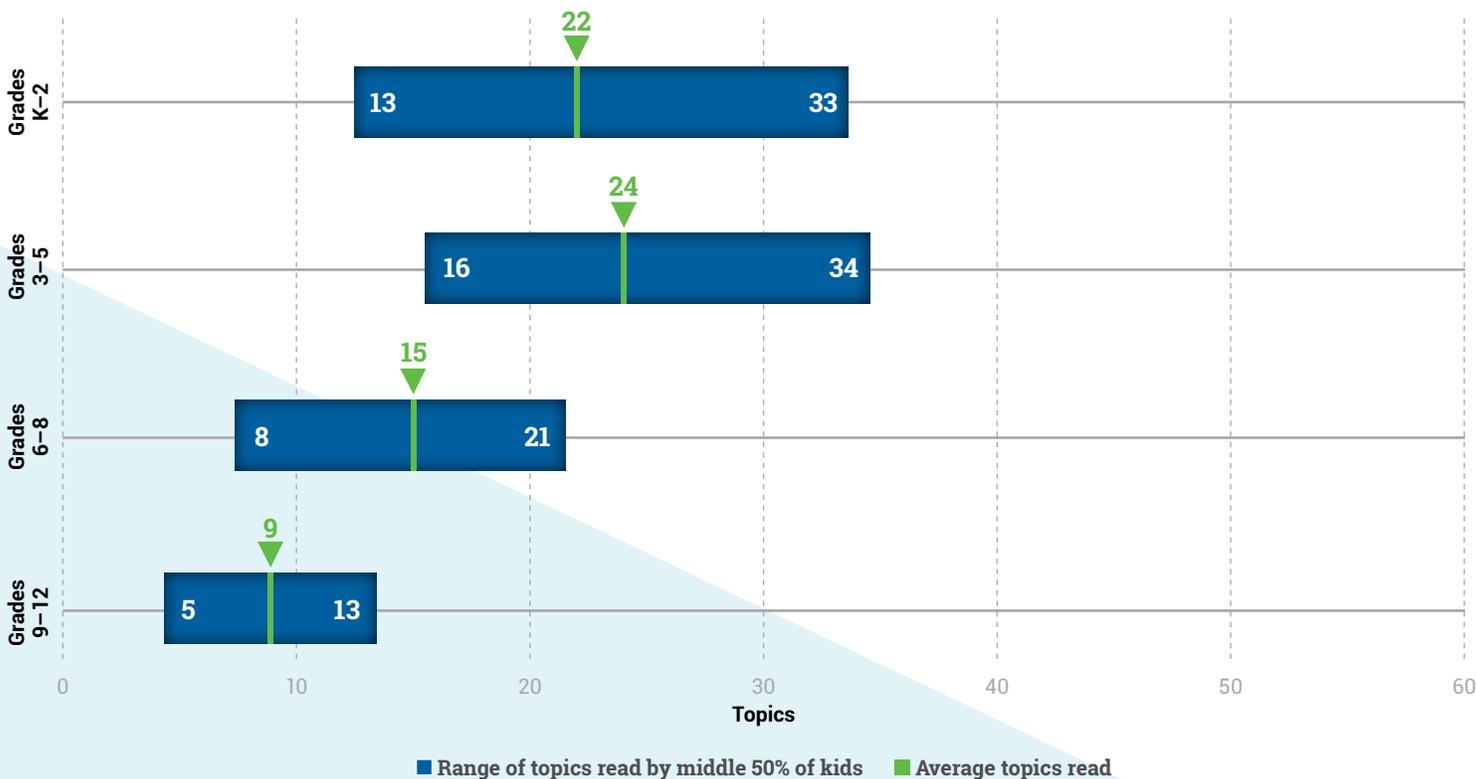
Research Spotlight

Establishing Background Knowledge

How many topics are students exposed to while reading in a given school year?

With Accelerated Reader quizzes available on 200,000 books covering 60 unique topic areas, prior to high school, students tend to read books on about a third of these themes over the course of the year, with fewer topics read as older students hone their interests. (A topic was considered “read” if a student passed a quiz for more than one book on the subject.)

Topic exposure peaks in elementary grades as students explore their world through reading



Which topic areas do kids gravitate toward?

Students read a variety of books as they progress through each grade, yet they tend to be drawn to common themes at all ages.

Top nonfiction topics, grades K-12



Animals



Science



Biographies/
Autobiographies

Top fiction topics, grades K-12



Animals



Family Life



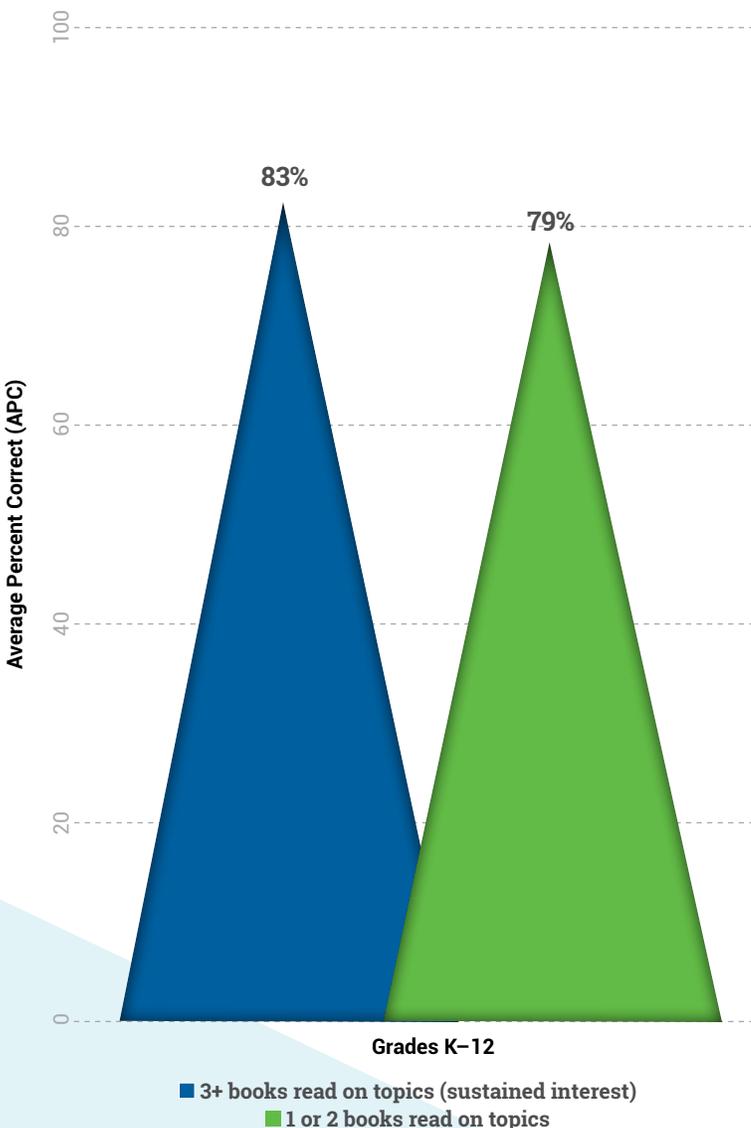
Humor/Funny

Literacy experts agree that subject-matter knowledge and vocabulary are essential for reading comprehension. And when students read both deeply and widely—multiple books within and across different topics—they solidify that content knowledge while also strengthening comprehension skills.

How does reading comprehension change when students focus on topics?

When books capture students' interests and they seek out additional reading on the same subjects, their background knowledge grows and reading quiz scores improve (APC).

Students with sustained interest in a topic area score higher on reading comprehension



Do students understand certain topics better than others?

Scores on comprehension quizzes (APC) show students' interests drive their understanding.

Easy and hard topics by grade range

	Easy	Hard
Grades K-2	 Emotions APC 84%	 Good and Evil APC 74%
Grades 3-5	 Legendary Characters APC 85%	 World/Global Issues APC 75%
Grades 6-8	 Spy/Espionage APC 87%	 Biographies/Autobiographies APC 76%
Grades 9-12	 Fantasy/Imagination APC 83%	 Military/Wars APC 75%

Source: Accelerated Reader database, 2018–2019 school year

WHAT KIDS ARE READING

Grades 6–8

In the middle grades, the time students spend reading may start to decline, even as grade-level reading expectations begin to rise. Kids who aren't reading enough not only miss out on the intrigue and escape reading can provide, but also miss gaining new vocabulary, additional background knowledge, a wider world view, and greater empathy for others.

Grade 6

During the 2018–2019 school year, 754,468 sixth graders each read, on average, 16.9 books and 404,001 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 6

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series
Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L) SP</p> | <p>11 The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963
Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG, 920L) SP</p> |
| <p>2 Brian's Saga Series
Gary Paulsen (5.5–5.9, MG/MG+, 960L–1140L) SP</p> | <p>12 Holes
Louis Sachar (4.6, MG, 660L) SP</p> |
| <p>3 Wonder Series
R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG, 790L) SP</p> | <p>13 Smile/Sisters/Guts
Raina Telgemeier (2.4–2.6, MG, 290L–480L) NF SP</p> |
| <p>4 Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series
Rick Riordan (4.1–6.7, MG, 590L–790L) SP</p> | <p>14 Harry Potter Series
J.K. Rowling (3.9–8.8, MG/MG+, 500L–1230L) SP</p> |
| <p>5 Number the Stars
Lois Lowry (4.5, MG, 670L) SP</p> | <p>15 Series of Unfortunate Events Series
Lemony Snicket (6.2–7.4, MG, 980L–1370L) SP</p> |
| <p>6 Freak the Mighty Series
Rodman Philbrick (5.0–5.5, MG/UG, 870L–930L)</p> | <p>16 Where the Red Fern Grows
Wilson Rawls (4.9, MG, 700L)</p> |
| <p>7 Bud, Not Buddy
Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG, 950L) SP</p> | <p>17 Restart
Gordon Korman (5.1, MG, 730L)</p> |
| <p>8 Tuck Everlasting
Natalie Babbitt (5.0, MG, 770L) SP</p> | <p>18 Dork Diaries
Rachel Renée Russell (4.2–5.4, MG, 660L–890L) SP</p> |
| <p>9 Giver Quartet
Lois Lowry (4.9–5.7, MG/MG+, 680L–760L) SP</p> | <p>19 Esperanza Rising
Pam Muñoz Ryan (5.3, MG, 750L) SP</p> |
| <p>10 Hunger Games Trilogy
Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L) SP</p> | <p>20 A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story
Linda Sue Park (5.0, MG+, 720L)</p> |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 6 myON NF

- **Take Your Pick of Disgusting Foods**, G.G. Lake (3.9, MG, 720L)
- **Haunted Houses Around the World**, Joan Axelrod-Contrada (5.7, MG, 890L)
- **Scooby-Doo! A Science of Sound Mystery: A Song for Zombies**, Megan Cooley Peterson (3.7, MG, 590L)
- **Scorpion vs. Centipede: Duel to the Death**, Kimberly Feltes Taylor (4.8, MG, 750L)
- **Cobras: On the Hunt**, Janet Riehecky (2.8, MG, 650L)
- **National Geographic Kids Myths Busted! 2**, Emily Krieger (750L)
- **All about Everything**, DK Publishing (1130L)
- **Immigration**, Debra J. Housel (5.2, MG, 710L)
- **How to Speak Dog: A Guide to Decoding Dog Language**, Aline Alexander Newman (5.2, MG, 810L)
- **Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs**, Wendy Conklin (5.4, MG, 730L)

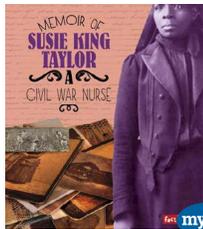
Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 6–8

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

Social Studies: Civil War and Slavery

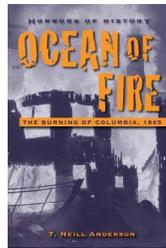
Advanced

Nonfiction **NF**



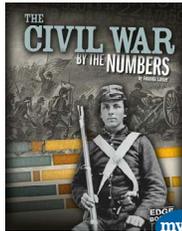
Memoir of Susie King Taylor: A Civil War Nurse
Pamela Dell
(6.7, MG, 1080L)

Fiction

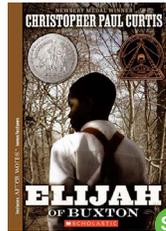


Horrors of History: Ocean of Fire: The Burning of Columbia, 1865
T. Neill Anderson
(6.1, MG+)

Intermediate

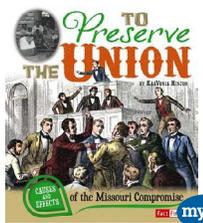


The Civil War by the Numbers
Amanda Lanser
(6.0, MG, 870L)



Elijah of Buxton
Christopher Paul Curtis
(5.4, MG, 980L)

Beginning



To Preserve the Union: Causes and Effects of the Missouri Compromise
KaaVonia Hinton
(5.5, MG, 750L)



The Songs of Stones River: A Civil War Novel
Jessica Gunderson
(4.2, MG, 600L)

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

My Favorite Character

By Melissa Stewart,
author of *Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes, and Stinkers: Celebrating Animal Underdogs*

Who is my favorite character?

For many people, this seems like a fun, easy question, but consider this: not everyone is naturally drawn to stories and storytelling.

Look around your classroom. Some students connect strongly to the characters they encounter in stories. But others... not so much. They'd rather soak up facts, ideas, and information about topics they find fascinating. These "info-kids" read with a purpose. They want to understand the world and how it works and their place in it. They want to learn about the past and the present, so they can envision the future stretching out before them.

I'm an info-kid. And I'm not alone.

Studies show that 40 percent of elementary students prefer to read expository nonfiction—true books that explain, describe, or inform in a clear, interesting way.

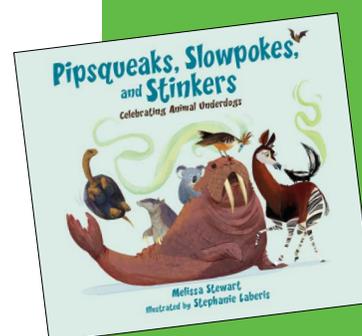
So instead of writing about a fictional character, I'm going to share some fun facts about one of my favorite animals—the American pika. Trust me, it's a REAL character.

For starters, the American pika is one of the most adorable animals on Earth. To see for yourself, do a Google search to find some photos and display them on the interactive whiteboard in your classroom. I don't mind waiting.

See what I mean? Adorable!

These fluffy furballs live on rocky

mountain slopes in the western US and Canada. They weigh about as much as an apple, and they're small enough to sit in your hand.



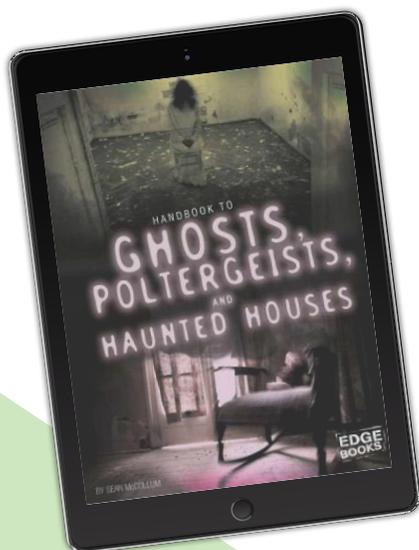
continued on p. 31

Grade 7

During the 2018–2019 school year, 538,928 seventh graders each read, on average, 11.3 books and 376,580 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 7

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Giver Quartet
Lois Lowry (4.9–5.7, MG/MG+, 680L–760L) SP</p> | <p>11 Brian's Saga Series
Gary Paulsen (5.5–5.9, MG/MG+, 960L–1140L) SP</p> |
| <p>2 The Outsiders
S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG, 750L) SP</p> | <p>12 A Christmas Carol (Unabridged)
Charles Dickens (6.7, MG, 560L)</p> |
| <p>3 Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series
Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L) SP</p> | <p>13 The Boy in the Striped Pajamas
John Boyne (5.8, UG, 1000L) SP</p> |
| <p>4 Hunger Games Trilogy
Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L) SP</p> | <p>14 To All the Boys I've Loved Before Series
Jenny Han (4.2–4.5, UG, 630L–700L)</p> |
| <p>5 Wonder Series
R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG, 790L) SP</p> | <p>15 Tangerine
Edward Bloor (4.3, MG, 680L)</p> |
| <p>6 A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story
Linda Sue Park (5.0, MG+, 720L)</p> | <p>16 Harry Potter Series
J.K. Rowling (3.9–8.8, MG/MG+, 500L–1230L) SP</p> |
| <p>7 Freak the Mighty Series
Rodman Philbrick (5.0–5.5, MG/UG, 870L–930L)</p> | <p>17 Divergent Series
Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L) SP</p> |
| <p>8 Rikki-Tikki-Tavi
Rudyard Kipling (5.0, LG, 810L)</p> | <p>18 Maze Runner Series
James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L) SP</p> |
| <p>9 Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series
Rick Riordan (4.1–6.7, MG, 590L–790L) SP</p> | <p>19 Refugee
Alan Gratz (5.3, MG, 800L)</p> |
| <p>10 The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963
Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG, 920L) SP</p> | <p>20 Series of Unfortunate Events Series
Lemony Snicket (6.2–7.4, MG, 980L–1370L) SP</p> |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 7 myON NF

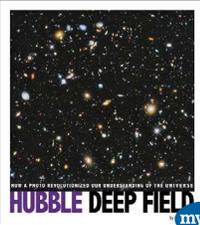
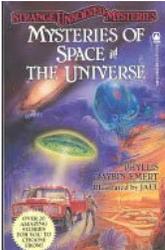
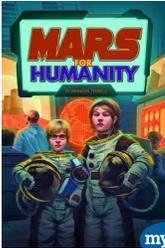
- **Handbook to Ghosts, Poltergeists, and Haunted Houses**, Sean McCollum (5.6, MG, 830L)
- **Muhammad Ali: American Champion**, Michael Burgan (3.8, MG, 570L)
- **Impact: The Story of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks**, Matt Doeden (4.8, MG, 610L)
- **The Most Haunted Places in the World**, Emily Rajj (4.3, MG, 780L)
- **The World's Strangest Foods**, Alicia Z. Klepeis (5.1, MG, 860L)
- **National Geographic Myths Busted! 3**, Emily Krieger (1000L)
- **Chicago Bulls**, Pete Birle (980L)
- **Free At Last: The Story of Martin Luther King, Jr.**, Angela Bull (5.7, LG, 820L)
- **How to Speak Cat**, Aline Alexander Newman (830L)
- **Animal Invaders**, Amanda Doering Tourville (6.1, MG, 860L) SP

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 6–8

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

Advanced

Science: Space

Nonfiction NF		Fiction
 <p>Hubble Deep Field: How a Photo Revolutionized Our Understanding of the Universe Don Nardo (7.9, MG, 1140L)</p>	 <p>Mysteries of Space and the Universe Phyllis Raybin Emert (8.1, MG)</p>	
 <p>Yuri Gagarin and the Race to Space Ben Hubbard (6.7, MG, 1030L)</p>	 <p>Starbounders Adam Jay Epstein (6.0, MG, 850L)</p>	
 <p>The National Air and Space Museum Megan Cooley Peterson (4.9, MG, 860L)</p>	 <p>Mars for Humanity Brandon Terrell (5.1, MG, 720L)</p>	

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

continued from p. 29

But don't let that fool you. These itty-bitty beasts aren't afraid of a fight. A pika will battle fiercely to defend its den.

What's so valuable that it's worth protecting? Food. A pika spends all summer stockpiling grass and leaves for winter. Hour after hour, it rips plants out of the ground, scurries to a sunny spot, and carefully lays the greens out to dry. Then it piles the plants in a "haystack." By autumn, the stash could fill 9 one-gallon milk containers.

Like rabbits and guinea pigs, American pikas produce two kinds of droppings—soft pellets and hard poop. Believe it or not, pikas eat the soft pellets because they're full of partially-digested food. It may seem like a hideous habit, but it helps the mini-mammals get the nutrients they need to live and grow.

So what do you think? Now that you know a little bit about the American pika, is it one of your favorite animals too?



Melissa Stewart

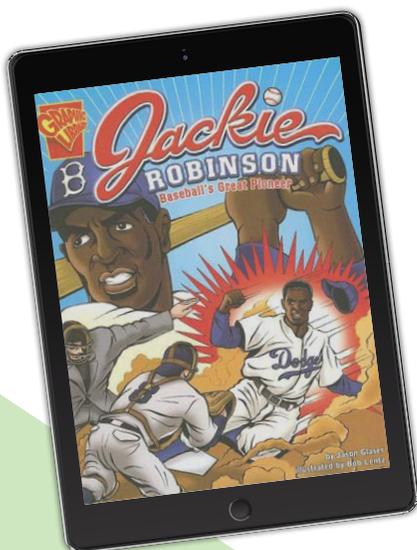
Melissa Stewart is the award-winning author of more than 180 science books for children, including *Seashells: More than a Home* and *Pipsqueaks, Slowpokes, and Stinkers: Celebrating Animal Underdogs*. She enjoys speaking at schools and chatting with teachers and students via Twitter. Her website is bursting with resources for teaching nonfiction writing: www.melissa-stewart.com

Grade 8

During the 2018–2019 school year, 477,357 eighth graders each read, on average, 9.7 books and 378,979 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 8

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 The Outsiders
S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG, 750L) SP</p> | <p>11 Wonder Series
R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG, 790L) SP</p> |
| <p>2 Giver Quartet
Lois Lowry (4.9–5.7, MG/MG+, 680L–760L)</p> | <p>12 To All the Boys I've Loved Before Series
Jenny Han (4.2–4.5, UG, 630L–700L)</p> |
| <p>3 The Tell-Tale Heart
Edgar Allan Poe (7.3, UG, 1350L)</p> | <p>13 Divergent Series
Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L) SP</p> |
| <p>4 The Diary of Anne Frank
Frances Goodrich (3.1, MG, 1020L)</p> | <p>14 The Hate U Give
Angie Thomas (3.9, UG, 590L)</p> |
| <p>5 Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series
Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L) SP</p> | <p>15 Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series
Rick Riordan (4.1–6.7, MG, 590L–790L) SP</p> |
| <p>6 The Boy in the Striped Pajamas
John Boyne (5.8, UG, 1000L) SP</p> | <p>16 Maze Runner Series
James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L) SP</p> |
| <p>7 Hunger Games Trilogy
Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L) SP</p> | <p>17 The Fault in Our Stars
John Green (5.5, UG, 850L) SP</p> |
| <p>8 Night
Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L) NF</p> | <p>18 The Call of the Wild
Jack London (8.0, MG, 1120L) SP</p> |
| <p>9 The Monkey's Paw
W.W. Jacobs (6.5, UG, 420L)</p> | <p>19 Harry Potter Series
J.K. Rowling (3.9–8.8, MG/MG+, 500L–1230L) SP</p> |
| <p>10 To Kill a Mockingbird
Harper Lee (5.6, UG, 790L) SP</p> | <p>20 Refugee
Alan Gratz (5.3, MG, 800L)</p> |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 8 myON NF

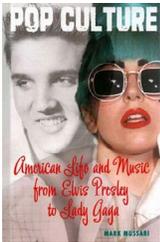
- **Jackie Robinson: Baseball's Great Pioneer**, Jason Glaser (3.8, MG, 570L) SP
- **Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad**, Michael Martin (3.7, MG, 510L) SP
- **Disgusting Foods**, Connie Colwell Miller (2.9, MG, 710L)
- **Jay-Z: Hip-Hop Icon**, Jessica Gunderson (4.0, MG, 570L)
- **Wolves: On the Hunt**, Lori Polydoros (3.2, MG, 700L)
- **Golden State Warriors**, Zach Wyner (1210L)
- **Latino Folklore and Culture**, Bill Palmer (650L)
- **How to Survive Anything**, Rachel Buchholz (930L)
- **Titanic**, Theresa Greenaway (1240L)
- **Danny Blackgoat, Navajo Prisoner**, Tim Tingle (4.0, MG, 550L)

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 6–8

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

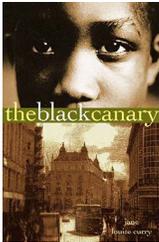
Arts: Music

Nonfiction NF



American Life and Music from Elvis Presley to Lady Gaga
Mark Mussari
(8.7, MG+, 1300L)

Fiction



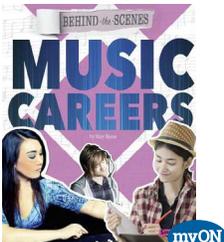
The Black Canary
Jane Louise Curry
(6.1, MG, 960L)



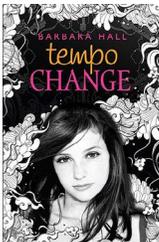
Raggin', Jazzin', Rockin': A History of American Musical Instrument Makers
Susan VanHecke
(8.0, MG+, 1090L)



Play Me a Story: Nine Tales About Musical Instruments
Naomi Adler (5.7, MG, 910L)



Behind-the-Scenes Music Careers
Mary Boone
(7.3, MG, 1120L)

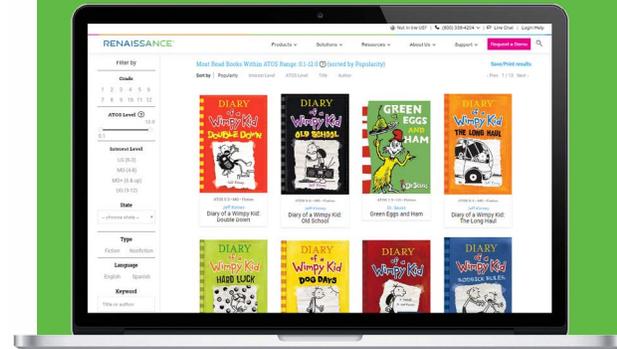


Tempo Change
Barbara Hall
(4.5, MG+, 690L)

Advanced

Intermediate

Beginning



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:



Visit www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom to access the Custom Report Builder tool.



Use the filters to select state, grade, reading level, and more.



Click "Generate My Report" for a PDF you can save or print.

Research Spotlight

Making Career Connections

How can students prepare for the reading levels of future career materials?

Establish background knowledge with topical reading across grade levels

Elementary School

Middle School

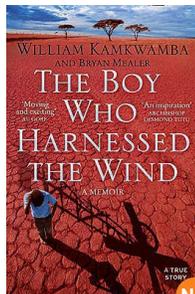
High School



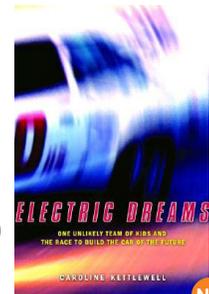
Electricians



Zap!
Martha Freeman
(4.6, MG, 660L)



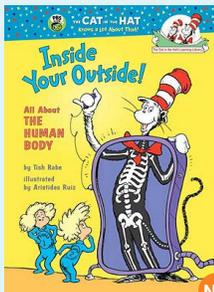
The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind
William Kamkwamba
(6.4, UG, 960L)



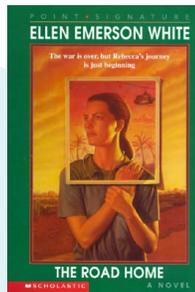
Electric Dreams
Caroline Kettlewell
(8.4, UG)



Registered Nurses



Inside Your Outside!
Tish Rabe
(3.7, LG, 560L)



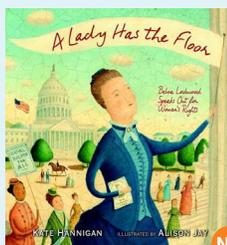
The Road Home
Ellen Emerson
(5.3, UG, 780L)



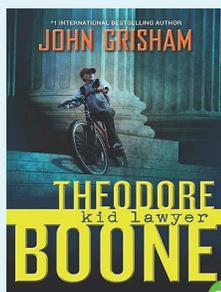
Florence Nightingale
Catherine Reef
(7.6, MG+, 1050L)



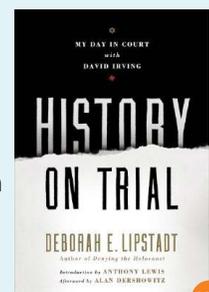
Lawyers



A Lady Has the Floor
Kate Hannigan
(4.3, LG, 780L)



Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer
John Grisham
(5.2, MG)



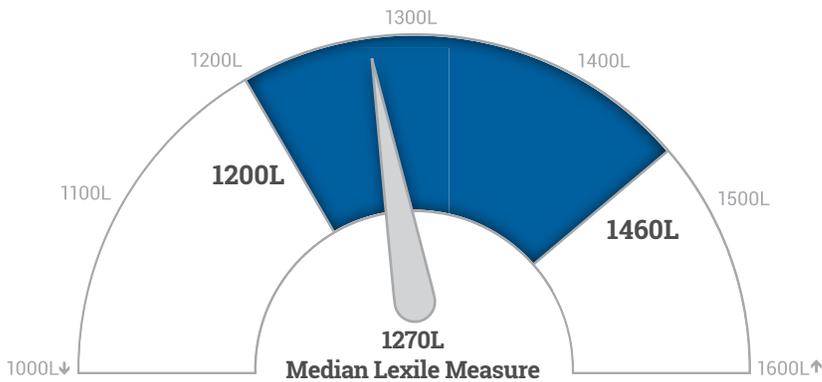
History on Trial
Deborah E. Lipstadt
(9.6, UG)

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

As students move through schooling, their everyday learning is preparing them for their future. MetaMetrics' **Lexile® Career Database** provides the only available data on how students' reading test scores relate to the entry-level reading demands of careers. These occupational reading demands were determined by researching and measuring the text complexity of textbooks, professional training manuals, recruitment materials, and other career-related sources individuals use to prepare for their first post-secondary career, either on the job or in college.

What are the reading demands of popular careers?

Example occupational reading levels per Lexile Career Database

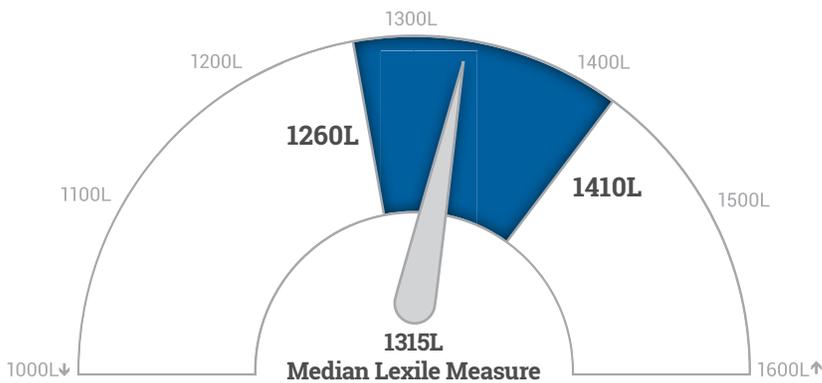


Electricians will likely encounter training materials ranging from a reading level of 1200L to 1460L.

An example book in this reading range is **Fast Food Nation** by Eric Schlosser.

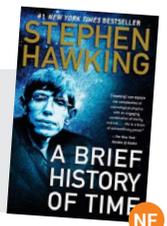


NF

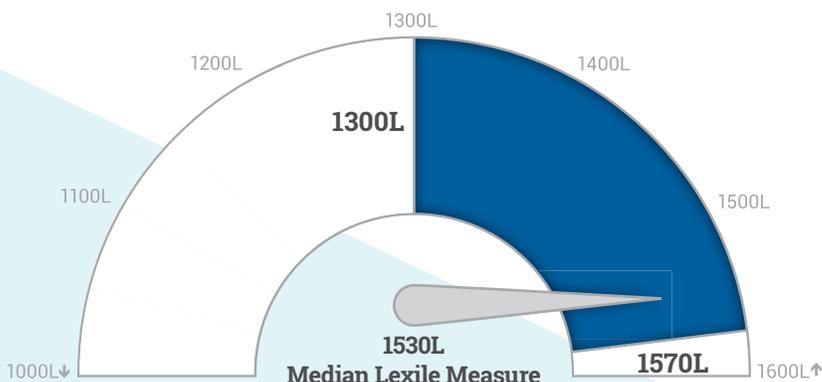


Registered Nurses will likely encounter training materials ranging from a reading level of 1260L to 1410L.

An example book in this reading range is **A Brief History of Time** by Stephen W. Hawking.

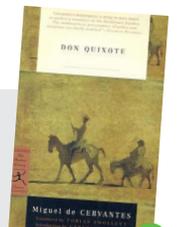


SF



Lawyers will likely encounter training materials ranging from a reading level of 1300L to 1570L.

An example book in this reading range is **Don Quixote** by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.



SP

WHAT KIDS ARE READING

Grades 9–12

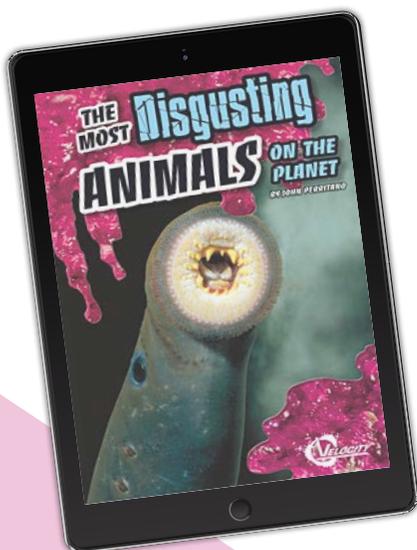
In high school, students are preparing for the next phase of their lives. After graduation, these young adults will need specific skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of higher education, technical schooling, military service, or the workforce.

Grade 9

During the 2018–2019 school year, 96,911 ninth graders each read, on average, 6.2 books and 280,132 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 9

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 To Kill a Mockingbird
Harper Lee (5.6, UG, 790L) SP</p> | <p>11 Lord of the Flies
William Golding (5.0, UG, 770L) SP</p> |
| <p>2 Of Mice and Men
John Steinbeck (4.5, UG, 630L) SP</p> | <p>12 Fahrenheit 451
Ray Bradbury (5.2, UG, 890L) SP</p> |
| <p>3 Romeo and Juliet
William Shakespeare (8.6, UG) SP</p> | <p>13 Giver Quartet
Lois Lowry (4.9–5.7, MG/MG+, 680L–760L) SP</p> |
| <p>4 The Most Dangerous Game
Richard Connell (5.3, UG) SP</p> | <p>14 Wonder Series
R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG, 790L) SP</p> |
| <p>5 Night
Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L) NF</p> | <p>15 The Fault in Our Stars
John Green (5.5, UG, 850L) SP</p> |
| <p>6 The Outsiders
S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG, 750L) SP</p> | <p>16 Divergent Series
Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L) SP</p> |
| <p>7 Hunger Games Trilogy
Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L) SP</p> | <p>17 Maze Runner Series
James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L) SP</p> |
| <p>8 Animal Farm
George Orwell (7.3, UG, 1370L) SP</p> | <p>18 Percy Jackson and the Olympians Series
Rick Riordan (4.1–6.7, MG, 590L–790L) SP</p> |
| <p>9 To All the Boys I've Loved Before Series
Jenny Han (4.2–4.5, UG, 630L–700L) SP</p> | <p>19 Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series
Jeff Kinney (5.2–6.5, MG, 910L–1060L) SP</p> |
| <p>10 The Hate U Give
Angie Thomas (3.9, UG, 590L) SP</p> | <p>20 Speak
Laurie Halse Anderson (4.5, UG, 690L) SP</p> |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 9 myON NF

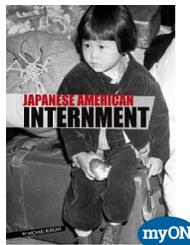
- **The Most Disgusting Animals on the Planet**, John Perritano (4.9, MG, 780L)
- **The Sinking of the Titanic**, Matt Doeden (3.8, MG, 550L) SP
- **World War II (Living Through...)**, Andrew Langley (7.8, MG, 1050L)
- **Cars and Motorcycles**, John Townsend (6.2, MG, 940L)
- **The Future of Life on Earth (Freestyle)**, Michael Bright (7.7, MG, 1090L)
- **Nicki Minaj**, Saddleback Educational Publishing (650L)
- **Reptiles and Dinosaurs**, Sol 90 (1330L)
- **Matter**, Britannica Educational Publishing (1150L)
- **The Great Wall of China**, Cindy Jenson-Elliott (1220L)
- **Usain Bolt**, Saddleback Educational Publishing (130L)

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 9–12

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

Social Studies: The World Wars

Nonfiction **NF**



Japanese American Internment
Michael Burgan
(7.8, MG+, 1090L)

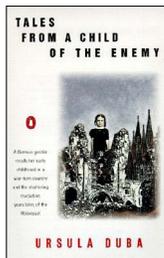
Fiction



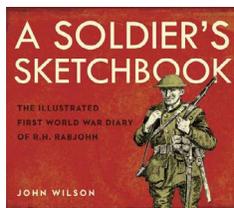
War and Remembrance
Herman Wouk
(8.4, UG, 950L)



Kristallnacht
Stephanie Fitzgerald
(7.5, MG+, 1040L)



Tales from a Child of the Enemy
Ursula Duba (7.3, UG)



A Soldier's Sketchbook: The Illustrated First World War Diary of R.H. Rabjohn
John Wilson
(6.7, MG+, 990L)



And in the Morning
John Wilson (6.1, UG)

Advanced

Intermediate

Beginning

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

My Favorite Character

By Isabel Thomas,

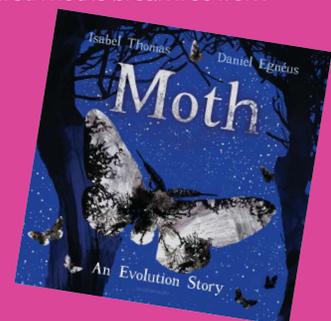
author of *Moth: An Evolution Story*

My favourite character is character itself.

When I began writing nonfiction 15 years ago, story and character were firmly associated with fiction. These were the books offering a portal to adventure by slipping readers into someone else's shoes. Nonfiction was seen as a source of facts, a way to get your homework done. Happily, this is no longer the case. Children, teachers, and parents are embracing narrative nonfiction, and there is no narrative without character.

These are often real-life characters, in stories of lives well-lived. Today's lavishly illustrated biographies are nothing like encyclopaedia entries. Inside their pages, children can join a young Nelson Mandela on his adventures in the rolling hills of South Africa, build a garden rollercoaster with Amelia Earhart, or feel nine-year-old Marie Curie's incredulity when her teacher insists she control her curly hair. Details like this make history relevant and relatable. They show children that scientists, explorers, and world-changing activists are people just like them.

Children gravitate to these character-led books. Looking back to *What Kids Are Reading, 2019*, it's notable that readers' best-loved nonfiction titles were the memoirs of Elie Wiesel and Raina Telgemeier, and many of the popular digital nonfiction titles were biographies. However, the power of character can extend far beyond biography. In my picture book, *Moth: An Evolution Story*, winner of the 2020 AAAS/Subaru Children's Science Book Prize, peppered moths break free from the dry textbook presentation to become characters in a story. Character gives readers someone (or



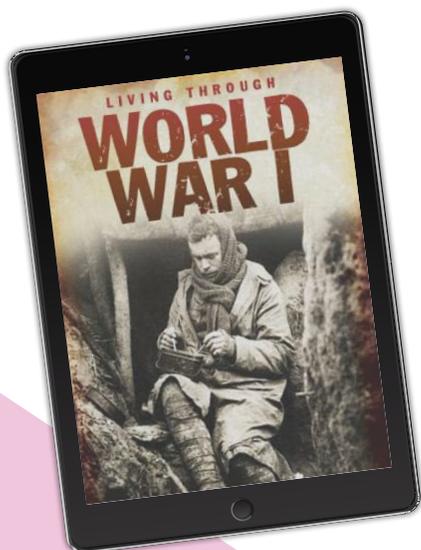
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Grade 10

During the 2018–2019 school year, 74,764 tenth graders each read, on average, 5.4 books and 285,604 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 10

- | | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1 | Night
Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L) | NF |
| 2 | To Kill a Mockingbird
Harper Lee (5.6, UG, 790L) | SP |
| 3 | Of Mice and Men
John Steinbeck (4.5, UG, 630L) | SP |
| 4 | Lord of the Flies
William Golding (5.0, UG, 770L) | SP |
| 5 | Animal Farm
George Orwell (7.3, UG, 1370L) | SP |
| 6 | To All the Boys I've Loved Before Series
Jenny Han (4.2–4.5, UG, 630L–700L) | |
| 7 | Julius Caesar
William Shakespeare (10.8, UG) | |
| 8 | The Hate U Give
Angie Thomas (3.9, UG, 590L) | |
| 9 | Things Fall Apart
Chinua Achebe (6.2, UG, 890L) | |
| 10 | The Metamorphosis
Franz Kafka (10.5, UG, 1340L) | |
| 11 | Anthem
Ayn Rand (6.1, UG, 880L) | |
| 12 | Hunger Games Trilogy
Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L) | SP |
| 13 | Maze Runner Series
James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L) | SP |
| 14 | Divergent Series
Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L) | SP |
| 15 | The Lottery
Shirley Jackson (5.9, UG) | |
| 16 | Fahrenheit 451
Ray Bradbury (5.2, UG, 890L) | SP |
| 17 | The Great Gatsby
F. Scott Fitzgerald (7.3, UG, 1010L) | SP |
| 18 | Wonder Series
R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG, 790L) | SP |
| 19 | Macbeth
William Shakespeare (10.9, UG) | |
| 20 | Thirteen Reasons Why
Jay Asher (3.9, MG+, 550L) | |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 10 myON NF

- **World War I (Living Through...)**, Nicola Barber (9.3, MG, 1250L)
- **Gadgets and Inventions**, Neil Morris (7.9, MG, 1060L)
- **What Do We Know About the Solar System? (Freestyle)**, Ian Graham (6.4, MG, 970L)
- **Food Technology**, Neil Morris (6.5, MG, 960L)
- **Cover Your Assets: The Teens' Guide to Protecting Their Money and Their Stuff**, Kara McGuire (1090L)
- **Cesar Chavez**, Anne Schraff (5.4, MG+, 790L)
- **Dinosaurs**, Tim Vicary (820L)
- **Shark!**, Saddleback Educational Publishing (150L)
- **The Kennedy Assassination**, David Robson (1100L)
- **The Brain**, Helen Dwyer (1201L)

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 9–12

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

Science: Oceans

Nonfiction **NF**

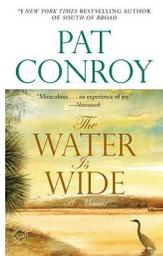
Fiction



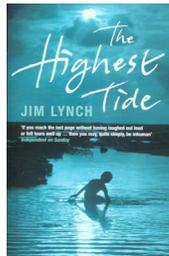
Tracking Trash: Flotsam, Jetsam, and the Science of Ocean Motion
Loree Griffin Burns
(8.5, MG, 1200L)



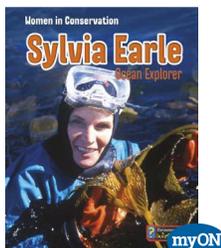
From Sea to Shining Sea
James Alexander Thom
(7.3, UG)



The Water Is Wide: A Memoir
Pat Conroy (7.2, UG, 760L)



The Highest Tide
Jim Lynch (6.7, UG, 1030L)



Sylvia Earle: Ocean Explorer
Dennis Fertig (6.2, MG)



The Light Between Oceans
M.L. Stedman (5.6, UG)

Advanced

Intermediate

Beginning

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

continued from p. 39

something) to root for. It keeps children turning the page, helping them to make an emotional connection with a subject. This connection makes the science easier to understand and to remember.

I would like to see storytelling and character used widely in STEM learning and teaching. Young people learn about the arts and humanities by striving to see the world through the eyes of others. In contrast, science is too often condensed to a list of facts and theories. Bite-sized nuggets of information delight some readers, but for many they are not accessible. As adults, our existing knowledge helps us to put new information into context and grasp its significance. For young readers, this is difficult or impossible. I use character to overcome a reader's lack of experience, to build a bridge from their starting point to new understanding—and new passions. We may not know anything about a topic before we pick up a book, but we can all relate to a character's hopes, dreams, humour, and resilience.



Photo by Tiffany Willis

Isabel Thomas

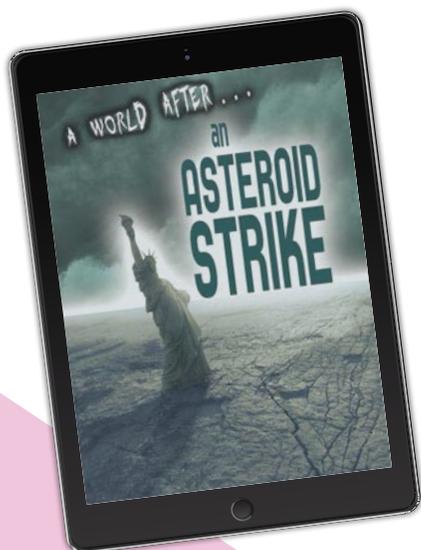
Isabel Thomas is an award-winning science writer, journalist, and author of more than 150 books for young readers, including *Moth: An Evolution Story*, *This Book Will (Help) Cool the Climate*, and the Little Guides to Great Lives Series. She lives and writes in Cambridge, UK.
www.isabelthomas.co.uk

Grade 11

During the 2018–2019 school year, 58,703 eleventh graders each read, on average, 5.1 books and 261,580 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 11

1	The Crucible Arthur Miller (4.9, UG)	
2	The Great Gatsby F. Scott Fitzgerald (7.3, UG, 1010L)	SP
3	Of Mice and Men John Steinbeck (4.5, UG, 630L)	SP
4	The Scarlet Letter (Unabridged) Nathaniel Hawthorne (11.7, UG, 1280L)	SP
5	To All the Boys I've Loved Before Series Jenny Han (4.2–4.5, UG, 630L–700L)	
6	To Kill a Mockingbird Harper Lee (5.6, UG, 790L)	SP
7	The Hate U Give Angie Thomas (3.9, UG, 590L)	
8	A Raisin in the Sun Lorraine Hansberry (5.5, UG)	
9	Hunger Games Trilogy Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L)	SP
10	Fahrenheit 451 Ray Bradbury (5.2, UG, 890L)	SP
11	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Unabridged) Mark Twain (6.6, MG+, 980L)	
12	Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave , Frederick Douglass (7.9, UG, 1040L)	NF
13	Maze Runner Series James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L)	SP
14	The Catcher in the Rye J.D. Salinger (4.7, UG, 790L)	SP
15	Divergent Series Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L)	SP
16	Thirteen Reasons Why Jay Asher (3.9, MG+, 550L)	
17	The Old Man and the Sea Ernest Hemingway (5.1, UG, 940L)	SP
18	Before I Fall Lauren Oliver (5.4, UG, 860L)	
19	Wonder Series R.J. Palacio (4.2–4.8, MG, 790L)	SP
20	Night Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L)	NF



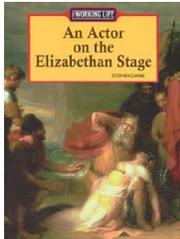
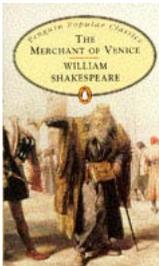
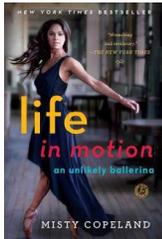
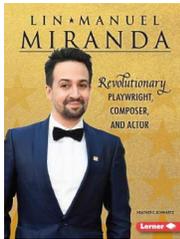
Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 11 myON NF

- **A World After an Asteroid Strike**, Alex Woolf (1140L)
- **Crime-Fighting Devices**, Robert Snedden (6.9, MG, 960L)
- **Avoiding Hunger and Finding Water (Freestyle)**, Andrew Langley (6.1, MG, 900L)
- **Smart Spending: The Teens' Guide to Cash, Credit, and Life's Costs**, Kara McGuire (1050L)
- **Stories of Women in World War II: We Can Do It!**, Andrew Langley (6.5, MG, 940L)
- **The 1960s**, Hal Marcovitz (1220L)
- **A History of Art**, Laura Perdew (1150L)
- **Agatha Christie, Woman of Mystery**, John Escott (660L)
- **Are Video Games Harmful?**, Hal Marcovitz (1330L)
- **Space**, Tim Vicary (870L)

Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 9–12

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

Arts: Theater

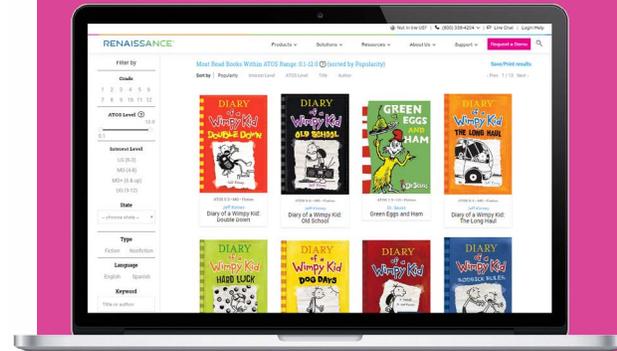
Nonfiction NF	Fiction
 <p>An Actor on the Elizabethan Stage Stephen Currie (9.2, UG)</p>	 <p>The Merchant of Venice William Shakespeare (9.4, UG)</p>
 <p>Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina Misty Copeland (7.3, MG+, 1040L)</p>	 <p>Shiva's Fire Suzanne Fisher Staples (6.8, UG, 990L)</p>
 <p>Lin-Manuel Miranda: Revolutionary Playwright, Composer, and Actor Heather E. Schwartz (6.3, MG, 1010L)</p>	 <p>Eyes Like Stars Lisa Mantchev (5.3, UG, 740L)</p>

Advanced

Intermediate

Beginning

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 in three simple steps:



Visit www.renaissance.com/wkar-custom to access the Custom Report Builder tool.



Use the filters to select state, grade, reading level, and more.



Click "Generate My Report" for a PDF you can save or print.

Grade 12

During the 2018–2019 school year, 42,217 twelfth graders each read, on average, 5.0 books and 250,436 words.

Top 20 Books Read: Grade 12

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Hamlet
William Shakespeare (10.5, UG)</p> | <p>11 Hunger Games Trilogy
Suzanne Collins (5.3–5.3, MG/MG+, 800L–820L) SP</p> |
| <p>2 Frankenstein (Unabridged)
Mary Shelley (12.4, UG, 1040L)</p> | <p>12 The Great Gatsby
F. Scott Fitzgerald (7.3, UG, 1010L) SP</p> |
| <p>3 Macbeth
William Shakespeare (10.9, UG)</p> | <p>13 1984
George Orwell (8.9, UG, 1090L) SP</p> |
| <p>4 Animal Farm
George Orwell (7.3, UG, 1370L) SP</p> | <p>14 Brave New World
Aldous Huxley (7.5, UG, 870L)</p> |
| <p>5 The Kite Runner
Khaled Hosseini (5.2, UG, 840L)</p> | <p>15 The Metamorphosis
Franz Kafka (10.5, UG, 1340L)</p> |
| <p>6 Of Mice and Men
John Steinbeck (4.5, UG, 630L) SP</p> | <p>16 Divergent Series
Veronica Roth (4.8–5.8, UG, 700L–850L) SP</p> |
| <p>7 Night
Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG, 590L) NF</p> | <p>17 Maze Runner Series
James Dashner (3.3–5.7, MG/UG, 720L–810L) SP</p> |
| <p>8 The Hate U Give
Angie Thomas (3.9, UG, 590L)</p> | <p>18 Oedipus the King
Sophocles (5.6, UG, 1110L)</p> |
| <p>9 To All the Boys I've Loved Before Series
Jenny Han (4.2–4.5, UG, 630L–700L)</p> | <p>19 The Twilight Saga
Stephenie Meyer (4.5–7.6, UG, 670L–720L) SP</p> |
| <p>10 Lord of the Flies
William Golding (5.0, UG, 770L) SP</p> | <p>20 Harry Potter Series
J.K. Rowling (3.9–8.8, MG/MG+, 500L–1230L) SP</p> |



Popular Digital Nonfiction Reads: Grade 12 myON NF

- **All About the Green: The Teens' Guide to Finding Work and Making Money**, Kara McGuire (1000L)
- **A World After Fossil Fuels**, Liz Gogerly (1040L)
- **Stories of Women's Suffrage: Votes for Women!**, Charlotte Guillain (7.5, MG, 1100L)
- **Should Scientists Pursue Cloning?**, Isabel Thomas (7.6, MG, 1060L)
- **Sustaining Our Natural Resources (Freestyle)**, Jen Green (7.5, MG, 840L)
- **Why? Answers to Everyday Scientific Questions**, Joel Levy (1250L)
- **Brain Injuries in Football**, Stephanie Watson (1060L)
- **Bullying**, Laura Perdew (1150L)
- **Kanye West**, Saddleback Educational Publishing (760L)
- **Evolution**, Sarah Eason (1152L)

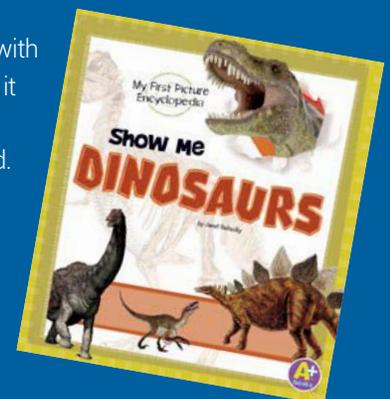
My Favorite Character

By Janet Riehecky,
author of *Show Me Dinosaurs*

I always root for the underdog, so I've loved many characters in children's literature, but my favorite is Menolly in *Dragonsong* by Anne McCaffrey. Set in a fantasy world called Pern, the story focuses on Menolly's struggles to fit in. She has a gift for music; however, the culture that she lives in thinks only men should compose songs. After her mentor dies, there's no one in her community, called Half-Circle Hold, who understands what is inside her, and she is miserable. I can identify with her because while I was growing up, I was such a bookworm that I didn't fit in with other kids.

Menolly is forbidden even to sing, and when her father hears her playing a melody she wrote herself, he beats her. She realizes she can't stay in Half-Circle Hold anymore and runs away. It takes a lot of courage for her to do so. There are no other holds nearby that she can take refuge in, and a terrible substance called Thread drops from the sky at regular intervals. Thread is an acid-like material that burns anything it touches. Menolly takes refuge in a cave where she is safe. Her courage and resourcefulness make me admire her and want her to succeed.

But there's another element that makes me love Menolly and this book. I love the idea of magical beasts. On this world, gigantic dragons bond with individuals, and the dragons and their riders fight the Thread by searing it with fire before it can reach the ground. They are



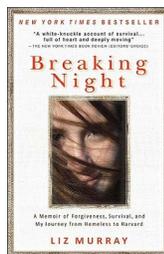
Cross-Curricular Connections: Grades 9–12

Nonfiction and Fiction Book Pairs of Increasing Text Difficulty

Social Emotional Learning: Character

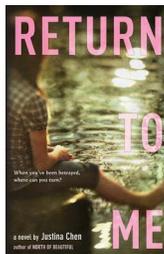
Advanced

Nonfiction **NF**



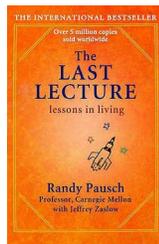
Breaking Night: A Memoir of Forgiveness, Survival, and My Journey from Homeless to Harvard
Liz Murray (6.8, UG)

Fiction



Return to Me
Justina Chen (6.1, UG, 870L)

Intermediate



The Last Lecture
Randy Pausch (6.3, UG)

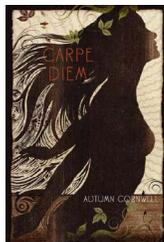


American Panda
Gloria Chao (5.6, UG, 780L)

Beginning



Little Fish: A Memoir from a Different Kind of Year
Ramsey Beyer (4.6, UG)



Carpe Diem
Autumn Cornwell (4.9, UG, 740L)

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

continued on p. 47

WHAT KIDS ARE READING

About the Report

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

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.

This report draws from two data sources: Accelerated Reader data, which tracks the books and articles (print and digital) that students have read from start to finish, and myON data, which monitors student reading on a personalized digital library platform. Combined, these two sources provide insight into millions of students' reading habits. No other study captures student reading behavior on this scale.¹

How to Use This Report

Start by flipping to the book lists for your grade level to see the books your students' peers are reading, which include the most read books overall and popular digital nonfiction selections. For your readers who seek more challenge, look ahead a grade or two. For students reading below grade level, search for titles on their grade-level lists with lower ATOS or Lexile readability levels.

Students of all ages love a good read aloud—and children often can comprehend more complex material when it's read aloud to them than when they read it independently. Helping kids access literature they are interested in, but may be unable to read on their own, is a great way to foster positive relationships between students and reading.

To find book suggestions that complement your teaching, turn to the cross-curricular connections lists, where you'll find nonfiction and fiction book pairs of increasing text difficulty on social studies, science, and arts topics for each grade range (plus a bonus social emotional learning list for grade 12).

Remember, 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.

In addition to the book lists in *What Kids Are Reading*, also examine the three research sections that analyze data on exploring nonfiction reading, establishing background knowledge, and making career connections, as well as five engaging essays by the popular authors whose books populate this report.

¹ Note: Renaissance is deeply committed to protecting school and student data. For all publications, we provide aggregated data useful to educators, families, and researchers, but do not release information that could identify any district, school, teacher, or student. For more on our data security and confidentiality practices, see www.renaissance.com/privacy-policy. Also, we recognize not all student reading is captured through Accelerated Reader and myON; however, for users of these tools, we know much reading practice activity is captured this way.

continued from p. 45

awesome, but there are also rumors of small fire-lizards that live in the wilds. The rumor turns out to be true. Menolly finds a nest of these fire-lizards in her cave, and the eggs hatch while Thread is falling outside. To keep them from going outside seeking food, Menolly feeds them and bonds (impresses) with nine of the creatures. The tiny creatures provide company for Menolly, and taking care of them keeps her so busy she doesn't have time to worry about her situation.

Menolly undergoes many trials without giving up. She learns how to believe in herself and behave unselfishly. When she finally finds a place where both she and her fire-lizards are welcome, I feel that warm glow I get when everything turns out right, and all the loose ends fit together perfectly. Menolly's triumph made me feel like I could triumph too.



Janet Riehecky

Janet Riehecky is a college professor and the author of 134 books for children, ranging from preschool picture books to middle grade biographies and mysteries. She served as National Director of Kids Love A Mystery, a literacy program, from 1998 to 2004, and has been a network representative for SCBWI since 2007.

Matching Books to Students

When using this report to find students' next great read, be sure to consider not only text complexity, but also book Interest Level as well as content, structure, student motivation, and background knowledge.

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 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 that text could likely be read by a fifth-grade student in the fourth month of the school year. Visit Renaissance Accelerated Reader Bookfinder® to find ATOS levels for nearly every book in your school's library: www.arbookfind.com.

Analyze other text for free at www.renaissance.com/products/practice/acceleratedreader-360/atos-and-text-complexity/.

Renaissance pairs the ATOS measure with Interest Level guidelines to 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.

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 by grade level is available at hub.lexile.com/lexile-gl. For more information and to analyze texts for free, visit hub.lexile.com/la.

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

By the numbers



271 million books

7.6 million students



24,985 US schools

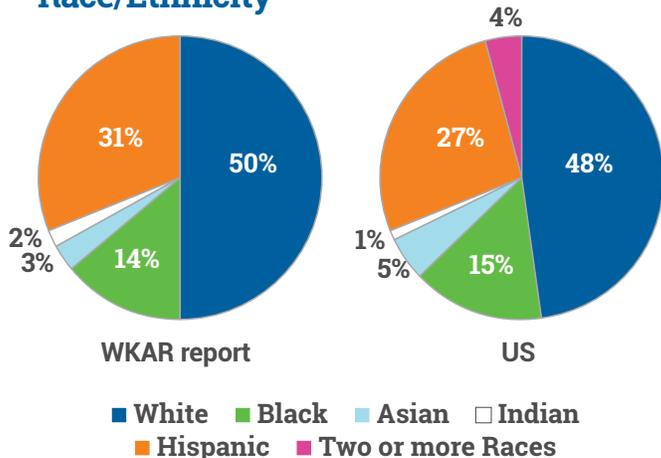
Students, books, words, and average ATOS by grade

Accelerated Reader database, 2018–2019 school year

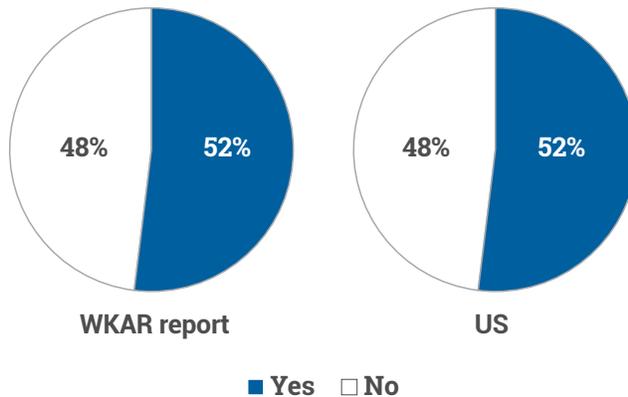
Grade	Students	Books read	Average books read per student	Average words read per student	Average ATOS
K	231,799	5,192,761	22.4	7,234	1.4
1	798,874	37,348,312	46.8	27,971	1.7
2	1,076,623	65,295,727	60.6	87,287	2.5
3	1,158,568	60,620,822	52.3	195,000	3.1
4	1,173,798	44,812,365	38.2	306,272	3.5
5	1,153,475	33,133,479	28.7	388,397	3.9
6	754,468	12,763,510	16.9	404,001	4.2
7	538,928	6,086,741	11.3	376,580	4.5
8	477,357	4,628,590	9.7	378,979	4.7
9	96,911	604,602	6.2	280,132	4.8
10	74,764	405,971	5.4	285,604	5.1
11	58,703	297,879	5.1	261,580	5.1
12	42,217	211,112	5.0	250,436	5.2
K–12	7,636,485	271,401,871			

Report demographics reflect national percentages

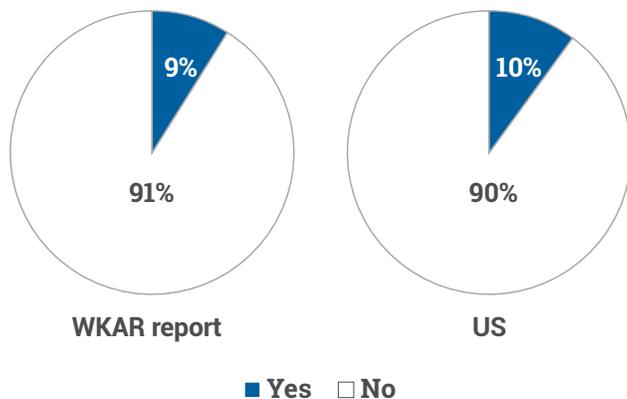
Race/Ethnicity



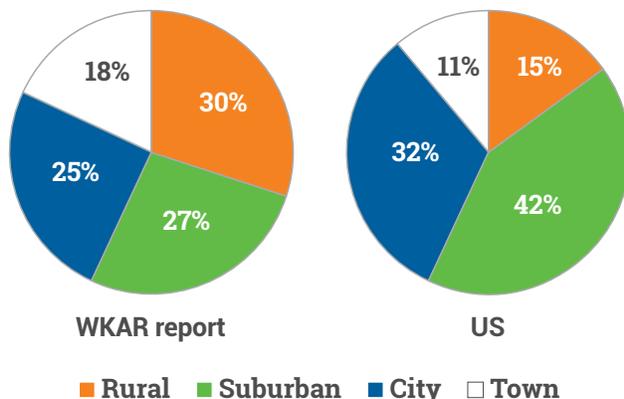
Free/Reduced-price Lunch



English Learner



School Location



About 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 spanning a variety of skills and text types, and a worldwide community of support.

How Accelerated Reader works: For independent reading, first the teacher sets students' personalized reading goals, focusing on key factors for successful reading practice: quantity (time spent reading), quality (comprehension), and difficulty (text complexity level). Next, each student selects and reads a book or article, and then completes a short Accelerated Reader practice quiz. The digital quizzes provide students with immediate

feedback, which is shared with the teacher, about comprehension level and number of words read.

With quizzes for 200,000 books and new quizzes constantly added, Accelerated Reader offers vast reading options. In addition, the program's Discovery Bookshelf provides personalized suggestions that help students find their next great read.

The data in this report: We studied the Accelerated Reader records for 7.6 million students in grades K–12 at 24,985 schools, across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, who read 271 million books during the 2018–2019 school year (see table at left). This massive Accelerated Reader report sample, although one of convenience, includes a diverse group of students, roughly representative of US schools (see demographic information above).² The top 20 books by grade are drawn from this data set.

² Report sample data is based on school-level percentages from the Education Database (Market Data Retrieval). National data is from National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp.

A young girl with dark hair pulled back, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a blue denim shirt with white floral embroidery, is smiling and reading a book. Her right hand is resting on her chin. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting with a window.

Visit the *What Kids Are Reading* website for our Custom Report Builder tool and more: www.renaissance.com/wkar.

About myON

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

How myON works: After students take quick assessments to identify their reading level and interests, myON 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 a 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: We studied the 105,518,942 books opened in myON over the 2018–2019 school year. Overall, students read more than 827,885,052 minutes in myON—approximately 13,798,084 hours, 574,920 days, or 1,575 years of reading—and almost 2 billion pages over the school year. The lists of popular digital nonfiction reads for each grade are drawn from this data set.

Visit the *What Kids Are Reading* website for our Custom Report Builder tool and more: www.renaissance.com/wkar.



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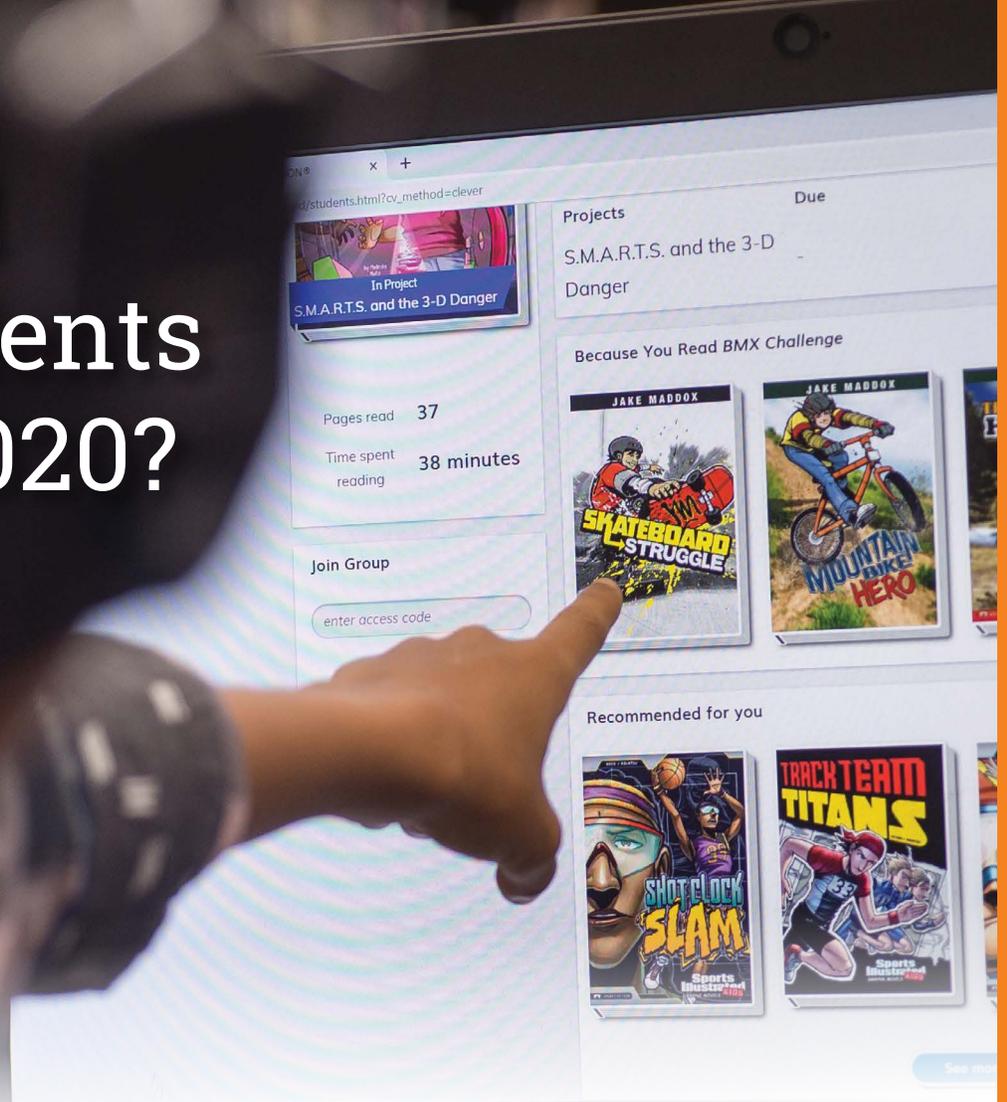
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The myON digital library has more than 13,000 available books from a variety of publishers.

What will your students read in 2020?



myON

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to the books they want.

Teachers get the analytics they
need to ensure growth.



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