

L.A. Public Library Speech

May 16, 2006

Dwight's
Copy

Libraries are always in need of money and those of
you who have come to this dinner will continue,
presumably, to support its functions.

I could speak at length about the beauties and literary
splendors to be encountered over a fine day browsing
through the shelves of a public library which is how it used
to be—and I could go on with respect for the bounties of
research that are available in the stacks when working on a

Opening 2

novel today, but I must confess that I do not see any of that as a good way to use my time here tonight at this podium. I would rather suggest that now at the age of 83, I would rather take the opportunity to converse about rarer matters than the good service you offer your community by coming to an expensive dinner that will serve an honorable community purpose, no, I am not here to stroke you with flattery for your beneficence but would look rather to reach into some of your more critical and guarded thoughts. I

come here not as a fund-raiser, but as an old and amateur
philosopher.

Poor Norman Mailer, he is lost and rudderless in his
narcissistic semanticisms and agnosticisms

For Mailer to try out a notion of a limited God, struggling along with us betrays his unfortunate need for an introductory course in theology.

When it comes to his philosophical vaporizings, Norman Mailer is as he has always been, quite an embarrassment.

His amateurishness and egotistical brashness always appear as something to be merely brushed off, but in this instance his sudden religiosity is so reactionary, that it deserves political condemnation. Sartre should have found God!

Indeed! It's bad enough that Mailer is merely a self-appointed existentialist, but that he should even imply he's in the same league with Sartre is, you'll pardon the word, absurd. God knows why Liberation solicited his views, but only you know why you saw fit to reprint them.

You've always had the inside line on cleanliness, godliness, and sexiness, and now you have the special authority that comes with senility. When I'm your age I hope to be able to write much the same dismissal of your inflated reputation. Not, however, on the grounds of atheism. Just windbaggery.

What Norman Mailer lacks in his understanding of philosophy, is exceeded only by what he lacks in his understanding of the field of writing, astronomy, political theory and common sense. He is a man full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. His tales are those of an idiot. He is an idiot. The last book the man wrote that made any sense was his autobiographical novel the Naked and the Dead. Just about everything else he wrote serves as evidence that a monkey hitting random keys on a typewriter could have done better.

While reading Norman Mailer's gasbag ruminations on Sartre and God, it felt like I was transported to the retiree's post-prandial late hour at the Martha's Vineyard yacht club soiree. When Mailer states at the end, "Something immense may now be stirring..." was this literally true, that he was about to crap his pants big-time?

The letters read like blogs from Lower Swamp
Hollow. They are as *ad hominem* as mosquitoes. If I were
a good Christian, I might say, “Oh, Lord, they, too, are
Your creatures and they need a little blood so much. Let
them have mine.”

Let me conclude, however, with a letter that reads at
least like good rabbinic boilerplate.

It is wonderful receiving a theology lesson from Norman Mailer. He has recreated God in his image with a slight bit of help from William James' finite more maker of the universe. However, in lambasting the God of religion he forgets to remind the reader of the most important quality of the God of the religious tradition he ostensibly comes from. The God of Judaism not only demands Mankind's participation in shaping the world—God demands Mankind's walking in the way of God in compassion, kindness and goodness. This is not a particularly Mailerean theme, but is the heart of the traditional Jewish vision of the world and provides the guideline to all the ideal and visionary transformative movements which would bring Mankind to greater justice and well-being."

As one Jew to another, I would ask Shalom, “What, then, was the Holocaust? Should we look upon it as our punishment? Has Jehovah come back because we Jews do not walk sufficiently ‘in compassion, kindness, and goodness,’ or does the Holocaust reinforce my supposition that God is not All-Powerful. If I cannot have faith in both qualities, let God at least be compassionate even if not All-Powerful.

I would say that Sartre, despite his incontestable strengths of mind, talent and character, is still the man who derailed existentialism.

Sartre was comfortable as an atheist. If he had no fundament on which to plant his philosophical feet, he didn't need it. We are French, he was ready to say. We have minds, we can live with the absurd and ask for no reward. That is because we are noble enough to live with emptiness, and strong enough to choose a course which we are even ready to die for. And we will do this in whole defiance of the fact that, indeed, we have no footing. We do not look to a Hereafter.

It was an attitude; it was a proud stance; it was equal to living with one's mind in formless space, but it deprived existentialism of more interesting explorations. For atheism is a cropless undertaking when it comes to philosophy. Atheism can contend with ethics (as Sartre did on occasion most brilliantly), but when it comes to metaphysics, atheism ends in a locked cell. It is, after all, near to impossible for a philosopher to explore how we are here without entertaining some notion of what the prior force might have been. Cosmic speculation is asphyxiated if existence came into being without a clue to suggest whether we are here for good purpose, or there is no reason whatsoever for us.

All the same, Sartre's philosophical talents were damnably virtuoso. He was able to function with precision in the upper echelons of every logical structure he set up. If only he had not been an existentialist! For an existentialist who does not believe in any kind of God is equal to an engineer who designs an automobile that requires no driver and accepts no passengers. If existentialism is to develop new philosophers building on earlier premises, it needs a God who is more confident of the end that we are; a God who is a Creator, not a law-giver; a God who suffers the uncertainties of an artist; a God who lives without any of the pre-arranged guarantees that sit like an incubus upon formal theology with its self-

serving assumption of a Being who is All-Good and All-Powerful. What a gargantuan oxymoron—All-Good and All-Powerful. It is certain to maroon any and all formal theologians who would like to explain an earthquake.

Before the wrath of a tsunami, they can only break wind—God's ways are unknown, they will bleat. The notion of an existential God, a Creator who may have been doing His or Her artistic best, but could still have been remiss in designing the tectonic plates, is not within their scope.

Sartre was an alien to the possibility that existentialism might thrive if it would just assume that indeed we do have a God who, no matter His or Her cosmic dimensions, (whether larger or smaller than we assume),

embodies nonetheless some of our faults, our ambitions, our talents and our gloom. For the end is not written. If it is, there is no place for existentialism. Base our beliefs, however, on the fact of our existence, and it takes no great step for us to assume that we are not only individuals but may well be a vital part of a larger phenomenon that searches for some finer vision of life that could conceivably emerge from our present human condition. There is no reason, one can argue, why this assumption is not nearer to the real condition of our lives than anything the oxymoronic theologians would offer us. It is certainly more reasonable than Sartre's ongoing assumption that we are here willy-nilly and must manage to do the best we can

with nothingness installed upon floorlessness. Sartre was indeed a writer of major dimension—his desire for a better society was passionate—but he was also a philosophical executioner. He guillotined existentialism just when we needed most to hear its howl, its barbaric yawp that there is something in common between God and all of us. We, like God, are imperfect artists doing the best we can. We may succeed or fail—God as well as us. That is the implicit if undeveloped air of existentialism. We would do well to live again with the Greeks, live again with the expectation that the end remains open but human tragedy may well be our end.

Great hope has no real footing unless one is willing to face into the doom that may also be on the way. Those are the poles of our existence—as they have been from the first instant of the Big Bang. Something immense may now be stirring, but to meet it we will do better to expect that life will not provide the answers we need so much as it will offer the privilege of improving our questions. It is not moral absolutism but theological relativism we would do well to explore if our real need is for a God with whom we can engage our lives.

Mr. Mailer exposes his limitations by attacking Mr. Sartre in order to prop up his own nebulous thinking. It is somehow underhanded to attack a brilliant writer who can no longer physically speak and I'm sure Mr. Mailer would resent that possibility of posthumous criticism of his own work and beliefs.

* *"To the contrary, I would welcome it on the assumption that they are still reading me and misreading me."*

Libraries are always in need of money and those of you who have come to this dinner will continue, presumably, to support its functions.

I could speak at length about the beauties and literary splendors to be encountered over a fine day browsing through the shelves of a public library which is how it used to be—and I could go on with respect for the bounties of research that are available in the stacks when working on a novel today, but I must confess that I do not see any of that as a good ^{what} reason to use my time here tonight at this podium. I would rather suggest that now at the age

of 83, ~~being one of the two or three oldest major American writers still~~

~~writing, and on a visit that could conceivably be my last trip to the West~~

~~Coast, I would rather talk to all of you about a ^{speed} matter that occupies ^{few subjects} me more~~

~~that paying homage to a good or even great library. I would rather speak of~~

~~what concerns me today about America, about our civilization and about my~~

~~profession. This, after all, is an~~ ^{take the} opportunity to converse about rarer matters

than the good service you offer your community by coming to an expensive

~~dinner~~ ^{dinner} that will serve an honorable community purpose, no, I am not here to

stroke you ~~any~~ ^{with} flattery for your beneficence but ~~look~~ ^{would} rather to reach into

some of your more critical and guarded thoughts. I come here not as a

fund-raiser, but as an old and amateur philosopher.

A short speech that intends to cover as many topics as a long one must restrict itself, however, to assertions. So I will declare that I love my country and this love is selfish. America has accorded me the incomparable freedom to say what I think. That is one of the finer human freedoms. But have I also been disturbed by my country—even, in these years—appalled? Yes. When at its worst, the word is appalled.

Here I can offer a metaphor. It is one I have used before. I would say that America has become comparable to a handsome, seven-foot giant who

weighs 300 pounds, is all muscle, and yet has to be reassured every few minutes that the odor of his armpits is splendid. It seems we Americans have a desperate need to keep approving of ourselves, and this has become so compelling a sentiment that I must conclude the most powerful religion in America today is now America itself. We are exceptionalists. At least half of this nation believes that God created America to be exceptional, to be superior to all other earthly alternatives in order for the U.S. to be able to show others the way. It is a vanity so immense that I will call it hubris, and this American hubris, this potentially tragic pride, has produced awesome blunders in foreign affairs. If we have had successes like the Marshall Plan, we have also had our ten years in Vietnam with no more to show by the end than our national shame. It is worth reminding ourselves over and over that democracy is not a stable edifice set in concrete, ready to be ^{boxed} packaged and

shipped as a cure-all ^{machine} ~~medicine~~ to dictatorships so that they can learn how to live right.

Rather, democracy is a social premise based on hard-earned institutions and the optimistic supposition that there is more grace than evil in human beings. If this proves true, [/] over the decades and the centuries, then freedom can not only survive but prove superior to totalitarian systems where less is demanded of human initiative and good will but the dire price ~~for that~~ is to accept daily oppressions plus ^{occasional} ~~intermittent but~~ outrageous oppressions.

Democracy can perhaps be compared to any good human being who is full of faults but ready to recognize that he or she is not necessarily guaranteed to end as a good human being. We can become less as we grow older and a few of us can turn inside-out and shift over altogether to evil.

That can also apply to a democracy. Like us, democracy is a living creation and not all that lives grows finer as it ages.

The same can be said for progress. There is no natural law that authorizes progress to lead us into better lives. Much of the culture that sustains democracy is now on the chopping block. Civilization has become a dangerous vehicle hurtling toward a fate we fear—a fate that could be malevolent. We face a second metaphor which is like the first. Civilization is a giant with developed limbs, fine faculties and prodigies of strength but the giant is blind, blind in its ambitions, blind in its wars. Its great limbs do not coordinate with each other. Theology, as one of those limbs, is helpless before the unanswered questions of the Holocaust even as formal religion insists on an All-Good and All-Powerful God.

Over a century ago, Nietzsche uttered four words as shattering as a lightning bolt. Four words—“All priests are liars!”

By the sense-evidence we possess, he is correct or close to correct, for if they are not liars, theologians, no matter how mighty, are at the least, fantasists. Priest, after all, and reverends and rabbis speak with absolute authority about matters which are finally not knowable. For example, if God exists, and I for one, do so believe, there is no certainty that this Deity is a law-giver. All we can know—those of us who believe there is a God—is that this Divinity is ipso facto a Creator, a magical and mighty creator, a cosmic artist. That does not mean He or She is All-Good and All-Powerful. The reversals, perversities and horrors of history would tend to suggest the opposite. If the Lord gave us reason, it may be more reasonable to assume that the Divinity is doing the best that He or She can accomplish against odds as formidable as the weight of all the other powers in the universe, indeed, one must speak of other powers because if there are none in the universe and God is alone and All-Good and All-Powerful, then God is also

an oxy-moron, a contradiction in terms rather than an inscrutable being. It is time that the millennially-old philosophical evasions that are embedded in the word inscrutable are also brought up for human judgement and conceivably discarded as alien to the powers of reason that God gave us.

The point is that we do not know, we cannot begin to know, that God is All-Good and All-Powerful—indeed by the experience of world-history it is even difficult to assume fundamentalists, whether Christian or followers of Islam, would tell you that they do know and are prepared to see the world destroyed in order to certify their faith.

In contrast to these fundamentalists with their certainty of God's terminal judgment, liberals are in a state of woe before their inner perception of increasing powerlessness. The great light of the Enlightenment which fortified their sense of historic entitlement over the last three centuries is now a flickering lamp. The intellectual disciplines that formed the armature

of liberal ideology over the decades since the Second World War are now repetitive or void of new ideas. Sociology characterizes social maladies through endless exercises of logorrhea. It uses such formulaic words as dysfunctional when all it is telling us is that a given individual or family is badly messed up.

In its turn, now that Freud's constructions are crumbling, psychoanalysis circles endlessly around the enigmas of human behavior. So, it is not only without profound answers, but is not ready to propose serious new questions—as, for example, do God and the Devil exist, and are they, too, part of our psychic dynamic?

The word “faith” is available to all, The fundamentalist can comprehend and live with my faith no more than I can live with his, and for either of us to suppose for a moment that we are communicating with each other when we use the word face to face is the beginning of confusion. To

the fundamentalist, faith is for the reply God offers him to all the questions for which he cannot find an answer, whereas I had the faith that all questions, at the least, can resolve themselves into finer questions, higher questions until God Himself or God Herself must ask: was my purpose in creating human kind a good deed or a bad one? In my faith nothing is guaranteed or predetermined. Our existence is open to what we will do with it.

If this much is able to provoke you, let my try to admit to an arrogance that could prove unseemly. It will, however, not be attached to my work. Having been a published writer since the age of twenty-five, I ought to know the faults as well as the virtues of my books. So this arrogance will be based instead on the belief that I have been a good and serious novelist. In these days, however, I am feeling the woeful emotions of a carriage-maker one hundred years ago as he watched the disappearance

of his profession before the onrush of the automobile. In the more recent past, it was the movies and television that looked ready to dispense with the good novel. By now, film is almost our friend but then the best films are also in danger of becoming a footnote to our technological, cybernetic, and advertising world, and the serious novel may soon be in danger of being adored with exactly that poignant concern we feel for endangered species. The best novels are certainly endangered by the devastations of television and its clusters of commercials as well as by the book reviewers of the mass media.

There is an all but unspoken shame in the literary world today. The passion readers used to feel for venturing into a serious novel has withered. Indeed how many of you, even in the audience, do not obtain more pleasure from a pitiless review in the New York or L.A. Times than from the ardors involved in reading a good, difficult but serious novel?

I would underline this last categorization: A Serious Novel. For if we are told that everywhere literacy is improving and more books are being sold than ever before, even more novels being read than ever before, I would have to agree. It is just that the vast majority of such successful fiction is quickly digestible and all-too forgettable, page turners at best. One can finish them feeling no more disturbed than when one started. At their best, the reader has been given the equivalent of a fine massage. But the real purpose of a great novel is not to cater to one's needs but to change one's life. The great novel will kill no time on airplane trips, nor help a few to sleep at night. Very good novels do not always have the promise of literary entertainments. Ergo, they are in danger of becoming a footnote to our technological, cybernetic and advertising worlds.

But then much is on the chopping block. Even television may soon be eclipsed by the need for instant information. The good novel is, in any

event, all but gone from that part of the active world which drives the economy of modern existence. I speak of American power, or, as it may yet be experienced, Chinese power, Chinese bureaucracy, Chinese management. Yeats' rude beast has appropriated the market-place. The good serious novel, and most certainly the rare great novel, is inimical to the needs of this market-place. I would go so far as to say the most dedicated novels of the future will have the same lack of impact on the ambitions and greed of the world as fine poetry offers most readers today. So, too, will the serious novel be seen as doing little harm, provided it is kept on that high shelf we save for family what-nots.

If these gloomy predictions are correct—and how I hope they are not—let us look at least at what we may be losing.

Well, it can be asked, what will the great novel possibly do for such a world?

I dare to suggest that the novelist, if his or her dedication is deep enough,

may be able to see a little further than others, and may even unravel enigmas that major disciplines are not ready to approach. Our field, our ground, our illumination does not derive from all the specialized fields of inquiry which have hardened over the centuries while advancing their own field at the expense of others. We are bound to no discipline but the explanation of our own experience, our—should we be fortunate enough to find it—our own vision. So a gifted few may even be ready to explore experience that is not available to other professions.

On the other hand, novelists are rarely heroic. Gawky, half-formed, shy perverse, spoiled, vain in their youth, so, too, can their vision be astigmatic. Nonetheless, the best of them do look to honor the profound demands of their profession. (INSERT P4 & P3?) So our hope is to offer insights with which good readers can enrich themselves on the meaning of their own lives. Whose comprehension of society is not more

incisive after reading Proust, who does not know more about language once James Joyce is encountered, whose sense of compassion has not been deepened by living in Tolstoy's novels? And whose sense of the absurd relations between humans and society is not given focus by Franz Kafka?

So, here is to future Tolstoys, future Joyces, Dostoevskys, Prousts and Kafkas. In the interim let me salute the young serious novelists today who are yet to arrive. May they startle us with the breadth and power of their vision. May there be a Theodore Dreiser or a Hemingway, a Faulkner, a Steinbeck a Henry Miller or a Herman Melville among them.

INSERT “C”

The novelist, marooned in his or her individual existence, unconnected to the larger powers outside one's own person, still has on rare occasions, a mighty strength. At best, he or she is ready to spend a life searching into the nuances of morality. The worldly powers, particularly the theological powers who deem themselves to be closest to morality are the farthest away from nuance. They dictate morality, they judge, they declare, they are alienated from nuance. The Catholic Church does, of course, have a special sensibility by way of confession but priests are still alienated from a true search into what human nature might be since the end of such inquiries, as the Church sees it, are not open to interpretations.

INSERT “D”

So, I would propose that the real purpose of the great novel is not to massage one's needs, but to alter one's life; speak so deeply into our personal experiences that we are never again the same, and so may be more equipped to deal with the problems of our time rather than continue to support them, suffer them, and prolong their hegemony. For problems can also be analogous to institutional—which is to say that whether they are good or bad, their inclination is to perpetrate themselves, where, for example, is the sociologist or psychiatrist who will relinquish the word dysfunctional when all it means, once stripped of its psycho-babble, is “all messed up.”

L-2

We lost 60,000 men in a war we never declared ourselves to be in, which was, of course, Vietnam, and we killed two million Asiatics in the process before we could gain the strength to quit with nothing gained. A decade later we conquered Grenada. There, we invaded with fifteen-hundred Marines who charged ashore and took the island away from 1200 unarmed Cuban construction workers. It was done in a day, and Ronald Reagan rushed to declare that we had wiped out the shame of Vietnam.

We bombed Kosovo from 15,000 feet up and never suffered a casualty because we had no U.S. soldiers on the ground. That was a tactic employed by a president who wished to avoid impeachment since he had been guilty of a species of semi-infidelity towards his wife, whereas we are most unlikely to impeach a president who lied to us about weapons of mass destruction because he was too much of a cretin to know the truth. This,

however, may be too harsh a judgment. Some of the data indicates that he is not entirely without light, but is the equal of a dim bulb and so was ready to get us into a war we won in two weeks and have been cleaning up for 160 weeks since at immense expense to our own nation. Yes, war has become surrealistic.

I have spoken of limbs that do not coordinate. Theology and war are two gigantic examples. Corporate business is another. Corporate heads live, I would warrant, with the pride that they are irreplaceable to our economy, after all, they have given us our faceless buildings tens of stories high and our suburban malls and, by way of the auto our faceless super-highways, and with it all how they have profited! Their devotion to the bottom line has become a passion eclipsed only by their dedication to the mega-dimensions of their yearly salary.

The one beauty that existed amid the exploitative 19th century ravages of labor under capitalism was at least the owners and workers pride in their product. That has now been replaced by the skills of marketing.

Advertising (also known sub rosa as mendacity and manipulation) now leads

the way. The pride of a gung-ho advertiser is that he or she has the insight and the know-how to sell a second-rate product at first rate prices. After all, it takes less with and certainly offers less profit to sell a first-rate product on its merits. Any well-equipped salesman can market a Rolls-Royce—he just needs to speak to the fellow who has the money to buy it, but the skills of the artful distortion are involved in promoting the sleazy and mediocre.

T-1

Theology, war, and corporate practice hardly complete the list of those disciplines of the post-modern age that have become a part of Leviathan, this Leviathan who hurtles through time, and is not only sightless, but numb to moral nuance. As, for example, journalism. At its best, it is open and can give a partial picture of our ongoing history, blurred but for occasional jagged salients of high focus, but journalism at its middling and lower levels succeeds in cheapening everything it touches for its fundamental need is to over-stimulate as well as to over simplify. All too often journalistic prose has the same relation to good literary prose as the sit-com has to Death of a Salesman or A Streetcar named Desire.

Medicine may be even more immense as a subject, but how many of us are without the fear that in its drug-prescribing rush to the future it may yet create a bionic man and keep us alive for decades in gated communities.

Yet, as a hint to or an omen of the profound ignorance that sits side by side with the most stupendous medical advances, let us at least recall how we were told to eschew butter for margarine only to be informed a decade later that butter was less harmful to the heart than margarine.

That was a minor if symptomatic mistake, but is it not true that by now half the people one knows who are entering the last profession of them all, the business of dying, appear to be embarked on this passage under the whip of the hardest taskmaster of them all: Cancer. Where are the statistics on cancer? Is its incidence greater today than it was, let us say, in 1950? If that is true it may be fair to state that the Leviathan of medicine itself with its vitamins, its anti-biotics, its cosmetic surgeries, its operative advancements may be the primary cause in what I assume in the increase of cancer itself.

From: jmcenany@earthlink.net
Subject: [LETT] Norman Maller seems to be saying
Date: May 24, 2005 8:43:34 AM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com

Sender: jmcenany@earthlink.net
Name: Jack McEnany
Postal: Bob 195
Franconia, NH, 03580
Teleph: 603-616-9568
URL: <http://www.thenation.com/about/>
Browser: Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows NT 5.1; Updated-1-22-2004; SV1)

Message:

Norman Maller seems to be saying: Cant we just pretend theres a God. Wouldnt it make everything better? And while were at it, lets make Him a limited God, the kind of God we can get over on when we need to.

Catholic theology teaches that a limited God receives those limitations from a higher power, which a priori, is the true God. Not exactly a water tight case for the existence of a supreme being, but its the best argument that the priestocracy has ever managed. This ontological sophistry is why atheists reject the notion of God altogether. Maller's provincial and diluted deity is more an invention of science fiction than theology.

?

While carriers of the God gene and old men in fear of death can find reasons to believe in every empty tea cup, Maller takes it one step further and suggests that if we quasi-secular artistic types go to the trouble of inventing a God for ourselves, then we might as well create Him in our own flawed and overreaching image. A God with good intentions, but who screws up sometimes and feels really bad about it. Cant you just hear God: Everybody shut up about the damn tsunami already! It wont happen again, all right? But something else -- equally tragic and senseless -- will. Sitcom or theology?

A God who doesnt forgive, but who needs forgiveness isnt God the All Powerful, but God the In Over His Head Schmuck. Which begs the question, Mr. Maller: whats the point?

Jack McEnany Franconia, NH

sent by an automailer

From: nw105@columbia.edu
Subject: [LETT] Norman Mailer can be brilliant a
Date: May 29, 2005 12:40:31 PM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com

Sender: nw105@columbia.edu
Name: Nathaniel Wander
Postal: 25A Cook Street
San Francisco, CA 94118
Teleph: 415-831-2645
URL:
Browser: Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows NT 5.1; .NET CLR 1.0.3705)

Message:

Norman Mailer can be brilliant and instructive, but he can also be silly and tedious. If he wants a god, fine, but forcing one on Sartre, let alone the rest of us: silly and tedious.

Evolutionary biology provides a perfectly fine basis for Existentialism ex deus. As the song says: "We're here because we're here because we're here because we're here." Self-replicating molecules happened. Gene-organized living cells happened. Eventually consciousness happened. They were "solutions" to biochemical and later biological "problems," and the "problems" too just happened. That is, they emerged at the intersection of "history" and "stuff:" the problems and the solutions were all contingent.

So, we're here, and the on-going problem is how to "be" here and "behave" decently. Earn some money in an honorable way to pay for a haircut, go to the barber shop, chat with the customers and the barbers while civilly waiting your turn, get your hair cut, and then get out of the damned chair and on your way so the next person can get a haircut.

sent by an automailer

From: Alan_PASCH@umail.umd.edu (ap3)
Subject: **Mailer on Sartre &c.**
Date: June 22, 2005 4:38:00 PM EDT
To: letters@thenation.com

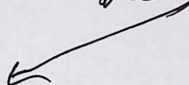
To the Editor:

Norman Mailer's take on Heidegger, Sartre, and existentialism hints at what most of us thought there probably could not be: a new argument for the existence of God. It goes like this. The only plausible alternative to divine creation is a Darwinian process of evolution. But the slow, gradual, carefully-evolving enterprise that Darwin gives us, devoted as it is to the task of enhancing the survival fitness of the individual and the species, simply cannot account for a universe as messed up as the one we've got. And the counterexamples--the earthquakes, the male nipples, our cupidity, our inability to govern ourselves--these are the consequences not of malice or of evil intent, but of incompetence. The philosophers and theologians whose bete [insert ^] noire is the problem of evil have got it wrong. The problem isn't the evil, though there's plenty of that; the problem is the mediocrity. Let God be infinitely benevolent, let him or her be just as unbelievably good as we were told in Sunday School; he or she is trying, but simply screws up every now and then, as we all do (some more than others). The universe reeks of incompetence. Nothing works right. The Big Bang was probably a lab experiment gone wrong. That this is a consequence of evil, not mediocrity, that it stems from a God who both doesn't want it and is able to prevent it--such a scenario paralyzes reason. Mailer's suggestion that Sartre's metaphysics might have had easier sailing had he assumed that "indeed we do have a God who, no matter His or Her cosmic dimensions..., embodies nonetheless some of our faults, our ambitions, our talents and our gloom"--that suggestion if taken seriously could have a salutary effect on a world of mediocrity.

Alan Pasch
College Park, Maryland

out

*Following
the
reading*



From: lmeyers@hunter.cuny.edu
Subject: [LETT] When it comes to his philosophic
Date: May 26, 2005 9:35:58 PM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com

Sender: lmeyers@hunter.cuny.edu
Name: lewis meyers
Postal: 10 W.15th Street (Apt. 1618)
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Teleph: (212) 627-2644
URL: <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20050606&s=mailer>
Browser: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Win 9x 4.90; en-US; rv:1.7.7) Gecko/20050414 Firefox/1.0.3

Gut

Message:

When it comes to his philosophical vaporizings, Norman Mailer is, as he has always been, quite an embarrassment. Between the scatological and the vatic, his amateurishness and egotistical brashness (disguising his ignorance) always appear as something to be merely brushed off, but in this instance his sudden religiosity is so reactionary, that it deserves political condemnation. Sartre should have found God, indeed! It's bad enough that Mailer is merely a self-appointed existentialist, but that he should even imply he's in the same league with Sartre is, you'll pardon the word, absurd. God (!) knows why Liberation solicited his views, but only you know why you saw fit to reprint them.

*Look up
Vatic*

sent by an automailer

From: Fred Johnson <meta.johnson@comcast.net>
Subject: Norman Mailer
Date: June 1, 2005 9:06:06 AM EDT
To: letters@thenation.com

Shane *cut*

It is hard to believe the Nation would publish Mailer's buttock response to two of the most important philosophers our time. This is only slightly worse than the New Yorker having the Rabbit try to deal with Kierkegaard. Mailer is very good and sometimes even funny in using toilet humor to make his points and put down his opponents. But to try to contain Sartre and Heidegger within teenage tee-hee is as dumb as squeezing the Charmin to find soft spots for morons in philosophy.

It is obvious Mailer does not understand: "Existence precedes essence" and, far from having a God problem, Sartre is very sorry God does not exist, for then there are no absolute values, none: there being no God to think them. Furthermore Existence precedes essence means that existence comes first. Man is thrust into existence, and all his ideas of essences are brought into existence by him, including the idea of God. All ideas of God come from existing man, also all ideas of prior and future.

To fault Sartre for not having to get sooner or later into the "God problem" is to be hopeless mired in the view "Essence precedes existence". Mailer writes: "It is, after all, near to impossible for a philosopher to explore how we are here without entertaining some notion of what the prior force might have been."

But for the Existentialist this is merely another idea which man has in his facticity; he and his world are born together. There is no reality for Sartre except his "For itself" in its facticity, its existence now. The "is", in its facticity, the "now", is all there ever is. All notions of was, or will be, are ideas the For itself causes to be pulled down into existence in the world.

Man is thus free, totally free, condemned to be free, and totally responsible for whatever he thinks or does. There is no God to be blamed, or to relieve man from the world we have brought into our facticity by the choices we have all been making together. We are our world. For Mailer to try out a notion of a limited God, struggling along with us betrays his unfortunate need for an introductory course in theology or ontology. Is this a sort of cosmic "big brotherism"?

The world is full of philosophers who understand Sartre and Heidegger well. Could you not have found one to celebrate Sartre on his centenary.

From: MartinWhite@starband.net
Subject: **[LETT] Dear Editor,**
Date: May 25, 2005 5:56:07 AM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com

While reading N

Sender: MartinWhite@starband.net
Name: Martin White
Postal: 78 Fleming Lane
Salem, NY 12865
Teleph: 518-854-9825
URL: <http://www.thenation.com/about/>
Browser: Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows NT 5.1; SV1; StarBand Version 4.0.0.2; .NET CLR 1.1.4322)

cut

Message:

Dear Editor,

While reading Norman Mailer's gasbag ruminations on Sartre and God, it felt like I was transported to the retirees post-prandial late hour at the Martha's Vineyard yacht club soiree. When Mailer states at the end, "Something immense may now be stirring..." was this literally true, that he was about to crap his pants big-time?

sent by an automailer

From: tmmr870@cs.com
Subject: [LETT] Is Norman Mailor In his articl
Date: May 24, 2005 10:56:35 AM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com

Sender: tmmr870@cs.com
Name: Gloria del Vecchio
Postal: 65 East Afton Avenue
Yardley, PA 19067-1433
Teleph: 215-493-4939
URL: <http://www.thenation.com/about/>
Browser: Mozilla/5.0 (Windows; U; Windows NT 5.1; en-US; rv:0.9.4.2) Gecko/20021112 CS 2000 7.0/7.0

Message:

Is Norman Mailor in his article about Jean Paul Sartre jumping on the current religious fad or is he now that his is aging, postulating a God who will forgive him and not send him to Hell? And why does existentialism or any other philosophy have to be "grounded" so it doesn't just float on the Abyss? The Cosmos is entity enough to support all. Mailor talks in tough images yet his ideas come across as very soft, indeed!

sent by an automailer

From: pearlvolkov@tampabay.rr.com
Subject: [LETT] Re: Sartre's God Problem by Norm
Date: May 22, 2005 2:45:37 PM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com

Sender: pearlvolkov@tampabay.rr.com
Name: Pearl Volkov
Postal: 1322 Crystal Greens Drive
Sun City Center, FL 33573-4421
Teleph: 813:633-6664
URL: <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20050606&s=mailer>
Browser: Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows 98; Win 9x 4.90)

Message:

Re: Sartre's God Problem by Norman Mailer

Dear Editors:

I think the title of this article should be "Mr. Mailer's God problem". He is imposing his quasi-religious beliefs on Mr. Sartre's philosophy of life which philosophy makes a great deal of sense to many of us non-believers.

It is obvious that Mr. Mailer is unable to live without the support of a form of supernaturalism however modified and he is certainly entitled to his beliefs. But he exposes his limitations by attacking Mr. Sartre in order to prop up his own nebulous thinking and accuses Sartre of destroying the true purpose of existentialism.

If Sartre were alive to reply he would have good arguments for Mr. Mailer, but let his life's work speak for itself. It is somehow underhanded to attack a brilliant writer who can no longer physically speak and I am sure Mr. Mailer would resent that possibility of posthumous criticism of his own work and beliefs.

I hope you will forward this reply to Mr. Mailer.

Thank you. Sincerely yours, Pearl Volkov

sent by an automailer

I would welcome it on the assumption that they are still reading me and ~~mis~~ misreading me.

✓

From: dascs4@aol.com
Subject: [LETT] It's down on our knees, is it, N
Date: May 21, 2005 4:06:56 PM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com

Sender: dascs4@aol.com
Name: Thomas Disch
Postal: 31 Union Sq W
New York, NY
Teleph: 212 924 5875
URL: <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20050606&s=mailer>
Browser: Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 5.5; AOL 7.0; Windows 95)

Message:

It's down on our knees, is it, Norman? Of course, you've always had the inside line on cleanliness, godliness, and sexiness, and now you have the special authority that comes with senility. But your basic point is well taken. We wasted too much of our youth heeding the dictates of Sartre. When I'm you're age I hope to be able to write much the same dismissal of your inflated reputation. Not, however, on the grounds of atheism. Just windbagery.

18

out

→

sent by an automailer

From: "Ralph Alan Dale" <dpublish@earthlink.net>
Subject: **Letter to the Editor**
Date: May 24, 2005 2:26:17 PM EDT
To: "The Nation" <letters@thenation.com>

15

early

24 May 2005

Letter to the Editor, Katrina vanden Heuvel

North Miami Beach, FL

Norman Mailer's God Problem

Poor Norman Mailer ["Sartre's God Problem", June 6] who is lost and rudderless in his narcissistic semanticisms and agnosticisms. And poor Nation readers, who deserve to celebrate Sartre's centenary with greater insights, higher hopes and better existential road maps to the potentials of the present pregnant moment for self and social actualization of our humanity.

Ralph Alan Dale

~~Author of Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching: A New Translation and Commentary, Barnes & Noble Books, 2004.~~

3805 N.E. 167th Street

N. Miami Beach, FL 33160

Tel: (305) 944-3669

Fax: (305) 945-5329

E-mail: dpublish@earthlink.net

Ralph Alan Dale
dpublish@earthlink.net

From: jm wordcraft <jmwordcraft@yahoo.com>
Subject: Mailer long reply
Date: July 27, 2005 11:46:00 AM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com
1 Attachment, 17.5 KB

Judith,

Here it is below between the underscores. I am also attaching it as a Word file as I can't make it clear in an email that "ad hominen" gets underlined. By the way, my automatic word count comes in at 215 words (exclusive of dateline and signature).

Provincetown, Mass.

The letters by David Niose, Ralph Alan Dale, Thomas Disch, John Bergerstrom, and John J. Fitzgerald read like blogs from Lower Swamp Hollow. They are as ad hominem as mosquitoes. If I were a good Christian, I might say, "Oh, Lord, they, too, are Your creatures and they need a little blood so much. Let them have mine."

In contrast, the letter from Jerusalem by Shalom Freedman was good rabbinic boilerplate. As one Jew to another, I would ask Shalom, "What, then, was the Holocaust? Should we look upon it as our punishment? Has Jehovah come back because we Jews do not walk sufficiently 'in compassion, kindness, and goodness,' or does the Holocaust reinforce my supposition that God is not All-Powerful?"

The last by Katharine W. Rylaarsdam is interesting. Does she suggest at the end that our pollution of the earth was related to the tsunami? In the middle, she is certainly forthright when she states that the earth is independent of us. The thought does suggest a schism within our deity; otherwise, it must posit more than one god for world and earthly affairs. This again, opens the real possibility that the Lord is not All-Good and All-Powerful. Too bad! We seem to have a need to cling like leeches to a theological oxymoron.

Norman Mailer

Please confirm receipt. Many thanks,

From: shalomfn@netvision.net.il
Subject: [LETT] It is wonderful receiving a theo
Date: May 25, 2005 2:50:04 PM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com

LAST ✓

19

Sender: shalomfn@netvision.net.il
Name: Shalom Freedman
Postal: 17 Rabbi Meir St, Jerusalem/Israel
93184
Teleph: 97226784069
URL:
Browser: Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 6.0; Windows 98; .NET CLR 1.1.4322)

Message:

It is wonderful receiving a theology lesson from Norman Mailer. He has recreated God in his image with a slight bit of help from William James' finite moral maker of the universe. However in lambasting the God of religion he forgets to remind the reader of the most important quality of the God of the religious tradition he ostensibly comes from. The God of Judaism not only demands Mankind's participation in shaping the world- God demands Mankind's walking in the way of God in compassion, kindness and goodness. This is not a particularly Mailerian theme, but what to do it is the heart of the traditional Jewish vision of the world and provides the guideline to all the ideal and visionary transformative movements which would bring Mankind to greater justice and well- being.

From: fitzgera@comcast.net
Subject: [LETT] Norman Mailer's pathetic attempt
Date: July 20, 2005 1:10:16 PM EDT
To: jlong@thenation.com

Sender: fitzgera@comcast.net
Name: John J. Fitzgerald
Postal: 95 Cedar Road
Longmeadow, MA 01106
Telephone: 413 567 - 6315
URL: <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20050606&s=mailer>
Browser: Mozilla/4.0 (compatible; MSIE 5.23; Mac_PowerPC)

Message:

Norman Mailer's pathetic attempt at analysis

~~The recent decision of a once prestigious magazine, "The Nation" (6 June 2005) to run a commentary by Norman Mailer on the centenary of the birth of Jean-Paul Sartre is a classic example of an "arbitrary and capricious" choice. Norman Bates of the movie Psycho would have provided better commentary. Given the choice between a flatulent writer of fiction and a fictional character. I'll go with the man of character! What Norman Mailer lacks in his understanding of philosophy is only exceeded by what he lacks in his understanding of the field of writing, astronomy, political theory, and common sense. He is a man full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. His tales are those of an idiot. He is an idiot! The last book the man wrote that made any sense was his autobiographical novel, "The Naked and the Dead." This was also his first book and the principal source of whatever claim to fame and celebrity he has enjoyed. Just about everything else he wrote serves as evidence that a monkey hitting random keys on a typewriter could have done better. Consider his 1960's era work, the ego-maniacal, "Advertisements for Myself" and you will begin to understand why people began to worry about the impact the pulp paper industry was starting to have on the life of healthy forests and trees in the 1960's. (Was it worthwhile to chop down a tree and turn it into paper so that Norman Mailer could use it as a form of toilet paper?) Norman Mailer was in no small way the father of the environmental movement! Norman Mailer never met Rachel Carson and for that she must have been grateful. Mailer offers a passing comment on the "... first instant of the Big Bang." Sartre~~

fame

then Norman Mailer

stet

Earl Early

⑦

Poor Norman Mailer, he is lost and rudderless in his

narcissistic semanticisms and agnosticisms

Q

Program

of living

For Mailer to try out a notion of a limited God, struggling
along with us betrays his unfortunate need for an
introductory course in theology or ~~ontology~~.

Strong words

(3)

When it comes to his philosophical vaporizings, Norman Mailer is as he has always been, quite an embarrassment. ~~Between the scatological and the vatic,~~ his amateurishness and egotistical brashness (~~disguising his ignorance~~) always appear as something to be merely brushed off, but in this instance his sudden religiosity is so reactionary, that it deserves political condemnation. Sartre should have found God, ~~indeed!~~ It's bad enough that Mailer is merely a self-appointed existentialist, but that he should even imply he's in the same league with Sartre is, you'll pardon the word, absurd. God ~~knows~~ why Liberation solicited his views, but only you know why you saw fit to reprint them.

late

18

~~It's down on our knees, is it, Norman? Of course,~~ you've
always had the inside line on cleanliness, godliness, and
sexiness, and now you have the special authority that
comes with senility. When I'm your age I hope to be able
to write much the same dismissal of your inflated
reputation. Not, however, on the grounds of atheism. Just
windbaggery.

Lack 5

What Norman Mailer lacks in his understanding of philosophy, is exceeded only by what he lacks in his understanding of the ^{field} ~~field~~ of writing, astronomy, political theory and common sense. He is a man full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. His tales are those of an idiot. He is an idiot. The last book the man wrote that made any sense was his autobiographical novel the Naked and the Dead. Just about everything else he wrote serves as evidence that a monkey hitting random keys on a typewriter could have done better.

late

6

While reading Norman Mailer's gasbag ruminations on Sartre and God, it felt like I was transported to the retiree's post-prandial late hour at the Martha's Vineyard yacht club soiree. When Mailer states at the end, "Something immense may now be stirring..." was this literally true, that he was about to crap his pants big-time?

late - late

7

The letters read like blogs from Lower Swamp Hollow.

They are as ad hominem as mosquitoes. If I were a good Christian, I might say, "Oh, Lord, they, too, are Your creatures and they need a little blood so much. Let them have mine."

let me conclude, however with a

~~In contrast, the letter from Jerusalem by Shalom~~
~~letter that reads like at least like~~
~~Freedman was good rabbinic boilerplate. As one Jew to~~

Separate
Pg

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9

Holocaust? Should we look upon it as our punishment?

Separate
Pg

Has Jehovah come back because we Jews do not walk

sufficiently 'in compassion, kindness, and goodness,' or
does the Holocaust reinforce my
supposition that God is not All-Powerful?
If I cannot have faith in both
qualities, let God at least be
compassionate even if not All-Powerful.

~~Frederick~~ (B)

It is wonderful receiving a theology lesson from Norman Mailer. He has recreated God in his image ~~with a slight bit~~ of help from William James' finite ~~more~~ maker of the universe. However, in lambasting the God of religion he forgets to remind the reader of the most important quality of the God of the religious tradition he ostensibly comes from. The God of Judaism not only demands Mankind's participation in shaping the world—God demands Mankind's walking in the way of God in compassion, kindness and goodness. This is not a particularly Mailerean theme, but is the heart of the traditional Jewish vision of the world and provides the guideline to all the ideal and visionary transformative movements which would bring Mankind to greater justice and well-being

1 | would say that Sartre, despite his incontestable strengths of mind, talent and character, is still the man who derailed existentialism, ~~sent it right off the track.~~

~~But then~~ Sartre, ~~was~~ comfortable as an ~~atheist~~ ^{atheist}, even if he had no fundament on which to plant his philosophical feet. ~~To hell with that,~~ he didn't need it. ~~He was~~

~~ready to survive in mid-air.~~ We are French,
he was ready to say. We have minds, we can
live with the absurd and ask for no reward.
That is because we are noble enough to
live with emptiness, and strong enough to
choose a course which we are even ready
to die for. And we will do this in whole
defiance of the fact that, indeed, we have
no footing. We do not look to a Hereafter.

It was an attitude; it was a proud stance;
it was equal to living with one's mind in ~~mind~~
formless space, but it deprived existential-
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atheism is a cropless undertaking when
it comes to philosophy. (~~We need only~~
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sion most brilliantly), but when it comes to
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losopher to explore how we are here without

~~the~~ entertaining some notion of what the prior force might have been. Cosmic speculation is asphyxiated if existence came into being ~~ex nihilo. In Sartre's case~~ worse. Existence came into being without a clue to suggest whether we are here for good purpose, or there is no reason whatsoever for us.

All the same, Sartre's philosophical talents were damnably virtuoso. He was able to function with precision in the upper echelons of every logical structure he set up. If only he had not been an existentialist! For an existentialist who does not believe in ~~some kind of Other~~ is equal to an engineer who designs an automobile that requires no driver and accepts no passengers. If existentialism is to ~~flourish~~ (that is, develop ~~through a series of~~ new philosophers building on earlier premises), it needs a God who is no more confident of the end than we are; a God who is an artist, not a law-giver; a God who suffers the uncertainties of ~~existence~~; a God who lives without

any kind of God,

~~Original~~

a Creator

an artist,

any of the pre-arranged guarantees that sit like an incubus upon formal theology with its ~~(tautologous)~~ self-serving assumption of a Being who is All-Good and All-Powerful. What a gargantuan oxymoron—All-Good and All-Powerful. It is certain to maroon any and all formal theologians who would like to explain an earthquake. Before the wrath of a tsunami, they can only break ~~wine~~. The notion of an existential God, a Creator who may have been doing His or Her artistic best, but could still have been remiss in designing the tectonic plates, is not within their scope.

Sartre was alien to the possibility that existentialism might thrive if it would just assume that indeed we do have a God who, no matter His or Her cosmic dimensions, (whether larger or smaller than we assume), embodies nonetheless some of our faults, our ambitions, our talents and our gloom.

4

Kind —
God's
ways
are
unknown
they
will
beat,

For the end is not written. If it is, there is
no place for existentialism. Base our beliefs,
however, on the fact of our existence, and
it takes no great step for us to assume that
we are not only individuals but may well be
a vital part of a larger phenomenon that
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can argue, why this assumption is not nearer
to the real being of our lives than anything
the oxymoronic theologians would offer us.
It is certainly more reasonable than Sartre's
ongoing assumption ~~despite his passion-~~
~~ate desire for a better society~~ that we are
here willy-nilly and must manage to do
the best we can with endemic nothingness
installed upon eternal floorlessness. Sartre
was indeed a writer of major dimension,

*this desire for a better
society was passionate -*

Conclusion

5

5 but he was also a philosophical executioner. He guillotined existentialism just when we needed most to hear its howl, its barbaric yawp that there is something in common between God and all of us. We, like God, are imperfect artists doing the best we can. We may succeed or fail—God as well as us. That is the implicit if undeveloped air of existentialism. We would do well to live again with the Greeks, live again with the expectation that the end remains open but human tragedy may well be our end.

Great hope has no real footing unless one is willing to face into the doom that may also be on the way. Those are the poles of our existence—as they have been from the first instant of the Big Bang. Something immense may now be stirring, but to meet it we will do better to expect that life will not provide the answers we need so much as it will offer the privilege of improving our questions. It is not moral absolutism but theological relativism we would do well to explore if our real need is for a God with whom we can engage our lives. ■

6

would say that Sartre, despite his incontestable strengths of mind, talent and character, is still the man who derailed existentialism, sent it right off the track.

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~~4~~ entertaining some notion of what the prior force might have been. Cosmic speculation is asphyxiated if existence came into being ~~ex nihilo. In Sartre's case — worse. Existence came into being~~ without a clue to suggest whether we are here for good purpose, or there is no reason whatsoever for us.

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6 but he was also a philosophical executioner. He guillotined existentialism just when we needed most to hear its howl, its barbaric yawp that there is something in common between God and all of us. We, like God, are imperfect artists doing the best we can. We may succeed or fail—God as well as us. That is the implicit if undeveloped air of existentialism. We would do well to live again with the Greeks, live again with the expectation that the end remains open but human tragedy may well be our end.

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Late 10

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"To the contrary, I

**I would welcome it on the assumption that they are still reading me and misreading me."*

Early

Is Norman Mailer postulating a God who will forgive him
and not send him to Hell? Mailer talks in tough images yet
his ideas come across as very soft, indeed!

Qa

does the Holocaust reinforce my supposition that God is
not All-Powerful?"

cut

Mailer's suggestion that Sartre's metaphysics might have had easier sailing had he assumed that "indeed we do have a God who, no matter His or Her cosmic dimensions...embodies nonetheless some of our faults, our ambitions, our talents and our gloom—" that suggestion, if taken seriously could have a salutary effect on a world of mediocrity.

TV ADVERTISING

Until 1984 the National Association of Broadcasters had a code that called for no more than 9 1/2 minutes of "nonprogram" material (advertising, promotional spots and public service announcements) per hour.

Prime Time:

In the 3rd quarter of 2003, the four major networks aired a record-high average of 52 minutes of nonprogram material in prime time (8 to 11pm). This is up 8% from 2000 and 36% from 1991.

13 min average

The average commercial break in prime time is more than 3 minutes long, up 41% from five years ago.

(survey by PhaseOne Communications)

Overall:

In 2003, three of the four major networks broadcast more than 15 minutes of nonprogram material per hour. (survey by MindShare)

ABC aired 15 minutes, 31 seconds per hour (up 2% from 2002)

Fox aired 15 minutes 13 seconds (up 3% from 2002)

NBC aired 15 minutes 7 seconds (up 2% from 2002)

CBS aired 14 minutes 18 seconds (up 1% from 2002)

In the 4th quarter of 2003, ABC had 7.11 messages per break; CBS had 6.32, NBC had 6.24, Fox had 6.03.

The average number of paid commercials per break was 5.5.

Sign of the times?(Slants & Trends)(Brief Article)

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SIGN OF THE TIMES?--In unwelcome news for the literacy community, a much-ballyhooed new report this month decried the falling levels of literary reading among American adults. According to a National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) survey released July 8, fewer than half of adults spend any time reading literature.

The decline has been particularly acute in the past two decades, with a drop of 10 percentage points in literary readers from 1982 to 2002. That represents an astonishing loss of 20 million potential readers, the NEA said. As if that is not bad enough, the endowment said the rate of decline is increasing, having almost tripled just in the past decade.

"This report documents a national crisis," said NEA Chairman Dana Gioia. "The decline in reading among every segment of the adult population reflects a general collapse in advanced literacy. To lose this human capacity--and all the diverse benefits it fosters--impoverishes both cultural and civic life."

A few facts from the report:

* Women read more literature than men do. Just slightly more than a third of adult males read literature today.

* Literary reading declined across ethnic and racial groups, with drops seen among whites, African Americans and Hispanics. The decline, however, was most pronounced among Hispanics, among whom literary reading fell by 10 percentage points.

* Literary reading fell among all age groups studied, but the rate of decline was steepest for the youngest groups measured. For adults aged 18 to 24, the drop was 55 percent greater than for all adults.

Not a surprise, but the survey found the less people read, the more television they watch. Adults who typically stay away from the tube are 48 percent more likely to read frequently than are those who watch television one to three hours a day. Find Reading at Risk at www.nea.gov.

MediaWorks

Edited by
Ann Marie Kerwin

June 7, 2004 | Advertising Age | 53

THE BIZ

Which nets are kings of clutter?

By CLAIRE ATKINSON

MARKETERS WORRY endlessly about producing campaigns that break through the clutter of TV ads. Now a newly released study examines just which broadcast and cable networks have the most crowded commercial breaks, and which have the least.

The study, from strategic media auditor Media IQ, New York, notes which networks are cutting back on clutter, and reveals which are giving up prime positions to advertisers and which are keeping the best slots to promote their own shows.

Among broadcast networks, Walt Disney Co.'s ABC had the most clutter, broadcasting 7.11 messages a break, closely followed by UPN with 6.52, CBS with 6.32, NBC with 6.24, WB with 6.15 and Fox with 6.03.

The study—which compares clutter on all networks during the final quarter of 2002 with the same period in 2003—showed ABC also handed over the most number of “A” positions (the first spot in a break) to advertisers. ABC ranked No. 1 in 2002 and 2003 for least amount of A positions taken for its own promotions (0.2% in the fourth quarter of 2002; 0.7% in the fourth quarter of 2003). Time Warner's WB took the most prime positions for itself (27.9% in the fourth quarter of 2003). Both A and “L” (the last spot in a pod) positions are sought after by advertisers since viewers tend to recall those ads more.

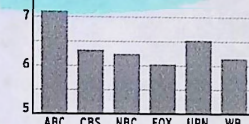
“The study is aimed at helping advertisers rebalance the playing field, against the seller. The networks have had the upper hand,” says Mike Lotito, CEO, Media IQ. The amount of clutter, he said, can be as important as the cost-per-thousand rates agencies negotiate.

The average number of paid commercials messages per commercial break, or pod, was up slightly in 2003 to 5.5, compared with 5.4 in '02, according

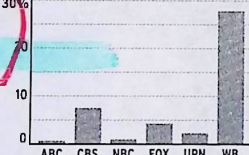
CLUTTER

How commercial breaks measure up among broadcast and cable nets

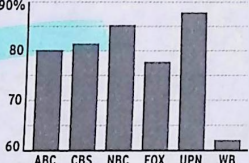
MESSAGES PER COMMERCIAL BREAK (INCLUDES NETWORK PROMOS)



% “A” POSITIONS TAKEN BY NETWORK



% “L” POSITIONS TAKEN BY NETWORK



Notes: “A” positions are the first spot in a commercial break. “L” positions refer to the last spot. Source: Media IQ

to Media IQ research. That change in average number of units per pod is equal to somewhere around an added 15,000 commercials to inventory in 2003 prime time over 2002 prime time across 43 cable networks and seven broadcast networks. Lotito says. The average number of messages per break, which includes network promos and public service announcements as well

as paid ads, was seven.

One major financial advertiser said, “It was very enlightening to see how the networks compare to each other in commercial load and how they treat the positioning of our spots. We can see things we suspected are true.” This executive said shorter pods are always better and the clutter problem was more of an issue on cable networks than on broadcast. “The [broadcast] networks have been taking care of us. The cable networks don’t even monitor it. Now I have some data to take to them.”

MOVING IT AROUND

The executive now will consider spending a greater proportion of money with the cable networks that give up the prized A and L positions. “I’ll still buy 20 networks, but I can shift my money around.” The battle internally at the TV networks, this executive says, is always between the programmers who want to promote their own shows in the A positions and the ad-sales teams who want to look after their customers.

According to the study, Discovery Channel has worked the hardest to reduce clutter. During the fourth quarter of 2003, Discovery Channel broadcast 4.36 messages per break compared with eight in the same period in 2002.

The Weather Channel ran the least number of messages, 3.61 per break, compared with 5.15 in 2002. CNN Headline News ran 4.06 messages per break, up from 3.62 in fourth quarter of 2002. Discovery Channel ranked third with 4.36 messages, compared with 8.14 in fourth quarter of 2002.

Since news channels generally run a greater number of breaks, with fewer messages than entertainment channels, “The question is, is that a better environment?” Lotito asks.

Generally media buyers can only negotiate positioning in breaks during events such as the Super Bowl, but Lotito said some get more A positions than others. According to his data, General Electric Co. ran 126 spots during NBC’s “Meet the Press” in 2003, a highly sought after show among advertisers. He says 37% of those were A positions—GE, of course, owns NBC. Xerox meanwhile bought 51 spots on NBC, gaining just one A position. ■

The Buzz

WHAT WE’RE TALKING ABOUT

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A MARKETER to be front and center in a reality show, and yet not be too in your face? Brian Woods, CEO of United Online’s NetZero Highspeed, thinks the relationship between his brand and NBC’s upcoming “Next Action Star,” walks that fine line, even though NetZero is woven into the content of every show and its “Die Hard”-esque promotional campaign.

“It’s such a soft sell,” Woods says. No stranger to product integration, NetZero stars in every episode of NBC’s “Fear Factor,” and appeared in the now defunct “Dog Eat Dog.” The marketer helped foot the bill for “Next Action Star,” making its debuts this week, with Joel Silver’s Silver Pictures Television, GRB Entertainment and NBC Productions.

The 14 wanna-be action heroes, who compete for a movie role, will drive the NetZero Nascar and compete in “NetZero Highspeed Challenges,” a reflection of the brand’s ad tagline. For the promo spot, airing on NBC, ESPN, TNT, USA and other nets, a Bruce Willis-like character crashes through a window to save a hostage. Because he can’t get details via a computer on how to diffuse a ticking bomb in the room—obviously he doesn’t have NetZero—the bomb explodes. Next Action Star!

The promotion is part of “the A-to-Z integration,” that NBC is striving for, said Barbara Biagiardi, VP-marketing at The NBC Agency, its in-house marketing unit. “We want to take co-branding from the show to the marketing.”

—T.L. STANLEY



NICKIN’: The next action hero?

HEAT INDEX

WEEKLY RATING (0-10) OF SIZZLE & FIZZLE

9 MEMORIAL DAY MOVIES “The Day After Tomorrow” opened, nabbing \$86 million. “Shrek 2” in its second weekend, took in \$92.2 million. The two sold the most tickets ever for the official kickoff to blockbuster season.

5 WEINSTEIN’S Harvey and Bob reportedly in talks with Rupert Murdoch’s 20th Century Fox for a Miramax partnership in case they finally make the move to break off with Disney.

7 DAN RATHER CBS anchor nabs Bill Clinton for first interview on the publication of his book, “My Life,” to air on “60 Minutes.” Will we hear about the vast right-wing conspiracy?

2 HOWARD STERN with his protector Mel bowing out of Viacom, Howard is feeling orphaned, declares this latest blow “the final nail in my coffin.”

Sony Pictures Television Presents

An Original Line-Up of First-Run Programming!

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JUDGE
HATCHETT



NEW
LIFE & STYLE



NEW
PAT CROCE
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“Her Brand of Justice Matters...”

“Bringing a fresh, young and hip attitude to daytime.”

“He Inspires. He Motivates. And He’s Moving In!”

TV BUYER

Crucial

EBB & FLOW

Little Left for
Syndie Scatter

Syndicated TV's fourth-quarter scatter market is likely to end flat at best, which isn't terrible given the softness of the scatter market overall. "You can get some sweet deals," says Andrew Ladas, supervisor, national broadcast, Carol.

Overall, says Hadassa Gerber, director of research, Syndicated Network TV Association, syndication revenue for

Revenue Jan. Sept.

+16.4%

Jan.-Sept. is up 16.4% for 2003, according to CMR data, but fourth-quarter revenue will be flat to negative.

First quarter '04 looks equally quiet. "I see it as flat overall, with only mid-tier or upper-tier shows getting increases," Ladas says. "There's no scatter money, and I know we took options. That's probably a sign clients are cutting budgets."

Says Aaron Cohen, EVP/director of national broadcast, Horizon Media, "There'll be some money, but it will trickle in." Horizon isn't buying any scatter either.

Nor is another major buyer, speaking off the record: "We've done little scatter in January and none in syndication. Clients just didn't plan for it, largely because we bought a hell of a lot more syndication in the upfront."

Suit, Twentieth Television met its fourth-quarter budgets, says EVP, barter advertising and cable, Bob Cesa. "First quarter is slower than it's been in the past," he adds, "but it actually started to pick up this week."

Same goes for another major syndicator: "Last week, I thought we'd end up really slow. But, over the last few days, there's been a dramatic increase in budgets submitted—in many cases, for first quarter and, in some cases, for multiple quarters. There's increased optimism."

—Joan Bergantini Grillo

NEXT:

Radio

Ad Clutter Keeps Climbing

Prime time on broadcast nets has seen a 36% increase in a decade

By STEVE MCCLELLAN

If you're wondering why channel surfing is a way of life for TV watchers today and TiVo is such a big issue in the industry, consider this: Almost one full hour out of the three hours of prime time TV on the broadcast networks is composed of commercials, on-air program promos and public-service announcements.

That's according to a new study of commercial "clutter" on the networks, which reveals that viewers are now exposed to an average 52 minutes of non-program content a night on each of the four major broadcast networks. That's about 17 minutes worth of clutter time per network per hour.

And, according to the study by Los Angeles-based media research firm PhaseOne Communications, there is more of it—clutter, that is—than ever. The firm reports 8% growth in broadcast prime time clutter compared with 2000. Over the past decade, clutter has grown an astounding 36% in network prime time, PhaseOne reports.

"Breaking through the clutter and getting a television ad noticed today is harder than ever," says Terry Villines, director of analysis for PhaseOne. "Advertisers need to be increasingly creative to deliver the same results that television advertising has offered in the past."

The fact of the matter is, though, clutter is a "doubled edged sword," as Susan Nathan, a senior vice president at Universal McCann, puts it. "It's a reflection of demand by advertisers to be on the air in the marketplace, so, in a way, it's a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy."

The most effective solution to clutter, observers say, is for advertisers to buy fewer spots. But given the continuing strong demand for TV time, such a move would defeat the purpose for buyers and sellers alike.

The alternative is to come up with better ways to showcase products and advertisers. "I think everybody is kind of knocking themselves over trying to do that," says Nathan.

Product placement, cross-platform marketing, and sponsored programming are some of the techniques advertisers are exploring as part of the effort to stand out from the pack.

Universal McCann is working on its own clutter study, analyzing monthly dayparts for both broadcast and cable nets in the fourth quarter. The study is due next month.

The average commercial break in prime time is now just over three minutes long, up 41% from five years ago, according to the PhaseOne study, which was done in-house and

monitored each night of network prime time programming during the third quarter. The company issued some of its findings last week but also plans to issue a full report next month.

Among the four networks, ABC showed the most prime time clutter in the PhaseOne study, with an average 54.6 minutes of commercial, PSA and promo time per night.

That's up 8% from the network's clutter tally in 2000. CBS had the least amount of non-program time in the daypart: an average 50.8 minutes, up 7%. NBC posted 52.8 minutes of clutter nightly, up 2%. Fox averaged 51.6 minutes per night and showed the biggest percentage increase over 2000: 16%.

The results of the PhaseOne study show significantly more prime time network clutter than was revealed in recent studies by Court TV and OMD. Court TV found about 13 minutes of clutter per hour (39 minutes per night) for the Big Four for the 2002-03 broadcast year.

The OMD study showed just over 15 minutes of clutter per hour (45 minutes per night) for the 2002-03 prime time season. Researchers say methodological differences probably account for the differing results, although, directionally, the studies show the same trend: Broadcast clutter continues to rise.

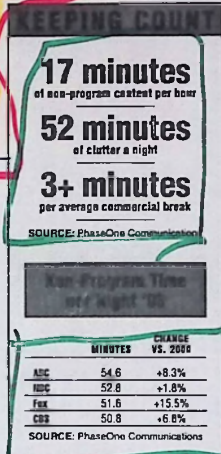
The PhaseOne study also showed about 6% more clutter than was revealed in prime time by a study jointly sponsored by the American Association of Advertising Agencies and the Association of National Advertisers for 2001.

The Court TV study was based on Nielsen Monitor-Plus data and took a representative week from each of the past four quarters, measuring prime time clutter for 30 cable networks and the Big Four broadcast nets.

American Movie Classics showed the least clutter among the cable nets, averaging just less than 10 minutes per hour; until a couple of years ago, though, it was commercial-free. Court TV was in the top quarter of networks showing less clutter, averaging just under 14 minutes per hour in prime time.

Among the most cluttered cable networks were MTV (just under 17 minutes per hour) and Food Network (just over 16). The TV Guide Channel was the most cluttered, with more than 19 minutes per hour.

Court TV Senior Vice President, Sales Strategy, Debbie Reichig says clutter tends to diminish the effectiveness of TV as an advertising environment. "There is a correlation between clutter and switching channels." Indeed, studies show the more clutter the viewer is exposed to, the more channel surfing he or she engages in, Reichig says. ■



'Advertisers need to be increasingly creative to deliver the same results that television advertising has offered in the past.'

TERRY VILLINES,
PhaseOne Communications

April 12, 2004

TelevisionWeek Clutter on Broadcast Rises; Three of Big 4 Nets Surpass 15 Minutes Per Hour of Nonprogram Material. (I

Clutter on Broadcast Rises; Three of Big 4 Nets Surpass 15 Minutes Per Hour of Nonprogram Material. (News)

by Jon Lafayette

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Byline: Jon Lafayette

The broadcast airwaves were even more cluttered last year, much to the consternation of a leading ad buying agency.

A new survey by MindShare found that for the first time, three of the Big 4 networks broadcast more than 15 minutes of what's called "nonprogram" material per hour during prime time in 2003. That is up from one network, ABC, that was over 15 minutes in 2002. Nonprogram material includes commercials, public service announcements and promos. It does not include the end credits on shows.

According to the survey, ABC was once again the most cluttered network, with 15 minutes and 31 seconds of nonprogram material per hour, up 2 percent from 2002. Fox broke the 15-minute barrier for the first time with 15:13 in nonprogram material, up 3 percent from the previous year. NBC was up 2 percent overall to 15:07. CBS was the least cluttered at 14:18, up 1 percent.

An increase of 3 percent might not seem like much, but "1 [percent] or 2 percent a year since 1984 is really a lot," said Debbie Solomon, senior partner and group research director at MindShare in Chicago. She noted that until 1984, the National Association of Broadcasters had a code that called for no more than 9 1/2 minutes of nonprogram material per hour.

Advertisers are alarmed about clutter because it makes viewers tune out both shows and commercials.

"Clutter is the only area in which every single study agrees," Ms. Solomon said. "Clutter is a bad thing. As an advertiser I don't want to do something that hurts my commercial impact."

Too much clutter causes viewers to confuse which message came from which advertisers, or to forget the messages entirely, she said.

She added that clutter impacts how people relate to the programming they watch. "If there are too many commercials, it makes it harder for viewers to find the shows they're watching if they flip the channel," she said.

Ms. Solomon said advertisers recognize that broadcasters

need to make money by selling more commercials. Nevertheless, she said, "We are concerned about the continuing deterioration of the TV environment caused by the increasing number of distracting elements present in prime time. More restraint would be most welcome."

The broadcast networks declined to comment on MindShare's clutter study.

According to the report, CBS logged the biggest increase in the amount of network commercial time, up 3 percent to 9 minutes and 19 seconds per hour. And while NBC's total nonprogram minutes rose, its network commercial minutes and total commercial minutes (including local breaks) went down.

During the fourth quarter, the most cluttered shows included "The Bachelor," with 18:08 of nonprogram materials, "My Wife and Kids" at 17:40, "Everybody Loves Raymond" at 16:15, "Friends" at 16:06 and "Survivor: Pearl Islands" at 16:05.

Ms. Solomon noted in her report that other forms of clutter are also "creeping onto the TV screen." In addition to network bugs in the corner of the screen, some channels are running animated promotions for upcoming shows during programming, digital text appears especially during news shows, and pop-up ads are appearing on Fox, MTV and other cable channels.

The study, which is based on data from TNS Media Intelligence/CMR, showed that several cable networks had lower amounts of clutter in prime time.

Among the 10 major cable networks listed in the MindShare study, only MTV exceeded 15 minutes per hour in prime time. At 15:36, it also topped ABC, the most cluttered broadcast network.

Clutter increased by 11 percent on Lifetime to 14:25 and by 7 percent on MSNBC. Clutter declined by 8 percent on Discovery to 12:28. ESPN racked up only 11:48 of clutter.

"Some of the cable network are promoting their less cluttered status," Ms. Solomon said.

One way of reducing ad clutter is by creating special sponsorship packages. In her report, Ms. Solomon noted that Ford sponsored the premiere of Fox's "24," and that episode ran commercial-free.

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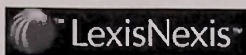
GALE GROUP

Information Integrity

split attention
watch TV while you read

Clutter on Broadcast Rises; Three of Big 4 Nets Surpass 15 Minutes Per Hour of Nonprogram Material.(News)

"More of the cable networks are offering that kind of thing," she said, pointing out Hallmark, which is trying to position itself as a network that makes advertiser-friendly sponsorship deals. "You can try to negotiate for a less cluttered environment," she said. "You can make it known to the networks what is acceptable and what's not acceptable."



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The New York Sun

December 16, 2003 Tuesday

SECTION: BUSINESS; Pg. 13

LENGTH: 718 words

HEADLINE: Prime-Time Lineup Heavy on Commercials

BYLINE: By KEN MAGILL Staff Reporter of the Sun

BODY:

A record level of advertising flooded prime-time television during the third quarter of 2003, according to a study released yesterday. The news comes as analysts increasingly question television advertising's ability to respond to the threat of personal video recorders, such as TiVo.

The four major networks aired a record-high average of 52 minutes of commercials in their programming from 8 to 11 p.m. during the third quarter of 2003, according to PhaseOne Communications Inc. This is up 8% from 2000 and 36% from 1991, the Los Angeles-based research and consulting firm reported. *17 minutes in 60*

Although ABC, CBS, FOX, and NBC are using fewer commercial breaks during prime time, the average length of each break is a record three minutes and five seconds, up 41% from five years ago. *+ clutter*

"Television viewers are inundated with promotional messages during prime time," said director of analysis for PhaseOne, Terry Villines.

The short-term prospects for television advertising look good with plenty of political and Olympics ads on the horizon in 2004, along with the cyclical ad rebound seemingly currently underway. But by 2007 nearly one-fifth of American homes will be able to fast-forward through television commercials, according to broadcast and entertainment strategies analyst for research firm Yankee Group of Boston, Adi Kishore.

Personal video recorders, also called digital video recorders, are like VCRs but offer more features such as the ability to pause live programming and effortlessly skip commercials.

Contrary to the incorrect predictions that most people would skip commercials with their VCRs, viewers with personal video recorders reportedly really do skip at least 60% of commercials.

Mr. Kishore issued a report recently predicting that the television ad industry will lose \$5.5 billion in revenue by 2006, when more than 19 million American homes will own personal video recorders.

Moreover, SG Cowen analyst James Marsh in November lowered the ratings of four broadcast-related companies he tracks - Hearst-Argyle, Gannett, Tribune, and Univision - to "market perform" from "market outperform" as a result of the personal video recorder threat.

PhaseOne's prime-time ad study further indicates that broadcast-related companies are unprepared for new video devices, Mr. Marsh told The New York Sun.

"These guys [broadcasters] want to keep their growth rates moving in what they perceive to be the right direction. They're losing viewers [to cable and the Internet]. Now people are skipping ads, and their competitive response is to add more commercials," he said. "Encouraging people to invest in a device that will help them skip through the clutter is not what they should be doing right now."

Mr. Marsh said, however, that he is "somewhat perplexed" as to how broadcasters should combat the threat of personal video recorders.

He predicts that as the American household penetration of the video recorders will reach 11% by 2005, and 15% by year-end 2006, the devices will increase audience fragmentation because they encourage recording shows that viewers otherwise would not be able to watch. They will also diminish the importance of prime time and, as a result, the traditional programming tactic of herding viewers from one program to the next, Mr. Marsh said.

Moreover, ad skipping will adversely affect broadcasters' ability to promote their own shows, forcing them to spend more cash on other ad outlets, rather than simply using their own unsold time.

The result will be a "struggle to bring fixed costs in line with slowing revenue growth while contending with higher promotion and programming costs," Mr. Marsh said in his report.

"Sponsorships and product placements cannot possibly offset the loss in spot ad revenues," the report said. "Those broadcasters that do not own the bulk of the programming they air (namely affiliate groups) will be most at risk during

this transition period."

Meanwhile, according to the PhaseOne study, ABC aired the highest average number of primetime spots and promotion time: 152 and 54.6 minutes, respectively. FOX aired the fewest spots, an average of 130. But CBS had the lowest amount of promotion time, averaging 50.8 minutes. NBC had the fewest breaks, but the longest break times, averaging 3.6 minutes.

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Online Article

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Costs and Benefits

The promise of providing all children with a high-quality education is a noble one. But after looking at the projected costs for 10 states to fulfill the requirements of NCLB, Mr. Mathis fears that the federal government is asking too much and giving too little.

By William J. Mathis

IT IS THE cruelest illusion to promise far more than we will ever deliver. Yet throughout time reformers of all persuasions have offered Utopian visions in exchange for permission to shape the world to their view. With great fanfare about historic turning points and fervent promises to America's children, in January 2002 President Bush signed into law the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

The rhetoric was certainly noble, and the law was sold with the guarantee that, at last, we would leave no student behind. The poor would have the same as the rich, and the strong arm of a resolute government would make it so. Public support for equality, periodic testing, highly qualified teachers, and other provisions of the law was strong. As shown by the 87-10 Senate vote, the law passed with substantial bipartisan support.

President Bush and Secretary of Education Rod Paige have said much about the great investments the federal government has made in education. And in strident tones, the material accompanying the passage of the law says that the public has a right to demand great returns on this investment.²

Alas, the promises are far greater than the reality. When the "historic" federal investments in education are scrutinized, the first-year increases to Title I compensatory funds amount to a mere 0.4% of total education spending. When the much-touted "flexibility" procedures that NCLB gives to local districts are examined, they allow, at best, a local district to shift around about 4.3% of its already-committed money.³ When the so-called adequate yearly progress provisions of the law are examined, independent reviewers, almost without exception, say the plans are unrealistic.⁴ Submerged beneath emotional appeals and rhetorical demands, hard questions about costs, the adequacy of resources, and the strength of commitments lie hidden.

The Nation's Financial Commitment

Throughout the last century, critics loudly proclaimed the nation's peril owing to the alleged poor condition of the schools. Yet results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show that at the end of the century scores in reading and mathematics had leveled off at a 30-year high, dropouts were near all-time lows, and our nation's economic supremacy was unquestioned.⁵ This is hardly a picture of a "failed" system. But these facts hide the nation's true educational problems.

Much has been made of the "merely average" test scores of U.S. students in comparison with those from other countries. To be sure, U.S. scores on international examinations — such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) — are at international averages in reading, math, and science.⁶ However, it is just as clear that the U.S. investment in K-12 education is also less than stellar. We spend the same average amount of our gross domestic product on elementary schools as other developed countries, but we fall to the bottom half in our commitment to high schools.⁷

The greater and more insidious danger, however, is the disparity in achievement within the United States. International test data tell us that we have the greatest inequities between our highest- and lowest-scoring students of any nation.⁸ In a UNICEF follow-up study, the gap between our average scorers and our low scorers gives the U.S. an abysmal ranking of 1st out of 24 industrialized nations in educational equality.⁹ While we are getting more productivity than we pay for, the troubling disparities in achievement reflect our disparities in funding.

NCLB Costs: What We Spend Versus What We Need

In 1989 the Kentucky Supreme Court ruled that the state constitution requires the state to provide schools and students with the resources necessary to meet high state standards. Since that time, state courts in New Hampshire, Tennessee, Arkansas, Ohio, North Carolina, and New Jersey have issued similar rulings on behalf of children. In addition to court actions, the vast majority of states have enacted standards-based reforms. NCLB adopts these state standards and imposes progressively harsher penalties on schools if students do not get passing scores.

Thus figuring out how much NCLB will cost requires knowing how much it will take to ensure that all students meet the standards and pass the tests. But how do we know how much money is enough? Different methods have been used to estimate what is an adequate amount of money.

The "professional judgment" method uses panels of experts to carefully define the resources needed for each child to meet the standards. These resources are then added up to arrive at a state figure. The "successful school" technique identifies a set of high-achieving schools, examines their resource allocations and spending levels, and generalizes to other schools. The "statistical analysis" approach calculates what it takes to predict a passing score. These models are particularly useful in determining regional costs, such as what it would take to attract qualified teachers to a remote location.

Within the last four years, a new generation of finance studies has estimated the costs of raising all children's test scores up to a particular state's standard. While some of these studies expressly include NCLB costs, most have been based on achieving the state's own standards -- which have since been folded into each state's NCLB system. Since each state determines its own standards, has its own social and political culture, and has its own level of student needs, a great variety of outcomes exists.

Nevertheless, recent studies in different states, by different researchers, using different methods, reveal a picture of the massive costs of making sure all children pass the mandated NCLB tests.

Indiana. To enable a school to meet the "commendable" level on state tests, Indiana would have to increase its base spending from \$5,468 to \$7,142 per pupil -- a 31% increase -- according to an analysis by Augenblick and Myers, Inc. These estimates do not include any added costs for special education students, which range between \$7,500 and \$8,300 per pupil. They also do not include the cost of "hard-to-serve students," who average an additional \$4,200 to \$5,300 per student.¹⁰

Maryland. Calculating the costs for Maryland students to meet state standards, Augenblick and Myers, Inc., arrived at a total education cost of \$12,060 per pupil for elementary schools, \$9,000 for middle schools, and \$9,599 for high schools. The firm further calculated that having a low-income student meet standards would require an average excess cost of \$7,748 per student, or 1.7 times the base cost. The analysts used both a market-basket model and a high-achieving-school model to arrive at costs for their standards-based models. The results from both methods were similar.¹¹

The total cost for the system for fiscal-year 2000 would have been between \$7.9 and \$8.8 billion. Since the expenditures for that year were \$5.9 billion, the required percentage increase was between 34% and 49%. To Maryland's credit, its lawmakers boosted education spending by \$1.3 billion in spring 2002.¹²

Montana. Montana's 2002 study was sponsored by five education organizations and assisted by the National Council of State Legislators. The analysts used a professional-judgment approach to cost out meeting NCLB requirements based on the current level of performance. They found that a base cost between \$6,004 and \$8,041 per pupil (depending on district type) was required, while the current base was only \$4,471. Additional special-needs and remedial costs were \$8,000 and \$2,000 per pupil respectively. Thus base costs in Montana would increase between 34% and 80%, depending on location and level of need.¹³

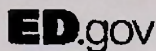
Nebraska. The state department of education, in cooperation with various education organizations, commissioned a study of what it would take to meet current Nebraska standards under NCLB in 2002-03. Estimated costs range from \$5,845 per pupil in a large K-12 district to \$11,257 in a small, isolated K-12 district.

On top of this figure, at-risk and special-needs students would require an additional \$1,500 to \$12,000 each, depending on the level of need. "Total costs would vary, on average, from \$8,103 per student in large K-12 districts to \$13,525 per student in very small K-12 districts," says the report.¹⁴ Nebraska currently spends about \$5,600 per pupil. Thus the state is looking at a 45% cost increase. NCLB testing and labeling have brought cries of outrage from Nebraska state and local officials. The state senate called for full federal funding of the mandate.¹⁵

New Hampshire. Mark Joyce, executive director of the New Hampshire School Administrators Association, sent his members and the citizens of the state his analysis of NCLB costs. He found that the state will receive an average of \$77 of new federal money for each of the Granite State's 220,000 students, while the obligations imposed by the law will cost \$575 per student. In other words, New Hampshire will receive about \$17 million in new money for new obligations of \$126.5 million.¹⁶

To arrive at this number, Joyce estimated a state cost for each of the elements of the law and added them together. He contends that his estimates are conservative, and he is probably right. The reason is that his analysis was confined to increased costs for local and state staff and administration. He assumed that the number of special education students would increase by 2%, but he did not include the costs of remedial

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Introduction: No Child Left Behind

INTRODUCTION

Related Resources

- [No Child Left Behind Powerpoint Presentation](#)

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (*No Child Left Behind*) is a landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools. President George W. Bush describes this law as the "cornerstone of my administration." Clearly, our children are our future, and, as President Bush has expressed, "Too many of our neediest children are being left behind."

With passage of *No Child Left Behind*, Congress reauthorized the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*--the principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. In amending *ESEA*, the new law represents a sweeping overhaul of federal efforts to support elementary and secondary education in the United States. It is built on four common-sense pillars: accountability for results; an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research; expanded parental options; and expanded local control and flexibility.

↑ ↑ *statistical, not scientific*

WHAT NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND DOES FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Supports learning in the early years, thereby preventing many learning difficulties that may arise later

Children who enter school with language skills and pre-reading skills (e.g., understanding that print reads from left to right and top to bottom) are more likely to learn to read well in the early grades and succeed in later years. In fact, research shows that most reading problems faced by adolescents and adults are the result of problems that could have been prevented through good instruction in their early childhood years (Snow, Burns and Griffin 1998). It is never too early to start building language skills by talking with and reading to children. *No Child Left Behind* targets resources for early childhood education so that all youngsters get the right start.

Provides more information for parents about their child's progress

Under *No Child Left Behind*, each state must measure every public school student's progress in reading and math in each of grades 3 through 8 and at least once during grades 10 through 12. By school year 2007-2008, assessments (or testing) in science will be underway. These assessments must be aligned with state academic content and achievement standards. They will provide parents with objective data on where their child stands academically.

Alerts parents to important information on the performance of their child's school

No Child Left Behind requires states and school districts to give parents easy-to-read, detailed report cards on schools and districts, telling them which ones are succeeding and why. Included in the report cards are student achievement data broken out by race, ethnicity, gender, English language proficiency, migrant status, disability status and low-income status; as well as important information about the professional qualifications of teachers. With these provisions, *No Child Left Behind* ensures that parents have important, timely information about the schools their children attend--whether they are performing well or not for all children, regardless of their background.

Gives children and parents a lifeline

In this new era of education, children will no longer be trapped in the dead end of low-performing schools. Under *No Child Left Behind*, such schools must use their federal funds to make needed improvements. In the event of a school's continued poor performance, parents have options to ensure that their children receive the high-quality education to which they are entitled. That might mean that children can transfer to higher-performing schools in the area or receive supplemental educational services in the community, such as tutoring, after-school programs or remedial classes.

Improves teaching and learning by providing better information to teachers and principals

Annual tests to measure children's progress provide teachers with independent information about each child's strengths and weaknesses. With this knowledge, teachers can craft lessons to make sure each student meets or exceeds the standards. In addition, principals can use the data to assess exactly how much progress each teacher's students have made and to better inform decisions about how to run their schools.

<http://www.ed.gov/print/nclb/overview/intro/index.html>

- vouchers

Related Organizations

- Education Commission of the States
- National Center for Education Statistics
- National Center on Education and the Economy
- National Center on Education Finance
- National Governors' Association

per-pupil basis (to ensure there is enough to cover each child's education) and categorically (to ensure there is enough for each special program or facility).

But school funding isn't quite that simple. Every state has different formulas and systems for financing education. Forty-five states and the District of Columbia use some version of a foundation program as the basis of their school funding systems, where responsibility for providing a level of funding necessary for a basic education is shared between the state and local districts. But beyond this, there are few similarities in state mechanisms for funding education. And because local funding is so important to most states' public education systems, the amount of money particular schools receive tends to vary dramatically, depending on property values, not just from state to state but from district to district, and from year to year.

One way to better understand school finance is to think of it in terms of the adequacy and equity of resources. Adequacy is based on the principle that states should provide enough funding for all students to be able to meet academic expectations. According to the most recent data available from the National Center for Education Statistics, nationwide, the average state spending per pupil was \$7,376 in 2001 - ranging from a high of \$11,216 in the District of Columbia to a low of \$4,895 in Utah (NCES, 2003). It is difficult, however, to determine exactly how much money is needed to give all students an adequate education.

Most experts agree that educating low-income or special education students costs more than educating the average pupil. Adequate spending on education is often determined through studies that rely either on an analysis of the expenditures of successful schools,

"State Steps Up Role in Ailing Texas District," Sept. 8, 2004.

"Alaska School Aid System Challenged in Court," Sept. 8, 2004.

"Ohio Schools Brace for Fallout From Levy Defeats," Sept. 1, 2004.

"With \$1 Billion Pledge, Calif. Settles Lawsuit," Sept. 1, 2004.

"Why Adequacy Lawsuits Matter," Commentary, Aug. 11, 2004.

"As Lawmakers Stall, N.Y. School Aid Case Gets 'Special Masters,'" Aug. 11, 2004.

"N.C. High Court Rules State Must Spend More on Schools," Aug. 11, 2004.

"Lawmakers Greet Rosy Budget Picture With Caution," July 28, 2004.

"Pa. Weighs on Slot Machines to Pay for Property-Tax Relief," July 14, 2004.

"Settlement of School Equity Case Caught Up in Calif. Budget Battle," July 14, 2004.

"Second Time a Charm for Maine Measure," June 16, 2004.

"Fiscal Woes Make for Long Year at Calif. School," June 16, 2004.

"Robin Hood' Still Alive After Texas Special Session," May 26, 2004.

"Kansas Judge Orders State to Shut Schools," May 19, 2004.

"Robin Hood' On Ropes in Texas School Aid Tilt," May 12, 2004.

"New Dollars to Shrink Fla. Class Sizes OK'd," May 12, 2004.

"Private Schools in Australia Share in Public Largess," May

or the professional judgment of practitioners (Advocacy Center for Children's Success with Standards, 2003).

12, 2004.

"Mass. School Funding Comes Up Short, Judge Rules," May 5, 2004.

The notion of equity in school funding focuses on strategies for closing the gap between local districts' abilities to raise revenues for their schools. Since local funds are commonly based at least in part on property taxes, less wealthy communities are not able to raise as much money for schools as wealthier districts, leaving their children at a considerable disadvantage. The higher the share of funding that states provide for education, and the more states target that money, the better the chances for increasing equity in the system. According to an analysis of education spending in *Education Week's Quality Counts 2004*, states such as Delaware, Minnesota, and Nevada target funds toward property-poor districts and provide more than 60 percent of total (state and local) funding.

"Two School Aid Ballot Initiatives Pushed in Nevada," April 21, 2004.

"Ore. Activists Seek to Dismantle Special Local Tax," April 21, 2004.

"Report Finds State Preschool Funds Fall Short of Rhetoric," April 21, 2004.

"N.C. Cites Progress in Satisfying Equity Lawsuit," April 14, 2004.

"Texas Governor Unveils School Funding Plan," April 14, 2004.

"Panel Urges N.Y. to Enrich School Funding," April 7, 2004.

Court battles have repeatedly determined that states are responsible for all education spending and that even when their funding is simply a minor supplement to local budgets, states should not allow one district to spend vastly more than another.

A wave of state school finance lawsuits that started in California in 1971 has served as one of the main means for spurring changes in states' education finance systems. There have been lawsuits challenging the state funding systems in 45 states, and recently, new cases have been filed in Kentucky and Nebraska

Ensures that teacher quality is a high priority

No Child Left Behind defines the qualifications needed by teachers and paraprofessionals who work on any facet of classroom instruction. It requires that states develop plans to achieve the goal that all teachers of core academic subjects be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-06 school year. States must include in their plans annual, measurable objectives that each local school district* and school must meet in moving toward the goal; they must report on their progress in the annual report cards.

Gives more resources to schools

Today, more than \$7,000 on average is spent per pupil by local, state and federal taxpayers. States and local school districts are now receiving more federal funding than ever before for all programs under *No Child Left Behind*: \$23.7 billion, most of which will be used during the 2003-04 school year. This represents an increase of 59.8 percent from 2000 to 2003. A large portion of these funds is for grants under Title I of ESEA: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged. Title I grants are awarded to states and local education agencies to help states and school districts improve the education of disadvantaged students; turn around low-performing schools; improve teacher quality; and increase choices for parents. (For more about Title I, see the introductory paragraph to Q-and-As.) For fiscal year (FY) 2003, funding for Title I alone is \$11.7 billion--an increase of 33 percent since the passage of *No Child Left Behind*. President Bush's FY 2004 budget request would increase spending on Title I by 48 percent since he took office.

Allows more flexibility

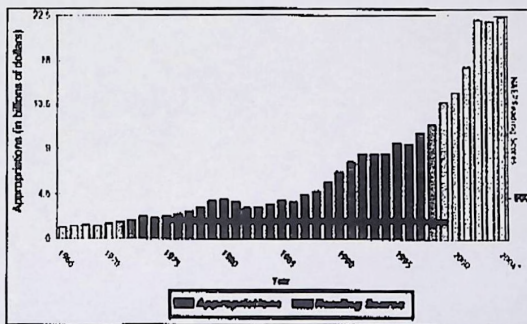
In exchange for the strong accountability, *No Child Left Behind* gives states and local education agencies more flexibility in the use of their federal education funding. As a result, principals and administrators spend less time filling out forms and dealing with federal red tape. They have more time to devote to students' needs. They have more freedom to implement innovations and allocate resources as policymakers at the state and local levels see fit, thereby giving local people a greater opportunity to affect decisions regarding their schools' programs.

Focuses on what works

No Child Left Behind puts a special emphasis on implementing educational programs and practices that have been clearly demonstrated to be effective through rigorous scientific research. Federal funding will be targeted to support such programs. For example, the Reading First program makes federal funds available to help reading teachers in the early grades strengthen old skills and gain new ones in instructional techniques that scientifically based research has shown to be effective.

WHY NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND IS IMPORTANT TO AMERICA

Federal Spending on K-12 Education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and NAEP Reading Scores (Age 9)



Note: Appropriations for ESEA do not include funding for special education. Reading scores are the average scores for 9-year-olds, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). A score of 200 implies an ability to understand, combine ideas and make inferences based on short, uncomplicated passages about specific or sequentially related information.

*Reflects the President's budget request for 2004.

Source: U.S. Department of Education Budget Service and NAEP 1999 Trends in Academic Progress.

Since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act first passed Congress in 1965, the federal government has spent more than \$242 billion through

<http://www.ed.gov/print/nclb/overview/intro/index.html>

2003 to help educate disadvantaged children. Yet, the achievement gap in this country between rich and poor and white and minority students remains wide. According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on reading in 2000, only 32 percent of fourth-graders can read at a proficient level and thereby demonstrate solid academic achievement; and while scores for the highest-performing students have improved over time, those of America's lowest-performing students have declined (National Assessment of Educational Progress 2001).

The good news is that some schools in cities and towns across the nation are creating high achievement for children with a history of low performance. If some schools can do it, then all schools should be able to do it.

UNITED FOR RESULTS

Because of No Child Left Behind:

Parents will know their children's strengths and weaknesses and how well schools are performing; they will have other options and resources for helping their children if their schools are chronically in need of improvement.

Teachers will have the training and resources they need for teaching effectively, using curricula that are grounded in scientifically based research; annual testing lets them know areas in which students need extra attention.

Principals will have information they need to strengthen their schools' weaknesses and to put into practice methods and strategies backed by sound, scientific research.

Superintendents will be able to see which of their schools and principals are doing the best job and which need help to improve.

School boards will be able to measure how their districts are doing and to measure their districts in relation to others across the state; they will have more and better information on which to base decisions about priorities in their districts.

Chief state school officers will know how the schools in their states and in other states are doing; they will be better able to pinpoint where guidance and resources are needed.

Governors will have a yearly report card on how their states' schools are doing; they will be able to highlight accomplishments of the best schools and target help to those schools that are in need of improvement.

Community leaders and volunteer groups will have information they can use to rally their members in efforts to help children and schools that need the most help.

*Note: For the purpose of discussion in this book, the terms "district" and "local education agency" are used interchangeably in discussing the agency at the local level responsible for maintaining administrative control of public elementary and secondary schools in a given area or political subdivision of the state. [return to text]

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billion (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2003a). This is true even though 31 states have made across the board spending cuts, and 11 have made targeted cuts to K-12 education (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2003b).

Some reformers are also examining ways schools could use money more like the private sector does—as an incentive. For instance, they ask, instead of paying teachers and administrators according to an unbending formula, is there a way to reward superior performance? Others are looking at ways to cut central-office spending, and in turn increase the amount of money that actually flows down to the school level.

Finally, some argue that spending has absolutely no correlation to academic achievement (Hanushek, 1997). They say no matter how much money is pumped into the educational system, it won't make a difference unless schools fundamentally change how they operate.

—Jennifer Park

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National Endowment for the Arts

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Dana Gioia VII

Reading At Risk:
A Survey of Literary Reading in America

Research Division Report #46

This is a good
Source.



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Research Division Report #46

June 2004



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Preface

June 2009

VLL

Reading at Risk is not a report that the National Endowment for the Arts is happy to issue. This comprehensive survey of American literary reading presents a detailed but bleak assessment of the decline of reading's role in the nation's culture. For the first time in modern history, less than half of the adult population now reads literature, and these trends reflect a larger decline in other sorts of reading. Anyone who loves literature or values the cultural, intellectual, and political importance of active and engaged literacy in American society will respond to this report with grave concern.

Reading at Risk is not a collection of anecdotes, theories, or opinions. It is a descriptive survey of national trends in adult literary reading. Based on an enormous sample size of more than 17,000 adults, it covers most major demographic groups – providing statistical measurements by age, gender, education, income, region, race, and ethnicity. Conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and spanning 20 years of polling, the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, the data source for *Reading at Risk*, is as reliable and objective as any such survey can be. While not every measurement of reading was built into the study, the report provides so much data in such detail that it constitutes a comprehensive factual basis for any informed discussion of current American reading habits.

The key results of the survey are condensed in the "Executive Summary," which follows, but the report can be further summarized in a single sentence: literary reading in America is not only declining rapidly among all groups, but the rate of decline has accelerated, especially among the young. The concerned citizen in search of good news about American literary culture will study the pages of this report in vain.

Although the news in the report is dire, I doubt that any careful observer of contemporary American society will be greatly surprised – except perhaps by the sheer magnitude of decline. *Reading at Risk* merely documents and quantifies a huge cultural transformation that most Americans have already noted – our society's massive shift toward electronic media for entertainment and information.

Reading a book requires a degree of active attention and engagement. Indeed, reading itself is a progressive skill that depends on years of education and practice. By contrast, most electronic media such as television, recordings, and radio make fewer demands on their audiences, and indeed often require no more than passive participation. Even interactive electronic media, such as video games and the Internet, foster shorter attention spans and accelerated gratification.

While oral culture has a rich immediacy that is not to be dismissed, and electronic media offer the considerable advantages of diversity and access, print culture affords irreplaceable forms of focused attention and contemplation that make complex communications and insights possible. To lose such intellectual



Photo by Vance Jacobs

capability – and the many sorts of human continuity it allows – would constitute a vast cultural impoverishment.

More than reading is at stake. As this report unambiguously demonstrates, readers play a more active and involved role in their communities. The decline in reading, therefore, parallels a larger retreat from participation in civic and cultural life. The long-term implications of this study not only affect literature but all the arts – as well as social activities such as volunteerism, philanthropy, and even political engagement.

What is to be done? There is surely no single solution to the present dilemma, just as there is no single cause. Each concerned group – writers, teachers, publishers, journalists, librarians, and legislators – will legitimately view the situation from a different perspective, and each will offer its own recommendations. The important thing now is to understand that America can no longer take active and engaged literacy for granted.

Reading is not a timeless, universal capability. Advanced literacy is a specific intellectual skill and social habit that depends on a great many educational, cultural, and economic factors. As more Americans lose this capability, our nation becomes less informed, active, and independent-minded. These are not qualities that a free, innovative, or productive society can afford to lose.

Dana Gioia

Dana Gioia
Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts

no more than democracy

* real education depends on person being able to live above with one's thoughts

Executive Summary

Reading at Risk presents the results from the literature segment of a large-scale survey, the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, conducted by the Census Bureau in 2002 at the request of the National Endowment for the Arts. This survey investigated the percentage and number of adults, age 18 and over, who attended artistic performances, visited museums, watched broadcasts of arts programs, or read literature. The survey sample numbered more than 17,000 individuals, which makes it one of the most comprehensive polls of art and literature consumption ever conducted.

Reading at Risk extrapolates and interprets data on literary reading and compares them with results from similar surveys carried out in 1982 and 1992. The survey asked respondents if, during the previous twelve months, they had read any novels, short stories, plays, or poetry in their leisure time (not for work or school). The report establishes trends in the number of adults reading, listening to, and writing literature by demographic categories of age, race, region, income, and education. This report also compares participation in literary activities with other leisure activities, such as watching movies and exercising.

Reading at Risk provides an invaluable snapshot of the role of literature in the lives of Americans. It comes at a critical time, when electronic media are becoming the dominant influence in young people's worlds. *Reading at Risk* adds new and distressing information to the discussion. It contains solid evidence of the declining importance of literature to our populace. Literature reading is fading as a meaningful activity, especially among younger people. If one believes that active and engaged readers lead richer intellectual lives than non-readers and that a well-read citizenry is essential to a vibrant democracy, the decline of literary reading calls for serious action.

10 Key Findings

1. The percentage of adult Americans reading literature has dropped dramatically over the past 20 years.

Decline in Literary Reading

	1982	1992	2002
% of U.S. Adult Population Reading Literature	56.9	54.0	46.7
Number of Literary Readers (in millions)	96	100	96

- Less than half of the adult American population now reads literature.
- The 10 percentage point decline in literary reading represents a loss of 20 million potential readers.
- Only the strong growth in overall U.S. population of nearly 40 million adults from 1982 to 2002 allowed the actual number of readers to remain flat at 96 million.

2. The decline in literary reading parallels a decline in total book reading.

Trends in Book and Literary Reading

	Percentage of U.S. Adult Population		Change, 1992 to 2002 Percentage Point (pp)	
	1992	2002	Difference	Rate of Decline
Read Any Book	60.9	56.6	-4.3 pp	-7%
Read Literature	54.0	46.7	-7.3 pp	-14%

- Total book reading is declining significantly, although not at the rate of literary reading.
- The percentage of the U.S. adult population reading any books has declined by -7 percent over the past decade.

Next Page →

3. The rate of decline in literary reading is accelerating.

Rates of Decline in Literary Reading

	1982	1992	2002
% of U.S. Adult Population	56.9	54.0	46.7
Percentage Point (pp) Decline	—	-2.9 pp	-7.3 pp
Rate of Decline	—	-5%	-14%

■ The ten-year rate of decline has accelerated from -5 percent to -14 percent since 1992.

4. Women read more literature than men do, but literary reading by both groups is declining at significant rates.

Literary Reading by Gender

	Percentage by Group			Percentage Point (pp) Change	
	1982	1992	2002	1992-2002	1982-2002
Men	49.1	47.4	37.6	-9.8 pp	-11.5 pp
Women	63.0	60.3	55.1	-5.2 pp	-7.9 pp

■ Only slightly more than one-third of adult American males now read literature.

■ Reading among women is also declining significantly, but at a slower rate.

5. Literary reading is declining among whites, African Americans, and Hispanics.

Literary Reading by Race/Ethnicity

	Percentage by Group			Percentage Point (pp) Change	
	1982	1992	2002	1992-2002	1982-2002
White	59.8	58.0	51.4	-6.6 pp	-8.4 pp
African American	42.3	45.6	37.1	-8.5 pp	-5.2 pp
Hispanic	36.4	34.0	26.5	-7.5 pp	-9.9 pp
Other	50.2	42.7	43.7	+1.0 pp	-6.5 pp

Key page XI

6. Literary reading is declining among all education levels.

Literary Reading by Education

	Percentage by Group			Percentage Point (pp) Change	
	1982	1992	2002	1992-2002	1982-2002
Grade School	21.2	17.3	14.0	-3.3 pp	-7.2 pp
Some High School	38.8	34.5	23.3	-11.1 pp	-15.4 pp
High School Graduate	54.2	49.0	37.7	-11.3 pp	-16.5 pp
Some College	72.9	65.0	52.9	-12.1 pp	-20.0 pp
College Graduate/ Graduate School	82.1	74.6	66.7	-7.9 pp	-15.4 pp

■ The higher the education level, the higher the reading rate, but reading among every group has declined over the past 20 years.

7. Literary reading is declining among all age groups.

Literary Reading by Age

	Percentage by Group			Percentage Point (pp) Change	
	1982	1992	2002	1992-2002	1982-2002
18-24	59.8	53.3	42.8	-10.5 pp	-17.0 pp
25-34	62.1	54.6	47.7	-6.9 pp	-14.4 pp
35-44	59.7	58.9	46.6	-12.3 pp	-13.1 pp
45-54	54.9	56.9	51.6	-5.3 pp	-3.3 pp
55-64	52.8	52.9	48.9	-4.0 pp	-3.9 pp
65-74	47.2	50.8	45.3	-5.5 pp	-1.9 pp
75 & Older	40.9	40.4	36.7	-3.7 pp	-4.2 pp

A
B

4 13.3
3.3

average of 15%
Very important
A TV watchers from 1965-1970 on
B TV watchers from 1955-1960
decline of 3.3%

8. The steepest decline in literary reading is in the youngest age groups.

Literary Reading by Young Adults

Age Group	Percentage of Group			Rate of Decline
	1982	1992	2002	1982-2002
18-24	59.8	53.3	42.8	-28 %
25-34	62.1	54.6	47.7	-23
All Ages	56.9	54.0	46.7	-18

■ Over the past 20 years, young adults (18-34) have declined from being those most likely to read literature to those least likely (with the exception of those age 65 and above).

The rate of decline for the youngest adults (18-24) is 55 percent greater than that of the total adult population (-28 percent vs. -18 percent).

9. The decline in literary reading foreshadows an erosion in cultural and civic participation.

Participation in Cultural and Social Activities

	Percentage of U.S. Adult Population	
	Literary Readers	Non-Literary Readers
Perform Volunteer and Charity Work	43.0	17.0
Visit Art Museums	44.0	12.0
Attend Performing Arts Events	49.0	17.0
Attend Sporting Events	45.0	27.0

■ Literary reading strongly correlates to other forms of active civic participation.

■ Literary readers are more likely than non-literary readers to perform volunteer and charity work, visit art museums, attend performing arts events, and attend sporting events.

10. The decline in reading correlates with increased participation in a variety of electronic media, including the Internet, video games, and portable digital devices.

■ Literature now competes with an enormous array of electronic media. While no single activity is responsible for the decline of reading, the cumulative presence and availability of these alternatives have increasingly drawn Americans away from reading.

■ Non-readers watch more television than do readers.

■ In 1990, book buying constituted 5.7 percent of total recreation spending, while spending on audio, video, computers, and software was 6 percent. By 2002, electronic spending had soared to 24 percent, while spending on books declined slightly to 5.6 percent.

■ A 1999 study showed that the average American child lives in a household with 2.9 televisions, 1.8 VCRs, 3.1 radios, 2.1 CD players, 1.4 video game players, and 1 computer.

XIII

Conclusion

Reading at Risk presents a distressing but objective overview of national trends. The accelerating declines in literary reading among all demographic groups of American adults indicate an imminent cultural crisis. The trends among younger adults warrant special concern, suggesting that — unless some effective solution is found — literary culture, and literacy in general, will continue to worsen. Indeed, at the current rate of loss, literary reading as a leisure activity will virtually disappear in half a century.

Reading at Risk is testimony that a cultural legacy is disappearing, especially among younger people. Twenty years ago, just after the NEA 1982 survey, the landmark study *A Nation at Risk* warned that “a rising tide of mediocrity” had overtaken the school system and threatened a generation of students. The report sparked a massive reform effort whose consequences are still evolving today. *Reading at Risk* reveals an equally dire situation, a culture at risk. The National Endowment for the Arts calls upon public agencies, cultural organizations, the press, and educators to take stock of the sliding literary condition of our country. It is time to inspire a nationwide renaissance of literary reading and bring the transformative power of literature into the lives of all citizens.

Chapter 1: Introduction



Who reads literature in America?

Novels, short stories, poetry, and plays have their own intrinsic value, as do all of the arts. Beyond the benefits of literature to the individual lie the benefits to a culture as a whole. Who reads literary works, what kinds, how often, and how much – all measure the well being of a culture. Do we value reading? Encourage it in our homes, schools, and the wider community?

The question of who reads is one of particular social importance. Reading is both a reflection of disparate education levels and a way of bridging the differences among them. Reading is obviously related to the literacy of a nation, which in turn is related to the quality of life of its citizens. If literacy is the baseline for participation in social life, then reading – and reading of literary work in particular – is essential to a sound and healthy understanding of, and participation in, a democratic society.

Levels of public participation in literature also matter to the economic vitality of the publishing industry – from publishers large and small, distributors, and bookstores to individual poets, dramatists, and fiction writers. Books are big business in the United States. In 2000, the book industry published 122,000 new titles and sold a total of 2.5 billion books, a number that has tripled over the past 25 years.¹ Given these figures, some have expressed the opinion that there is currently an “explosive growth in America’s book culture.”²

Research into the habits of readers is important to provide information about the state of literature and literacy, to examine the market for books, and to assess the relationship of literature to other areas of arts and culture. Although this monograph cannot explore all of these issues, it examines a number of demographic, lifestyle, and other factors that may influence literature participation. In particular, the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts allows us to examine whether literary reading varies based on demographic

(e.g., gender, ethnicity, race, education, and age), socioeconomic (e.g., family income, employment status, and occupation), and geographic (e.g., regions and states) factors.

Data Collection

The 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) was conducted as a supplement to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Study (CPS), which scientifically selects households to represent the socio-economic characteristics of the U.S. population. The Census Bureau also conducted arts participation surveys in 1982 and 1992.

In the 2002 SPPA, 17,135 adults, age 18 and older, were interviewed, primarily by telephone. Demographic data including gender, income, educational level, age, and race/ethnicity were used in weighting the survey data so that the results match characteristics of the total U.S. adult population. The Census Bureau determined the weight for each survey record.

Interviewed in August 2002, survey respondents were asked about their arts participation activities in the prior 12 months. The response rate to the survey was 70 percent, similar to the rate in the second half of the 1992 survey (68 percent). Appendices A and B provide background information and data collection procedures for both the SPPA and CPS.

Literature vs. Books

The SPPA investigates arts participation in a variety of art forms, including attendance at live concerts, plays, and dance performances; visits to art museums and historic sites; and participation through broadcasts, recorded media, and the Internet. This monograph focuses on the survey’s questions related to reading literature, listening to readings or recordings of literature, and creative writing activities.

The 2002 SPPA asked respondents if, during the past 12 months, they had read any novels or short stories, plays, or poetry. A positive response to any of

¹ See Gayle Feldman, *Best and Worst of Times: The Changing Business of Trade Books, 1975-2002*, Columbia University’s National Arts Journalism Program, (2003).

² J. Peder Zane, “America the Literate,” *newsobserver.com*, Dec. 15, 2002.

those three categories is counted as reading literature, including popular genres such as mysteries, as well as contemporary and classic literary fiction. No distinctions were drawn on the quality of literary works.

In addition to the three questions pertaining to literature, the SPPA asked respondents if they had read any books, and, if so, how many. The distinction between reading literary works and reading any books is important to the analysis presented in this report. Books can be of any type and cover a vast array of subjects, literary and non-literary alike, and for the purposes of the survey, the respondents need to have read as a leisure time activity, not for work or school.

Literature, of course, can be found in sources other than books. Poetry, drama, and fiction can be read in magazines and literary journals, even on subway and bus placards. The Poetry Society of America, for example, provides poetry to transit authorities throughout the country, including Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Dallas.

In several sections of this monograph, literary readers will be classified in terms of how many books of any type that they have read. This measure of book-reading frequency is used to investigate broad characteristics of literary readers. For example, Table 5 (shown in Chapter 2) shows the percentage of adults who volunteered or did charity work. About 17 percent of those who did not read literature did charity work; more than 43 percent of literary readers did. Almost half of literary readers who also read 50 or more books in 2002 (i.e., "avid readers") did charity work. Therefore, the number of books read is used to investigate how literary readers spend their time, and how their time usage differed from those who did not read literature.

Throughout this monograph, information from the SPPA will be supplemented with information on literature from a range of sources, including research reports, essays, newspaper articles, and books.

The rest of this monograph is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 summarizes the participation in literary activities in 2002;
- Chapter 3 analyzes factors affecting literature participation in 2002;
- Chapter 4 examines trends in literature participation between 1982 and 2002; and
- Chapter 5 provides a summary and conclusion for the monograph.

Chapter 2: Literature Participation in 2002

Americans participate in a wide range of literary activities, including book reading, listening to recorded literary readings or attending live readings, and pursuing their own creative writing. The 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) asked people 18 years of age or older a series of questions about their literary activities. This chapter highlights findings from the SPPA on general levels of participation in literary activities; numbers of books read; and literature participation compared with other cultural and leisure activities. The SPPA shows the levels of "crossover" participation, that is, the number of literary readers who also participate in a range of additional cultural and leisure activities. Finally, levels of literature participation in the U.S. are compared with literature and reading surveys in other countries. Unless otherwise noted, all information in this chapter refers to SPPA respondents' activities during the one-year period between August 2001 and August 2002. For simplicity, this time period will be referred to throughout this report as 2002.

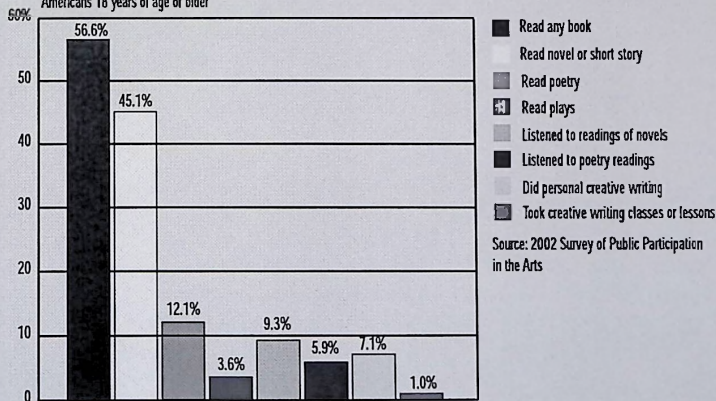
Figure 1 and Table 1 summarize responses to a range of literature participation questions. These graphics show that over one-half of respondents (57

percent) indicated that they read at least one book in 2002 (not counting books required for work or school).³ This amounts to about 117 million people 18 years of age or older. The SPPA also asked about the types of literature read.

The most common types of literature read were novels or short stories (45 percent of adults or 93 million people).⁴ Poetry was read by 12 percent of adults, or 25 million people.⁵ A smaller number of adults (4 percent or 7 million people) indicated that they read a play during the previous year.⁶

Grouping novel, short story, poetry, and play readers into a single category of *literary readers* shows that just under one-half of all adults (47 percent) read literature in 2002. This represents 96 million people and forms the group that is the principal focus of this monograph. The definition of literature used in this report encompasses any type of fiction, poetry, and plays that the SPPA respondents felt should be included and not just what literary critics might consider literature. Respondents were not asked what genre of works they read, nor were they asked whether they read literary non-fiction such as criticism, commentary, and essays. By this definition,

Figure 1: Participation in Literary Activities, 2002
Americans 18 years of age or older



³The wording of the question asked is: "With the exception of books required for work or school, did you read any books during the last 12 months?"

⁴During the last 12 months, did you read any novels or short stories?"

⁵During the last 12 months, did you read any poetry?"

⁶During the last 12 months, did you read any plays?"

Table 1
U.S. Adult Participation in Literary Activities in the 12-Month Period Ending August 2002

	% of population	Millions of people
Read any book	56.6%	117
Read literature	46.7	96
Including:		
Read a novel or short story	45.1	93
Read poetry	12.1	25
Read a play	3.6	7
Listened to live or recorded readings of novels or books	9.3	19
Read or listened to poetry	14.3	30
Including:		
Read poetry	12.1	25
Listened to live or recorded readings of poetry	5.9	12
Did personal creative writing	7.0	14
-published	1.0	2
-unpublished	6.1	13
Took creative writing classes or lessons		
-in past year	1.0	2
-ever	13.3	27
Used Internet to learn about, read or discuss topics related to literature	9.2	19

if the proportion of those reading literary works is subtracted from the total number of people who read at least one book of any kind, about ten percent of the population read *only* non-literary books.

The SPPA results also reveal that just less than one in ten people (9 percent) listened to live or recorded readings of novels or books in the previous year.⁷ This amounts to 19 million people. A smaller number (6 percent or 12 million people) listened to live or recorded readings of poetry.⁸

Seven percent of adults (or 15 million people) indicated that they did some creative writing during 2002.⁹ For most, this activity appears to be done more for personal fulfillment than for income or public enjoyment, as only 1 percent (or 2 million people) had a work published.¹⁰

Respondents were also asked whether they took creative writing classes or lessons, and 13 percent of adults (or 27 million people) indicated that they had taken a class at some point in their lives.¹¹ Most respondents indicated that the classes were taken while they were in elementary or high school. Only a small percentage (1 percent or 2 million people) indicated that they took creative writing classes or lessons during the survey year.¹²

Given the increasing importance of the Internet as a tool for the arts, the 2002 SPPA asked respondents whether they use the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature. About 9 percent of adults (or 19 million people) said they had.¹³

Number of Books Read

The 2002 SPPA asked all respondents how many books they read in 2002.¹⁴ Respondents who answered affirmatively indicated that they read approximately six books. Extrapolated for the population as a whole, this means Americans read about 2.1 billion books in the survey year.¹⁵

The general book-reading habits of literary readers vary widely. Readers of literary works can be divided into four categories: "light" readers (1-5 books during the year, both literary and non-literary), "moderate" readers (6-11 books per year, both literary and non-literary), "frequent" readers (at least one book every month, i.e., 12-49 books per year, both literary and non-literary), and "avid" readers (about one book every week, i.e., 50 or more books per year, both literary and non-literary). The percentage of people in each category is as follows: light readers 21 percent, moderate readers 9 percent, frequent readers 12 percent, and avid readers 4 percent. In other words, about one in six people reads 12 or more books in a

⁷ "During the last 12 months, did you listen to a reading of novels or books, either live or recorded?"

⁸ "During the last 12 months, did you listen to a reading of poetry, either live or recorded?"

⁹ "With the exception of work or school, did you do any creative writing such as stories, poems or plays during the last 12 months?"

¹⁰ "Were any of your writings published?"

¹¹ "Have you ever taken lessons or classes in creative writing?"

¹² "Did you take any of these lessons or classes in the past year?"

¹³ "Do you use the Internet to learn about, read or discuss topics related to literature - novels, poetry or plays?"

¹⁴ The number of books read includes all books read (outside of work or school), not just novels, short stories, poetry, and plays.

¹⁵ This median number of books read (6) is the point where half of all readers read more books and half read less. The mean (commonly called "average") number of books read was 18.5. (The mean is much higher than the median because of the impact of those readers who indicated that they read a very large number of books.) The total books read estimate of 2.1 billion is a product of the number of readers (117 million) times the mean number of books read (18).

year (just fewer than 17 percent are in the "frequent" or "avid" reader categories).

Comparison of Literary Participation with Other Cultural and Leisure Activities

How does literary reading compare to other cultural, sports, and leisure activities? Literary reading is clearly an important component of Americans' leisure activities. The data in Table 2 demonstrate that the proportion of people reading literature is higher than participation in most cultural, sports, and leisure activities. In fact, of the activities included in the 2002 SPPA, only TV watching, moviegoing, and exercising attract significantly more people than reading literary works. Literary reading is much more popular than

attending sporting or performing arts events or visiting art museums or galleries. In 2002, about the same percentage of people read literature as watched an average of three or more hours of TV per day.

Table 2 also shows that, with about 93 million readers, novels and short stories have a significant audience in the U.S. Poetry, with 25 million readers, is about as popular as attendance at performances of jazz, classical music, or non-musical plays. About as many people — 7 million — read plays as attend live opera or ballet.

Participation of Literary Readers in Other Cultural and Leisure Activities

Readers are highly social people, frequently engaged in the arts, sports, and community life. Analysis of the 2002 SPPA data in Tables 3 through 7 show that people who read literature are active, attending a variety of arts events, volunteering in their communities, and participating in sports. In fact, literary readers are much more likely to participate than those who do not read. For example, literary readers are nearly three times as likely to attend a performing arts event, almost four times as likely to visit an art museum, over two-and-a-half times as likely to do volunteer or charity work, over one-and-a-half times as likely to attend sporting events, and over one-and-a-half times as likely to participate in sports activities. In fact, people who read larger numbers of books tend to have the highest levels of participation in other activities, especially arts activities.

The first row of Table 3 shows that, in 2002, 32 percent of people attended a performing arts event (including jazz, classical music, opera, musical and non-musical plays, ballet, and other dance performances). The second and third rows of Table 3 show that the performing arts attendance rates of literary readers and those who did not read are strikingly different: 49 percent of literary readers attended a performing arts event, compared to 17 percent of those who did not read literature during the year. Literary readers are

Table 2
U.S. Adults Participation in Cultural, Sports, and Leisure Activities
in the 12-Month Period Ending August 2002

	% of population	Millions of people
Watch at least one hour of TV per day (on average)	95.7%	197
Go out to movies	60.0	124
Jog, lift weights, walk or other exercise program	55.1	113
Work with indoor plants or do any gardening (for pleasure)	47.3	97
Read literature	46.7	96
Including:		
Read novel or short story	45.1	93
Read poetry	12.1	25
Read play	3.6	7
Watch 3 or more hours of TV per day (on average)	46.2	95
Make repairs or improvements on home	42.4	87
Go to amusement/theme park or carnival	41.7	86
Attend amateur or professional sports (excluding youth sports)	35.0	72
Visit art or craft festival or fair	33.4	69
Attend any of 7 live performing arts activities (except school performances)	31.8	65
Including:		
Musical stage play or opera	17.1	35
Non-musical stage play	12.3	25
Classical music	11.6	24
Jazz	10.8	22
Other dance	6.3	13
Ballet	3.9	8
Opera	3.2	7
Visit historic park or monument / Tour historic buildings or neighborhoods	31.6	65
Do outdoor activities, such as camping, hiking or canoeing	30.9	64
Participate in any sports activity	30.4	63
Do volunteer or charity work	29.0	60
Attend art museum or gallery	26.5	55

Table 3
Performing Arts Attendance by U.S. Adults, 2002

	% Attending	Number of Attenders (millions)
All adults	31.8 %	65
Did not read literature	16.7	18
Read literature	49.0	47
*Light book readers (1-5 books)	41.2	18
*Moderate book readers (6-11 books)	51.9	10
*Frequent book readers (12-49 books)	57.0	14
*Avid book readers (50 books or more)	58.2	5

*Note: Books can be of any type, literary and non-literary

nearly three times as likely to attend performing arts events.

The last four rows of Table 3 show that performing arts attendance rates are highest for those who have read the most books. Moreover, the 47 million literary readers who attended a performing arts event in 2002 account for nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of all attendees.

Table 4 shows that 26 percent of people visited an art museum in 2002. Literary readers are much more likely to visit art museums (44 percent) than non-readers are (12 percent). Art museum attendance rates are highest for those who have read the most books. The 42 million literary readers who visited an art museum in 2002 comprise over three-quarters (77 percent) of the total art museum visiting public.

Table 4
Art Museum Attendance by U.S. Adults, 2002

	% Attending	Number of Attenders (millions)
All adults	26.5 %	55
Did not read literature	11.6	13
Read literature	43.5	42
*Light book readers (1-5 books)	34.9	15
*Moderate book readers (6-11 books)	47.2	9
*Frequent book readers (12-49 books)	53.1	13
*Avid book readers (50 books or more)	50.9	5

*Note: Books can be of any type, literary and non-literary

Literary readers are also engaged citizens. Table 5 shows that 29 percent of all survey respondents did volunteer or charity work in 2002. As with the findings noted above for performing arts and art museum attendance, there is a striking difference between the rates of volunteer or charity work of literary readers (43 percent) and non-readers (17 percent). Frequent readers are most likely to have

Table 5
Volunteer and Charity Work by U.S. Adults, 2002

	% Volunteering	Number of Volunteers (millions)
All adults	29.0 %	60
Did not read literature	16.6	18
Read literature	43.3	42
*Light book readers (1-5 books)	36.5	16
*Moderate book readers (6-11 books)	45.9	8
*Frequent book readers (12-49 books)	51.1	13
*Avid book readers (50 books or more)	49.2	5

*Note: Books can be of any type, literary and non-literary

volunteered or done charity work in 2002.

Readers of literary works attend sporting events and participate in sporting activities themselves at rates higher than non-readers. The first row in Table 6 shows that 35 percent of all adults attended an amateur or professional sporting event (excluding youth sports) in 2002. Sports attendance was much more common among literary readers (45 percent) than non-readers (27 percent). Sports attendance does decrease somewhat for avid readers, but still remains above the sports attendance rate of those who do not read literary works.

In terms of active sports participation, Table 7 shows that 30 percent of all adults participated in a sports activity in 2002. Again, literary readers are more likely to participate in sports (38 percent) than non-readers (24 percent). Sports participation is somewhat lower for readers of 50 books or more than for less-frequent readers. Still, the sports participation rate of avid readers (31 percent) is higher than the participation of people who do not read literary works (24 percent).

Table 6
Sporting Events Attendance by U.S. Adults, 2002

	% Attending	Number of Attendees (millions)
All adults	35.0 %	72
Did not read literature	26.7	29
Read literature	44.5	43
*Light book readers (1-5 books)	43.2	19
*Moderate book readers (6-11 books)	46.9	9
*Frequent book readers (12-49 books)	47.5	12
*Avid book readers (50 books or more)	37.7	3

*Note: Books can be of any type, literary and non-literary

Table 7
U.S. Adults Playing Leisure Sports, 2002

	% Participating	Number of Participants (millions)
All adults	30.4 %	63
Did not read literature	23.9	26
Read literature	37.9	36
*Light book readers (1-5 books)	36.1	16
*Moderate book readers (6-11 books)	41.7	8
*Frequent book readers (12-49 books)	40.8	10
*Avid book readers (50 books or more)	31.1	3

*Note: Books can be of any type, literary and non-literary

International Comparisons

A survey similar to the SPFA was conducted in Canada in 1998. In response to a question about their reading habits, two-thirds of Canadians (15 years of age or older) indicated that they read a book during the survey year.¹⁶ The most comparable figure from the U.S. survey would be the overall book reading rate (outside of work and school) among Americans 18 years of age or older. This figure is 57 percent, markedly lower than the Canadian percentage of 67 percent.

A recent study reported that the overall book reading rate in 15 European countries was 45 percent

(15 years of age or older).¹⁷ Like the Canadian figure reported above, this amount includes reading any type of book outside of work or school, not just novels, short stories, plays or poetry. The most comparable U.S. figure (57 percent) is quite high compared to the overall European average, and is similar to the reading rate in a number of European countries (Luxembourg 56 percent, Denmark 55 percent, and the Netherlands 53 percent). The highest European reading rates are in Sweden (72 percent), Finland (66 percent), and the United Kingdom (63 percent), and the lowest rates are in Belgium (23 percent) and Portugal (15 percent).

The European study also defined "strong readers" as those who read eight or more books during the year. Overall, about 37 percent of Europeans fall into this category, with a high of 52 percent in the U.K. to a low of 15 percent in Portugal. A recalculation of the American figures shows that about 24 percent of Americans read eight or more books in 2002. The percentage of "strong readers" in the U.S. falls in the bottom third of the 15 European countries surveyed.

Summary of Literature Participation in 2002

The results from the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts show that literary reading is a popular but declining leisure activity, reaching about one-half of the adult population (47 percent), or 96 million people.

Among readers of literary works, the most popular category is fiction, with 45 percent of the population reading novels and/or short stories. About 12 percent read poetry, while about 4 percent read plays.

In terms of the frequency of reading, during the survey year, for literary readers:

¹⁶ Calculations by Hill Strategies Research Inc. from Statistics Canada's *General Social Survey 1998*. This figure is based on the population 15 or older. The question asked was: "During the past 12 months, as a leisure activity (not for paid work or studies) did you read a book?"

¹⁷ The percentages reported here reflect the percentage of respondents (15 or older) indicating that they read a book for reasons other than work or study in the survey year (2000-01). The figures are taken from *Key Figures on Cultural Participation in the European Union*, a presentation by Michail Skaliotis to the International Symposium on Culture Statistics, Montreal, October 2002. Available at www.readingeurope.org/observatory.nsf/InternationalSurveyA?OpenPage.

- About one in five (21 percent) read 1 to 5 books;
- About one in 11 (9 percent) read 6 to 11 books;
- Almost one in eight (12 percent) read 12 to 49 books;
and
- Approximately one in 25 (4 percent) read 50 books
or more.

The SPPA results reveal that almost one in ten people (9 percent) listened to live or recorded readings of novels or books and 6 percent listened to poetry readings during the survey year. About 7 percent wrote creative works of their own, and 9 percent used the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature.

An examination of literary readers' participation in other cultural and leisure activities clearly shows that literary readers are active and social. The high degree of crossover attendance indicates that book marketing directed at arts attenders may be effective. This also means that arts organizations could target literary readers in order to increase attendance. The high level of volunteer participation by literary readers suggests that organizations trying to develop their volunteer base should target literary readers.

While no direct comparisons are available for literary reading, the SPPA and other research indicate that the U.S. falls behind Canada and several European nations in overall reading rates.

Chapter 3: Factors in Literary Reading

number of demographic, lifestyle, and other factors influence literature participation. Knowledge of these factors is important both to understand current readership and to develop readers in different demographic groups. On one hand, statistics demonstrate that literary reading varies significantly by gender, ethnicity, race, education, and other variables. On the other hand, literary reading varies somewhat less by age and family income.

In addition to the literary reading inquiries presented in this chapter, two statistical models were created in order to identify the factors most closely associated with literary reading and frequent literary reading. The statistical models help establish an association between certain demographic characteristics and literary reading rates. In particular, the models give estimates of the likelihood of someone in a particular group (e.g., men) reading literature, compared to others (e.g., women), accounting for the fact that men and women do not necessarily have the same levels of education, income, or other characteristics that can lead to higher rates of literary reading. The major findings of the statistical models are highlighted throughout the chapter, and Appendix C to this monograph provides more information about the models.

Demographic and Geographic Factors in Literary Reading

Table 8 summarizes the estimates of literary reading rates of Americans in various demographic groups based on the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts. Overall, 47 percent of adults, about 96 million people, read literature during the survey year. This reading rate provides a benchmark measure for all other estimates. That is, any group with a literary reading rate lower than 47 percent can be considered underrepresented among literary readers, and any group with a rate over 47 percent can be thought of as overrepresented.

More women read literature than men. The survey found that, in 2002, 55 percent of women read literature vs. 38 percent of men. This gap is supported

Table 8
Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Adults Reading Literature in the 12-Month Period Ending August 2002

Demographic characteristics	% reading literature	Number reading literature (millions of adults)
Overall population	46.7 %	96
Gender		
Female	55.1	59
Male	37.6	37
Ethnicity and race		
Hispanic	26.5	6
White	51.4	77
African American	37.1	9
Other	43.7	4
Age		
18 to 24	42.8	11
25 to 34	47.7	18
35 to 44	46.6	21
45 to 54	51.6	20
55 to 64	48.9	13
65 to 74	45.3	8
75 or older	36.7	6
Education		
Grade school	14.0	2
Some high school	23.4	5
High school graduate	37.7	24
Some college	52.9	30
College graduate	63.1	23
Graduate school	74.3	13
Family income		
\$9,999 or less	32.1	5
\$10,000 to \$19,999	37.5	8
\$20,000 to \$29,999	37.5	9
\$30,000 to \$39,999	44.1	11
\$40,000 to \$49,999	47.9	8
\$50,000 to \$74,999	52.3	18
\$75,000 or more	60.8	28
Income not reported	39.8	9

by the statistical model, which found that men were less than half as likely as women to read literature, once differences in education, income, and other demographic and economic factors were accounted for.

Literary reading is also unequal among different ethnic and racial groups.¹⁸ White Americans have the highest literature participation rate (51 percent), much higher than that of African Americans (37 percent) and Hispanic Americans (26 percent). The statistical model of literary reading shows that, compared to Hispanic Americans, white Americans are almost twice as likely to read literature, even keeping other factors constant, such as the higher overall levels of education among white Americans. African Americans are about 30 percent more likely than Hispanic Americans to read literature.¹⁹

A percent distribution of literary readers by ethnicity and race shows that 80 percent are white, 9 percent are African American, and 6 percent are Hispanic American. A more in-depth focus on ethnicity and race is provided later in this chapter.

Age

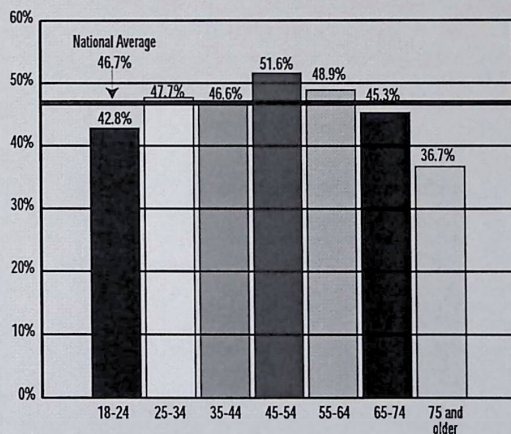
In contrast to the distinct differences in literary reading by gender and ethnic or racial background, Figure 2 shows that literary reading is reasonably consistent between people in different age ranges, with the exception of a very low reading rate among those 75 or older. The next lowest literary reading rate is among young adults aged 18-24 years (43 percent), while the highest rate is for those between 45-54 years (52 percent). All of the age groups (below 75) fall within this reasonably narrow range of participation

rates. In fact, the percentage of literary readers in every age group is only a percentage point or two different from each age group's share of the overall population. The report of the *2001 Consumer Research Study on Book Purchasing* confirms the SPPA findings by stating that "books appeal to consumers of all ages."²⁰

In the statistical model of literary reading, the only age group that was found to be a significant factor in literary reading is the youngest age group (18-24). Accounting for differences in education, income, and other socioeconomic factors, people in this age group were about 15 percent less likely than others to read literature.

Despite the relative consistency in reading among the different age groups, the fact that the youngest age group has the lowest literary reading rate raises

Figure 2: Literary Reading Rates by Age, 2002
Americans 18 years of age or older



Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

¹⁸ The ethnic and racial groups examined include Hispanic Americans (of any race), non-Hispanic white Americans (referred to as simply "white Americans" in this monograph), non-Hispanic African Americans (referred to as simply "African Americans"), and Other ethnic or racial groups.

¹⁹ The SPPA literature questions did not specify the language of books read.

²⁰ *2001 Consumer Research Study on Book Purchasing*, Book Industry Study Group, p. 63.

questions about the future of literary reading in America. Is this an indication of a decline in reading, possibly due to competition from TV, videogames, movies, and the Internet? Or is it simply a "natural" function of the fact that younger people are temporarily preoccupied with other types of reading (textbooks and coursework) or other leisure activities? Will those in the youngest age group read more as they age? Chapter 4 looks at trends in literary reading since 1982, including an analysis of trends in literary reading for specific age groups.

Table 9
Literary Reading by Race and Ethnicity, U.S. Adults
in the 12-Month Period Ending August 2002

Demographic characteristics	Hispanic Americans (% reading literature)	African Americans* (% reading literature)	White Americans* (% reading literature)
Overall literature reading rate	26.5 %	37.1 %	51.3 %
Gender			
Male	18.4	29.8	41.4
Female	34.1	42.9	60.7
Age			
18 to 24	21.6	34.8	48.6
25 to 34	31.9	43.8	51.7
35 to 44	24.5	43.7	51.3
45 to 54	28.7	35.9	56.8
55 to 64	32.2	32.8	53.1
65 to 74	14.3	27.0	50.5
75 or older	17.7	16.7	40.3
Education			
Grade school	11.7	6.5	19.2
Some high school	19.9	22.2	14.0
High school graduate	28.7	29.3	40.4
Some college	34.0	45.8	55.6
College graduate	52.2	58.6	66.1
Graduate school	57.0	59.9	76.1
Family income			
\$9,999 or less	19.5	26.9	38.6
\$10,000 to \$19,999	26.8	33.5	41.6
\$20,000 to \$29,999	21.9	33.4	42.4
\$30,000 to \$39,999	25.4	38.4	48.9
\$40,000 to \$49,999	23.4	45.7	50.3
\$50,000 to \$74,999	37.1	45.6	54.9
\$75,000 or more	39.6	51.8	62.8
Income not reported	22.7	30.2	44.5

*Not including Hispanics

Ethnicity and Race

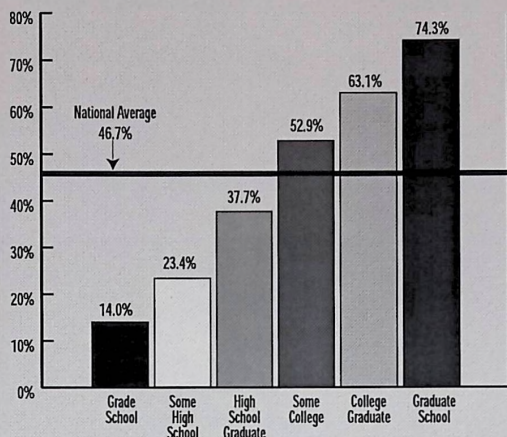
Literary reading rates differ among ethnic and racial groups in America, due in part to differences in culture, language, socioeconomic, education, and other factors outside the scope of the SPPA. Table 9 gives a breakdown of literary reading rates by gender, age, education, and income for people in each of these ethnic and racial groups. Some interesting differences emerge from the data in Table 9. For instance, an examination of literary reading rates by gender shows that women have much higher literary reading rates than men in all ethnic and racial groups.

In addition, the data show that the lowest literary reading rate is among male Hispanic Americans (18 percent), followed by male African Americans (30 percent), and female Hispanic Americans (34 percent). Male white Americans and female African Americans read literature in similar proportions (41 percent and 43 percent, respectively). Female white Americans have by far the highest literary reading rate – 61 percent.

There are also interesting age-related differences in literary reading habits among people in different ethnic and racial groups. For white Americans, literary reading is fairly evenly distributed by age. This is less true for African Americans, for whom literary reading is most common among younger age groups (25 to 34 and 35 to 44). This is undoubtedly related to higher education levels among younger African Americans. There is no consistent pattern of literary reading by Hispanic Americans. The highest reading rates are for those in the 25 to 34 and 55 to 64 age groups.

The data in Table 9 show that literary reading is strongly related to education levels in all ethnic and racial groups. Those with college education have much

Figure 3: Literary Reading Rates by Education, 2002
Americans 18 years of age or older



Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

higher literary reading rates than those with high school education or less. The literary reading rates in all three ethnic and racial groups increase as family income increases. A close examination of the figures shows that the differences in literary reading between the higher and lower income groups are larger for Hispanic and African Americans than for white Americans.

Education

Both the literary reading rates and the statistical model of literary reading show that the most important factor is educational attainment. Figure 3 shows that only 14 percent of those with grade school education read novels, short stories, poetry, or plays in 2002. Those with a graduate school education are more than five times (74 percent) more likely to read literary works. In between these two extremes, literary reading increases consistently at every educational level, with literature participation rates for those with various levels of educational attainment.

The statistical model shows that, compared to high school graduates:

- those with a grade school education are almost 60 percent less likely to read literature;
- those with some high school education (but no diploma) are about a third less likely (35 percent) to read literature;
- those with some college education (but no degree) are about 35 percent more likely to read literature;
- those with a college degree are about 75 percent more likely to read literature; and
- those with a graduate school degree are 240 percent more likely to read literature.

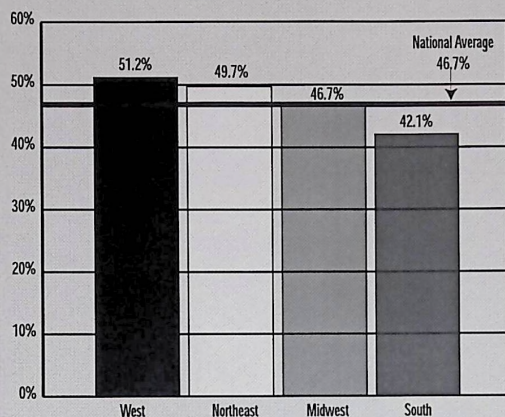
Research into consumers' book purchases confirms the SPPIA findings that highly educated people are overrepresented among book readers. Data from the *2001 Consumer Research Study on Book Purchasing* indicate that, while 27 percent of all adults have at least a college degree, 39 percent of books for adults are bought by those with at least a college degree.²¹

Family Income

The literary reading rate does not vary as strongly based on family income as it does for education, although literature participation does increase fairly steadily for each increase in family income (see the figures in Table 8). About one-third of the lowest income group (those with family income under \$10,000) read literature during the survey year compared to 61 percent of the highest income group (those with family incomes of \$75,000 or more). The statistical model shows that having a low family income (or not reporting the family income level) is associated with low literary reading rates. Those with low family incomes and those who did not report their income level are about 17 percent less likely to read literature as those in other income levels (after adjusting for other factors, such as the fact that those

²¹ 2001 Consumer Research Study on Book Purchasing, p. 35.

Figure 4: Literary Reading Rates by Region, 2002
Americans 18 years of age or older



Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

with lower family incomes often have lower education levels).

Higher income people are overrepresented among those who buy books. While 23 percent of people have household incomes of \$75,000 or more, 33 percent of books are bought by those with household incomes in this range.²²

Geographic Areas

Figure 4 shows that literary reading is most popular in the Western states (51 percent), followed by the Northeast (50 percent), Midwest (47 percent) and South (42 percent). (See Table 10 for a list of the states included in each of these regions.) After accounting for regional differences in education, income, etc., the statistical model shows that, compared with residents of the Northeast, residents of the West are 14 percent more likely to read literature, while residents of the Midwest and South are less likely to read literature (13 percent and 20 percent less likely, respectively).

Table 10 lays out the literary reading rates by region and in sub-regional groupings of states. The

data in Table 10 show that, of nine sub-regional groupings of states, literary reading is most common in the two sub-regions of the West (Mountain – 53 percent and Pacific – 50 percent) and least common in the three sub-regions of the South (South Atlantic – 43 percent, West South Central – 41 percent, and East South Central – 41 percent). The sub-regions of the Northeast (New England and Mid-Atlantic – both 50 percent) and the Midwest (West North Central – 50 percent and East North Central – 45 percent) rank in the middle of regional participation in literature.²³

In addition to these regional differences, the SPPIA found several other differences. People who live in the suburbs are more likely to be readers than either those who live in the city or the country. The literary reading rate for

rural residents is 41 percent, compared with 47 percent for central-city dwellers and 49 percent for those who reside in the suburbs of metropolitan areas.

Employment and Occupation

Employed people are most likely to have read literature in 2002. Indeed, 49 percent of employed people did so, compared to 41 percent of those unemployed. Of those people who are not in the labor force (including retired and disabled Americans as well as those not looking for a job), some 43 percent read literary works in the survey year. People in managerial, professional, and technical occupations are more likely to read literature than those in other occupation groups. Table 11 shows a breakdown of literature participation in four broad occupation groups.

Parents Education Level

Survey respondents were also asked about their parents' education levels. Table 12 shows that reading varies strongly based on parents' education levels,

²² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

²³ Because of the small number of survey respondents in some states, literary reading rates are not reported on a state-by-state basis.

Table 10
Literary Reading by Region, U.S. Adults, 2002

Region (% reading literature)	Sub-region (% reading literature)	States included in sub-region
West (51.2%)	Mountain (53.4%)	Arizona Colorado Idaho Montana Nevada New Mexico Utah Wyoming
	Pacific (50.4%)	Alaska California Hawaii Oregon Washington
Northeast (49.7%)	New England (50.0%)	Connecticut Maine Massachusetts New Hampshire Rhode Island Vermont
	Mid-Atlantic (49.7%)	New Jersey New York Pennsylvania
Midwest (46.7%)	West North Central (49.9%)	Iowa Kansas Minnesota Missouri Nebraska North Dakota South Dakota
	East North Central (45.5%)	Illinois Indiana Michigan Ohio Wisconsin
South (42.1%)	South Atlantic (43.3 %)	Delaware District of Columbia Florida Georgia Maryland North Carolina South Carolina Virginia West Virginia
		West South Central (40.9%)
		Arkansas Louisiana Oklahoma Texas
		East South Central (40.9%)
		Alabama Kentucky Mississippi Tennessee

Table 11
Literary Reading by Occupation Group, U.S. Adults, 2002

Occupation groups	% reading literature
Managerial, professional, technical and support occupations	58.8 %
Sales occupations	40.5
Service occupations	39.9
Production, craft, repair, operator occupations	27.7

undoubtedly due to the fact that better educated parents are more likely to read to their children and encourage children to read when they are young.²⁴ An earlier SPPA survey asked respondents about the encouragement to read that they received from their parents. A summary of the results from the 1982 survey indicated that "the relationship between parental encouragement to read and adult literary reading was quite strong, stronger even than the relationship between the respondent's education level and literary reading."²⁵ The statistical model of literary reading based on the 2002 SPPA survey shows that respondents whose mothers had attended college are nearly 50 percent more likely than others to read literature in 2002.

Table 12
Literary Reading by Parents' Education Levels, U.S. Adults, 2002

Education levels of father or mother	Father's education (% reading literature)	Mother's education (% reading literature)
Grade school	37.0 %	34.2 %
Some high school	44.6	43.6
High school graduate	49.2	49.8
Some college	60.1	63.4
College graduate	63.1	65.2
Graduate school	73.4	76.0

Impact of Television

Does TV watching affect literary reading? This is a key question posed by many who feel that today's frequent TV watchers may not read as much as previous generations have. The 2002 SPPA data show

²⁴ Statistics on the topic of parental involvement in reading can be found through the National Household Education Survey. A summary is available on the National Institute for Literacy's website, www.nifl.gov.

²⁵ Nicholas Zill and Marianne Winglee, *Who Reads Literature?*, National Endowment for the Arts Research Report #22, 1990. Questions about parental encouragement were not asked in the 2002 SPPA.

that literary readers watch an average of 2.7 hours of TV per day, while people who do not read literary works watch an average of 3.1 hours of TV per day.²⁶ Not surprisingly, a statistical model created to analyze frequent readers found that watching four hours or more of TV per day had a negative impact on the chances of someone reading 12 books or more per year. Watching no TV had a positive impact on the

Table 13
Average Number of Hours Per Day Watching TV, U.S. Adults, 2002

	Average Hours Per Day
All adults	2.9
Did not read literature	3.1
Read literature	2.7
*Light book readers (1-5 books)	2.8
*Moderate book readers (6-11 books)	2.6
*Frequent book readers (12-49 books)	2.4
*Avid book readers (50 books or more)	2.6

*Note: Books can be of any type, literary and non-literary

probability of someone reading 12 books or more. Overall, however, frequent readers watch only slightly less TV per day than infrequent readers. The SPPA results cannot show whether people who never read literary works would do so if they watched less TV, or whether they would use this extra time in other ways. A 2001 Gallup survey of 512 people showed that regular computer users spent 1.5 hours per day using the Internet and 1.1 hours reading books. However, those who did not regularly use a computer also spent 1.1 hours per day reading a book.²⁷

In some cases, TV watching may have a positive impact on literary reading. Authors regularly appear on TV to promote their books, and some TV book clubs have been extremely popular. In fact, in the spring of 2002, most book publishers were very

disappointed when Oprah Winfrey cancelled the book club related to her talk show.²⁸ The effects of mass media, particularly television, movies, and the Internet, merit further scrutiny and research.

Literacy

Although 46.7 percent of the adult population read literature in 2002, a comparable percentage of adults may not have been capable of reading and understanding most novels, short stories, poetry, or plays. A 1995 report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shows that 45 percent of adults read at "prose literacy levels" one and two.²⁹ Rather than reporting a single illiteracy rate, NCES classifies adults into five levels of literacy. People scoring at levels one and two probably do not have the skills necessary to read many types of literature.

Participation of Literary Readers in Other Cultural and Leisure Activities

Previous research into performing arts and art museum attendance has shown that attendance at one type of arts activity is strongly related to attendance at other types of activities.³⁰ The 2002 SPPA data show that literary reading is also strongly related to participation in other arts activities. For example, 77 percent of art museum visitors read literature in 2002, and 72 percent of people who attend performing arts events also read literary works. Those who participate in any of the arts are likely to participate in more than one form. Some people appear to be predisposed to partake in a wide range of arts activities, while others choose not to participate in any artistic activities at all. Arts participation, once begun, tends to become a habit.

In the statistical model of literary reading, attendance at art museums and performing arts events is shown to be a significant factor in predicting literary

²⁶ These figures were calculated from responses to the question "Approximately how many hours of television do you watch on an average day?"

²⁷ Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing, "Does reading still stack up?" September 3, 2002.

²⁸ Oprah's book club has been reinstated with a focus on classic literary works rather than contemporary books. A recent selection, for example, is *East of Eden* by John Steinbeck.

²⁹ NCES Fast Facts, National Center for Education Statistics, at www.nces.ed.gov/fastfacts.

³⁰ See, for example, two reports by Hill Strategies, *Performing Arts Attendance in Canada and the Provinces and Museum and Art Gallery Attendance in Canada, 2003*, available from www.hillstrategies.com. For more information about crossovers between disciplines, see 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, Report #45, National Endowment for the Arts, April 2004. Also see Timothy Fisher and Stephen Preece, "Evaluating Performing Arts Audience Overlap" in *International Journal of Arts Management*, vol. 4, no. 3, Spring 2002.

reading, even controlling for education, ethnicity, race, and other factors. Respondents who attended both an art museum and a performing arts event are nearly six times as likely to read literature as those who participated in neither of these arts activities. Those who visited an art museum or attended a performing arts event are over twice as likely to read literature as those who participated in neither of these arts activities.

Demographic Characteristics of Frequent Readers

Of those who read any literary works in 2002, 17 percent are classified as frequent readers (12 or more books in the survey year). Women are much more likely than men to be frequent readers: 22 percent of women, compared to 11 percent of men. Frequent readers among racial and ethnic groups break down into these percentages: 20 percent of white Americans, 9 percent of African Americans, and 5 percent of Hispanic Americans. Those between 45 and 74 years of age tend to read the most books in a year. About one in five people in this age group is a frequent reader, compared to only one in ten people under 25. Frequent readers also tend to have high levels of education and family income. The West, Midwest and Northeast regions of the country have similar proportions of frequent readers (just under one in five residents of each of these regions), while the South has the lowest proportion of frequent readers (about one in seven residents).

Art museum and performing arts attenders are much more likely than non-attenders to be frequent readers. In fact, 33 percent of art museum visitors (compared to 11 percent of non-visitors) read 12 or more books during the year. Similarly, 30 percent of performing arts attenders (compared to 10 percent of non-attenders) read 12 or more books in 2002.

The regression model (see Appendix C) shows the demographic patterns of frequent book readers who reported reading literature. This model demonstrates that:

- men are 37 percent less likely than women to be frequent readers (12 or more books of any kind per year);

- white Americans are 63 percent more likely than people from other ethnic and racial groups to be frequent readers;
- those under 45 years of age are 36 percent less likely to be frequent readers;
- those with at least some college education are 28 percent more likely than those without any college education to be frequent readers;
- those respondents whose mothers had at least some college education are 19 percent more likely to be frequent readers than are those whose mothers had no college education;
- those who are not in the labor force are 17 percent more likely than others to be frequent readers;
- those who visit an art gallery and attend a performing arts events in a year are more than 250 percent more likely to be frequent readers than those who did only one or neither of these arts activities;
- those who did charity work are 26 percent more likely to read 12 or more books per year than those who did not;
- those who did not watch TV in a typical day are 48 percent more likely to be frequent readers than are those who watched one to three hours of TV per day; and
- those who watched four or more hours of TV in a typical day are 12 percent less likely to be frequent readers than are those who watched one to three hours of TV per day.

Readers of Novels, Short Stories, Poetry, and Plays

The 2002 SPPA included questions regarding three types of literature: novels or short stories (a single question), poetry, and plays. Novels or short stories were by far the most popular types of literature, with 45 percent of the survey respondents indicating that they had read novels or short stories in the survey year. In comparison, 12 percent read poetry and 4 percent read plays.

Many demographic patterns are consistent among readers of the different types of literature examined in the SPPA. For all three types of literature:

- women read more than men;
- white Americans are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to read literature;
- reading varies slightly across age groups, with the exception of a drop for those 75 or older and a declining rate for 18-24 year olds;
- reading rates increase strongly with education levels, with college graduate rates more than 50 percent higher than the overall reading rate for poetry or plays and more than one-third higher for novels or short stories;
- reading rates also increase with income levels, with people with family incomes under \$40,000 reading at rates below the overall average, and those with family incomes of \$40,000 or more exceeding average reading rates;
- the West and Northeast regions of the country have the highest reading rates.

There are some differences in the reading rates of different types of literature for non-white ethnic and racial groups. The gap between white Americans – the group with the highest reading rates for all types of literature – and African or Hispanic Americans varies between the different types of literature. For example, there is a large gap between the novel or short story reading rates of white Americans (50 percent), African Americans (35 percent), and Hispanic Americans (25 percent.) In contrast, African Americans and white Americans have similar rates for poetry (12 percent and 13 percent). Hispanic Americans are only somewhat less likely than white Americans to read plays (3.1 percent and 3.8 percent).

Listening to Live or Recorded Readings of Novels or Poetry

In addition to reading books, many people enjoy listening to literary readings, either in person or

Table 14
Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Adults That Read Novels or Short Stories, Poetry, or Plays in the 12-Month Period Ending August 2002

	% reading novels or short stories	% reading poetry	% reading plays
Overall reading rate	45.1 %	12.1 %	3.6 %
Sex			
Male	36.1	7.8	3.0
Female	53.4	16.0	4.1
Ethnicity and race			
Hispanic	24.8	6.7	3.1
White	50.0	13.1	3.8
African American	34.7	11.8	2.8
Other	42.3	9.8	3.1
Age			
18 – 24	40.7	13.9	5.9
25 – 34	45.8	10.9	3.5
35 – 44	45.1	10.9	3.4
45 – 54	50.2	14.2	3.7
55 – 64	47.9	12.4	2.5
65 – 74	43.8	11.9	2.5
75 or older	35.4	9.4	3.2
Education			
Grade school	13.4	2.5	1.1
Some high school	22.7	5.1	1.5
High school graduate	36.5	6.8	1.6
Some college	51.1	14.3	3.9
College graduate	60.7	18.0	6.4
Graduate school	72.3	26.1	8.2
Family income			
\$9,999 or less	29.6	10.0	3.4
\$10,000 to \$19,999	36.2	10.4	3.1
\$20,000 to \$29,999	36.2	9.2	2.5
\$30,000 to \$39,999	42.5	11.0	2.8
\$40,000 to \$49,999	46.4	12.7	4.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	50.7	12.9	3.8
\$75,000 or more	59.4	16.0	4.9
Income not reported	38.0	9.5	2.8
Region			
West	49.5	15.4	4.8
Northeast	48.3	11.9	3.9
Midwest	45.5	10.8	2.8
South	40.5	10.8	3.2

through recordings. The 2002 SPPA asked respondents whether they listened to live or recorded readings of novels³¹ or poetry.³² Just over 9 percent said that they listened to live or recorded readings of novels or other books, and about 6 percent indicated that they listened to poetry readings during the survey year.

Table 15 provides a detailed demographic breakdown of those who listened to novels or poetry in 2002. Women are more likely than men to listen to novels or poetry. While white Americans are most likely to listen to book readings, African Americans are most likely to listen to poetry readings. This may be due, in part, to the popularity of dub and slam poetry readings in the U.S.³³ Although readings of both novels and poetry are most commonly attended by those between 45 and 54, there is decidedly younger audience listening to poetry readings. The second-most likely age group to attend poetry readings is 18-24 year olds, while 55-64 year olds are most likely to listen to a reading of a novel or other literary work.

There is a strong connection between education and listening to both novels and poetry; college graduates are more than 50 percent more likely than the average person to listen to novels or poetry. The rates of listening to novel or poetry readings also increase with income. As was the case with literary reading, the West has the highest rates of listening to novels or poetry of all regions of the country.

Personal Creative Writing

The third major set of questions dealt with personal creative writing,³⁴ and about one in 14 people (7 percent) said that they wrote creative works during the survey year. As is the case with all facets of literary reading and writing,

³¹ "Did you listen to a reading of novels or books, either live or recorded during the last 12 months?"

³² "Did you listen to a reading of poetry, either live or recorded during the last 12 months?"

³³ Dub poetry is an oral presentation of poetic works usually combined with music (often drumming).

³⁴ "With the exception of work or school, did you do any creative writing such as stories, poems or plays during the last 12 months?"

Table 15
Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Adults Listening to Live or Recorded Readings of Novels or Poetry, 2002

	% listening to novels or other books	% listening to poetry
Overall rate	9.3 %	5.9 %
Sex		
Male	7.9	4.8
Female	10.6	6.8
Ethnicity and race		
Hispanic	5.6	3.4
White	10.3	5.9
African American	7.4	8.6
Other	6.6	5.1
Age		
18 – 24	5.6	6.2
25 – 34	7.7	5.8
35 – 44	10.5	5.8
45 – 54	12.1	7.1
55 – 64	10.9	5.9
65 – 74	9.3	4.8
75 or older	6.2	3.8
Education		
Grade school	2.6	1.3
Some high school	3.6	2.9
High school graduate	5.4	2.8
Some college	9.7	7.3
College graduate	15.3	9.1
Graduate school	20.9	12.4
Family income		
\$9,999 or less	6.1	4.6
\$10,000 to \$19,999	4.9	4.5
\$20,000 to \$29,999	5.9	4.7
\$30,000 to \$39,999	8.5	6.4
\$40,000 to \$49,999	8.3	6.7
\$50,000 to \$74,999	11.8	6.1
\$75,000 or more	14.0	7.2
Income not reported	7.7	4.9
Region		
West	11.7	7.3
Northeast	8.8	6.6
Midwest	9.7	5.6
South	7.8	4.7

Table 16
Demographic Characteristics of U.S. Adults
Doing Creative Writing, 2002

	% doing creative writing
Overall rate	7.0 %
Sex	
Male	5.8
Female	8.2
Ethnicity and race	
Hispanic	4.0
White	7.6
African American	7.4
Other	5.3
Age	
18 – 24	12.7
25 – 34	7.9
35 – 44	6.7
45 – 54	6.8
55 – 64	5.0
65 – 74	4.1
75 or older	3.7
Education	
Grade school	1.0
Some high school	2.8
High school graduate	4.1
Some college	9.1
College graduate	10.6
Graduate school	12.7
Family income	
\$9,999 or less	7.8
\$10,000 to \$19,999	5.5
\$20,000 to \$29,999	5.6
\$30,000 to \$39,999	7.6
\$40,000 to \$49,999	7.4
\$50,000 to \$74,999	7.0
\$75,000 or more	8.5
Income not reported	5.9
Region	
West	8.3
Northeast	7.3
Midwest	7.5
South	5.9

women are more likely than men to pursue creative writing. Similarly, creative writing is most popular among those with high education levels and among residents of the western region of the country.

However, an analysis of creative writers shows some differences between the demographic characteristics of creative writers and literary readers (see Table 16). Interestingly, creative writing does not increase consistently by income levels. Low- and middle-income people are about as likely to write creative works as those with high incomes. Other comparisons of the data show that African Americans are as likely as white Americans to do creative writing. In addition, creative writing is most common among those under 25.

Summary of Factors in Literature Participation

With nearly one-half of Americans participating, literary reading is clearly one of the nation's favorite pastimes. But the pleasures of reading literature are not shared by all. Educational attainment is the most important factor in literature participation. Highly educated people read literature much more than those with lower levels of education. This chapter has also shown that reading and listening to literature are consistently higher for women, urban residents, and, generally, those with higher family incomes. White Americans have the highest participation rates of any ethnic or racial group in almost all literature-related activities, except for the high participation rate of African Americans listening to poetry and doing creative writing. Literature participation is fairly consistent between those in different age ranges, with the exception of the youngest and oldest people. Literary activities are most popular in the West, followed by the Northeast, Midwest, and South.

It is not clear from the SPPA data how much influence TV watching has on literary reading. People who read literary works, even frequent book readers, watch slightly less TV each day than those who do not read at all. A statistical model created to analyze

frequent book readers found that watching four hours or more of TV per day had a negative impact on the chances of someone reading 12 books or more per year, while watching no TV had a positive impact on the probability of someone reading 12 books or more. The SPPA results cannot show whether people would read more if they watched less TV, or whether they would use this extra time in other ways.

The 2002 SPPA data show that one of the most important factors in literary reading is participation in other arts activities. Art museum and performing arts attendance are significant factors in literature participation, even adjusting for education, ethnicity, race and other factors. The book industry might target arts participants in their marketing in the future.

Chapter 4: Trends in Literature Participation, 1982-2002

Over the past 20 years, the U.S. has experienced significant demographic change. The population has grown considerably since 1982 and is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. Recent waves of immigration have come from a wide range of countries. The Census Bureau noted in a recent report that “the minority population grew 11 times more rapidly as the white non-Hispanic population between 1980 and 2000.”³⁵ The changing demographics of the United States ensure continued change in literary and artistic circles and in public participation in literature and the arts.

Myriad other social and economic transformations have also taken place since 1982. For example, technological change has increased in intensity over the past 20 years. In 1982, personal computers were a relatively new phenomenon, and the Internet was a small network. Now, computers and the Internet are readily available in many homes and in most workplaces. Videogames have also proliferated since the early 1980s, a time when Atari sets were fairly new. These changes, along with the growth in network, cable, and satellite television and the advent of video rentals, have had a significant impact on people’s time use over the past 20 years. As early as the 1980s, fears were expressed that the U.S. was becoming a “nation of watchers” rather than a “nation of readers.”³⁶ In the late 1990s, the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress chose “Building a Nation of Readers” as its National Reading Promotion Campaign theme. By the time of the 2002 SPPA, public participation in literature faced very real challenges born out by the Survey’s findings.

This chapter examines changes in literary reading in the 1982, 1992, and 2002 Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts, and relates these changes to literary, social, and cultural trends in American

society. Results from statistical tests (chi square) are also presented in this chapter in order to examine whether the changes in literary reading between 1982, 1992, and 2002 are statistically significant.³⁷

Changes in Literature Participation

Literary reading in America has not grown since 1982. In fact, it is the strong growth in the population that has allowed the overall number of people reading literature to remain stable at about 96 million between 1982 and 2002.³⁸ Along with these figures, Table 17 shows that there has been a substantial decrease in the percentage of people reading literature, from 57 percent in 1982 to 47 percent in 2002, a decline of 10 percentage points.

Table 17
Literary Reading, U.S. Adults, 1982, 1992, and 2002

	1982	1992	2002	Change 1982 to 2002
Number reading literature (in millions)	95.6	100.3	96.2	0.6
American population 18 or older (in millions)	168.0	185.8	205.9	37.9
% reading literature	56.9%	54.0%	46.7%	-10.2

Changes in Poetry Reading and Listening

During the 1990s, the growth in popularity of live readings, poetry slams, and other forms led some to speculate about a revitalization of poetry in America.³⁹ If such revitalization is occurring, it is not apparent in the figures from the 1982, 1992, and 2002 Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts. A comparison of the poetry readers and listeners in these years (see Table 18) shows that, despite significant population growth, the number of people reading poetry or listening to a poetry reading decreased from about 34 million in 1982 to just under 30 million in 2002. This amounts to a loss of more

³⁵ *Demographic Trends in the 20th Century*, Census 2000 Special Report issued November 2002.

³⁶ See, for example, President Reagan’s Radio Address on Education, September 8, 1984, available at <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1984/08084a.htm>

³⁷ The chi-square statistic can be used to test whether the literary reading rates of Americans in various groups (e.g., men, women, Hispanic Americans, white Americans, etc.) are independent of the year the sampling was done. Within each group, a statistically significant chi-square statistic would indicate that the literary reading rates were significantly different between the years tested.

³⁸ In 1982, only one question was asked regarding literary reading: “During the last 12 months, did you read novels, short stories, poetry or plays?” In 1992 and 2002, three separate questions were asked: “During the last 12 months, did you read any plays?”; “During the last 12 months, did you read any poetry?”; and “During the last 12 months, did you read any novels or short stories?” Respondents who said “yes” to any of these three questions in 1992 or 2002 are included in Table 17. In all three years, a statistically representative sample of Americans was surveyed. In 1982 and 2002, there were about 17,000 survey respondents, compared to about 13,000 in 1992. It should be noted that the estimate of 96 million literary readers differs from the 93.3 million estimate that appears on page 2, Table 1, of *Research Report #45: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts*, because it is based on the revised estimate of the 1982 adult population, 168 million, and not the 164 million originally provided by the Census Bureau.

³⁹ See, for example, “10 Years After, Poetry Still Matters” in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 27, 2002.

than 4 million people, or 13 percent of the 1982 audience for poetry.⁴⁰ The percentage of people reading poetry or listening to poetry decreased substantially, from about 20 percent of adults in 1982 and 1992 to 14 percent in 2002.

Table 18
Reading or Listening to Poetry, U.S. Adults, 1982, 1992, and 2002

	1982	1992	2002	Change 1982 to 2002
Number reading or listening to poetry (in millions)	33.8	38	29.5	-4.3
% reading or listening to poetry	19.8 %	20.5 %	14.3 %	-5.5

Changes in Personal Creative Writing

Contrary to the overall decline in literary reading, the number of people doing creative writing – of any genre, not exclusively literary works – increased substantially between 1982 and 2002. In 1982, about 11 million people did some form of creative writing. By 2002, this number had risen to almost 15 million people (18 or older), an increase of about 30 percent.⁴¹

The percentage of people doing creative writing increased by a much smaller amount, from just fewer than 7 percent of adults in 1982 to just greater than 7 percent in 2002. Table 19 shows the trends in creative writing activity.

Table 19
Creative Writing, U.S. Adults, 1982, 1992, and 2002

	1982	1992	2002	Change 1982 to 2002 *
Number doing creative writing (in millions)	11.5	13.7	14.4	2.9
% doing creative writing	7.0 %	7.4 %	7.1 %	0.1

* The amounts in the change column are calculated from non-rounded figures. Because of rounding, the amounts in this column may not equal the difference between the figures in the other columns.

Changes in Creative Writing Classes or Lessons

Table 20 shows that the number of people who indicated that they had ever taken a creative writing class or lesson decreased from 30 million in 1982 to 27 million in 2002.⁴² The percentage of people taking creative writing classes or lessons at some point in their lives also decreased, from 18 percent of adults in 1982 to 13 percent in 2002.

Table 20
Creative Writing Classes or Lessons, U.S. Adults, 1982, 1992, and 2002

	1982	1992	2002	Change 1982 to 2002
Number ever taking creative writing classes or lessons (in millions)	29.5	29	27.3	-2.2
% ever taking creative writing classes or lessons	18.0 %	15.6 %	13.3 %	-4.7

Factors in the Changes in Literature Participation

Due to higher overall levels of education in America over the past 20 years and the correlation between literature participation and education, one might think that there would have been an increase in the popularity of literature since 1982. However, an

analysis of the demographic characteristics of literary readers in 1982, 1992, and 2002 shows a widespread decline in the literary reading rates of people from a range of demographic backgrounds. In fact, literary reading rates decreased for men, women, all ethnic and racial groups, all education groups, and all age groups.

⁴⁰ In 1982, only one question was asked regarding poetry reading and listening: "During the last 12 months, did you read, or listen to a reading of, poetry?" In 2002, two separate questions were asked: "During the last 12 months, did you read any poetry?" and "During the last 12 months, did you listen to a reading of poetry, either live or recorded?" Respondents who said "yes" to either of these questions in 2002 are included in Table 18.

⁴¹ The creative writing question asked did not vary much between 1982 and 2002. In 1982, the wording was: "During the last 12 months, did you work on any creative writings such as stories, poems, plays and the like? Exclude any writing done as part of a course requirement." In 1992 and 2002, the wording was: "With the exception of work or school, did you do any creative writing such as stories, poems or plays during the last 12 months?"

⁴² The question regarding creative writing lessons or classes did not change between 1982 and 2002. In all three years, the wording was: "Have you ever taken lessons or classes in creative writing?"

The results of the statistical test (chi square) confirm the significance of the widespread decline in literary reading. The statistical test shows that, between 1982 and 2002, there were statistically significant decreases in literary reading for the following demographic groups:

- men and women;
- Hispanic Americans, white Americans, African Americans and other ethnic groups;
- people in all categories of educational attainment; and
- the three age groups under 45 (18-24, 25-34, and 35-44).

There are some differences in the rates of decline among different demographic groups. For example, the decrease in literary reading was more pronounced among men than among women. Figure 5 illustrates a decrease in the male literary reading rate from 49

percent to 37 percent, a drop of 12 percentage points.⁴³ In contrast, the female literary reading rate decreased from 63 percent to 55 percent, a drop of 8 percentage points. Figure 5 also illustrates the overall decline in literary reading, from 56 percent in 1982 to 47 percent in 2002.

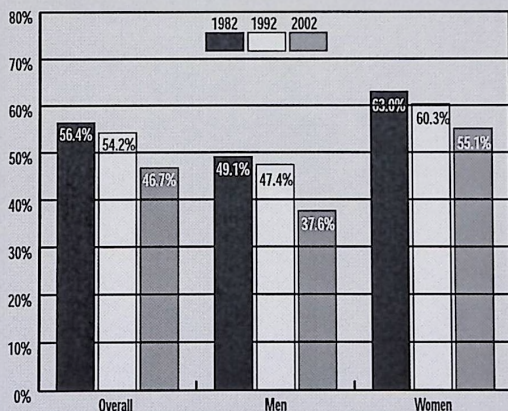
Gender

The gap in the literary reading rates between women and men increased between 1982 and 2002. In 1982, the literary reading rate among women (63 percent)

Table 21
Literary Reading by Gender, 1982, 1992, and 2002
(Millions of U.S. Adults)

	1982	1992	2002	Change	% change
Men	39.5	42.2	36.9	-2.6	-6.6%
Women	56.8	58.5	59.1	2.3	4.0%

Figure 5: Literary Reading Rates by Gender, 1982, 1992, and 2002
Americans 18 years of age and older



Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

was 14 percentage points higher than the rate among men (49 percent). The difference increased to 17 percentage points in 2002, with 55 percent of women and 38 percent of men reading literature. Changes in the *number* of people reading literature depend on two main factors: changes in the literary reading rate and changes in population. Because of the overall 21 percent increase in the population (18 years of age and older), the trends in the number of people reading literature were not as strongly downward as the changes in the literary reading rates.

Different demographic groups saw varying rates of population growth and differing changes in literary reading rates between 1982 and 2002. Consequently, changes in the number of people reading literature varied between demographic groups. Table 21 shows

⁴³ This drop in percentage points should not be confused with the "percentage decrease." The drop in percentage points is simply the difference between the literary reading rates in 1982 and 2002. The percentage change relates the difference in rates to the initial reading rate. The percentage change in the proportion of men reading literature was 24 percent between 1982 and 2002, while the percentage change was 13 percent for women.

that the number of male literary readers decreased slightly, from 39 million in 1982 to 37 million in 2002. The number of American women reading literature increased slightly, from 57 million to 59 million between 1982 and 2002.

Race and Ethnicity

Among all four ethnic and racial groups examined, the literary reading rate decreased most strongly among Hispanic Americans. At 36 percent, the literary reading rate of Hispanic Americans was the lowest of all ethnic and racial groups in 1982. This rate decreased by 10 percentage points to 26 percent in 2002. Figure 6 shows that there were significant, but lower, rates of decline in literary reading among white Americans (-8.4 points), African Americans (-5.2), and people of Other ethnic and racial origins (-6.5).

The gap between the literary reading rates of white and Hispanic Americans increased slightly between 1982 and 2002. In 1982, 60

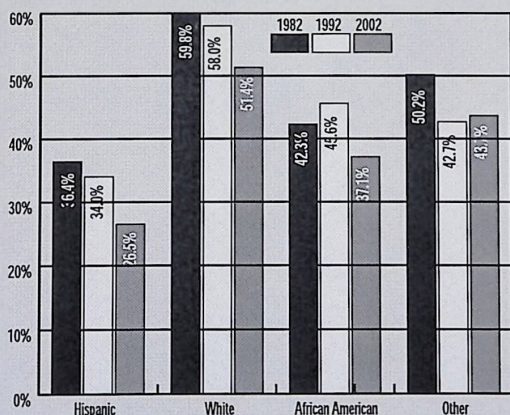
percent of white Americans and 36 percent of Hispanic Americans read literature, for a difference of about 23 percentage points. In 2002, the difference was 25 percentage points.

The gap between the literary reading rates of white and African Americans decreased slightly, from 17 percentage points in 1982 to 14 percentage points in 2002. The gap between the literary reading rates of white Americans and people from other ethnic groups also decreased slightly between 1982 and 2002. In 1982, the gap was nearly 10 percentage points; in 2002, the

Table 22
Literary Reading by Ethnicity and Race, 1982, 1992, and 2002
(Millions of U.S. Adults)

	1982	1992	2002	Change	% change
Hispanic	3.4	5.2	6	2.6	74.7 %
White	83.3	83.5	77	-6.2	-7.5
African American	7.6	9.5	8.8	1.2	15.4
Other	2	2.4	4.1	2.2	111.5

Figure 6: Literary Reading Rates by Ethnicity And Race, 1982, 1992, and 2002
Americans 18 years of age or older



Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

gap was 6.5 percentage points.

At the same time as the literary reading rate decreased very strongly among Hispanic Americans, there was also a sharp increase in the Hispanic American population. Given this population increase, the number of Hispanic Americans reading literature increased by nearly 3 million between 1982 and 2002. This increase, which amounts to nearly 75 percent of the number of Hispanic American literary readers in 1982, is the largest increase in the number of readers from any ethnic or racial group.

There was also significant growth in the African American population and in the population from other ethnic groups. Because of these important demographic shifts, the number of readers from African

American and other backgrounds increased between 1982 and 2002. In contrast, the number of white Americans reading literature fell by more than 6 million between 1982 and 2002. In summary, because of the changing demographics of the U.S., there was an increase in the number of literary readers from all ethnic and racial groups *except* white Americans.

These changes in the number of literary readers are highlighted in Table 22. White Americans represented 80 percent of literary readers in 2002, down from 87 percent in 1982. African Americans constituted 9 percent of literary readers in 2002, a slight increase from 8 percent in 1982. Hispanic Americans comprised 6 percent of literary readers in 2002, up from 4 percent in 1982. Finally, Americans from other ethnic and racial groups represented 4 percent of literary readers in 2002, an increase from 2 percent in 1982.

Education

Figure 7 illustrates that the literary reading rate

decreased significantly for people with all levels of educational attainment. In fact, the literary reading rate decreased by 15 percentage points or more for those in all except the lowest education group (grade school only).

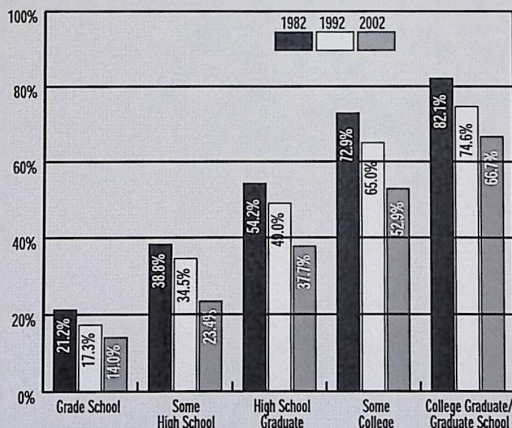
Table 23
Literary Reading by Education, 1982, 1992, and 2002
(Millions of U.S. Adults)

	1982	1992	2002	Change	% change
Grade school	4.2	2.4	1.6	-2.5	-60.9%
Some high school	9.9	7.6	4.7	-5.2	-52.6
High school graduate	33.1	32.6	24	-9.1	-27.5
Some college	26.1	27.2	30	4	15.2
College graduate / Graduate school	23.5	31.1	35.6	12.2	52.0

The gap between the literary reading rates of college graduates and high school graduates remained large but stable between 1982 and 2002. In 1982, the difference between the reading rates of college graduates (82 percent) and high school graduates (54 percent) was about 28 percentage points. By 2002, after a significant drop in the literary reading rates of both groups, the gap was 29 percentage points.

Despite the sharp decreases in literary reading at all education levels, rising levels of education in American society led to an increase in the number of literary readers who had some college education or a college degree. Table 23 shows that the number of readers with a college degree or graduate education increased by about 12 million. The number of literary readers with some college education increased by about 4 million. There were decreases in the number of literary readers at the three other education levels. In particular, the number of literary readers with a high school education decreased by 9 million.

Figure 7: Literary Reading Rates by Education, 1982, 1992, and 2002
Americans 18 years of age or older



Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

Age Groups

Although literary reading rates decreased between 1982 and 2002, the only statistically significant decrease was for those 18 to 44 years of age. While all three age groups under age 45 dropped in percentage, for those adults 18 to 24 years of age, the literary reading rate decreased from nearly 60 percent in 1982 to 43 percent in 2002 – a drop of 17 percentage points.

Young adults are reading much less than they used to. Making literary reading appeal to teenagers also appears to be a significant problem. Long-term reading assessments, summarized by the National Institute for Literacy, show that:

- a smaller percentage of 13- and 17-year-olds read for fun daily in 1999 than in 1984;
- a smaller percentage of 17-year-olds saw adults reading in their homes in 1999 than in 1984; and
- a greater percentage of 17-year-olds were watching three or more hours of television each day in 1999 than in 1978.⁴⁴

For those in the 25 to 34 age group, literary reading decreased by more than 14 percentage points, from 62 percent in 1982 to 47 percent in 2002. The literary reading rate among those 35 to 44 years of age decreased by 13 percentage points, from 60 percent in 1982 to 47 percent in 2002.

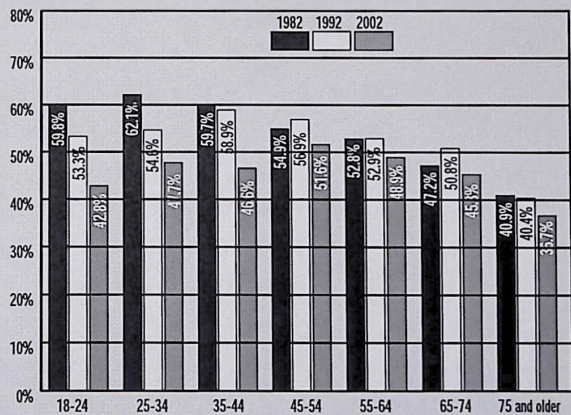
A close examination of Figure 8 also reveals a shift in the popularity of literary reading between 1982 and 2002, especially among the younger age groups. In 1982, the 25 to 34 age group had the highest literary reading rate (62 percent), followed by the 18 to 24 and the 35 to 44 age groups (each 60 percent). In 2002, the

literary reading rate of people under 45 did not rank as highly among the seven age groups. In 2002, the 18 to 24 age group had a literary reading rate (43 percent) that placed it sixth among the seven age groups. The 48 percent literary reading rate of those between 25 and 34 ranked third among all age groups, while the 47 percent rate for people between 35 and 44 ranked fourth. People between 45 and 54 had the highest literary reading rate in 2002 (52 percent). For people between 55 and 64, the literary reading rate of 49 percent placed this group second among the seven age groups. The literary reading rates of those between 65 and 74 (45 percent) and people 75 and older (37 percent) ranked these groups fifth and seventh respectively.

In 1982, reading literature peaked between ages 18 and 34, gradually falling off as readers aged. In 2002, fewer younger people are reading literature; the peak age group is 45-54, with sloping off rates at both ends of the spectrum.

Population growth and aging led to increases in the number of people reading literature in all age

Figure 8: Literary Reading Rates by Age, 1982, 1992, and 2002
Americans 18 years of age or older



Source: 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

* See the National Institute for Literacy's online *Reading Facts* available at www.nifl.gov.

** Forget literary reading, it is the act of reading which is essential*

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groups 35 or older. The increase in the number of literary readers was largest for those between the ages of 45 and 54 (this age group encompasses the largest share of the baby boomer cohort). There were more than 7 million more literary readers in this age category in 2002 than in 1982. This is about double the increase in the number of literary readers between the ages of 35 and 44. For those 55 and older, the increase in the number of literary readers was fairly small. There were significant decreases in the number of literary readers in the 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 age groups. Not only have the percentages fallen for young adults, but the actual numbers of young readers have fallen, despite overall population growth. See Table 24 for full details.

An important question about literary reading concerns trends in age cohorts over time. This section compares the literary reading rates by age in 1982 with the age groups to which those people would belong in 2002. As an example, the literary reading rate of 25 to 34 year olds in 1982 was 62 percent. In 2002, this group of people would have been between 45 and 54. The literary reading rate of this group in 2002 was under 52 percent, a decrease of more than 10 percentage points. Table 25 shows that there has been a substantial decrease in literary reading between 1982 and 2002 for every age cohort. In fact, all of the age cohorts have seen decreases of about 10 percentage points or more since 1982.

Other Leisure Activities

A comparison of the 1982, 1992, and 2002 Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts shows that time spent watching TV has remained stable for those 18 and older. In 1982 and 1992, the average amount of TV watched per day was 3.0 hours. This decreased slightly to 2.9 hours per day in 2002. These figures suggest that TV watching may not be an important factor in the overall decrease in literary reading.

Movies are a popular leisure activity in the United States, but the percentage of people going to at least one movie in a year decreased slightly over the past 20 years, from 63 percent in 1982 to 60 percent in 2002.

Although this seems to show that literary reading is not being replaced by moviegoing, it should be noted that it is possible that those who went to the movies in 2002 may have gone to more movies per year (than moviegoers in 1982), leaving them with less time to read literature.

Watching movies at home is also very popular, with many people setting up full "home theaters" to watch movies acquired through satellite or cable connections or the rental of videotape and digital video disks. In 1982, videocassette recorders were just starting to achieve widespread home popularity.

Between 1985 and 2000, annual consumer spending on television, radios, and sound equipment increased by 68 percent, from \$371 per household in 1985 to \$622 in 2000. In comparison, annual spending on reading increased by only 4 percent, from \$141 per household in 1985 to \$146 in 2000.⁴⁵

Table 24
Literary Reading by Age, 1982, 1992, and 2002
(Millions of U.S. Adults)

	1982	1992	2002	Change	% change
18 to 24	17.8	12.9	11.4	-6.3	-35.7%
25 to 34	24.9	23.1	17.6	-7.3	-29.2
35 to 44	17	23.4	20.5	3.5	20.7
45 to 54	12.7	15.8	20.1	7.4	58.4
55 to 64	12	11.3	12.6	0.6	5.0
65 to 74	7.8	9.3	8	0.2	2.5
75 and older	4.1	5	5.7	1.6	39.3

Table 25
Literary Reading by Age Cohort, 1982 and 2002
(Millions of U.S. Adults)

	1982	2002	Change
18 - 24 in 1982 / 35 - 44 in 2002	59.8%	46.6%	-13.2
25 - 34 in 1982 / 45 - 54 in 2002	62.1	51.6	-10.5
35 - 44 in 1982 / 55 - 64 in 2002	59.7	48.9	-10.8
45 - 54 in 1982 / 65 - 74 in 2002	54.9	45.3	-9.6
55 - 64 in 1982 / 75 and older in 2002	52.8	36.7	-16.1

⁴⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2002*, Table 1212, p. 748.

Summary of Trends in Literature Participation

The statistics presented in this chapter clearly demonstrate that there has been a widespread decline in literary reading over the past 20 years. There were significant decreases in the literary reading rates of Americans from a wide range of demographic groups, including:

- men and women;
- people from all ethnic and racial groups;
- people with all levels of educational attainment; and
- those under age 45.

Poetry suffered between 1982 and 2002 with fewer people reading poetry or listening to live poetry readings or recordings. Creative writing is one of the few literary activities in which a higher percentage of people participated in 2002 than in 1982.

Although nearly half of Americans read literature in 2002, literary participation is clearly less popular than it used to be, possibly due to competition for entertainment time and money from a range of other options, including videogames, movies, and the Internet. Consumer spending data show a significant increase in spending on television, radios, and sound equipment between 1985 and 2000. Because of the overall increase in the population between 1982 and 2002, the trends in the number of people reading literature were not as strongly downward as the changes in the literary reading rates.

For all who are interested in reading habits in America – from the book industry, literacy organizations, and arts funders to governments and businesses that depend on a well-educated, literate workforce – the trends presented in this chapter point to the importance of attracting and exciting readers from a broad range of demographic groups.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

In a recent essay, "What use is literature?," Myron Magnet stated that "data are meaningless until we can articulate a story that makes sense out of them, and literature makes sense out of the data of human experience."⁴⁶

Who Reads Literature?

Data from the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) demonstrate that many people enjoy literature. Novels, short stories, poetry, and plays attract almost one-half of those 18 or older (47 percent or about 96 million people). Each part of the literary puzzle examined in this monograph – novels, short stories, poetry, and plays – attracts a significant number of people. Poetry (read by 25 million adults) is about as popular as attendance at jazz performances or at classical music events. About as many people read plays (7 million) as attend live opera or ballet. Novels and short stories have an audience (93 million) that is larger than almost any other cultural or leisure pursuit. A number of people have a particularly strong attachment to books; about one in six literary readers (17 percent) read 12 or more books in 2002.

Americans participate in literature in a variety of other ways. Almost one in ten (9 percent) listened to live or recorded readings of novels or books, and 6 percent listened to poetry readings during the survey year. About 7 percent wrote creative works of their own, and 9 percent used the Internet to learn about, read, or discuss topics related to literature. Most literary readers are active in a wide range of other cultural and leisure pursuits.

Factors in Literature Participation

Those with high levels of education are much more likely to read literature than those with lower levels of educational attainment. Reading and listening to literature are consistently higher for women, urban residents, and, generally, people with higher family incomes. Non-Hispanic white Americans have the highest participation rates of any ethnic or racial group in almost all literature-related activities. One

exception to this is the high participation rate of non-Hispanic African Americans listening to poetry.

The pleasure of literature participation appears to be shared fairly equally among those in different age ranges, although the youngest and oldest age groups have the lowest participation rates.

Literary activities are most popular in the West, followed by the Northeast, Midwest and South.

It is not clear from the SPPA data how much influence TV watching has on literary reading. Not surprisingly, a statistical model created to analyze frequent readers found that watching four hours or more of TV per day had a negative impact on the chances of someone reading 12 books or more per year.⁴⁷ Watching no TV had a positive impact on the probability of someone reading 12 books or more. Literary readers watch slightly less TV each day than non-readers, and frequent readers watch only slightly less TV per day than infrequent readers. The SPPA results cannot show whether non-readers would read more if they watched less TV, or whether they would use this extra time in other ways.

Literacy rates and levels (see Literacy on page 15) have a significant impact on literature participation. More research into the leisure time habits of well-educated non-readers would be required in order to determine ways of raising literacy in the U.S., although it is evident that people have more arts and entertainment options competing for their leisure time than ever before.

Participation in Other Arts Activities

The 2002 SPPA data show that one of the most important factors in literary reading is participation in other arts activities. Art museum and performing arts attendance are significant indicators for literature participation, even adjusting for education, ethnicity, race, and other factors.

⁴⁶ In *City Journal*, Summer 2003, www.city-journal.org.

⁴⁷ The details of the statistical models created for this report are included in Appendix C.

Trends in Literature Participation

The percentage of U.S. adults reading literature dropped from 56.4 percent in 1982 to 46.7 percent in 2002 – a decline of almost 10 percentage points. This may indicate a downward trend over the past two decades, but it is important to note that the SPPA is not conducted on a yearly basis. This monograph looks at the surveys held in 1982, 1992, and 2002 – ten-year snapshots. No information is available for non-SPPA years, and it is possible that the 2002 drop is a short, one-year change.

If the 2002 data represent a declining trend, it is tempting to suggest that fewer people are reading literature and now prefer visual and audio entertainment. Again, the data – both from SPPA and other sources – do not readily quantify this explanation.

As discussed in Chapter 3, television does not seem to be the culprit. In 2002, those who do read and those who do not read literature watched about the same amount of TV per day – three hours' worth. The Internet, however, could have played a role. During the time period when the literature participation rates declined, home Internet use soared. According to a 2000 Census Bureau report, 42 percent of households used the Internet at home – up dramatically from 26 percent in 1998, one of the earliest years of the Bureau's tracking.⁴⁸ By contrast, literary reading rates reported in 1982 and 1992 were virtually identical in a period before the Internet was widely available. It was not until 2002 that the reported percentage of adults reading literature dropped considerably.

Also, home Internet users have a similar profile to literary readers. They are likely to be well educated (bachelor's degree or higher) and belong to the age group whose reading rates show the greatest percentage drop. Home Internet use was the greatest (50.2 percent) for people ages 25-44. However, this pattern of falling literary reading rates timed with rising home Internet use may only be coincidental. The SPPA did not ask if people substituted Internet

surfing for reading literary works.

Demographic factors may have also contributed to the overall decline in literary reading rates. Over the 20-year span of this analysis, Hispanics doubled their share of the total U.S. population, rising from 6.4 percent of the total in 1980 to 12.5 percent in 2003.⁴⁹ At the same time, the 2002 SPPA reports that the literary reading rate for Hispanics was only half that of non-Hispanic whites. So, the dramatic population growth of Hispanics may have contributed to lower literary reading rates for the adult population as a whole.

But this assumption has shortcomings. If Hispanic populations were a significant reason for falling rates of literary reading, presumably the SPPA would have reported heavier decreases in literary reading by adults with lower levels of education (given that education levels are lower for Hispanics). Instead, the survey reports that literary reading fell among all education levels. Still, population growth for this ethnic group is considerable. For this reason alone, arts agencies and policy makers may want to target Hispanics for programs to raise literary reading rates.

These are only two factors of many that could have contributed to the drop in the share of adults reading literature in 2002. Newspaper and magazine articles about post-September 11 developments and the war in Afghanistan may have hindered literary reading during the survey year.

Additional data and research are needed to explain why literary reading fell in 2002 and if indeed there is a pattern of decline over time. More research is needed to complete the portrait of the reader of literary works. Some questions for a research agenda and a national conversation on literature participation might include:

- How does literature, particularly serious literary work, compete with the Internet, popular entertainment, and other increased demands on leisure time?

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, "Home Computers and Internet Use in the United States: August 2000." *Current Population Reports*, P23-207, September, 2001.
⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, "The Hispanic Population." *Census 2000 Brief*, May 2001.

- How do parents, communities, schools, and the education system respond to illiteracy and aliteracy?
- Have changes in the ways publishers choose and market books had any effect on literature participation?
- If education levels are the surest predictor of literature participation, what can be done to increase the reading level by less educated adults?
- What factors are at work in the decline in reading literary works among people ages 18 to 45? Are we losing a generation of readers?

The National Endowment for the Arts and other organizations involved with literature can look forward to future arts participation surveys (the next SPPA is scheduled for 2007) to further investigate who reads literature.

Appendix A

Survey of Public Participation in the Arts Background and Methodology

In 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) initiated the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) to examine the public's involvement in a variety of arts and art forms. The survey examines general participation in the performing arts, visual arts, historic site visits, music, and literature.

1982 and 1985 Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts

The U.S. Census Bureau administered the first SPPA in conjunction with the 1982 National Crime Survey, which surveyed over 72,000 individuals. More than 17,000 respondents over 18 years of age were interviewed for the SPPA.

The survey concentrated primarily on live arts participation, consisting of ten questions. The survey asked the live arts questions of all survey respondents. On a rotating basis, it asked questions pertaining to arts education, non-arts leisure activities, arts facilities, music preferences, arts creation and other participation, media engagement, and barriers to attending live performances categories. As a result, the sample sizes for the latter questions were smaller than for the live arts category. Approximately 25 percent of the interviews were completed by phone.

In 1985, the NEA sponsored a second SPPA through the U.S. Census Bureau as part of the newly named National Crime Victimization Survey. It was nearly identical to the 1982 survey.

1992 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

The third SPPA, conducted in 1992, surveyed 12,736 individuals over 18 years of age and followed the same format as previous surveys. However, questions about arts education, non-arts leisure activities, etc. were asked throughout the year, thereby providing a larger sample size for these questions than in the 1982 survey. Additionally, the NEA refined the survey instrument by adding, omitting, and modifying various questions

and sections. For example, the arts education category includes new questions about the location of arts education and if survey respondents had taken arts education lessons in the last year. The survey dropped questions about craftwork lessons. Some questions concerning live attendance, recreation lifestyle, music preferences, arts creation, and media participation were also modified.

1997 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

From June to October of 1997, the NEA conducted a fourth edition of the SPPA. This survey was not administered through the U.S. Census Bureau's National Victimization Survey. Instead, the NEA retained Westat Corporation of Rockville, Maryland, a private research firm, to conduct a stand-alone telephone survey. Using a random-digit dial telephone survey plan, more than 12,000 individuals over 18 years of age were interviewed. However, due to the considerable differences in survey methodologies, the 1997 telephone survey produced results that are not comparable to previous or subsequent surveys. The 1997 survey can only be analyzed as a stand-alone, point-in-time survey, and not in an SPPA historical analysis.

2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts

In 2002, the NEA sponsored its fifth and most recent SPPA. For the first time, the 2002 SPPA was implemented as a supplement to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), a research instrument issued monthly to approximately 60,000 households throughout the nation for use by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The U.S. Census Bureau weighted each survey record so that the survey sample would reflect the nation's estimated demographic and geographic profile.

A total of 17,135 respondents in the August 2002 CPS participated in the 2002 SPPA. Respondents were asked all of the 2002 SPPA questions, resulting in an

overall sample size applicable to the entire survey.

In general, the 2002 survey instrument followed that used in the 1992 SPPA, only incorporating slight modifications. For instance, the media engagement category added a video (DVD) discs option to questions about watching arts programs via television. The music preferences category added and omitted various music categories, and two new sections were added to the end of the survey. The first new section asked about trips away from home to attend arts events or art museums, and the second new section asked the individual's frequency of reading about, discussing, or accessing information about the arts via the Internet.

Appendix B

Data Collection

Basic CPS

The basic Current Population Survey (CPS) collects primary labor force data about the civilian noninstitutional population. Interviewers ask questions concerning labor force participation about each member 15 years and older in every sample household.

The 2002 monthly CPS sample was selected from the 1990 Decennial Census files with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The sample is continually updated to account for new residential construction. To obtain the sample, the United States was divided into 2,007 geographic areas. In most states, a geographic area consisted of a county or several contiguous counties. In some areas of New England and Hawaii, minor civil divisions are used instead of counties. These 2,007 geographic areas were then grouped into 754 strata, and one geographic area was selected from each stratum.

About 60,000 occupied households are eligible for interview every month out of the 754 strata. Interviewers are unable to obtain interviews at about 4,500 of these units. This occurs when the occupants are not found at home after repeated calls or are unavailable for some other reason.

Each month's sample is composed of eight rotation groups that rotate on a schedule of four months in sample, eight months out, and four months back again.

August 2002, Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) Supplement

In addition to the basic CPS, interviewers asked supplementary questions on public participation in the arts. Households in the outgoing rotation groups are eligible sample households for the supplement; therefore only 25 percent of the basic CPS households were sampled. The SPPA supplement attempted to obtain self-responses from household members ages 18 and over. Proxy responses were allowed if attempts for a self-response were unsuccessful.

The supplement contained questions about the household member's participation in various artistic activities from August 1, 2001 to August 1, 2002. It asked about the type of artistic activity, the frequency of participation, training and exposure, music preferences, length of travel for trips to artistic events, school-age socializations, and computer usage related to artistic information. Interviews were conducted during the period of August 18-24, 2002.

Appendix C

The main source of information for this research monograph is the 2002 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), conducted in August 2002 by the Census Bureau on behalf of the National Endowment for the Arts. More than 17,000 people 18 years of age or older responded to the SPPA's questions about participation in the arts, including questions about the number and types of books they read. Respondents were asked to respond to the survey questions based on their activities during a 12-month period leading up to August 2002. The response rate to the SPPA was 70 percent.

This appendix provides an overview of two statistical models that were created in preparing this monograph:

1. a model of factors that can be used to predict literary reading in 2002; and
2. a model of factors that can be used to predict frequent reading in 2002 (i.e., reading 12 books or more).

Variables and statistical considerations common to the two models will be discussed first.

Variables

To predict whether or not a person will read literature, some basic background knowledge is required. These basic facts are known as independent variables (conventionally known as *x* variables) and often include items such as a person's age, gender, ethnic background, education, etc. These examples represent several different types of independent variable; identification of each variable type is pertinent since it determines the statistical technique(s) available. Age could be treated as a continuous variable since it is quantifiable and can be any conceivable value within a specific range (e.g. 45.6667 years old), but is more commonly identified as an interval variable where the difference between each value is measurable and constant (e.g. 44, 45, 46 years old). Ethnic background and gender are examples of categorical variables and measure qualitative

characteristics that cannot be quantified. Ethnic background is a typical categorical variable where there are a number of categories with no intrinsic order. Gender is a particular type of categorical variable known as a dichotomy since it can equal only one of two possible values. Similarly, whether a person has read literature could be described as a dichotomous variable (i.e. person has read literature/person has not read literature). In the analysis reported here, whether a person has read literature is also the dependent variable (conventionally known as '*Y*') since it is the outcome to be predicted based on a set of independent variables.

Mathematical and Statistical Considerations

The following mathematical and statistical discussion has been derived from *Logistic Regression Using the SAS System: Theory and Application* by Paul D. Allison (1991). Further review can be obtained from Pampel (2000) and Wright (1995) as listed in the References section at the end of this appendix.

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression or linear regression is the most common statistical technique employed to predict the value of a dependent variable based on a given set of independent variables. In OLS regression, independent variables can be continuous, categorical, or interval. However, if OLS is used to predict the value of a dichotomous dependent variable such as 'literary reading,' violations of the statistical assumptions of ordinary linear regression and a conceptual problem occur. As a result, OLS regression is not suitable to an analysis of literary reading. A demonstration of the conceptual problem can be obtained by setting *Y* equal to '1' (read literature) or '0' (did not read literature) and then attempting to predict the expected value of *Y* using a set of dependent variables. Since 0 and 1 are the only possible values for *Y*, the expected value of *Y* is equivalent to the probability that *Y* is equal to 1 (i.e. the probability that a given person read literature).

This can be seen in the following equations where $E(Y_i)$ is the expected value of Y for any given i person:

$$E(Y_i) = 1 \times \text{Probability}(Y_i=1) + 0 \times \text{Probability}(Y_i=0),$$

and substituting $p_i = \text{Probability}(Y_i=1)$

we obtain $E(Y_i) = p_i$.

Furthermore, application of the statistical assumptions that the error in the expected value of Y does not vary with x and that Y is a linear function of x , we obtain in its simplest form what is called the linear probability model:

Equation 1

$$p_i = \alpha + \beta x_i$$

where α is the Y intercept and β the regression coefficient or slope. This equation says that the probability that $Y=1$ is a linear function of x . If x happens to be a continuous variable that has no upper or lower bound it is theoretically possible to obtain values of Y which are less than 0 or greater than 1. Since linear functions are by nature unbounded, and probabilities by definition cannot exceed 1 or fall below 0, a nonsensical situation with little predictive value arises.

Logistic regression (also called logit analysis) has been developed to address statistical and conceptual issues that arise from the use of OLS with dichotomous dependent variables. Logistic regression can also be used with quantitative and/or categorical independent variables making it an optimal method for social sciences data analyses.

One of the key concepts of logistic regression is the relationship between probability and odds. Odds are commonly used by gamblers and refer to the ratio between the expected number of times an event will occur to the expected number of times an event will not occur. For example, if the odds are 5 to 1 then we expect the event to occur 5 times as many times as not and if the odds are 1/5 then we would expect the reverse. The relationship between probability and odds can be shown as:

Equation 2

$O = p/(1-p)$ = probability of event/probability of no event

and by rearranging the terms,

$$p = O/(1+O)$$

or more explicitly in the following table:

Probability	Odds
0.1	0.11
0.2	0.25
0.3	0.43
0.4	0.67
0.5	1.00
0.6	1.50
0.7	2.33
0.8	4.00
0.9	9.00

It is clear from the table that if the probability of an event occurring is less than 0.5 that the odds are less than 1. Furthermore, from equation 2 it can be seen that while there is no upper boundary on odds, the lower boundary is still 0. However, by taking the logarithm of the odds the lower boundary can be removed. Starting with the linear probability equation discussed above (Equation 1), followed by changing probabilities to odds (Equation 2) and then taking the logarithm of these odds, we obtain the logit model as shown in the equation below (from Allison, 1991):

Equation 3

$$\log(p_i/(1-p_i)) = \alpha + \beta_1 x_{i1} + \beta_2 x_{i2} + \dots + \beta_k x_{ik}$$

where k refers to the number of independent variables, $i = 1, \dots, n$ individuals, and p_i is the probability that $Y=1$. The term ' $\log(p_i/(1-p_i))$ ' is also known as the logit or log-odds. Natural logarithms tend to be used by most researchers although base-10 logarithms may be used as well.

Multiple Logistic Regression Model to Predict Literary Reading in Adults

Prior to the development of the model, the unweighted 2002 SPPA dataset was examined for trends and correlated variables. The dependent variable was "literary reading in adults" and this was scored as '1' if the respondent had reported reading literature in the previous 12 months and '0' if they did not. The frequency distribution of literary readers and non-readers was investigated for survey responses and lead to the identification of trends and a subset of independent variables most likely to explain whether people read literature or not. These variables were then subjected to a multiple correlation analysis to determine if any were correlated with each other (also called collinear or multicollinear analysis). The independent variables were also correlated with the dependent variable 'literary reading' to further determine which were likely to play the largest role in the prediction of literary reading. Collinearity analyses were performed primarily to eliminate correlated independent variables in the regression model since highly correlated independent variables may result in inflated standard errors and unstable regression coefficients. For example, the education levels of the mothers and fathers of respondents were found to be highly correlated ($r=0.724$, $p<.001$). At the same time, the mother's education was found to be more highly correlated with literary reading in respondents compared to the father's education. As a result, the father's education variable was eliminated from the final model. Each potential independent variable was examined in this manner prior to construction of the regression model.

Following preliminary exploration of the 2002 SPPA data, the maximum-likelihood estimation method in the PROC LOGISTIC program of the SAS version 8.02 statistical software package was used to develop the logistic regression model. Multicollinearity of independent variables was checked for the variables in the final model using the PROC REG program with the TOL and VIF options. The TOL and VIF options indicate the level of

inflation in the variance of each coefficient compared with what it would be if the variable was uncorrelated with any other variable in the model (Allison, 1991).

Table 1 summarizes the results of the final multiple logistic regression to determine statistically significant ($p<0.05$) demographic predictors of literary reading in adults. Table 3 shows the partial correlation coefficients of all significant independent variables for the literary reading and frequent/avid reader logistic regression models. The partial correlation coefficient or r gives a measure of the degree of correlation (positive or negative) between each independent variable and the dependent variable while excluding the effects of all the other variables. The ranking for each variable indicates the relative order of the correlation of each independent variable to the dependent variable.

Coding of Independent Variables

Specific levels of the independent variables within the broad groups of education, gender, ethnicity and race, region, age, annual family income, mother's education, and attendance at an art museum and/or performing arts in the previous 12 months were determined to be statistically significant ($p<0.05$) predictors of literary reading in adults. The variables and their corresponding reference variables are shown in Table 1. Only variables that were statistically significant were included in the model and as a result some levels were grouped together.

All levels of respondent education were found to be statistically significant predictors of literary reading and, as shown in Table 1, were broken into several dummy variables corresponding to grade school only, some high school, some college, college graduate, and graduate school. Each survey respondent was assigned a '1' for the highest education level achieved and a '0' for all other education levels. High school graduation was used as the reference variable for odds ratio interpretation.

Gender was coded '1' for male and '0' for female and by default female was the reference variable (for

dichotomous variables the reference variable is the one coded as '0'. Ethnicity and race were initially divided into 'Hispanic,' 'non-Hispanic white,' 'non-Hispanic African American,' and 'other' ethnic groups. In the final analysis, cases belonging to the 'other' ethnic category were eliminated since this category was not found to be statistically significant. 'Hispanic' was set as the reference variable. The remaining respondents were coded as '1' for the ethnicity and race category to which they belonged and '0' for all others.

Respondents were also divided into Northeast, Midwest, South, and West depending on the region of residence. Northeast was set as the reference variable and respondents were coded as '1' depending on residence and coded as '0' for all other regions.

Since the only age group found to be a significant predictor of literary reading was the 18-24 group, the variable age was set so that correspondents were given a score of '1' if they were aged 18-24 and a score of '0' if they were aged 25 or over.

Similarly, income was broken into two categories; respondents were coded as '1' if their income was less than \$10,000 or if they did not report their income, otherwise they were coded as '0'.

The respondent's mother's education variable was scored as '1' if the respondent's mother attended at least some college and as '0' if she did not.

The arts attendance variable was broken into three dummy variables. Attendance at either an art museum or a performing arts event in the previous year resulted in a score of '1' for the first variable. Attendance at both an art museum and a performing arts event in the previous year was scored as '1' for the second variable. Otherwise respondents were coded as '0'. The variable 'attended neither' was used as the reference variable for odds ratio interpretation.

Interpretation of Regression Coefficients, Standard Error and Odds Ratios

Table 1 illustrates the regression coefficients, the standard error associated with each coefficient, and the odds ratios including the 95 percent confidence

interval for each statistically significant predictor of literary reading in adults. The regression coefficient for each variable measures the effect of that particular variable alone on the log-odds that a person read literature, given that all other variables are equal. Examination of the predictor variable 'Graduate school' reveals that the coefficient for the regression model is 0.8725 which is the logged odds that a person with this education level read literature (see equation 3) with all other factors held constant. By taking the inverse of the natural log of this coefficient ($e^{0.8725}$) we obtain the odds ratio point estimate of 2.393. This means that, everything else being equal, the odds of a person who went to graduate school reading literature is more than twice that of a person whose education ended with high school graduation. (High school graduation is the reference variable for the odds ratios for all education variables in this model.). Put another way, the odds of a person who graduated from high school (and didn't continue to college) reading literature is 0.4178 or 42 percent of the odds of a person who went to graduate school (i.e. $1/2.393$) reading literature. The interpretation of the odds ratios for dichotomous variables such as 'gender' is identical. In this case, the chances of a male reading literature (net of the effects of all other predictor variables) are less than half (0.431) of the chances of a female reading literature. For each odds ratio point estimate the corresponding 95 percent confidence limit was calculated using the standard error for the regression coefficient and outlines the degree of sampling variability in that coefficient.

At the bottom of Table 1 the proportion of correctly identified cases, false positives and false negatives at the 0.500 probability level is given for the regression model. These statistics give the proportion of observed cases which would be classified correctly using the set of independent variables identified in the given model when the calculated probability of being a literature reader is 0.500 or higher. These statistics also estimate the proportion which would be classified as literary readers when they were not (false positives),

and the proportion classified as non-literary readers when in fact they did read literature (false negatives).

Multiple Logistic Regression Model to Predict Reading of 12 or More Books Per Year in 2002

("Frequent" and "avid" readers)

The goal of the second statistical model is to predict whether literature-reading adults were likely to read 12 or more books based on the same set of demographic predictor variables as in the previous analysis. Prior to the construction of the logistic regression model based on the unweighted 2002 SPPA dataset, all data from respondents who did not read literature in the previous year were eliminated. The dependent variable was 'frequent/avid reader' and the remaining respondents were given a score of '1' if they reported reading 12 or more books in the previous year and '0' if they had not.

The maximum likelihood estimation method within the PROC LOGISTIC program was used to construct the logistic regression model as previously described. Multicollinearity of independent variables within the final model was analyzed as in the previous model.

Table 2 provides a summary of the final multiple logistical model containing the statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) predictors of readers of 12 or more books per year. The regression coefficients, standard errors, p values and reference variable interpretation are as before. The odds ratio point estimates (with 95 percent confidence intervals) give the odds of being a frequent/avid reader for each particular variable, all other variables being equal. The multiple correlation analysis of the predictor variables is shown in Table 3.

Coding of Independent Variables and Interpretation of Odds Ratios

Specific levels of the independent variables (education, gender, ethnicity and race, television viewing habits, age, employment, mother's education, participation in charity/volunteer work, and attendance at art museums and performing arts events) were shown to be significant ($p < 0.05$) predictors of whether or not an

adult read 12 or more books in the previous 12 months. As before, only variables that were statistically significant were included in the model. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Respondents with at least some college (coded as '1') were predicted to be nearly 28 percent more likely to be a frequent/avid reader (everything else being equal) than those with a high school diploma or less (coded as '0').

Gender of the correspondent was coded as '1' if male and '0' if female. Analysis of the odds ratios suggested that males are 0.633 times as likely as females to read 12 or more books in a year.

Analysis of the ethnicity and race variables indicated that within this category, only the non-Hispanic white group was a statistically significant predictor of frequent/avid reading. As a result, respondents were scored as '1' if they were non-Hispanic white Americans and '0' if they were Hispanic Americans, non-Hispanic African Americans, or from another ethnic or racial group. The logistic regression analysis suggested that non-Hispanic white people were 1.6 times as likely to fall into the frequent/avid reader group compared with all the other ethnic and racial groups.

Television viewing habits were broken into three dummy variables: 0 hours of television watching per day, 1-3 hours per day, and 4 or more hours per day. The group corresponding to 1-3 hours of television per day was set as the reference variable and respondents were scored as '1' for the television viewing class to which they belonged and '0' for all others. Examination of the odds ratios reveals that people who watch no television are 1.475 times as likely to read 12 or more books in a year than those who watch 1-3 hours per day. Alternatively, those who reported watching 4 or more hours of television per day would be expected to be only 88 percent as likely to read 12 or more books compared with those in the 1-3 hour reference group.

The variable 'age' was divided into two groups representing respondents less than 45 years old (scored as '1') and those aged 45 or older (scored as '0'). The logistic regression model predicts that respondents

under the age of 45 were only 63 percent as likely to be frequent/avid readers compared with those aged 45 or greater.

Respondents who were not in the labor force were given a score of '1' while those who were in the labor force (unemployed or employed) were scored as '0'. The odds ratio analysis suggested that respondents who were not in the labor force were more likely (17 percent) to be frequent/avid readers than those who self-identified as being in the labor force.

The respondent's mother's education variable was scored as '1' if the mother attended at least some college and as '0' if she did not. Respondents whose mothers attended college were nearly 20 percent more likely to be frequent/avid readers than those whose mothers had a high school diploma or less.

The variable 'charity work' was scored as '1' if respondents reported participation in volunteer or charity work in the previous year and as '0' if they did not. Participation in charity work is associated with a 26 percent increase in the odds of being a frequent/avid reader compared to those who did not perform volunteer or charity work.

Attendance at both an art museum and a performing arts event was a significant predictor of reading 12 or more books in a year. Respondents were scored as '1' if they attended both an art museum and performing art event, and '0' if they only attended one or didn't attend either in the previous year. Respondents who attended both were 2.6 times as likely to be a frequent/avid reader compared with those who attended one or neither activity.

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Appendix Table 1
Summary of Multiple Logistic Regression Predicting Whether Adults have Read Literature (n=16,183).

Variable		Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	p value
Intercept		-0.8747	0.0843	<0.0001
Education	Grade school	-0.8454	0.1029	<0.0001
	Some high school	-0.434	0.0707	<0.0001
	Some college	0.3279	0.0456	<0.0001
	College graduate	0.5652	0.0574	<0.0001
	Graduate school	0.8725	0.078	<0.0001
Sex	Male	-0.8423	0.0369	<0.0001
Ethnicity & Race	Non-Hispanic white	0.6186	0.0711	<0.0001
	Non-Hispanic African American	0.2701	0.0913	0.0081
Region	Midwest	-0.1434	0.053	0.0068
	South	-0.2264	0.0516	<0.0001
	West	0.1296	0.0557	0.02
Age	Young (under 25)	-0.1599	0.0635	0.0118
Income	Low or not reported	-0.1813	0.0494	0.0002
Mother's Education	At least some college	0.3871	0.0482	<0.0001
Arts Attendance	Art museum OR performing arts	0.9654	0.0437	<0.0001
	Art museum AND performing arts	1.7851	0.058	<0.0001

At the 0.5000 probability level, the proportion of cases correctly classified with the model above is 71.3%; the false positive rate is 26.8%; and the false negative rate is 30.2%.

Odds Ratios

Reference Variable	Point Estimate	Lower 95% Con. Limit	Upper 95% Con. Limit
High school graduate	0.429	0.351	0.525
as above	0.648	0.564	0.744
as above	1.388	1.269	1.518
as above	1.76	1.572	1.97
as above	2.393	2.054	2.788
Female	0.431	0.401	0.463
Hispanic	1.856	1.615	2.134
as above	1.31	1.095	1.567
Northeast	0.866	0.781	0.961
as above	0.797	0.721	0.882
as above	1.138	1.021	1.27
Age 25+	0.852	0.753	0.965
Reported income > \$9,999	0.834	0.757	0.919
High school or less	1.473	1.34	1.619
Attended neither	2.626	2.41	2.861
Attended neither	5.96	5.32	6.677

Appendix Table 2
Summary of Multiple Logistic Regression Predicting Whether Adults have Read 12 or More Books (n=7,555)

Variable		Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	p value
Intercept		-0.9113	0.0915	<0.0001
Education	At least some college	0.2432	0.0577	<0.0001
Sex	Male	-0.4575	0.0517	<0.0001
Ethnicity & Race	Non-Hispanic white	0.4898	0.0725	<0.0001
TV Viewing (hours/day)	none	0.3889	0.114	0.0006
	4 or more hours	-0.1273	0.061	0.0369
Age	<45 years old	-0.4538	0.052	<0.0001
Employment	Not in Labor Force	0.1599	0.0569	0.005
Mother's Education	At least some college	0.177	0.0554	<0.0014
Charity Work	Some volunteer/charity work	0.2337	0.0501	<0.0001
Arts Attendance	Art museum AND performing arts	0.3738	0.0542	<0.0001

At the 0.5000 probability level, the proportion of cases correctly classified with the model above is 62.3%; the false positive rate is 42.7%; and the false negative rate is 36.4%.

Odds Ratios

Reference Variable	Point Estimate	Lower 95% Con. Limit	Upper 95% Con. Limit
High school or less	1.275	1.139	1.428
Female	0.633	0.572	0.7
African American, Hispanic and other	1.632	1.416	1.881
1-3 hours as above	1.475 0.88	1.18 0.781	1.845 0.992
Age 45+	0.635	0.574	0.703
In Labor Force (Unemployed or employed)	1.173	1.05	1.312
High school or less	1.194	1.071	1.33
No volunteer/charity work	1.263	1.145	1.394
Attended only one or didn't attend either	1.453	2.41	2.861

Appendix Table 3

Correlation Analysis of Predictor Variables in the Literature Reading and Frequent/Avid Book Reading, Logistic Regression Models

Independent Variable		y*	Rank
Education	Grade school	-0.159	6
	Some High School	-0.155	8
	Some College	0.072	14
	College Graduate	0.167	5
	Graduate School	0.168	4
Sex	Male	-0.179	3
Ethnicity & Race	Non-Hispanic White	0.156	7
	Non-Hispanic African American	-0.077	12
Residence	Midwest	-0.008	16
	South	-0.084	11
	West	0.073	13
Age	Young	-0.034	15
Income	Low/Not Reported	-0.093	10
Mother's Education	At least some college	0.207	2
Arts Attendance	Art museum OR Performing Arts	0.155	9
	Art museum AND Performing Arts	0.327	1

* indicates the partial coefficient (β) and is a measure of the degree of correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable excluding the effects of all the other variables. All pa reading correlation (this variable was statistically significant in the regression model, see Appendix Table 1).

Independent Variable		y*	Rank
Education	At least some college	0.084	6
Charity Work	Volunteer or Charity Work	0.103	3
Sex	Male	-0.101	5
Ethnicity & Race	Non-Hispanic White	0.104	4
Television Viewing	None 4+ hours/day	0.047 -0.047	9 10
Age	<45	-0.113	2
Employment	Not in labor force	0.048	7
Mother's Education	At least some college	0.056	8
Arts Attendance	Art museum AND Performing Arts	0.129	1

Initial correlation coefficients are statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level with the exception of the variable "Midwest" in the literature

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

ADULT LITERACY

in America

Not too much in this. Pages are indicated.

Literary
skills

possible start on last page.

A First Look at the Findings of the National Adult Literacy Survey

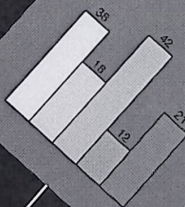


Table 10.1.8. Response for single isolated intermediate-level seismic shaking (MSK 7.0) in the
isolated (IAB) and pinned (IAB)

	Number	Percentage	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Non-periodic	10	10.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Periodic	90	90.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Table 8.3.10: Response for length of time without returning to the type of period in the future

[illegible][illegible]

Item	Unit	Price	Quantity	Total
1. Cement	kg	1.50	100	150.00
2. Sand	m ³	10.00	10	100.00
3. Gravel	m ³	15.00	10	150.00
4. Labor	hr	10.00	100	1000.00
5. Transport	km	5.00	10	50.00
6. Water	lit	0.10	100	10.00
7. Electricity	hr	1.00	10	10.00
8. Fuel	lit	1.00	10	10.00
9. Maintenance	hr	1.00	10	10.00
10. Insurance	hr	1.00	10	10.00
11. Taxes	hr	1.00	10	10.00
12. Profit	hr	1.00	10	10.00
Total				1400.00

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

April 2002

Third Edition

Adult Literacy in America

A First Look at the Findings of the National Adult Literacy Survey

**Irwin S. Kirsch
Ann Jungeblut
Lynn Jenkins
Andrew Kolstad**

**U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement**

NCES 1993-275

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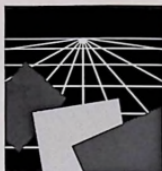
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Irvin S. Kirsch
Ann Jungeblut

Lynn Jenkins
Andrew Kolstad



PREFACE

The United States has always been a mosaic of cultures, but the diversity of our population has increased by striking proportions in recent years. As Barbara Everitt Bryant, director of the Bureau of the Census, has written: "If you gave America a face in 1990, it would have shown the first sign of wrinkles [and] it would have been full of color."¹ The median age of Americans continues to rise, growing from 30 to almost 33 years during the 1980s. It is projected that by the year 2080, nearly 25 percent of the adults in this nation will be over 65, compared with only about 12 percent today. The racial and ethnic composition of the nation also continues to change. While 3.7 million people of Asian or Pacific Islander origin were living in this country in 1980, there were 7.2 million a decade later — a change of almost 100 percent. The number of individuals of Hispanic origin also rose dramatically over this time period, from roughly 6 to 9 percent of the population, or more than 22 million people. Our increasing diversity can not only be seen but also heard: today, some 32 million individuals in the United States speak a language other than English, and these languages range from Spanish and Chinese to Yupik and Mon-Khmer.²

Given these patterns and changes, this is an opportune time to explore the literacy skills of adults in this nation. In 1988, the U.S. Congress called on the Department of Education to support a national literacy survey of America's adults. While recent studies funded by the federal government explored the literacy of young adults and job seekers, the National Adult Literacy Survey is the first to provide accurate and detailed information on the skills of the adult population as a whole — information that, to this point, has been unavailable.

Perhaps never before have so many people from so many different sectors of society been concerned about adult literacy. Numerous reports published in

¹ B.E. Bryant. (1991). "The Changing Face of the United States." *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1992*. New York, NY: Pharos Books. p. 72.

² United States Department of Commerce. (1993, April). "Number of Non-English Language Speaking Americans Up Sharply in 1980s, Census Bureau Says." *United States Department of Commerce News*.

the last decade — including *A Nation at Risk*, *The Bottom Line*, *The Subtle Danger*, *Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults*, *Jump Start: The Federal Role in Adult Education*, *Workforce 2000*, *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*, and *Beyond the School Doors* — have provided evidence that a large portion of our population lacks adequate literacy skills and have intensified the debate over how this problem should be addressed.

Concerns about literacy are not new. In fact, throughout our nation's history there have been periods when the literacy skills of the population were judged inadequate. Yet, the nature of these concerns has changed radically over time. In the past, the lack of ability to read and use printed materials was seen primarily as an individual problem, with implications for a person's job opportunities, educational goals, sense of fulfillment, and participation in society. Now, however, it is increasingly viewed as a national problem, with implications that reach far beyond the individual. Concerns about the human costs of limited literacy have, in a sense, been overshadowed by concerns about the economic and social costs.

Although Americans today are, on the whole, better educated and more literate than any who preceded them, many employers say they are unable to find enough workers with the reading, writing, mathematical, and other competencies required in the workplace. Changing economic, demographic, and labor-market forces may exacerbate the problem in the future. As a recent study by the American Society for Training and Development concluded, "These forces are creating a human capital deficit that threatens U.S. competitiveness and acts as a barrier to individual opportunities for all Americans."³

Whether future jobs will have greater literacy requirements than today's jobs, or whether the gap between the nation's literacy resources and its needs will widen, are open questions. The evidence to support such predictions is scarce. What many believe, however, is that our current systems of education and training are inadequate to ensure individual opportunities, improve economic productivity, or strengthen our nation's competitiveness in the global marketplace.

There is widespread agreement that we as a nation must respond to the literacy challenge, not only to preserve our economic vitality but also to ensure that every individual has a full range of opportunities for personal fulfillment and participation in society. At the historic education summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, the nation's governors — including then-Governor Clinton — met with then-President Bush to establish a set of national education goals that would guide this country into the twenty-first century. As adopted in 1990 by members of the National Governors' Association, one of the six goals states:

³ A.P. Carnevale, L.J. Gainer, A.S. Meltzer, and S.L. Holland. (1988, October). "Workplace Basics: The Skills Employers Want." *Training and Development Journal*. pp. 20-30.

By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The following year, Congress passed the National Literacy Act of 1991, the purpose of which is "to enhance the literacy and basic skills of adults, to ensure that all adults in the United States acquire the basic skills necessary to function effectively and achieve the greatest possible opportunity in their work and in their lives, and to strengthen and coordinate adult literacy programs."

But how should these ambitious goals be pursued? In the past, whenever the population's skills were called into question, critics generally focused on the educational system and insisted that school reforms were necessary if the nation were to escape serious social and economic consequences. Today, however, many of those who need to improve their literacy skills have already left school. In fact, it is estimated that almost 80 percent of the work force for the year 2000 is already employed. Moreover, many of those who demonstrate limited literacy skills do not perceive that they have a problem. Clearly, then, the schools alone cannot strengthen the abilities of present and future employees, and of the population as a whole. A broad-based response seems necessary.

To initiate such a response, we need more than localized reports or anecdotal information from employers, public leaders, or the press; accurate and detailed information about our current status is essential. As reading researchers John Carroll and Jean Chall observed in their book *Toward a Literate Society*, "any national program for improving literacy skills would have to be based on the best possible information as to where the deficits are and how serious they are."⁴ Surprisingly, though, we do lack accurate and detailed information about literacy in our nation — including how many individuals have limited skills, who they are, and the severity of their problems.

In 1988, Congress asked the U.S. Department of Education to address this need for information on the nature and extent of adult literacy. In response, the Department's National Center for Education Statistics and Division of Adult Education and Literacy called for a national household survey of the literacy skills of adults in the United States. A contract was awarded to Educational Testing Service and a subcontract to Westat, Inc. to design and conduct the National Adult Literacy Survey, the results of which are presented in these pages.

⁴ J.B. Carroll and J.S. Chall, eds. (1975). *Toward a Literate Society: A Report from the National Academy of Education*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. p. 11.

During the first eight months of 1992, trained staff conducted household interviews with nearly 13,600 individuals aged 16 and older who had been randomly selected to represent the adult population in this country. In addition, approximately 1,000 adults were surveyed in each of 12 states that chose to participate in a special study designed to produce state-level results that are comparable to the national data. Finally, some 1,100 inmates from 80 federal and state prisons were interviewed to gather information on the skills of the prison population. Each individual was asked to spend about an hour responding to a series of diverse literacy tasks and providing information on his or her background, education, labor market experiences, and reading practices.

The results of the National Adult Literacy Survey comprise an enormous set of data that includes more than a million responses to the literacy tasks and background questions. More important than the size of the database, however, is the fact that it provides information that was previously unavailable — information that is essential to understanding this nation's literacy resources.

To ensure that the survey results will reach a wide audience, the committees that guided the project recommended that the findings be issued in a series of reports. This first volume in the series offers an overview of the results. Additional reports offer a more detailed look at particular issues that are explored in a general way in this report, including:

- literacy in the work force
- literacy and education
- literacy among older adults
- literacy in the prison population
- literacy and cultural diversity
- literacy practices

A final report conveys technical information about the survey design and the methods used to implement it.

Although these reports focus almost exclusively on the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey, their contents have much broader implications. The rich collection of information they contain can be used to inform policy debates, set program objectives, and reflect on our society's literacy resources and needs.

Irwin S. Kirsch
Project Director



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a first look at the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by Educational Testing Service, in collaboration with Westat, Inc. It provides the most detailed portrait that has ever been available on the condition of literacy in this nation — and on the unrealized potential of its citizens.

Many past studies of adult literacy have tried to count the number of “illiterates” in this nation, thereby treating literacy as a condition that individuals either do or do not have. We believe that such efforts are inherently arbitrary and misleading. They are also damaging, in that they fail to acknowledge both the complexity of the literacy problem and the range of solutions needed to address it.

The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) is based on a different definition of literacy, and therefore follows a different approach to measuring it. The aim of this survey is to profile the English literacy of adults in the United States based on their performance across a wide array of tasks that reflect the types of materials and demands they encounter in their daily lives.

To gather the information on adults' literacy skills, trained staff interviewed nearly 13,600 individuals aged 16 and older during the first eight months of 1992. These participants had been randomly selected to represent the adult population in the country as a whole. In addition, about 1,000 adults were surveyed in each of 12 states that chose to participate in a special study designed to provide state-level results that are comparable to the national data. Finally, some 1,100 inmates from 80 federal and state prisons were interviewed to gather information on the proficiencies of the prison population. In total, over 26,000 adults were surveyed.

Each survey participant was asked to spend approximately an hour responding to a series of diverse literacy tasks as well as questions about his or her demographic characteristics, educational background, reading practices, and other areas related to literacy. Based on their responses to the survey tasks,

This report describes the types and levels of literacy by adults in this country and analyzes the variation in literacy subgroups in the population. It also explores connections between literacy and social and economic variables such as voting, employment, and earnings. Some of the major findings are listed below.

Literacy Skills of America's Adults

- Twenty-one to 23 percent — or some 40 to 44 million of the 191 million adults in this country — demonstrated skills in the lowest level of prose, document, and quantitative proficiencies (Level 1). Though all adults in this level displayed limited skills, their characteristics are diverse. Many adults in this level performed simple, routine tasks involving brief and uncomplicated texts and documents. For example, they were able to total an entry on a deposit slip, locate the time or place of a meeting on a form, and identify a piece of specific information in a brief news article. Others were unable to perform these types of tasks, and some had such limited skills that they were unable to respond to much of the survey.
- Many factors help to explain why so many adults demonstrated English literacy skills in the lowest proficiency level defined (Level 1). Twenty-five percent of the respondents who performed in this level were immigrants who may have been just learning to speak English. Nearly two-thirds of those in Level 1 (62 percent) had terminated their education before completing high school. A third were age 65 or older, and 26 percent had physical, mental, or health conditions that kept them from participating fully in work, school, housework, or other activities. Nineteen percent of the respondents in Level 1 reported having visual difficulties that affect their ability to read print.
- Some 25 to 28 percent of the respondents, representing about 50 million adults nationwide, demonstrated skills in the next higher level of proficiency (Level 2) on each of the literacy scales. While their skills were more varied than those of individuals performing in Level 1, their repertoire was still quite limited. They were generally able to locate information in text, to make low-level inferences using printed materials, and to integrate easily

56 percent

identifiable pieces of information. Further, they demonstrated the ability to perform quantitative tasks that involve a single operation where the numbers are either stated or can be easily found in text. For example, adults in this level were able to calculate the total cost of a purchase or determine the difference in price between two items. They could also locate a particular intersection on a street map and enter background information on a simple form.

- Individuals in Levels 1 and 2 were much less likely to respond correctly to the more challenging literacy tasks in the assessment — those requiring higher level reading and problem-solving skills. In particular, they were apt to experience considerable difficulty in performing tasks that required them to integrate or synthesize information from complex or lengthy texts or to perform quantitative tasks that involved two or more sequential operations and in which the individual had to set up the problem.

*180,000,000
Half are at
levels 1 & 2*

- The approximately 90 million adults who performed in Levels 1 and 2 did not necessarily perceive themselves as being "at risk." Across the literacy scales, 66 to 75 percent of the adults in the lowest level and 93 to 97 percent in the second lowest level described themselves as being able to read or write English "well" or "very well." Moreover, only 14 to 25 percent of the adults in Level 1 and 4 to 12 percent in Level 2 said they get a lot of help from family members or friends with everyday prose, document, and quantitative literacy tasks. It is therefore possible that their skills, while limited, allow them to meet some or most of their personal and occupational literacy needs.

- Nearly one-third of the survey participants, or about 61 million adults nationwide, demonstrated performance in Level 3 on each of the literacy scales. Respondents performing in this level on the prose and document scales were able to integrate information from relatively long or dense text or from documents. Those in the third level on the quantitative scale were able to determine the appropriate arithmetic operation based on information contained in the directive, and to identify the quantities needed to perform that operation.

- 20%*
- Eighteen to 21 percent of the respondents, or 34 to 40 million adults, performed in the two highest levels of prose, document, and quantitative literacy (Levels 4 and 5). These adults demonstrated proficiencies associated with the most challenging tasks in this assessment, many of which involved long and complex documents and text passages.

- 1992
- The literacy proficiencies of young adults assessed in 1992 were somewhat lower, on average, than the proficiencies of young adults who participated in a 1985 literacy survey. NALS participants aged 21 to 25 had average prose, document, and quantitative scores that were 11 to 14 points lower than the scores of 21- to 25-year-olds assessed in 1985. Although other factors may also be involved, these performance discrepancies are probably due in large part to changes in the demographic composition of the population — in particular, the dramatic increase in the percentages of young Hispanic adults, many of whom were born in other countries and are learning English as a second language.
 - Adults with relatively few years of education were more likely to perform in the lower literacy levels than those who completed high school or received some type of postsecondary education. For example, on each of the three literacy scales, some 75 to 80 percent of adults with 0 to 8 years of education are in Level 1, while fewer than 1 percent are in Levels 4 and 5. In contrast, among adults with a high school diploma, 16 to 20 percent are in the lowest level on each scale, while 10 to 13 percent are in the two highest levels. Only 4 percent of adults with four year college degrees are in Level 1; 44 to 50 percent are in the two highest levels.
 - Older adults were more likely than middle-aged and younger adults to demonstrate limited literacy skills. For example, adults over the age of 65 have average literacy scores that range from 56 to 61 points (or more than one level) below those of adults 40 to 54 years of age. Adults aged 55 to 64 scored, on average, between middle-aged adults and those 65 years and older. These differences can be explained in part by the fact that older adults tend to have completed fewer years of schooling than adults in the younger age groups.
 - Black, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander adults were more likely than White adults to perform in the lowest two literacy levels. These performance differences are affected by many factors. For example, with the exception of Asian/Pacific Islander adults, individuals in these groups tended to have completed fewer years of schooling in this country than had White individuals. Further, many adults of Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic origin were born in other countries and were likely to have learned English as a second language.
 - Of all the racial/ethnic groups, Hispanic adults reported the fewest years of schooling in this country (just over 10 years, on average). The average years of schooling attained by Black adults and American Indian/Alaskan Native

7 years
35 to 42

adults were similar, at 11.6 and 11.7 years, respectively. These groups had completed more years of schooling than Hispanic adults had, on average, but more than a year less than either White adults or those of Asian/Pacific Islander origin.

- With one exception, for each racial or ethnic group, individuals born in the United States outperformed those born abroad. The exception occurs among Black adults, where there was essentially no difference (only 3 to 7 points). Among White and Asian/Pacific Islander adults, the average differences between native-born and foreign-born individuals range from 26 to 41 points across the literacy scales. Among Hispanic adults, the differences range from 40 to 94 points in favor of the native born.
- Twelve percent of the respondents reported having a physical, mental, or other health condition that kept them from participating fully in work or other activities. These individuals were far more likely than adults in the population as a whole to demonstrate performance in the range for Levels 1 and 2. Among those who said they had vision problems, 54 percent were in Level 1 on the prose scale and another 26 percent were in Level 2.
- Men demonstrated the same average prose proficiencies as women, but their document and quantitative proficiencies were somewhat higher. Adults in the Midwest and West had higher average proficiencies than those residing in either the Northeast or South.
- Adults in prison were far more likely than those in the population as a whole to perform in the lowest two literacy levels. These incarcerated adults tended to be younger, less well educated, and to be from minority backgrounds.

Literacy and Social and Economic Characteristics

- Individuals demonstrating higher levels of literacy were more likely to be employed, work more weeks in a year, and earn higher wages than individuals demonstrating lower proficiencies. For example, while adults in Level 1 on each scale reported working an average of only 18 to 19 weeks in the year prior to the survey, those in the three highest levels reported working about twice as many weeks — between 34 and 44. Moreover, across the scales, individuals in the lowest level reported median weekly earnings of about \$230 to \$245, compared with about \$350 for individuals performing in Level 3 and \$620 to \$680 for those in Level 5.

- Adults in the lowest level on each of the literacy scales (17 to 19 percent) were far more likely than those in the two highest levels (4 percent) to report receiving food stamps. In contrast, only 23 to 27 percent of the respondents who performed in Level 1 said they received interest from a savings or bank account, compared with 70 to 85 percent in Levels 4 or 5.
- Nearly half (41 to 44 percent) of all adults in the lowest level on each literacy scale were living in poverty, compared with only 4 to 8 percent of those in the two highest proficiency levels.
- On all three literacy scales, adults in the higher levels were more likely than those in the lower levels to report voting in a recent state or national election. Slightly more than half (55 to 58 percent) of the adults in Level 1 who were eligible to vote said they voted in the past five years, compared with about 80 percent of those who performed in Level 4 and nearly 90 percent of those in Level 5.

Reflections on the Results

In reflecting on the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey, many readers will undoubtedly seek an answer to a fundamental question: Are the literacy skills of America's adults adequate? That is, are the distributions of prose, document, and quantitative proficiency observed in this survey adequate to ensure individual opportunities for all adults, to increase worker productivity, or to strengthen America's competitiveness around the world?

Because it is impossible to say precisely what literacy skills are essential for individuals to succeed in this or any other society, the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey provide no firm answers to such questions. As the authors examined the survey data and deliberated on the results with members of the advisory committees, however, several observations and concerns emerged.

Perhaps the most salient finding of this survey is that such large percentages of adults performed in the lowest levels (Levels 1 and 2) of prose, document, and quantitative literacy. In and of itself, this may not indicate a serious problem. After all, the majority of adults who demonstrated limited skills described themselves as reading or writing English well, and relatively few said they get a lot of assistance from others in performing everyday literacy tasks. Perhaps these individuals are able to meet most of the literacy demands they encounter currently at work, at home, and in their communities.

Yet, some argue that lower literacy skills mean a lower quality of life and more limited employment opportunities. As noted in a recent report from the American Society for Training and Development, "The association between skills and opportunity for individual Americans is powerful and growing. . . . Individuals with poor skills do not have much to bargain with; they are condemned to low earnings and limited choices."¹

The data from this survey appear to support such views. On each of the literacy scales, adults whose proficiencies were within the two lowest levels were far more likely to receive food stamps and to be in poverty. Moreover, they were far less likely than their more literate peers to be employed full-time, to earn high wages, to rely on print sources (such as newspapers and magazines) for information about current events, public affairs, and government, and far less likely to vote.

Literacy is not the only factor that contributes to how we live our lives, however. Some adults who displayed limited skills reported working in professional or managerial jobs, earning high wages, and participating in various aspects of our society, for example, while others who demonstrated high levels of proficiency reported being unemployed or out of the labor force. Thus, having advanced literacy skills does not necessarily guarantee individual opportunities.

Still, literacy can be thought of as a currency in this society. Just as adults with little money have difficulty meeting their basic needs, those with limited literacy skills are likely to find it more challenging to pursue their goals — whether these involve job advancement, consumer decision making, citizenship, or other aspects of their lives. Even if adults who performed in the lowest literacy levels are not experiencing difficulties at present, they may be at risk as the nation's economy and social fabric continue to change.

Beyond these personal consequences, what implications are there for society when so many individuals display limited skills? The answer to this question is elusive. Still, it seems apparent that a nation in which large numbers of citizens display limited literacy skills has fewer resources with which to meet its goals and objectives, whether these are social, political, civic, or economic.

If large percentages of adults had to do little more than be able to sign their name on a form or locate a single fact in a newspaper or table, then the levels of literacy seen in this survey might not warrant concern. We live in a nation, however, where both the volume and variety of written information are growing and where increasing numbers of citizens are expected to be able to read, understand, and use these materials.

¹ A.J. Carnevale and L.J. Gainer. (1989). *The Learning Enterprise*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

Historians remind us that during the last 200 hundred years, our nation's literacy skills have increased dramatically in response to new requirements and expanded opportunities for social and economic growth. Today we are a better educated and more literate society than at any time in our history.² Yet, there have also been periods of imbalance — times when demands seemed to surpass levels of attainment.

In recent years, our society has grown more technologically advanced and the roles of formal institutions have expanded. As this has occurred, many have argued that there is a greater need for all individuals to become more literate and for a larger proportion to develop advanced skills.³ Growing numbers of individuals are expected to be able to attend to multiple features of information in lengthy and sometimes complex displays, to compare and contrast information, to integrate information from various parts of a text or document, to generate ideas and information based on what they read, and to apply arithmetic operations sequentially to solve a problem.

The results from this and other surveys, however, indicate that many adults do not demonstrate these levels of proficiency. Further, the continuing process of demographic, social, and economic change within this country could lead to a more divided society along both racial and socioeconomic lines.

Already there is evidence of a widening division. According to the report *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages!*, over the past 15 years the gap in earnings between professionals and clerical workers has grown from 47 to 86 percent while the gap between white collar workers and skilled tradespeople has risen from 2 to 37 percent. At the same time, earnings for college educated males 24 to 34 years of age have increased by 10 percent while earnings for those with high school diplomas have declined by 9 percent. Moreover, the poverty rate for Black families is nearly three times that for White families.⁴ One child in five is born into poverty, and for minority populations, this rate approaches one in two.

² L.C. Stedman and C.F. Kaestle. (1991). "Literacy and Reading Performance in the United States from 1880 to the Present," in C.F. Kaestle et al., *Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading Since 1880*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. T. Snyder (ed.), (1993). *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

³ U.S. Department of Labor. (1992, April). *Learning a Living: A Blueprint for High Performance*. Washington, DC: The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). R.L. Venezky, C.F. Kaestle, and A. Sum. (1987, January). *The Subtle Danger: Reflections on the Literacy Abilities of America's Young Adults*. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

⁴ National Center on Education and the Economy. (1990, June). *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages! The Report of The Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*. p. 20.

In 1990, then-President Bush and the nation's governors, including then-Governor Clinton, adopted the goal that all of America's adults be literate by the year 2000. The responsibility for meeting this objective must, in the end, be shared among individuals, groups, and organizations throughout our society. Programs that serve adult learners cannot be expected to solve the literacy problem alone, and neither can the schools. Other institutions — ranging from the largest and most complex government agency, to large and small businesses, to the family — all have a role to play in ensuring that adults who need or wish to improve their literacy skills have the opportunity to do so. It is also important that individuals themselves come to realize the value of literacy in their lives and to recognize the benefits associated with having better skills. Only then will more adults in this nation develop the literacy resources they need to function in society, to achieve their goals, and to develop their knowledge and potential.

OK, I wimped out of going through the cost/benefit analysis for Ohio because it

a) ran to 75 pages!

b) applied to only one state

c) was written by state bureaucrats FOR state bureaucrats—i.e., by a committee within the Ohio State Legislature to be submitted to the entire legislature to see how and if they would accept this federal money and what kind of state laws they would draft to see about raising their share.

The 8-pager is much more succinct and discusses 10 different states. There is one constant—the feds kick in a fairly small sum but make large demands—the states then have to spend many times the federal contribution out of their state funds to meet the federal demand. Feisty old Nevada simply passed a law that said in effect the feds had to pay for it ALL or could stuff their demands.

The other bugbear you'll find throughout is NCLB encourages "teaching to the test"—these standardized math/reading tests. The author makes some interesting points.

Add the football field story.

Books still beat bytes. (Take note)

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ACCORDING TO THE U.S. Census Bureau's most recent Statistical Abstract, Americans still love to read. The report indicates that 40 percent of Americans enjoy reading for leisure, while only 27 percent surf the Internet for pleasure. These figures comfort publishers and booksellers. Pat Schroeder, president of the Association of American Publishers, tells the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, "There's something kind of comforting about a book--it's like comfort food."

Latest Statistical Abstract
tables attached.
(2003)

Breaker 10th Co.

Consumer Spending
on T.V. U.S. Reading.

The last couple of years

No. 1242. Household Pet Ownership: 2001

[Based on a sample survey of 80,000 households in 2001; for details, see source]

Item	Unit	Dog	Cat	Pet bird	Horse
Percent of households owning companion pets ¹	Percent	36.1	31.6	4.6	1.7
Average number owned	Number	1.6	2.1	2.1	3.0
Households obtaining veterinary care	Percent	85.0	66.8	12.9	56.7
Average visits per household per year	Number	2.8	1.9	0.3	2.2
PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS OWNING PETS					
Annual household income:					
Under \$20,000	Percent	29.7	28.1	5.1	1.0
\$20,000 to \$34,999	Percent	33.9	30.9	4.5	1.3
\$35,000 to \$54,999	Percent	37.9	32.2	4.8	2.0
\$55,000 to \$84,999	Percent	40.5	34.3	4.4	2.1
\$85,000 and over	Percent	39.7	33.7	4.2	2.1
Household size: ¹					
One person	Percent	20.8	23.5	2.8	0.7
Two persons	Percent	34.3	31.3	4.0	1.6
Three persons	Percent	46.2	37.4	5.9	2.2
Four persons	Percent	50.6	38.2	6.3	2.3
Five or more persons	Percent	53.0	39.7	8.3	3.2

¹ As of December 31, 2001. ² During 2001.

Source: American Veterinary Medical Association, Schaumburg, IL, *U.S. Pet Ownership and Demographics Sourcebook*, 2002 (copyright).

No. 1243. Adult Attendance at Sports Events: 2002

[In thousands (8,827 represents 8,827,000), except percent. For fall 2002. Based on survey and subject to sampling error; see source]

Event	Attend one or more times a month		Attend less than once a month		Event	Attend one or more times a month		Attend less than once a month	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Baseball	8,827	4.3	17,873	8.7	Golf	1,899	0.9	4,397	2.2
Basketball					High school sports	11,662	5.7	8,335	4.1
College games	4,138	2.0	6,396	3.1	Horse racing				
Professional games	3,588	1.8	8,779	4.3	Flats, runners	979	0.5	3,381	1.7
Bowling	1,604	0.8	2,733	1.3	Trotters/harness	446	0.2	2,374	1.2
Boxing	1,482	0.7	2,449	1.2	Ice hockey	2,307	1.1	7,357	3.6
Equestrian events	514	0.3	2,880	1.4	Motorcycle racing	913	0.5	2,971	1.5
Figure skating	621	0.3	2,770	1.4	Pro beach volleyball	397	0.2	2,061	1.0
Fishing tournaments	819	0.4	2,416	1.2	Rodeo	1,193	0.6	3,890	1.9
Football					Soccer	2,740	1.3	3,570	1.7
College games	6,225	3.0	8,073	3.9	Tennis	1,060	0.5	3,071	1.5
Monday night professional games					Truck and tractor pull/mud racing	851	0.4	3,289	1.6
Weekend professional games	1,917	0.9	3,494	1.7	Wrestling—professional	1,282	0.6	3,098	1.5
	3,541	1.7	8,282	4.0					

Source: Mediarmark Research, Inc., New York, NY *Top-line Reports* (copyright). Internet site <<http://www.mediarmark.com/mri/docs/TopLineReports.html>>.

No. 1244. Adult Participation in Selected Leisure Activities by Frequency: 2002

[In thousands (30,254 represents 30,254,000), except percent. For fall 2002. Based on sample and subject to sampling error; see source]

Activity	Participated in the last 12 months		Frequency of participation							
			Two or more times a week		Once a week		Two to three times a month		Once a month	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Attend music performances ¹	30,254	14.8	452	0.2	585	0.3	1,517	0.7	3,464	1.7
Baking	36,551	17.8	7,098	3.5	6,393	3.1	7,459	3.6	5,154	2.5
Barbecuing	66,686	32.5	10,094	4.9	10,005	4.9	16,031	7.8	9,298	4.5
Board games	33,582	16.4	2,730	1.3	2,978	1.5	5,990	2.9	5,671	2.8
Cooking for fun	33,746	16.5	11,522	5.6	5,351	2.6	4,809	2.4	3,664	1.8
Crossword puzzles	32,178	15.7	13,771	6.7	4,237	2.1	3,216	1.6	2,021	1.0
Dining out	103,148	50.3	21,358	10.4	24,671	12.0	24,215	11.8	12,307	6.0
Entertain friends or relatives at home	80,642	39.3	7,010	3.4	9,926	4.8	19,324	9.4	16,433	8.0
Go to bars/night clubs	43,415	21.2	3,288	1.6	5,075	2.5	7,212	3.5	7,372	3.6
Go to beach	51,413	25.1	3,385	1.7	2,457	1.2	4,812	2.4	4,845	2.4
Go to live theater	31,530	15.4	148	0.1	324	0.2	1,379	0.7	3,408	1.7
Play cards	43,246	21.1	5,612	2.7	5,221	2.6	6,382	3.1	6,324	3.1
Reading books	81,538	39.8	44,462	21.7	8,174	4.0	7,067	3.5	5,643	2.8
Surf the Net	55,361	27.0	34,302	16.7	6,981	3.4	4,754	2.3	1,687	0.8

¹ Excluding country and rock.

Source: Mediarmark Research, Inc., New York, NY, *Top-line Reports* (copyright). Internet site <<http://www.mediarmark.com/mri/docs/TopLineReports.html>>.

No. 1124. Communications Industry—Finances: 1998 to 2001

[In millions of dollars (198,877 represents \$198,877,000,000). Covers 353 publicly reporting media and communications companies with revenues of over \$1 million in 12 media and communication industry segments. Minus sign (-) indicates loss]

Industry	Revenue				Operating Income			
	1998	1999	2000	2001	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total	198,877	221,199	255,246	261,655	25,884	25,705	19,716	15,758
Advertising, marketing services and specialty media ¹	27,247	32,119	36,797	38,110	3,553	3,693	3,536	3,912
Marketing services holding companies	16,278	18,896	20,771	22,781	1,950	2,276	2,643	2,760
Telephone directory publishing	4,305	4,411	4,751	4,482	1,113	1,180	1,344	1,356
Specialty media	2,662	2,922	3,210	3,453	310	367	456	421
E-marketers	1,161	1,871	2,619	1,851	-127	-367	-1,394	-699
Broadcast television	24,026	25,623	30,414	29,820	4,609	5,078	6,300	5,085
Television network companies	18,855	19,989	23,997	24,201	2,979	3,515	4,500	4,003
Television station broadcasters	5,171	5,634	6,418	5,619	1,630	1,563	1,830	1,081
Cable and satellite television	29,033	34,210	44,567	51,984	2,650	1,715	-1,872	-1,125
Cable and satellite providers	19,022	23,055	31,650	37,851	944	226	-1,715	-3,780
Cable and satellite networks	10,011	11,155	12,918	14,133	1,706	1,488	43	2,655
Radio broadcasting	3,500	4,595	6,876	6,766	822	1,136	999	699
Entertainment	44,029	46,532	47,362	44,093	3,996	3,775	1,726	1,530
Filmed entertainment	27,106	27,053	26,950	27,208	2,038	1,650	1,151	1,142
Recorded music	9,544	10,672	11,433	9,208	606	432	29	-341
Interactive entertainment	7,379	8,806	8,978	7,677	1,353	1,493	546	729
Consumer Internet	4,527	6,834	11,301	12,326	-341	-1,037	960	-38
Internet service providers	3,995	5,650	8,873	10,352	-53	-340	2,111	2,983
Newspaper publishing	22,135	23,904	24,900	23,728	4,547	5,268	5,318	3,946
Consumer book publishing	3,952	3,067	4,197	4,552	166	278	41	483
Consumer magazine publishing	7,311	7,113	7,245	7,460	938	1,024	56	-205
Business-to-business communications	2,094	2,251	2,443	2,186	310	308	410	172
Professional, educational and training media	9,675	11,059	12,792	12,289	959	1,122	1,187	992
Professional and educational media	6,460	7,132	8,155	6,768	690	876	1,053	731
Adult education/corporate training	3,215	3,928	4,637	5,521	269	246	124	261
Business information services	21,347	22,891	26,354	28,341	3,654	3,346	396	308
Financial information	13,461	13,755	14,900	15,699	2,697	2,596	2,349	2,456
Healthcare information	3,256	3,945	4,571	4,701	341	195	2,245	-2,116

¹ Includes other industries, not shown separately.

No. 1125. Media Usage and Consumer Spending: 1998 to 2006

[Estimates of time spent were derived using rating data for television, cable and satellite television, and radio; survey research and consumer purchase data (units, admissions, access) for books, home video, Internet, interactive TV, magazines, movies in theaters, newspapers, recorded music, and video games. Adults 18 and older were the basis for estimates for television, cable & satellite television, daily newspapers, consumer books, consumer magazines, home video, and interactive TV. Persons 12 and older were the basis for estimates for radio, recorded music, movies in theaters, video games, and consumer Internet]

Item	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002, proj.	2003, proj.	2004, proj.	2005, proj.	2006, proj.
HOURS PER PERSON PER YEAR									
Total	3,347	3,469	3,519	3,570	3,623	3,661	3,715	3,750	3,785
Television	1,551	1,588	1,640	1,661	1,661	1,656	1,669	1,672	1,679
Broadcast TV	884	867	865	815	810	798	796	790	787
Network stations	710	706	805	753	749	738	735	729	726
Independent stations	174	162	61	62	61	61	61	61	61
Cable & satellite TV	667	720	774	846	851	858	873	881	892
Basic cable and satellite TV ¹	565	617	638	692	698	706	720	729	726
Premium cable and satellite TV ¹	101	103	137	154	153	152	153	152	166
Radio	936	967	964	983	1,001	1,014	1,032	1,049	1,062
Box office	13	13	12	13	13	13	14	14	14
Home video	36	39	46	56	77	96	109	120	126
Interactive TV ³	-	2	2	2	2	3	3	5	6
Recorded music	283	290	264	238	228	219	211	203	195
Video games	43	61	75	78	84	90	95	101	106
Consumer Internet	54	82	106	134	157	174	189	199	213
Daily newspapers	185	183	179	177	175	173	172	170	169
Consumer books	120	121	111	109	107	106	105	104	103
Consumer magazines	125	124	121	119	117	116	115	113	112
CONSUMER SPENDING PER PERSON PER YEAR (dol.)									
Total	570.29	622.32	645.10	683.33	727.90	774.52	815.59	852.93	885.31
Television	167.38	181.71	194.63	210.58	225.34	241.30	255.18	269.18	282.17
Broadcast TV	167.38	181.71	194.63	210.58	225.34	241.30	255.18	269.18	282.17
Cable & satellite TV	125.77	135.61	146.73	158.94	168.75	178.64	187.65	195.62	202.64
Basic cable & satellite networks	41.61	46.10	47.90	51.64	56.58	62.66	67.54	73.56	79.53
Premium cable & satellite services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Radio	31.23	33.11	33.40	36.57	39.79	41.86	44.33	45.82	48.88
Box office	92.58	97.33	102.46	109.60	127.80	135.84	141.35	141.84	141.84
Home video	-	2.22	2.86	5.02	6.63	8.09	9.50	11.28	12.85
Interactive TV ³	61.67	65.13	62.80	60.57	58.81	57.27	55.82	54.30	52.70
Recorded music	18.49	24.45	25.93	27.96	30.46	33.60	35.87	38.38	40.92
Video games	27.63	41.77	50.63	62.08	75.10	88.96	100.99	111.76	122.32
Consumer Internet	53.37	53.83	53.39	54.12	54.70	55.68	56.24	56.57	57.36
Daily newspapers	84.16	89.04	87.34	87.34	87.34	87.34	87.34	87.34	87.34
Consumer books	46.45	46.15	44.87	43.57	44.07	44.60	45.10	46.26	47.42
Consumer magazines	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

- Represents zero. ¹ UPN, WB, and PAX affiliates included in independent stations and pay-per-view included basic cable from 1998 to 1999. ² UPN, WB, and PAX affiliates moved to network-affiliated stations and pay-per-view moved to premium services in 2000. ³ Playback of prerecorded tapes only. ⁴ Video-on-demand (VOD) only. Personal video recorders (PVRs) included in total TV.

Source for Tables 1124 and 1125: Veronis Suhler Stevenson, New York, NY, Communications Industry Report Forecast, annual (copyright) and Communications Industry Forecast, annual (copyright).

2 hrs a day per person in the family of four.

282

140

**No. 1233. Expenditures Per Consumer Unit for Entertainment and Reading:
1990 to 2001**

[Data are annual averages. In dollars, except as indicated. Based on Consumer Expenditure Survey; see text, Section 13, for description of survey. See also headline, Table 678. For composition of regions, see map, inside front cover]

Year and characteristic	Entertainment and reading		Entertainment				Reading
	Total	Percent of total expenditures	Total	Fees and admissions	Television, radios, and sound equipment	Other equipment and services ¹	
1990.....	1,575	5.6	1,422	371	454	597	153
1991.....	1,635	5.5	1,472	378	468	627	163
1992.....	1,662	5.6	1,500	379	492	629	162
1993.....	1,792	5.8	1,626	414	590	621	166
1994.....	1,732	5.5	1,567	439	533	595	165
1995.....	1,775	5.5	1,612	433	542	637	163
1996.....	1,993	5.9	1,834	459	561	814	159
1997.....	1,977	5.7	1,813	471	577	766	164
1998.....	1,907	5.4	1,746	449	535	762	161
1999.....	2,050	5.5	1,891	459	608	824	159
2000.....	2,009	5.3	1,863	515	622	727	146
2001, total.....	2,094	5.3	1,953	526	660	767	141
Age of reference person:							
Under 25 years old.....	1,212	5.2	1,152	289	506	356	60
25 to 34 years old.....	2,112	5.4	2,001	492	698	810	111
35 to 44 years old.....	2,644	5.6	2,508	707	787	1,014	136
45 to 54 years old.....	2,405	5.0	2,233	635	781	817	172
55 to 64 years old.....	2,520	6.1	2,337	588	642	1,107	183
65 to 74 years old.....	1,455	4.5	1,296	379	500	417	159
75 years old and over.....	950	4.1	822	207	361	254	128
Origin of reference person:							
Hispanic.....	1,305	3.8	1,246	277	593	376	59
Non-Hispanic.....	2,170	5.4	2,021	550	666	805	149
Race of reference person:							
White and other.....	2,237	5.5	2,085	573	671	841	152
Black.....	1,050	3.6	988	188	575	225	62
Region of residence:							
Northeast.....	2,023	4.9	1,854	561	681	611	169
Midwest.....	2,382	6.0	2,220	587	680	953	162
South.....	1,753	4.8	1,652	410	614	628	101
West.....	2,400	5.5	2,241	620	693	928	159

¹ Other equipment and services includes pets, toys, and playground equipment; sports, exercise, and photographic equipment; and recreational vehicles.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Survey, annual.

Reading
1/10 of total spent
on entertainment.

TV, radio, sound
equipment

Other - 9/10 on fees, admissions

TV, radio + sound
equipment + other
equipment

Not all books bought
bought on read

No. 678. Average Annual Expenditures of All Consumer Units by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Age of Householder: 2001

[In dollars. Based on Consumer Expenditure Survey. Data are averages for the noninstitutional population. Expenditures reported here are out-of-pocket]

Item	All consumer units	Age of householder							
		Black	His- panic	Under 25 yrs.	25 to 34 yrs.	35 to 44 yrs.	45 to 54 yrs.	55 to 64 yrs.	65 yrs. and over
Expenditures, total	39,518	28,903	34,361	23,526	39,451	46,908	47,930	41,462	27,714
Food	5,321	4,271	5,648	3,724	5,214	6,242	6,451	5,442	3,749
Food at home	3,086	2,804	3,551	1,857	2,936	3,589	3,659	3,238	2,435
Cereals and bakery products	452	402	490	276	419	535	522	463	377
Cereals and cereal products	156	160	188	112	160	188	176	147	122
Bakery products	296	242	302	164	259	348	347	315	255
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	828	941	1,098	472	791	948	959	898	641
Beef	248	245	331	147	241	274	308	266	191
Pork	177	229	229	88	167	196	211	205	148
Other meats	102	95	111	60	91	127	124	103	77
Poultry	152	198	206	93	153	181	182	154	108
Fish and seafood	114	132	164	59	107	131	134	134	87
Eggs	35	43	55	25	33	39	40	36	30
Dairy products	332	241	355	194	317	400	388	340	257
Fresh milk and cream	136	98	168	84	137	164	156	126	108
Other dairy products	196	143	186	110	181	236	232	215	148
Fruits and vegetables	522	460	663	295	478	585	607	555	468
Fresh fruits	160	124	218	85	142	178	187	173	151
Fresh vegetables	162	131	231	86	148	176	193	183	141
Processed fruits	116	125	132	78	110	136	128	112	105
Processed vegetables	84	80	82	46	78	95	98	88	72
Other food at home	952	759	946	620	931	1,120	1,142	982	693
Nonalcoholic beverages	256	216	290	168	243	307	319	265	175
Food away from home	2,235	1,467	2,097	1,867	2,277	2,653	2,792	2,204	1,314
Alcoholic beverages	349	156	308	379	393	413	396	322	192
Housing	13,011	10,510	11,747	7,585	13,828	15,870	15,026	12,802	9,354
Shelter	7,602	5,925	7,018	4,862	8,544	9,529	8,854	7,067	4,844
Owned dwellings	4,979	2,981	3,349	778	4,641	6,784	6,498	5,122	3,258
Mortgage interest and charges	2,862	1,880	2,152	434	3,129	4,533	3,935	2,539	849
Property taxes	1,233	703	670	257	833	1,393	1,528	1,434	1,343
Rented dwellings	2,134	2,762	3,503	3,786	3,655	2,261	1,632	1,187	1,201
Other lodging	489	182	167	298	248	484	594	758	366
Utilities, fuels, and public services	2,767	2,955	2,429	1,369	2,606	3,111	3,192	2,998	2,481
Natural gas	411	494	332	142	360	457	466	445	428
Electricity	1,009	1,090	848	483	914	1,145	1,149	1,108	934
Fuel oil and other fuels	112	61	43	22	63	108	135	150	146
Telephone	914	1,024	917	625	1,001	1,068	1,072	928	652
Water and other public services	321	286	290	93	267	366	371	368	321
Household operations	676	417	430	237	775	942	570	491	700
Personal services	291	229	251	140	533	536	141	85	162
Other household expenses	385	189	179	97	242	406	428	406	538
Housekeeping supplies	503	253	432	215	430	576	566	593	430
Household furnishings and equipment	1,458	877	1,437	902	1,473	1,712	1,802	1,653	899
Household textiles	114	67	97	37	90	127	153	149	88
Furniture	372	309	383	253	439	446	451	353	212
Floor coverings	40	30	36	7	22	51	59	49	33
Major appliances	178	118	162	72	200	192	211	92	143
Miscellaneous household equipment	667	315	656	494	655	795	816	789	366
Apparel and services	1,743	1,729	1,857	1,197	1,922	2,110	2,337	1,575	891
Men and boys	423	376	416	293	458	522	597	366	193
Women and girls	677	618	654	395	634	812	930	684	408
Children under 2 years old	81	82	141	103	165	99	66	51	16
Footwear	302	434	203	203	406	377	395	250	143
Other apparel products and services	259	218	241	202	303	301	348	224	131
Transportation	7,633	5,184	7,083	4,834	8,173	9,202	9,355	8,093	4,470
Vehicle purchases (net outlay)	3,579	2,193	3,360	2,463	3,920	4,463	4,319	3,778	1,859
Cars and trucks, new	1,685	821	1,455	710	1,533	2,143	2,013	2,107	1,073
Cars and trucks, used	1,848	1,359	1,880	1,713	2,335	2,259	2,249	1,615	780
Gasoline and motor oil	1,279	968	1,265	867	1,324	1,518	1,586	1,343	783
Other vehicle expenses	2,375	1,766	2,134	1,277	2,563	2,798	2,998	2,473	1,475
Vehicle finance charges	359	302	335	236	471	451	440	364	127
Maintenance and repair	662	443	695	358	605	820	837	677	464
Vehicle insurance	819	643	726	449	822	885	1,032	899	620
Public transportation	400	257	323	226	365	423	450	459	353
Health care	2,182	1,264	1,343	530	1,286	1,879	2,265	2,703	3,493
Entertainment	1,953	988	1,246	1,152	2,001	2,508	2,233	2,337	1,067
Personal care products and services	485	468	467	307	452	525	585	542	396
Reading	141	62	59	60	111	136	172	183	144
Education	648	352	428	1,111	477	669	1,036	438	173
Tobacco products and smoking supplies	308	203	177	265	320	379	374	333	154
Miscellaneous	750	585	457	319	566	740	900	815	891
Cash contributions	1,258	776	727	268	771	1,263	1,575	1,478	1,583
Personal insurance and pensions	3,737	2,936	2,814	1,395	3,938	4,971	5,224	4,401	1,157
Life and other personal insurance	410	310	209	51	239	423	545	653	384
Pensions and Social Security	3,326	2,046	2,605	1,344	3,700	4,548	4,679	3,747	773
Personal taxes	2,920	1,181	1,320	438	2,534	3,576	4,594	3,532	1,114

¹Includes other expenditures not shown separately. ²For additional health care expenditures, see Table 138. ³For additional recreation expenditures, see Section 26.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditures in 2001*; earlier reports. See also <<http://www.bls.gov/ex/csxann01.pdf>> (released April 2003).

No. 679. Average Annual Expenditures of All Consumer Units by Region and Size of Unit: 2001

(In dollars. For composition of regions, see map, inside front cover. See headnote, Table 676)

Item	Region				Size of consumer unit				
	North-east	Mid west	South	West	One person	Two persons	Three persons	Four persons	Five or more
Expenditures, total	41,169	39,548	36,285	43,261	23,507	40,359	45,508	54,395	53,805
Food	5,697	5,052	5,153	5,549	2,835	5,291	6,208	7,448	8,194
Food at home	3,399	2,892	2,983	3,183	1,533	2,954	3,696	4,404	5,151
Cereals and bakery products	511	435	431	454	224	420	526	660	800
Cereals and cereal products	179	148	146	162	75	135	186	231	308
Bakery products	332	287	285	292	149	285	340	429	492
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	939	720	846	816	369	811	1,040	1,142	1,425
Beef	252	232	257	247	103	251	304	347	428
Pork	181	159	198	161	74	178	228	245	296
Other meats	127	95	99	94	47	95	134	143	173
Poultry	189	124	152	149	68	140	191	207	289
Fish and seafood	154	83	106	123	58	113	141	155	173
Eggs	37	28	35	41	19	33	41	44	65
Dairy products	375	328	301	348	169	304	394	485	573
Fresh milk and cream	140	135	125	150	68	116	162	201	260
Other dairy products	235	193	175	198	101	188	232	284	312
Fruits and vegetables	608	459	482	577	285	512	604	712	834
Fresh fruits	191	147	140	181	91	159	183	212	255
Fresh vegetables	183	134	149	192	86	164	187	214	257
Processed fruits	139	102	108	125	65	107	133	167	193
Processed vegetables	94	77	85	79	43	83	100	120	129
Other food at home	966	951	923	998	486	907	1,132	1,404	1,530
Nonalcoholic beverages	262	261	246	263	134	242	302	379	406
Food away from home	2,299	2,160	2,170	2,366	1,302	2,336	2,512	3,043	3,042
Alcoholic beverages	386	346	298	400	314	400	315	368	309
Housing	14,439	12,458	11,375	15,000	8,371	12,944	14,744	17,914	17,317
Shelter	8,943	7,056	6,101	9,440	5,253	7,463	8,358	10,415	9,911
Owned dwellings	5,789	4,973	3,993	5,872	2,491	4,988	5,737	7,892	7,039
Mortgage interest and charges	2,750	2,742	2,363	3,866	1,175	2,547	3,689	5,019	4,524
Property taxes	2,065	1,290	851	1,072	752	1,328	1,227	1,784	1,590
Maintenance, repair, insurance, other	974	941	778	914	565	1,113	821	1,089	924
Rented dwellings	2,536	1,549	1,754	3,019	2,505	1,834	2,167	1,893	2,249
Other lodging	618	534	353	548	256	640	454	630	563
Utilities, fuels, and public services	2,836	2,823	2,843	2,524	1,799	2,816	3,202	3,530	3,734
Natural gas	498	586	272	373	276	412	461	529	560
Electricity	685	924	1,258	804	642	1,032	1,179	1,273	1,388
Fuel oil and other fuels	319	90	58	68	73	131	106	140	142
Telephone	897	914	924	914	620	905	1,091	1,166	1,194
Water and other public services	237	309	331	388	189	336	365	422	450
Household operations	778	614	619	745	356	474	477	1,356	984
Personal services	305	302	259	319	78	84	897	765	579
Other household expenses	474	312	360	426	278	389	380	591	405
Housekeeping supplies	518	492	494	544	246	556	562	731	719
Household furnishings and equipment	1,365	1,473	1,318	1,748	717	1,636	1,746	1,882	2,029
Household textiles	134	113	100	120	59	138	122	141	146
Furniture	324	349	371	440	161	422	426	574	477
Floor coverings	45	31	30	64	14	49	44	56	63
Major appliances	149	182	161	225	84	219	171	247	238
Small appliances, misc. housewares	79	89	74	111	43	111	79	118	102
Miscellaneous household equipment	634	709	582	787	356	697	902	746	1,003
Apparel and services	2,072	1,695	1,602	1,736	862	1,650	2,013	2,643	2,893
Men and boys	539	429	378	389	197	377	491	694	735
Women and girls	803	703	628	620	342	661	767	985	1,118
Children under 2 years old	95	91	72	74	13	47	140	162	186
Footwear	347	261	291	325	131	302	290	491	545
Other apparel products and services	288	211	233	327	179	263	325	311	314
Transportation	7,194	7,681	7,448	8,258	4,012	7,692	9,348	10,775	11,123
Vehicle purchases (net outlay)	3,131	3,496	3,813	3,676	1,805	3,487	4,325	5,258	5,594
Cars and trucks, new	1,719	1,476	1,785	1,717	832	1,896	1,893	2,376	2,268
Cars and trucks, used	1,396	1,971	1,975	1,902	934	1,556	2,400	2,790	3,275
Gasoline and motor oil	1,086	1,367	1,245	1,408	659	1,301	1,580	1,810	1,872
Other vehicle expenses	2,402	2,464	2,110	2,684	1,275	2,426	3,051	3,256	3,215
Vehicle finance charges	262	373	395	371	142	351	478	552	536
Maintenance and repair	664	626	566	854	419	661	788	867	910
Vehicle insurance	845	803	787	866	442	866	1,059	1,097	1,039
Public transportation	574	353	281	491	273	478	412	450	443
Health care	2,084	2,292	2,194	2,129	1,441	2,827	2,265	2,253	2,150
Entertainment	1,854	2,220	1,652	2,241	1,097	2,051	2,137	2,787	2,718
Personal care products and services	479	482	467	521	297	512	555	614	658
Reading	169	162	101	159	111	168	139	155	131
Education	729	689	483	798	423	476	830	1,059	984
Tobacco products and smoking supplies	304	374	316	230	203	312	397	349	416
Miscellaneous	985	701	605	833	518	744	843	1,156	743
Cash contributions	1,007	1,541	1,206	1,258	1,063	1,429	1,547	1,984	1,399
Personal insurance and pensions	3,770	3,853	3,385	4,149	1,960	3,864	4,547	5,589	4,770
Life and other personal insurance	405	474	418	335	180	482	527	565	477
Pensions and Social Security	3,366	3,379	2,967	3,815	1,779	3,382	4,020	5,024	4,293
Personal taxes	2,527	3,449	2,232	3,795	1,829	3,599	3,066	3,900	2,652

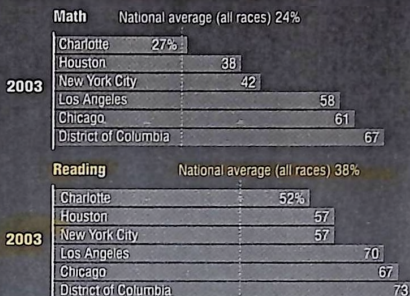
¹ For additional health care expenditures, see Table 138. ² For additional recreation expenditures, see Section 26.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditures in 2001*; earlier reports. See also <<http://www.bls.gov/cex/csxann01.pdf>> (released April 2003).

A LINGERING DIVIDE

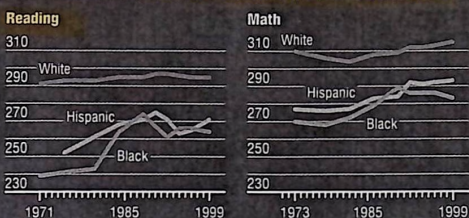
High school graduation rates have risen steadily for all groups, but striking racial and ethnic differences remain. Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress show that the academic gains black and Hispanic 17-year-olds made during the mid-1980s have leveled off. But some urban schools are doing much better on the NAEP than others.

PERCENTAGE OF BLACK FOURTH GRADERS SCORING WELL BELOW GRADE LEVEL



Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, Education Statistics of the United States

AVERAGE NATIONAL TEST SCORES FOR 17-YEAR-OLDS



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES AMONG AMERICANS 25 YEARS AND OLDER



REUTERS/JEFFREY M. HARRIS

Surprising as it may seem in 2004, Chief Justice Earl Warren's opinion in *Brown* made little reference to scholastic achievement. Instead, it focused on the psychological damage of segregation and asserted that as long as education is separate, true equality of opportunity cannot exist. But now, as the racially charged fights over desegregation recede into the past, a new national debate over how to close the minority achievement gap has emerged. Not only is integration hard to achieve, but it is no longer universally assumed to be the key to excellence. If anything, the argument has been reversed: To have any hope of luring whites into majority-black schools, educators must first raise academic achievement in those classrooms. The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act is the most prominent example of this intellectual shift. The law does not concern itself with how integrated a school is. It simply demands achievement from every student, in every school.

To reach that goal, schools must find ways to prevent disorder and indifference from overwhelming education. Novak's experience is all too common. As he tries to continue his social-studies lesson Phillip McPherson, a 14-year-old with a high forehead and watchful eyes, swivels

around in his chair and flirts with a classmate. "Phillip, turn around," Novak calls. Phillip ignores him. "That's two demerits, Phillip, turn around." Phillip picks up a pink notebook on the girl's desk and begins to flip through it. Novak moves beside him. "OK, that is detention; don't make it an hour visit," Novak says. Phillip does not look up at the teacher. Novak breathes in and exhales: "Phillip. Turn. A. Round."

Novak is not a bad teacher. He possesses, according to his colleagues, great promise, energy, and vision. He tutors students after school and tries to design class projects that catch kids' attention. But the placement of a brand-new instructor in a tough, failing school, without meaningful guidance or support, is just one example of the systemic failure of minority education in America.

Last year, for the first time, the federal government released comparative test scores for 10 cities that have traditionally been home to the most troubled schools and the lowest minority achievement. At the bottom of the list was Washington, D.C., where 73 percent of black fourth graders were "below basic" in reading. At the other end was Charlotte, N.C., where 52 percent of black fourth graders were below basic.

While these scores leave plenty of room for improvement (overall, just 17 percent of whites in Charlotte were below basic), African-Americans in Charlotte easily bested the black national average. True, Charlotte enjoys advantages that the nation's capital lacks, notably the support of a reform-minded state government and the benefits of a school district that encompasses its immediate suburbs. Nevertheless, Washington and other failing school systems have much to learn from the kind of reforms that are starting to close the gap between white and black in Charlotte.

Great expectations. Each morning, televisions flicker on in the classrooms and offices of Charlotte's Highland Renaissance Academy. Two students lead the public elementary school in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and the school's "Pledge for Success": a list of rules such as "I will wait my turn to speak." Jenell Bovis, the principal, appears on the closed-circuit broadcast to call a group of students in front of the camera. Each has read enough books and passed enough comprehension tests to reach a different milestone. At each level, students get a prize—a soft water bottle, or Beanie Baby—and recognition. This is the big idea at Highland: Set

(Copy any other information)
interruption excites the desire to move

To the extent possible, outlays were used in this report rather than appropriations or obligations, with the exception that obligations were used for academic research at institutions of higher education. Outlays are the actual amount of dollars spent. Appropriations are the amount of funds made available in legislation providing funds for federal programs. Obligations are spending commitments by the federal government that will require outlays either immediately or in the future.

⬆ BACK TO TOP

Highlights

Important

The federal government provides support for education well beyond programs funded through the Department of Education. Federal support for education, excluding estimated federal tax expenditures, was an estimated \$122.8 billion in FY 2000 (table A), an increase of \$60.0 billion, or 95 percent, since FY 90. After adjustment for inflation, federal support for education increased 55 percent between FY 90 and FY 2000.

Table A.-Federal on-budget funds for education, by level or other educational purpose, and off-budget support and nonfederal funds generated by federal legislation: Fiscal years 1980, 1985, 1990, and 2000

Level	FY 80	FY 85	FY 90	FY 2000 ¹
(In billions of current dollars)				
On-budget	\$34.5	\$39.0	\$51.6	\$90.7
Elementary and secondary	16.0	16.9	22.0	44.0
Postsecondary	11.1	11.2	13.7	19.9
Libraries, museums, and other	1.5	2.1	3.4	5.8
Research at educational institutions	5.8	8.8	12.6	21.0
Off-budget support and nonfederal funds ²	4.9	8.7	11.2	32.1
Total	39.3	47.8	62.8	122.8
(In billions of constant FY 2000 dollars)				
On-budget	\$68.0	\$57.5	\$65.2	\$90.7
Elementary and secondary	31.6	24.9	27.8	44.0
Postsecondary	21.9	16.4	17.2	19.9
Libraries, museums, and other	3.1	3.1	4.3	5.8
Research at educational institutions	11.4	13.0	15.9	21.0
Off-budget support and nonfederal funds ²	9.6	12.8	14.1	32.1
Total	77.6	70.3	79.4	122.8

*Over 20 years.
77.6 to 122.8*

¹Estimated.

²Off-budget support and nonfederal funds generated by federal legislation.

NOTE: Detail may not add to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education: Office of the Under Secretary, unpublished data, and National Center for Education Statistics, compiled from data appearing in U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government*, fiscal years (FY) 1982-2001 (selected years); National Science Foundation, *Federal Funds for Research and Development*, FY 1980-2000 (selected years); and unpublished data obtained from various federal agencies. (Originally published as an untitled table on p. iv of the complete report from which this article is excerpted.)

For FY 2000, on-budget federal funds for education programs were estimated to be \$90.7 billion, an increase of 76 percent since FY 90 in current dollars² or an increase of 39 percent after being adjusted for inflation. Off-budget support and nonfederal funds generated by federal legislation (predominantly

postsecondary education loans) were estimated at \$32.1 billion, a rise of 187 percent in current dollars between FY 90 and FY 2000 and 127 percent in constant dollars.

Support from on-budget program funds

Between FY 80 and FY 2000, after being adjusted for inflation, federal on-budget program funds for elementary and secondary education³ increased 39 percent; postsecondary education funds declined 9 percent; other education funds (which include funds for libraries, museums, cultural activities, and miscellaneous research) increased 89 percent; and funds for research at universities and university-administered research and development centers increased 84 percent.

Between FY 90 and FY 2000, federal on-budget funds for elementary and secondary education increased 58 percent in constant dollars, postsecondary education funds increased 15 percent, other education funds increased 35 percent, and research funds at colleges and universities increased 32 percent.

In FY 2000, Department of Education outlays totaled an estimated \$40.7 billion (table B), reflecting an increase of 57 percent after being adjusted for inflation from FY 80 and an increase of 39 percent between FY 90 and FY 2000. The Department of Education's share of total federal on-budget education funds rose from 38 percent in FY 80 to 45 percent in FY 90 and FY 2000 (figure A).

Table B.-Funds provided by fiscal year 2000's largest providers of federal on-budget funds for education, by agency: Fiscal years 1980, 1985, 1990, and 2000

Agency	FY 80	FY 85	FY 90	FY 2000*
(In billions of current dollars)				
Dept. of Education	\$13.1	\$16.7	\$23.2	\$40.7
Dept. of Health and Human Services	5.6	5.3	8.0	16.5
Dept. of Agriculture	4.6	4.8	6.3	10.8
Dept. of Labor	1.9	1.9	2.5	4.5
Dept. of Defense	1.6	3.1	3.6	4.0
Dept. of Energy	1.6	2.2	2.6	3.9
National Science Foundation	0.8	1.1	1.6	2.9
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	0.3	0.5	1.1	2.2
Dept. of Veterans Affairs	2.4	1.3	0.8	1.6
(In billions of constant FY 2000 dollars)				
Dept. of Education	\$25.9	\$24.6	\$29.3	\$40.7
Dept. of Health and Human Services	11.1	7.8	10.1	16.5
Dept. of Agriculture	9.0	7.0	7.9	10.8
Dept. of Labor	3.7	2.9	3.2	4.5
Dept. of Defense	3.1	4.6	4.6	4.0
Dept. of Energy	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.9
National Science Foundation	1.6	1.7	2.0	2.9
National Aeronautics and Space Administration	0.5	0.7	1.4	2.2
Dept. of Veterans Affairs	4.6	1.9	1.0	1.6

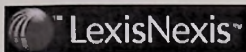
*Estimated.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education: Office of the Under Secretary, unpublished data, and National Center for Education Statistics, compiled from data appearing in U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government*, fiscal years (FY) 1982-2001 (selected years); National Science Foundation, *Federal Funds for Research and Development*, FY 1980-2000 (selected years); and unpublished data obtained from various federal agencies. (Originally published as an untitled table on p. iv of the complete report from which this article is excerpted.)

Figure A.-Percentage distribution of federal on-budget funds for education, by agency: Fiscal year 2000

too complicated

8 to 4
3 to 2
11 to 9
5 to 4
4 to 3
5 to 4
8 to 5
4 to 1
down 1 to 3

*Most useful*

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HEADLINE: Fewer Noses Stuck in Books In America, Survey Finds

BYLINE: By BRUCE WEBER

BODY:

Oprah's Book Club may help sell millions of books to Americans, and slam poetry may have engendered a youthful new breed of wordsmith, but the nation is still caught in a tide of indifference when it comes to literature. That is the sobering profile of a new survey to be released today by the National Endowment for the Arts, which describes a precipitous downward trend in book consumption by Americans and a particular decline in the reading of fiction, poetry and drama.

The survey, called "Reading at Risk," is based on data from "The Survey of Public Participation in the Arts," conducted by the Census Bureau in 2002. Among its findings are that fewer than half of Americans over 18 now read novels, short stories, plays or poetry; that the consumer pool for books of all kinds has diminished; and that the pace at which the nation is losing readers, especially young readers, is quickening. In addition it finds that the downward trend holds in virtually all demographic areas.

"What this study does is give us accurate numbers that support our worst fears about American reading," said Dana Gioia, the chairman of the endowment, who will preside over a discussion of the survey results at the New York Public Library this morning. "It quantifies what people have been observing anecdotally, but the news is that it has been happening more rapidly and more pervasively than anyone thought possible. Reading is in decline among all groups, in every region, at every educational level and within every ethnic group," he said, calling the survey results "deeply alarming."

The study, with its stark depiction of how Americans now entertain, inform and educate themselves, does seem likely to fuel debate over issues like the teaching and encouragement of reading in schools, the financing of literacy programs and the prevalence in American life of television and the other electronic media that have been increasingly stealing time from readers for a couple of generations at least. It also raises questions about the role of literature in the contemporary world.

The survey also makes a striking correlation between readers of literature and those who are socially engaged, noting that readers are far more likely than nonreaders to do volunteer and charity work and go to art museums, performing arts events and ballgames. "Whatever good things the new electronic media bring, they also seem to be creating a decline in cultural and civic participation," Mr. Gioia said. "Of literary readers, 43 percent perform charity work; only 17 percent of nonreaders do. That's not a subtle difference."

Still, in a world where information is more readily available than ever, where people know more than they ever have, and where visual acuity is becoming ever more crucially utilitarian, it is worth asking: What, if anything, does literature's diminished importance to Americans represent? The study has already produced conflicting reactions.

"It's not just unfortunate, it's real cause for concern," said James Shapiro, a professor of English at Columbia University. "A culture gets what it pays for, and if we think democracy depends on people who read, write, think and reflect -- which is what literature advances -- then we have to invest in what it takes to promote that."

On the other hand Kevin Starr, librarian emeritus for the state of California and a professor of history at the University of Southern California, said that if close to 50 percent of Americans are reading literature, "that's not bad, actually."

"In an age where there's no canon, where there are so many other forms of information, and where we're returning to medieval-like oral culture based on television," he said, "I think that's pretty impressive, quite frankly." Mr. Starr continued: "We should be alarmed, I suppose, but the horse has long since run out of the barn. There are two distinct cultures that have evolved, and by far the smaller is the one that's tied up with book and high culture. You can get through American life and be very successful without anybody ever asking you whether Shylock is an anti-Semitic character or whether 'Death in Venice' is better than 'The Magic Mountain.'"

The Census Bureau study upon which the survey was based measured the number of adult Americans who attended live performances of theater, music,

dance and other arts; visited museums; watched broadcasts of arts programs; or read literature in the past year. The survey sample -- 17,135 people -- makes it one of the largest studies ever conducted on the subject of arts participation, and the data were compared with similar studies from 1982 and 1992. In the literature segment respondents were asked whether they had, during the previous 12 months, without the impetus of a school or work assignment, read any novels, short stories, poems or plays in their leisure time.

Their answers show that just over half -- 56.6 percent -- read a book of any kind in the previous year, down from 60.9 percent a decade earlier. Readers of literature fell even more precipitously, to 46.7 percent of the adult population, down from 54 percent in 1992 and 56.9 percent in 1982, which means that in the last decade the erosion accelerated significantly. The literary reading public lost 5 percent of its girth between 1982 and 1992; another 14 percent dropped away in the following decade. And though the number of readers of literature is about the same now as it was in 1982 -- about 96 million people -- the American population as a whole has increased by almost 40 million.

The survey found that men (37.6 percent) were doing less literary reading than women (55.1 percent); that Hispanics (26.5 percent) were doing less than African-Americans (37.1 percent) and whites (51.4 percent), but that all categories were declining. The steepest declines of any demographic group are among the youngest adults. In 1982, 59.8 percent of 18-to-24-year-olds read literature; by 2002 that figure had dropped to 42.8 percent. In the 25-to-34 age group, the percentage of literary readers dropped to 47.7 from 62.1 over the same period.

"This won't be news to publishers," said Jim Milliot, senior editor for news at the trade journal Publishers Weekly. "It just confirms what we've known from other fragmented surveys all along."

Last month the Association of American Publishers released worldwide sales figures for 2003, indicating that total sales of consumer book products increased 6 percent for the year. Much of the increase can be accounted for by sales of audio books, juvenile titles and nonpaper e-books, sold online. Adult hardbound books, adult paperbacks and mass-market paperbacks all showed relatively flat revenues, in spite of price increases.

The one category of book to rise markedly was that of religious texts, with total sales of \$337.9 million, 36.8 percent over the previous year.

URL: <http://www.nytimes.com>

GRAPHIC: Chart: "Reading on the Decline"Percent of Americans in the study who reported reading any novels, short stories, plays or poetry for pleasure during one year.Graph tracks Americans between the ages of 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75+ and all ages for 1982, 1992 and 2002.(Source by National Endowment for the Arts)(pg. E4)

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- Perversely, states with high standards, such as New York, Michigan, and Vermont, will have the highest remedial needs and costs while those with low standards will have the lowest costs.²⁶

Public spending on K-12 education was \$422.7 billion in 2001-02. If we use a broad -- yet easily justified and extremely conservative -- estimate of 20% added costs for the nation as a whole, that translates into a national increase of about \$84.5 billion. An estimate of 39% additional costs yields a national increase of \$148 billion.

For comparison purposes, the current federal Title I appropriation is \$11.3 billion, and the Administration's budget request of \$12.3 billion is below the authorized amount of \$18 billion in NCLB. President Bush said in his weekly radio address of 4 January 2003 that the additional \$1 billion was "more than enough money" and that "we are insisting that schools use that money wisely."²⁹

Who Has to Pay the NCLB Bill?

Legal scholars have opined that the federal government cannot be sued to force adequate funding of the law. In fact, Secretary of Education Richard Riley in a letter dated 19 January 2001 said that states have the responsibility of providing educational resources to meet new standards: "Indeed, raising standards without closing resource gaps may have the perverse effect of exacerbating achievement gaps and of setting up many children for failure."³⁰

The alternative for states is to reject the federal money and, along with it, the mandates. However, if states take the money and require local districts to meet state standards, then these same local districts can legally demand that the state provide adequate money to meet these standards. Local districts can cite a growing number of financial adequacy studies to support their case in the courts.

With the National Governors' Association estimating that states face a total fiscal-year 2003 deficit of \$58 billion, state governments will be hard pressed to fund an additional \$84.5 billion -- to say nothing of \$148 billion. In many states, budgets are being balanced in part by cutting education dollars. Tax cuts, a sluggish economy, and the cost of war in Iraq all suggest that significant fiscal help will not be forthcoming from the federal government.

Few reasonable people argue against the idea that all children must be well educated or that extra services must be made available for our most needy. In fact, it has been the dream of many educators throughout our nation's history. However, if funding remains inadequate, then at best the law will represent the attenuated efforts of an overpromising government, which will leave behind our poorest and most needy children.

Promised Benefits: Accountability

The primary promised benefit of NCLB is that 95% of all student groups will reach their state test standards by 2014. Obviously, we don't know if that goal can or will be reached. But if the system is not adequately funded, then reaping that benefit is a remote and forlorn hope.

Assessing the possible benefits of NCLB requires answering two questions -- one technical, the other about values. The technical question is whether the system can ever work. At the heart of the plan is the requirement that each subgroup of students in each school improve test scores in equal yearly increments. That is, they are required to make "adequate yearly progress" (AYP). The values question is whether the goals of the system, narrowly conceived as improved test scores, are the right goals for public education in a democratic society.

Promised Benefits: 'Adequate Yearly Progress'

There is simply no body of accepted scientific knowledge that says that all students and all subgroups of students can reach meaningful high standards, at the required AYP pace, given the levels of funding and the lack of social, economic, and family assets of many of our children. It is also doubtful that the "machinery" will work. Indeed, there is scant evidence that the AYP train can even get out of the station.

Test score reliability. The centerpiece of NCLB is the requirement that test scores must improve annually. Before NCLB became law, Thomas Kane and Douglas Staiger demonstrated that 70% of the year-to-year change in test scores for grade levels or schools is simply random variation.³¹ Differences in the student body from one year to the next, combined with the statistical error in the tests themselves, make it impossible to know whether the tests are measuring real gains (or losses) or whether the changes are merely random noise.

Similarly, Walt Haney examined the scores of all Massachusetts schools. He found that those that received a medallion for large gains in one year saw those gains disappear the following year.³² In Florida, the same pattern emerged, with 62% of the schools that posted gains in the first cycle of testing falling back in the next cycle.³³ In Miami, Jaekyung Lee found the same phenomenon and noted that the random fluctuation, not surprisingly, increased as the size of the school decreased.³⁴

The problems become far more difficult as the number of subgroups increases. A school with a diverse population (and many subgroups) has many more opportunities to fail. Thus the diverse school, which faces greater challenges, is penalized.

Likewise, many rural and small schools do not have enough students in a grade level or a population subgroup to draw valid conclusions. While some states call for a minimum of 30 or 50 students in a subgroup, new analyses are finding that these cell sizes are still too small to validly measure AYP gains. For example, modeling in Vermont shows that 170 students per grade level are needed for the scores to be stable.³⁵

Validity. Most states claim that their testing systems are "aligned" with their state curriculum standards. Generally, this means that they are not grossly incompatible. It does not mean that they are a faithful, accurate, and balanced representation of the state's standards for instruction. Since most tests are geared toward reading and mathematics, social studies and science get short shrift. Even within math and reading, the ability of any test to sample validly an ever-expanding knowledge base is suspect. The reading and math wars demonstrate that even these basic areas are subject to great controversy. Moreover, different tests give different results for the same students — even when they are supposedly measuring knowledge of the same subject matter.³⁶

Testing companies, state agencies, and local districts all have their own incentives to keep the time, amount, and expense of testing to a minimum. The result, unfortunately, is a tradeoff. Thus it is doubtful that any state accountability test can be considered a valid and representative sampling of the state's curriculum expectations for an educated youth.

Improvement of learning through tests. Each year, the NCLB system progressively increases sanctions against schools that do not meet annual growth targets. Ultimately, the state could take over the school, change its management, or disband it altogether. The assumption is that the fear of these penalties will drive schools to even higher levels of performance.

Leaving aside whether schools have the resources and whether students have the social capital to reach the high levels sought by NCLB, it is questionable whether punitive incentive systems work. (B. F. Skinner disproved negative reinforcement systems 45 years ago.) In looking at 18 states with high-stakes testing systems, Audrey Amrein and David Berliner considered the scores on the high-stakes tests along with the scores on other tests. If all scores went up, they concluded that learning was taking place. If only the high-stakes scores went up, they concluded that test preparation and curriculum narrowing were taking place. They found that scores on the other tests were not related to scores on high-stakes tests. Thus the basic assumption that high-stakes systems lead to improved learning must be suspect at least.³⁷

Texas is cited as a state in which the increase in the percentage of students meeting the standards was paralleled by increases in the state's scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. However, the low level of the state's tests and the very different trend lines of the state and NAEP tests call this conclusion into question. More troubling still is that the increase in test scores was not accompanied by increases in outcomes of high value, such as increased high school completion or college attendance.³⁸

Unintended Consequences

The assumption of the NCLB system is that the test results represent what an educated person should know and be able to do. Few would say that an educated person only has high test scores. Most would say good scores are desirable but not sufficient to define an educated person. Most would say that schools must also produce good citizens, strong family members, contributors to society, and people engaged in democratic governance. None of these characteristics are measured by or deemed of importance in the federal accountability system. Along the way, a number of unintended consequences also appear likely.

Curriculum narrowing. As noted above, statewide achievement tests do not measure the vast expanse of curriculum set forth by states and school districts. Tests tend to measure those things that are easy to measure, in an efficient and economical way. This means that the focus is on lower-order thinking skills, with a light smattering of higher-order skills, such as writing a short essay.³⁹ Schools and teachers, faced with ever-increasing demands to avoid the "failing school" label, will logically focus on the curriculum content that is most likely to improve test scores. Leaving aside the fact that these tests provide little useful instructional feedback, the inevitable results will be that the nation's curriculum will be narrowed and the level of expectations will be lowered.⁴⁰

Failing schools. While the federal government has recently announced that the "failing" label for schools should be replaced with the more politically acceptable term "in need of improvement," the negative moniker sticks in the minds of the people and of the media. Regardless of the solid record of achievement test scores and the good graduation rates of the nation's schools, public school critics have been successful in painting schools as "failing," and they have made the most of the cooperation of the media, which have natural incentives to report negative news.

A plethora of estimates have been put forth regarding the number of schools across the U.S. that will turn out to be failing under NCLB. The Center for Assessment says 75%, North Carolina estimates 60%, Vermont calculated 80% over three years, and Louisiana reports 85% — even though two-thirds of their schools show improved scores.⁴¹

Furthermore, as Lowell Rose has pointed out with regard to Indiana, "A failing label will be assigned frequently, based on the crushing impact of poverty." Students with large and diverse populations will find it most difficult to show progress while schools with a breakout group in special education will find it impossible.⁴² Black students showed a 94% failure rate, while Hispanics registered a 68% failure rate. Students who received free and reduced-price lunches showed a 56% failure rate.

<http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k0305mat.htm>

Schools labeled as "failing" will not receive their label because they have failed. Rather, schools will be branded because they are in poor or diverse neighborhoods, because they are small and rural, because they are underfunded, and because the AYP system cannot tell the difference between a learning gain and random noise.

Dropouts. While it is still too early to determine whether students will drop out of school as a result of the NCLB requirements, an examination of the national longitudinal database shows that students subjected to eighth-grade promotion examinations are more likely to drop out by 10th grade. 43 Anecdotal evidence suggests that some students are encouraged (or provided subtle incentives) to drop out. This is consistent with the "uncertainty principle" mechanisms set forth by Anrein and Berliner. Simply put, the more intense the negative consequences held over a system in an effort to get high results, the more likely the system is to game the rules to show better results.

Conclusion: Sure Costs, Uncertain Benefits

The No Child Left Behind law claims noble aims and sets unyielding expectations for schools. Yet there is a troubling difference between the language of the federal government and its actions. While asking for the highest educational achievement scores in the world, we ignore that we are, at best, mediocre in the commitment of our substantial wealth to our schools. When it comes to equality for all our children, the U.S. is among the least equitable nations in the world.

It is in this context that NCLB has promised equality for all. Yet in the 10 states profiled in this analysis, the costs for making these promises a reality are far from being met. Seven of the 10 states require new base investments in education of at least 24%. The federal Administration has asked for an increase of \$1 billion in Title I, but we need at least \$84.5 billion if we are to make a realistic effort to leave no child behind. The states, currently wallowing in deficits totaling \$58 billion, will be legally forced to take on these added burdens, but they lack the capability. With war pushed to the front burner and another tax cut planned, there is little reason to believe that federal commitment in the form of federal dollars will follow federal rhetoric.

If we were willing to fund our educational obligations to the poor and the needy, the social benefits would be enormous. But funding alone will do little to stop an unworkable AYP system from randomly assigning punitive sanctions to our schools. The system does not recognize that a hungry child with a poor, single parent and a violent home may not be focused on phonics each morning. The system does not ensure adequate money for an underfunded school. It gives no promise that children will not have to go to a dilapidated school. The system makes no distinction between a school with well-educated parents and generous resources and an impoverished school. Both schools are held to the same standard.

The program is likely to increase the number of dropouts, narrow the curriculum, and label a great many schools as failing – even as NAEP reading and mathematics scores are at very high levels. The effect will not simply be to punish schools and children for failing when they never had a chance. The effect will be that our society accepts a meager vision of what it means to be educated in America. The effect will be to take money from those schools and those communities that need it most and transfer it to "successful" schools. Ultimately, the effect will be to shift the purpose of schools away from education for a democracy and away from the provision of equal opportunities for all children.

If we are to work seriously to attain the goal of educating all children, there are a number of requirements that must be met.

- Funding for education, prevention, and remediation must be adequate. This will require major new investments – particularly in poor, rural, and inner-city environments. We must undertake this effort not because it is the law but because it is what we should do.
- Ultimately, adequate funding is not a matter of fiscal capacity as much as it is a matter of political will. Obtaining adequate funding will require a level of political involvement not traditionally seen from educators.
- States and districts must conduct their own cost/benefit analyses. Even though schools desperately need the small Title I sums they receive, districts and states should reject Faustian bargains that fail to compensate them adequately for the obligations they take on. The inevitable result is that the district agrees to being publicly branded a failure when it never had a reasonable chance for success.
- States and districts must work with federal officials – elected and appointed – for the repeal or massive revision of the NCLB law so that it provides a workable accountability system. This system must include comprehensive and democratic conceptions of educational goals rather than a narrow reliance on tests. It must also measure gains according to where students are coming from as much as where they are going.
- Finally, educators must embrace accountability. We must work to ensure that no school provides substandard, inadequate, or inequitable educational programs. We must do so not because it is politically expedient but because it is what we owe the children, our society, and ourselves.

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Each copy of *Blutun* costs about \$2,000 to produce. Hawley is selling copies for \$10,000 apiece, with proceeds going to Friendly Planet, a charity he founded that has built schools in Cambodia and Blutan. ■

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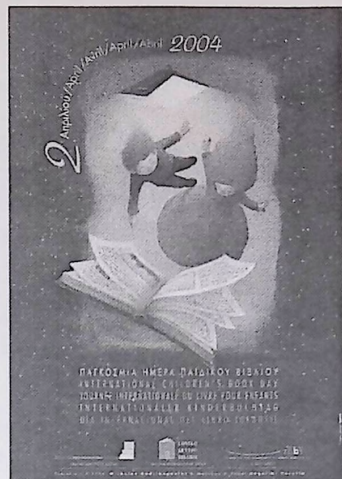
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Celebrate Book Day



Angeliki Varela and Nicholas Andrikopoulos of Greece prepared the text and artwork, respectively, for this year's International Children's Book Day (ICBD) poster. For further information about ICBD, which will be celebrated on April 2, visit the website of the International Board on Books for Young People at www.ibby.org.

Education Week report spotlights special education

U.S. states are struggling to meet federal requirements that the vast majority of students with disabilities perform at the proficient level on state tests by 2013-2014, according to a new 50-state report by *Education Week*.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, states must bring virtually all students to the proficient level on state tests within a decade. Nowhere is this challenge more evident than for the nearly 6 million children receiving special education services. Until now, such students—representing about 12% of school-age youngsters—have largely been excluded from state testing and accountability systems and, often, from mainstream instruction.

For this year's report, *Quality Counts 2004: Count Me In*, Education Week commissioned a national poll of special and general education teachers. A striking 84% of teachers believe that most special education students should not be expected to meet the same set of academic content standards as other children their age. Nearly as many (76%) think such students should be given alternative assessments, rather than the same tests as other children their age.

Students with disabilities have the same right as other children to be included in state standards, assessments, and accountability systems, said Virginia B. Edwards, editor of *Quality Counts 2004* and *Education Week* executive. It's impossible to know how such youngsters are performing or how well public schools are serving their needs. But how to do so in a way that is fair and appropriate remains one of the biggest challenges facing states.

For further information, visit the *Education Week* website at www.edweek.org. ■

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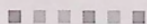
Young children immersed in media, says recent study

Even the very youngest children in the United States are growing up immersed in media, according to a study released October 28 by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Children ages 6 and under spend an average of 1 hour and 58 minutes a day using screen media (television, videos, computers, and video games), about the same amount of time they spend playing outside (2 hours and 1 minute), and well over the amount of time they spend reading or being read to (30 minutes).

According to the study, *Zen to See: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*, reading continues to be a regular part of young children's lives. In any given day, nearly 8 in 10 (79%) children ages 6 and under either read or are read to. Those who do read do so for an average of 19 minutes.

For further information visit the Kaiser Family Foundation's website at www.kff.org. ■

Study attached



Zero to Six

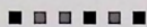
**ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN
THE LIVES OF INFANTS,
TODDLERS AND
PRESCHOOLERS**

Fall 2003



A Kaiser Family
Foundation Report

By:
Victoria J. Rideout,
Elizabeth A. Vandewater
and
Ellen A. Wartella



Acknowledgments

This study was a partnership of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the Children's Digital Media Centers (CDMC).

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A forum to advise on the design of the survey instrument provided much valuable input, and the authors would like to acknowledge those who participated in that event, including Daniel Anderson, Professor, University of Massachusetts; Joshua Aronson, Assistant Professor, New York University; David Bickham, doctoral student, University of Texas at Austin; Sandy Calvert, Professor, Georgetown University, and director of the CDMC; Allison Caplovitz, doctoral student, University of Texas at Austin; Lynette Ciervo, Communications Strategist, Zero to Three; Elishiva Gross, doctoral student at the University of California, Los Angeles; Nancy Jennings, lecturer, University of Michigan; Amy Jordan, Senior Research Investigator, University of Pennsylvania; Claire Lerner, Child Development Specialist, Zero to Three; Matt McGlone, Associate Professor, Lafayette College; Barbara O'Keefe, Dean of Communication at Northwestern University, and co-principal investigator of CDMC; Mi-Suk Shim, doctoral student, University of Texas at Austin; Kaveri Subramanyan, Associate Professor, California State University; Rosemarie Truglio, Vice President for Education and Research, Sesame Workshop; and Barbara Wilson, Professor, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign. The authors would also like to acknowledge the co-principal investigator of the CDMC, Patricia Greenfield, Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

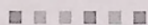
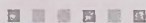


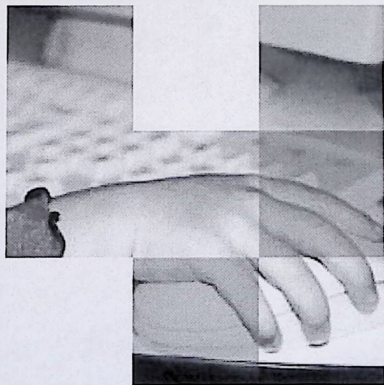
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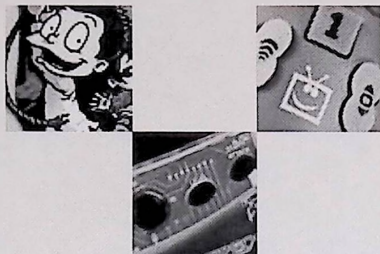
Introduction

Recent years have seen an explosion in electronic media marketed directly at the very youngest children in our society: A booming market of videotapes and DVDs aimed at infants one to 18 months, the launching of the first TV show specifically targeting children as young as 12 months, and a multi-million dollar industry selling computer games and even special keyboard toppers for children as young as nine months old.



Despite this plethora of new media aimed at very young children, next to nothing is known about how these changes have played out in young people's lives. *This study is one of the only large-scale national studies on the role of media in the lives of infants, toddlers and preschoolers in America.*¹ As Dan Anderson, a leading media researcher from the University of Massachusetts, has commented, "When it comes to electronic media, we have been able to find no reliable information about very young children's exposure, attention or interaction... At this point there is no systematic published research about the amount or nature of very young children's use of computers, the Internet, or interactive toys."² Not even the commercial media ratings services include children under the age of two. Amy Jordan, professor at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, has written that "we currently know very little about which media are available to very young children and whether or how [they] engage with them."³

A critical starting point is to document very young children's access to and use of electronic and print media in the home. This study reports on a nationally representative random-digit-dial telephone survey of more than 1,000 parents of children ages six months through six years, conducted in the spring of 2003.



Specific questions addressed in this study include: Which media do very young children use, and how much time do they spend using them? How old were they when they first started using each medium? What is the social context of their media use? If they spend a great deal of time with one kind of media, do they spend less time in other activities? Is there a relationship between the media environment in the home and how children spend their time? How do parental rules shape children's media use? Are newer, interactive media playing a key role in children's lives, or do more passive screen activities predominate? How is the amount of time children spend reading related to the amount and types of media they use? What are parents' attitudes about the educational value of television, computers or books?

The rapid changes in our media environment have not been accompanied by a similar growth in our knowledge of how new media may impact children's cognitive, social, emotional or physical development. These issues are of deep concern not only to parents, but also to educators, health providers, policymakers and advocates. Many experts have argued that it is especially critical to understand media use by the youngest children, noting that because social and intellectual development are more malleable in these early years, media use at this age could have an especially significant impact.

This study provides baseline data that can be used to inform the direction of future studies on the impact of interactive and non-interactive media on children, including research on the beneficial or harmful effects of media use, the amount of media that is appropriate for children, and how best to create media that will enhance children's development. Considering the extent of the rapidly changing hardware and software available to children, objective and publicly available information on what media technology and content children are using is critical.

This report provides highlights of the basic data from the study on the role of media in the lives of children ages six months to six years old. Future papers will offer detailed analysis on topics of special interest, such as the role of family structure, socio-economic status or ethnicity in young children's media use; pathways to media use; and generational changes in media use patterns.

¹The only other nationally representative dataset of which we are aware that includes media use by children under two is the PSID Child Development Supplement Data (<http://www.isr.umich.edu/src/chld-development/home.html>). Analyses of these data can be found in: Wright, John C., Aletha Huston, Elizabeth Vandewater, David Bickham, Ronda Scantlin, Jennifer Kotler, Allison Caplovitz, June Lee, Sandra Hofferth and Jonathan Finkelstein, "American Children's Use of Electronic Media in 1997: A National Survey," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 22, 2001, pp. 31-47, and Bickham, David S., Elizabeth Vandewater, Aletha Huston, June Lee, Allison Caplovitz and John Wright, "Predictors of Children's Electronic Media Use: An Examination of Three Ethnic Groups," *Media Psychology*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2003, pp. 107-138. An analysis of television viewing habits among infants can be found in Cerbin, Laura K. and Robert S. Kahn, "Prevalence, Correlates, and Trajectory of Television Viewing Among Infants and Toddlers," *Pediatrics*, Vol. 109, No. 4, April 2002, pp. 634-642. A handful of other studies have examined media use among young children, but not those under two. For example, the Kaiser Family Foundation's 1999 media use study included extensive data on media use by children ages two to four and five to seven (Roberts, Donald F., Ulla G. Foehr, Victoria J. Rideout and Miliann Brodie, *Children & Media @ the New Millennium*, Kaiser Family Foundation, 1999). The Annenberg Public Policy Center's annual "Media in the Home" surveys include parents of children two and older; an analysis of data from 145 parents of two- and three-year-olds can be found in Jordan, Amy B. and Emary Woodard, "Electronic Childhood: The Availability and Use of Household Media by 2- to 3-Year-Olds," *Zero to Three*, October/November 2001.

²Anderson, Daniel and Marie Evans, "Peril and Potential of Media for Infants and Toddlers," *Zero to Three*, October/November 2001, pp. 11, 14.

³Jordan and Woodard, p. 4.

Key Findings

1. Children today are growing up immersed in media.

Children's homes are packed with media options, including TVs, computers, DVD players and video game consoles. Nearly all children (99%) live in a home with a TV set, half (50%) have three or more TVs, and one-third (36%) have a TV in their bedroom. Nearly three out of four (73%) have a computer at home, and about half (49%) have a video game player. In some ways, new media is trumping old: nearly twice as many children in this age group live in a home with Internet access (63%) as with a newspaper subscription (34%). Nearly all of them (97%) have products—clothes, toys, and the like—based on characters from TV shows or movies.

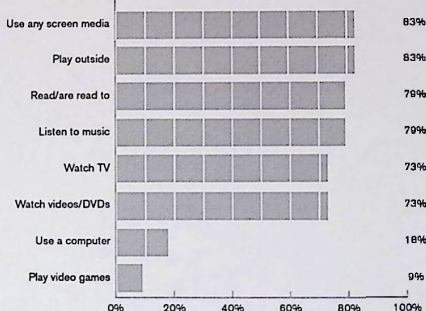
It is probably not surprising that nearly all children in the zero to six age range have listened to music (97%) and have read or been read to (95%), or that nine out of ten have watched TV (91%) and videos or DVDs (89%). But perhaps more unexpectedly, nearly half (48%) of all children six and under have used a computer, and more than one in four (30%) have played video games.

According to their parents, children six and under spend an average of about two hours a day with screen media (1:58), about the same amount of time that they spend playing outside (2:01), and three times as much time as they spend reading or being read to (39 minutes). These figures are the averages among all children, factoring in the days they skip doing a particular activity, and includes those children who, because of their age or parental regulations, do not use some types of media at all.

The vast majority of children are growing up in homes where television is a near-constant presence. Two-thirds of zero- to six-year-olds (65%) live in a home where the TV is on at least half the time or more, even if no one is watching, and one-third (36%) live in "heavy" TV households, where the television is left on "always" or "most of the time." Just under half (45%) of all parents say that if they have something important to do, it is very or somewhat likely that they will use TV to occupy their child while they finish their task.

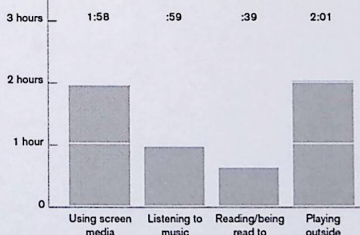
Given the omnipresence of media in these children's lives, it is not surprising that in a typical day, about eight in ten use screen media (83%)—about the same proportion who read (79%) or listen to music (79%).

Chart 1 In a typical day, percent of children 0–6 who...

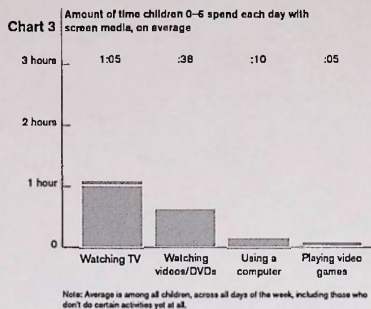


But many of these toddlers and preschoolers are not just passively consuming media chosen by other members of their homes—they are actively asking for and helping themselves to what they want. They are turning on the TV by themselves (77%), asking for particular shows (67%), using the remote to change channels (62%), asking for their favorite videos or DVDs (71%), putting in their own music tapes or CDs (36%), hopping up to the computer by themselves (33%), loading their own CD-ROMs (23%), and for some, even asking for specific websites while surfing the Net (12%).

Chart 2 Amount of time children 0–6 spend each day, on average



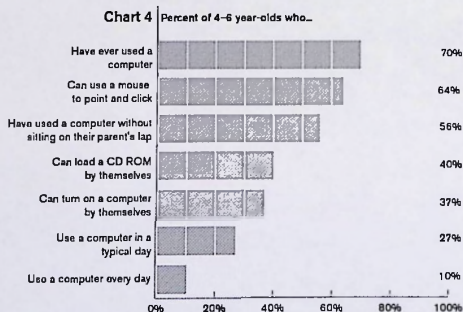
Note: Average is among all children, across all days of the week, including those who don't do certain activities yet at all.



2. Many children six and under are active computer users.

About half (48%) of all children six and under have used a computer; by the time they are in the four- to six-year-old range, seven out of ten (70%) have used a computer.

Indeed, every day, more than one in four (27%) four- to six-year-olds use a computer. Those who use a computer spend an average of just over an hour at the keyboard (1:04). More than half of all children in this age group (56%) have used a computer by themselves (without sitting in their parent's lap); 64% know how to use a mouse to point and click; 40% can load a CD-ROM by themselves; 37% have turned the computer on by themselves; and 17% have sent email with help from a parent. In fact, many children are starting even younger: one in four zero- to three-year-olds have used a computer without sitting on their parent's lap (27%).



3. Even the very youngest children are highly exposed to TV and other screen media.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under two not watch any television, and that all children over two be limited to one to two hours of educational screen media a day. Despite these recommendations, in a typical day, 68% of all children under two use screen media (59% watch TV, 42% watch a video or DVD, 5% use a computer and 3% play video games), and these youngsters will spend an average of two hours and five minutes in front of a screen.

Indeed, according to their parents, 43% of all children under two watch TV every day, and one-quarter (26%) have a TV in their bedroom. Seventy-four percent of all infants and toddlers have watched TV before age two.

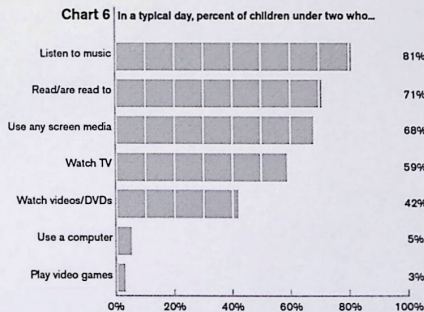
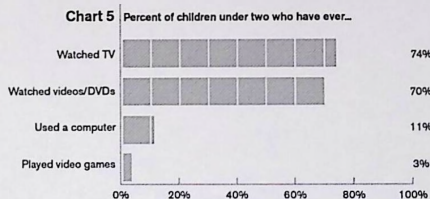
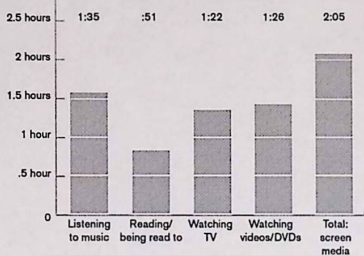


Chart 7 Among children under two who do each activity in a typical day, average amount of time spent...



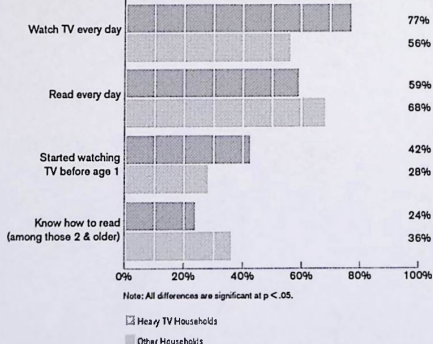
Note: The sample of children under 2 who use a computer or play video games in a typical day is too small for reliable data on time spent with those media.

4. How much the TV is left on in the home has a significant relationship to the amount of time children spend watching it, and to the time they spend reading.

Not surprisingly, children in "heavy TV households"—those where the TV is left on "always" or "most of the time," even if no one is watching (36%)—are more likely to start watching TV before they are one (42% vs. 28%), to watch every day (77% vs. 56%) and to watch for longer than other children (when they do watch TV, they watch for an average of 34 more minutes in a typical day).

Children in heavy TV households are also less likely to read every day (59% vs. 68%), and when they do read or are read to, it is for a shorter amount of time than for children in non-heavy TV households. In fact, these children are less likely to be able to read at all:

Chart 8 Percent of children 0-6 who...

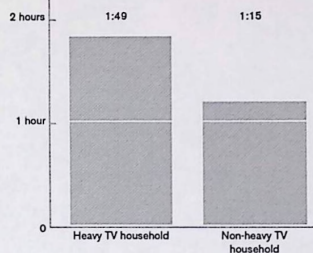


Note: All differences are significant at $p < .05$.

■ Heavy TV Households
■ Other Households

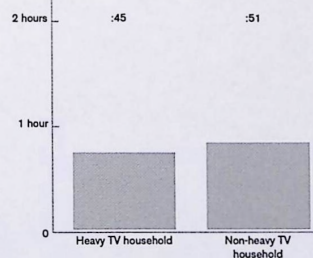
according to their parents, 24% of children over the age of two in heavy TV households can read, compared to 36% of children in other homes. This difference is even more pronounced among the four- to six-year-old group, where 34% of those in heavy TV homes can read, compared to 56% of those in non-heavy TV homes, according to their parents. While these data document a negative relationship between children's reading and the amount of time the TV is left on in the home, they do not prove a causal relationship between the two. It may be that there are other factors that are influencing the results. For example, although there do not appear to be any differences in income levels between heavy and non-heavy TV households, the study does indicate that parents in the heavy TV homes are less likely to have a college degree than other parents, and this factor may be influencing their children's reading. At the very least, the data on reading provide a compelling case for further examination of the impact of background media on children's development.

Chart 9 Average amount of TV watched in a typical day, among those who watched



Note: Differences are significant at $p < .05$.

Chart 10 Average amount of time spent reading/being read to in a typical day, among those who read



Note: Differences are significant at $p < .05$.

5. Many very young children have a TV, VCR or video game player in their bedroom, and these children spend substantially more time with those media.

Fully one-third (36%) of all children six and under has their own TV in their bedroom (30% of zero- to three-year-olds and 43% of four- to six-year-olds); one in four (27%) has their own VCR or DVD player, and one in ten (10%) has their own video game console in their room.

Children who do have such "bedroom" media spend more time using them. For example, on average, children who have a TV in their room spend 14 minutes more in a typical day watching TV and videos/DVDs than children who do not have a TV in their bedroom, and those with a video game player spend an average of 15 minutes more playing video games.

While these data indicate there is a relationship between having a TV or game player in the bedroom and the amount of time children spend watching or using it, it is not possible to determine if it is a causal relationship or not.

Chart 11 Percent of children with a TV in their bedroom

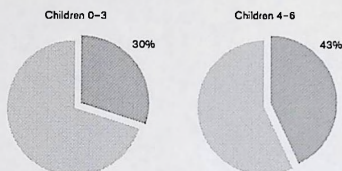
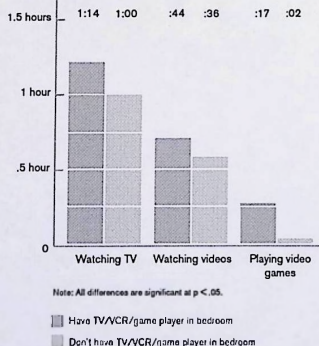


Chart 12 Average amount of time children 0-6 spend per day...



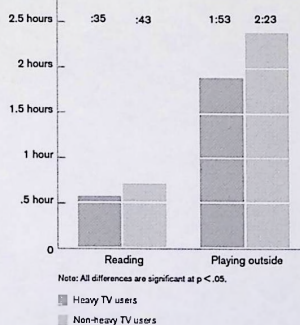
6. Four- to six-year-olds who are "heavy" TV users spend less time reading or playing outside than other children their age.

As a whole, zero- to six-year-olds average about an hour a day of TV watching (1:05), plus another 38 minutes a day watching videos. One-quarter of all children in this age group (25%) are "heavy" TV watchers, spending two hours or more a day watching television. Boys and girls were equally likely to be heavy TV users.

One issue that has been raised about TV watching is whether it "displaces" other activities—that is, if the time children spend watching TV replaces time they might spend in other pursuits, such as reading or playing outside. Among the younger children in this study—those from six months to three years old—no such effects were found. Among the more independent and mobile four- to six-year-olds, however, the heavy TV watchers spent an average of 30 minutes less per day playing outside and eight minutes less per day reading than did children who were not heavy TV watchers.

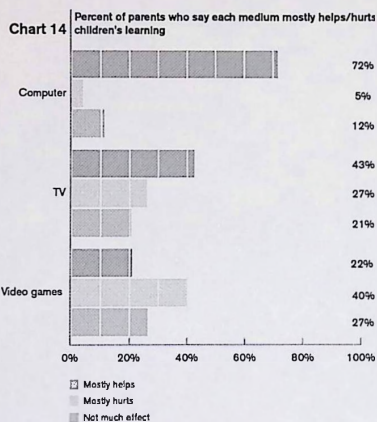
While there appears to be a relationship between the amount of time spent watching TV and the amount of time spent reading or playing outside, it is not possible to tell from this study whether it is a causal relationship and, if so, which direction the relationship is in. For example, it could be that children who cannot play outside—perhaps because they live in an unsafe neighborhood or a particularly cold climate—decide instead to spend more time watching TV. On the other hand, it could be that children who spend more time watching TV have less interest in or time available for playing outside or reading.

Chart 13 Average amount of time children 4-6 spend per day...



7. Many parents have faith in the educational value of electronic media.

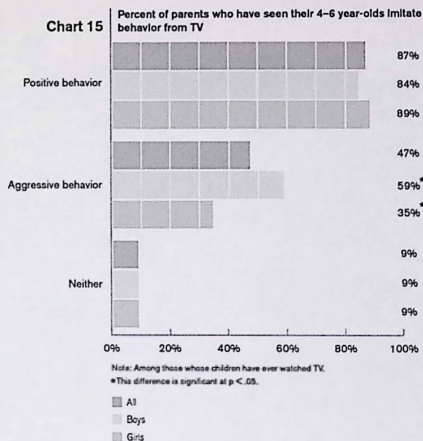
Of all the types of electronic media included in the survey, parents are most enthusiastic about the educational potential of computers, with 72% saying they think using a computer "mostly helps" children's learning, and just 5% saying it "mostly hurts." Despite the many criticisms parents often make of TV, far more parents of young children (zero to six years old) think TV "mostly helps" children learn (43%) than think it "mostly hurts" learning (27%), or that it doesn't affect learning one way or the other (21%). Indeed, a significant proportion of parents believe that various types of educational media are "very important" to children's intellectual development, including educational television (58%), educational videos (49%) and educational computer games (43%). However, books were chosen as "very important" by far more parents (96%) than any of the electronic media.



Children whose parents have positive views about the educational value of media are more likely to spend time using those media. For example, in a typical day, 82% of children whose parents think TV mostly helps learning will watch TV, compared to 58% of those whose parents think TV mostly hurts learning. Whether there is a causal relationship or not is impossible to tell from this study, and if so, which direction it runs. For example, it is possible that parents who believe a particular medium is educational allow their children to spend more time using it. On the other hand, it could be that parents whose children spend a lot of time with a particular medium come to perceive it as educational, either as a result of being exposed to more of its content or out of self-justification.

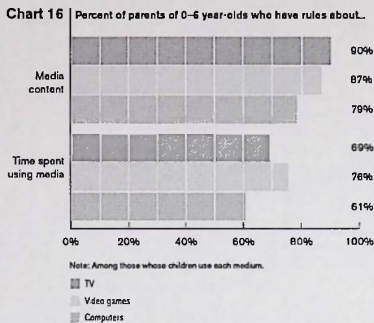
8. The vast majority of parents have seen their children imitate behavior from TV, and they are far more likely to see them copy pro-social rather than aggressive behaviors.

Among all parents whose zero- to six-year-olds have watched TV, 81% say they have seen their children imitate either positive (e.g., sharing, helping) or aggressive (e.g., hitting, kicking) behaviors from TV (78% positive v. 36% aggressive). By the time children are a little older—in the four to six age range—more than eight in ten (87%) parents whose children watch TV have seen them imitate positive behaviors and nearly half (47%) say they've seen their children imitate aggressive behaviors from TV. Imitating aggressive behaviors appears to be more common among boys in this age group than among girls (59% vs. 35%).



9. Most parents have media-related rules, and the children of parents who report strongly enforcing their rules spend less time watching TV and more time reading.

Almost all parents say they have some type of rules about their children's use of media. Parents seem to be more concerned about the specifics of what their children watch or play than they are about the amount of time they spend doing it.



Children whose parents have rules about how much time they can spend watching TV average almost a half-hour less with the television per day (1:00 vs. 1:29) than other children do.

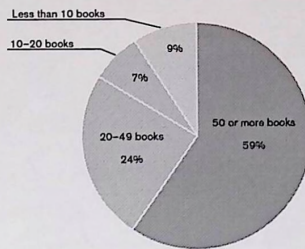
Nearly all (88%) parents who have some type of media rules say they enforce them at least "most of the time," with about half (54%) saying they "always" enforce their rules. Children of parents who say they always enforce their media rules are more likely to read in a typical day (84% vs. 76% of children in homes with no rules or rules that aren't always enforced), to read "every day" (74% vs. 57%), to spend more time reading (about eight minutes a day longer), and also to spend more time playing outdoors (2:16 vs. 1:53).

10. Reading or being read to remains a constant in most children's lives.

According to their parents, two out of three (65%) children ages zero to six read or are read to every day (another 26% are read to a few times a week). In a typical day, 79% of all children in this age group spend time with books, and those who do read or are read to spend about 50 minutes (.49) with print material (an average of .39 minutes a day among all children). Almost all parents (96%) consider books "very important" to children's intellectual development, and two-thirds (66%) say they consider books the most important when compared to other media or toys, while one in three (32%) choose

other items such as educational TV, computer games, puzzles or videos. A majority (59%) of all children six or under has 50 or more children's books at home, although about one in ten (9%) have fewer than ten books. Talking books are also very popular: three out of four parents (76%) say their children have talking book toys like LeapPad.

Chart 17 Percent of children 0-6 who have...books at home



Children in households where the TV is left on in the background a great deal of the time tend to read less than other children. For example, the percent of youngsters who read daily is lower in those households where the TV is left on more than half the time even if no one is watching (59% vs. 68% in other households), and when children in those "heavy" TV households do read, they spend an average of six minutes less a day reading (45 minutes vs. 51 among those who read in a typical day; 33 vs. 42 among all children).

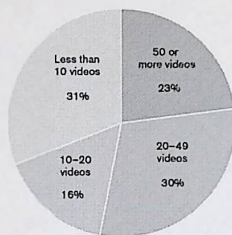
11. Listening to music is one of the most popular media activities among young children.

Anyone who has spent countless hours singing "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" or "Old MacDonald" will not be surprised to learn how popular listening to music is among the youngest children. In a typical day, eight out of ten children will listen to music (79%); indeed, two-thirds (66%) listen to music daily, about the same proportion who read (65%) or watch TV (63%) on a daily basis. Children under six spend an average of about an hour a day listening to music (.59). The typical child six or under lives in a home with an average of four to five radios and CD/tape players, and four in ten (42%) even have their own CD or cassette player in their bedroom. One-third of all youngsters this age (36%) know how to use CD or cassette players themselves.

12. Videos and DVDs have become a staple of children's lives.

Almost all homes (95%) with children ages zero to six have at least one VCR or DVD player, and more than one in four children (27%) have one in their bedroom. In a typical day, about half of all children this age (46%) will watch a video or DVD, and according to their parents, one in four (25%) watch videos every day. On average, youngsters in this age group spend just under 40 minutes a day watching videos or DVDs (38). Children quickly develop their favorites, with 70% having requested a particular video or DVD, and about half (49%) able to put one in the player by themselves. More than half of all children (53%) six and under own at least 20 videos. Parents appear to have a great deal of faith in educational videos, with about half (49%) saying they consider them 'very important' to children's intellectual development. Indeed, more than one in four (27%) children have had one of the 'Baby Einstein' videos designed for children from one to 18 months old.

Chart 18 Percent of children 0-6 who have...videos at home



13. Playing video games is a less common activity among the six and under set, but is more popular among boys than girls.

Video game playing is less common among children six and under than most other types of media, accounting for an average of just five minutes a day among all children in this age group. Thirty percent of children ages zero to six have played video games, either on a console or on a hand-held player.

By the time they are preschoolers, children are a bit more likely to play video games. In a typical day, about one in every six (16%) four- to six-year-olds plays a video game, and those who play average a little over an hour at the controls (1:04). The gender gap in video games starts young: in a typical day, one in four boys ages four to six plays video games (24%) compared to 8% of girls, and nearly one in ten (9%) boys this age plays every day (compared to 2% of four- to six-year-old girls).

Chart 19 Percent of 4-6 year-olds who...

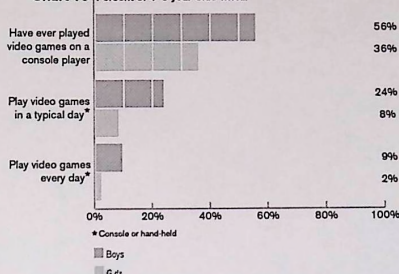
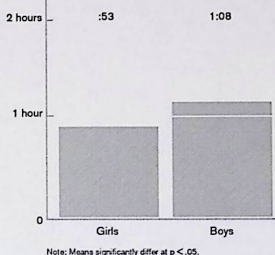


Chart 20 Among those 4-6 year-olds who play video games in a typical day, amount of time spent playing



Parents are less enthusiastic about the educational value of video games than any other medium addressed in this survey. Four in ten (40%) think video games mostly hurt children's learning (22% think they mostly help children's learning, while 27% say they don't have much effect one way or the other).

14. There do not appear to be many differences in how boys and girls use media at the youngest ages.

When they are first beginning to use media, boys and girls spend the same amount of time watching TV, reading, listening to music and using computers. They develop the same basic media-use skills, and do so at roughly the same age. By the time they are in the four- to six-year-old range, however, there is a difference between boys and girls when it comes to video games, with boys being more likely to play and to play for longer periods of time. This contributes to a difference between boys and girls in the average amount of time they spend in front of screen media each day: among all girls ages four to six, the average is 2:01, and among all boys, the average is 2:19, a difference of 18 minutes each day.

Another gender issue that stands out in the data is the difference in the percent of boys vs. girls who have imitated aggressive behaviors they saw on TV (45% of boys compared to 28% of girls). This difference is especially pronounced among the four- to six-year-olds (59% of boys vs. 35% of girls). What the data do not reveal, however, is whether boys are watching shows with more violent content, or whether they are simply more likely to copy that type of behavior.

Popular gender stereotypes about differences between men and women in their use of the TV remote do not appear to have their roots in this early developmental period; four- to six-year-old boys and girls are equally likely to have used the remote to change channels (75%), although it should be pointed out that the study didn't examine how often children use the remote, or their emotional attachment to it (©).

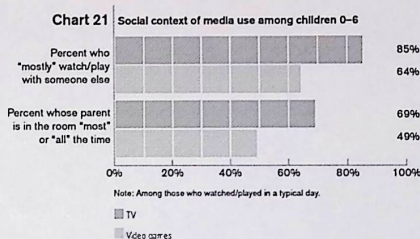
15. Most very young children are using media with someone else, usually with a parent in the room.

One major and continuing concern regarding children's media use is the notion that parents use television as a "babysitter." This notion conjures up an image of children spending countless hours watching television or playing video games with no adult presence or guidance.

This study indicates that 45% of all parents report that they would be very or somewhat likely to sit their child down with a video or a television program if they had something important they needed to get done. These parents' children do indeed spend an average of 30 minutes more per day watching TV than other children (an average of one hour 21 minutes vs. 51 minutes on a typical day).

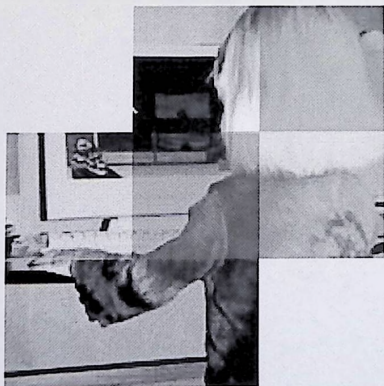
Among children who watch TV on a typical day, however, the vast majority of parents (85%) reported that most of the time, the child was watching with someone else. Moreover, 69% of parents reported that they were in the room either all or most of the time their child was watching. While it is not possible to know whether parents were actually watching the television show with their child, it appears from these reports that the portrayal of television watching among young children as a highly solitary activity is not accurate.

Video game use appears to be a somewhat more solitary activity than television watching. According to their parents, among children who play video games in a typical day, 64% spend most of their time playing with someone else, and half (49%) have a parent in the room with them most or all of the time they are playing.



Conclusion

This study has documented a potentially revolutionary phenomenon in American society: the immersion of our very youngest children, from a few months to a few years old, in the world of electronic and interactive media. The impact that this level of media exposure has on children's development is unknown, but one thing is certain: it is an issue that demands immediate attention from parents, educators, researchers and health professionals.



We know from many decades of research that media do have a variety of important effects on children. What we don't know is what effect media have on the very youngest children, who are at such a critical developmental stage.

Much of the data this study has revealed regarding the media habits of infants, toddlers and preschoolers is brand-new information, and it will take some time for the academic, educational and medical communities to absorb it and determine what steps should be taken next. In our view, the most significant findings of this study include the following:

- Children six and under spend an average of two hours a day with screen media, mostly TV and videos;
- TV watching begins at very early ages, well before the medical community recommends;
- A high proportion of very young children are using new digital media, including 50% of four- to six-year-olds who have played video games and 70% who have used computers;
- Two out of three zero- to six-year-olds live in homes where the TV is usually left on at least half the time, even if no one is watching, and one-third live in homes where the TV is on "almost all" or "most" of the time; and children in the latter group of homes appear to read less than other children and to be slower to learn to read;
- Many parents see media as an important educational tool, beneficial to their children's intellectual development, and parents' attitudes on this issue appear to be related to the amount of time their children spend using each medium; and
- Parents clearly perceive that their children's TV watching has a direct effect on their behavior, and are more likely to see positive rather than negative behaviors being copied.

Some of the media being used by today's toddlers, such as computers, the Internet, or the newest generation of highly produced video games, are brand new and have been subject to only a limited amount of study. Others, like television, have been around for a quarter of a century, but have not traditionally been targeted at such young viewers. In all cases, the news that these media are being

so widely consumed by such young children raises a host of important questions.

Topics for further study include the impact of each medium itself as well as the content being consumed; and in each case there are questions about the impact on children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. For example:

- Does the presence of background media interrupt the concentration of infants and toddlers as they attempt to master such tasks as language development or physical coordination?
- Does time spent with electronic media take away from time spent playing outdoors, reading or interacting with parents, and, if so, what impact does that time shift have on children's development?
- Does today's media environment develop children's ability to "multi-task," and what effect, if any, does multi-tasking have on their understanding of what they are watching, reading and listening to?
- Does the time spent with media contribute to a more sedentary lifestyle for young people, contributing to the growing problem of childhood obesity?
- Do activities such as video-game playing help the visual and spatial skills of young children, and if so, how can games be designed to enhance the positive effects? Are there risks of eyestrain associated with screen media use, or significant ergonomic implications of children's use of computers or video games?
- Does the fast-paced content of today's television and other media affect children's attention span?
- How much advertising and marketing are young children exposed to through their media consumption, and what impact does such marketing have on them?
- Does the interactive nature of digital media such as video and computer games stimulate children's cognitive development? Are passive screen media like television and videos in any way inherently detrimental to children's cognitive development?
- What role does music play in children's cognitive and social development, and how can any positive impact be maximized?
- Does the educational programming available to children on TV and in computer games help their intellectual development in the way many parents believe? What should media producers know about this very young age group in order to maximize the positive effects of their work?
- Is early computer use related in any way to higher academic achievement later in life? If so, what, if anything, should be done to address discrepancies in home Internet access for low-income children?
- How much non-educational content are children being exposed to in television programming, video games and computers, and what are the effects of that exposure?

To answer these questions effectively, it would be beneficial to track the media habits of young children over time, using longitudinal studies as well as random samples.

It is our hope that the medical and educational communities will review these data and offer their input on children's media to parents and the media industry. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that children two and under not watch television at all, and that those over two be limited to one to two hours a day of educational screen media. Given the number of children who are consuming significantly more than the recommended amount of media, pediatricians may need to clarify their reasoning, elaborate on their recommendations (particularly with regard to computers) and step up efforts to communicate those recommendations to parents.

For parents who are concerned that their children spend too much time with electronic media, there is good news: there appear to be concrete steps parents can take that will impact the amount of time their children spend with media. Turning off the TV in their home when no one is watching, getting televisions out of children's bedrooms, and setting rules about how much time their children can spend with media all appear to make a significant difference in the amount of time children spend in front of a screen.

Tables

Overall media use:

Percent of children who have ever:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
Listened to music:	97%	96%	99%
Read/been read to:	95%	92%	99%
Watched TV:	92%	87%	98%
Watched videos/DVDs:	88%	82%	96%
Used a computer:	48%	31%	70%
For games:	44%	26%	65%
For other activities:	22%	12%	35%
Played video games:	30%	14%	50%
On a console:	28%	14%	47%
On a hand-held player:	17%	8%	28%

In a typical day, percent of children who:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
Read/are read to:	79%	76%	83%
Listen to music:	79%	81%	75%
Watch TV:	73%	69%	78%
Watch videos/DVDs:	46%	48%	44%
Use a computer:	18%	10%	27%
Play video games:	9%	4%	16%
Use any screen media:	83%	78%	88%

Note: Unless specified otherwise, all references to "computer" include both computer games and other uses of the computer, all references to video games include both console and hand-held games.

Amount of time children spend a day, on average, with media and other activities:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
Screen media:	1:58	1:47	2:10
TV:	1:05	1:01	1:10
Videos/DVDs:	:38	:41	:36
Computers:	:10	:05	:16
Video games:	:05	:01	:10
Listening to music:	:59	1:08	:49
Reading/being read to:	:39	:37	:41
Playing outside:	2:01	1:51	2:14

Note: All times in hours: minutes. Average is among all children, across all days of the week, factoring in the percent of children who don't do certain activities yet at all.

Percent of children who use each medium daily:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
TV:	63%	58%	70%
Videos:	25%	29%	20%
Music:	66%	69%	62%
Video games:	4%	2%	6%
Computer:	7%	4%	10%
Reading:	65%	63%	66%
Any screen media:	69%	64%	75%

In a typical day, the percent of children who spend more than an hour:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
Watching TV:	53%	49%	60%
Listening to music:	41%	46%	34%
Watching videos/DVDs:	34%	33%	35%
Reading/being read to:	30%	30%	31%
Using a computer:	7%	3%	11%
Playing video games:	4%	1%	7%
Using any screen media:	71%	65%	78%
Playing outside:	72%	68%	78%

Media in the home – percent of children 0-6 who live in homes with:

Television:	99%
Radio:	98%
VCR/DVD:	95%
CD/tape player:	93%
Cable or satellite TV:	78%
Computer:	73%
Internet access:	63%
Three or more TVs:	50%
Console video game player:	49%
Newspaper subscription:	34%
Hand-held video game player:	32%

Media in the bedroom – percent of children 0-6 who have:

Radio:	46%
CD/tape player:	42%
TV:	36%
VCR/DVD player:	27%
Video game console:	10%
Computer:	7%
Internet access:	3%

Educational value of media – parents' views on whether media mostly helps/mostly hurts children's learning:

	Mostly helps	Mostly hurts	Not much effect
Using a computer:	72%	5%	12%
Watching TV:	43%	27%	21%
Playing video games:	22%	40%	27%

Percent of parents who consider each item to be "very important" to children's intellectual development:

Books:	96%
Building blocks:	77%
Puzzles:	74%
Educational toys like talking books:	62%
Educational TV:	58%
Educational videos:	49%
Educational computer games:	43%
Educational websites:	31%

Note: Two-thirds of parents (66%) say books are the most important to children's learning; 32% name something else as most important.

Parental rules about media – percent of parents with rules about:

	TV	Computer	Video Games
Content:	90%	79%	87%
Time spent:	69%	61%	76%

Note: Among parents whose children have done each activity.

Enforcement of parental media rules:

Percent of parents who say they "always" enforce their rules:	54%
Percent who say they enforce rules at least "most of the time":	88%

Impact of parental media rules:

	Among those whose parents have media rules and say they "always" enforce them	Among those with no rules or with rules that aren't always enforced
In a typical day, percent of children who read/are read to:	84%	76%
Percent of children who read daily:	74%	57%
Average amount of time children spend reading per day:	:44	:35
Average amount of time children spend playing outside per day:	2:16	1:53

Note: All percentages and means in this table significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Percent of children who own products based on characters from TV, movies or video games:

All children 0-6:	97%
One-year-olds:	93%

■ Video games:

Percent who have ever played video games:

0-6:	31%
0-3:	14%
4-6:	50%

Note: Includes both console and hand-held throughout, unless otherwise noted.

In a typical day, percent of children who play video games:

0-6:	9%
0-3:	4%
4-6:	16%
4-6 boys:	24%
4-6 girls:	8%

Percent of children who play video games several times a week or more:

0-6:	15%
0-3:	7%
4-6:	25%

Amount of time spent playing video games per day:

	Average among all	Average among those who play in a typical day
0-6:	:05	1:01
0-3:	:01	:48
4-6:	:10	1:04

Gender differences among children ages 4-6:

	Girls	Boys
Have ever played video games:	36%	56%
In a typical day, percent who play:	8%	24%
Percent who play video games daily:	2%	9%
Among those who play, average amount of time spent:	:53	1:08

Note: All percentages and means in this table significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Educational value of video games:

Percent of parents who say that, in general, video games mostly help/mostly hurt children's learning:

Mostly helps:	22%
Mostly hurts:	40%
Not much effect:	27%

In a typical day, percent of children 0-6 who play video games, by parent attitude:

Parent thinks video games mostly help children's learning:	14%
Parent thinks video games mostly hurt children's learning:	4%

Note: Difference is statistically significant at $p < .05$.

■ Television:

In a typical day, percent of children who watch TV:

0-6:	73%
0-3:	69%
4-6:	78%

Percent of children who watch TV every day:

0-6:	63%
0-3:	58%
4-6:	70%

Amount of time spent watching TV:

	Average among all	Average among those who watched
0-6:	1:05	1:30
0-3:	1:01	1:30
4-6:	1:10	1:30

Percent of children whose parents see them imitate behavior from TV:

	0-6	boys	girls
Positive behavior (e.g., sharing or helping):	78%	76% ^{ad}	80% ^{ad}
Aggressive behavior (e.g., hitting or kicking):	36%	45% ^{ae}	28% ^{ae}
Neither:	18%	20% ^{af}	16% ^{af}

	0-3	boys	girls
Positive behavior (e.g., sharing or helping):	70% ^{aa}	68%	72%
Aggressive behavior (e.g., hitting or kicking):	27%	32% ^{ab}	21% ^{ab}
Neither:	26% ^{ag}	29%	23%

	4-6	boys	girls
Positive behavior (e.g., sharing or helping):	87% ^{ba}	84%	89%
Aggressive behavior (e.g., hitting or kicking):	47%	59% ^{bc}	35% ^{bc}
Neither:	9% ^{bg}	9%	9%

Note: Among those who have ever watched TV. Within rows and columns, common subscripts indicate percentages which significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Using the TV by themselves – percent of children who have ever:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
Turned on the TV by themselves:	77%	66%	91%
Changed channels with the remote:	62%	52%	75%
Put in a video or DVD by themselves:	50%	30%	74%
Asked for a particular TV show or channel:	67%	51%	87%

Relationship between time spent watching TV and time in other activities – amount of time children 0-6 spend per day, on average:

	Reading	Outdoors
0-6		
Heavy TV users:	.38	1:50 ^a
Non-heavy TV users:	.40	2:07 ^a
0-3		
Heavy TV users:	.40	1:48
Non-heavy TV users:	.37	1:52
4-6		
Heavy TV users:	.35 ^b	1:52 ^c
Non-heavy TV users:	.43 ^b	2:24 ^c

Note: Among children who have ever watched television. Heavy TV users are those who watch 2 hours or more a day. Within column, the same subscripts indicate means which significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Heavy TV households – percent of children 0-6 who live in homes where the TV is on "always" or "most of the time," even if no one is watching:

0-6:	36%
0-3:	40%
4-6:	33%

How children in "heavy" TV households compare to other children:

	Heavy TV Households	Others
In a typical day, percent who:		
Watch TV:	81%	69%
Play outside:	79%	85%
Read:	74%	83%

Percent of children who do each activity "daily":

Watch TV:	77%	56%
Read:	59%	68%

Amount of time children spend watching TV, on average:

Among those who watched:	1:49	1:15
Among all:	1:29	.51

Percent of children who started watching TV before age one: 42% 28%

Percent of children over age two who can read: 24% 36%

Amount of time children spend reading, on average:

Among those who read:	.45	.51
Among all:	.33	.42

Note: All percentages and means in this table significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Alarming

Educational value of TV – percent of parents who say that, in general, TV mostly helps/mostly hurts children's learning:

Mostly helps:	43%
Mostly hurts:	27%
Not much effect:	21%

Educational value of TV – in a typical day, percent of children 0–6 who watch TV, by parent attitude:

Parent thinks TV mostly helps learning:	82%
Parent thinks TV mostly hurts learning:	58%

Note: These percentages significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Percent of children with a TV in their bedroom:

0–6:	36%
0–3:	30%
4–6:	43%

TV in the bedroom – amount of time spent watching:

	TV	Video/DVD
All Children 0–6		
TV in bedroom:	1:14a	:44b
No TV in bedroom:	1:00a	:36b
Children 0–3		
TV in bedroom:	1:13c	:47
No TV in bedroom:	:56c	:38
Children 4–6		
TV in bedroom:	1:14	:40
No TV in bedroom:	1:05	:32

Note: Within columns, the same subscripts indicate means significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Impact of parental rules on time spent watching TV:

	Parents have rules about time spent watching TV	Parents have no rules about time with TV
Percent of children who watch TV in typical day:	75%	84%
Average amount of time children spend watching TV per day:	1:00	1:29
In a typical day, amount of time those who watched TV spent watching:	1:20	1:47

Note: Among children who have ever watched television. All percentages and means in this table significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Penetration of cable and satellite TV, by income:

\$75,000 or more:	90%
\$20,000–49,000:	78%
<\$20,000:	63%

■ Music:

In a typical day, percent of children who listen to music:

0–6:	79%
0–3:	81%
4–6:	75%

Percent of children who listen to music daily:

0–6:	66%
0–3:	69%
4–6:	62%

Amount of time children spend listening to music each day, on average:

	Among all	Among those who listen
0–6:	:59	1:16
0–3:	1:08	1:24
4–6:	:49	1:05

■ Computers¹¹

Computers in the home – percent of all children who live in a home with:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
Computer:	73%	71%	77%
Internet access:	63%	60%	66%

Computers in the bedroom:

Percent with a computer in bedroom:	7%
Percent with Internet access in bedroom:	3%

Percent of children who have ever used a computer:

0-6:	48%
0-3:	31%
4-6:	70%

In a typical day, percent of children who:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
Play computer games:	14%	9%	21%
Use computer for any purpose:	18%	10%	27%

Percent of children who use a computer several times a week or more:

0-6:	26%
0-3:	16%
4-6:	39%

Amount of time spent using a computer:

	Average among all	Average among those who used in a typical day
0-6:	:10	:59
0-3:	:05	:49
4-6:	:16	:04

Using the computer by themselves – percent of children who have:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
Used a mouse to point and click:	40%	21%	64%
Played computer games:	41%	24%	62%
Used a computer by themselves*:	33%	14%	56%
Turned the computer on by themselves:	23%	11%	37%
Loaded a CD-ROM by themselves:	23%	10%	40%
Gone to a children's website:	20%	12%	30%
Requested a specific website:	12%	5%	20%
Sent email, with help from a parent or other adult:	10%	4%	17%

*Not on parent's lap.

Trends in initiation of computer use among young children:

Percent of children who had done the following at age two or younger:

	Among all six-year-olds (N=129)	Among all two-year-olds (N=166)
Used a computer on a parent's lap:	11%a	28%a
Used a mouse to point and click:	5%b	17%b
Visited websites for children:	0	10%

Note: Items with a common subscript significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Educational value of computers:

Percent of parents who say that, in general, computers mostly help/mostly hurt children's learning:

Mostly helps:	72%
Mostly hurts:	5%
Not much effect:	12%

In a typical day, percent of children 0-6 who use a computer, by parent attitude:

Parent thinks computers mostly help learning:	22%
Parent thinks computers mostly hurt/no effect:	9%

Computer use by gender – percent of boys and girls 0-6 who:

	Boys	Girls
Use a computer in a typical day:	18%	17%
Average time spent with computer, among those who used one:	:56	:02
Use a computer at least a few times a week:	56%	53%
Have ever:		
Used a computer without sitting on parent's lap:	33%	33%
Turned on a computer by themselves:	24%	21%
Used a mouse to point and click:	39%	41%
Loaded a CD-ROM by themselves:	25%	22%

Note: No differences in this table are statistically significant.

Relationship of computer use and time spent in other activities – amount of time children spend:

	Heavy computer users (1+ hour)	Non-heavy computer users
Watching TV:	1:37a	1:02a
Listening to music:	:59	:59
Watching videos:	:52b	:38b
Playing video games:	:23c	:04c
Reading:	:45	:38
Playing outside:	2:29d	1:59d

Note: Within rows, items with a common subscript differ significantly at $p < .05$.

■ Reading:

In a *typical* day, percent of children who read/are read to:

0-6:	79%
0-3:	76%
4-6:	83%

How *often* children read/are read to:

	0-6	0-3	4-6
Daily:	65%	63%	66%
Several times a week:	26%	24%	28%
Several times a month:	3%	3%	3%
Less than several times a month, or never:	6%	9%	2%

Amount of time spent reading or being read to, in a typical day:

	Average among all	Average amount those who read/were read to
0-6:	.39	.49

Number of books in children's homes:

50 or more:	59%
20-49:	24%
Ten-20:	7%
Less than ten:	9%

Relationship of TV and reading:

	Heavy TV Households	Non-heavy TV Households
In a typical day, percent of children who read:	74%	83%
Percent of children who read daily:	59%	68%
Amount of time spent reading among all, on average:	.33	.42
Amount of time spent reading among those who read:	.45	.51

Note: All percentages and means in this table significantly differ at $p < .05$.

■ Videos/DVDs:

Average number of VCRs/DVDs in homes of children 0-6:

2.3

Percent of children with a VCR/DVD player in their bedroom:

27%

In a *typical* day, percent of children who watch videos/DVDs:

0-6:	46%
0-3:	48%
4-6:	44%

Percent of children who watch videos/DVDs every day:

0-6:	25%
0-3:	29% ^a
4-6:	20% ^a

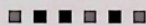
Note: Items with a common subscript significantly differ at $p < .05$.

Amount of time spent watching videos/DVDs per day:

Among all:	.38
Among those who watched in a typical day:	1.26

Percent of children 0-6 who:

Have asked for a particular video or DVD:	70%
Have put a video/DVD in by themselves:	49%
Own 20 or more videos:	53%
Have had a "Baby Einstein" video:	27%



Survey Topline Results

Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Kaiser Family Foundation

N=1,065 parents of children aged 6 months to 6 years

Margin of error: Plus or minus 3 percentage points

Interview Dates: April 11–June 9, 2003

NOTE: Because percentages are rounded, they may not total 100%. An asterisk (*) indicates a value of less than .5%

PARENT INTRODUCTION: Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling for Princeton Survey Research. We're conducting an important national opinion survey about what life is like for American families today.

Before we start, I need to confirm that you are the parent, stepparent or guardian of one or more children aged six months to six years who live with you. Is this correct? For my next questions, I'd like you to think about your (youngest/oldest) child who is six months to six years of age.

Q.1 Is this child a boy or a girl?

Boy (Son):	51
Girl (Daughter):	49
Refused:	0

Q.2 And what is this child's current age?

Less than one year (six months to 11 months):	6
One (12 months to 23 months):	17
Two:	16
Three:	17
Four:	16
Five:	16
Six:	12
Refused:	*

Q.3 Could you please tell me this child's first name?

Gave name:	97
Did not give name:	3

Q.4 Is (INSERT NAME) now in any kind of child care, day care, school or preschool OUTSIDE the home?

Q.5 In an average week, about how many hours does (he/she) spend outside the home in childcare, day care, school, or preschool?

Total in day care/school:	55
Ten hours or less per week:	14
11 to 20 hours per week:	11
21 hours or more per week:	29
Hours per week not specified:	1
Total not in day care/school:	45
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.6 How much time did you personally spend with (him/her) YESTERDAY?

Q.7 [If Q6=less than "most of the day"; N=311] Was the amount of time you spent with your child yesterday typical for a (weekday/Saturday/Sunday), or not?

Q.7a [If NO to Q7; N=80] For the next series of questions, I'd like you to think back to the LAST day you and your child followed your typical routine. What day of the week was that?

Q.7b. How much time did you personally spend with your child on that day?

Yesterday/target day	
Total Weekday:	74
Monday:	12
Tuesday:	13
Wednesday:	20
Thursday:	13
Friday:	15
Total Weekend:	25
Saturday:	9
Sunday:	16
Undetermined:	*
Time spent with child yesterday/ target day	
All or almost all of the day:	55
Most of the day:	21
Only part of the day:	23
No time at all:	1
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.8 We're interested in what kinds of things (INSERT NAME) did YESTERDAY/on the LAST day you followed your typical routine. As best you can recall, please tell me which, if any, of the following activities your child did (yesterday/on that day). IF CHILD YOUNGER THAN THREE, READ: If it's something your child is too young to do, just tell me and I'll move on to the next item.

Did your child spend any time (INSERT; RANDOMIZE) (yesterday/on that day)?

	Yes	No	(VOL) Child too young to do this	DK/Ref
a. Watching TV:	73	25	2	*
b. Watching a video or DVD:	46	52	2	*
c. Listening to music, including while riding in the car:	79	20	1	*
d. Playing outside:	83	16	1	*
e. Reading or being read to:	79	20	1	*
f. Playing video games like X-Box or Playstation:	8	72	20	*
g. Playing hand-held video games like Gameboy:	3	77	20	*
h. Playing inside with toys:	90	9	1	*
i. Playing computer games:	14	70	16	1
j. Using a computer for something other than games:	7	76	17	1
Total played video games:	9			
Total used computer:	18			
Total used screen media:	83			

Q.9 We're interested in how much TIME your child spent doing these activities (yesterday/on that day). About how much time did your child spend (INSERT ITEMS FROM Q.8) (yesterday/on that day)?

NOTE: Response categories were 5 minutes, 15 minutes, 30 minutes, 45 minutes, 1 hour, 1½ hours and up, in half-hour increments.

	More than 2 Hours	1-2 Hours	Less than 1 Hour	DK/Ref	Mean Hours for Children Who Did This	Did Not Do This	Mean Hours for All Children
a. Watching TV:	9	44	17	2	1:29	27	1:05
b. Watching a video or DVD:	4	30	10	2	1:26	54	0:38
c. Listening to music, including while riding in the car:	9	32	36	1	1:16	21	0:59
d. Playing outside:	33	39	9	1	2:27	17	2:01
e. Reading or being read to:	2	28	49	*	0:49	21	0:39
f. Playing video games like X-Box or Playstation:	*	3	4	1	0:55	92	0:04
g. Playing hand-held video games like Gameboy:	*	1	2	*	0:38	97	0:01
h. Playing inside with toys:	37	39	10	3	2:39	10	2:23
i. Playing computer games:	*	5	8	1	0:55	86	0:07
j. Using a computer for something other than games:	*	1	4	1	0:41	93	0:02
Total video games:	1	3	4	1	1:01	91	0:05
Total computer:	1	6	9	1	0:59	82	0:10
Total screen use:	32	39	11	1	2:22	17	1:58

Q.10 Now, thinking about the time your child spent watching TV or videos (yesterday/on that day), did your child do any of that in their bedroom, or not?

Yes: 20
No: 61
Child didn't watch TV/videos/DVDs: 19
Don't know/Refused: *

Q.11 Did your child watch TV or videos MOSTLY in their bedroom, or MOSTLY in another room?

Watched TV mostly in bedroom: 10
Watched TV mostly in
another room: 70
(VOL) Half and half: 1
Child didn't watch TV/videos/DVDs: 19
Don't know where child
watched TV/Refused: *

Q.12 For MOST of the time (INSERT NAME) was watching TV, was someone else also watching TV, or was (he/she) doing this alone?

Mostly with someone else: 69
Mostly alone: 11
Child didn't watch TV/videos/DVDs: 19
Don't know/Refused: 1

Q.13 When your child was watching TV or videos (yesterday/on that day), was a parent in the room:

The whole time: 26
Most of the time: 30
About half the time: 15
Less than half the time: 6
Not at all: 4
Child didn't watch TV/videos/DVDs: 19
Don't know/Refused: *

Q.14 Now, thinking about the time your child spent playing video games (yesterday/on that day), did your child do any of that in their bedroom, or not?

Yes:	3
No:	6
Child didn't play video games:	91
Don't know/Refused:	0

Q.15 Did your child play video games MOSTLY in their bedroom, or MOSTLY in another room?

Played video games mostly in bedroom:	2
Played video games mostly in another room:	6
(VOL) Half and half:	*
Child didn't play video games:	91
Don't know where child played video games/Refused:	*

Q.16 For MOST of the time (INSERT NAME) was playing video games, was someone else playing with (him/her), or was (he/she) doing this alone?

Mostly with someone else:	6
Mostly alone:	3
Child didn't play video games:	91
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.17 When your child was playing video games (yesterday/on that day), was a parent in the room:

The whole time:	2
Most of the time:	2
About half the time:	1
Less than half the time:	2
Not at all:	1
Child didn't play video games:	91
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.18 Now, thinking about the time your child spent using a computer (yesterday/on that day), did your child do any of that in their bedroom, or not?

Yes:	3
No:	15
Child didn't use computer:	82
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.19 Did your child use a computer MOSTLY in their bedroom, or MOSTLY in another room?

Used computer mostly in bedroom:	2
Used computer mostly in another room:	15
(VOL) Half and half:	*
Child didn't use computer:	82
Don't know where child used computer/Refused:	*

Q.20 For MOST of the time (INSERT NAME) was using a computer, was someone else using the computer with (him/her), or was (he/she) doing this alone?

Mostly with someone else:	9
Mostly alone:	7
Child didn't use computer:	82
Don't know/Refused:	1

Q.21 When your child was using a computer (yesterday/on that day), was a parent in the room:

The whole time:	7
Most of the time:	4
About half the time:	2
Less than half the time:	2
Not at all:	2
Child didn't use computer:	82
Don't know/Refused:	1

Q.22 Now I have a few questions about the electronic items in your household, including any that are in your bedroom or a child's bedroom. In answering, please don't count anything that is not hooked up or is put away in storage. How many televisions, if any, do you have in your household?

None:	1
One:	14
Two:	36
Three:	29
Four:	13
Five:	5
Six or more:	3
Don't know/Refused:	0
Mean TVs in household:	2.65

Q.22a Do you have cable or satellite TV?

Total households with television:	99
Have cable/satellite:	78
Do not have cable/satellite:	21
Don't know/Refused:	0
No TV in household:	1

Q.23 Do you have any (INSERT IN ORDER) in your household?

Q.24 How many?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+	DK/ Ref	Mean
a. VCRs or DVD players:	5	23	34	22	11	3	2	0	2.33
b. Video-game players like X-box or Playstation:	50	34	10	3	1	*	*	*	.75
c. Hand-held video game players like Gameboy:	68	19	10	2	1	*	*	*	.51

Q.25 How many (INSERT IN ORDER) do you have in your household?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+	DK/ Ref	Mean
a. Radios:	2	26	29	20	13	6	5	0	2.55
b. Music CD or audiocassette players:	6	30	29	16	7	4	6	1	2.24

Q.26 Does your household subscribe to any (INSERT IN ORDER)?

	Yes	No	DK/ Ref
a. Newspapers:	34	66	*
b. News magazines like Time or Newsweek:	15	85	*
c. Parenting magazines:	35	64	*
d. Children's magazines:	39	60	*

Q.27 When someone is at home in your household, how often is the TV on, even if no one is actually watching it:

Always:	14
Most of the time:	23
About half of the time:	29
Less than half of the time:	17
Hardly ever:	13
Never:	4
No TV in household:	1
Don't know/Refused:	0

Q.28 How often is the TV on when your family is eating meals?

Always:	18
Most of the time:	17
About half of the time:	15
Less than half of the time:	9
Hardly ever:	15
Never:	26
No TV in household:	1
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.29 Do you have any computers in your household? This would include laptops as well as desktop computers.

Q.30 How many?

None:	27
One:	48
Two:	17
Three:	5
Four:	2
Five:	1
Six or more:	1
Don't know/Refused:	0
Mean computers in household:	1.12

Q.31 Do you have Internet access on your home computer/any of your home computers?

Q.32 Do you have high-speed Internet access such as a cable or DSL hook-up, or is your Internet access through a dial-up telephone modem?

Total have Internet access:	63
Have high-speed Internet access:	20
Have dial-up Internet access:	42
Don't know what kind of Internet access/Ref:	1
Have computer but no Internet access:	11
No computer in household:	27

READ: For my next questions, I'd like you to think again about (INSERT NAME)/the child we talked about earlier.

Q.33 When you're at home with (INSERT NAME) and you have something important to do, how likely are you to sit (him/her) down with a video or TV show while you get it done?

Very likely:	16
Somewhat likely:	29
Not too likely:	26
Not at all likely:	27
No TV in household:	1
Don't know/Refused:	1

Q.34 When your child is playing and the TV is on in the background, how frequently does it distract (his/her) attention from what (he/she) is doing? Does this happen:

Often: 14
 Sometimes: 39
 Hardly ever: 31
 Never: 13
 (VOL) TV is never on in background: 2
 No TV in household: 1
 Don't know/Refused: 1

Q.35 We'd like to know how often, if ever, your child does each of the following things. Again, if it's something your child is too young to do, just tell me and I'll move on to the next item. How often does your child (INSERT IN ORDER)? Every day, several times a week, several times a month, less often, or has your child NEVER done this?

	Every day	Several times a week	Several times a month	Less often	Never	(VOL) Child too young	(VOL) Child not allowed	DK/Ref	Total done/never done
a. Watch television:	63	20	3	5	5	3	0	*	92/8
b. Listen to music:	66	23	2	6	2	1	0	*	97/3
c. Play video games like X-Box or Playstation:	3	10	5	9	51	21	*	*	28/72
d. Play hand-held video games like Gameboy:	2	5	4	6	63	20	*	0	17/83
e. Read a book alone or with someone else:	65	26	3	1	2	3	0	*	95/5
f. Watch videos or DVDs:	25	37	18	9	9	3	0	*	88/12
g. Play computer games:	5	18	11	10	41	16	*	*	44/56
h. Use a computer for something other than games:	3	7	5	7	60	17	*	1	22/78
Total play video games:	4	11	6	9	49	20	1	*	30/70
Total use a computer:	7	20	12	10	33	17	1	1	48/52

Q.36 Please tell me if you have any rules for (INSERT NAME) about each of the following. (First,) do you have any rules about (INSERT; ROTATE):

	Yes	No	DK/Ref
--	-----	----	--------

Items a-b based on parents of children who ever watch TV [N=978]

a. What your child can or can't watch on TV:	90	9	1
b. How much time your child can spend watching TV:	69	30	1

Items c-d based on parents of children who ever use computer [N=526]

c. What your child can or can't do on the computer:	79	19	3
d. How much time your child can spend on the computer:	61	36	3

Items e-f based on parents of children who ever play video games [N=316]

e. What video games your child can play:	87	12	*
f. How much time your child can spend playing video games:	76	23	1

Q.37 In general, how often are these kinds of rules enforced in your household? Are they enforced:

Based on children who use screen media [N=991]

All of the time: 54
 Most of the time: 34
 Only sometimes: 4
 Hardly ever: 2
 Parents have no rules for screen use: 7
 Don't know/Refused: 1

Q.38 Is there a TV in (INSERT NAME)'s bedroom, even it doesn't get any channels and is used only for videos or video games?

Yes: 36
 No: 63
 No TV in household: 1
 Don't know/Refused: 0

Q.39 Does the TV in your child's room:

Get some cable or satellite channels: 15
 Get only regular channels: 9
 Is it just used for watching videos or playing games: 11
 (VOL) TV not currently used/not currently working: 1
 No TV in child's room: 63
 No TV in household: 1
 Don't know/Refused: 0

Q.40 Please tell me if your child has any of the following items in their bedroom. (First,) what about... (INSERT IN ORDER):

	Yes	No	DK/ Ref
a. A VCR or DVD player:	27	73	0
b. A video game player like X-box or Playstation:	10	90	0
c. A music CD or audiocassette player:	42	57	*
d. A radio:	46	55	*
e. A telephone:	10	90	0
f. A computer:	7	94	0

Q.41 Does the computer in your child's bedroom have Internet access?

Yes: 3
 No: 2
 No computer in child's room: 67
 No computer in household: 27
 No Internet access in household: 2
 Don't know/Refused: 0

Q.42 Please tell me if (INSERT NAME) has any of the following things; it doesn't matter whether they are kept in their bedroom or not. (First,) does your child have (INSERT IN ORDER):

	Yes	No	DK/ Ref
a. Building toys such as blocks or Legos:	90	10	0
b. Any talking book toys like LeapPad:	76	23	1
c. A TOY cell phone:	63	37	*
d. A TOY computer:	40	60	*
e. A TV remote designed especially for children:	9	90	*

Q.43 We're interested in whether your child has any products based on characters from TV, movies or video games. Does your child have any (INSERT; RANDOMIZE) based on characters (from TV, movies or video games)?

	Yes	No	DK/Ref
a. Clothes:	79	20	*
b. Dolls, stuffed animals or action figures:	87	13	*
c. Books:	89	11	*
d. Bedding or beach towels:	60	40	*
e. Other products I haven't already mentioned:	36	62	2
Total who have any of these items:	97		

Q.44 Please tell me if (INSERT NAME) has EVER done each of the following things. (First/Next),... (INSERT IN ORDER). Has your child ever done this?

	Yes	No	DK/Ref	Child Doesn't Watch TV
a. Turn on the TV by themselves:	77	15	*	8
b. Change the channels with a TV remote:	62	29	*	8
c. Ask to watch a particular TV show or channel:	67	24	*	8

	Yes	No	DK/Ref	Child Doesn't Watch Video/DVDs
d. Ask to watch a particular video or DVD:	71	18	0	12
e. Put in a video or DVD by themselves:	50	39	0	12

	Yes	No	DK/Ref	Child Doesn't Listen to Music
f. Put a CD or audiocassette into a player by themselves:	36	61	*	3

	Yes	No	DK/Ref	Child Doesn't Use a Computer
g. Use a computer WITHOUT sitting on a parent's lap:	33	14	1	52
h. Turn on a computer by themselves:	23	24	2	52
i. Use a mouse to point and click:	40	7	1	52
j. Put a CD-ROM into the computer:	23	23	1	52
k. Look at websites for children:	20	26	2	52

	Yes	No	DK/Ref	Child Doesn't Use a Computer	Child Doesn't Visit Websites
l. Ask to go to a particular website:	12	8	0	52	28
m. Go to a particular website on their own:	4	16	*	52	28

	Yes	No	DK/Ref	Child Doesn't Use a Computer
n. Send email with help from a parent or someone else:	10	37	1	52
o. Send email by themselves:	1	47	1	52

Q.45 Please tell me AT WHAT AGE (INSERT NAME) FIRST did each of the following things?

	LT 6 mos	6-11 mos	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs	DK/Ref	Child Does Not Do This	Child Does Not Watch TV	Mean Age Started	
a. Watch television:	12	21	29	18	6	1	*	0	4	N/A	8	1 yr 2 mos	
b. Turn on the TV by themselves:	1	6	21	20	16	8	3	*	2	15	8	2 yrs 1 mo	
c. Change the channels with a TV remote:	1	4	14	12	11	11	6	1	2	29	8	2 yrs 5 mos	
d. Ask to watch a particular TV show or channel:	0	1	10	21	18	10	4	*	2	25	8	2 yrs 7 mos	
	LT 6 mos	6-11 mos	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs	DK/Ref	Child Does Not Do This	Child Does Not Watch Video/DVDs	Mean Age Started	
e. Watch a video or DVD:	6	9	19	26	16	7	2	*	3	N/A	12	1 yr 11 mos	
f. Ask to watch a particular video or DVD:	0	1	12	24	21	10	3	*	1	18	12	2 yrs 6 mos	
g. Put in a vide or DVD by themselves:	0	1	6	8	13	12	7	1	1	39	12	3 yrs 1 mo	
	LT 6 mos	6-11 mos	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs	DK/Ref	Child Does Not Do This	Child Does Not Listen to Music	Mean Age Started	
h. Put a CD or audiocassette into a player by themselves:	0	1	3	6	7	9	6	1	2	61	3	3 yrs 2 mos	
	LT 6 mos	6-11 mos	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs	DK/Ref	Child Does Not Do This	Child Does Not Use a Computer	Mean Age Started	
i. Use a computer while sitting on a parent's lap:	1	1	5	14	12	8	3	*	4	N/A	52	2 yrs 8 mos	
j. Use a computer WITHOUT sitting on a parent's lap:	0	*	1	3	9	10	6	1	1	15	52	3 yrs 6 mos	
k. Turn on a computer by themselves:	*	*	2	3	6	5	6	1	1	25	52	3 yrs 5 mos	
l. Use a mouse to point and click:	0	*	2	6	12	11	7	1	*	8	52	3 yrs 4 mos	
m. Put a CD-ROM into the computer:	0	*	1	2	7	6	6	2	*	25	52	3 yrs 8 mo	
n. Look at websites for children:	0	*	1	3	5	4	5	1	*	28	52	3 yrs 4 mos	
	LT 6 mos	6-11 mos	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs	DK/Ref	Child Does Not Do This	Child Does Not Use a Computer Website	Child Does Not Visit Website	Mean Age Started
o. Ask to go to a particular website:	*	*	*	1	3	4	3	1	*	8	52	28	3 yrs 8 mos
p. Go to a particular website on their own:	0	0	0	*	1	1	1	1	*	16	52	28	4 yrs
	LT 6 mos	6-11 mos	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs	DK/Ref	Child Does Not Do This	Child Does Not Use a Computer	Mean Age Started	
q. Send email with someone's help:	0	*	*	1	2	2	3	*	*	38	52	3 yrs 9 mos	
r. Send email by themselves:	0	0	*	0	*	*	*	0	*	47	52	3 yrs 2 mos	
s. Play computer games, even if it was while on your lap:	*	1	3	10	12	10	4	1	2	57	N/A	3 yrs	
	LT 6 mos	6-11 mos	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs	DK/Ref	Child Does Not Do This	Mean Age Started		
t. Play video games like X-Box or Playstation:	*	*	*	3	6	9	6	1	2	72	3 yrs 7 mos		
u. Play hand-held video games like Gameboy:	0	*	*	2	3	5	4	1	2	83	3 yrs 8 mos		

Q.46 Does your child know how to read?

Based on children 2 and older [N=823]

Yes:	32
No:	68
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.47 How old was your child when they learned to read?

Less than one year old (less than 12 months):	*
One year old (12 months to 23 months):	*
Two years old:	1
Three years old:	4
Four years old:	7
Five years old:	9
Six years old:	2
Child doesn't read:	52
Child younger than two:	23
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.48 In total, about how many computer games does (he/she) have, including any that are shared with brothers or sisters? (READ IF NECESSARY)

None:	4
One or two:	5
Three to five:	10
Six to ten:	9
Ten to 19:	7
20 to 49:	5
50 or more:	1
Child doesn't play computer games:	57
Don't know/Refused:	2

Q.49 Does your child have any of the following at home (INSERT IN ORDER)?

	Yes	No	DK/Ref	Child Doesn't Use Computer
a. A computer mouse designed especially for children:	5	43	*	52
b. A computer keyboard or keyboard topper designed for children:	7	41	*	52

Q.50 In total, about how many videos do you have at home for (INSERT NAME), counting both VHS tapes and DVDs and including any shared with brothers or sisters? (READ IF NECESSARY)

None:	1
One or two:	3
Three to five:	6
Six to ten:	9
Ten to 19:	16
20 to 49:	30
50 or more:	23
Child doesn't watch videos/DVDs:	12
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.51 Have they ever had any "Baby Einstein" videos like "Baby Bach" or "Baby Mozart"?

Yes:	27
No:	59
Child doesn't have any videos/DVDs:	2
Child doesn't watch videos/DVDs:	12
Don't know/Refused:	1

Q.52 In total, about how many video games does (INSERT NAME) have at home, including any shared with brothers or sisters? (READ IF NECESSARY)

None:	4
One or two:	4
Three to five:	7
Six to ten:	6
Ten to 19:	5
20 to 49:	3
50 or more:	1
Child doesn't play video games:	69
Don't know/Refused:	*

Q.53 In total, about how many children's books does (INSERT NAME) have at home, including any shared with brothers or sisters? (READ IF NECESSARY)

None:	1
One or two:	1
Three to five:	3
Six to ten:	4
Ten to 19:	7
20 to 49:	24
50 or more:	59
Don't know/Refused:	1

Q.54 Have you ever noticed your child (ROTATE)?

	Yes	No	DK/Ref	Child Doesn't Watch TV
a. Imitating aggressive behavior from a TV show like hitting or kicking:	33	57	1	8
b. Imitating positive behavior from a TV show like sharing or helping:	71	19	2	8

Q.55 Which one of these have you seen your child do MORE OFTEN—imitate aggressive behavior or imitate positive behavior?

Child imitates positive behavior more often:	58
Child imitates aggressive behavior more often:	12
(VOL) Both equally:	3
Child doesn't imitate behavior from TV:	18
Child doesn't watch TV:	8
Don't know/Refused:	1

Q.56 In general, do you think (INSERT; ROTATE) mostly helps or mostly hurts children's learning—or doesn't have much effect either way?

	Mostly Helps	Mostly Hurts	Not Much Effect	DK/Ref
a. Watching TV:	43	27	21	9
b. Using a computer:	72	5	12	11
c. Playing video games:	22	40	27	12

Q.57 Now I have a question about children's intellectual development—things like learning words and counting. Please tell me how important, if at all, you think each of the following is in helping the intellectual development of children (INSERT NAME)'s age. (First,) how important is (INSERT; RANDOMIZE WITHIN)? Very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not too Important	Not at all Important	DK/Ref
a. Reading books:	96	3	*	*	*
b. Building toys like blocks or Legos:	77	20	2	1	1
c. Doing puzzles:	74	21	3	1	1
d. Using educational toys like talking books:	62	30	6	2	1
e. Watching educational TV shows like 'Sesame Street':	58	34	5	2	1
f. Watching educational videos or DVDs:	49	39	8	3	1
g. Playing educational computer games:	43	36	9	6	5
h. Visiting educational websites:	31	36	16	9	9

Q.58 Which of the following do you think is MOST important to children's intellectual development?

Books:	66
Something else:	32
Educational toys like talking books:	8
Building toys like blocks or Legos:	6
Educational TV shows:	5
Educational videos or DVDs:	4
Educational computer games:	3
Puzzles:	2
Educational websites:	*
(VOL) Something else/	
None of these:	4
Don't know/Refused:	3

Q.59 Thinking about all the children under age 18 who live with you, is (INSERT NAME) the youngest child, the oldest child or a middle child?

Only child:	30
Youngest child:	51
Middle child:	8
Oldest child:	12
Don't know/Refused:	*

Demographics:

D1. Parent Gender

Male (Father):	19
Female (Mother):	81

D2. Now I have a few questions so that we can describe the parents who took part in our survey. Are you NOW employed full-time, part-time, are you retired or are you not employed for pay?

Full-time:	43
Part-time:	19
Retired:	1
Not employed:	31
Homemaker:	5
Student:	1
Disabled:	1
Refused:	*

D3. Are you married, LIVING as married, divorced, separated, widowed or have you never been married?

Married:	69
Living as married:	6
Divorced:	6
Separated:	3
Widowed:	1
Never married/Single:	15
Refused:	*

D4. Is your husband/wife or partner NOW employed full-time, part-time, retired or not employed for pay?

Based on those who are married or living as married (N=837)

Full-time:	86
Part-time:	7
Retired:	1
Not employed:	5
Homemaker:	*
Student:	*
Disabled:	*
Refused:	*

D5. What is the LAST grade or class that you COMPLETED in school?

None, or grades 1-8:	4
High school incomplete (grades 9-11):	10
High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate):	29
Business, technical or vocational school after high school:	4
Some college, no 4-year degree:	25
College graduate (B.S., B.A. or other 4-year degree):	20
Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a master's degree or Ph.D., law or medical school):	7
Don't know:	*
Refused:	*

D6. What is the LAST grade or class your (husband/wife/partner) COMPLETED in school?

Based on those who are married or living as married (N=837)

None, or grades 1-8:	4
High school incomplete (grades 9-11):	7
High school graduate (grade 12 or GED certificate):	30
Business, technical or vocational school after high school:	4
Some college, no 4-year degree:	20
College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other 4-year degree):	21
Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college (e.g., toward a master's degree or Ph.D.; law or medical school):	11
Don't know:	1
Refused:	*

D7. What is your age?

Under 30:	36
30-39:	46
40-49:	15
50 and older:	3
Refused:	1

D8. Last year, in 2002, what was your TOTAL household income from all sources, BEFORE taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category. (READ)

Less than \$10,000:	7
\$10,000 to under \$20,000:	11
\$20,000 to under \$30,000:	16
\$30,000 to under \$50,000:	22
\$50,000 to under \$75,000:	16
\$75,000 to under \$100,000:	9
\$100,000 or more:	10
Don't know:	4
Refused:	4

D9. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban or some other Spanish background?

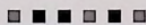
D10. What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian or some other race?

White, Non-Hispanic:	61
Total Non-White:	38
Black or African American:	14
Hispanic:	18
Asian:	3
Other or mixed race:	3
Undesignated:	1

D11. Is any language other than English spoken in your household?

Yes:	31
Spanish:	23
No:	68
Don't know/Refused:	*

END OF INTERVIEW: That completes the interview. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.



Methodology

This report is based on the results of a nationally representative, random-digit dial telephone survey of 1,065 parents of children ages six months to six years old, conducted from April 11 to June 9, 2003. The survey was designed and analyzed by staff at the Kaiser Family Foundation, the University of Texas and Princeton Survey Research (PSR). The interviews were conducted in English and Spanish by Princeton Data Source, LLC. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted

data is $\pm 3\%$. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.06. As many as ten attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week. In each eligible household, interviewers asked to speak with the parent who spends the most time with the target child. In households where neither parent spends more time with the child, one was chosen at random for interviewing. The response rate for this survey was 40 percent.



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The Kaiser Family Foundation is an independent, national health philanthropy dedicated to providing information and analysis on health issues to policymakers, the media, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

TV ADVERTISING

Until 1984 the National Association of Broadcasters had a rule that limited the amount of time for no more than 9 1/2 minutes of "nonprogram" material (including promotional spots and public service announcements) per hour.

Prime Time:

In the 3rd quarter of 2003, the four major networks aired an average of 52 minutes of nonprogram material in prime time. This is up 8% from 2000 and 36% from 1991.

The average commercial break in prime time is more than 10 minutes, up 41% from five years ago.

(survey by PhaseOne Communications)

Overall:

In 2003, three of the four major networks broadcast more than 1 hour of nonprogram material per hour. (survey by MindShare)

ABC aired 15 minutes 31 seconds per hour (up 2% from 2002)

Fox aired 15 minutes 13 seconds (up 3% from 2002)

NBC aired 15 minutes 7 seconds (up 2% from 2002)

CBS aired 14 minutes 18 seconds (up 1% from 2002)

In the 4th quarter of 2003, ABC had 7.11 messages per hour of 15 seconds or less, NBC had 6.24, Fox had 6.03.

The average number of paid commercials per break was 1.5.

These pages discuss
illiteracy rates + Facts.

Rejects

LITERACY in AMERICA

It was surprisingly difficult to find comparable literacy statistics. The only data from 1870 to 1979 recorded simple illiteracy. Later surveys used more sophisticated measure, but there is debate about whether the figures are accurate and what they mean.

Basic illiteracy:

The stats that seemed most comparable show little change in literacy rates in the last 50 years:

In 2004, 97% of those 15 or older can read and write
(The World Factbook, 2004)

In 1950, 96.8% of those 14 years or older could read and write
(U.S. Census)

Functional Illiteracy:

In 1970, the Census Bureau estimated that 8.3% of the population over 14 was "functionally" illiterate.

In 1975, a Adult Performance Level survey sponsored by the Department of Education found that 23 million adults "lacked important functional competencies."

In 1992, The National Adult Literacy survey - the first data that included 21% to 23% of adults functioned on the lowest level of reading, document and quantitative proficiencies." However, the second study later said the numbers had been misinterpreted and the lowest level percentage was closer to 9%.

Other Surveys:

A survey on public participation in the arts, based on 2002 census data, showed that 56.9% of adults read books in 2002, down from 60.6% in 1992. Readers of "literature" dropped from 56.9% in 1982 and 54.1% in 1992 to 46.7% in 2002.

A Harris poll, which charts favorite leisure time activities, showed reading still topped the list in 2003, as it has since the surveys began in 1995. TV watching stayed in 3rd place, as it has been since 1995.

27 48

Handwritten: ? If needed

Losing the War of Letters

A Government study finds that one of eight Americans cannot read

"We are creating a new generation of illiterates." With those words, Robert Barnes, an official of the U.S. Department of Education, last week released a chilling analysis of a basic literacy test given by the Bureau of the Census to 3,400 Americans age 20 and over. Thirteen percent flunked the test, able to answer only 20 or fewer of the 26 multiple-choice questions. (Sample: Don't allow your medical identification card to a) be used b) have destroy c) go lose d) get expired by any other person.) "It was a pretty simple test," notes Barnes dryly.

Atop the dismal failure rate, an additional 20% of those originally offered the test refused to take it, most for fear of revealing their illiteracy. From these results, Barnes projects that 17 million to 21 million adults in the U.S. cannot read. And this is only some of the bad news. The figures refute the impression, based on a 1979 Census Bureau study, that only one-half of 1% of Americans over 14 are illiterate. This survey assumed that anyone who had finished the fifth grade could read, and fostered the notion that most illiterates are elderly rural people who never got that far in school. The new study shows that the majority of nonreaders are under 50 (see chart) and many have attended high school. Particularly troubling is a 22% illiteracy rate among blacks, many of whom were moved through school by automatic-promotion policies but learned little on the way. Observes Barnes: "Too many blacks [who failed the test] were passed along from year to year at school without academic gain."

Perhaps most disturbing of all, the new test measured only bedrock inability to read, with no attempt to establish the number of U.S. adults who, although technically literate, cannot read well enough to function as successful citizens. Such a measure of functional illiteracy, say Barnes and other experts, would be even more disheartening. Indeed, a study published by the University of Texas in 1975 suggested that one in five Americans cannot read well enough to perform the simplest tasks. Of 15,000 tested, 20%

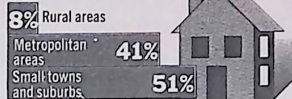
could not write a check without an error so serious that a bank could not cash it; 22% were unable to address an envelope well enough to ensure postal delivery; 40% could not figure correct change from a store purchase; and more than half had at least some trouble with reading or writing. "We're talking about half the U.S.

population being in a borderline or worse situation," says Texas Researcher Jim Cates, who directed the study. "There is no threat to the U.S. greater than that."

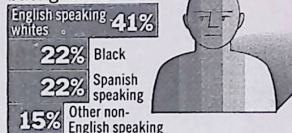
Cates, Barnes and other educators around the country agree that the American school system is partly to blame. In many elementary schools, reading time is devoted to "See Jane run" readers and dull word-drill workbooks. Another pedagogical problem: children frequently are force-fed new words by the "look and say" method, which requires recognition of

Facts about the 17-21 million U.S. illiterates

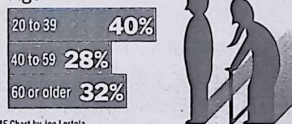
Where they live



Race and ethnic background



Age



TIME Chart by Joe Lerito

whole words, rather than the more flexible and effective technique of phonics, or sounding out words, phoneme by phoneme. The consequence, as Nebraska's Democratic Senator Edward Zorinsky argued at congressional literacy hearings last fall, is that many children "are not learning to read and therefore not learning much of anything."

The Department of Education estimates that 2 million more illiterates appear in society each year, including high school dropouts, unlettered pass-along graduates and immigrants. The last group constitutes fully one-third of nonreaders. Besides being concerned over the school system's failure, critics chide the U.S. Government for throwing pennies into remedial programs. "This is not a priority item with this Administration," charges

Cates. The annual federal outlay for hard-core adult illiterates this year and last has been \$352 million, or \$17 a person. Although Secretary of Education William Bennett is seeking an additional \$2 million, he maintains that the states bear the primary responsibility for such problems. Says he: "They do not lend themselves to a Washington solution."

The total cost of illiteracy to the U.S. economy cannot be accurately measured. But critics insist the nation is paying dearly in lost productivity and in human misery. Reports tell of an industrial worker killed because he could not read a warning sign, a sick child given a pink detergent instead of stomach medicine by a mother who could not decipher the bottle labels, and another mother who endorsed what she thought was a routine permission form for a school field trip only to discover that she had relegated her daughter to a home for the retarded.

Amid this gloomy picture there are some positive signs. Thirty-three states have formed literacy councils, and activity by volunteer organizations, colleges and schools is on the rise. California puts some \$74 million into adult-literacy programs, which touched 654,000 people in 1984-85. An adult basic-education campaign in California state prisons, where 33% of male inmates are illiterate, enlisted nearly 9,000 students last year. (The prisoners get a day subtracted from their sentence for every day of demonstrated study.)

The Chicago-based Coalition for Literacy, whose members make up a national network, has established a hot line to connect volunteer tutors with adults who have reading problems. The largest single coalition member is Laubach Literacy Action, a volunteer organization with some 50,000 tutors who work through 600 programs in 45 states. "We have seen a great turnaround in the last year," says Coalition Coordinator Jean Coleman. "There is a lot of interest, and it is growing."

But for all the energy and dedication of these efforts, the Department of Education estimates that only 2 million illiterates are helped each year, creating an equilibrium in which the number of people emerging from the illiteracy pool roughly equals the number falling in. A concerted national and local effort to reduce that pool could cost many more millions of dollars annually. But, advocates argue, an uneducated underclass will cost the country far more than that. "We all say glibly that the future belongs to the thinkers and people who will be able to master the expanding technologies," declares Cates. But given the illiteracy rate, he laments, "in this brave technological war we're waging with Japan and other countries, half our population is armed with peashooters."

—By Ezra Bowen.

Reported by Patricia Delaney/Washington and Lianne Hart/Houston



Barnes

Handwritten: \$ Spent on Battling illiteracy



Learning skills to make a living: A class for immigrants earlier in the century

Dumber Than We Thought

Literacy: A new study shows why we can't cope with everyday life

JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN MAKE OUT THIS sentence isn't proof that you're literate. And just because you shelled out the correct \$2.95 for this issue of NEWSWEEK doesn't mean you've got satisfactory arithmetic skills. The better measures: can you reach our offices using a Manhattan subway map, write us a letter about a billing error or figure out the Conventional Wisdom Watch every week?

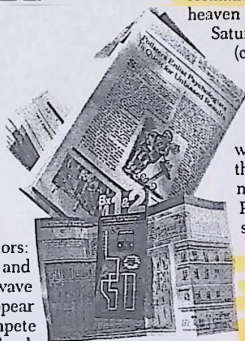
So concludes the most comprehensive study of literacy ever done of Americans. Released last week by the U.S. Department of Education, the report offers an appalling portrait of the population's proficiency with words and numbers. It, too, seems to confirm some of the worst fears of business

leaders and educators: American workers—and not just the latest wave of immigrants—appear ill equipped to compete globally, and high schools are hardly helping by awarding degrees to students barely able to read or write. "This should be a wake-up call," says Education Secretary Richard Riley. "The vast majority of Americans do not know that they do not have the skills to earn a living in our increasingly technological society and international marketplace."

Sure, Johnny can read simple prose. And Mary can add a couple of integers all right. The problem is their inability to make prac-

tical use of those skills in everyday life. Nearly half of the nation's 191 million adults, the study says, cannot do such tasks as fill out a bank-deposit slip, compute the cost of carpeting a room or translate information from a table to a graph. And heaven help them if they need to find a Saturday departure on a bus schedule (chart, page 45). Despite those facts, most of the 26,000 randomly selected participants in the literacy study said they were able to read and write English "well" or "very well." "Yeah, we're dumber than we thought we were," says William Bennett, secretary of education under President Reagan and current conservative activist.

The last major federal study on literacy was in 1975. It concluded that roughly 25 million American adults were functionally illiterate—far below the numbers revealed in last week's landmark report. Part of the reason for the increase is that the definitions have been changed. Traditionally, illiteracy has referred only to folks who signed their names "X" or hadn't graduated at least from a low grade. Now the net has been cast wider. "This test revealed that many people can read in the technical sense that they can decode the words," says Irwin Kirsch, project director for the \$14 million Education Department survey, which Congress commissioned five



years ago. "But they lack the strategies and skills needed to use the information." Case in point: half of the individuals scoring in the lowest 20 percent graduated from high school. "Does a high-school diploma mean anything today?" asks Bennett. "No. Zero." Among the report's other findings:

■ Literacy among 21- to 25-year-olds is dropping, when compared with a similar study from 1985. The likely cause is the dramatic increase in young Hispanics in the population, many of whom were born in other countries and are learning English as a second language. They might do better if the test were given in other languages, but the study only set out to measure English literacy, and those who conducted the study point out that American commerce is still primarily done in English.

■ White Americans outscored other ethnic groups, who, with the exception of Asians/Pacific Islanders, had less education or, with the exception of blacks, were more likely to speak English as a second language. Blacks scored worse, according to the study, because schools they attend are poorer than ones whites attend.

■ Among the worst performers were immigrants, the elderly and inmates. The elderly in particular constituted a disproportionate percentage of those in the lowest literacy level.

■ Men did about as well as women in reading skills but were better at math and interpreting documents.

■ Individuals with higher literacy more often were employed and earned higher wages. Those with the lowest test scores earned an average of \$230 a week; those with the highest, about \$680.

■ Of course, the more education a person had, the better he or she did. Nonetheless, 4 percent of college graduates tested at the lowest levels.

The survey results are especially worrisome because many employers now need workers with higher math and reading skills. "During various transition periods of our history, society's demands outstrip the skills of the people," Kirsch says. "We're now moving away from

a manufacturing society to an information society." That means workers will need more interpretative abilities and less of the rote skills prized on the assembly line. Kirsch and others, including President Clinton, have long urged redoubled efforts to educate and train Americans. By some estimates, employers are spending as much as \$50 billion to try to eliminate the kind of practical illiteracy that the new study describes.

The alarm sounded by American business, of course, raises again the specter of the United States being overtaken by the more qualified work forces of other Western nations. Maybe so, but they're about to get the treatment as well. The literacy test is being exported to eight other countries—Germany, Canada, Mexico, Ireland, France, Poland, Switzerland and the Netherlands—with a report due out in 1995. They, too, could be in for a few surprises.

DAVID A. KAPLAN with PAT WINGERT and FARAI CHIDEYA in Washington

Why Johnny Can't Find Broadway

The Department of Education study found many adults couldn't execute common daily tasks like reading a bus schedule. Some questions below:

Question 1

What is the gross pay for this year to date?

07/15/85		REGULAR	OVERTIME	CHRG	DET AM	NET PAY												
500		500	62500	62500		4596.8												
YEAR TO DATE		426889																
NON-NEGOTIABLE																		
<table border="1"> <tr> <th>DATE</th> <th>TIME</th> <th>FROM</th> <th>TO</th> <th>FARE</th> <th>TOTAL</th> </tr> <tr> <td>07</td> <td>DEN</td> <td>A12</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>							DATE	TIME	FROM	TO	FARE	TOTAL	07	DEN	A12			
DATE	TIME	FROM	TO	FARE	TOTAL													
07	DEN	A12																

Question 2

Here is a social-security card. Sign your name on the line that reads "signature."

SOCIAL SECURITY	
ACCOUNT NUMBER	301-02-0304
HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR	
SIGNATURE	
FOR SOCIAL SECURITY PURPOSES • NOT FOR IDENTIFICATION	

CASH	\$	00
LIST CHECKS BY BANK NO.	ENDORSE WITH NAME & ACCOUNT NUMBER	
	557 19	
	75 00	
TOTAL		

Question 4

You wish to use the automatic teller machine at your bank to make a deposit. Figure the total amount of the two checks being deposited. Enter the amount on the form in the space next to total.

Question 5

The price of one ticket and bus for "Sleuth" costs how much less than the price of one ticket and bus for "On the Town"? A charter bus will leave from the bus stop at 4 p.m. giving you plenty of time for dinner in New York. Return trip will start from W. 45th St. directly following the plays. Both theaters are on W. 45th St. Allow 1½ hours for the return.

Time: 4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 20

Price: "On the Town" Ticket and Bus \$11.00
"Sleuth" Ticket and Bus \$8.50

Question 3

On Saturday afternoon, if you miss the 2:35 bus leaving Hancock and Buena Ventura going to Flintridge and Academy, how long will you have to wait for the next bus?

OUTBOUND									
from Terminal									
Leave Downtown Terminal	Leave Penn Plaza	Leave Grand Central	Leave 42nd St	Leave 34th St	Leave 26th St	Leave 18th St	Leave 10th St	Leave 2nd St	Leave 1st St
6:20	6:35	6:45	6:50	7:03	7:15				
6:50	7:05	7:15	7:20	7:33	7:45				
7:20	7:35	7:45	7:50	8:03	8:15				
7:50	8:05	8:15	8:20	8:33	8:45				
8:20	8:35	8:45	8:50	9:03	9:15				
8:50	9:05	9:15	9:20	9:33	9:45				
9:20	9:35	9:45	9:50	10:03	10:15				
10:20	10:35	10:45	10:50	11:03	11:15				
11:20	11:35	11:45	11:50	12:03	12:15				
12:20	12:35	12:45	12:50	1:03	1:15				
1:20	1:35	1:45	1:50	2:03	2:15				
2:20	2:35	2:45	2:50	3:03	3:15				
3:20	3:35	3:45	3:50	4:03	4:15				
3:50	4:05	4:15	4:20	4:33	4:45				
4:20	4:35	4:45	4:50	5:03	5:15				
4:50	5:05	5:15	5:20	5:33	5:45				
5:20	5:35	5:45	5:50	6:03	6:15				
5:50	6:05	6:15	6:20	6:33	6:45				
6:20	6:35	6:45	6:50	7:03	7:15				

ANSWERS

1. \$4,268.85
2. Sign your name
3. 20 minutes
4. \$2.55
5. \$2.50

"Dude, that book was cool": The reading habits of young adults

BY URSULA FURI-PERRY

The MTV Generation, they sit, glued to television sets, mesmerized by online chat boards, addicted to video games. They shun books, reading only when necessary. In short, today's teenagers simply don't like to read.

Just how accurate are these stereotypes? Are the reading habits of young adults significantly decaying? Not at all, says Caryn Sipos, president of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). In fact, about 20 percent of library card carriers in the United States are under the age of 18.

According to *America's Children: Key Indicators of Well-Being*, a 2001 report developed by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, about 28 percent of 13-year-olds and about 25 percent of 15-year-olds reported reading independently on a daily basis. The National Education Association (NEA) found that in 2001, over 31 percent of teens read more than 15 books. Teenagers do read—the question is, does it matter what they are reading?

During the teenage years, "reading anything is better than reading nothing," Sipos believes. It's important to remember that while some teenagers may be unlikely to pick up a Shakespearean play on their own, those

same teenagers may find pleasure in reading a lighthearted work of fiction.

Parents often don't realize that simple comic books or graphic novels may be sufficient to fill the literary void in teens' lives. According to the ALA's *Non-Directions for Library Service to Young Adults*, while certain books and magazines may offer slightly lower vocabulary and linguistic levels, their appeal is likely to increase instead among teens who generally choose not to read in their free time. Teens who are nonreaders often will build better reading habits and a love for reading if they start with easier materials.

Fiction is the most successful literary genre among the age group in general. According to a 2001 NEA poll on the reading habits of adolescents, young adults as a group tend to prefer fiction over nonfiction, and they seek to relate to their reading on a personal level.

Stories about other adolescents and typical teenage situations are favored by many young adults. Teenagers generally love reading coming-of-age stories and books about the confusing times between childhood and adulthood—real-life fiction topics like substance abuse and eating disorders seem to do well among adolescents.

Of course, nonfiction books and magazines are also important. Lou

Waryncia, managing editor of Cobblestone Publishing, praises young adult nonfiction as a genre that educates and enlightens young readers while providing a sense of inspiration through real-life stories.

Statistics show that many young adults agree. While still lagging somewhat behind fiction, young adult nonfiction is on the rise. Teenagers enjoy biographies and creative nonfiction. Multicultural books and magazines are also successful among this age group.

The emerging reading habits of teenagers are made apparent by market changes in recent years. Young adult publishers have sprouted up across the United States, and writers are becoming increasingly interested in adolescent fiction.

Mainstream magazines have developed corresponding publications for teenagers. *Teen People*, *Cosmo Girl*, and *National Geographic Kids* are just a few examples. Publishers have seemingly taken notice of a promising genre.

According to Sipos, the Internet may also provide some quality reading material. YALSA's *Teen Graphic* website provides a comprehensive listing of insightful e-zines, online publications, and communities for teenagers. Sites like <http://www.cyberteens.com> provide young adults with a creative outlet for reading, writing, and art. In

addition, most adolescent print publications run corresponding online versions. Of course, just as with all other types of reading, parents should closely monitor their children's reading activities online.

Contrary to the common stereotype, many young adults do enjoy reading in their free time.

Positive reinforcement of good reading habits is an integral part of young people's education. Parental involvement in particular can greatly influence the reading and educational habits of children at all ages. NEA notes that reading to and with one's children is likely to increase their reading success in the future. Likewise, discussing books and magazine articles read by young adults is also likely to produce fruitful results.

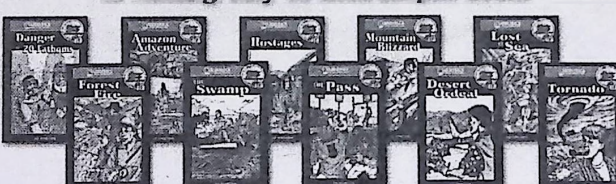
Teachers and librarians also can play an important part in increasing reading among young people. Teenagers are likely to turn to these professionals for reading recommendations and advice. In *Non-Directions for Library Service to Young Adults*, the ALA recommends implementing reading incentive programs and positive reinforcement messages. Booklists, recommended reading projects, and reading games can be fun ways for teachers and librarians to improve students' individual reading habits.

Contrary to the common stereotype, many young adults do enjoy reading in their free time. Furthermore, their reading habits are positively influenced by outside reinforcement, mainly from parents and educators. Teenagers read about an increasingly wide variety of subjects and topics. If we support their interest in reading, perhaps we will hear those five little words even more often: "Dude, that book was cool!"

Ursula Furi-Perry is editor in chief and co-founder of *TwentysixMagazine.com* and a widely published freelance writer.



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FEBRUARY 14, 2002

TRENDS

The Illiteracy Time Bomb

The fastest-growing demographic groups in the U.S. have the worst skills. That's bad news for businesses large and small

Ten years ago, what worried corporate leaders most was that U.S. competitiveness would be undercut by inadequate workforce skills. But those fears dissipated as the economy boomed in the late 1990s and productivity soared. Now, a new study raises troubling questions about the country's human capital once again, as well as about the failure of U.S. schools to keep pace in an increasingly competitive global economy.

The study, by the Princeton (N.J.)-based Educational Testing Service (ETS), finds that the literacy of American adults ranks 10th out of 17 industrialized countries. More troubling, the U.S. has the largest gap between highly and poorly educated adults, with immigrants and minorities making up the largest chunk of those at the bottom.

GROUNDBREAKING COMPARISON. Since both groups make up a growing share of the workforce, the U.S. will drop even further behind unless adult training and education improve sharply. Nor are U.S. schools likely to help: 16- to 25-year-olds not only underperform their foreign counterparts but also do so to a greater degree than Americans over 40.

The study illustrates how shortfalls in skills, experienced even in the midst of the current recession, are only likely to intensify as the economy picks up again. It also drives home the urgency of school reform. "We're living off the GI bill," says study co-author and Northeastern University economist Andrew M. Sum. "Our older workers still have a skill advantage, but other countries are catching up because their young workers are better prepared."

The ETS survey represents the first time anyone has been able to consistently compare skills of adults across countries. It looks at tests done by 17 countries between 1994 and 1998. Using the same methodology, each country judged three aspects of functional literacy: understanding texts such as books and newspaper articles, using documents such as maps and bus schedules, and employing math skills needed to balance a checkbook or calculate a tip. The Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) published the raw data in 2000, but the ETS is the first to analyze them. The outcome: The U.S. scored an average of 272 out of 500 on the three aspects, 32 points behind top-ranking Sweden.

PROFICIENCY LEVELS. Despite the mediocre U.S. ranking, it still beat out most of its major trading partners except Germany, including France, Britain, and Italy. (Japan didn't participate.) The showing is particularly good in light of America's far more diverse population. The U.S. has more minorities, immigrants, and poor people than most participating countries. But the results aren't much to brag about, either.

The OECD divided the results into five proficiency levels based on widely accepted standards. While few adults in any country are illiterate in the sense that they can't write their own names, those in the bottom two levels can't read or write as well as a high school graduate. Fully 45% of Americans fell into this category. Almost half of those, or 20%, scored in the lowest level, which puts their literacy below that of a high school dropout.

Most of the problems show up among immigrants and minorities. Immigrants accounted for more than 40% of U.S. labor-force growth since 1990. But because many are unskilled, they rank 74 points behind native-born Americans. They also

scored 16 points lower than newcomers in the other countries, which give preference to educated immigrants.

GROWTH THREATENED. U.S. minorities scored no better. Hispanics ranked as many as 75 points lower than whites, while blacks scored 63 points lower. Native-born whites and Asian Americans averaged 288 points, tying for second place in the international rankings on understanding texts. "Our school system has failed minorities and immigrants, which is a big problem for companies because that's who's out there to hire," says Phyllis Eisen, head of the National Association of Manufacturers' education arm.

The U.S. has long tolerated greater gaps between rich and poor, at least partly from the belief that the economy grows faster when more rewards go to the talented and the entrepreneurial. But the expansion of a low-skilled underclass threatens economic growth, too. Unless the U.S. redoubles its educational efforts for those on the bottom, its global workforce disadvantage is likely to worsen.

By Aaron Bernstein in Washington

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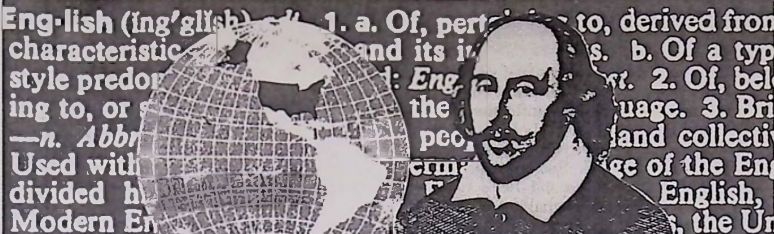
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It's at Home Where Our Language Is in Distress

The shortcomings of schools, waves of immigrants, TV addiction—all are taking a toll on U.S. linguistic skills.

English may be the toast of Paris and Peking, but back here in River City it's got trouble, trouble, trouble—

- Trouble because some 27 million adult Americans are functionally illiterate—unable to read a newspaper ad or a product label—and the total grows by the day.

- Trouble in that millions of other adults read barely well enough to scrape by, and 1 million children age 12 to 17 cannot read above a third-grade level.

- Trouble shown by the verbal scores of college-bound high-school seniors on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, which fell from an average of 466 in 1967 to 424 in 1981 and have risen only 2 points since then.

- Trouble documented in a survey by the National Opinion Research Center that finds the language ability of the U.S. population has dropped ever since the 1950s.

Doubly worrisome is that the ranks of the illiterate and marginally literate are swelling at the very time that rapid technological change makes proficiency with words and concepts more and more important.

The most seriously crippled are condemned to live in poverty or its shadow because they cannot fill out a simple application form or read a job manual. The nation spends up to 6 billion dollars annually on welfare and jobless aid for the illiterate, who account for as many as three fourths of the unemployed, one study estimates.

But the literacy problem goes far beyond this hard core. It also afflicts millions who, as college graduates, are con-

sidered well educated. In fact, many graduates have a weaker command of English than their parents.

Analytic ability is waning. The National Assessment of Educational Progress, a federally supported research organization, finds "little evidence of well-developed problem-solving strategies or critical-thinking skills" among youngsters. Richard Mitchell, an English professor at Glassboro (N.J.) State College and editor of the *Underground Grammarian*, says that if literacy is defined as the ability to fathom complex ideas, then "many very highly schooled people today are essentially illiterate."

The Rise of "Bonehead English"

Why is a country in which English took root more than 360 years ago facing mounting difficulties in passing on to its young this rich linguistic heritage?

Much of the blame is laid at the doorstep of the education establishment. Analysts say that in reaction to the student

unrest of the '60s—and the chorus of demands that students be allowed to "do their own thing"—schools and colleges watered down their curricula and ended up giving short shrift to reading, writing and critical thinking.

In its 1983 report, "A Nation at Risk," the National Commission on Excellence in Education concluded that "secondary-school curricula have been homogenized, diluted and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose. In effect, we have a cafeteria-style curriculum in which the appetizers and desserts can easily be mistaken for the main courses."

One sign of the dilution: In the late 1960s, 85 percent of high-school graduates received four years of English; a decade later, only 41 percent were getting that much. At the same time, enrollment shot up in less demanding remedial courses—"bonehead English"—in high school as well as in college.

The discipline of writing helps to develop and refine thought, yet many teachers cut back on time devoted to the principles of composition. The upshot: A dismaying number of high-school and college students write prose that is next to incomprehensible.

A recent sampling of high-school writing included this from a New York senior: "Teachers don't have enough energy to keep the kids interesting, and they don't explain their selves enough." A junior in Iowa wrote: "I think that students could not be able to participat to extra activities if failing in school."

Students frequently dash off only a single draft of a short piece. Writing is checked more for spelling and grammar than for grace or logic—and checking often is done by a poorly paid teacher

Heavy viewing of television can blunt verbal skills or retard their development.



not well equipped for the job. The average college-bound high-school senior planning to major in education scored 28 points below the national average on the verbal part of the SAT in 1984.

In his book *The Leaning Tower of Babel*, Richard Mitchell shows why some educators are poor teachers of writing. He quotes from an article shot through with errors in spelling and grammar: "The Cheerleaders cheered the Drill Team performed. The motivation and the momentous was there. It worked as clock word or a puzzle each part fell in place at the right time. If you were at the stadium with me. I am sure you would have been satisfied with the performance."

The author of those words? A high-school principal.

Legacy of "Look-Say"

Another setback to literacy, say many experts, grew out of an experiment in reading instruction that went awry. In the 1930s, schools shifted substantially to a "look-say" approach. Pupils were made to learn each new word by reciting it aloud, without breaking it into vowel-and-consonant combinations.

Advocates saw look-say as a way to make reading less mechanical, but it now appears that it left many children ill-prepared to cope with unknown words and made them poor spellers. Before this problem was documented convincingly in the late 1960s, a few generations were taught by this method.

Also working against the development of reading skills are textbooks that have been "dumbed down" to the point of repelling young people from the printed word. "The moment textbooks started wooing students by giving them the poetry of Bob Dylan and not that of Dylan Thomas, then what did the language have to look forward to?" asks John Simon, author of *Paradigms Lost: Reflections on Literacy and Its Decline*.

Many analysts also fault a system of permissive promotions in which students who cannot read properly are nevertheless passed to the next grade. In a report on the American high school, Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, contends that schools that advance language-deficient students without providing special help perpetrate "a cruel hoax." Eventually, he argues, the students "drop out or get a piece of paper that is worthless."

Many of these young people end up among the ranks of the functionally illiterate, whose numbers are growing by more than 2 million every year.

The increase in English-language literacy stems as well from the swelling tide of immigrants entering the United States—530,000 or more legally and an unknown number illegally each year. According to the Census Bureau, about 11 percent of the population now reports speaking a language other than English at home, with Spanish predominant by far.

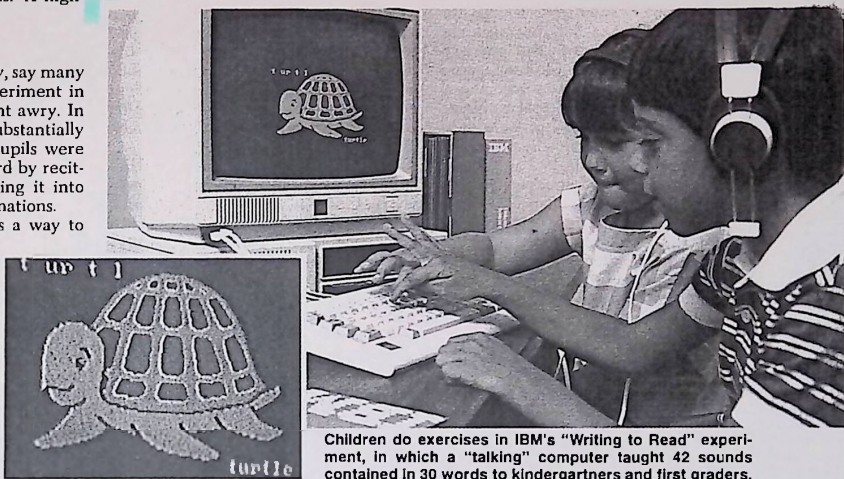
The spread of non-English speakers has been accompanied by expansion of bilingual education. Teachers give instruction in major subjects such as

"There is a general belief, nurtured to some extent by bilingual education, that English is not all that necessary."

Even so, most experts warn against making bilingualism a scapegoat for the nation's literacy problem. Jonathan Kozol, author of a soon-to-be-published book, *Illiterate America*, says illiteracy is not "a consequence of U.S. 'generosity' in immigration policies. It would remain a serious problem even if we had no immigrants."

TV Makes "Rich Kids Dumber"

Next to the shortcomings of the schoolhouse, television comes in for the biggest share of the criticism. For some analysts, in fact, it looms as the



Children do exercises in IBM's "Writing to Read" experiment, in which a "talking" computer taught 42 sounds contained in 30 words to kindergartners and first graders.

math and science in the students' native languages, most commonly Spanish, while limiting English training primarily to language classes.

Defenders of bilingualism argue that it allows students to advance academically in other subjects while they are learning English, in contrast to the old "sink or swim" approach in which all instruction was in English. At one point, arguments were also mustered on behalf of classroom use of the dialect called "black English," which gained a temporary foothold in a few schools and then fizzled.

As the debate over bilingual education continues, critics insist that it discourages children from learning English. "The primacy of English is being challenged," argues Gerda Bikales, executive director of U.S. English, a group that seeks to give the language official status in the Constitution.

chief culprit. "In its short lifetime, television has become the major stumbling block to literacy in America," argues Jim Trelease, author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook*.

Statistics show that young people spend hours vegetating, as critics see it, before the television screen, while the time children devote to recreational reading keeps shrinking as they get older.

Although many analysts treat television viewing as a uniform evil, some studies suggest that its effect varies with intelligence and social class. Researcher Michael Morgan of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst has found that youngsters from affluent families who watch a lot of TV do less well on tests of reading and language skills than youngsters from similar backgrounds who are light viewers.

At the same time, however, young-

sters from low-income families who watch a lot of TV do better on standardized tests than low-income children who are light viewers. "Poor kids get smarter and rich kids get dumber," says George Gerbner, one of the nation's leading television researchers. "TV represents a limitation for those who have had the advantages of our civilization."

Television affects adults as well. Researchers have found that heavy TV viewers do less well than light viewers on tests of verbal intelligence.

Indeed, the whole range of electronic communications offered by modern life often serves to blunt formal language skills. Where individuals used to write letters, they now frequently make telephone calls. Even most business executives no longer really write letters. Instead, they talk into a dictating machine.

In the face of widespread concern about the state of U.S. literacy, some analysts take a more measured view. They argue that, although real problems exist, Americans age 25 or older are more literate than those who preceded them in that age group. In 1910, fewer than 14 percent had graduated from high school and fewer than 3 percent from college, the analysts point out. By 1984, 73 percent had graduated from high school, 19 percent from college.

With fewer marginal students dropping out and more high-school graduates going to college, those regarded as educated are a less elite group now than in the past. One hundred years ago, says School Superintendent Jack French of Bristol, Va., "by the fourth or fifth grade, many of the poorer students had quit school to go behind the plow, and only the better students stayed. Today, we are teaching all levels."

This democratization of education has had a leveling effect, pulling the bottom up and the top down, scholars acknowledge. One indication of decline

at the top: The proportion of students scoring above 600 on the verbal portion of the SAT dropped from 10 percent to 7 percent between 1973 and 1983.

Still, publishers are selling more books today per capita than at any time in U.S. history. "People are reading more than ever," insists John Dessauer, director of the Center for Book Research at the University of Scranton.

"The collective intellectual capital of the United States is greater than it has ever been," argues Arthur Wise, senior social scientist at the Rand Corporation. "Average test-score performance masks the fact that higher percentages of our population are attaining greater levels of knowledge."

The Wellsprings of Reform

Even those who hold an upbeat view concede there is a lot of room for improvement. Now, in the face of public pressures generated by poor student performance and reports proclaiming U.S. education to be in a dismal state, schools are taking action.

Many are overhauling the way reading is taught. In most schools, the look-say method has given way to phonics, with youngsters taught to break words into letter sounds. The return to phonics is credited with a recent rise in reading scores among 9-year-olds.

Television, too, is in the phonics act. "Electric Company," a Public Broadcasting Service program now seen by 3 million children in school and 5 million at home, has for some time been teaching youngsters how various combinations of letters create new words.

School systems are putting more stress on writing as they begin to shift from emphasizing just spelling and grammar. Increasingly, they call on students to write short stories and essays.

Teachers in Brooklyn and Bir-

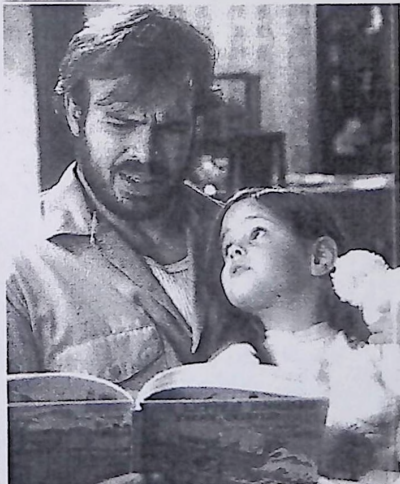
mingham elementary schools get children to take more care with writing by discussing ideas in advance and then having them revise their drafts several times. In Montgomery County, Md., youngsters are encouraged to write as early as the kindergarten year, during which they keep journals filled with pictures and letters. Educators believe that starting early promotes better writing in succeeding years.

The close relationship between reading and writing was demonstrated in a special program, "Writing to Read," tested by the International Business Machines Corporation. About 22,000 kindergartners and first graders, aided by a computer that can mimic a human voice, learned 42 sounds contained in 30 words. The children practiced writing the sounds in workbooks and then combined them into new words, from which they composed stories. Their reading performance surpassed national norms.

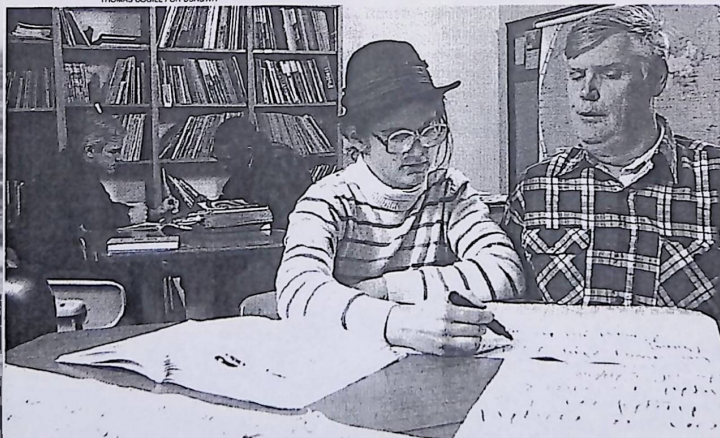
Many teachers acknowledge that the computer is an important literacy tool. The word processor makes writing easier by allowing a student to edit a composition on the screen without having to start over on a clean sheet of paper with each revision.

The new focus on developing basic skills has been accompanied by widespread competence testing throughout the nation. Many states require students to pass tests of basic skills before they can graduate from high school, and some school systems take such re-

THE ADVERTISING COUNCIL



The push is on for adult-literacy education, pictured at left. TV spot, above, depicts functionally illiterate father trying to read bedtime tale.



THOMAS COOGL FOR USMNR

sults into account in making decisions on other promotions.

Yet educators insist that schools can do only part of the job, that help from parents is vital in producing children who can read, write and think well. Analysts contend that Japanese and Chinese first graders have higher reading-achievement scores than first graders in the U.S. partly because parents in those countries spend more time reading to their children.

Adult illiteracy is also drawing increasing attention. As part of an Adult Literacy Initiative begun by President Reagan in 1983, 50 colleges and universities are using federal funds to train and pay students to teach adults to read. In December, 11 national organizations launched a campaign, in cooperation with the Advertising Council, to recruit volunteers to work with illiterate adults and direct people to literacy clinics.

Corporations are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to establish basic-skills programs for their employees. The Business Council for Effective Literacy has been set up to get corporations more involved.

The B. Dalton book chain has pledged 3 million dollars to help combat adult illiteracy, an effort that includes grants to literacy organizations.

Experts see all of those steps, from kindergarten through adulthood, as significant strides. But there is concern that the efforts may not be enough to meet the constantly growing demands.

"The advent of the Information Age raises to new levels of urgency the need for all students to be effective in their use of the written and the spoken word," says Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

This is war. Some specialists warn that illiteracy is so widespread that nothing less than crash programs at all levels of society can cope with the problem. "We need an all-out literacy war in the United States," declares author Kozol.

Scholars warn that if the battle is not won the nation's very survival as a democracy could be jeopardized. Says a Library of Congress report: "We must face and defeat the twin menaces of illiteracy and aliteracy—the inability to read and the lack of will to read—if our citizens are to remain free and qualified to govern themselves." □

By ALVIN P. SANOFF and LUCIA SOLORZANO

Gobbledygook, That "Normally Occurring Abnormal Occurrence"

College officials used to talk to one another. No longer. Today, they *articulate* with one another.

Gym classes once were in the physical-education department. No longer. At Rutgers University, they are in the department of *human kinetics*. In many schools, what was the library is now a *learning-resource center*.

Those are just a few examples of a language disorder known as "educa-



"I'll wait out here for you, Hal. My generation doesn't read."

tionese," variants of which afflict business, science and medicine. Its governmental form is gobbledygook, a term coined in the late 1930s by a Texas congressman after he spent months reading official reports larded with bloated, empty words.

A more serious ailment is new-speak, euphemism gone bonkers to the point of standing truth on its head—such as the Ministry of Truth, which in the George Orwell novel 1984 propagated lies.

Plain-English advocates despair over such linguistic maladies. "They debase the language and obscure thought," charges Lt. Col. Robert Murawski, associate professor of English at the Air Force Academy.

Murawski, who advises the White House on clear writing, contends

that "the real danger is not grammatical flubs but clotted expression that makes ideas needlessly complex."

Signs of improvement pop up from time to time. Last year, Navy Secretary John Lehman ordered the service to stop using certain terms that took root in the 1970s. A *Navy correctional facility* is once more a brig. *Unaccompanied officer personnel housing* is back to BOQ—bachelor-officer quarters. *Human resources* once again are people.

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige heartened purists when he ordered word processors in his agency programed to reject such terms as *task out* and *liaison with*.

"Gem" collectors. The bright spots, however, do not outweigh the assaults on clear communication, according to W.T. Rabe, head of the Unicorn Hunters, a plain-English group at Lake Superior State College in Michigan, and William Lutz, head of the English department at Rutgers University and editor of the *Quarterly Review of Doublespeak*. Rabe and Lutz offer these examples:

- *Predawn vertical insertion*, a White House coinage for the invasion of Grenada by parachutists.
- *Wood interdental stimulator*, Pentagonese for toothpick.
- *Experienced cars*, latest automotive euphemism to displace previously owned or used cars.
- *Normally occurring abnormal occurrence*, the nuclear industry's description of something that goes wrong all the time.
- *A therapeutic misadventure*, medical jargon for an operation that kills the patient.

Why do such linguistic atrocities persist? Sometimes, people want to make the common things they do seem more important. Thus, an elevator operator becomes a *vertical-transportation-corps member*.

Officials in government and industry use foggy phrases to hide harsh truths. An airline's report to stockholders referred to the "involuntary conversion of a 727." It was, in fact, a plane crash that killed three passengers. Medical experts and social scientists often create a jargon so abstruse that it discourages outsiders from second-guessing them.

"Pollution of the language keeps getting worse," complains Professor Lutz of Rutgers. "No one wants to talk directly any more."

By SUSANNA McBEE

See Dick and Jane Learn to Love Reading

Computers, realistic stories and old-fashioned drills are being used to reverse a drop in U.S. reading skills.

"Dick. See Dick. See Dick run."

Staccato phrases of that sort in reading primers about "Dick and Jane" were the first words more than 40 million Americans learned to read from the 1930s to the 1960s. The books may not have been the most exciting fiction ever composed, but they were the start of formal education for two generations.

All that appears to be changing now. To improve lagging reading skills, new teaching techniques—including computers—and an array of modernized beginning readers are being introduced in classrooms across America. Among the goals: To restore high levels of literacy as well as the desire among young people to read.

It is an effort widely regarded as one of the most urgent in American education—a necessity if the U.S. is to remain among world leaders in cultural and technological excellence. Without a population that reads and writes well, educators fear, this country could fall far behind high-achieving nations such as Japan and West Germany.

Warn the authors of a recent study of reading comprehension in America: "A society in which the habits of disciplined reading, analysis and interpretation, and discourse are not sufficiently cultivated has much to fear."

Emphasis pays off. Some signs are encouraging. Since the mid-1970s, reading-test scores of elementary schoolchildren have slightly but steadily improved, in response to heavy emphasis on basic word skills. For example, the percentage of 9-year-olds successfully completing tests on reading skills increased from 64 percent in 1971 to nearly 68 percent in 1980.

The verbal portion of the Scholastic Aptitude Test also rose 2 points last year, from 424 to 426, out of a possible 800, ending a 19-year decline.

But there are discouraging trends as well. Surveys indicate that more children are choosing not to read, viewing it as a meaningless exercise no longer needed in an electronic world.

Reading tests given throughout the 1970s by the National Assessment of Educational Progress found that fewer

than 30 percent of 17-year-olds tested could analyze a text in order to support a theme or conclusion.

Poor comprehension was not the only problem spotted. The study also found that the further children progressed in school, the less they liked reading. While 80 percent of 9-year-olds reported enjoying reading very much, only 50 percent of 13-year-olds rated their reading enjoyment that high. Somewhere during the course of



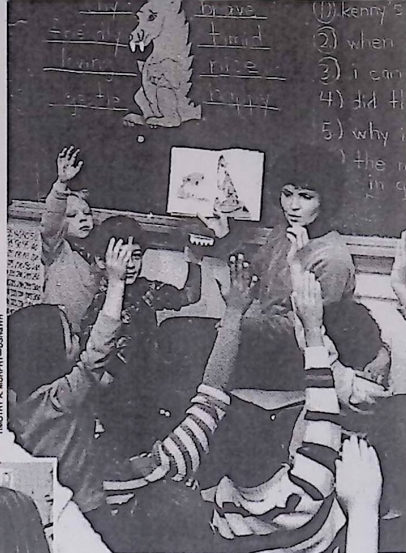
elementary school, many children lost their love of reading.

Some teachers say the main problem with reading is that children today have many distractions, such as TV and videogames, that did not exist when their parents were reading about Dick and Jane. But other educators blame reading classes where sterile drills and boring stories teach children that reading has nothing exciting to offer.

Child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim and associate Karen Zelan visited 300 children in eight schools as part of their 1981 book *On Learning to Read: The Child's Fascination With Meaning*. They concluded: "Without exception, the children complained about how stupid the stories in their basic readers had been, and said how much they had hated having to read them. . . . These books are an insult to the child's intelligence."

Educators complain that too many reading texts rely on the repetition of short words and sentences to teach word skills. The result, they say, is children who can sound out words by rote but who read with neither thoughtfulness nor enjoyment.

Publishers maintain that reading books have changed significantly in the



Teachers find computers and thoughtful questions motivate children to think as they read.

past three decades, reflecting both advances in teaching methods and new social conditions. A chief difference is the content of primers, which used to consist of stories about white, middle-class boys and girls.

Now basic reading books also feature minority children, and subjects include families headed by single parents and relatives out of work—realism intended to grab a child's interest immediately. A Houghton Mifflin Company book, for example, contains a story about a black urban family that is breaking up, and includes this scene: "Kim was saying over and over into his chest, 'Don't leave us, Daddy; please don't leave us.'"

John Ridley, Houghton Mifflin's editorial director of reading, defends the continuing practice of writing with short words and sentences as necessary in the early grades to build vocabulary gradually. But, says Ridley, story content has changed "quite a lot in the last 10 years. We're using high-quality literature a lot earlier in the program."

While tight budgets have prevented many districts from updating their reading series, more schools are supplementing textbooks with good literature to excite children about reading.

In one such effort, elementary-school teachers in Johnson City, N.Y., combine an introduction to children's classics such as *Charlotte's Web* with old-fashioned drills on phonics. Observes reading consultant Garnita Cole: "Our ultimate purpose is for our

children to be readers, not the masters of 3,000 skills."

New methods of inquiry are also being tried to get children to think more deeply about the stories they are reading. In Montgomery County, Md., second graders, who traditionally are exposed only to simple one-dimensional characters in books, are urged to find the contrasting personality traits of a dragon in a story by Ogden Nash.

Montgomery County fourth graders, instead of passively accepting the plot as it unfolds, are prodded to offer predictions of which way they think the plot will develop. Factual questions about the color of Sally's coat in Chapter 2 have been replaced by queries such as "What do you think will happen next? Why?"

More time is being devoted to "just reading." Judith Orasanu of the National Institute of Education notes: "In so many of the old reading programs, kids never got the chance to read. They were too busy having phonics lessons and breaking words into syllables."

Since the mid-'70s, several schools have adopted a program known as "sustained silent reading." Under that system, each student and employee, from

the principal to the janitor, is expected to drop whatever he or she is doing and read for about 15 minutes.

The goal is to get children into the habit of reading, something few teenagers do for enjoyment. The National Assessment of Educational Progress found that 26 percent of the 17-year-olds tested said they read for enjoyment less than once a week, and then for less than an hour.

Computers also are being used to make reading more stimulating. "Computers allow children to have a more active involvement with text," explains educator Leo Geoffrion, who is writing a book about the use of computers in reading instruction.

More than 60 school districts use a computer program called "Story Maker," which lets students construct complete stories using prewritten parts. The computer sets a goal for the students and evaluates the finished story

based on how well they meet the goal. Another program called "Computer Animated Reading Instruction System" encourages children with poor language skills to read by using a brief computer-animated cartoon to reinforce the meaning of a simple sentence.

Pupils in kindergarten through second grade in Provo, Utah, and New Brighton, Minn., soon will be able to learn word sounds by hearing a computer "speak" to them. Each child will then have to find words with the same sound on the computer screen.

Educators say instruction in essential skills, such as vowel and consonant sounds, must not be abandoned. But they caution that, unless reading is made more meaningful to children, schools will be graduating a new generation for whom the printed word carries little purpose or pleasure. □

By LUCIA SOLORZANO

Phonics Stages A Comeback

After years of debate over methods of teaching reading, many top educators say the war has been won—by the backers of phonics.

The vast majority of schools in the U.S. emphasize the mechanics of word pronunciation by phonics: Breaking down words into their vowel and consonant sounds.

Less evident is the method of teaching pupils to memorize whole words as a unit, known as the "look say" approach, which was once favored over phonics instruction. Now, most schools combine phonics drills with other teaching methods.

Approaches vary from making mastery of phonics the criterion for learning other skills to blending these drills with other lessons.

Richard C. Anderson, director of the Center for the Study of Reading in Illinois, observes: "Research certainly favors early instruction in phonics. But there is no research evidence to say schools should do phonics and nothing else."

Whitney Elementary School in Boise, Idaho, is among schools offering an intensive phonics program. Students learn to pronounce the



Bonnie Jones teaches letter sounds to first graders in Boise, Idaho.

sound of the letter "k" before they learn its name. They write words, using phonic principles, "before they even open their reading books," says Principal Genevieve Smith. Some third graders are now reading at a fifth-grade level.

There is increasing agreement that a combination of methods is best. A 1982 study indicated that while a strong background in phonics helps children become more fluent readers, it does not increase their comprehension skills.

Examples of what is being done to improve comprehension include:

- Listening to tapes in labs that expand children's knowledge of the subject presented.

- Guest speakers who explain

written materials further, adding vivid personal experiences.

- Computers that reiterate points already made in the writing.

Notes Harriet Bernstein, senior researcher with the Council for Basic Education: "For many children, phonics-based instruction is necessary in learning to read, but not sufficient to insure comprehension."

Many educators are convinced that the finishing touch in the process designed to improve comprehension is to add exercises that motivate children to think about what they are reading and to ask thoughtful questions. Concludes one veteran teacher: "Interesting stories also help children want to understand what the words are telling them."

The Plague of Illiteracy

By Marvin Stone



As many as 26 million Americans are "functionally illiterate," and 46 million more operate "at a marginal level or below."

Chairman Paul Simon listened as Education Secretary Terrel Bell gave that information to the House Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education. At about the same time, a hearing sponsored jointly with the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education, under Carl Perkins, elicited the following from the National Science Foundation:

In 1981, nationwide, half the teachers newly employed for high-school science and mathematics were not certified to teach those subjects. More than 40 states reported shortages of math and physics teachers. Science and math scores of 17-year-olds declined in the '70s.

These two subdivisions of the House Education and Labor Committee were concerned with Americans' ability to win and hold jobs in a time of severe unemployment, to get the country's work done and, if the appalling necessity should ever arise, to man the sophisticated weapons that have become the bulwark of U.S. defenses.

Further light is shed by the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress. In the early grades, the group known as "low achievers" made significant gains in reading scores over the decade of the '70s. Unfortunately there were no gains in science, and the "high achievers" suffered a substantial loss in that department. Both results were attributed to the special attention lavished recently on literacy. The challenge is to turn around the alarming decline of scientific study and at the same time hold or enlarge the gains in reading and communication, without which science is fatally hampered.

An added spur to action is that the United States is always looking over its shoulder, fearing with good reason that the rest of the world is overtaking it.

The Central Intelligence Agency recently briefed Congress on progress in the Soviet

Union. Literacy is hard to compare, because Soviet measures of it are even less reliable than the American, but the percentage of adults who have completed higher education increased by half in the U.S.S.R. in 10 years. That indicates a very determined effort—and the Kremlin's known emphasis on science and technology makes it even more meaningful.

Scientists agree that the world is catching up with America on an even higher plane, that of experimental science. For instance, Wolfgang Panofsky, director of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, complaining that federal research grants were lean, observed: "Can a nation live off derivative science? My answer is that in the short run you can, but in the long run that does not work."

Representative Simon is concentrating on the urgent need to help adult illiterates. The Labor Department estimates that up to 75 percent of the unemployed lack the necessary skills in reading and communication. Job trainers are finding that before applicants can be instructed in necessary new techniques they have to go back to class for basics.

On the scientific front, the Simon and Perkins subcommittees have written a bill to spend 300 million dollars in 1984 to help states with elementary and high-school instruction in math and sciences, to set up college scholarships, to improve skills for future and existing teachers and to replace equipment, which in many cases is unfit for teaching present-day technology.

Despite the administration's commendable effort to withdraw from federal control of education, and at a time when other expenditures are being lopped off, the President has demonstrated how seriously he, too, regards the educational need. He has budgeted 50 million dollars a year in spending authorization to train new science and math teachers. He also is asking for increases in funding for basic research—an answer to scientists' complaints. One way or another, funds will be forthcoming, as they should be.

Norris

From: <Draymond63@aol.com>
To: <nmmcm@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 29, 2004 5:13 PM
Subject: Education funding Stats

Federal Support for Education: Fiscal Years 1980 to 2000

Norris,

Could you please print the above for Norman.....

Norman,

if you look at the amounts of federal funding noted in this study and compare it with the average literacy rates--whether they increased or decreased significantly---I think you may be able to make a conclusion.

As far as looking for other sources and other studies, it seems that the ones I looked at, for the most part, culled their information from here (**National Center for Education Statistics**).

Leave a note for me if there is something more specific that you want other than these federal education funding numbers. I'll get them if I can find them and have them ready for you upon your return. As far as the stuff on your desk I left today, I broke them down into categories and added some additional blue highlighting of information. I hope it helps.

Best,

Dwayne

9/29/2004

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EDUCATION STATISTICS QUARTERLY

Vol 2, Issue 4, Topic: Crosscutting Statistics

Federal Support for Education: Fiscal Years 1980 to 2000

By: Charlene M. Hoffman

This article was excerpted from the Introduction and Highlights of the report of the same name. The data are primarily from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, the U.S. Department of Education's Budget Service, the National Science Foundation, and the budget offices of other federal agencies.

- [Introduction](#)
- [Student Achievement](#)
- [References](#)

Introduction

This report attempts to provide a comprehensive picture of total federal financial support for education since fiscal year (FY) 1980.¹ In addition to Department of Education programs, the many other federal programs that support education are included. The report also includes other types of federal support that are sometimes overlooked.

Categories of federal support

This report puts federal education funding into three categories: on-budget support, off-budget support, and nonfederal funds generated by federal programs.

On-budget funds are provided through programs funded by congressional appropriations. Although some consolidation of education programs in one federal agency was achieved with the establishment of the U.S. Department of Education in 1980, many large and significant federal education programs remain outside the Department. In addition, many federal programs involving education have other primary purposes. In order to account fully for all federal support for education, programs residing in other federal departments and agencies having significant educational components are included, even if they have additional purposes.

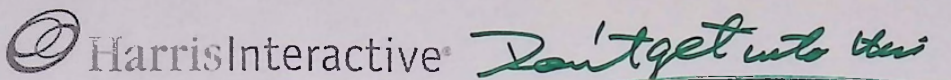
Off-budget support is federal money that has been excluded from the budget by law. Off-budget support in this report consists of the loan capital that is provided directly by the federal government under the William D. Ford Federal Direct Student Loan (FDSL) program.

Nonfederal funds generated by federal programs result from federal loan guarantees and interest subsidies to support loan capital raised through various private and public sources. Nonfederal funds are also made available for education purposes when federal programs require matching funds or offer incentives and subsidies. Almost all such nonfederal education funds go to postsecondary education.

Federal tax expenditures

Education programs can be supported either by direct funding or by indirect funding mechanisms such as tax expenditures. In this report, federal tax expenditures include only reductions in tax revenue received by the federal government due to deductions, exemptions, and credits allowable in the tax code. Unless otherwise noted, tables and discussions of federal support in this report do not include federal tax expenditures.

Outlays versus appropriations or obligations



The Harris Poll® #72, December 1, 2003

Large Decline Since 1995 in Favorite Activities Which Require Physical Exercise

One reason for the obesity epidemic

by Humphrey Taylor

We have heard the alarm calls about the nation's "obesity epidemic," with Americans getting fatter every year. And we have read that we consume more and more calories, and exercise far too little. A new Harris Poll throws more light on why this is happening; increasingly our favorite pastimes are sedentary ones which require little or no physical exercise.

Every year since 1995, Harris Interactive has asked a nationwide cross-section of adults to name their two or three favorite leisure time activities. Eight years ago, 38% of all the replies involved activities that required exercise including fishing, gardening, playing sports, swimming, walking, hunting, bicycling, hiking, running or dancing. Now only 29% of the replies involve exercise. A higher proportion of our favorite activities can now be accomplished by sitting.

These are the results of a nationwide survey of 1,017 adults surveyed by telephone by Harris Interactive® between October 14 and 19, 2003.

Reading, TV and spending time with family still top the list

As in previous years, the largest numbers of people mention reading (24%), watching TV (17%) and spending time with the family and kids (17%) as their favorite leisure time activities. These are followed by fishing (9%), movie-going (7%), socializing (7%), playing team sports (6%), exercise (6%) and gardening (6%).

However, the number of people who list reading as their favorite activity has declined seven points from a high of 31% in 2000. Those mentioning gardening are down nine points from a high of 15% in 1999. Spending time with the family and socializing with friends and neighbors reached their highest points this year.

Time spent working and leisure time

In last year's survey we recorded a drop in the number of hours people claimed to be working (including keeping house or going to school). After eight consecutive years in which the median number of hours worked had been 50 or 51, last year it went down to 47. This year it has bounced back to 49, only just below the level each year from 1993 to 2001, possibly a sign that the economy is rebounding.

The median number of available leisure hours ("to relax, watch TV, take part in sports or hobbies, go swimming or skiing, go to the movies, theater, concerts, or other forms of entertainment, get together with friends") is estimated at 19 hours this year. In the 1970s people reported more leisure time (26 hours a week in 1973); but in the fourteen years since 1989 it has only varied between 19 and 20 hours.

Humphrey Taylor is the chairman of The Harris Poll®, Harris Interactive.

TABLE 1

FAVORITE LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES

(Spontaneous, Unaided Responses)

"What are your two or three most favorite leisure-time activities?"

Base: All adults

1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003

95 '97 '98 '99 '00 '01 '02 '03

	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reading	28	28	30	27	31	28	26	24
Spending time with family/kids	12	12	13	12	14	12	11	17
TV watching	25	19	21	22	23	20	15	17
Fishing	10	12	11	13	9	12	8	9
Going to movies	8	7	8	8	6	7	6	7
Socializing with friends/neighbors	*	*	2	5	6	4	5	7
Playing team sports	9	9	9	8	5	5	7	6
Exercise (aerobics, weights)	2	4	3	3	6	5	4	6
Gardening	9	11	14	15	13	10	8	6
Church/church activities	3	4	2	3	4	3	2	5
Watching sporting events	*	*	2	5	4	2	2	5
Computer activities	2	3	3	7	6	7	4	5
Eating out/dining out	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	5
Walking	8	8	7	9	8	6	4	4
Traveling	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4
Listening to music	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
Shopping	3	3	3	4	3	4	2	4
Crafts (unspecified)	*	*	*	3	4	4	2	4
Hunting	4	4	4	6	3	3	3	4
Golf	6	8	6	6	5	6	5	3
Sewing/crocheting	7	4	8	4	3	3	3	3
Horseback riding	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	3
Hiking	3	3	2	2	1	*	3	3
Renting movies	5	5	3	4	5	4	3	3
Playing music	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	3
Relaxing	*	*	1	3	3	3	3	3
Entertaining	7	3	5	3	2	1	2	3
Cooking	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	3
Dancing	1	*	2	1	1	1	1	2
Playing cards	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	2
Housework	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2
Bicycling	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	2
Sleeping	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	2
Skiing	1	*	*	1	1	1	1	2
Swimming	7	6	7	6	5	8	5	2
Running	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
Woodworking	1	*	1	2	1	1	2	1
Boating	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	1
Animals/pets/dogs	*	*	2	2	1	1	1	1
Bowling	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	1
Painting	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
Camping	4	3	3	4	4	3	2	1
Theater	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tennis	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Working on cars	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
Motorcycling	*	*	1	1	1	1	1	1

Other activities mentioned by 1% include writing, museums, going to concerts, the beach, racing and dating.

TABLE 2**PROPORTION OF FAVORITE PASTIMES INVOLVING EXERCISE**

	1995	2003
FAVORITE ACTIVITIES:	%	%
Involve exercise*	38	29
Involve little or no exercise	62	71

*Includes fishing, gardening, playing team sports, swimming, golf, walking, exercise, hunting, bicycling, hiking, camping, running, bowling, dancing, tennis, horseback riding, skiing or housework/yard work.

TABLE 3**WORK HOURS PER WEEK**

"First, we would like to know approximately how many hours a week you spend at your job or occupation, and that includes keeping house or going to school as well as working for pay or profit. How many hours would you estimate you spend at work, housekeeping or studies, including any travel time to and from the job or school?"

Base: All adults

Year	Median Number of Work Hours
2003	49
2002	47
2001	50
2000	50
1999	50
1998	50
1997	51
1995	51
1994	51
1993	50
1989	49
1987	47
1984	47
1980	47
1975	43
1973	41

TABLE 4**HOURS AVAILABLE FOR LEISURE PER WEEK**

"And about how many hours each week do you estimate you have available to relax, watch TV, take part in sports or hobbies, go swimming or skiing, go to the movies, theater, concerts, or other forms of entertainment, get together with friends, and so forth?"

Base: All adults

Year	Median Number of Leisure Hours
------	--------------------------------

2003	19
2002	20
2001	20
2000	20
1999	20
1998	19
1997	20
1995	19
1994	20
1993	19
1989	19
1987	17
1984	18
1980	19
1975	24
1973	26

Methodology

The Harris Poll® was conducted by telephone within the United States between October 14 and 19, 2003 among a nationwide cross-section of 1,017 adults (ages 18+). Figures for age, sex, race, education, number of adults and number of voice/telephone lines in the household were weighted where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population.

In theory, with a probability sample of this size, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus three percentage points of what they would be if the entire adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in all polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. They include refusals to be interviewed (non-response), question wording and question order, interviewer bias, weighting by demographic control data and screening (e.g., for likely voters). It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

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Literacy Research

LETTERS

Sent From
The Nation.

(~~The ones they printed~~
~~I've enlarged~~)
To be read in L.A.