

2016 NATIONAL READING HABITS STUDY

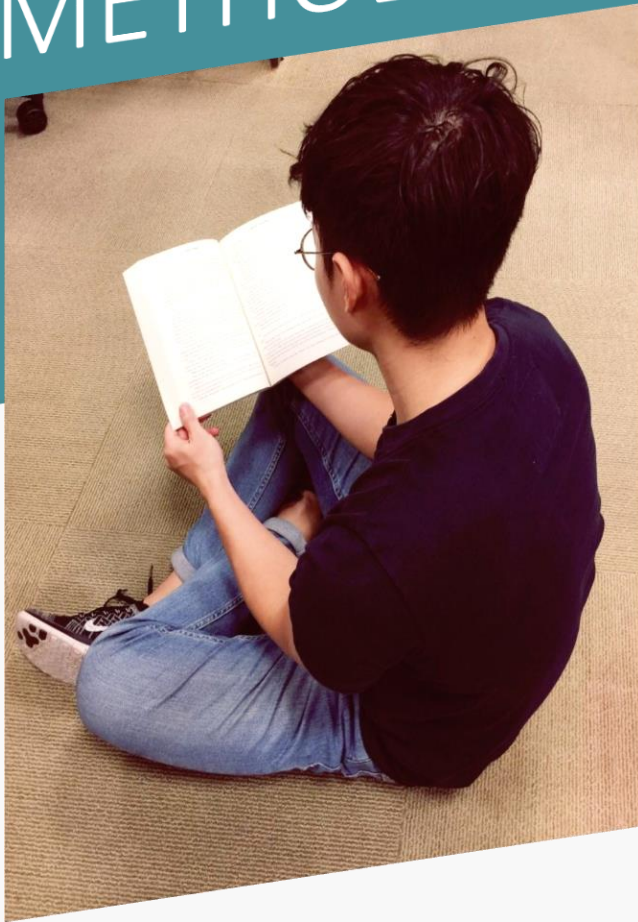
Findings on Teenagers



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STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY



This section covers the objectives and methodology of the study, definitions of key terms, and the profile of the survey respondents.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

In conjunction with the launch of the National Reading Movement (NRM) in 2016, the National Library Board conducted the inaugural National Reading Habits Study (NRHS). The study aims to ascertain the state of reading for leisure among Singapore residents aged 13 years old and above, so as to align NRM initiatives with the needs of the residents.

The report covering reading habits of adults (i.e. aged 20 years old and above) is available at NLB's website at this link: <http://www.nlb.gov.sg/About/ResearchStudies.aspx>.

In this report, we highlight the reading habits of teenagers (i.e. aged 13 to 19 years old).

Specifically, the study seeks to find out:

Reading habits

- Are teenagers reading?
- What type of materials do teenagers read?

Reading preferences

- What do teenagers like to read?

About books

- Are teenagers still reading books?
- Where do teenagers get their books from?

Reading motivations and barriers

DEFINITION OF READING

Reading is defined as having read any of the following types of materials.



Books include physical books, e-books, as well as audio books. This covers both fiction and non-fiction books, excluding textbooks.



News refers to printed newspapers as well as online news



Online Articles refer to articles, blogs or essays posted on social media (such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Twitter) or websites

Magazines include both physical and digital magazines

Reports, e.g. annual company reports or trade reports

This study excludes reading related to communications such as emails and messages received through mobile chat applications (e.g. WhatsApp).

METHODOLOGY

The Study was carried out in two phases - door-to-door surveys, followed by Focus Group Discussions.



Door-to-door surveys

- ✓ **485 surveys** were conducted **nation-wide via door-to-door interviews** by trained interviewers.
- ✓ **Singapore residents** (i.e. Singapore Citizens and Singapore Permanent Residents) **aged 13 to 19 years old** were randomly chosen for the survey. In the rest of the report,
 - Residents aged 13 to 15 years old will be known as “younger teenagers”
 - Residents aged 16 to 19 years old will be known as “older teenagers”
- ✓ The surveys were conducted at **different times** of the day, on **both weekdays and weekends**, to capture all demographic profiles.
- ✓ Each survey lasted on average about **45 minutes**.
- ✓ Surveys were conducted from **4 May to 5 August 2016**.

METHODOLOGY



Focus Group Discussions

- ✓ Focus Group Discussions were conducted by **experienced moderators** to understand reasons underlying reading behavior.
- ✓ A total of **3 Focus Groups** with **27 participants** aged **13 to 19 years old** were conducted from **22 August to 19 September 2016**.
- ✓ Participants covered **all ethnicities** and **dwelling types**.
- ✓ Discussions were conducted in the **English language**.

***Insights obtained from Focus Group Discussions are titled “A deeper look” in the rest of the report.**

PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Residency Status	n	% of Total
Singapore Citizen	462	95%
Singapore Permanent Residents	23	5%
Total	485	100%

Age	n	% of Total
13-16 years old	248	51%
17-19 years old	237	49%
Total	485	100%

Gender	n	% of Total
Male	258	53%
Female	227	47%
Total	485	100%

Ethnicity	n	% of Total
Chinese	330	68%
Malay	83	17%
Indian	58	12%
Others	14	3%
Total	485	100%

Dwelling Type	n	% of Total
1 or 2-room HDB flat	20	4%
3-room HDB flat	80	16%
4-room HDB flat	182	38%
5-room/ Executive HDB flat	118	24%
Executive Condominium/HUDC	5	1%
Condominium/ Apartment / Private Flat	29	6%
Private Landed Property	51	11%
Total	485	100%

Occupation	n	% of Total
Student – Secondary School	270	56%
Student – Junior College	39	8%
Student – Polytechnic	108	22%
Student – Institute of Technical Education	31	6%
Student - University	17	4%
Full-time National Serviceman	8	2%
Employed full-time	7	1%
Unemployed currently	5	1%
Total	485	100%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This section gives a summary of the key findings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (1)

METHODOLOGY



Door-to-door
interviews

SAMPLE SIZE

485

Singapore residents
aged 13 to 19
years old

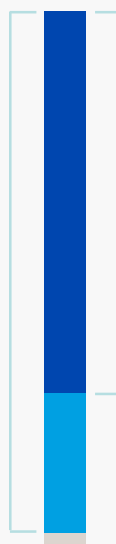


ARE TEENAGERS READING?

This includes reading books, magazines, newspapers / news (print or digital), as well as online articles **in the past 12 months**.

97%

read at least once
in the past 12
months



71% more than
once a week

26% once a week or
less often

3% did not read in the
past 12 months

WHAT ARE TEENAGERS READING?

Teenagers read the following more than once a week...

51%

Articles on social media/
websites



35%

News (print or digital)



32%

Books, including e-books



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2)

WHAT DO TEENAGERS LIKE TO READ?

Of the 97% who read...

98%

Non-fiction



Top non-fiction topics read

36%

Sports



29%

About Singapore



26%

History



93%

Fiction



Top fiction genres read

48%

Mysteries & Thrillers



36%

Fantasy



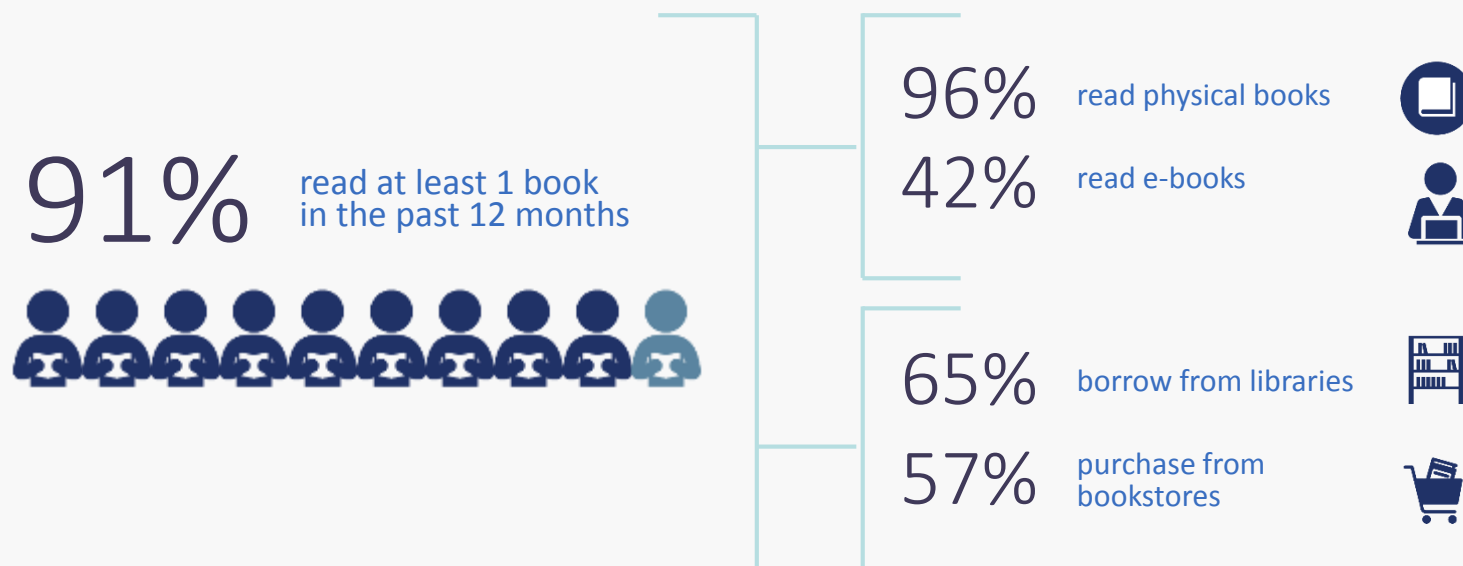
33%

Humorous stories & jokes



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (3)

ARE TEENAGERS STILL READING BOOKS?



TO READ OR NOT TO READ?

Motivations

Internet and digital devices have helped me to read more these days



Barriers

I tend to spend more time on other activities



I prefer watching TV/ DVDs/ online videos to reading

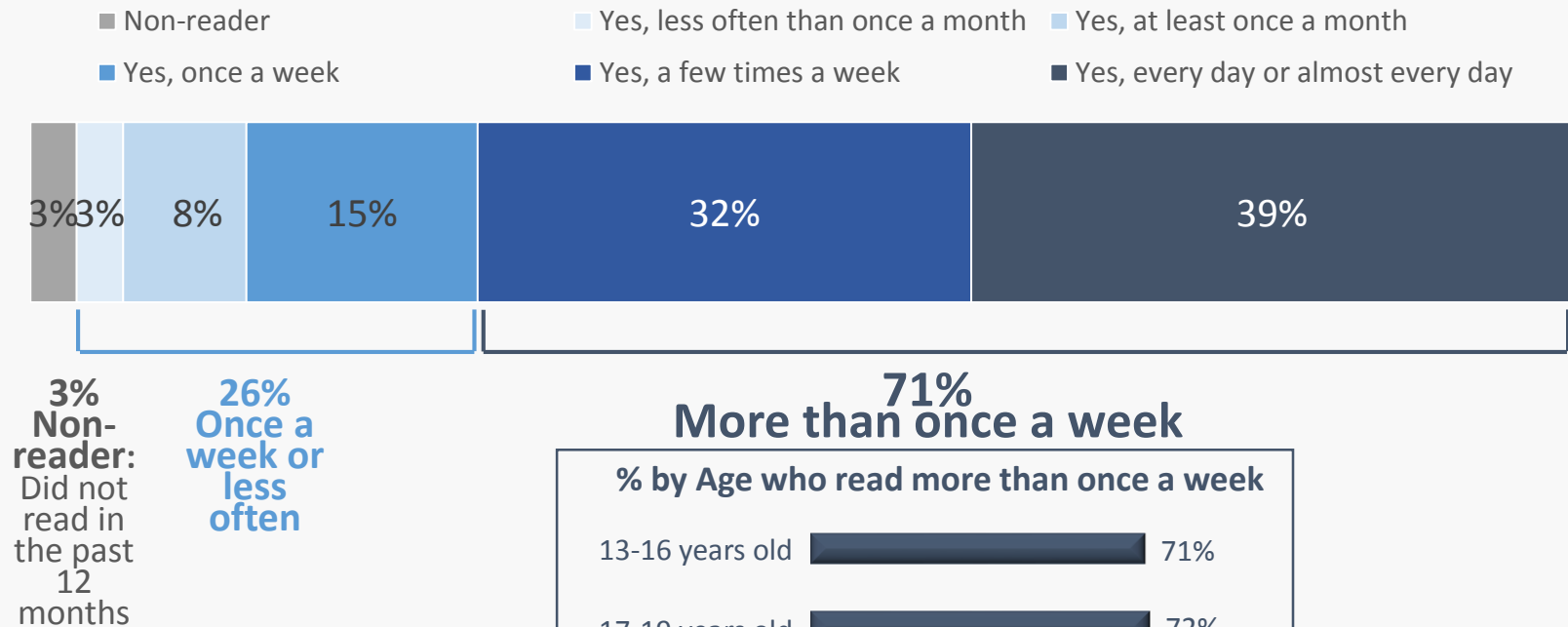
READING HABITS



This section looks into Singapore teenagers' reading frequency, types of materials read, and sharing of reads.

ARE TEENAGERS READING?

- *97% of Singapore teenagers read at least once in the past 12 months. This includes reading books (physical, e-books, or audio books), magazines (physical or digital), newspapers or online news, as well as articles posted on social media or websites.
- 71% read more than once a week, regardless of age.
- Among Singapore teenagers, 79% spent at least 30 minutes reading daily.

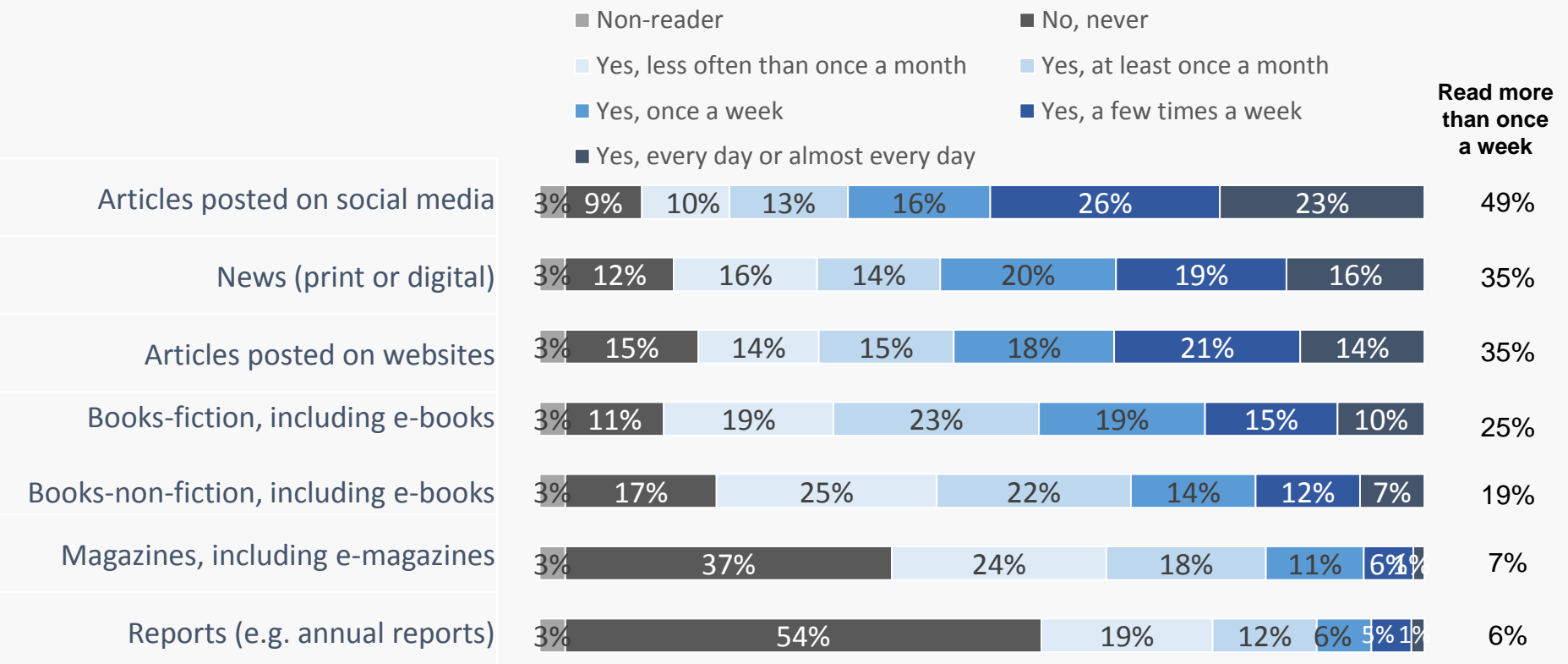


*This group will be known as **“readers”** (n=471) in the rest of this report

Base: All respondents (n=485)

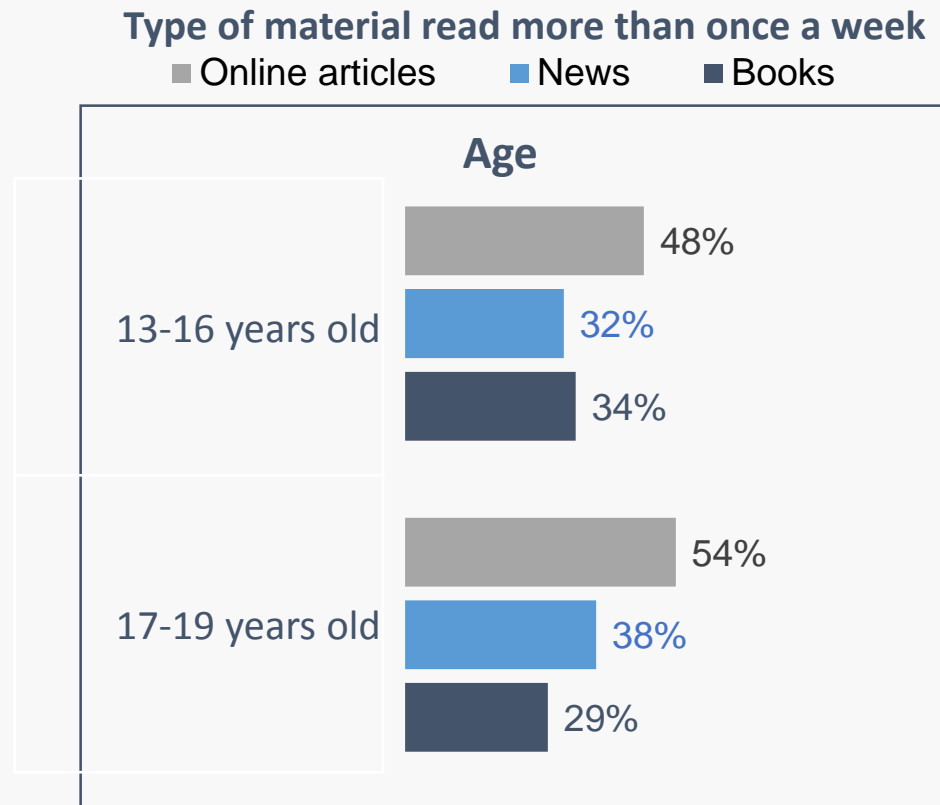
WHAT TYPE OF MATERIALS DO TEENAGERS READ?

- 51% of Singapore teenagers read **online articles** posted on either social media (49%) or websites (35%) more than once a week.
- In contrast, 35% read **news** more than once a week and 32% read **books** more than once a week. 25% read fiction books, while 19% read non-fiction books.



WHAT TYPE OF MATERIALS DO TEENAGERS READ?

- Online articles are the most common materials read more than once a week by the 13 to 16 year olds and 17 to 19 year olds who participated in the study.



A DEEPER LOOK INTO TYPES OF MATERIALS READ



Articles posted
on social media
or websites

Reading online articles is part of my lifestyle

- Internet is available all the time – receive **alerts** about posts
- **Links me** to friends and topics I like e.g. celebrity news
- Click through based on catchy headlines and **visuals**
“(Social media lets me) keep in touch with the world. Especially Instagram, it’s very (often) updated...Snapchat (as well).” – Female, 13 years old



Newspaper
or News
Online

Reading news is for me when it is conveniently available

- News is shared through **social media**, i.e. Snapchat, Twitter, and Facebook
- **Free newspapers** given out at MRT stations or if **parents subscribe to newspapers**
“It comes along from time to time, like someone shares a story (on social media)...(as a result,) everyone sees it. So that happens a lot.” – Male, 19 years old



Books –
includes
e-books

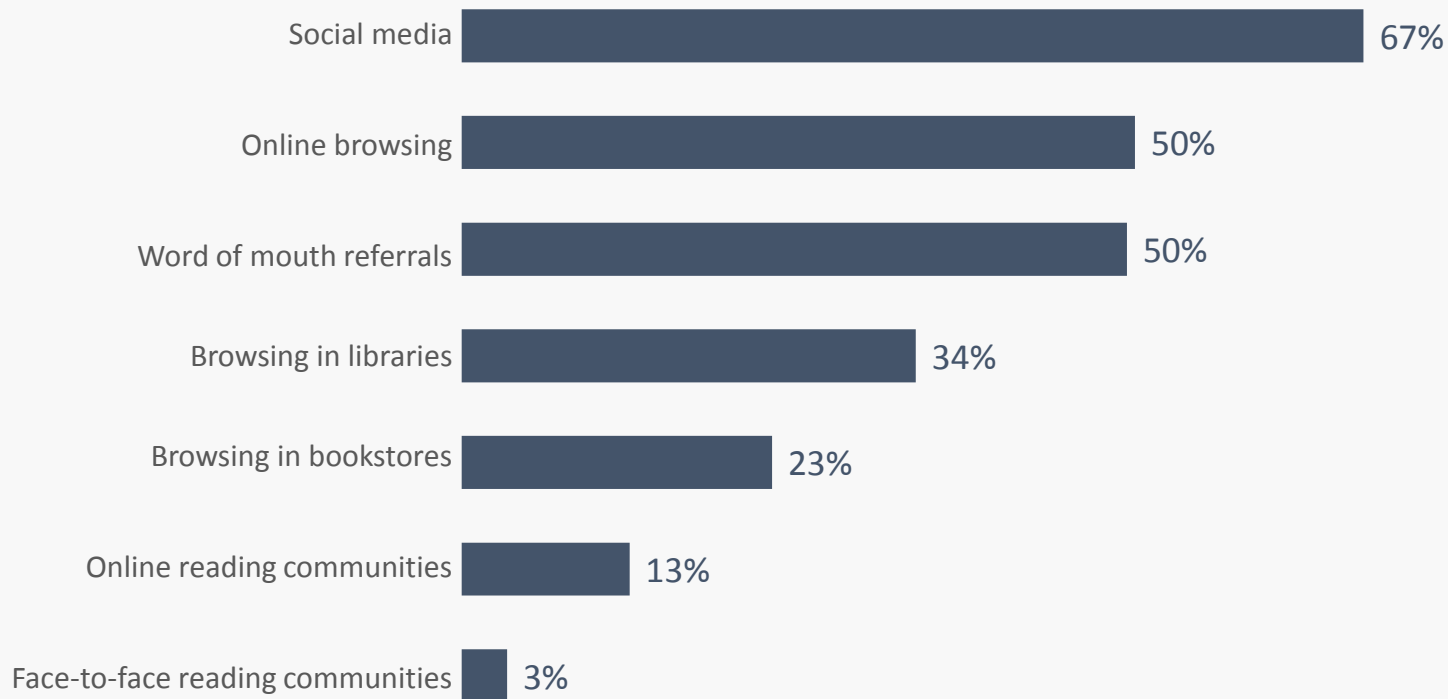
Reading books is a luxury for me

- **No time to read** – so much homework
- Provides me an escape from **mundane life**
- I would **binge read during holidays**.
“Back in primary school, we can read books anytime. But now (that we are in) secondary school, the teachers keep giving (us) so much homework, ...(that there) really (is) no time to read our books.” – Male, 15 years old

HOW DO TEENAGERS DISCOVER NEW READS?

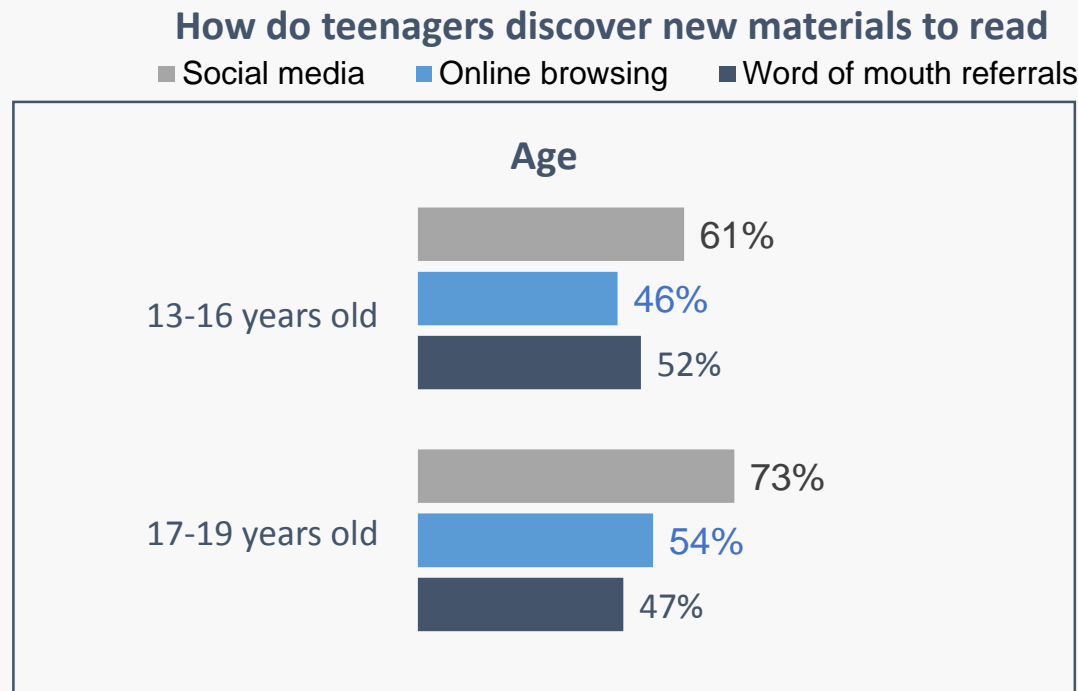
- Among the teenage readers, the main ways of discovering new reads are through social media (67%), online browsing (50%), and word of mouth referrals (50%).

How do teenagers discover new materials to read



HOW DO TEENAGERS DISCOVER NEW READS?

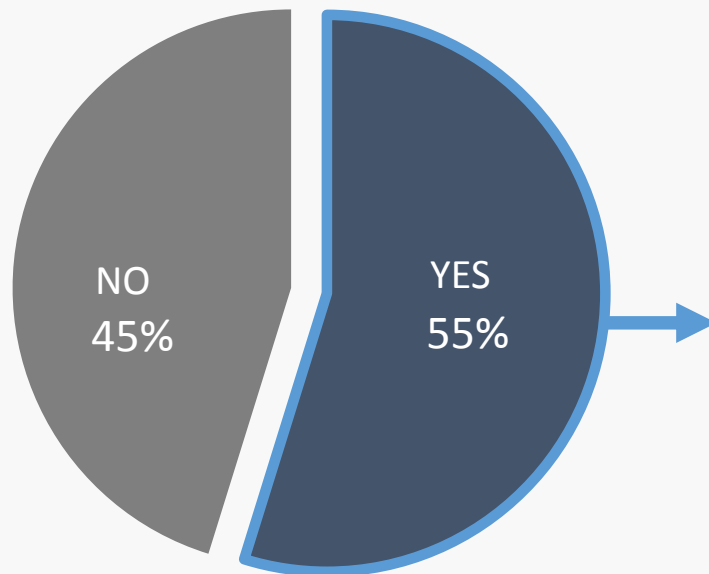
- Among the older teenage readers, 73% discover new reads through social media. This is a higher proportion compared to the younger teenage readers (61%).



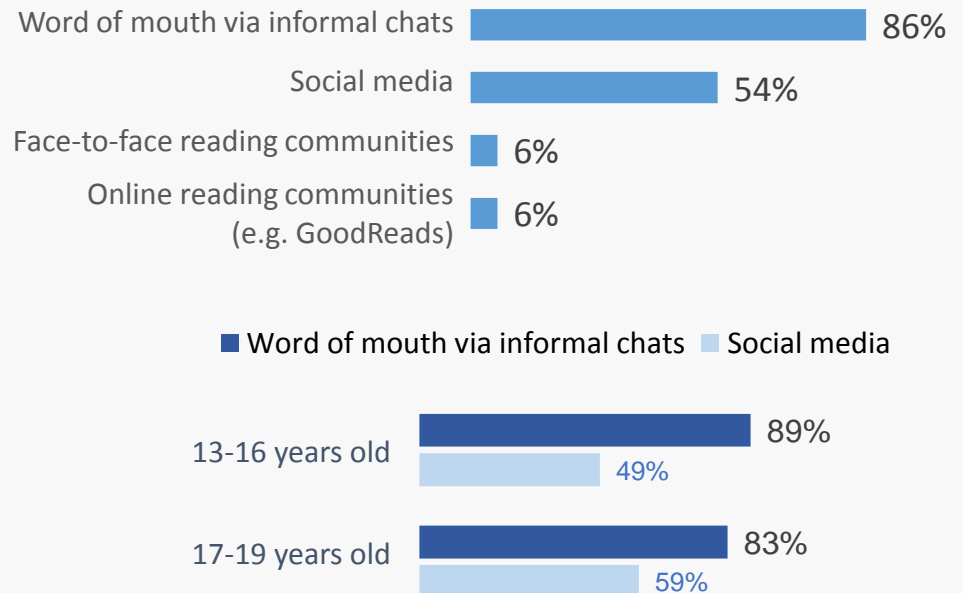
DO TEENAGERS SHARE OPINIONS ON WHAT THEY READ?

- 55% of teenage readers share their opinions on what they are reading with others.
- Among these readers who share their opinions, 86% do so via informal chats and 54% via social media.
- While most teenage readers share their opinions via informal chats, there is a higher proportion of the older teenage readers who do so via social media, compared to the younger ones.

Share opinions/ recommendations on reading materials



How do teenagers share their opinions



A DEEPER LOOK INTO READING CLUBS

Would you join reading clubs?



Awareness – Although teenagers know what reading clubs are, these are perceived as for children or outdated
“There's like online forums nowadays, so I don't think there's a need for (book clubs).” – Male, 17 years old

Concerns:

- meeting and talking to **strangers**
- not keen to commit **time** to the club
- **forced to read** and **contribute opinions**
- topics chosen may not conform to **personal interest**
- **convenience** of the meeting place

Interested if....

They are able to join it with friends – if they have companions

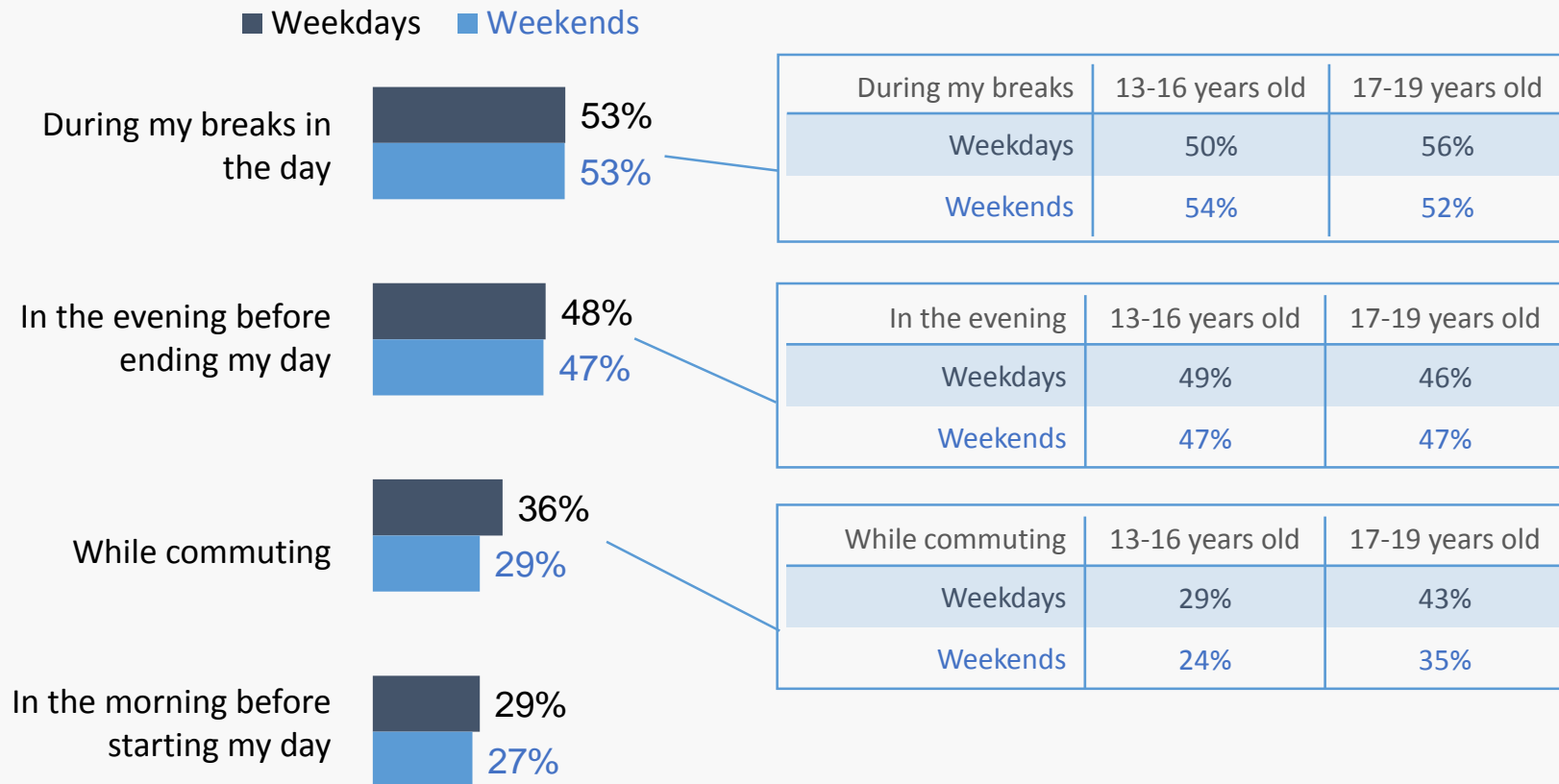
There are like-minded individuals

“It's fun to meet other people who like the same things as you” – Male, 17 years old

It is an online reading club – this eliminates concerns of fixed time commitment, inconvenient locations, meeting strangers, and allows teenagers to provide opinions anonymously.

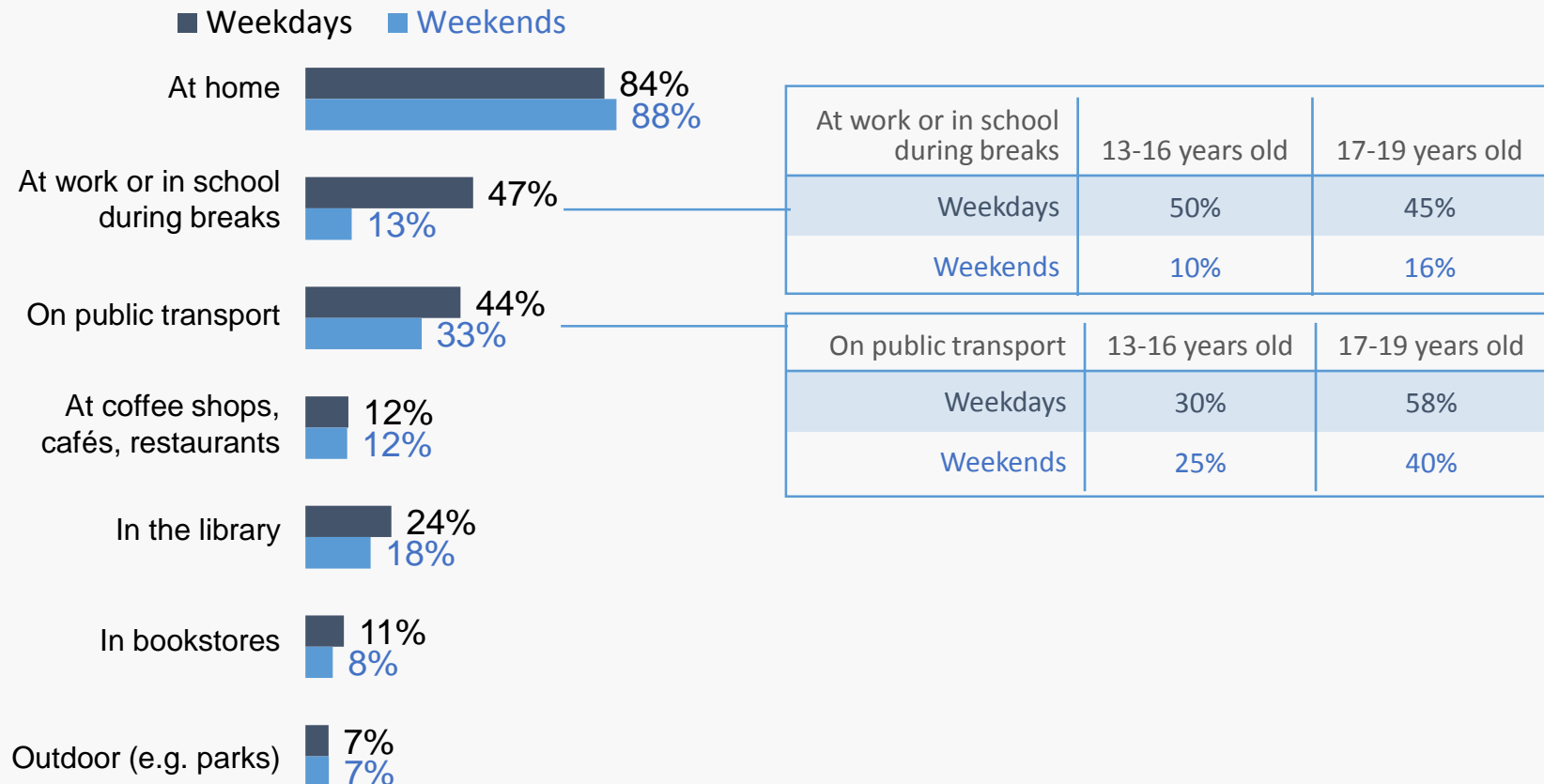
WHEN DO TEENAGERS READ?

- About half of Singapore teenagers read during their breaks in the day, or in the evening.
- A higher proportion (43%) of the older teenagers read while commuting, especially on weekdays, compared to the younger teenagers (29%).



WHERE DO TEENAGERS READ?

- Most teenage readers prefer to read at home.
- A higher proportion (58%) of the older teenage readers also read on public transport, especially on weekdays, compared to the younger ones (30%).



A DEEPER LOOK INTO WHERE TEENAGERS READ



At home

- Most read in the **comfort of home** – when they have free time, or before bedtime.

“(In the) Library, you cannot lie down, or play loud music. And you cannot just feel comfortable while reading...But at home you can just do whatever (you want to).” – Female, 14 years old

“You must be in the right place. When you feel comfortable, then you will be able to achieve that feeling.” – Male, 17 years old



On public transport

- While some teenagers do read **when commuting**, the amount and frequency read **depend heavily on their level of energy and mood**.

“I like to read storybooks and my journey back home (takes about) an hour. So I will read in the MRT or on a bus, so everyday I will read. That's the target (so that) I will read. If I'm too tired, then I will listen to my music and stuff.” – Female, 17 years old



At work or in school during breaks

- Many are **unable or unwilling to set aside reading time** due to homework and social priorities. Instead, reading happens randomly whenever they have **free time or need a break**.

“Snapchat also has news, like under the stories. Then sometimes (when) I am bored, I just click on it. I have nothing to do, I will just click on it and read...” – Female, 19 years old

READING PREFERENCES

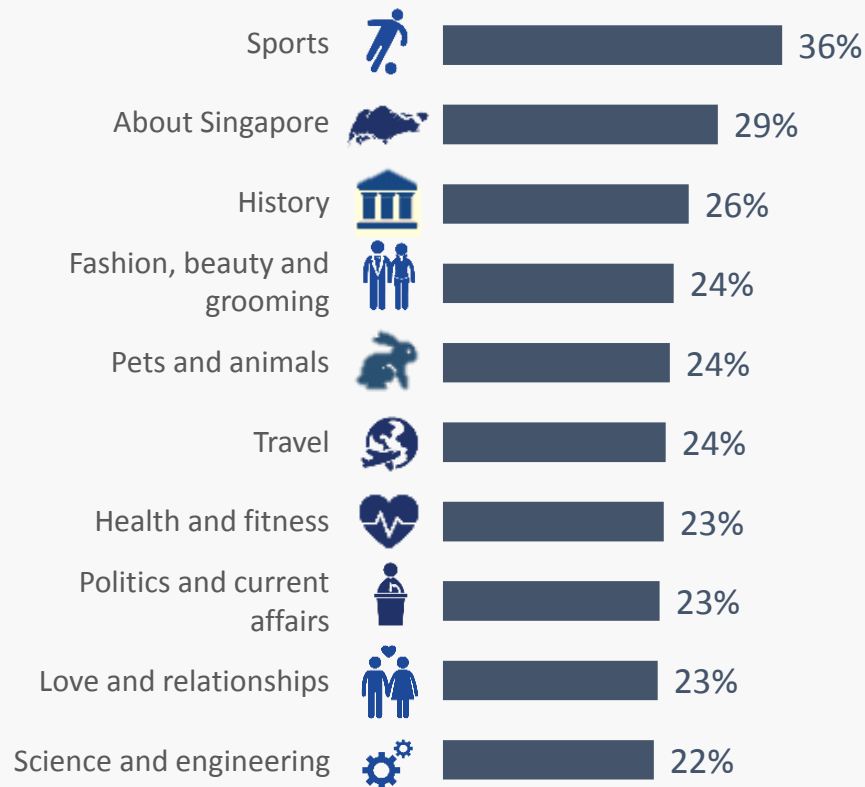


This section describes the top genres read for fiction and non-fiction for Singapore teenagers

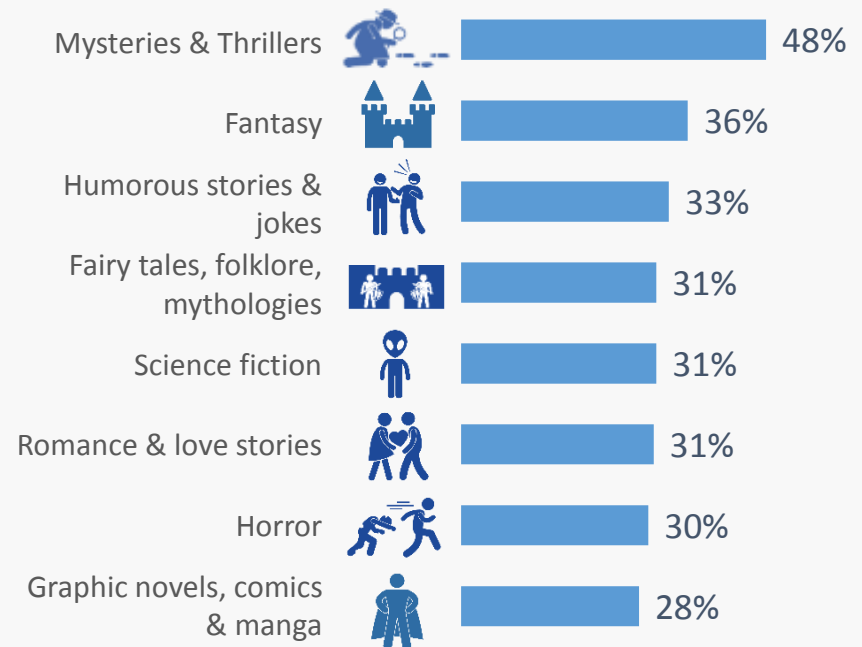
WHAT DO TEENAGERS LIKE TO READ?

- 98% of teenage readers read non-fiction, while 93% of readers read fiction. There are clear differences in genres and topics read across age and gender.

Top non-fiction topics read



































Top fiction genres read



*Note: Topics and genres shown are read by at least 22% of base
Base: Readers (n=471)

WHAT NON-FICTION TOPICS DO TEENAGERS READ?

- Male teenagers like to read about sports, while younger females read about pets and animals, as well as the arts. Among older female teenagers, a higher proportion (52%) read about fashion, beauty and grooming compared to younger female teenagers (31%).

Male		Female		
	13-16 years old	17-19 years old	13-16 years old	17-19 years old
1	 Sports 52%	 Sports 51%	 Pets & animals 40%	 Fashion, beauty & grooming 52%
2	 Computers & IT 37%	 Science & engineering 35%	 Arts (e.g. painting, craft) 32%	 Love & relationships 40%
3	 About Singapore 32%	 About Singapore 33%	 Fashion, beauty & grooming 31%	 Travel 39%
4	 History 30%	 History 31%	 About Singapore 30%	 Health & fitness 29%
5	 Science & engineering 29%	 Computers & IT 29%	 Love & relationships 26%	 Self-help & self-improvement 28%
6	 Health & fitness 25%	 Politics & current affairs 28%	 Sports 24%	 Politics & current affairs 26%
7	 Politics & current affairs 22%	 Travel 24%	 Travel 22%	 Pets & animals 25%
8		 Health & fitness 22%		 Cooking 24%
9				 Arts (e.g. painting, craft) 23%
10				 About Singapore 22%

*Note: Topics shown are read by at least 22% of base





























Base: Males 13-16 years old (n=136); Males 17-19 years old (n=114); Females 13-16 years old (n=105); Females 17-19 years old (n=116)

WHAT FICTION GENRES DO TEENAGERS READ?

- Mysteries and thrillers are popular among Singapore teenagers.
- Young teenage males also read science fiction and comics.
- Female teenagers prefer romance and love stories, fantasy, as well as fairytales, folklore and mythologies.

Male

Female

	13-16 years old	17-19 years old	13-16 years old	17-19 years old
1	 Mysteries & Thrillers 51%	 Mysteries & Thrillers 41%	 Mysteries & Thrillers 53%	 Romance & love stories 50%
2	 Science fiction 40%	 Humorous stories & jokes 38%	 Romance & love stories 46%	 Mysteries & Thrillers 48%
3	 Graphic novels, comics & manga 39%	 Fantasy 36%	 Fantasy 44%	 Fairytales, folklore, mythologies 36%
4	 Fantasy 35%	 Science fiction 34%	 Fairytales, folklore, mythologies 41%	 Humorous stories & jokes 35%
5	 Humorous stories & jokes 29%	 Graphic novels, comics & manga 30%	 Horror 35%	 Fantasy 28%
6	 Horror 29%	 Horror 29%	 Science fiction 30%	 Horror 26%
7	 Fairytales, folklore, mythologies 22%	 Fairytales, folklore, mythologies 27%	 Humorous stories & jokes 29%	
8			 Graphic novels, comics & manga 26%	

*Note: Genres shown are read by at least 22% of base

Base: Males 13-16 years old (n=136); Males 17-19 years old (n=114); Females 13-16 years old (n=105); Females 17-19 years old (n=116)

A DEEPER LOOK INTO FICTION AND NON-FICTION READING PREFERENCES



Fiction

Fiction is popular among teenagers:

- it is **entertaining** and a means of **escape from mundane life**
"It's not real. That's why it's more interesting. It's like living in another dimension." – Female, 13 years old
- **follow-up** to anime or movies – to fill in plot details not covered in anime or movies rather than wait for next instalment
- some hope to apply **fictional scenarios to real life**
"For example, if I read romance books, like how to attract a guy, that kind of thing, then maybe it will help (me)." – Female, 18 years old



Non-Fiction

Non-fiction is conveniently accessed:

- news and articles are **readily available** on social media
- older teens **follow news sites** on social media e.g. Straits Times and Channel NewsAsia

Non-fiction caters to their interest in specific topics:

- most value the **new knowledge** they acquire which can **help them in real life situations**, for example, books on influencing people
- Non-fiction books are read to **obtain different perspectives**

ABOUT BOOKS

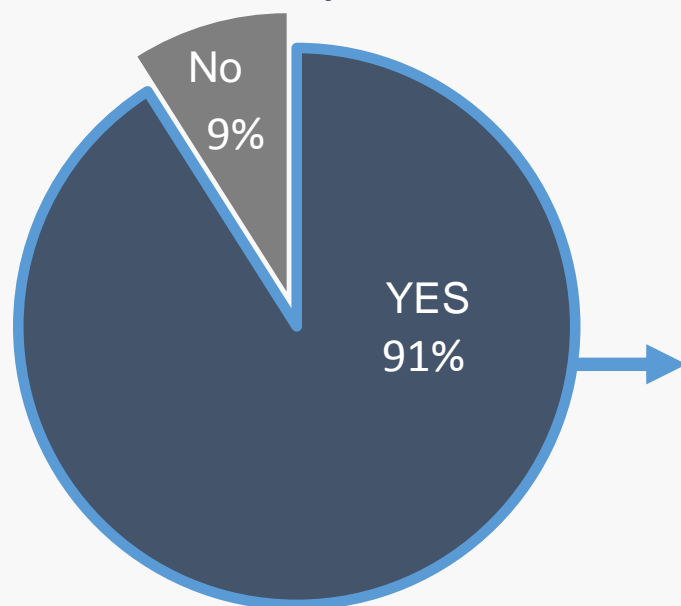


This section looks at the average number of books read by Singapore teenagers in the past 12 months and the book formats covered, as well as the different sources of books.

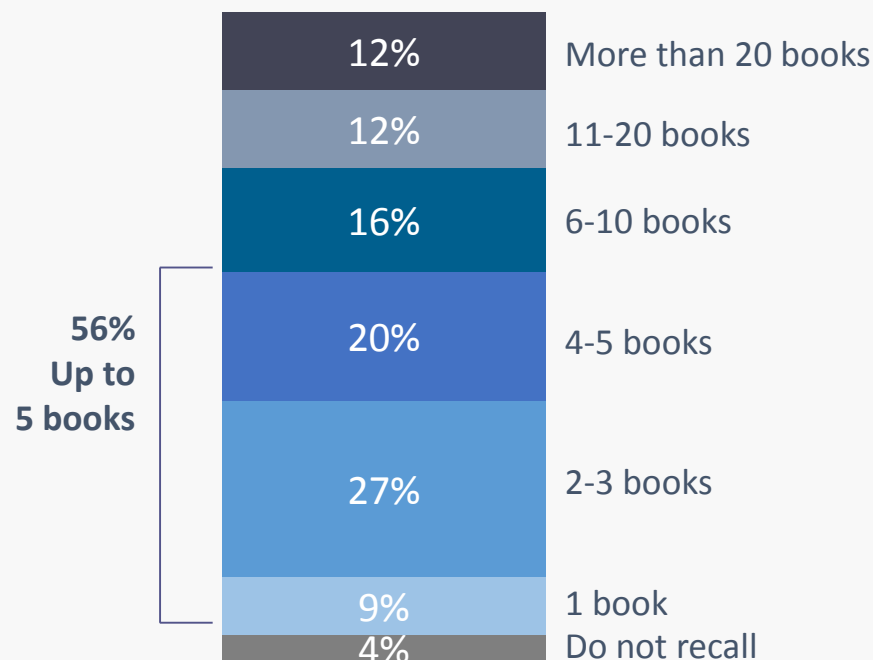
ARE TEENAGERS STILL READING BOOKS?

- Among Singapore teenagers, 91% have read books in the past 12 months.
- 56% of those who read books have read up to 5 books, while 40% have read more than 5 books.

Read books in the past 12 months



Number of books read in past 12 months



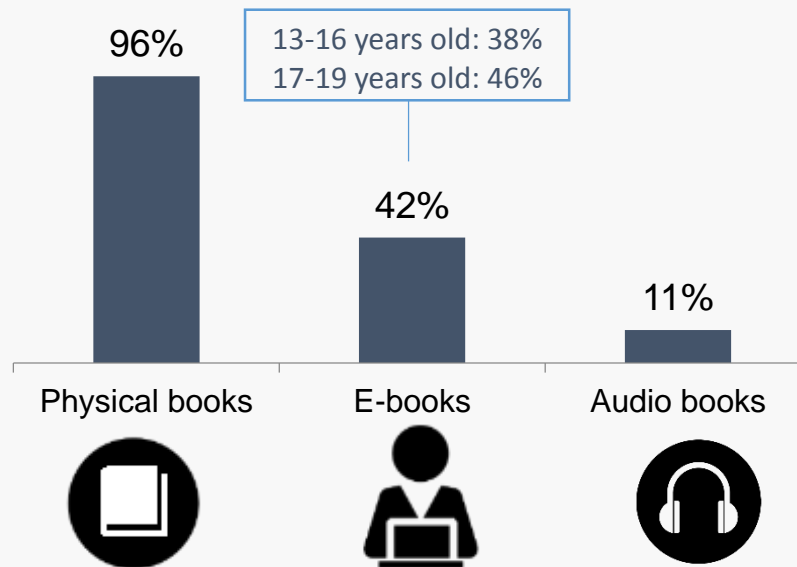
*Those who read at least 1 book will be known as "book readers" (n=423) in the rest of this report

Base: All respondents (n=485)

WHAT BOOK FORMAT DO TEENAGERS READ?

- Among the book readers, 96% read physical books and 42% read e-books.
- A higher proportion of the older teenage book readers have read e-books (46%), compared to the younger ones (38%).

Format of books read in past 12 months



WHERE DO TEENAGERS GET THEIR BOOKS FROM?

- Among teenage book readers, 65% borrow their books from libraries, while 57% buy their books from bookstores.

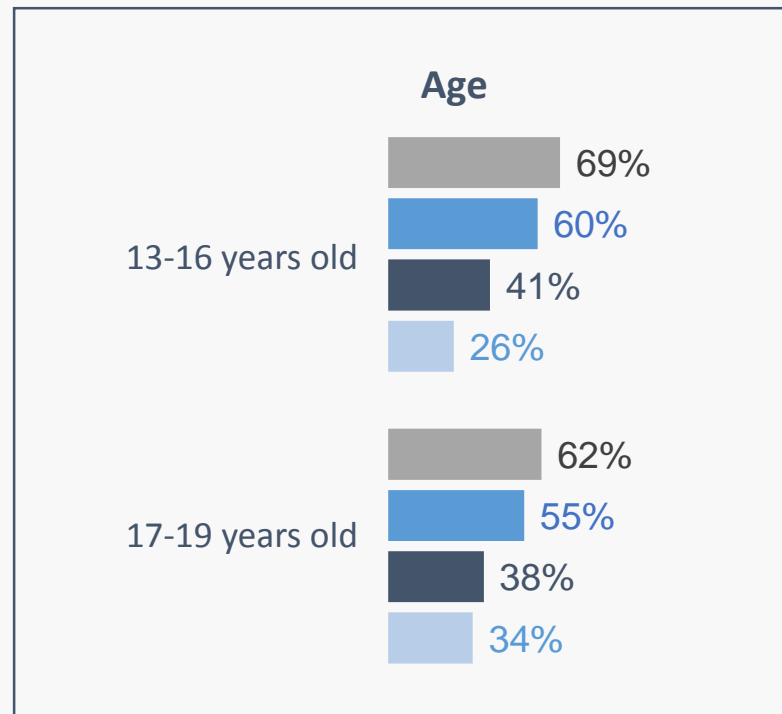


WHERE DO TEENAGERS GET THEIR BOOKS FROM?

- A higher proportion of the older teenage book readers have downloaded free books online (34%), compared to the younger ones (26%).

Source of books

■ Borrow from libraries ■ Purchase from bookstores ■ Borrow from friends or family ■ Download free online



A DEEPER LOOK INTO SOURCES OF BOOKS

Why borrow from a library?



- **Convenient** to borrow since teenagers are at the library to study
- **Short-term** need for the book e.g. look up information for entertainment
- **Parents' encouragement** to borrow books rather than buy books

Why buy from bookstores?



- Need to have it **immediately available**
- Read books at **own pace**
- Keep for **personal collection** e.g. collect **entire series**, re-read **favourite** books, **highly recommended** by teachers or friends, or for **future reference**

Why download free online?

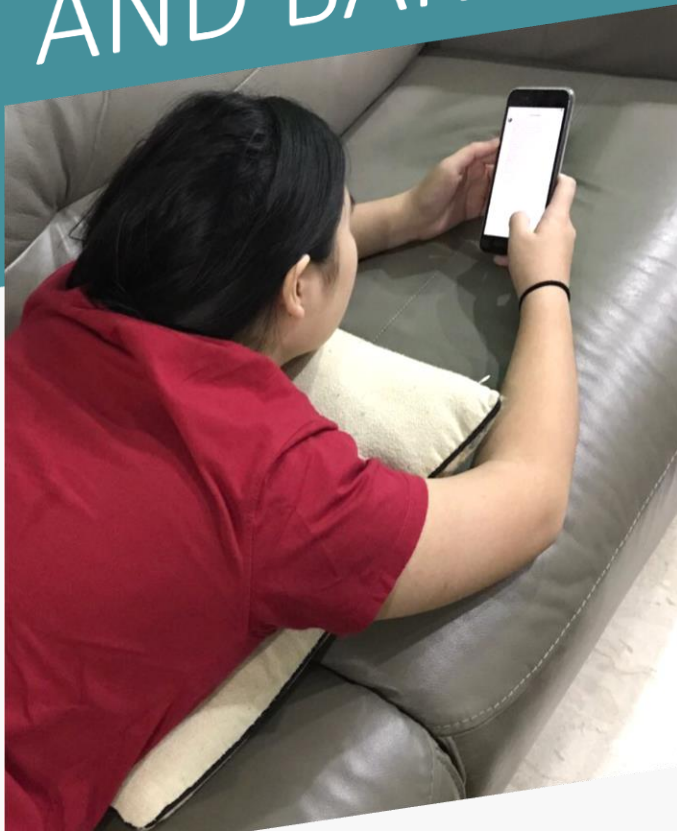


- No need to carry **heavy books** around
- Book is **not available as physical book**
- Easy to **search, cut and paste text** from e-books

However, teenagers cannot sustain prolonged reading on digital devices

- **Strain to the eyes** – glare, small screen
- **Interrupted** by messages, alerts etc.
- **More engaged** with 'authentic' look, feel and smell of the physical book

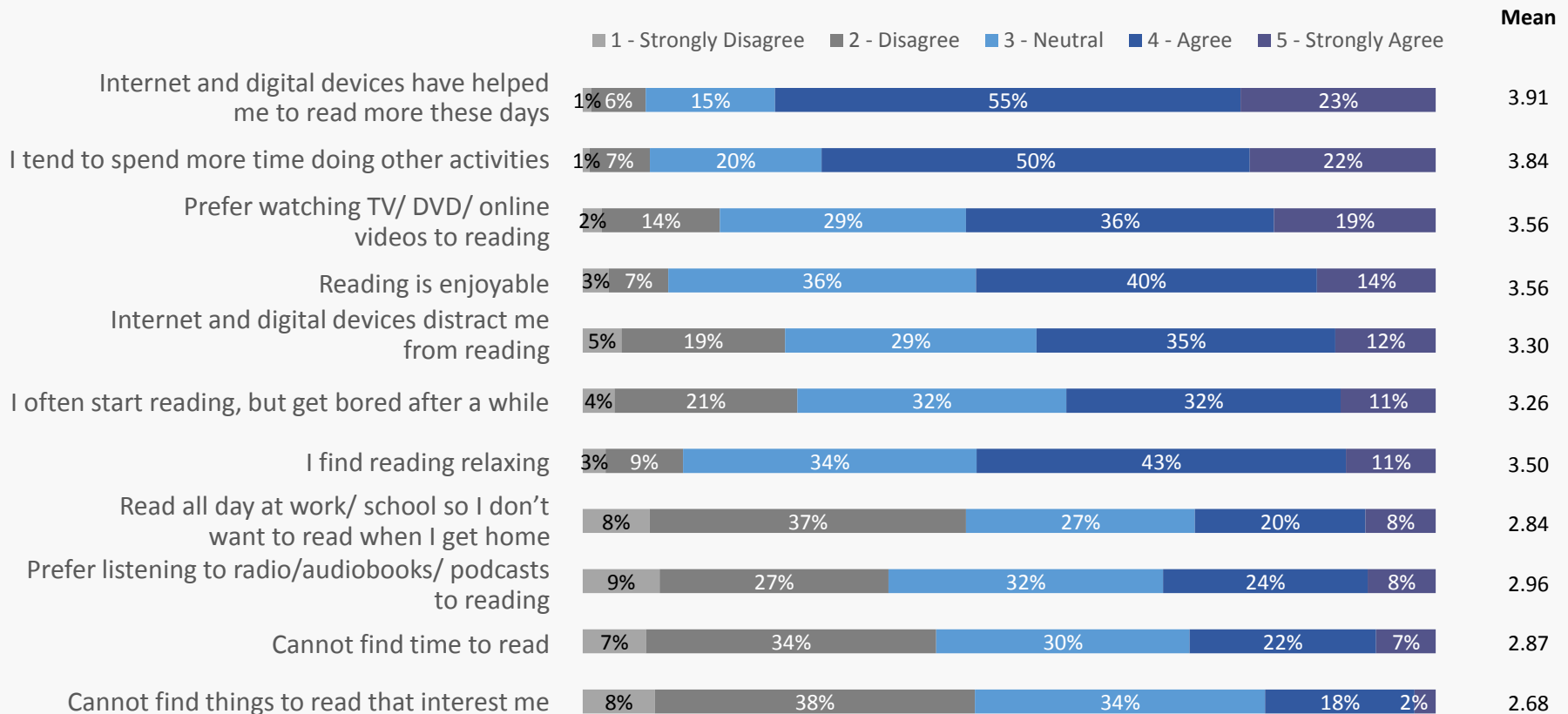
READING MOTIVATIONS AND BARRIERS



This section looks into the reasons for Singapore teenagers to read in general and the factors that inhibit reading

TO READ OR NOT TO READ?

- The top reason for Singapore teenagers to read is that internet and digital devices have helped them to read more.
- The main barriers to reading are that teenagers tend to spend more time doing other activities and that they prefer to watch TV/ DVDs/ online videos to reading.



THANK YOU

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