

The Humanities in Our Lives

THE VALUE OF READING

Reading remains simultaneously both entertainment and education. Extensive studies in the UK have documented the way that reading for recreation contributes to relaxation, enjoyment, empowerment, and empathy in adults. Adult reading for pleasure is also correlated with an improved sense of community and cultural understanding.

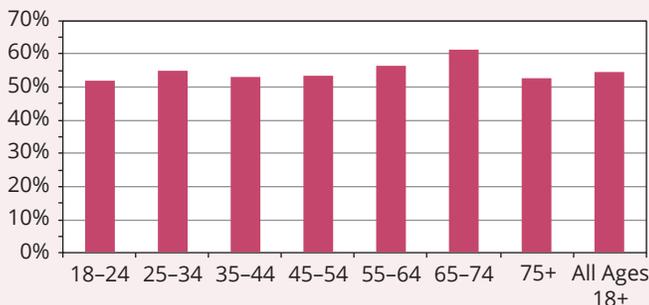
READING FOR PLEASURE

If you love to lose yourself in a good book, now is a terrific time to be a reader, with an ever-growing number of new titles published annually. Despite the growth in the number of books available, however, Americans are reading less literature than they did just five years ago.

KEY FACTS

- From 1992 to 2012, according to the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, the number of Americans who read a book outside of work or school fell from 61% to 54%.
- In 2017, the average American spent less than half an hour per day reading for personal interest (as compared to more than 2 hours 45 minutes per day watching TV).

Share of Americans Who Read a Book Other Than for Work or School in Past 12 Months, by Age, 2012



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

New Hampshire Humanities sponsors the **Connections** program to support and enhance adult literacy. Connections facilitators work in four-week workshops with more than 500 participants annually—both native speakers and English language learners—to foster enthusiasm for and engagement with reading.

“Quality books and stimulating discussions promote English language skills, cultivate conversations about ideas, reinforce family literacy, support a culture of reading, and encourage civic engagement.”

Participants keep the books they read or share them with family, and families are also invited to Connections’ yearly family festival. In addition to an online book list, Connections hosts individual author visits, sponsors an active blog, and offers a variety of other reader and facilitator resources to encourage a habit of reading.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

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For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit humanitiesindicators.org or email humanitiesindicators@amacad.org.

 **HUMANITIES INDICATORS**
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