

What Kids Are Reading And How They Grow

With essays from Tedd Arnold, Melba Pattillo Beals, and Laura Numeroff



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RENAISSANCE
P.O. Box 8036
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-8036
(800) 338-4204
www.renaissance.com
educatordevelopment@renaissance.com

Contents

Introduction by Gene M. Kerns, Ed.D., Chief Academic Officer, Renaissance.....	1
Section I: Overall reading	3
An analysis of reading practice	4
<i>If you give a child a book...</i> by Laura Numeroff, author of <i>If You Give a Mouse a Cookie</i>	7
Top 25 fiction and nonfiction books, grades K–12	8
Section II: Nonfiction reading	21
An analysis of nonfiction reading.....	22
<i>Becoming a reader</i> by Tedd Arnold, author of <i>Hi! Fly Guy</i>	25
Top 10 nonfiction articles and nonfiction books, grades K–12.....	26
Section III: Reading challenge across the curriculum.....	39
An analysis of reading challenge	40
<i>The magic key</i> by Melba Pattillo Beals, author of <i>Warriors Don't Cry</i>	43
Top 10 nonfiction articles and overall books about science, by text complexity grade bands.....	44
Top 10 nonfiction articles and overall books about social studies, by text complexity grade bands.....	49
Appendix: About the report.....	54
References.....	59

Insights

Who reads more, boys or girls?	4
How does reading each day impact kids' exposure to words over time?.....	5
How can reading practice help struggling readers catch up to higher-achieving classmates?	6
What is the most popular nonfiction book in each state?	22
What is the state of nonfiction reading in the US since the rollout of new rigorous academic standards?.....	23
Given recent STEM educational initiatives, how actively do kids read books on these topics?	24
How has literary language changed over time?.....	40
How does student reading measure up to adult leisure, college, and workplace reading?	41
Are secondary students reading books at high school levels?.....	42

Tables

Table A1. Students, texts, and words by grade.....	54
Table A2. <i>What Kids Are Reading</i> study demographics reflect national percentages	55

Figures

Figure A1. Accelerated Reader 360 quiz results.....	56
Figure A2. Highlighting and tagging text evidence in Accelerated Reader 360	57
Figure A3. Accelerated Reader 360 Book Discovery helps kids find next just-right read.....	58

Introduction

When I was in middle school, we had weekly time for independent reading. Every Wednesday our class periods were shortened slightly, and for 30 minutes during the middle of the day, we had silent sustained reading time. My school was attempting to increase our reading abilities, but not in a way—we know now—that is ideally designed to achieve growth.

Even as a student, I realized that my experience during those 30 minutes was often quite different from that of my peers. During that time, we could read anything. I clearly remember peers of mine who spent 30 minutes perusing magazines or other manuscripts of lesser quality. As a child from a family full of teachers, these materials were not an option for my reading time, but that was a decision made by family, not my teachers.

Most of the books I read then came from a wonderful bookstore called Kid's Paperbacks. They only sold books for children and young adults, and we were in so often the owners knew us well. They knew what we were reading and what our likes and interests were, so book recommendations were always forthcoming. In my hands were high-quality works of young-adult literature chosen with a knowledge of my reading ability and interests. I looked forward to visiting the store and enjoyed the mystery and anticipation surrounding finding that next great read.

With even the most cursory consideration, there are two major differences between Renaissance Accelerated Reader 360® and less developed silent-reading programs—a front-end consideration of reading achievement and the continuous flow of information from student reading practice. Plenty of research in psychology, education, and other fields shows that growing skills requires instruction and practice at the right level, followed by informative and motivating feedback. While educators provide students with instruction, followed by guidance on independent reading practice, the Accelerated Reader 360 program offers feedback to teachers and students on comprehension, challenge, and reading volume.

With this information, teachers are far better positioned to guide students' growth and kids become active participants in their learning. The relationships we developed with the staff at Kid's Paperbacks echoed these practices, and as a result, I feel certain that my 30 minutes of weekly reading time back then was far more productive than that of some of my classmates.

That all said, managing independent reading is complex, as is fostering growth. How do we encourage students to practice reading? First and foremost, we have to match the right book with the right kid. Reading level is important, interest level is important, but perhaps the most important consideration is that a student wants to read the book. How do we accomplish this? Choice. Lots of it. Reading options at the right level but on topics of kids' choosing.



Gene M. Kerns, Ed.D., is a third-generation educator with teaching experience from elementary through the university level, in addition to K12 administrative experience. He is currently Chief Academic Officer for Renaissance. He has bachelor's and master's degrees from Longwood College in Virginia and a doctor of education degree from the University of Delaware. *Informative Assessment: When It's Not About a Grade* is his first publication.

What Kids Are Reading by the numbers



346
million
books and
articles read



9.9
million
K12 students



30,863
schools

Even as I was supplied with ample reading recommendations as a child, I was still given autonomy over which of those options I ultimately decided to read. This was powerful.

What about reluctant readers—or those kids who say, “I can’t find anything good to read”? Reading experts and writers of state reading standards agree that exposure to text (what we call reading practice) is important, but kids must be truly engaged in what they are reading. One way to get students excited about reading is to connect them with books that kids like them are reading and enjoying.

At Renaissance, we know what kids are reading—kids of all reading levels and backgrounds. The lists within this report supply ample reading opportunities by popularity and grade, nonfiction selections in the form of books and informative articles, and options at varied levels of complexity in subjects like science and social studies.

Managing independent reading is complex, as is fostering growth. How do we encourage students to practice reading? First and foremost, we have to match the right book with the right kid.

We also explore data from Accelerated Reader 360 beyond the books kids are reading to share what we know about what kids do as they grow. We look at the impact of vocabulary-word exposure, compare reading-practice characteristics for struggling versus successful readers, explore nonfiction reading nationwide, and examine varying text difficulty levels of common reading materials, among other analyses. Additional information and ways to further examine the data—including book searches by level and keyword—can be found at <http://www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar>.

Think of this report as your very own Kids’ Paperbacks shop. Come in and linger. There’s a lot to explore. Peruse the lists. Explore the data. What will be your great finds?

Regards,



Section I: Overall reading

It's undeniable that kids love fiction books—there's just nothing like being swept away in a story to another land or time. And nonfiction books cover topics both great and small and far and wide to satisfy kids' endless curiosity or dazzle them with fresh new facts. With over 170,000 books with Accelerated Reader 360 quizzes available, there are so many places to explore, ideas to absorb, and stories to foster a love of reading.

What kids are reading

This section highlights the top 25 fiction and nonfiction books read by kids in grades K–12 during the 2015–2016 school year, based on reading records for 9.9 million students from over 30,000 US schools who read and quizzed on more than 346 million books and nonfiction articles with Accelerated Reader 360. Compare readership of these books over time by noting their prior-year rankings. Also, because the lists are dominated by fiction books, watch for a ☆ symbol that denotes the nonfiction picks that cracked the top 25 lists.

When looking over the lists for grades one through three, it's pretty clear that if kids read one book by **Laura Numeroff**, they will likely ask for many more. Numeroff's *If You Give...* stories captivate early readers by cleverly illustrating how every action sets off a chain reaction—on our second-grade list alone, her titles hold 6 of the top 25 spots! Learn what shaped her passion for reading and writing from an early age on page 7.

To read well, and become well read, students must dedicate time and effort to practicing this critical skill.

(Anderson et al., 1988; Ericsson et al., 2006)

What we know about how kids grow

To read well and become well read—and to be ready for future challenges in college and the workplace—students must dedicate time and effort to practicing this critical skill (Anderson, Wilson, & Fielding, 1988; Ericsson, Charness, Feltovich, & Hoffman, 2006). On the next page, we use Accelerated Reader 360 data to answer the following questions about reading practice:

1. Who reads more, boys or girls?
2. How does reading each day impact kids' exposure to words over time?
3. How can reading practice help struggling readers catch up to higher-achieving classmates?

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

An analysis of reading practice

Think of any skill—piano, carpentry, cooking, algebra, basketball. What do they have in common? As cognitive scientist Daniel Willingham has said, “It is virtually impossible to become proficient at a mental task without extended practice” (2009, p. 81). This is certainly true of reading. Regardless of whether kids are assigned reading materials or self-select them, the reading they do each day is a form of self-guided practice. Over the past decade at Renaissance, we’ve dug into our comprehensive data sets to better understand student reading practice and what makes it meaningful.

Specifically, we’ve discovered three characteristics of daily student reading practice that independently and significantly shape how it can profoundly impact annual achievement growth (Renaissance, 2012). What is the most powerful of these characteristics? Comprehension, the extent to which students understand the main points of the reading they do, is incredibly important. We also know that volume (the time students spend reading each day, and how this relates to the number of books and words read) and challenge (the difficulty level of text) make a big difference.

Let’s explore the data on reading practice.

1. Who reads more, boys or girls?

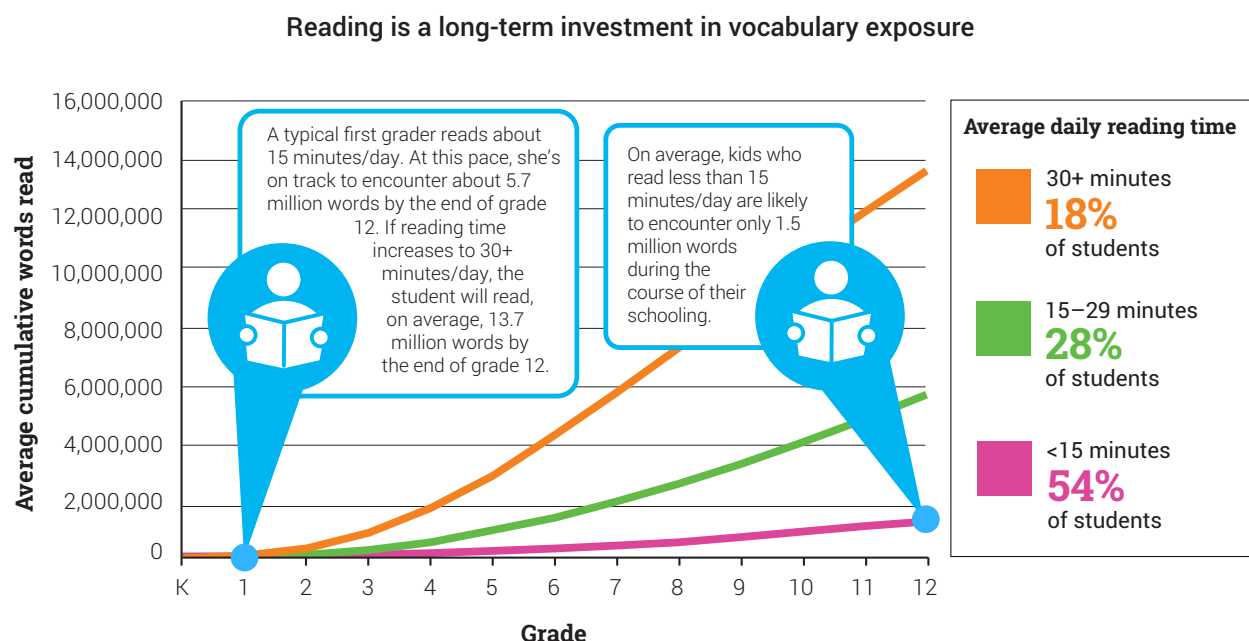


To become great readers, students need high-quality instruction and other supports, but reading volume (time) is also non-negotiable. Experts who study skill acquisition know kids must dedicate sufficient time to practice, and that this time is best spent if students have set goals, work at the optimal

level of challenge, receive immediate relevant feedback, and have opportunities to elaborate on what they are learning (Ericsson, Prietula, & Cokely, 2007). High exposure to words is crucial in developing vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, writing, and higher-order thinking skills (e.g., Anderson et al., 1988; Baker, Simmons, & Kameenui, 1995; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998).

Currently our data show that girls are outpacing boys in reading volume. On average, girls read 705,627 more words than boys by the end of high school. Girls read about 3.7 million words between kindergarten and senior year—23% more than boys, who encounter just over 3 million.

2. How does reading each day impact kids' exposure to words over time?



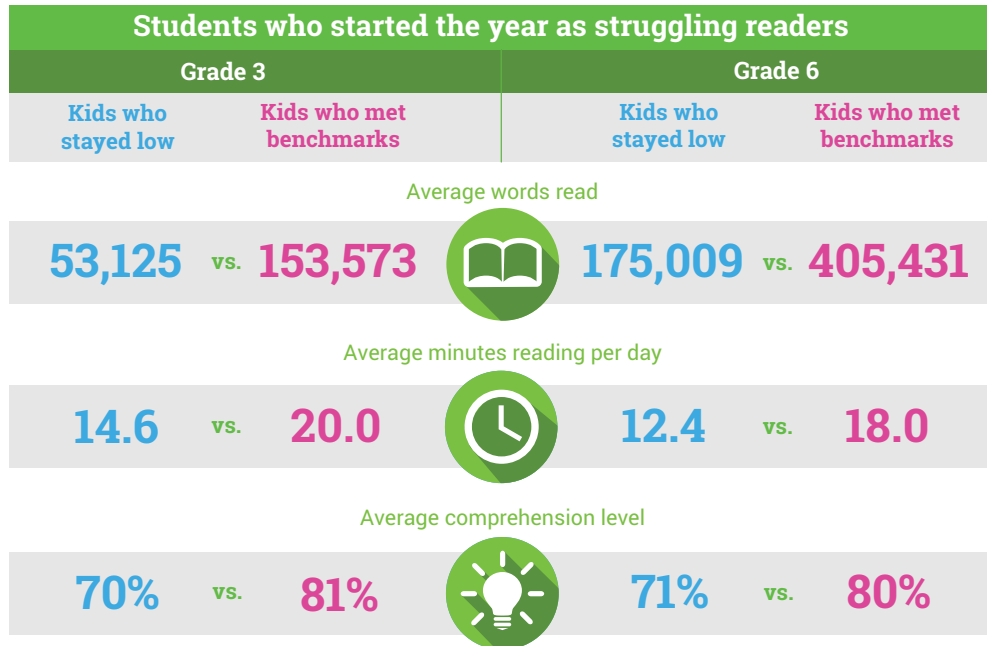
Source: Renaissance Accelerated Reader 360®, 2015–2016.

We care about how much time students spend reading each day because it tells us a lot about their word exposure. For students to build and strengthen their vocabularies, they need repeated exposure to words in a variety of contexts (Stahl, 2005). An important way students get that exposure is largely through reading—every day (Nagy, Anderson, & Herman, 1987).

Our data show that, over time, the collective impact of spending a few extra minutes reading each day can be astonishing. As shown above, the majority of students read for less than 15 minutes per day, meaning they will finish their schooling having been exposed to only 1.5 million words. Though this sounds like a lot of words, the kids who spend more than 30 minutes reading each day encounter a whopping 13.7 million words over the course of their schooling, a difference of more than 12 million words.

3. How can reading practice help struggling readers catch up to higher-achieving classmates?

High-quality daily reading practice helps struggling readers surge ahead



All students shown began the school year in the bottom quarter of reading achievement. Kids who read more words, spent more time reading each day, and read with greater understanding pulled ahead to end the year meeting college- and career-readiness benchmarks for their grade.

Source: Renaissance Accelerated Reader 360®, 2015–2016.

It's true that high-performing students read a lot. Our data show, however, that students who struggle initially but then begin to dedicate significant time to reading with high understanding can experience accelerated growth during the school year, and thus start to narrow achievement gaps. These findings echo Biancarosa and Snow (2006) and Gersten et al. (2008), who noted that while high-quality instruction and other factors are essential for struggling students, ensuring they spend enough time engaged with appropriately challenging text is key in getting them back on track.

Thus, kids who begin the year at lower achievement levels than their classmates are not stuck. With high-quality instruction, engagement with books that pique their interests, more time spent reading, additional encounters with new words, and chances to demonstrate their reading comprehension, struggling readers can surge forward and be better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead in further schooling and the workforce.

If you give a child a book...

by Laura Numeroff

One of the best things about being a children's book author is the reader mail I am lucky to receive. Since my fan base is three to eight years old, the letters are hilarious, honest, and sweet! I regularly receive adorable ideas for future book titles for the If You Give... series (e.g., *If You Give a Turtle a Taco*, *If You Give a Fox French Fries*, or *If You Give an Iguana Ice Cream!*).

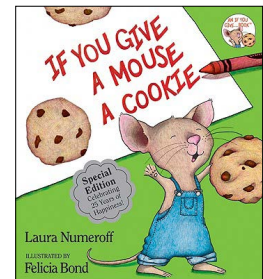
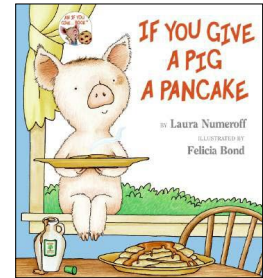
I relish each and every letter because I get to relive my childhood, which was shaped by my parents' love of literature, art, and science. When I was six, my dad took me to the Brooklyn Public Library. I couldn't believe how many books I could take home with me! The wonderful librarian suggested books she thought I might like. My all-time favorites (back then and now) are *Eloise*, by Kay Thompson and illustrated by Hilary Knight, and *Stuart Little*, written by E.B. White and illustrated by Garth Williams.

Eloise and *Stuart Little* completely captivated me, and I read them over and over again—especially since both books were set in New York, where I grew up. When I was eight years old, I knew I wanted to write books that made other little kids feel as happy as I was reading about Eloise and Stuart.

Also, since I was obsessed with animals, my father took me to the zoo all the time. Many of my stories and illustrations are about or inspired by animals, the most recognizable being Mouse, from *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. The unconditional encouragement and support of my parents allowed me to pursue my passion for writing and illustrating children's picture books.

In 1971, I went to Pratt Art Institute so I could be a fashion designer just like my older sister who I idolized, but I very quickly came to realize that I hated to sew. I studied photography, animation, and creative writing. In my last semester, I took a class in children's book writing and illustration. My homework was to write and illustrate a book. *Amy for Short* was about the tallest girl in third grade. When the teacher said she thought it was good, I tried to sell it. Macmillan actually bought it, so I graduated with a degree and a contract. My dream was coming true, but it took many years, and many more books, before my little story about a little mouse eating a large chocolate chip cookie (which was rejected nine times) finally got me recognition. That's why I always tell kids to never give up!

Now teachers use the If You Give... books for all kinds of reading, writing, and math curricula, the most popular being cause and effect. Actually, the most rewarding outcome of the series is the impact the books have had on children with autism, who love the cause and effect element. When I look at the direction my life took from reading incredible children's books and getting lost in brilliant illustrations, to writing stories that bring smiles to young children, it makes me so thankful for my parents' support. I'm convinced, more than ever, that the power of reading helps shape and grow young minds to believe that they are capable of absolutely anything.



Laura Numeroff was born in Brooklyn, New York, and graduated from Pratt Institute, with a contract for her first children's book. She published *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* (after nine rejections) in 1985. Mouse is now in its 62nd printing. Mouse and other If You Give... books have been on the *New York Times* Children's Best Sellers list. The If You Give... series has sold over 4.5 million copies, been printed in fourteen languages, and won a Quill award. Numeroff is extremely excited about her latest book, *Raising a Hero*, which is about a young boy training a puppy to be a service dog. *If You Give a Mouse a Brownie* is coming out in October 2016.

photo by William Numeroff

Top 25 fiction and nonfiction books, grades K–12

Grade K	In total, 294,266 kindergartners read 6,524,217 books with 2,432,382,625 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 7,616 words and girls read 8,083. Approximately 46% of books were read to students, 21% were read with students, and 33% were read independently.
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)	
Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	Biscuit Goes to School , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.9, LG)
2	Green Eggs and Ham , Dr. Seuss (1.5, LG)
3	Biscuit Finds a Friend , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.8, LG)
4	The Foot Book , Dr. Seuss (0.6, LG)
5	Biscuit's Big Friend , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.8, LG)
6	Biscuit , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (1.4, LG)
7	Biscuit Wants to Play , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.9, LG)
8	Biscuit Wins a Prize , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.9, LG)
9	Biscuit and the Baby , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.9, LG)
10	Biscuit's Day at the Farm , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.8, LG)
11	The Very Hungry Caterpillar , Eric Carle (2.9, LG)
12	Biscuit Meets the Class Pet , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.8, LG)
13	Biscuit and the Lost Teddy Bear , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.7, LG)
14	Biscuit and the Little Pup , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.7, LG)
15	The Cat in the Hat , Dr. Seuss (2.1, LG)
16	Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! , Mo Willems (0.9, LG)
17	Big Egg , Molly Coxe (0.4, LG)
18	Bathtime for Biscuit , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (1.1, LG)
19	Biscuit Visits the Big City , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (1.0, LG)
20	Are You My Mother? , P.D. Eastman (1.6, LG)
21	Clifford Makes a Friend , Norman Bridwell (0.4, LG)
22	Biscuit's New Trick , Alyssa Satin Capucilli (1.0, LG)
23	Hop on Pop , Dr. Seuss (1.5, LG)
24	David Goes to School , David Shannon (0.9, LG)
25	Itchy, Itchy Chicken Pox , Grace Maccarone (0.7, LG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books kindergartners read was 1.0. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

Grade 1		In total, 1,041,644 first graders read 47,248,514 books with 27,901,506,061 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 25,391 words and girls read 26,816. Approximately 13% of books were read to students, 14% were read with students, and 73% were read independently.		
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	1	1	1	Green Eggs and Ham, Dr. Seuss (1.5, LG)
2	4	7	17	Hi! Fly Guy, Tedd Arnold (1.5, LG)
3	2	2	2	The Foot Book, Dr. Seuss (0.6, LG)
4	3	3	3	Biscuit, Alyssa Satin Capucilli (1.4, LG)
5	5	4	5	Biscuit Goes to School, Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.9, LG)
6	7	6	4	Hop on Pop, Dr. Seuss (1.5, LG)
7	6	8	6	Are You My Mother?, P.D. Eastman (1.6, LG)
8	8	5	7	Biscuit Finds a Friend, Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.8, LG)
9	32	71	30,397	Pete the Cat: Pete's Big Lunch, James Dean (1.2, LG)
10	9	11	10	The Cat in the Hat, Dr. Seuss (2.1, LG)
11	42	6,330	—	Pete the Cat: Too Cool for School, Kimberly Dean (1.3, LG)
12	10	15	18	There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Fly Guy, Tedd Arnold (1.6, LG)
13	11	10	11	Go, Dog. Go!, P.D. Eastman (1.2, LG)
14	12	9	8	One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, Dr. Seuss (1.7, LG)
15	21	14	14	Biscuit Wants to Play, Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.9, LG)
16	15	26	35	Fly Guy Meets Fly Girl!, Tedd Arnold (1.4, LG)
17	26	29	29	Buzz Boy and Fly Guy, Tedd Arnold (1.3, LG)
18	13	22	24	I Spy Fly Guy!, Tedd Arnold (1.5, LG)
19	14	12	9	Bathtime for Biscuit, Alyssa Satin Capucilli (1.1, LG)
20	17	17	16	Biscuit's Big Friend, Alyssa Satin Capucilli (0.8, LG)
21	20	27	26	Shoo, Fly Guy!, Tedd Arnold (1.7, LG)
22	19	23	27	Fly High, Fly Guy!, Tedd Arnold (1.4, LG)
23	16	19	12	If You Give a Pig a Pancake, Laura Numeroff (2.5, LG)
24	25	33	42,913	Fly Guy and the Frankenfly, Tedd Arnold (1.6, LG)
25	22	25	22	If You Give a Mouse a Cookie, Laura Numeroff (2.7, LG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books first graders read was 1.4. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

— Title did not rank within report time frame.

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

Grade 2	In total, 1,417,427 second graders read 84,863,268 books with 122,058,400,027 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 82,885 words and girls read 84,700. Approximately 7% of the books were read to students, 7% were read with students, and 86% were read independently.			
	Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)			
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	1	2	1	Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type, Doreen Cronin (2.3, LG)
2	2	1	2	Green Eggs and Ham, Dr. Seuss (1.5, LG)
3	3	3	3	Officer Buckle and Gloria, Peggy Rathmann (3.4, LG)
4	4	4	4	If You Give a Mouse a Cookie, Laura Numeroff (2.7, LG)
5	5	6	8	The Cat in the Hat, Dr. Seuss (2.1, LG)
6	6	7	5	If You Give a Pig a Pancake, Laura Numeroff (2.5, LG)
7	7	8	6	If You Give a Moose a Muffin, Laura Numeroff (2.4, LG)
8	8	9	7	The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Eric Carle (2.9, LG)
9	9	10	10	If You Take a Mouse to School, Laura Numeroff (2.4, LG)
10	10	5	9	The Foot Book, Dr. Seuss (0.6, LG)
11	11	15	21	Hi! Fly Guy, Tedd Arnold (1.5, LG)
12	14	24	38	Diary of a Spider, Doreen Cronin (2.5, LG)
13	12	12	11	If You Take a Mouse to the Movies, Laura Numeroff (2.1, LG)
14	16	21	23	There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed Fly Guy, Tedd Arnold (1.6, LG)
15	13	19	20	Fly Guy vs. the Flyswatter!, Tedd Arnold (2.1, LG)
16	15	14	14	Are You My Mother?, P.D. Eastman (1.6, LG)
17	18	11	13	Hop on Pop, Dr. Seuss (1.5, LG)
18	19	18	15	If You Give a Pig a Party, Laura Numeroff (2.2, LG)
19	21	16	16	Diary of a Worm, Doreen Cronin (2.8, LG)
20	27	30	31	The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs, Jon Scieszka (3.0, LG)
21	25	26	30	Shoo, Fly Guy!, Tedd Arnold (1.7, LG)
22	24	22	17	Miss Nelson Is Missing!, Harry Allard (2.7, LG)
23	17	17	19	Henry and Mudge: The First Book of Their Adventures, Cynthia Rylant (2.7, LG)
24	23	23	18	The Giving Tree, Shel Silverstein (2.6, LG)
25	22	29	—	Fly Guy and the Frankenfly, Tedd Arnold (1.6, LG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books second graders read was 2.2. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

— Title did not rank within report time frame.

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

Grade 3		In total, 1,521,866 third graders read 79,017,588 books with 292,926,407,505 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 183,511 words and girls read 190,753.		
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	2	3	9	Charlotte's Web, E.B. White (4.4, MG)
2	—	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School, Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
3	5	12	12	The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs, Jon Scieszka (3.0, LG)
4	1	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul, Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
5	11	4	15	Green Eggs and Ham, Dr. Seuss (1.5, LG)
6	9	13	17	Because of Winn-Dixie, Kate DiCamillo (3.9, MG)
7	4	2	2	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
8	7	6	3	Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
9	3	5	6	Dogzilla, Dav Pilkey (4.2, LG)
10	8	7	4	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
11	12	19	27	Tops & Bottoms, Janet Stevens (3.2, LG)
12	6	1	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck, Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
13	13	10	8	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever, Jeff Kinney (5.8, MG)
14	21	29	85	A Fine, Fine School, Sharon Creech (3.3, LG)
15	19	16	20	Wolf!, Becky Bloom (3.5, LG)
16	16	14	14	If You Give a Mouse a Cookie, Laura Numeroff (2.7, LG)
17	17	9	5	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw, Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
18	15	8	7	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth, Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
19	18	11	1	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel, Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
20	20	15	11	First Day Jitters, Julie Danneberg (2.4, LG)
21	14	33	439	Bad Kitty School Daze, Nick Bruel (3.3, LG)
22	26	35	38	A Bad Case of Stripes, David Shannon (3.8, LG)
23	23	26	21	Miss Nelson Is Missing!, Harry Allard (2.7, LG)
24	22	18	28	The Cat in the Hat, Dr. Seuss (2.1, LG)
25	28	23	22	Stone Fox, John Reynolds Gardiner (4.0, MG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books third graders read was 4.1. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

— Title did not rank within report time frame.

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Grade 4		In total, 1,481,865 fourth graders read 55,378,225 books with 458,930,779,920 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 293,403 words and girls read 313,524.		
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	—	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School, Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
2	1	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul, Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
3	4	9	8	Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing, Judy Blume (3.3, MG)
4	2	1	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck, Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
5	3	3	3	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
6	6	7	7	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
7	9	8	6	Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
8	5	5	4	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth, Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
9	7	4	2	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever, Jeff Kinney (5.8, MG)
10	8	2	1	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel, Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
11	10	6	5	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw, Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
12	11	10	9	Because of Winn-Dixie, Kate DiCamillo (3.9, MG)
13	13	11	10	Stone Fox, John Reynolds Gardiner (4.0, MG)
14	21	198	263	Smile, Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG) ☆
15	12	—	—	Sisters, Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG) ☆
16	17	15	21	Island of the Blue Dolphins, Scott O'Dell (5.4, MG)
17	14	12	16	Frindle, Andrew Clements (5.4, MG)
18	16	20	19	Shiloh, Phyllis Reynolds Naylor (4.4, MG)
19	15	14	17	The Adventures of Captain Underpants, Dav Pilkey (4.3, MG)
20	59	44	33	Charlotte's Web, E.B. White (4.4, MG)
21	20	17	12	The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, Barbara Robinson (5.1, MG)
22	19	22	47	I Survived: The Attacks of September 11, 2001, Lauren Tarshis (4.5, MG)
23	18	19	14	Captain Underpants and the Attack of the Talking Toilets, Dav Pilkey (4.7, MG)
24	25,005	—	—	Tales from a Not-So-Dorky Drama Queen, Rachel Renée Russell (4.9, MG)
25	29	29	26	The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs, Jon Scieszka (3.0, LG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books fourth graders read was 4.9. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

— Title did not rank within report time frame.

☆ Nonfiction book

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Grade 5		In total, 1,399,087 fifth graders read 39,486,700 books with 564,397,403,601 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 371,958 words and girls read 416,536.		
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	—	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School, Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
2	1	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul, Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
3	2	1	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck, Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
4	3	4	4	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
5	6	5	3	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth, Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
6	4	2	1	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel, Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
7	5	3	2	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever, Jeff Kinney (5.8, MG)
8	7	7	6	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
9	9	8	7	Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
10	8	6	5	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw, Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
11	12	13	94	Wonder, R.J. Palacio (4.8, MG)
12	10	9	8	Number the Stars, Lois Lowry (4.5, MG)
13	11	10	9	Hatchet, Gary Paulsen (5.7, MG)
14	13	11	10	Frindle, Andrew Clements (5.4, MG)
15	23,864	—	—	Tales from a Not-So-Dorky Drama Queen, Rachel Renée Russell (4.9, MG)
16	15	12	12	The Sign of the Beaver, Elizabeth George Speare (4.9, MG)
17	19	94	120	Smile, Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG) ☆
18	14	—	—	Sisters, Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG) ☆
19	24	19	23	Tuck Everlasting, Natalie Babbitt (5.0, MG)
20	—	—	—	Tales from a Not-So-Perfect Pet Sitter, Rachel Renée Russell (4.4, MG)
21	17	14	13	Holes, Louis Sachar (4.6, MG)
22	33	42	79	Esperanza Rising, Pam Muñoz Ryan (5.3, MG)
23	16	116,294	—	Tales from a Not-So-Glam TV Star, Rachel Renée Russell (4.6, MG)
24	21	20	15	Tales from a Not-So-Popular Party Girl, Rachel Renée Russell (5.1, MG)
25	25	25	17	Tales from a Not-So-Fabulous Life, Rachel Renée Russell (5.4, MG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books fifth graders read was 5.1. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

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☆ Nonfiction book

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Grade 6				In total, 953,885 sixth graders read 16,349,428 books with 419,913,422,987 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 389,664 words and girls read 467,929.
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	—	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School , Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
2	2	2	4	Hatchet , Gary Paulsen (5.7, MG)
3	1	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul , Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
4	3	1	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck , Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
5	12	14	14	The Lightning Thief , Rick Riordan (4.7, MG)
6	4	6	11	Number the Stars , Lois Lowry (4.5, MG)
7	7	7	6	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days , Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
8	5	3	1	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel , Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
9	10	11	9	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules , Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
10	9	8	5	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth , Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
11	13	10	7	Diary of a Wimpy Kid , Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
12	8	5	3	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever , Jeff Kinney (5.8, MG)
13	14	12	8	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw , Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
14	18	23	92	Wonder , R.J. Palacio (4.8, MG)
15	15	15	12	Tuck Everlasting , Natalie Babbitt (5.0, MG)
16	11	4	2	The Hunger Games , Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
17	6	18	23	The Giver , Lois Lowry (5.7, MG)
18	24,977	—	—	Tales from a Not-So-Dorky Drama Queen , Rachel Renée Russell (4.9, MG)
19	21	17	18	The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963 , Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG)
20	23	27	21	Freak the Mighty/The Mighty , Rodman Philbrick (5.5, UG)
21	22	16	15	Holes , Louis Sachar (4.6, MG)
22	27	58	64	Smile , Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG) ☆
23	28	35	36	Bud, Not Buddy , Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG)
24	20	—	—	Sisters , Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG) ☆
25	25	22	16	Where the Red Fern Grows , Wilson Rawls (4.9, MG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books sixth graders read was 5.1. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

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☆ Nonfiction book

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Grade 7				In total, 690,743 seventh graders read 7,925,847 books with 286,179,509,584 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 347,677 words and girls read 454,703.
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	—	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School , Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
2	1	4	5	The Giver , Lois Lowry (5.7, MG)
3	3	2	3	The Outsiders , S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG)
4	2	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul , Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
5	7	5	1	The Hunger Games , Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
6	8	1	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck , Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
7	5	38	49	The Maze Runner , James Dashner (5.3, UG)
8	9	14	15	Freak the Mighty/The Mighty , Rodman Philbrick (5.5, UG)
9	14	12	16	The Lightning Thief , Rick Riordan (4.7, MG)
10	6	3	31	Divergent , Veronica Roth (4.8, UG)
11	12	11	13	Rikki-Tikki-Tavi , Rudyard Kipling (5.0, LG)
12	16	15	9	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days , Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
13	18	20	11	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules , Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
14	17	17	10	Diary of a Wimpy Kid , Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
15	15	19	18	The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963 , Christopher Paul Curtis (5.0, MG)
16	13	8	2	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Third Wheel , Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
17	21	18	8	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Ugly Truth , Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
18	19	10	6	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever , Jeff Kinney (5.8, MG)
19	24	21	12	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw , Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
20	11	70	88	The Scorch Trials , James Dashner (5.0, UG)
21	26	23	17	Hatchet , Gary Paulsen (5.7, MG)
22	52	169	1774	Paper Towns , John Green (5.4, UG)
23	28	32	148	Wonder , R.J. Palacio (4.8, MG)
24	41	79	226	A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story , Linda Sue Park (5.0, MG+)
25	4	6	261	The Fault in Our Stars , John Green (5.5, UG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books seventh graders read was 5.3. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

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Grade 8		In total, 634,776 eighth graders read 6,295,782 books with 263,433,628,879 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 342,022 words and girls read 463,978.		
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	2	1	2	The Outsiders, S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG)
2	1	3	3	The Giver, Lois Lowry (5.7, MG)
3	—	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School, Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
4	8	9	9	The Tell-Tale Heart, Edgar Allan Poe (7.3, UG)
5	10	10	10	The Diary of Anne Frank, Frances Goodrich (3.1, MG)
6	7	5	1	The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
7	4	20	25	The Maze Runner, James Dashner (5.3, UG)
8	6	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul, Jeff Kinney (5.4, MG)
9	23	66	545	Paper Towns, John Green (5.4, UG)
10	5	2	14	Divergent, Veronica Roth (4.8, UG)
11	15	15	13	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG) ☆
12	18	18	17	The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, John Boyne (5.8, UG)
13	12	55	60	The Scorch Trials, James Dashner (5.0, UG)
14	3	4	69	The Fault in Our Stars, John Green (5.5, UG)
15	19	17	20	To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee (5.6, UG)
16	13	6	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck, Jeff Kinney (5.5, MG)
17	26	33	31	The Monkey’s Paw, W.W. Jacobs (6.5, UG)
18	24	16	12	The Lightning Thief, Rick Riordan (4.7, MG)
19	16	74	79	The Death Cure, James Dashner (5.3, UG)
20	34	49	43	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, J.K. Rowling (5.5, MG)
21	20	8	4	Catching Fire, Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
22	29	28	18	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
23	28	24	16	Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Jeff Kinney (5.2, MG)
24	30	47	33	The Call of the Wild, Jack London (8.0, MG)
25	11	7	40	Insurgent, Veronica Roth (5.0, UG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books eighth graders read was 5.4. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

— Title did not rank within report time frame.

☆ Nonfiction book

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Grade 9		In total, 145,296 ninth graders read 891,233 books with 42,140,348,734 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 237,550 words and girls read 325,872.		
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	2	4	3	To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee (5.6, UG)
2	5	5	4	Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck (4.5, UG)
3	7	6	5	Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare (8.6, UG)
4	4	3	1	The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
5	10	9	7	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG) ☆
6	9	8	8	The Most Dangerous Game, Richard Connell (5.3, UG)
7	3	1	20	Divergent, Veronica Roth (4.8, UG)
8	16	48	243	Paper Towns, John Green (5.4, UG)
9	1	2	32	The Fault in Our Stars, John Green (5.5, UG)
10	6	27	28	The Maze Runner, James Dashner (5.3, UG)
11	13	14	11	Animal Farm, George Orwell (7.3, UG)
12	11	15	10	The Giver, Lois Lowry (5.7, MG)
13	15	11	9	The Outsiders, S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG)
14	21	24	76	Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury (5.2, UG)
15	14	20	81	Looking for Alaska, John Green (5.8, UG)
16	17	61	69	The Scorch Trials, James Dashner (5.0, UG)
17	27	18	15	The Cask of Amontillado, Edgar Allan Poe (7.3, UG)
18	24	30	17	Lord of the Flies, William Golding (5.0, UG)
19	—	—	—	Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Old School, Jeff Kinney (5.6, MG)
20	30	23	16	Speak, Laurie Halse Anderson (4.5, UG)
21	26	19	14	The Lightning Thief, Rick Riordan (4.7, MG)
22	22	13	12	A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG) ☆
23	18	7	2	Catching Fire, Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
24	8	105	152	If I Stay, Gayle Forman (5.3, UG)
25	12	10	40	Insurgent, Veronica Roth (5.0, UG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books ninth graders read was 5.6. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

— Title did not rank within report time frame.

☆ Nonfiction book

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<div>Grade 10</div>	In total, 115,422 tenth graders read 652,182 books with 34,717,525,141 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 253,107 words and girls read 336,340.			
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	2	2	3	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG) ☆
2	4	6	5	To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee (5.6, UG)
3	5	5	4	Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck (4.5, UG)
4	9	8	6	Julius Caesar, William Shakespeare (10.8, UG)
5	7	4	1	The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
6	12	12	9	Lord of the Flies, William Golding (5.0, UG)
7	14	31	183	Paper Towns, John Green (5.4, UG)
8	3	1	14	Divergent, Veronica Roth (4.8 , UG)
9	1	3	21	The Fault in Our Stars, John Green (5.5, UG)
10	6	26	38	The Maze Runner, James Dashner (5.3, UG)
11	13	10	8	Animal Farm, George Orwell (7.3, UG)
12	11	14	43	Looking for Alaska, John Green (5.8, UG)
13	15	18	16	Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe (6.2, UG)
14	22	17	25	Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury (5.2, UG)
15	17	68	83	The Scorch Trials, James Dashner (5.0, UG)
16	35	21	20	Anthem, Ayn Rand (6.1, UG)
17	21	13	10	A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG) ☆
18	16	40	31	The Giver, Lois Lowry (5.7, MG)
19	26	22	19	The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald (7.3, UG)
20	41	37	41	The Pearl, John Steinbeck (7.1, UG)
21	10	7	42	Insurgent, Veronica Roth (5.0, UG)
22	28	27	26	The Outsiders, S.E. Hinton (4.7, UG)
23	8	83	106	If I Stay, Gayle Forman (5.3, UG)
24	27	95	123	The Death Cure, James Dashner (5.3, UG)
25	18	9	2	Catching Fire, Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books tenth graders read was 5.7. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

☆ Nonfiction book

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<div>Grade</div> <div>11</div>	In total, 89,243 eleventh graders read 446,135 books with 25,667,838,524 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 242,858 words and girls read 315,927.			
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	1	1	1	The Crucible , Arthur Miller (4.9, UG)
2	2	2	3	The Great Gatsby , F. Scott Fitzgerald (7.3, UG)
3	4	4	5	Of Mice and Men , John Steinbeck (4.5, UG)
4	8	6	2	The Hunger Games , Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
5	5	3	13	Divergent , Veronica Roth (4.8, UG)
6	15	35	159	Paper Towns , John Green (5.4, UG)
7	10	9	7	The Scarlet Letter (Unabridged) , Nathaniel Hawthorne (11.7, UG)
8	3	5	18	The Fault in Our Stars , John Green (5.5, UG)
9	6	26	33	The Maze Runner , James Dashner (5.3, UG)
10	12	12	12	To Kill a Mockingbird , Harper Lee (5.6, UG)
11	13	11	11	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Unabridged) , Mark Twain (6.6, MG+)
12	11	17	42	Looking for Alaska , John Green (5.8, UG)
13	26	13	9	A Raisin in the Sun , Lorraine Hansberry (5.5, UG)
14	17	78	93	The Scorch Trials , James Dashner (5.0, UG)
15	23	20	17	The Catcher in the Rye , J.D. Salinger (4.7, UG)
16	21	15	10	A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage to Survive , Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG) ☆
17	9	8	39	Insurgent , Veronica Roth (5.0, UG)
18	20	16	15	Night , Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG) ☆
19	30	24	26	Fahrenheit 451 , Ray Bradbury (5.2, UG)
20	7	90	112	If I Stay , Gayle Forman (5.3, UG)
21	19	7	4	Catching Fire , Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
22	35	48	48	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone , J.K. Rowling (5.5, MG)
23	31	25	24	The Lightning Thief , Rick Riordan (4.7, MG)
24	37	38	49	The Things They Carried , Tim O'Brien (5.8, UG)
25	14	43	53	The Giver , Lois Lowry (5.7, MG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books eleventh graders read was 5.7. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

☆ Nonfiction book

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

<div>Grade 12</div>	In total, 65,183 twelfth graders read 344,116 books with 19,053,221,959 words during the 2015–2016 school year. On average, boys read 242,490 words and girls read 320,598.			
Top fiction and nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Rank	2014–15 Rank	2013–14 Rank	2012–13 Rank	Title, author (ATOS® level, interest level)*
1	4	4	4	Macbeth, William Shakespeare (10.9, UG)
2	3	2	2	Frankenstein (Unabridged), Mary Shelley (12.4, UG)
3	13	14	11	Hamlet, William Shakespeare (10.5, UG)
4	6	3	1	The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
5	2	1	19	Divergent, Veronica Roth (4.8, UG)
6	9	8	8	Animal Farm, George Orwell (7.3, UG)
7	24	56	160	Paper Towns, John Green (5.4, UG)
8	14	11	6	Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck (4.5, UG)
9	1	5	28	The Fault in Our Stars, John Green (5.5, UG)
10	22	18	14	The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini (5.2, UG)
11	5	28	45	The Maze Runner, James Dashner (5.3, UG)
12	18	10	7	The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald (7.3, UG)
13	12	12	10	Lord of the Flies, William Golding (5.0, UG)
14	15	19	17	1984, George Orwell (8.9, UG)
15	10	20	43	Looking for Alaska, John Green (5.8, UG)
16	11	15	16	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG) ☆
17	25	17	13	A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG) ☆
18	20	68	123	The Scorch Trials, James Dashner (5.0, UG)
19	28	22	24	Brave New World, Aldous Huxley (7.5, UG)
20	34	34	34	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone, J.K. Rowling (5.5, MG)
21	8	7	44	Insurgent, Veronica Roth (5.0, UG)
22	17	6	3	Catching Fire, Suzanne Collins (5.3, MG+)
23	47	35	31	Othello, William Shakespeare (8.4, UG)
24	30	24	21	Thirteen Reasons Why, Jay Asher (3.9, MG+)
25	7	111	141	If I Stay, Gayle Forman (5.3, UG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 25 books twelfth graders read was 7.0. ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. Interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12).

☆ Nonfiction book

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

Section II: Nonfiction reading

Kids love to escape in a good story, but they are also fascinated by learning new facts and making meaningful discoveries. Options for exploration abound in Accelerated Reader 360, as nearly half of the over 170,000 books with quizzes available are nonfiction/informational titles.

What kids are reading

This section features the top 10 nonfiction articles and nonfiction books read by kids in grades K–12, based on Accelerated Reader 360 data. For the 2015–2016 school year, this database houses reading records for 9.9 million students from over 30,000 schools nationwide who read more than 346 million books and nonfiction articles.

The lists throughout this report tell us kids are abuzz with excitement about **Tedd Arnold's** Fly Guy whether he is on an adventure with his best bud Buzz or teaching kids about topics ranging from dinosaurs to firefighters to space. The Fly Guy fictional series dominates the younger grades in section I, taking 8 of 25 spots on the first-grade list and 5 places for second grade. Here, in section II, his nonfiction books pepper the elementary rankings, with four titles making the top 10 in both grades 2 and 3. On page 25, Arnold reflects on what first sparked his interest in reading.

“Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students gain a reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images.”

(National Governors Association, 2010a, p. 35)

What we know about how kids grow

As the new rigorous academic standards advise, “Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students gain a reservoir of literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images; the ability to evaluate intricate arguments; and the capacity to surmount the challenges posed by complex texts” (National Governors Association, 2010a, p. 35). On the next page, we use Accelerated Reader 360 data to answer the following questions about nonfiction reading:

1. What is the most popular nonfiction book in each state?
2. What is the state of nonfiction reading in the US since the rollout of new rigorous academic standards?
3. Given recent STEM educational initiatives, how actively do kids read books on these topics?

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

An analysis of nonfiction reading

As students prepare to move on to higher levels of learning or into the workforce, nonfiction and informational texts help broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. New rigorous academic standards stress that kids should read and comprehend a wide variety of text types (literary, nonfiction, poetry, and so forth), and informational texts are seen as particularly important. Likewise, the reading framework for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2015) is often cited as a desirable mix of fiction and nonfiction reading for students. NAEP aims for 50% of reading in grade 4 to be nonfiction, 55% in grade 8, and then 70% in grade 12. Our data show kids continue to fall far short of these grade targets at 26%, 21%, and 21%, respectively.

Let's explore the data on nonfiction reading.

1. What is the most popular nonfiction book in each state?

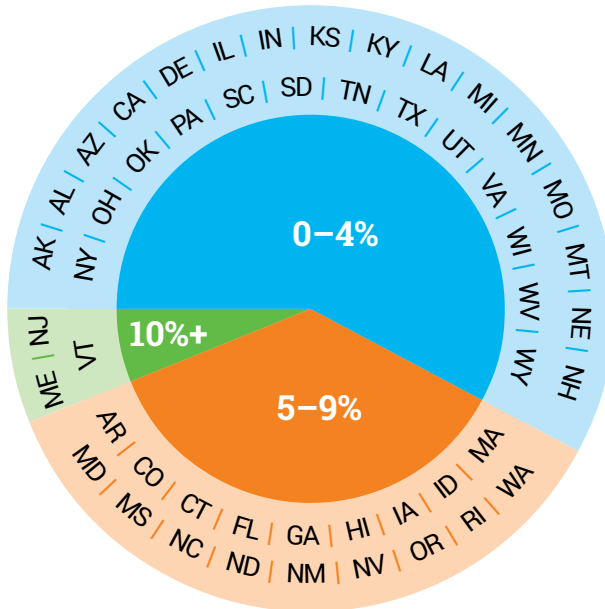
Most popular nonfiction reading nationwide, grades 6–8



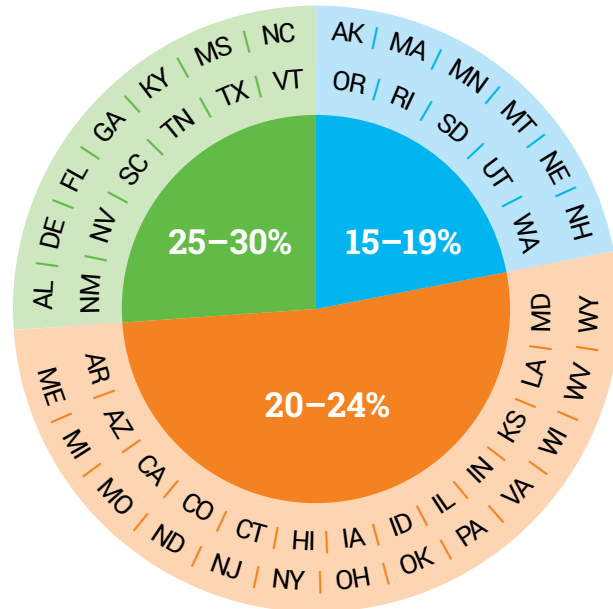
This map displays the nonfiction book read most in each state for the middle grades, 6–8. So that each state could depict a unique cover, if a tie existed among states for a particular book, the state with higher readership was given the cover. To see popular nonfiction books nationwide for the other grade levels, as well as lists of popular books by state, gender, grade, fiction and nonfiction designation, and more, visit <http://www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar>.

2. What is the state of nonfiction reading in the US since the rollout of new rigorous academic standards?

Across US, kids read only slightly more nonfiction after new standards released



Nationwide, nonfiction materials represent less than a third of kids' overall reading



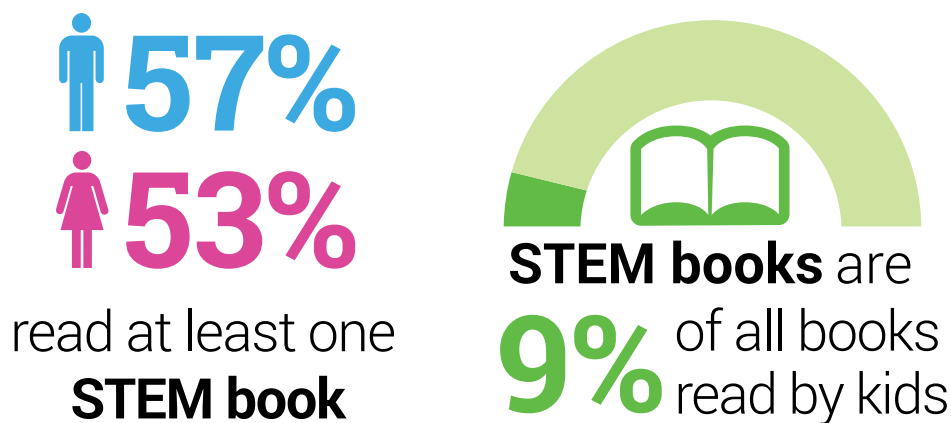
In upper elementary and middle grades, NAEP aims for 50–55% of reading to be nonfiction, increasing to 70% by the end of high school.

Source: Renaissance Accelerated Reader 360®, 2015–2016.

Our data show that students across the country are falling well short of both NAEP's nonfiction reading framework and the call for more nonfiction reading by many state English language arts standards. We found that since the 2008–2009 school year (just before the National Governors Association convened a group to draft new common academic standards for US students, which were released in June 2010), although nonfiction reading has been on the rise nationwide, it's grown, on average, by less than 10% in the vast majority of states. Similarly, the current percentage of students' total reading that is nonfiction averages 30% or less, with a little more than half the country falling in the 20–24% range.

3. Given recent STEM educational initiatives, how actively do kids read books on these topics?

Kids typically read few books with STEM topics



Source: Renaissance Accelerated Reader 360®, 2015–2016.

Even though STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) books are a natural fit to nurture students' nonfiction and informational text reading, books on these topics are lacking from kids' reading diets. Currently, our data show that only about half of students read a book on a STEM topic in a given year, and overall, STEM books represent less than 10% of all book reading. Echoing these numbers, we found boys are slightly more likely to choose books with STEM topics than girls—10% of all books read by boys covered a STEM topic, versus 8% of books read by girls. Our data also show that more books with STEM topics were read at the elementary grades versus middle and high school.

Popular books with STEM topics for the 2015–2016 school year (and their ATOS^{®1} and interest levels) include *Addition Annie* (1.1, LG) by David Gisler, *The Greedy Triangle* (3.9, LG) by Marilyn Burns, *From Seed to Daisy: Following the Life Cycle* (4.1, LG) by Laura Purdie Salas, *How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning* (5.1, LG) by Rosalyn Schanzer, *Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two* (6.4, MG) by Joseph Bruchac, and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (8.0, UG) by Rebecca Skloot.

¹ For more on the Renaissance ATOS Readability Formula, see Appendix, page 57.

Becoming a reader

by Tedd Arnold

I became a Reader (with a capital R) when my reading became subversive. I don't mean like overthrowing the government, or organizing a mutiny against Blackbeard on the high seas, though both of those are fun to read about. Subversive in a small way—through the personal choices in reading material that I alone made for myself leading me to places my parents or teachers never would. In short, I became a Reader thanks to *Mad Magazine*. Sure, Mom had read to us four boys, and teachers taught us, and book reports were written. But the day *Mad Magazine* first landed in my hands was a landmark moment for me as a sixth grader.

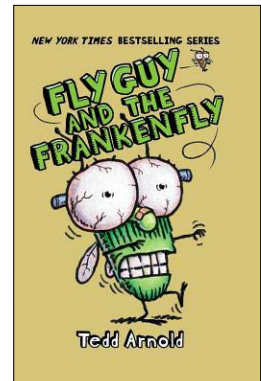
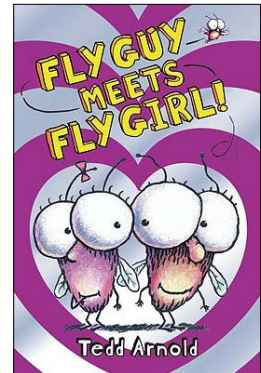
I don't recall how *Mad* first came to my attention but it was sometime in 1960, and this much I know. On a weekly schedule, my family visited Mike's Bookstore in downtown Gainesville, Florida, for Dad to purchase his pipe tobacco while us boys fanned out through the maze of aisles, intent on investing our allowance money. A white, hammered-tin ceiling spread high over the slightly rolling and creaky wood floors that were worn to a soft gold gloss by decades of shoe-leather. Second-hand cigar smoke mixed with the sweet aroma of pipe tobacco sold from bulk humidors. A large glass case behind the counter was filled nearly to the ceiling with shelves of men's fedoras perched on short, wooden hat stands.

I went straight to the back of the store and rifled through the magazine racks for the latest *Mad* issue featuring Alfred E. Neuman on the cover. Each magazine was a goldmine of current-event inspired gags, TV and movie send-ups, and often inscrutable cultural references, all delivered in an array of cartoon styles that I drooled over and aspired to emulate. And it was deliciously subversive!

One day, I discovered that paperback books with collections of older *Mad* material were also for sale on a shelf labeled "Humor." The drawings and words were reduced in size to fit the paperback format but I tolerated the difficult reading for the rewards of classic works by the likes of Wally Wood, Harvey Kurtzman, Jack Davis, and Will Elder. It would be a long, long time before such books would be referred to by lofty appellations such as "graphic novels" or "sequential pictorial narratives."

From that Humor shelf, it was then only a few steps to the rest of the paperback books; a short leap, if you will, to Robert Heinlien's science fiction and Ian Fleming's James Bond series and to my new-found status of Reader. Back in the 1960s, my "real reading" never crossed paths with my school work. Or as Mark Twain once noted, "I have never let my schooling interfere with my education." I'm originally from Elmira, New York, and just couldn't close without a Twain reference!

I no longer travel to visit schools as an author, but what I loved most about those trips was meeting wonderful teachers and librarians who find ways to connect the right children with the right books at the right time. My hats off to all of you and your Readers (with a capital R).



Tedd Arnold has published over 50 books as author and illustrator. Born in Elmira, New York, he grew up in a family of six with three brothers. When he turned 10, his family moved to Gainesville, Florida, where his first art lessons in an abandoned office over the Happy Hour pool hall eventually led to a fine arts degree from the University of Florida. Arnold's first son, Walter, inspired his breakthrough picture book, *NO JUMPING ON THE BED!*, and his second son, William, now stars in the sequel, *NO MORE WATER IN THE TUB!* In 2006, Arnold's book *Hi! Fly Guy* received a Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor. Arnold lives in Florida with his wife Carol.

Top 10 nonfiction articles and nonfiction books, grades K–12

Grade K				
Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)				
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	Hello Healthy School Snacks (4.9)	AP	Health	Compare and Contrast
2	Tyrannosaurus Rex: Bigger Than We Thought? (4.3)	Nick News	Science	Main Idea and Details
3	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
4	Girl Drives Mom's Car in Emergency (3.7)	AP	Culture	Sequence
5	Dog Is a Hero for Warning Deaf Boy About Fire (3.9)	AP	Social Studies	Main Idea and Details
6	New Jersey Moves Beach-Lovin' Seal to a Zoo (4.3)	AP	Science	Cause and Effect
7	Walking School Bus (4.0)	AP	Health	Argumentation
8	What Do Astronauts Eat? (4.6)	Youngzine	Science	Sequence
9	Kid Sells Cocoa and Helps a Friend (3.8)	Nick News	Money	Inference and Evidence
10	Why Goldfish Belong in a Bowl (4.4)	Nick News	Science	Argumentation
Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)				
Boys		Girls		
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*			
1	From Head to Toe, Eric Carle (1.0, LG)	Dogs, Helen Frost (0.5, LG)		
2	Fish, Helen Frost (0.5, LG)	A Whisper Is Quiet, Carolyn Lunn (0.5, LG)		
3	I Am Water, Jean Marzollo (0.6, LG)	From Head to Toe, Eric Carle (1.0, LG)		
4	Dogs, Helen Frost (0.5, LG)	Fish, Helen Frost (0.5, LG)		
5	Cats, Helen Frost (0.6, LG)	I Am Water, Jean Marzollo (0.6, LG)		
6	I'm a Caterpillar, Jean Marzollo (0.9, LG)	Cats, Helen Frost (0.6, LG)		
7	Turtles, Martha E.H. Rustad (0.7, LG)	I'm a Caterpillar, Jean Marzollo (0.9, LG)		
8	Birds, Helen Frost (0.6, LG)	Birds, Helen Frost (0.6, LG)		
9	Hamsters, Helen Frost (0.7, LG)	Rabbits, Helen Frost (0.8, LG)		
10	The Tiny Seed, Eric Carle (2.7, LG)	Hamsters, Helen Frost (0.7, LG)		

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts kindergartners read was 4.2 for nonfiction articles, and 0.8 for boys and 0.7 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 1

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	What's the Story of Chocolate? (4.1)	Youngzine	Social Studies	Compare and Contrast
2	Walking School Bus (4.0)	AP	Health	Argumentation
3	A Bigger Dinosaur! (3.6)	Nick News	Science	Main Idea and Details
4	Goofy-Looking Dinosaur Found (4.4)	AP	Science	Main Idea and Details
5	Harpist Soothes Apes at Zoo (3.8)	AP	Science	Cause and Effect
6	Backyard Wildlife: The Daddy Longlegs (4.0)	Ranger Rick	Science	Inference and Evidence
7	Boy Makes Candles That Smell Like Pizza (3.9)	Nick News	Education	Argumentation
8	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
9	Dog Is a Hero for Warning Deaf Boy About Fire (3.9)	AP	Social Studies	Main Idea and Details
10	Mystery of Moving Rocks: Solved (4.3)	AP	Science	Cause and Effect

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	From Head to Toe, Eric Carle (1.0, LG)	From Head to Toe, Eric Carle (1.0, LG)	
2	Red-Eyed Tree Frog, Joy Cowley (1.3, LG)	Me on the Map, Joan Sweeney (1.8, LG)	
3	I'm a Caterpillar, Jean Marzollo (0.9, LG)	I'm a Caterpillar, Jean Marzollo (0.9, LG)	
4	Me on the Map, Joan Sweeney (1.8, LG)	Red-Eyed Tree Frog, Joy Cowley (1.3, LG)	
5	Fly Guy Presents: Sharks, Tedd Arnold (2.8, LG)	I Am Water, Jean Marzollo (0.6, LG)	
6	I Am Water, Jean Marzollo (0.6, LG)	Animal Babies, Bobbie Hamsa (1.0, LG)	
7	Animal Babies, Bobbie Hamsa (1.0, LG)	I'm a Seed, Jean Marzollo (1.0, LG)	
8	Dinosaurs, Dinosaurs, Byron Barton (2.9, LG)	Dogs, Helen Frost (0.5, LG)	
9	Dinosaur Babies, Lucille Recht Penner (2.1, LG)	I Am an Apple, Jean Marzollo (1.0, LG)	
10	Plenty of Penguins, Sonia W. Black (1.4, LG)	Cats, Helen Frost (0.6, LG)	

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 texts first graders read was 4.0 for nonfiction articles, and 1.5 for boys and 1.0 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 2

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
2	Girl Drives Mom's Car in Emergency (3.7)	AP	Culture	Sequence
3	Butterflies May Have a Compass Inside Them (4.9)	AP	Science	Cause and Effect
4	A Bigger Dinosaur! (3.6)	Nick News	Science	Main Idea and Details
5	What's the Story of Chocolate? (4.1)	Youngzine	Social Studies	Compare and Contrast
6	Amazing American, Helen Keller (4.3)	Public Domain	Education	Author's Purpose and Perspective
7	Goofy-Looking Dinosaur Found (4.4)	AP	Science	Main Idea and Details
8	What Do Astronauts Eat? (4.6)	Youngzine	Science	Sequence
9	New Tarantulas! (4.2)	Youngzine	Science	Main Idea and Details
10	New Jersey Moves Beach-Lovin' Seal to a Zoo (4.3)	AP	Science	Cause and Effect

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	
1	Fly Guy Presents: Sharks, Tedd Arnold (2.8, LG)	The Tiny Seed, Eric Carle (2.7, LG)
2	The Tiny Seed, Eric Carle (2.7, LG)	Tara and Tíree, Fearless Friends, Andrew Clements (2.0, LG)
3	Fly Guy Presents: Space, Tedd Arnold (3.3, LG)	Penguin Chick, Betty Tatham (3.4, LG)
4	Super Storms, Seymour Simon (3.8, LG)	My Name Is Gabriela: The Life of Gabriela Mistral, Monica Brown (4.3, LG)
5	Penguin Chick, Betty Tatham (3.4, LG)	Super Storms, Seymour Simon (3.8, LG)
6	Tara and Tíree, Fearless Friends, Andrew Clements (2.0, LG)	Jellies, Twig C. George (3.4, LG)
7	Fly Guy Presents: Firefighters, Tedd Arnold (3.5, LG)	Animals Building Homes, Wendy Perkins (3.3, LG)
8	Fly Guy Presents: Dinosaurs, Tedd Arnold (3.8, LG)	Fly Guy Presents: Sharks, Tedd Arnold (2.8, LG)
9	My Name Is Gabriela: The Life of Gabriela Mistral, Monica Brown (4.3, LG)	A Harbor Seal Pup Grows Up, Joan Hewett (2.0, LG)
10	Jellies, Twig C. George (3.4, LG)	Splish! Splash! Animal Baths, April Pulley Sayre (2.6, LG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts second graders read was 4.2 for nonfiction articles, and 3.2 for boys and 3.0 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 3

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	A Bigger Dinosaur! (3.6)	Nick News	Science	Main Idea and Details
2	Chocolate's Story (4.1)	Youngzine	Social Studies	Compare and Contrast
3	Dog Is a Hero for Warning Deaf Boy About Fire (3.9)	AP	Social Studies	Main Idea and Details
4	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
5	Backyard Wildlife: The Daddy Longlegs (4.0)	Ranger Rick	Science	Inference and Evidence
6	Aloha from Hawaii! (3.6)	Ranger Rick	Science	Prediction
7	5-Year-Old California Boy Gets to Be 'BatKid' (3.5)	AP	Education	Inference and Evidence
8	A Girl and Her Pet Skunk (3.5)	Nick News	Science	Inference and Evidence
9	Girl Drives Mom's Car in Emergency (3.7)	AP	Culture	Sequence
10	The Children's Story That Began Japan's Raccoon Problem (3.8)	Smithsonian	Science	Argumentation

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	
1	Penguin Chick , Betty Tatham (3.4, LG)	Sisters , Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)
2	Fly Guy Presents: Sharks , Tedd Arnold (2.8, LG)	Smile , Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)
3	Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates , Jonah Winter (4.5, LG)	Penguin Chick , Betty Tatham (3.4, LG)
4	Yonder Mountain: A Cherokee Legend , Robert H. Bushyhead (3.8, LG)	The Story of Ruby Bridges , Robert Coles (4.4, LG)
5	Young Thomas Edison , Michael Dooling (4.7, LG)	Yonder Mountain: A Cherokee Legend , Robert H. Bushyhead (3.8, LG)
6	Aero and Officer Mike: Police Partners , Joan Plummer Russell (4.8, LG)	Young Thomas Edison , Michael Dooling (4.7, LG)
7	Fly Guy Presents: Space , Tedd Arnold (3.3, LG)	Aero and Officer Mike: Police Partners , Joan Plummer Russell (4.8, LG)
8	What Do Illustrators Do? , Eileen Christelow (3.7, MG)	Roberto Clemente: Pride of the Pittsburgh Pirates , Jonah Winter (4.5, LG)
9	Fly Guy Presents: Dinosaurs , Tedd Arnold (3.8, LG)	What Do Illustrators Do? , Eileen Christelow (3.7, MG)
10	Fly Guy Presents: Firefighters , Tedd Arnold (3.5, LG)	Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. , Doreen Rappaport (3.4, LG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts third graders read was 3.8 for nonfiction articles, and 3.8 for boys and 3.6 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

Grade 4

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	Bears Munch Ants and Help Plants (4.0)	Smithsonian	Science	Cause and Effect
2	China's Latest Count Finds More Wild Giant Pandas (4.8)	AP	Science	Summary
3	America Has a Wild Horse Problem (5.0)	Youngzine	Social Studies	Cause and Effect
4	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
5	Chocolate-Tasting Around the World (5.1)	Smithsonian	Culture	Author's Purpose and Perspective
6	A Bigger Dinosaur! (3.6)	Nick News	Science	Main Idea and Details
7	Buckle Up! (4.5)	Nick News	Health	Inference and Evidence
8	Chocolate's Story (4.1)	Youngzine	Social Studies	Compare and Contrast
9	Are Ants Smarter Than Google? (5.5)	Youngzine	Culture	Compare and Contrast
10	A Discovery in Idaho (4.2)	Nick News	Science	Main Idea and Details

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	
1	My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers Growing Up with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. , Christine King Farris (5.0, LG)	Smile , Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)
2	Sisters , Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)	Sisters , Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)
3	Smile , Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)	My Brother Martin: A Sister Remembers Growing Up with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. , Christine King Farris (5.0, LG)
4	Finding the Titanic , Robert D. Ballard (4.0, LG)	The Story of Ruby Bridges , Robert Coles (4.4, LG)
5	Mighty Jackie: The Strike-Out Queen , Marissa Moss (4.0, LG)	Finding the Titanic , Robert D. Ballard (4.0, LG)
6	The Story of Ruby Bridges , Robert Coles (4.4, LG)	Mighty Jackie: The Strike-Out Queen , Marissa Moss (4.0, LG)
7	Who Would Win? Ultimate Ocean Rumble , Jerry Pallotta (4.0, LG)	Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. , Doreen Rappaport (3.4, LG)
8	Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. , Doreen Rappaport (3.4, LG)	El Deafo , Cece Bell (2.7, MG)
9	Fly Guy Presents: Sharks , Tedd Arnold (2.8, LG)	Snowflake Bentley , Jacqueline Briggs Martin (4.4, LG)
10	Who Would Win? Tyrannosaurus Rex vs. Velociraptor , Jerry Pallotta (4.1, LG)	Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes , Eleanor Coerr (4.1, MG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts read by fourth graders was 4.4 for nonfiction articles, and 3.8 for boys and 3.4 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 5

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	Are Ants Smarter Than Google? (5.5)	Youngzine	Culture	Compare and Contrast
2	Martin Luther King and Nonviolence (6.0)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
3	Captured Cobra Had Venom Glands (5.9)	AP	Science	Main Idea and Details
4	A Bigger Dinosaur—Scientists Found One! (5.3)	Nick News	Science	Main Idea and Details
5	Alaska Mom Wants Daughter's Name to Be Awesome (5.1)	AP	Money	Argumentation
6	5-Year-Old California Boy a Smash Hit as 'Batkid' (4.6)	AP	Education	Inference and Evidence
7	Eating Insects: Good for You and the World? (4.7)	AP	Culture	Argumentation
8	Aloha, Hawaii! (4.8)	Ranger Rick	Science	Prediction
9	Circus to Stop Using Elephants (4.9)	Nick News	Science	Main Idea and Details
10	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	Smile, Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)	Smile, Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)	
2	Sisters, Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)	Sisters, Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)	
3	The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary: How Greg Heffley Went Hollywood, Jeff Kinney (6.5, MG)	The Story of Ruby Bridges, Robert Coles (4.4, LG)	
4	The Story of Ruby Bridges, Robert Coles (4.4, LG)	El Deafo, Cece Bell (2.7, MG)	
5	And Then What Happened, Paul Revere?, Jean Fritz (5.3, MG)	Rosa, Nikki Giovanni (4.9, LG)	
6	Who Was Babe Ruth?, Joan Holub (4.4, MG)	Who Was Rosa Parks?, Yona Zeldis McDonough (4.8, MG)	
7	I Survived: Five Epic Disasters, Lauren Tarshis (6.3, MG)	Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, Eleanor Coerr (4.1, MG)	
8	Who Was Milton Hershey?, James Buckley, Jr. (5.2, MG)	And Then What Happened, Paul Revere?, Jean Fritz (5.3, MG)	
9	Rosa, Nikki Giovanni (4.9, LG)	The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary: How Greg Heffley Went Hollywood, Jeff Kinney (6.5, MG)	
10	Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Doreen Rappaport (3.4, LG)	Who Was Anne Frank?, Ann Abramson (4.6, MG)	

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts fifth graders read was 5.2 for nonfiction articles, and 4.3 for boys and 3.3 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 6

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	Are Ants Smarter Than Google? (5.5)	Youngzine	Culture	Compare and Contrast
2	Can Dolphins Really Talk? (6.4)	Nick News	Science	Compare and Contrast
3	Are You More Intelligent Than an Ape? (6.4)	Nick News	Science	Argumentation
4	The Abandoned Theme Park That Lived Happily Ever After (6.7)	Smithsonian	Education	Author's Purpose and Perspective
5	13-Year-Old Fashion Designer Finds Success (7.0)	AP	Education	Inference and Evidence
6	Do Parents Really Know What Their Kids Are Eating? (6.3)	NPR	Science	Author's Purpose and Perspective
7	Bears Munching on Ants Help Plants (6.2)	Smithsonian	Science	Cause and Effect
8	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
9	McDonald's to Test New Seasoned French Fries (5.8)	AP	Health	Compare and Contrast
10	Boy Builds Braille Printer Using Legos (6.5)	AP	Money	Summary

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	Smile, Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)	Smile, Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)	
2	Sisters, Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)	Sisters, Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)	
3	The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary: How Greg Heffley Went Hollywood, Jeff Kinney (6.5, MG)	El Deafo, Cece Bell (2.7, MG)	
4	Football, Paul Joseph (4.5, LG)	A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	
5	I Survived: Five Epic Disasters, Lauren Tarshis (6.3, MG)	Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, Eleanor Coerr (4.1, MG)	
6	Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, Eleanor Coerr (4.1, MG)	I Am Malala: Young Readers Edition, Malala Yousafzai (5.9, MG)	
7	Chasing Lincoln’s Killer, James L. Swanson (7.5, MG+)	The Story of Ruby Bridges, Robert Coles (4.4, LG)	
8	Football, Ray Broekel (3.3, LG)	The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary: How Greg Heffley Went Hollywood, Jeff Kinney (6.5, MG)	
9	Who Was Babe Ruth?, Joan Holub (4.4, MG)	Who Was Rosa Parks?, Yona Zeldis McDonough (4.8, MG)	
10	Basketball, Paul Joseph (4.9, LG)	Who Was Anne Frank?, Ann Abramson (4.6, MG)	

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts sixth graders read was 6.1 for nonfiction articles, and 4.3 for boys and 3.2 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 7

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	Bad Behavior on Social Media Can Prove Costly to Recruits (8.1)	AP	Science	Author's Purpose and Perspective
2	Angry Birds Helping Save Their Living Equals in South Pacific (7.0)	AP	Technology	Cause and Effect
3	Ants: Smarter Than Google? (7.2)	Youngzine	Culture	Compare and Contrast
4	Cool or Creepy? A Clip-On Camera Can Capture Every Moment (7.5)	NPR	Culture	Argumentation
5	Bigfoot Hair Samples Mostly from Bears (7.7)	AP	Science	Author's Purpose and Perspective
6	Distracted Driving: We're All Guilty, So What Should We Do About It? (7.1)	NPR	Science	Inference and Evidence
7	Dog Escapes Texas Backyard, Somehow Gets To Ohio (7.2)	AP	Culture	Inference and Evidence
8	Eating Insects Is Good for You and the World (6.4)	AP	Culture	Author's Purpose
9	Anne Frank: A Legacy (7.5)	Youngzine	Social Studies	Inference and Evidence
10	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	Chasing Lincoln's Killer, James L. Swanson (7.5, MG+)	Smile, Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)	
2	Football, Paul Joseph (4.5, LG)	Sisters, Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)	
3	Smile, Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	
4	Sisters, Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)	Chasing Lincoln's Killer, James L. Swanson (7.5, MG+)	
5	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for the Love of a Family, Dave Pelzer (5.1, UG)	
6	The Wimpy Kid Movie Diary: How Greg Heffley Went Hollywood, Jeff Kinney (6.5, MG)	I Am Malala: Young Readers Edition, Malala Yousafzai (5.9, MG)	
7	Basketball, Paul Joseph (4.9, LG)	El Deafo, Cece Bell (2.7, MG)	
8	Basketball, Bert Rosenthal (3.4, LG)	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	
9	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	Heaven Is for Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back, Todd Burpo (6.3, MG+)	
10	Football, Cynthia Klingel (2.1, LG)	The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank (6.5, MG+)	

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts seventh graders read was 7.0 for nonfiction articles, and 4.6 for boys and 4.1 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 8

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	The Abandoned Theme Park That Finally Got Its Storybook Ending (8.6)	Smithsonian	Education	Author's Purpose and Perspective
2	Does Getting Angry Make You Angrier? (8.2)	NPR	Education	Inference and Evidence
3	Are You Smarter Than an Ape? (7.8)	Nick News	Science	Argumentation
4	Basketball: It's More Than a Game for Saudi Women (8.8)	AP	Culture	Inference and Evidence
5	Black Captain America Leads Comic Book Diversity (8.3)	AP	Culture	Inference and Evidence
6	Can Dolphins Actually Talk? (8.5)	Nick News	Science	Compare and Contrast
7	For Their Own Good? New Curfew Sends Baltimore Kids Home Early (8.0)	NPR	Social Studies	Cause and Effect
8	Bad Behavior on Social Media Can Prove Costly to Recruits (8.1)	AP	Science	Author's Purpose and Perspective
9	Flavors in Food Remain a Mystery (8.8)	AP	Health	Argumentation
10	The Mysteries of Alcatraz (7.6)	Youngzine	Money	Main Idea and Details

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	
2	A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	A Child Called “It”: One Child’s Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	
3	Football, Paul Joseph (4.5, LG)	Sisters, Raina Telgemeier (2.4, MG)	
4	Chasing Lincoln’s Killer, James L. Swanson (7.5, MG+)	Smile, Raina Telgemeier (2.6, MG)	
5	Basketball, Paul Joseph (4.9, LG)	The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank (6.5, MG+)	
6	The Diary of a Young Girl, Anne Frank (6.5, MG+)	The Lost Boy: A Foster Child’s Search for the Love of a Family, Dave Pelzer (5.1, UG)	
7	Basketball, Bert Rosenthal (3.4, LG)	Chasing Lincoln’s Killer, James L. Swanson (7.5, MG+)	
8	Football, Ray Broekel (3.3, LG)	Bad Boy: A Memoir, Walter Dean Myers (6.5, MG)	
9	American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History, Chris Kyle (6.3, UG)	Heaven Is for Real: A Little Boy’s Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back, Todd Burpo (6.3, MG+)	
10	Football, Cynthia Klingel (2.1, LG)	Tuesdays with Morrie, Mitch Albom (5.5, UG)	

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts eighth graders read was 8.3 for nonfiction articles, and 5.0 for boys and 5.0 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 9

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	Bad Behavior on Social Media Can Cost Recruits (9.0)	AP	Science	Author's Purpose and Perspective
2	The Girl Who Swims with Sharks and Protects Them (8.9)	Smithsonian	Science	Cause and Effect
3	Trained in CPR? This Life-Saving App Could Make You a Superhero (8.8)	Smithsonian	Money	Author's Word Choice and Figurative Language
4	Go Ahead, Wise Guy: Sarcasm Ups Your Creativity (9.7)	Smithsonian	Culture	Inference and Evidence
5	Girl Has Pet Skunk (3.5)	Nick News	Science	Inference and Evidence
6	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
7	Are Ants Smarter Than Google? (5.5)	Youngzine	Culture	Compare and Contrast
8	Garbage Mass Is Growing in the Pacific (8.8)	NPR	Science	Cause and Effect
9	Astronaut Who Walked On the Moon: "It Was Science Fiction to Us" (6.9)	NPR	Science	Main Idea and Details
10	As Banks Open In Schools, A Chance For Students To Learn To Save (8.8)	NPR	Culture	Inference and Evidence

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	Night , Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	Night , Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	
2	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive , Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive , Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	
3	American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History , Chris Kyle (6.3, UG)	The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for the Love of a Family , Dave Pelzer (5.1, UG)	
4	The Miracle Worker , William Gibson (5.2, UG)	The Miracle Worker , William Gibson (5.2, UG)	
5	The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game , Michael Lewis (7.2, UG)	Heaven Is for Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back , Todd Burpo (6.3, MG+)	
6	Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption , Laura Hillenbrand (7.7, UG)	The Glass Castle: A Memoir , Jeannette Walls (5.9, UG)	
7	The Man Who Walked Between the Towers , Mordicai Gerstein (3.7, LG)	Tuesdays with Morrie , Mitch Albom (5.5, UG)	
8	Tuesdays with Morrie , Mitch Albom (5.5, UG)	Maus: A Survivor's Tale, I: My Father Bleeds History , Art Spiegelman (3.2, UG)	
9	Basketball , Paul Joseph (4.9, LG)	The Man Who Walked Between the Towers , Mordicai Gerstein (3.7, LG)	
10	Football , Paul Joseph (4.5, LG)	The Pregnancy Project: A Memoir , Gaby Rodriguez (6.5, UG)	

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts ninth graders read was 7.6 for nonfiction articles, and 5.3 for boys and 5.2 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 10

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	Basketball More Than a Game for Saudi Women (9.9)	AP	Culture	Inference and Evidence
2	Here's a Water Bottle You Can Actually Eat (10.5)	Smithsonian	Money	Main Idea and Details
3	Facebook's Privacy Update: Five Things to Know (9.4)	AP	Culture	Main Idea and Details
4	Bad Behavior on Social Media Can Cost Recruits (9.0)	AP	Science	Author's Purpose and Perspective
5	Ready for Snack Bars Made from Bugs? (3.7)	Smithsonian	Health	Main Idea and Details
6	Alaska Mom Wants Daughter's Name to Be Awesome (5.1)	AP	Money	Argumentation
7	Man Who Broke Law by Feeding Homeless Undeterred (10.0)	AP	Social Studies	Cause and Effect
8	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
9	As Banks Open In Schools, A Chance For Students To Learn To Save (8.8)	NPR	Culture	Inference and Evidence
10	Flavors Fuel Food Industry, but Remain a Mystery (10.2)	AP	Health	Argumentation

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	Night , Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	Night , Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	
2	American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History , Chris Kyle (6.3, UG)	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive , Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	
3	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive , Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	The Glass Castle: A Memoir , Jeannette Walls (5.9, UG)	
4	The Glass Castle: A Memoir , Jeannette Walls (5.9, UG)	The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for the Love of a Family , Dave Pelzer (5.1, UG)	
5	Tuesdays with Morrie , Mitch Albom (5.5, UG)	Tuesdays with Morrie , Mitch Albom (5.5, UG)	
6	Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption , Laura Hillenbrand (7.7, UG)	Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood , Marjane Satrapi (3.3, UG)	
7	Maus: A Survivor's Tale, I: My Father Bleeds History , Art Spiegelman (3.2, UG)	Warriors Don't Cry (Abridged) , Melba Pattillo Beals (6.5, UG)	
8	The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game , Michael Lewis (7.2, UG)	A Stolen Life: A Memoir , Jaycee Lee Dugard (5.2, UG)	
9	The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for the Love of a Family , Dave Pelzer (5.1, UG)	Maus: A Survivor's Tale, I: My Father Bleeds History , Art Spiegelman (3.2, UG)	
10	Warriors Don't Cry (Abridged) , Melba Pattillo Beals (6.5, UG)	Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption , Laura Hillenbrand (7.7, UG)	

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts tenth graders read was 8.2 for nonfiction articles, and 5.2 for boys and 5.1 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 11

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	NSA Spying on Virtual Worlds, Online Games (11.5)	AP	Culture	Author's Purpose and Perspective
2	Can This Toilet Save Millions of Lives? (10.9)	Smithsonian	Health	Author's Purpose and Perspective
3	2 New Maya Civilization Centers Studied in Mexico (11.1)	AP	Education	Main Idea and Details
4	How Dogs Can Help Veterans Overcome PTSD (11.7)	Smithsonian	Social Studies	Connections and Relationships
5	Basketball More Than a Game for Saudi Women (9.9)	AP	Culture	Inference and Evidence
6	Five Reasons Why You Should Probably Stop Using Antibacterial Soap (11.2)	Smithsonian	Health	Author's Purpose and Perspective
7	Five Health Benefits of Standing Desks (10.8)	Smithsonian	Health	Connections and Relationships
8	Martin Luther King and Nonviolence (6.0)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence
9	Eating in Hard Times (4.7)	Smithsonian	Health	Main Idea and Details
10	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	
1	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)
2	American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History, Chris Kyle (6.3, UG)	The Glass Castle: A Memoir, Jeannette Walls (5.9, UG)
3	Into the Wild, Jon Krakauer (8.1, MG)	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)
4	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	Into the Wild, Jon Krakauer (8.1, MG)
5	Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Frederick Douglass (7.9, UG)	Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Frederick Douglass (7.9, UG)
6	Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption, Laura Hillenbrand (7.7, UG)	Tuesdays with Morrie, Mitch Albom (5.5, UG)
7	The Glass Castle: A Memoir, Jeannette Walls (5.9, UG)	Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption, Laura Hillenbrand (7.7, UG)
8	Tuesdays with Morrie, Mitch Albom (5.5, UG)	The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for the Love of a Family, Dave Pelzer (5.1, UG)
9	The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game, Michael Lewis (7.2, UG)	The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates, Wes Moore (7.1, UG)
10	The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates, Wes Moore (7.1, UG)	In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and its Consequences, Truman Capote (7.1, UG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts eleventh graders read was 9.4 for nonfiction articles, and 6.5 for boys and 6.3 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Grade 12

Top nonfiction articles (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Topic	Skill area
1	How Dogs Can Help Veterans Overcome PTSD (11.7)	Smithsonian	Social Studies	Connections and Relationships
2	Businesses Seek to Block Portion of Seattle Minimum Wage Law (11.5)	AP	Money	Argumentation
3	Ready for Snack Bars Made from Bugs? (3.7)	Smithsonian	Health	Main Idea and Details
4	Study: Social Media Users Shy Away from Opinions (10.8)	AP	Health	Author's Purpose and Perspective
5	Denver-area Seniors Protest New State Tests (10.8)	AP	Education	Summary
6	Spotlight: George Herman "Babe" Ruth (6.0)	ABDO	Culture	Sequence
7	The Science of Being in Solitary Confinement (12.5)	Smithsonian	Health	Author's Word Choice and Figurative Language
8	China Tightens Rules on Internet Use, Online Comments (11.7)	AP	Social Studies	Inference and Evidence
9	UK Moves Toward Making Babies from DNA of Three People (11.2)	AP	Science	Argumentation
10	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Science	Inference and Evidence

Top nonfiction books (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	
1	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)
2	American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History, Chris Kyle (6.3, UG)	Night, Elie Wiesel (4.8, UG)
3	A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer (5.8, UG)	The Glass Castle: A Memoir, Jeannette Walls (5.9, UG)
4	A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, Ishmael Beah (6.1, UG)	The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for the Love of a Family, Dave Pelzer (5.1, UG)
5	The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game, Michael Lewis (7.2, UG)	A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, Ishmael Beah (6.1, UG)
6	The Glass Castle: A Memoir, Jeannette Walls (5.9, UG)	Tuesdays with Morrie, Mitch Albom (5.5, UG)
7	Tuesdays with Morrie, Mitch Albom (5.5, UG)	Into the Wild, Jon Krakauer (8.1, MG)
8	Into the Wild, Jon Krakauer (8.1, MG)	A Stolen Life: A Memoir, Jaycee Lee Dugard (5.2, UG)
9	Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption, Laura Hillenbrand (7.7, UG)	Heaven Is for Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back, Todd Burpo (6.3, MG+)
10	Football, Paul Joseph (4.5, LG)	American Sniper: The Autobiography of the Most Lethal Sniper in U.S. Military History, Chris Kyle (6.3, UG)

* The average ATOS level of the top 10 nonfiction texts twelfth graders read was 9.3 for nonfiction articles, and 6.0 for boys and 5.7 for girls for nonfiction books. ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

Section III: Reading challenge across the curriculum

In light of new rigorous academic standards that call for kids to connect more deeply with their learning, one avenue for increased understanding is, of course, reading. Gone are the days when reading instruction happened only in the reading classroom—now all teachers must focus on this critical skill. To be successful—both in and out of school—students must read with understanding not only at their individual level, but also when stretching their reading practice, as appropriate, to higher levels of difficulty. Research has shown this practice is beneficial, so long as kids are able to independently read more complex books with comprehension (Renaissance, 2012).

What kids are reading

This section features the top 10 nonfiction articles and overall books on science and social studies topics, presented by text complexity grade bands.² The lists are based on the Accelerated Reader 360 database, which for the 2015–2016 school year includes reading records for 9.9 million students from over 30,000 schools across the US who read more than 346 million books and nonfiction articles.

Gone are the days when reading instruction happened only in the reading classroom—now all teachers must focus on this critical skill.

Stretching kids to read more complex texts also includes expanding their world view with challenging subject matter. In 1957, three years after the historic Supreme Court ruling *Brown v. Board of Education*, **Melba Pattillo Beals**, author of *Warriors Don't Cry*, and eight other teens attempted to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Her memoir recounts their struggle during the Little Rock crisis, detailing the angry mobs and violence these kids faced. This powerful book is one of the top 10 nonfiction books read by tenth graders in section II. On page 43, Beals shares how books have helped shape her views and understanding of the world and its inhabitants.

What we know about how kids grow

Experts say that although enrollment in postsecondary programs appears on the rise, many college students need remedial courses (Chen, 2016; Radford, Berkner, Wheelless, & Shepherd, 2010). This challenging transition may be intensified by a gap in text difficulty between high school versus college materials (National Governors Association, 2010b). On the next page, we use Accelerated Reader 360 data to answer the following questions about reading challenge:

1. How has literary language changed over time?
2. How does student reading measure up to adult leisure, college, and workplace reading?
3. Are secondary students reading books at high school levels?

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

² The text complexity grade bands are ranges of ATOS Readability Formula levels that Renaissance established for Nelson, Perfetti, Liben, and Liben's (2012) study of text complexity measures. These bands are year-end reading goals to be achieved with scaffolded supports.

An analysis of reading challenge

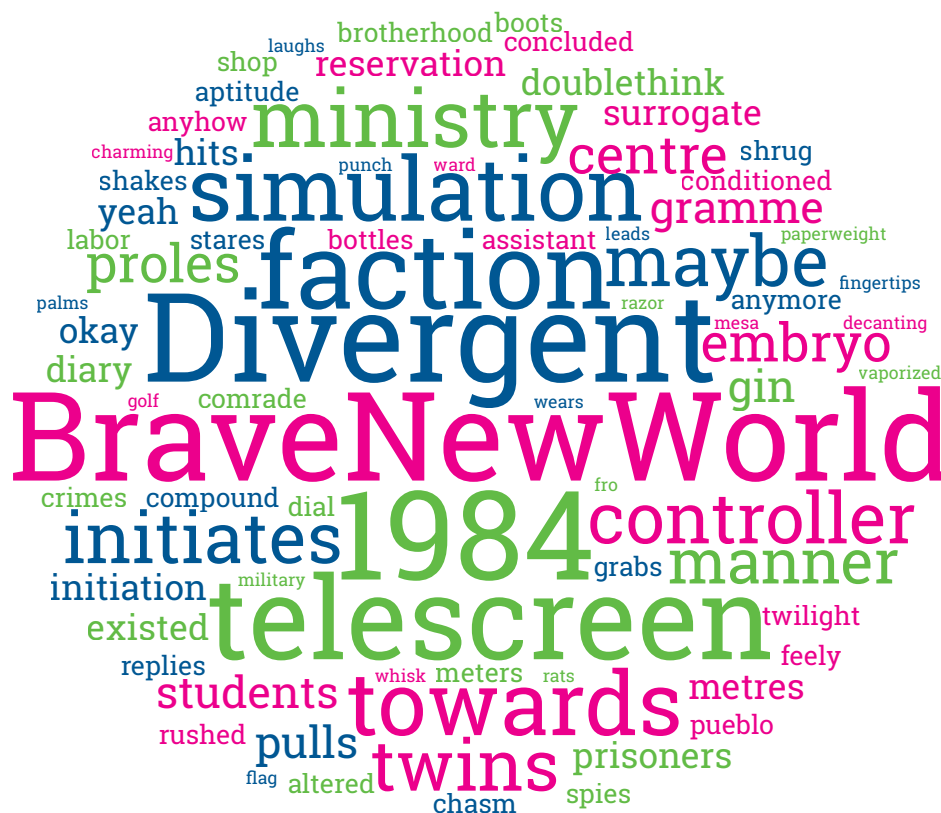
New rigorous academic standards and education advocates like ACT (2006, 2015) have placed greater emphasis than ever on the level of challenge—or complexity—presented by the texts kids are reading. They emphasize that students should encounter increasingly complex texts to prepare for future demands, including postsecondary schooling and workplace settings, an area prior research has established there exists a substantial gap in text difficulty (Williamson, 2006).

In order to assure that students are prepared for the weightier texts they will encounter as they continue schooling and move into the working world, teachers in subject areas beyond reading are also now challenged to teach kids to engage more deeply with subject-area texts (Harlin & Jones, 2006; Horning, 2007). Reading teachers' roles are heightened by demands in the new academic standards, and so are those of their counterparts spanning the curriculum.

Let's explore the data on reading challenge.

1. How has literary language changed over time?

Modern novels present less formal vocabulary than past works



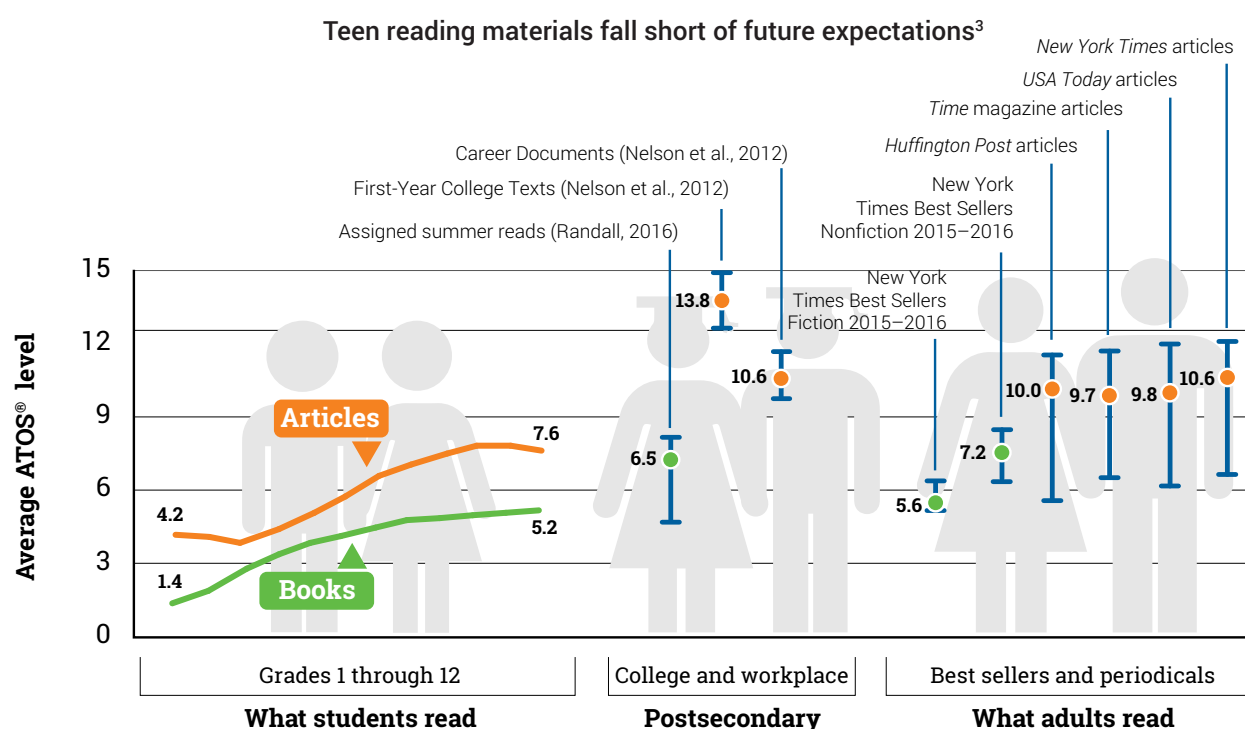
Brave New World, published 1932 *1984*, published 1949 *Divergent*, published 2011

Research has found that, over time, writing has become simpler and more succinct, with shortened sentences and less abstract language (DuBay, 2007). To illustrate the transformation of prose over time, the word cloud displays the top 25 most frequently appearing unique words in each of three dystopian novels to rank on our book lists: *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley (published 1932, ATOS 7.5, UG

interest level), *1984* by George Orwell (published 1949, ATOS 8.9, UG interest level), and *Divergent* by Veronica Roth (published 2011, ATOS 4.8, UG interest level). Two items to note: (1) for ease in exploration, each set of words in the cloud is color coded to match its book title, and (2) the words displayed for each book are unique to that book, among the three titles.

What's noticeable even before taking in the author's word choices is that all three titles are written with dystopian themes and at an UG interest level (meaning upper grades, 9–12), yet the readability levels of Huxley and Orwell's earlier tomes are 7.5 and 8.9, respectively, whereas Roth's recent novel is at a 4.8 level. In the cloud, words such as *gramme*, *metres*, *decanting*, and *towards* were penned by Huxley in the 30s and *proles*, *telescreen*, *comrade*, and *doublethink* by Orwell in the 40s, while more modern-day words like *okay*, *yeah*, *hits*, and *maybe* are prominent in Roth's 2011 work.

2. How does student reading measure up to adult leisure, college, and workplace reading?



Source: Renaissance Accelerated Reader 360®, 2015–2016.

The chasm between text difficulty for high school seniors versus college freshman is striking. By the time students finish high school, they are reading books in the 5–6 range, which is close to the level of typical

³ Assigned summer reads: Randall, D. (2016). *Beach books: 2014–2016. What do colleges and universities want students to read outside class?* New York, NY: National Association of Scholars. Retrieved from https://www.nas.org/images/documents/NAS-BeachBooks2014-16_Full_Report.pdf

First-year college texts/career documents: Nelson, J., Perfetti, C., Liben, D., & Liben, M. (2012). *Measures of text complexity: Testing their predictive value for grade levels and student performance*. Technical report to the Gates Foundation. Retrieved from <http://achievethecore.org/page/321/measures-of-text-difficulty>

Best sellers: Fiction: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times_Fiction_Best_Sellers_of_2015; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times_Fiction_Best_Sellers_of_2016; Nonfiction: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times_Non-Fiction_Best_Sellers_of_2015; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times_Non-Fiction_Best_Sellers_of_2016

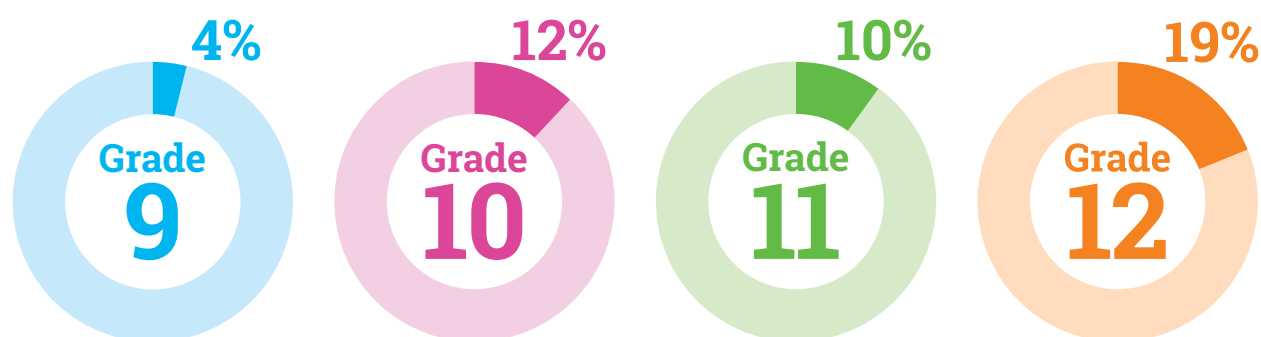
Periodicals: 10 front-page articles on <http://www.huffingtonpost.com> (October 9, 2015; October 3, 2016); 10 articles in *Time* magazine (Oct. 19, 2015; Vol. 186, No. 15; Oct. 3, 2016; Vol. 188, No. 13; Oct. 10, 2016; Vol. 188, No. 14); 10 most popular/top stories from *USA Today* (October 12, 2015; October 4, 2016); 10 trending articles from the *New York Times* (October 12, 2015); and 10 front-page articles on <http://www.nytimes.com/pages/todayspaper/index.html> (October 3, 2016).

fiction best sellers of about 5.6; however, their selections are one to two grades below the demands of books assigned as summer reading to incoming college freshman (6.5) and typical nonfiction best sellers (7.2).

For nonfiction article reading, teachers assign students articles, on average, more than two grade levels higher than the books kids are reading. In high school, the most commonly assigned articles tend to be in the 7–8 range, averaging 7.6 in grade 12. Reading at this level begins to close the complexity gap between these materials and articles in popular publications such as *Time*, *Huffington Post*, *USA Today*, and the *New York Times*, who publish articles in the 9–11 range; however, these difficulty levels are still far from 13.8, the complexity demand of first-year college textbooks.

3. Are secondary students reading books at high school levels?

High school book reading rarely surpasses 9.0 reading level



Source: Renaissance Accelerated Reader 360®, 2015–2016.

Perhaps it's unsurprising that twelfth graders read the highest number of books at a readability level of 9.0 or above; however, this number doesn't represent even a quarter of students' overall reading, and kids in the other high school grades read even fewer high-level books. Encouragingly, the top five books with an ATOS level of 9.0+ read by students in grades 9–12 during the 2015–2016 school year are classics: William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (10.9) and *Julius Caesar* (10.8), *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (12.4), *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare (10.5), and *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne (11.7).

In guiding students to stretch their reading muscles, it's important to remember that pushing kids to read difficult texts at the expense of comprehension could be detrimental. Findings from prior research have detected a tipping point around a comprehension level of 85% (i.e., students averaging 85% or higher on Accelerated Reader 360 quizzes) (Renaissance, 2012). Students who can sustain this success over a quarter, semester, or school year may experience above-average growth. Keep in mind, though, that instructional supports will likely be needed to help students reach this level of understanding.

The magic key

by Melba Pattillo Beals

I believe reading is a magical key that opens doors to all worlds beyond. Reading allows us to explore and learn everything we need to know about the fascinating puzzle pieces that make up this universe. When I was growing up in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the 1940s, the segregated world around me led me to question whether I was a valuable human being and whether or not my people deserved to be on this earth. It was on the pages between the covers of books that I was able to explore the merits of their claims and to answer the questions that haunted me: Who am I? Where do I belong? How do I fit into the human tapestry of this planet?

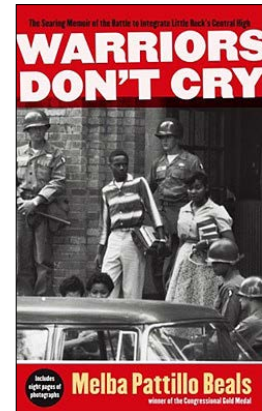
Grandmother began teaching me to read at age three, first by reading the Bible to me every day. She would talk to me about the love and faith demonstrated by the heroes and heroines in their adventures and about the cultures of people who were distinctly different from us. As I grew older, she would also tell me to write a few words in my Big Chief tablet to explain how I felt about what she had read.

A short time later, she introduced me to great literature, like Shakespeare, Grimm's Fairy Tales, and Aesop's Fables. Grandmother urged me to read every day on my own. When I was five, Mother took a job working in a local university library. My brother and I had the privilege of playing in the stacks and selecting whatever book attracted us from the shelves. Mom never told us which books we could or could not choose. I was thereby provided a lifetime appreciation for reading.

Books are a free pass to explore the world and all of its infinite details. I believe if we are to survive on this planet it is essential that we accept each other and respect our differences as well as our similarities. Reading enables us to explore each other's cultures. Being equal is seeing equal. Therefore, when we see beauty in others, we are much more likely to see it in ourselves.

The pictures and texts in a well-written book can stimulate our senses, expand our brain capacity, and make us ravenous for more information. Reading can temporarily transport us from the mire of our own circumstances to the luxury of a castle, the excitement of a space trip to Mars, the oddity of an Alaskan Iditarod trip, the mystery of an African safari, the chic allure of a Beverly Hills shopping trip, the spiritual peace of walking the Appalachian Trail, the serenity of fishing on the Snake River, or the rush of canoeing through the Grand Canyon.

Reading gives us insight about the world, but much more insight about who we are and where we fit into our world. Books can empower us to achieve our goals and change our lives to make us feel a part of the whole. Witness the saga of the homeless teenager whose mother was a hard-core drug addict. They were both doomed to living on the streets of New York City. The daughter began to go to the library to shield herself from the winter cold. Day by day and year by year she read because she had no place else to go. She transported herself from being a near illiterate to earning a fully paid scholarship at a top-ten university. She graduated at the top of her class and created a productive life for herself and her mother. Every time we open a book, we open a door. It is our choice to step across the threshold into the treasures it provides.



Melba Pattillo Beals is a retired Professor Emeritus from Dominican University in California. Congress bestowed the Congressional Medal of Honor on Beals and eight other members of the Little Rock Nine for risking their lives to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. Her struggle for equality continued throughout her life. She obtained a doctorate in International Multi-Cultural Education in order to support diverse student populations. Dr. Beals says, "Education is one major key to personal equality that cannot be taken away." She has written several award-winning books including *Warriors Don't Cry*.

Top 10 nonfiction articles and overall books about science, by text complexity grade bands

Science			
ATOS levels 2.8–5.1			
Top nonfiction articles on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)			
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	Whale Poop Makes Money for Eight-Year-Old Boy (3.8)	Youngzine	Inference and Evidence
2	A Bigger Dinosaur! (3.6)	Nick News	Main Idea and Details
3	Goofy-Looking Dinosaur Found (4.4)	AP	Main Idea and Details
4	What Do Astronauts Eat? (4.6)	Youngzine	Sequence
5	Bears Munch Ants and Help Plants (4.0)	Smithsonian	Cause and Effect
6	New Tarantulas! (4.2)	Youngzine	Main Idea and Details
7	Girl Has Pet Skunk (3.5)	Nick News	Inference and Evidence
8	China's Latest Count Finds More Wild Giant Pandas (4.8)	AP	Summary
9	Aloha, Hawaii! (4.8)	Ranger Rick	Prediction
10	New Jersey Moves Beach-Lovin' Seal to a Zoo (4.3)	AP	Cause and Effect
Top books on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)			
Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	Parts, Tedd Arnold (2.8, LG)	How Much Is a Million?, David M. Schwartz (3.4, LG)	
2	Sharks!, Anne Schreiber (3.0, LG)	Parts, Tedd Arnold (2.8, LG)	
3	Amazing Snakes!, Sarah L. Thomson (3.2, LG)	The Greedy Triangle, Marilyn Burns (3.9, LG)	
4	Who Would Win? Killer Whale vs. Great White Shark, Jerry Pallotta (3.4, LG)	What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?, Steve Jenkins (3.0, LG)	
5	Who Would Win? Hornet vs. Wasp, Jerry Pallotta (3.7, LG)	The Science Fair from the Black Lagoon, Mike Thaler (3.8, LG)	
6	The Science Fair from the Black Lagoon, Mike Thaler (3.8, LG)	The Magic School Bus Inside the Earth, Joanna Cole (3.6, LG)	
7	How Much Is a Million?, David M. Schwartz (3.4, LG)	Snowflake Bentley, Jacqueline Briggs Martin (4.4, LG)	
8	Who Would Win? Tyrannosaurus Rex vs. Velociraptor, Jerry Pallotta (4.1, LG)	Super Storms, Seymour Simon (3.8, LG)	
9	Who Would Win? Komodo Dragon vs. King Cobra, Jerry Pallotta (4.1, LG)	Sharks!, Anne Schreiber (3.0, LG)	
10	Who Would Win? Polar Bear vs. Grizzly Bear, Jerry Pallotta (3.8, LG)	Just a School Project, Mercer Mayer (2.9, LG)	

* ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Science			
ATOS levels 5.0–7.0			
Top nonfiction articles on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)			
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	Martin Luther King and Nonviolence (6.0)	Youngzine	Inference and Evidence
2	Captured Cobra Had Venom Glands (5.9)	AP	Main Idea and Details
3	A Bigger Dinosaur—Scientists Found One! (5.3)	Nick News	Main Idea and Details
4	Are You More Intelligent Than an Ape? (6.4)	Nick News	Argumentation
5	Can Dolphins Really Talk? (6.4)	Nick News	Compare and Contrast
6	Angry Birds Helping Save Their Living Equals in South Pacific (7.0)	AP	Cause and Effect
7	Do Parents Really Know What Their Kids Are Eating? (6.3)	NPR	Author's Purpose and Perspective
8	Backyard Wildlife: A Daddy Longlegs (5.6)	Ranger Rick	Author's Word Choice and Figurative Language
9	Bears Munching on Ants Help Plants (6.2)	Smithsonian	Cause and Effect
10	Another Dangerous Crossroads: Bison on the Move (6.7)	Nick News	Argumentation
Top books on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)			
Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	The Invisible Fran, Jim Benton (5.2, LG)	The Invisible Fran, Jim Benton (5.2, LG)	
2	I Survived: Nature Attacks!, Lauren Tarshis (6.4, MG)	Scat, Carl Hiaasen (5.5, MG)	
3	Who Was Albert Einstein?, Jess M. Brallier (5.8, MG)	An Abundance of Katherines, John Green (5.6, UG)	
4	The River, Gary Paulsen (5.5, MG)	How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning, Rosalyn Schanzer (5.1, LG)	
5	Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs!, Kathleen V. Kudlinski (5.0, LG)	Who Was Albert Einstein?, Jess M. Brallier (5.8, MG)	
6	How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning, Rosalyn Schanzer (5.1, LG)	Boy, Were We Wrong About Dinosaurs!, Kathleen V. Kudlinski (5.0, LG)	
7	Scat, Carl Hiaasen (5.5, MG)	I Survived: Nature Attacks!, Lauren Tarshis (6.4, MG)	
8	If Dogs Were Dinosaurs, David M. Schwartz (5.5, MG)	If Dogs Were Dinosaurs, David M. Schwartz (5.5, MG)	
9	Volcanoes, Seymour Simon (5.1, MG)	The River, Gary Paulsen (5.5, MG)	
10	All About Alligators, Jim Arnosky (5.2, LG)	Around One Cactus: Owls, Bats and Leaping Rats, Anthony D. Fredericks (6.1, LG)	

* ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Science			
ATOS levels 7.0–10.0			
Top nonfiction articles on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)			
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	Angry Birds Helping Save Their Living Equals in South Pacific (7.0)	AP	Cause and Effect
2	Bad Behavior on Social Media Can Prove Costly to Recruits (8.1)	AP	Author's Purpose and Perspective
3	Bigfoot Hair Samples Mostly from Bears (7.7)	AP	Author's Purpose and Perspective
4	Distracted Driving: We're All Guilty, So What Should We Do About It? (7.1)	NPR	Inference and Evidence
5	Are You Smarter Than an Ape? (7.8)	Nick News	Argumentation
6	Can Dolphins Actually Talk? (8.5)	Nick News	Compare and Contrast
7	Circus Will Stop Using Elephants (7.2)	Nick News	Main Idea and Details
8	The Girl Who Swims Among Sharks (7.2)	Smithsonian	Cause and Effect
9	Bad Behavior on Social Media Can Cost Recruits (9.0)	AP	Author's Purpose and Perspective
10	Astronauts to Get 3-D Printer at Space Station (8.3)	AP	Cause and Effect
Top books on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)			
Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	Tunnels, Roderick Gordon (7.0, MG)	I Am: Albert Einstein, Grace Norwich (7.2, LG)	
2	I Am: Albert Einstein, Grace Norwich (7.2, LG)	Tunnels, Roderick Gordon (7.0, MG)	
3	Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science, John Fleischman (7.4, UG)	Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story About Brain Science, John Fleischman (7.4, UG)	
4	Jurassic Dinosaur World, Tamara Green (7.6, MG)	Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland, Sally M. Walker (9.0, UG)	
5	100 Most Destructive Natural Disasters, Anna Claybourne (7.1, MG)	I Feel Better with a Frog in My Throat: History's Strangest Cures, Carlyn Beccia (7.1, MG)	
6	Shark Life: True Stories About Sharks & the Sea, Karen Wojtyla (7.4, MG)	Outliers: The Story of Success, Malcom Gladwell (7.8, UG)	
7	Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland, Sally M. Walker (9.0, UG)	The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot (8.0, UG)	
8	Giant Squid: Searching for a Sea Monster, Mary M. Cerullo (7.0, MG)	Sea Turtles: Ocean Nomads, Mary M. Cerullo (7.3, MG)	
9	Outliers: The Story of Success, Malcom Gladwell (7.8, UG)	Shark Life: True Stories About Sharks & the Sea, Karen Wojtyla (7.4, MG)	
10	Dinosaur, David Norman (7.6, MG)	Cat, Juliet Clutton-Brock (7.3, MG)	

* ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Science			
ATOS levels 9.7–12.0			
Top nonfiction articles on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)			
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	Playing Video Games Could Actually Be Helpful for Your Brain (9.7)	Smithsonian	Author's Purpose and Perspective
2	Agency Proposes Alaskan Area as Critical Habitat for Ringed Seals (10.0)	AP	Argumentation
3	Combing Through Light May Give Us Faster, More Powerful Internet (10.4)	Smithsonian	Author's Word Choice and Figurative Language
4	Air Pollution in China Is Spreading to the U.S. (10.7)	Smithsonian	Author's Purpose and Perspective
5	How Brains Make Money (10.6)	Smithsonian	Author's Purpose and Perspective
6	Combing Through Light May Produce a Faster, More Powerful Internet (11.5)	Smithsonian	Organization
7	Agency Proposes Habitat for Ring Seals off Alaskan Coast (11.5)	AP	Argumentation
8	Playing Video Games Could Actually Change Your Brain for the Better (11.1)	Smithsonian	Author's Purpose and Perspective
9	This Desert Pit Has Been On Fire for More Than 40 Years (9.8)	Smithsonian	Cause and Effect
10	UK Moves Toward Making Babies from DNA of Three People (11.2)	AP	Argumentation
Top books on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)			
Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	The Purloined Letter, Edgar Allan Poe (10.4, UG)		The Purloined Letter, Edgar Allan Poe (10.4, UG)
2	Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us, Michael Moss (10.2, UG)		Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us, Michael Moss (10.2, UG)
3	Shark, Mark Carwardine (10.3, UG)		The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World, Steven Johnson (11.2, UG)
4	A Brief History of Time, Stephen W. Hawking (10.5, UG)		War and Peace, Leo Tolstoy (10.1, UG)
5	The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World, Steven Johnson (11.2, UG)		Artificial Intelligence, Peggy Thomas (10.2, UG)
6	Sharks & Rays, Time-Life Editors (10.4, UG)		Reproductive Technology, Kim K. Zach (11.3, UG)
7	Snake, Chris Mattison (9.7, UG)		The Reproductive System, Pam Walker (9.8, UG)
8	War and Peace, Leo Tolstoy (10.1, UG)		Marijuana, Hal Marcovitz (10.2, UG)
9	A Briefer History of Time, Stephen W. Hawking (10.1, UG)		Breast Cancer, Don Nardo (10.6, UG)
10	Steroids, Jacqueline Adams (10.7, UG)		Shark, Mark Carwardine (10.3, UG)

* ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Science			
ATOS levels 11.0–14.1			
Top nonfiction articles on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)			
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	Air Pollution in China Is Spreading Across the Pacific to the U.S. (12.0)	Smithsonian	Author's Word Choice and Figurative Language
2	Combing Through Light May Produce a Faster, More Powerful Internet (11.5)	Smithsonian	Organization
3	Agency Proposes Habitat for Ring Seals off Alaskan Coast (11.5)	AP	Argumentation
4	Playing Video Games Could Actually Change Your Brain for the Better (11.1)	Smithsonian	Author's Purpose and Perspective
5	UK Moves Toward Making Babies from DNA of Three People (11.2)	AP	Argumentation
6	Will Japanese Researchers Grow Human Organs Inside Pigs? (11.1)	Smithsonian	Author's Purpose and Perspective
7	Mouse Study Shows Tumor-Fighting Cells May Benefit from Extra Oxygen (11.6)	AP	Inference and Evidence
8	The World's Largest Virus Was Just Resurrected from 34,000-Year-Old Permafrost (11.7)	Smithsonian	Inference and Evidence
9	How Did Raptors Use Their Fearsome Toe Claws? (11.2)	Smithsonian	Summary
10	Humans Evolved to Respond to Art (11.3)	Smithsonian	Connections and Relationships
Top books on science topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)			
Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World, Steven Johnson (11.2, UG)	The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic—and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World, Steven Johnson (11.2, UG)	
2	Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies, Jared Diamond (12.6, UG)	Reproductive Technology, Kim K. Zach (11.3, UG)	
3	Silent Spring, Rachel Carson (11.5, UG)	Silent Spring, Rachel Carson (11.5, UG)	
4	Reproductive Technology, Kim K. Zach (11.3, UG)	AIDS (Lucent), Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen (11.7, UG)	
5	Michael Faraday, Martin Gutnik (11.0, MG)	Schizophrenia, Melissa Abramovitz (11.7, UG)	
6	The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for the Ultimate Theory, Brian Greene (12.3, UG)	Bipolar Disorder, Melissa Abramovitz (11.6, UG)	
7	Rocks & Fossils, Time-Life Editors (11.4, UG)	Michael Faraday, Martin Gutnik (11.0, MG)	
8	T. Rex and the Crater of Doom, Walter Alvarez (11.0, UG)	Multiple Sclerosis, Melissa Abramovitz (12.0, UG)	
9	The Fourteenth Amendment: Equal Protection Under the Law, David L. Hudson, Jr. (11.2, MG)	The Bill of Rights: The First Ten Amendments of the Constitution, David L. Hudson, Jr. (11.0, MG)	
10	Genetics, Robert Taylor (11.3, UG)	Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies, Jared Diamond (12.6, UG)	

* ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

For additional insights on what kids are reading, visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/

Top 10 nonfiction articles and overall books about social studies, by text complexity grade bands

Social Studies			
ATOS levels 2.8–5.1			
Top nonfiction articles on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)			
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	Chocolate's Story (4.1)	Youngzine	Compare and Contrast
2	Dog Is a Hero for Warning Deaf Boy About Fire (3.9)	AP	Main Idea and Details
3	America Has a Wild Horse Problem (5.0)	Youngzine	Cause and Effect
4	Ruby Bridges's Life Story (4.8)	Public Domain	Inference and Evidence
5	Cobra Captured in California (3.9)	AP	Main Idea and Details
6	Fifth Grader Finds Very Old Hunting Tool (4.2)	Smithsonian	Inference and Evidence
7	China Makes Japan Mad (4.8)	AP	Cause and Effect
8	What Is the Reason We Use Daylight-Saving Time? (4.6)	Nick News	Sequence
9	Clara Barton: Civil War Heroine (4.3)	Public Domain	Author's Purpose and Perspective
10	Many Kinds of Maps (4.1)	Rosen	Argumentation
Top books on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)			
Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	So You Want to Be President?, Judith St. George (4.8, MG)	So You Want to Be President?, Judith St. George (4.8, MG)	
2	I Am Abraham Lincoln, Brad Meltzer (3.0, LG)	I Am Abraham Lincoln, Brad Meltzer (3.0, LG)	
3	Hottest, Coldest, Highest, Deepest, Steve Jenkins (4.9, LG)	Thank You, Sarah: The Woman Who Saved Thanksgiving, Laurie Halse Anderson (3.7, LG)	
4	The Magic School Bus Blows Its Top, Gail Herman (3.7, LG)	My Family, George Ancona (3.0, LG)	
5	Mummies, Elizabeth Carney (3.8, LG)	Hottest, Coldest, Highest, Deepest, Steve Jenkins (4.9, LG)	
6	My Family, George Ancona (3.0, LG)	Vote!, Eileen Christelow (3.8, MG)	
7	Thank You, Sarah: The Woman Who Saved Thanksgiving, Laurie Halse Anderson (3.7, LG)	The Scrambled States of America, Laurie Keller (4.4, LG)	
8	The Scrambled States of America, Laurie Keller (4.4, LG)	Mummies, Elizabeth Carney (3.8, LG)	
9	Vote!, Eileen Christelow (3.8, MG)	The Magic School Bus Blows Its Top, Gail Herman (3.7, LG)	
10	What Was the Gold Rush?, Joan Holub (4.6, MG)	What Was the Underground Railroad?, Yona Zeldis McDonough (5.0, MG)	

* ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Social Studies

ATOS levels 5.0–7.0

Top nonfiction articles on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	America Has a Wild Horse Problem (5.0)	Youngzine	Cause and Effect
2	Chocolate's Bitter and Sweet Story (5.9)	Youngzine	Compare and Contrast
3	Apple Will Refund \$32.5M for Kids' Purchases (5.7)	AP	Cause and Effect
4	Fifth Grader Finds 14,000-Year-Old Clovis Point on Beach (6.0)	Smithsonian	Summary
5	Kinds of Maps (5.2)	Rosen	Summary
6	History of Our Nation's Veterans Day (6.3)	Public Domain	Summary
7	Finally, a Shoe to Grow With (6.6)	Smithsonian	Author's Purpose and Perspective
8	Food Labels: What Are You Eating? (6.1)	Youngzine	Author's Purpose and Perspective
9	A Costly Decision With a Valuable Lesson (5.7)	Nick News	Sequence
10	Most Americans Want Their Personal Information to Remain Private (6.4)	AP	Inference and Evidence

Top books on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	What Was Pearl Harbor? , Patricia Brennan Demuth (5.4, MG)	What Was the Underground Railroad? , Yona Zeldis McDonough (5.0, MG)	
2	What Was the First Thanksgiving? , Joan Holub (5.0, MG)	What Was the First Thanksgiving? , Joan Holub (5.0, MG)	
3	What Was the Battle of Gettysburg? , Jim O'Connor (5.8, MG)	What Was the March on Washington? , Kathleen Krull (6.1, MG)	
4	What Was the March on Washington? , Kathleen Krull (6.1, MG)	What Was Pearl Harbor? , Patricia Brennan Demuth (5.4, MG)	
5	What Was the Underground Railroad? , Yona Zeldis McDonough (5.0, MG)	What Was the Boston Tea Party? , Kathleen Krull (5.9, MG)	
6	What Was the Boston Tea Party? , Kathleen Krull (5.9, MG)	What Was Ellis Island? , Patricia Brennan Demuth (5.6, MG)	
7	What Was the Hindenburg? , Janet B. Pascal (5.4, MG)	What Was Pompeii? , Jim O'Connor (6.3, MG)	
8	What Was the Alamo? , Pam Pollack (5.4, MG)	What Was the Battle of Gettysburg? , Jim O'Connor (5.8, MG)	
9	What Was the Lewis and Clark Expedition? , Judith St. George (5.8, LG)	My Senator and Me: A Dog's-Eye View of Washington, D.C. , Edward Moore Kennedy (5.1, LG)	
10	What Was Ellis Island? , Patricia Brennan Demuth (5.6, MG)	The Librarian Who Measured the Earth , Kathryn Lasky (5.8, LG)	

* ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Social Studies

ATOS levels 7.0–10.0

Top nonfiction articles on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	Anne Frank: A Legacy (7.5)	Youngzine	Inference and Evidence
2	Conjoined Twins Celebrate Eighteenth Birthday (7.7)	AP	Compare and Contrast
3	Beneath Paris' City Streets, an Empire of Death Awaits Tourists (8.1)	Smithsonian	Inference and Evidence
4	How Video Games Are Getting Inside Your Head—and Wallet (7.5)	NPR	Author's Purpose and Perspective
5	For Their Own Good? New Curfew Sends Baltimore Kids Home Early (8.0)	NPR	Cause and Effect
6	What If a Baseball Game Were Played and Nobody Came? (7.0)	Nick News	Inference and Evidence
7	The Boy Who Was a World War II Veteran by the Age of 13 (7.7)	Smithsonian	Cause and Effect
8	Chicago Man Artfully Fills Potholes (7.5)	AP	Inference and Evidence
9	American Women Have Always Served and Died (7.7)	AP	Summary
10	Kids Want You to Stop Saying the "R Word" (7.0)	Nick News	Summary

Top books on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	World War II: Fighting for Freedom: 1939–1945: The Story of the Conflict That Changed the World, Peter Christp (7.6, MG)	Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case, Chris Crowe (8.7, UG)	
2	Killing Kennedy: The End of Camelot, Bill O'Reilly (8.6, UG)	Amelia to Zora: Twenty-six Women Who Changed the World, Cynthia Chin-Lee (7.0, LG)	
3	Getting Away with Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case, Chris Crowe (8.7, UG)	Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West, Blaine Harden (8.1, UG)	
4	D-Day: The Invasion of Normandy, 1944, Rick Atkinson (9.0, MG)	Killing Kennedy: The End of Camelot, Bill O'Reilly (8.6, UG)	
5	Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West, Blaine Harden (8.1, UG)	Everything Ancient Egypt, Crispin Boyer (7.2, MG)	
6	The Story of Salt, Mark Kurlansky (7.0, MG)	Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America, Firoozeh Dumas (7.3, UG)	
7	Amelia to Zora: Twenty-six Women Who Changed the World, Cynthia Chin-Lee (7.0, LG)	The Story of Salt, Mark Kurlansky (7.0, MG)	
8	Becoming Ben Franklin: How a Candle-Maker's Son Helped Light the Flame of Liberty, Russell Freedman (8.4, MG)	D Is for Democracy: A Citizen's Alphabet, Elissa Grodin (7.3, MG)	
9	Maps and Geography, Ken Jennings (7.1, MG)	Becoming Ben Franklin: How a Candle-Maker's Son Helped Light the Flame of Liberty, Russell Freedman (8.4, MG)	
10	The Vietnam War: One Event, Six Bios, Daniel Polansky (9.0, MG)	Lives of Extraordinary Women: Rulers, Rebels (and What the Neighbors Thought), Kathleen Krull (8.5, MG)	

* ATOS level is an estimate of text difficulty reported on a grade-level scale. For books, interest level refers to the sophistication/maturity of a text's content, ideas, and themes: LG (lower grades, K–3), MG (middle grades, 4–8), MG+ (middle grades plus, 6 and up), and UG (upper grades, 9–12). ATOS level and interest level together inform book selection.

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Social Studies

ATOS levels 9.7–12.0

Top nonfiction articles on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	African Ivory Smuggled on Official China Visits (10.5)	AP	Summary
2	Jeans Face an Uncertain Future Amid Yoga Wear Rage (9.9)	AP	Connections and Relationships
3	Beneath Paris' City Streets, There's an Empire of Death Waiting for Tourists (10.2)	Smithsonian	Inference and Evidence
4	How Dogs Can Help Veterans Overcome PTSD (11.7)	Smithsonian	Connections and Relationships
5	Analysis: New Studies Weigh College Value and Cost (9.7)	AP	Argumentation
6	Man Who Broke Law by Feeding Homeless Undeterred (10.0)	AP	Cause and Effect
7	Girl Scouts Asked to End Partnership with Barbie (11.7)	AP	Argumentation
8	Where Did Dogs First Appear? DNA Points to Europe (10.3)	AP	Main Idea and Details
9	African Ivory Smuggled on High-Level China State Visits (11.7)	AP	Author's Word Choice and Figurative Language
10	How Dogs Help Veterans Beat PTSD (10.7)	Smithsonian	Connections and Relationships

Top books on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	
1	Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal , Eric Schlosser (10.4, UG)	Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal , Eric Schlosser (10.4, UG)
2	Barack Obama , Sherri Devaney (10.3, UG)	The Department of Commerce , Jan Goldberg (11.2, MG)
3	Why We Can't Wait , Martin Luther King, Jr. (10.4, UG)	Why We Can't Wait , Martin Luther King, Jr. (10.4, UG)
4	Colin Powell , Warren Brown (9.7, MG)	Barack Obama , Sherri Devaney (10.3, UG)
5	Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time , Dava Sobel (9.7, UG)	Cubism , Shannon Robinson (10.1, MG)
6	Cubism , Shannon Robinson (10.1, MG)	The Department of Homeland Security , Fletcher Haulley (10.1, MG)
7	Bangladesh , Ellen London (9.7, MG)	Colin Powell , Warren Brown (9.7, MG)
8	Mexico , Adriane Ruggiero (11.5, UG)	Spain , Elizabeth Kohen (10.0, UG)
9	The Department of Commerce , Jan Goldberg (11.2, MG)	Communism , Jennifer Fandel (9.9, MG)
10	Mexico , William Goodwin (10.4, UG)	Albania , MaryLee Knowlton (9.7, MG)

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Social Studies

ATOS levels 11.0–14.1

Top nonfiction articles on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® collection)

Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*	Source	Skill area
1	How Dogs Can Help Veterans Overcome PTSD (11.7)	Smithsonian	Connections and Relationships
2	Girl Scouts Asked to End Partnership with Barbie (11.7)	AP	Argumentation
3	African Ivory Smuggled on High-Level China State Visits (11.7)	AP	Author's Word Choice and Figurative Language
4	China Tightens Rules on Internet Use, Online Comments (11.7)	AP	Inference and Evidence
5	Johnson Space Center Director Dr. Ellen Ochoa (11.8)	Public Domain	Author's Purpose and Perspective
6	Women's Right to Vote (11.6)	Public Domain	Argumentation
7	Egypt's Mammal Extinctions Tracked Through 6,000 Years of Art (11.5)	Smithsonian	Connections and Relationships
8	Vikings Storm the Streets at Up Helly Aa, Europe's Largest Fire Festival (11.8)	Smithsonian	Connections and Relationships
9	Dwindling Group of Survivors to Mark Auschwitz 70 Years On (11.2)	AP	Inference and Evidence
10	Reagan's Nomination of Justice O'Connor (12.0)	Public Domain	Author's Word Choice and Figurative Language

Top books on social studies topics (Accelerated Reader 360® data)

Boys		Girls	
Rank	Title (ATOS® level)*		
1	Mexico, Adriane Ruggiero (11.5, UG)	The Department of Commerce, Jan Goldberg (11.2, MG)	
2	The Department of Commerce, Jan Goldberg (11.2, MG)	Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation, Joseph J. Ellis (12.8, UG)	
3	Russia, Kim Brown Fader (11.2, UG)	The Bill of Rights: The First Ten Amendments of the Constitution, David L. Hudson, Jr. (11.0, MG)	
4	The Fourteenth Amendment: Equal Protection Under the Law, David L. Hudson, Jr. (11.2, MG)	His Excellency: George Washington, Joseph J. Ellis (12.7, UG)	
5	Germany, Sean Dolan (11.8, MG)	Russia, Kim Brown Fader (11.2, UG)	
6	North Korea, Debra A. Miller (12.6, UG)	A Look at the First Amendment: Freedom of Speech and Religion, John Richard Conway (11.2, MG)	
7	Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation, Joseph J. Ellis (12.8, UG)	Democracy in America, Vol. 1, Alexis de Tocqueville (13.4, UG)	
8	His Excellency: George Washington, Joseph J. Ellis (12.7, UG)	Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed, Jared M. Diamond (12.3, UG)	
9	Ancient Chinese Dynasties, Eleanor J. Hall (11.0, UG)	Ancient Chinese Dynasties, Eleanor J. Hall (11.0, UG)	
10	The Bill of Rights: The First Ten Amendments of the Constitution, David L. Hudson, Jr. (11.0, MG)	The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change, Al Gore (13.8, UG)	

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Appendix: About the report

Teachers who use Accelerated Reader 360 know how well, how much, and at what challenge level their students are reading. Each day, at tens of thousands of schools worldwide, kids who have read a book or nonfiction article complete an Accelerated Reader 360 quiz to check their understanding. In turn, the program gives teachers daily information for each student on key indicators of successful reading practice: quality (comprehension), quantity (time spent reading), and difficulty (text complexity level).

Publisher book-sale records, best-sellers lists, and library- or periodical-circulation data are great ways to find out what texts are capturing the public's attention. What's not known, however, is if the purchaser or borrower is actually reading. Accelerated Reader 360 data reveals the books and articles students really read, from start to finish. Our comprehension quizzes are designed to query students about story specifics they could only know through reading a text in its entirety.

For it is in the reading of a text that the magic happens... stories unfold, lessons are learned, new worlds are explored. And when the writing is at a student's reading level, academic magic happens too... new connections are made, vocabulary is not only learned but retained, and valuable reading practice occurs.

The data

What Kids Are Reading: And How They Grow is based on reading data from Accelerated Reader 360. For the 2017 report, this data includes records for 9.9 million students in grades K–12 who read 346 million books and nonfiction articles during the 2015–2016 school year (see table A1).⁴ These students hail from 30,863 schools, spanning all 50 US states and the District of Columbia.

Table A1. Students, texts, and words by grade (Accelerated Reader 360 database, 2015–2016 school year)

Grade	Students who read books and/or nonfiction articles	Books read	Average books read per student	Nonfiction articles read	Average words read per student (books and articles)
K	294,280	6,524,217	22.2	87	8,266
1	1,041,804	47,248,514	45.4	2,560	26,783
2	1,417,714	84,863,268	59.9	15,983	86,100
3	1,522,991	79,017,588	51.9	81,612	192,359
4	1,483,555	55,378,225	37.4	138,010	309,389
5	1,401,110	39,486,700	28.2	150,118	402,875
6	956,968	16,349,428	17.1	171,274	438,901
7	694,289	7,925,847	11.5	119,078	412,304
8	638,744	6,295,782	9.9	110,581	412,550
9	146,797	891,233	6.1	23,960	287,188
10	116,377	652,182	5.7	22,950	298,468
11	90,164	446,135	5.0	13,689	284,796
12	65,637	344,116	5.3	7,402	290,368
Total	9,870,430	345,423,235		857,304	

⁴ Schools optionally record demographic information about students using Accelerated Reader 360, so gender data is available for approximately 72% of students. Lists in the report include records for boys, girls, and students for which gender was not noted.

As table A2 shows, our massive report sample, although one of convenience, includes a diverse group of students, roughly representative of US schools. No other study captures student reading behavior on this scale.

Table A2. What Kids Are Reading study demographics⁵ reflect national percentages⁶

Race/ethnicity		
	Report sample	US
White	52%	50%
Black	14%	16%
Asian	3%	5%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2%	1%
Hispanic	29%	25%
Two or more races	—	3%
Free/reduced lunch		
	Report sample	US
Yes	54%	52%
No	46%	48%
English learner		
	Report sample	US
Yes	9%	9%
No	91%	91%
Locale		
	Report sample	US
Rural	30%	28%
Suburban	27%	31%
Urban	25%	27%
Town	18%	14%

Accelerated Reader 360 quizzes currently number over 170,000—almost half for nonfiction/informational texts—with additional quizzes created each week. The sheer volume of books and nonfiction articles with quizzes available give students a vast array of reading options. We recognize, of course, not all reading done in or outside the classroom is captured through Accelerated Reader 360; though for its users, we know much reading practice activity is captured this way.

Please note: Renaissance is deeply committed to protecting school and student data. For all publications, we go to great lengths to provide aggregated data that is useful to educators, parents, and researchers, but stop well short of releasing information that could identify any district, school, teacher, or student. For more information about our data security and confidentiality policies, see <http://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R0054577B8522158.pdf>.

5 Estimates are based on school-level percentages from the Education Database (Market Data Retrieval). To estimate the number of students in each category at each school, we took the percentage of students per category multiplied by the number of students using Accelerated Reader 360 in that school. Results were aggregated to compute sample-wide percentages.

6 Data is from the National Center for Education Statistics (2013–2014): http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/current_tables.asp.

Insights

In each section of the report, we are pleased to share what kids are (truly) reading and how students' reading habits may influence what and how they learn:

- **Section I: Overall reading:** An analysis of reading practice, essay by Laura Numeroff (*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*), top 25 fiction and nonfiction books, grades K–12
- **Section II: Nonfiction reading:** An analysis of nonfiction reading, essay by Tedd Arnold (*Hi! Fly Guy*), top 10 nonfiction articles and nonfiction books, grades K–12
- **Section III: Reading challenge across the curriculum:** An analysis of reading challenge, essay by Melba Pattillo Beals (*Warriors Don't Cry*), top 10 nonfiction articles and overall books about science and social studies, by text complexity grade bands

About Accelerated Reader 360

Accelerated Reader 360 helps teachers promote and manage students' reading practice, providing independent reading, targeted nonfiction reading, and close-reading skills practice. The program helps teachers know what kids are reading and whether they truly understood what was read.

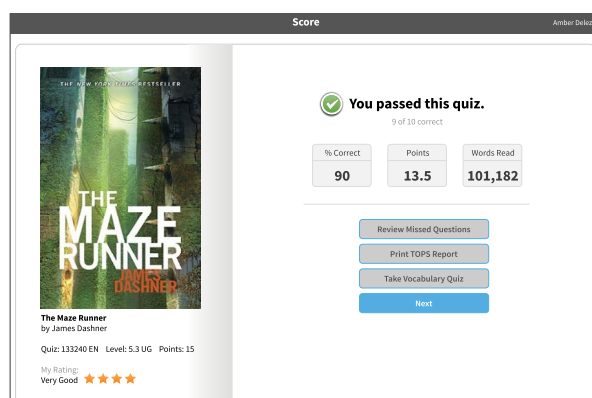
For independent reading, the teacher sets individualized reading goals with each student. Then students read a self-selected book from end to end; complete an Accelerated Reader 360 reading practice quiz (of 3, 5, 10, or 20 items, depending on book length); and receive immediate feedback, which is shared with the teacher, about their comprehension percent correct and number of words read (see figure A1).

For instructional reading practice, Accelerated Reader 360 supports three key instructional tenets emphasized by education advocates: (1) reading more nonfiction, (2) increasing text complexity, and (3) citing textual evidence. The program supplies an extensive library of nonfiction articles with built-in skills-practice activities that promote students' close-reading skills. Students are challenged to reference text evidence and craft responses to writing prompts, which encourages interaction with text and deep thinking about content (see figure A2).

Educators nationwide use Accelerated Reader 360 because it saves teachers time, motivates students to read more, and is more reliable and accurate than traditional methods of tracking student reading practice. To ensure that teachers make the most of their Accelerated Reader 360 data and that students benefit to the greatest extent possible, fidelity of implementation is guided by research-based professional development that promotes best practices in literacy and language arts.

Accelerated Reader 360 helps teachers promote and manage students' reading practice, providing independent reading, targeted nonfiction reading, and close-reading skills practice.

Figure A1. Accelerated Reader 360 quiz results



Research support and accolades

The large evidence base supporting Accelerated Reader 360 currently comprises 180 studies and reviews, including 31 experimental or quasi-experimental research studies—generally considered the strongest study designs—152 independent studies, and 28 articles that have been published in peer-reviewed journals.⁷

The research support for Accelerated Reader 360 continues to grow and has contributed to favorable reviews by external panels, including the Council of Administrators of Special Education (endorsed in 2016), the Promising Practices Network (named a “proven” program in 2013), and the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (designated a “model” program with “strong evidence” in 2010), among others.

Matching texts to students

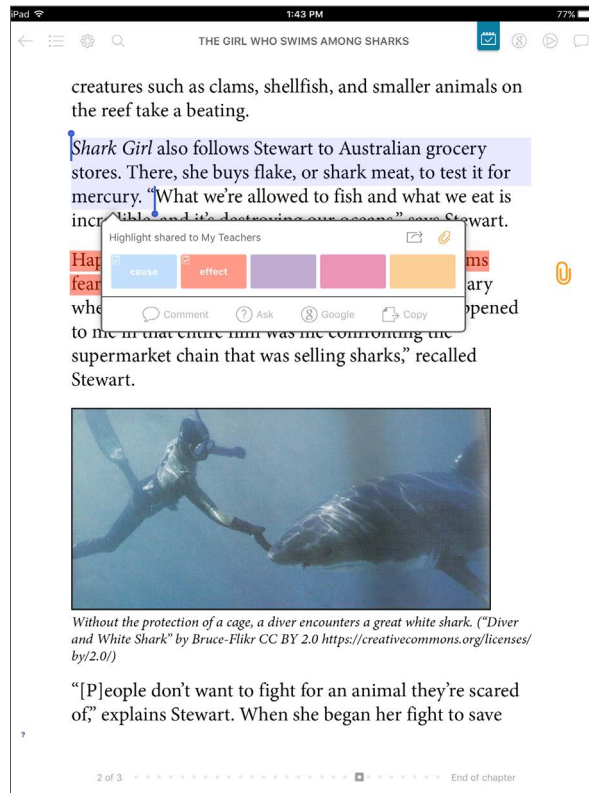
Research has shown that as students grow as readers, it is increasingly important they have a say in what they read (Allington, 2012; Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Worthy & McKool, 1996). While educators guide students’ instructional reading with the nonfiction article library in Accelerated Reader 360, Renaissance recommends students play an active role in their independent reading practice selections. Choice is motivating for students and helps foster a lasting love of reading. Renaissance recommends students consider several factors, guided by a teacher’s professional judgment, when selecting a book to read. ATOS level (text complexity) and interest level (appropriateness of content) are two key factors.

Text complexity

Considering the challenge level of a given text is critical in text selection. To help educators guide students to just-right books and articles at appropriate levels, an ATOS level is assigned to each text with an Accelerated Reader 360 quiz available. The ATOS Readability Formula⁸ takes into account three important predictors of text difficulty: average sentence length, average word length, and average word-difficulty level.

This formula is reported on a grade-level scale, so that texts and student achievement share the same easy-to-interpret metric. For example, an ATOS level of 5.4 indicates the text could likely be read by a fifth-grade student in the fourth month of the school year.

Figure A2. Highlighting and tagging text evidence in Accelerated Reader 360



Renaissance recommends students play an active role in their independent reading practice selections.

⁷ To learn more, see *Types of Education Research: Support for Accelerated Reader 360*: <http://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R0058266092E6F1A.pdf>.

⁸ ATOS is a reliable and valid quantitative measure of text difficulty (Milone, 2014) that “puts students and texts on the same scale” (National Governors Association, 2010b, p. 7).

ATOS level is intended to work with interest level to inform book selection. An ATOS level matched to a student's independent reading range (ZPD),⁹ although a reliable and valid estimate of text complexity, does not necessarily indicate the suitability of a book's content or literary merit for individual readers. Other factors that affect students' understanding of text, such as content, structure, and language conventionality, as well as student motivation, background knowledge, and purpose for reading, must also be considered (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, & Cox, 1999).

ATOS level is intended to work with interest level to inform book selection.

Appropriateness of content

Each book with an Accelerated Reader 360 quiz is assigned an interest level in addition to an ATOS level. An interest level is based on publisher recommendations and provides a qualitative measure of text complexity that refers to the sophistication and maturity level of a book'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, for more mature middle-grade readers), and UG for upper grades (9–12).

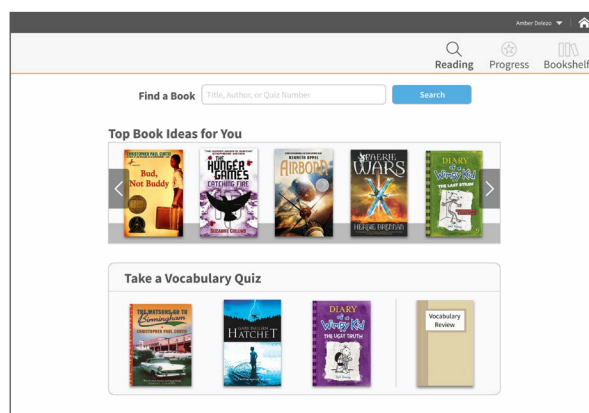
For example, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* has an ATOS level of 4.0, indicating that typically performing students in fourth grade or above likely can read the text; however, because of mature content, the book is coded as UG (upper grades).

An interest level designation should be thought of as a helpful guideline. Whether or not a text is appropriate for a particular student is a local decision best made by educators, parents, and students.

What to read next

To help students find that next great read, book information—including ATOS levels, interest levels, book abstracts, and the like—is available in AR BookFinder® (<http://www.arbookfind.com>) or via Book Discovery within Accelerated Reader 360 (see figure A3), and other text may be analyzed for free at <http://www.renaissance.com/products/accelerated-reader/atos-analyzer>.

Figure A3. Accelerated Reader 360 Book Discovery helps kids find next just-right read



Visit www.renaissance.com/learnalytics/wkar/ for additional insights on what kids are reading, to create customized book lists, and more.

⁹ ZPD (zone of proximal development) is a theoretical concept inspired by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978) that is based on appropriate level of difficulty—neither too easy nor too hard—where students are challenged without being frustrated.

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