Horizon Research

National Reading Survey

March 2025

Prepared for: Read NZ Te Pou Muramura

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the results of the fourth survey of book reading in New Zealand. Where possible, results have been compared with conducted in 2021, 2018 and 2017.

1,024 New Zealanders aged 18+ responded to the online survey between 17 and 23 March, 2025.

The total sample is weighted on age, gender, personal income, ethnicity, education and region to match the adult population and has an overall margin of error of ±3.1%.

Key Findings

Reading

87% (equivalent to around 3,359,000 New Zealand adults[1]) have read or started to read at least one book in the past 12 months. This is a slight increase from **85%** in 2021 and similar to levels in 2017.

- **84%** of males have read or started a book in the past 12 months – a significant increase from **79%** in 2021
- **90%** of females have read a book in the past 12 months. There has been little change since 2021
- Although not statistically significant there has been a drop in reading among 18-24 year olds from **87%** in 2021 to **82%** in 2025.

80% (3,100,000 adults) have read a fiction book all or part way through in the past 12 months. A significant increase from **76%** in 2021.

74% (2,872,000 adults) have read a non-fiction book. Slightly up from **71%** in 2021.

32% (1,253,000 adults) have read a poetry book. A significant increase from **25%** in 2021.

	Read Fiction	Read Non-Fiction	Read Poetry
% of total adults	80%	74%	32%
Number of adults	3,100,000	2,872,000	1,253,000
Average age of readers	47.8	48.6	NA
Average number of books in 12 months	12.6	5.5	1.5

96% of readers said they read for pleasure and **46%** for work or study.

[1] In this report the population estimates are based on the New Zealand adult population from the 2023 Census = 3,865,235. All estimates rounded to nearest thousand.

Fiction

The three most read fiction genres are:

- General Fiction including Literary Fiction – **77%** (2,590,000 readers 18+[2])
- Crime, Thriller & Adventure – **72%** (2,402,000 readers 18+)
- Historical Fiction - **65%** (2,170,000 readers 18+).

Non-Fiction

The three most popular non-fiction genres are:

- Biographies/Autobiographies/Memoir – **60%** (2,019,000 readers 18+)
- History and Politics – **59%** (1,992,000 readers 18+)
- NZ non-fiction - **43%** (1,444,000 readers 18+).

How are people reading

There has been significant change in how people are reading. Print book readership is still highest but has dropped significantly from **96%** in 2021 to **93%** in 2025.

60% of readers read e-Books/digital books, a significant increase from **55%** in 2021.

The biggest increase is in audio books with **43%** saying they listen to audio books, significantly up from **31%** in 2021.

	Read print books	Read e-books	Listen to audio books
% once a week or more	44%	25%	15%
Number of readers	3,137,000	2,025,000	1,333,000
Average age of readers	48	44	41
Average number of times per year	106	62	32
Average number of times per week	2	1	0.6

[2] In this report the estimated number of readers calculation is based on estimated number of people who have read in the past 12 months (3,358,889 adults) and rounded to nearest thousand.

Where sourced and heard about books

The three main sources of books for readers in the past 12 months were:

- **68%** (2,271,000 readers 18+) said books were bought in a book store by them or for them
- **62%** (2,079,000 readers 18+) re-read books they already had
- **55%** (1,857,000readers 18+) borrowed books from someone else.

75% of readers said they first heard about the books they had read through browsing online, in-store or in a library:

- **45%** found their book while browsing online
- **40%** browsing in store, and
- **35%** browsing in a library.

55% first heard about the books via recommendations.

35% first heard via advertising and **22%** through social media.

Reasons for reading

80% of readers read for the enjoyment.

- Of those who read for enjoyment, **90%** read once a week or more. On average they read on **4.5 days** a week.

68% of readers read to relax/have quiet time/time out.

57% read to learn and gain knowledge.

Reasons for not reading

13% have read less than 3 books in the past 12 months. **50%** of these people said it was due to not having time to read.

- **25%** have not found a book that interests them
- **23%** find it easier to watch movies based on books
- **21%** don't like reading.

39% of 18-24 year olds said they don't like reading.

What would encourage people to read more

All respondents were asked what would make them want to read more. **50%** said they would like to have more time for reading.

32% said if they found a book that interested them and **24%** mentioned if books were cheaper.

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Reading among children

44% of respondents said they have children 17 and under living in their household and **23%** of all respondents read to children in their household.

- **78%** of children under 6 are read to at home and are read to on average **4.2** times a week
- **86%** of 6-9 year olds are read to and on average **3.9** times a week
- **73%** of 10-12 year olds are read to and on average **2.9** times a week
- **43%** of 13-17 year olds are read to at home, on average **1.9** times a week.

76% of children have read at least one book, or had a book read to them, in the past month. On average children have read or been read **9.8** books in the past month.

12% haven't read any books or had a book read to them in the past month.

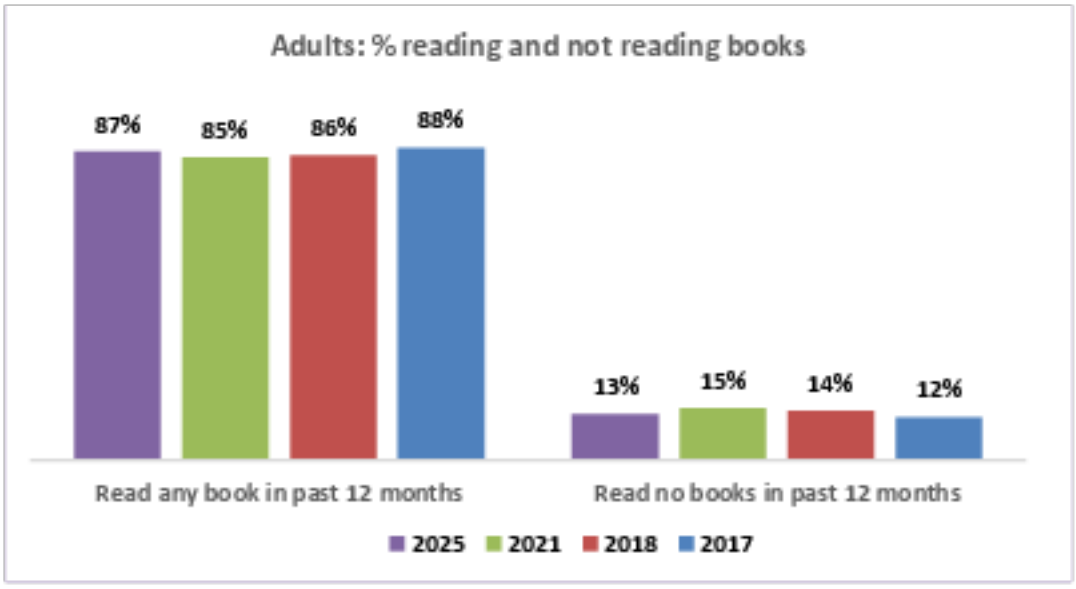
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Report

Book reading - Adults

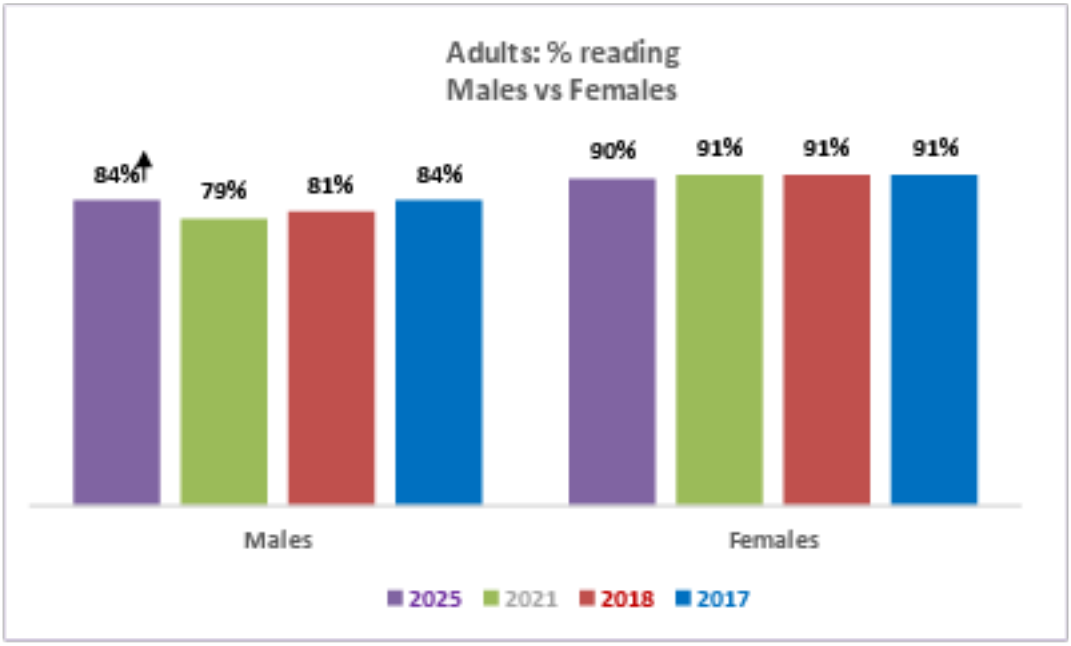
In 2025, **87%** of adults, equivalent to around 3,359,000 New Zealand aged 18+, have read or started to read at least one book in the past 12 months.

This is a slight increase from **85%** in 2021 and similar to levels in 2017.



Base: Total Sample

The percentage of females reading has remained at similar levels since 2017. The number of males reading had seen a decline; however this has increased significantly from **79%** in 2021 to **84%** in 2025.

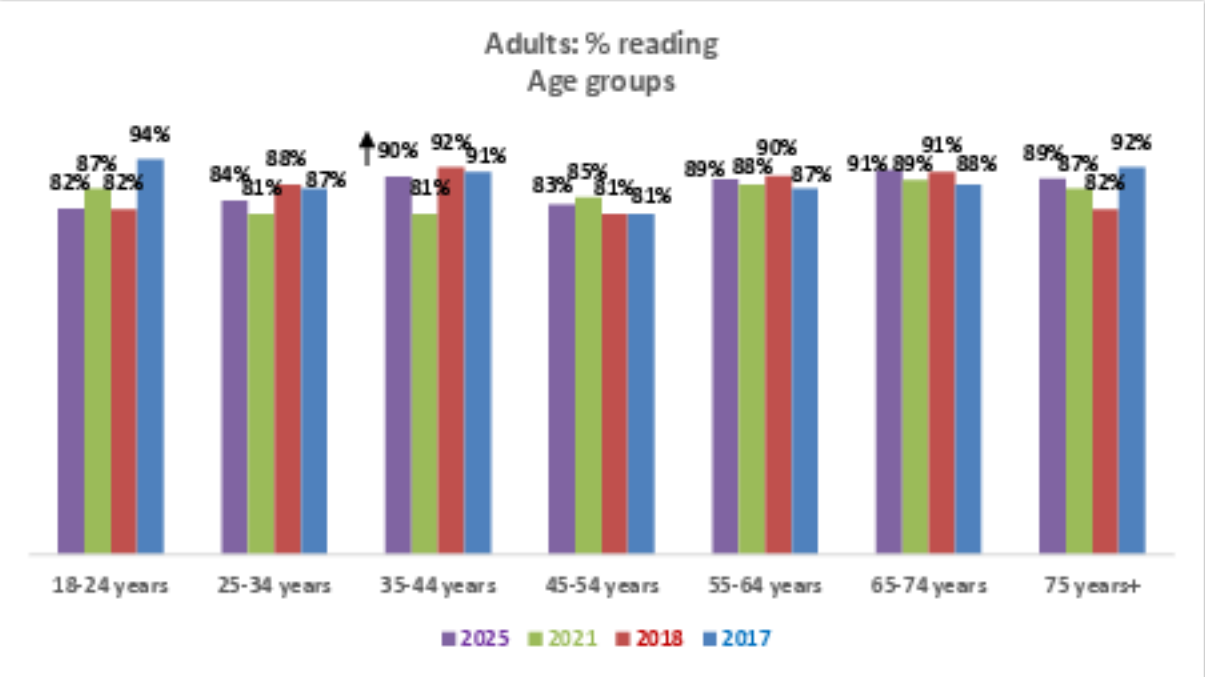


Base: Total Sample

↑↓ *Significant change since 2021*

Reading is lowest among 18-24 year olds, with **82%** saying they have read or started to read at least one book in the past 12 months.

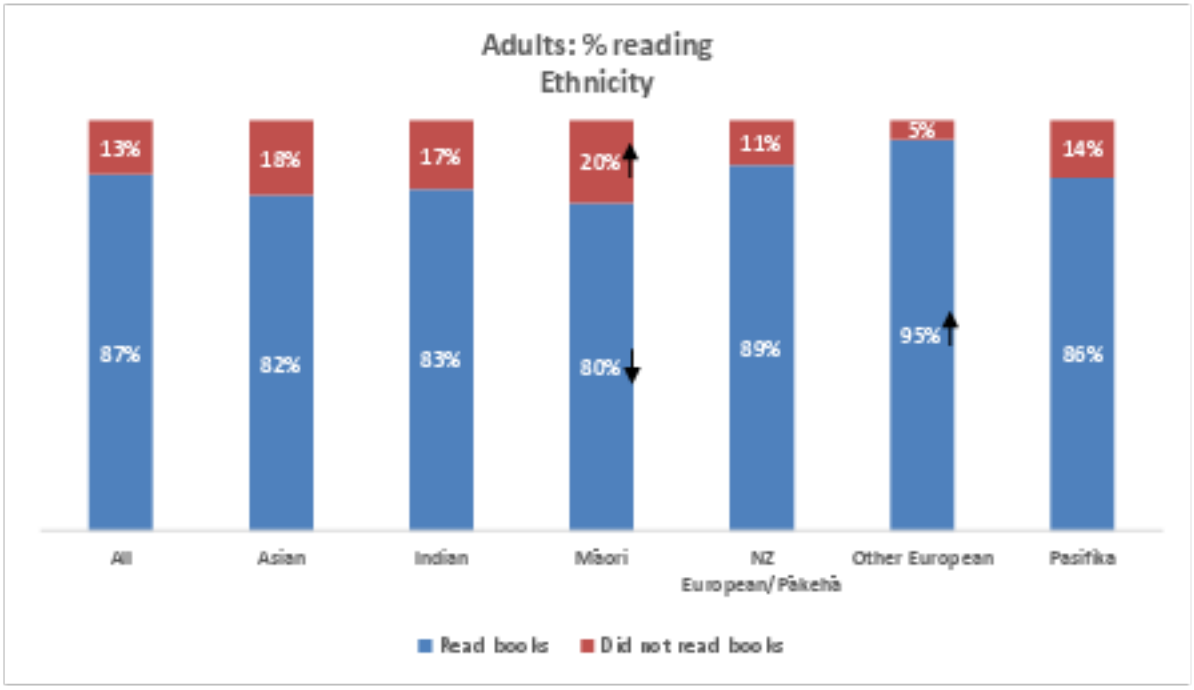
There has been a significant increase in reading among 35-44 year olds, from **81%** in 2021 to **90%** in 2025. This is similar to levels in 2018 and 2017 for this age group.



Base: Total Sample

↑↓ *Significant change since 2021*

The chart below shows reading among ethnic groups. Māori are less likely to have read or started to read at least one book in the past 12 months.



Base: Total Sample

↑↓*Significant difference from total sample (All)*

Book Categories

80% (3,100,000 adult New Zealanders) have read a fiction book all or part way through in the past 12 months. This is a significant increase from **76%** in 2021

- Among book readers, **92%** have read fiction, a significant increase from **89%** in 2021.

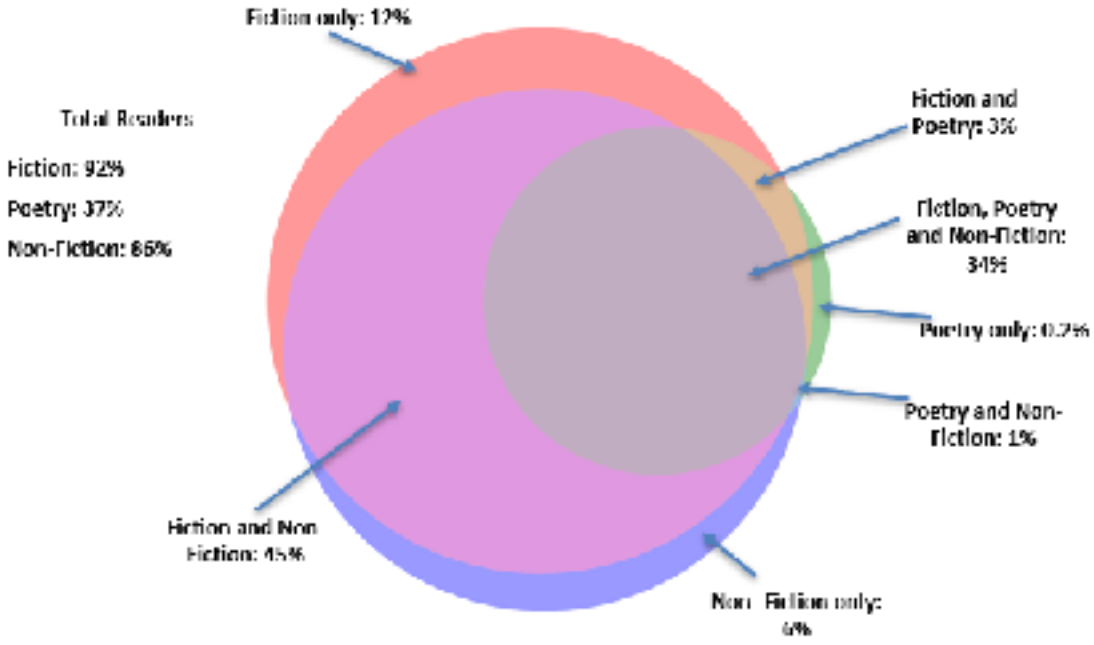
32% (1,253,000 adult New Zealanders) have read a poetry book all or part way through in the past 12 months. A significant increase from **25%** in 2021

- Among readers, **37%** have read poetry, a significant increase from **30%** in 2021.

74% (2,872,000 adult New Zealanders) have read a non-fiction book all or part way through in the past 12 months. Slightly up from **71%** in 2021

- Among readers, **86%** have read non-fiction, up from **83%** in 2021.

The following chart shows the combinations of book categories read by readers.



Average number of books read in past 12 months

The table below shows the average number of books read in past 12 months for each category.

On average all readers read **12.6** fiction books in the past 12 months. 65+ year olds read the most fiction books and people under 35 read the least amount of fiction. Females read more fiction than males.

On average readers each read **5.5** non-fiction books in the past 12 months and **1.5** poetry books.

2025	Average number of books read in past 12 months among readers		
	Fiction	Poetry	Non-Fiction
All	**12.6**	**1.5**	**5.5**
18-24 years	7.4	1.6	4.0
25-34 years	7.9	1.9	4.9
35-44 years	10.5	1.6	5.2
45-54 years	12.2	2.0	5.4
55-64 years	12.0	0.7	6.6
65-74 years	17.9	1.2	5.2
75 years or over	25.6	1.2	7.7
Males	9.6	1.8	5.2
Females	15.5	1.2	5.9

Print books, e-books/digital books and audio books

There has been significant change in how people are reading. Print books are most commonly read but this has dropped significantly from **96%** in 2021 to **93%** in 2025.

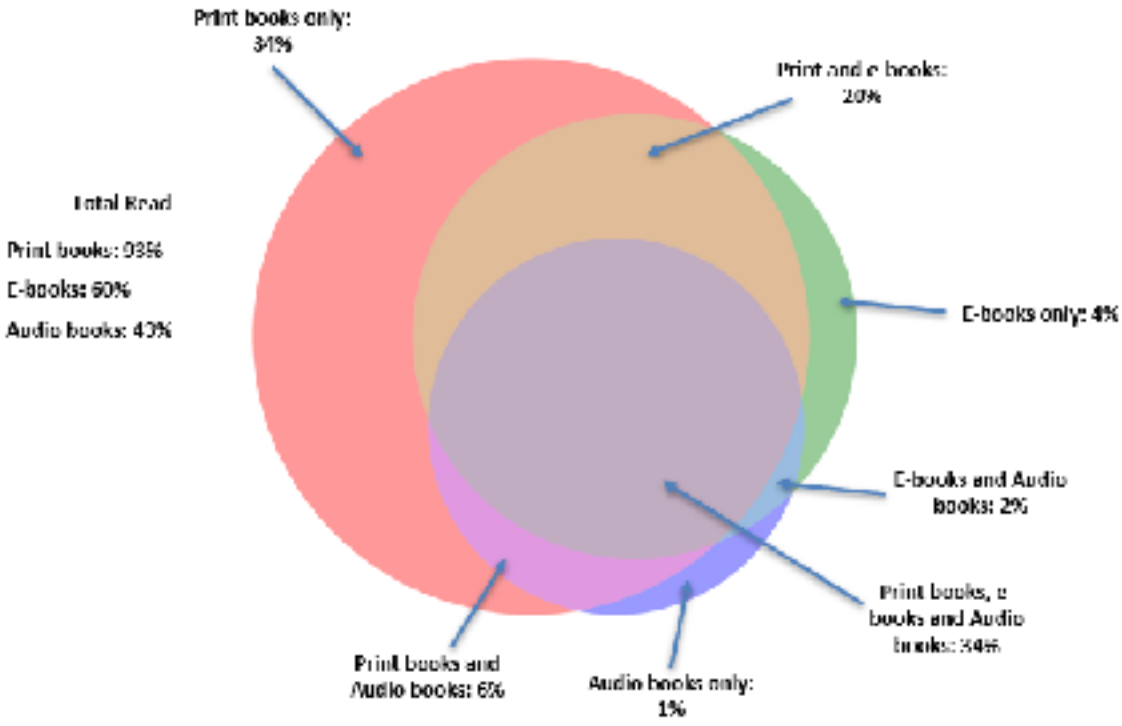
60% of readers read e-Books/digital books, a significant increase from **55%** in 2021. Few read e-books only - 4% in 2025; 2% in 2021.

- **20%** read print and e-books, significantly down from **29%** in 2021.

The biggest increase is in audio books with **43%** saying they listen to audio books. This is significantly up from **31%** in 2021.

In 2021, **24%** of readers said they read a combination of print, e-books and audio books. In 2025, this has increased significantly to **34%.**

The following chart shows the combinations of book types read by readers.



2021 results showed that on average readers read print books around **115 days a year**. This has dropped in 2025 to **106 days a year**, which is about twice a week.

The frequency for e-books and audio books has increased between 2021 and 2025.

- E-books/digital books – average use is **62 days a year** (about once a week) – up from **59 days a year** in 2021
- Audio books – average use is **32 days a year** (just less than once a week) – up from **21 days a year** in 2021.

How often do you read the following types of books?	TYPES OF BOOKS		
	Print books	e-books/ digital books	Audio books
Every day/almost every day	21%	13%	5%
A few times a week	14%	7%	5%
At least once a week	9%	6%	5%
Every couple of weeks	7%	5%	3%
At least once a month	6%	4%	3%
Several times a year	12%	7%	7%
Once or twice a year	13%	11%	9%
Never	18%	48%	63%
Average times per year	**106**	**62**	**32**
Average times per week	**2**	**1**	**0.6**
N (unweighted) - Read books	1,020	1,018	1,020

With the increase in use of e-books and audio books, the table below shows the groups who are more likely to use different types of books for reading.

	Total Sample	Significantly more likely[3] ▲
Print books	93%	55-64 year olds **97%** Household income $70k-$100k **98%** Household income $100k-$150k **97%** Personal income $70k-$100k **97%** Living in Wellington **97%**
E-books/digital books	60%	25-34 year olds **72%** 35-44 year olds **73%** Professional/Government Official **72%** Business Manager/ Executive **83%** Teacher/ Nurse/ Police/other trained service worker **72%** Household income $100k-$150k **69%** Household income more than $150k **73%** Personal income $50k-$150k **66%** Personal income $150k+ **76%** Two parent family, one or two children at home **68%** Asian **75%** Indian **82%** Living in Auckland **69%**
Audio books	43%	18-24 year olds **54%** 25-34 year olds **62%** 35-44 year olds **56%** Student **30%** Household income $50k-$70k **53%** Household income more than $150k **52%** Personal income $100k-$150k **58%** Two parent family, one or two children at home **53%** Indian **69%** Māori **52%** Living in Auckland **50%**

Average ages of readers of each book type are:

- Print books – **48 years old**
- E-books/Digital books – **44 years old**
- Audio books – **41 years old**.

[3] Significant differences only shown for groups with sample sizes more than 30.

Reading habits

Readers were asked in more detail about their reading habits. The table below summarises the types of book, source, languages read and purpose of reading.

For each question they were asked about books read in the past 12 months what proportion were of each type, source, language and purpose.

	% Readers	Estimated no. adults
TYPES OF BOOKS		
Printed books	93%	3,137,000
e-books (electronic/digital books)	60%	2,025,000
Audio books	40%	1,333,000
SOURCE OF BOOKS		
Bought in a bookstore by or for you	68%	2,271,000
Bought online by or for you (physical books)	52%	1,733,000
Downloaded online but not purchased	40%	1,357,000
Borrowed from someone else	55%	1,857,000
Public library books (not e-books)	54%	1,810,000
Re-reading books I already had	62%	2,079,000
LANGUAGES		
English	97%	3,251,000
Te Reo Māori	15%	511,000
A Pasifika language	10%	333,000
Another language	15%	511,000
READING PURPOSE		
Read for pleasure	96%	3,238,000
Read for work or study	46%	1,532,000

The percentage is a sum of their answers from a scale of 10% to 100%.

Estimated number of adults calculation is based on estimated number of people who have read in the past 12 months (3,358,889 adults) and rounded to nearest thousand.

There are differences across age groups and males and females in overall reading habits.

	All Readers	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
TYPES OF BOOKS						
Printed books	93%	93%	94%	93%	94%	94%
e-books (electronic/digital books)	60%	77%	71%	42%	63%	59%
Audio books	40%	63%	45%	21%	40%	39%
SOURCE OF BOOKS						
Bought in a bookstore by or for you	68%	75%	68%	63%	70%	66%
Bought online by or for you (physical books)	52%	56%	60%	42%	53%	51%
Downloaded online but not purchased	40%	63%	40%	27%	43%	38%
Borrowed from someone else	55%	57%	55%	55%	59%	52%
Public library books (not e-books)	54%	59%	54%	52%	55%	54%
Re-reading books I already had	62%	73%	61%	56%	68%	57%
LANGUAGES						
English	97%	96%	94%	99%	97%	97%
Te Reo Māori	15%	34%	17%	4%	21%	11%
A Pasifika language	10%	27%	9%	0%	15%	6%
Another language	15%	36%	15%	3%	21%	10%
READING PURPOSE						
Read for pleasure	96%	95%	94%	99%	96%	97%
Read for work or study	46%	64%	52%	30%	53%	39%

The percentage is a sum of their answers from a scale of 10% to 100%.

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

Fiction readers

80% (3,100,000 adult New Zealanders) have read a fiction book all or part way through in the past 12 months.

- **13%** of fiction readers read only fiction, a slight decrease from **15%** in 2021
- **48%** read fiction as well as non-fiction, a significant decrease from **53%** in 2021
- **36%** read fiction in conjunction with both poetry and non-fiction, a significant increase from **28%** in 2021.

The average age of fiction readers is **47.8 years**.

- **53%** are female – down from **57%** in 2021
- **46%** are male – up from **43%** in 2021.

Types of fiction genres read are shown in the following table.

Fiction		
	All Readers	Estimated no. adults
General Fiction including Literary Fiction	77%	2,590,000
Historical Fiction	65%	2,170,000
Crime, Thriller & Adventure	72%	2,402,000
Romance	41%	1,367,000
Short Stories and fiction anthologies	36%	1,213,000
Graphic Novels (novels in comic-strip format)	23%	776,000
Science Fiction and Fantasy	48%	1,612,000
NZ fiction	43%	1,448,000
Young adult fiction	29%	961,000
Children's fiction	24%	793,000
Poetry	24%	796,000
Something else	20%	682,000

The percentage is a sum of their answers from a scale of 10% to 100%.

Estimated number of adults calculation is based on estimated number of people who have read in the past 12 months (3,358,889 adults) and rounded to nearest thousand.

Types of fiction genres read across age groups and gender are shown in the table below.

Fiction	All Readers	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
General Fiction including Literary Fiction	77%	72%	78%	80%	76%	79%
Historical Fiction	65%	66%	60%	68%	69%	62%
Crime, Thriller & Adventure	72%	69%	62%	81%	70%	74%
Romance	41%	60%	38%	31%	29%	51%
Short Stories and fiction anthologies	36%	55%	34%	26%	44%	29%
Graphic Novels (novels in comic-strip format)	23%	49%	25%	6%	33%	15%
Science Fiction and Fantasy	48%	69%	53%	31%	57%	40%
NZ fiction	43%	43%	41%	45%	42%	44%
Young adult fiction	29%	64%	28%	7%	30%	28%
Children's fiction	24%	43%	28%	8%	23%	24%
Poetry	24%	39%	24%	13%	28%	20%
Something else	20%	32%	22%	11%	29%	13%

The percentage is a sum of their answers from a scale of 10% to 100%.

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

Non-fiction readers

74% (2,872,000 adult New Zealanders) have read a non-fiction book all or part way through in the past 12 months.

- **8%** of non-fiction readers read non-fiction only, a slight decrease from **10%** in 2021
- **52%** of non-fiction readers read fiction as well as non-fiction, a significant decrease from **58%** in 2021
- **39%** read fiction in conjunction with both poetry and non-fiction, a significant increase from **31%** in 2021.

The average age of non-fiction readers is **48.6 years**.

- **51%** are female – down from **53%** in 2021
- **48%** are male – **47%** in 2021.

Types of non-fiction genres read are shown in the following table.

Non-Fiction		
	All Readers	Estimated no. adults
Travel	37%	1,243,000
Biographies/Autobiographies/Memoir	60%	2,019,000
Family, Health and Relationships	41%	1,364,000
History and Politics	59%	1,992,000
Humour, Trivia and Puzzles	33%	1,102,000
Leisure and Lifestyle	37%	1,253,000
NZ non-fiction	43%	1,444,000
Personal Development/self-help	41%	1,377,000
Religion	28%	940,000
Sport	25%	836,000
Something else	23%	783,000

The percentage is a sum of their answers from a scale of 10% to 100%.

Estimated number of adults calculation is based on estimated number of people who have read in the past 12 months (3,358,889 adults) and rounded to nearest thousand.

Types of non-fiction genres read across age groups and gender are shown in the table below.

Non-Fiction	All Readers	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
Travel	37%	47%	37%	31%	42%	33%
Biographies/Autobiographies/Memoir	60%	60%	61%	60%	61%	60%
Family, Health and Relationships	41%	59%	48%	22%	39%	42%
History and Politics	59%	64%	56%	59%	72%	48%
Humour, Trivia and Puzzles	33%	41%	35%	26%	42%	25%
Leisure and Lifestyle	37%	55%	36%	28%	41%	34%
NZ non-fiction	43%	43%	41%	45%	49%	38%
Personal Development/self-help	41%	58%	49%	22%	42%	41%
Religion	28%	45%	30%	15%	32%	24%
Sport	25%	36%	26%	16%	38%	13%
Something else	23%	34%	23%	15%	30%	18%

The percentage is a sum of their answers from a scale of 10% to 100%.

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

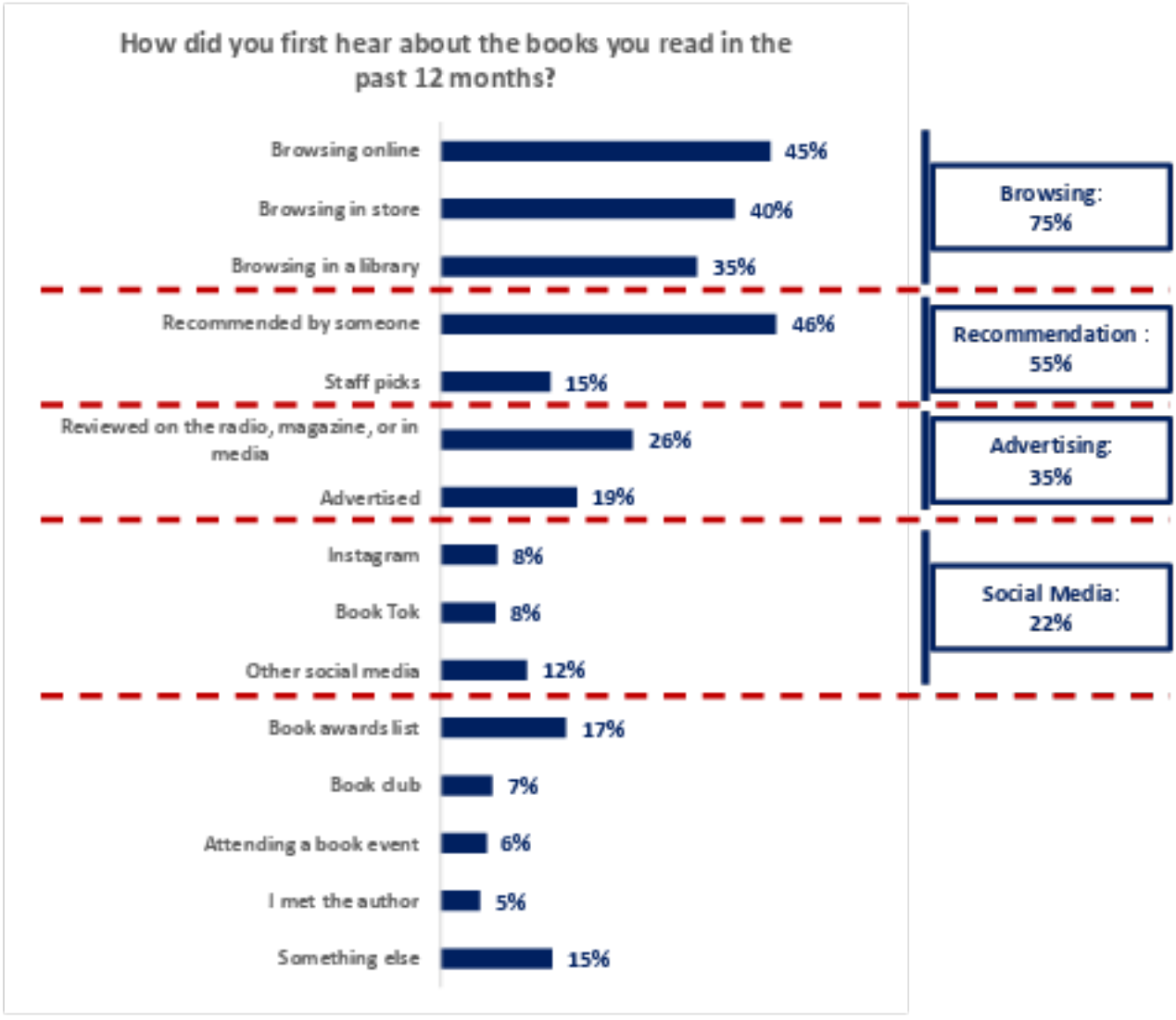
Hearing about books

When asked about where they first heard about the books they had read in the past 12 months, **75%** said it was through browsing:

- **45%** found their book while browsing online
- **40%** browsing in store, and
- **35%** browsing in a library.

55% said they first heard about the books via recommendations.

35% said they first heard via advertising and **22%** through social media.



Base: Read book in past 12 months n=652

15% said they first heard about books in some other way and were asked to write down where. The list of their answers is in Appendix 2.

The table below shows differences between age groups and males vs females on where they had heard about books read in the past 12 months.

How did you first hear about the books you read in the past 12 months?	All readers	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
Nett Browsing	**75%**	**70%**	**75%**	**79%**	**75%**	**76%**
Browsing online	45%	44%	52%	40%	42%	48%
Browsing in store	40%	39%	37%	44%	39%	41%
Browsing in a library	35%	31%	30%	42%	33%	37%
Nett Recommendation	**55%**	**56%**	**53%**	**55%**	**48%**	**60%**
Recommended by someone	46%	41%	48%	47%	39%	52%
Staff picks	15%	20%	14%	13%	13%	17%
Nett Advertising	**35%**	**30%**	**32%**	**41%**	**35%**	**35%**
Reviewed on the radio, magazine, or in media	26%	21%	21%	33%	25%	27%
Advertised	19%	16%	18%	20%	19%	18%
Nett Social Media	**22%**	**40%**	**26%**	**9%**	**15%**	**28%**
Instagram	8%	17%	9%	2%	6%	10%
Book Tok	8%	21%	6%	1%	5%	9%
Other social media	12%	12%	17%	8%	8%	15%
Book awards list	17%	20%	14%	18%	15%	18%
Book club	7%	10%	3%	9%	6%	8%
Attending a book event	6%	9%	6%	6%	7%	6%
I met the author	5%	6%	6%	5%	7%	4%
Something else	15%	7%	14%	22%	13%	18%

N (unweighted)	652	158	213	281	303	347

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

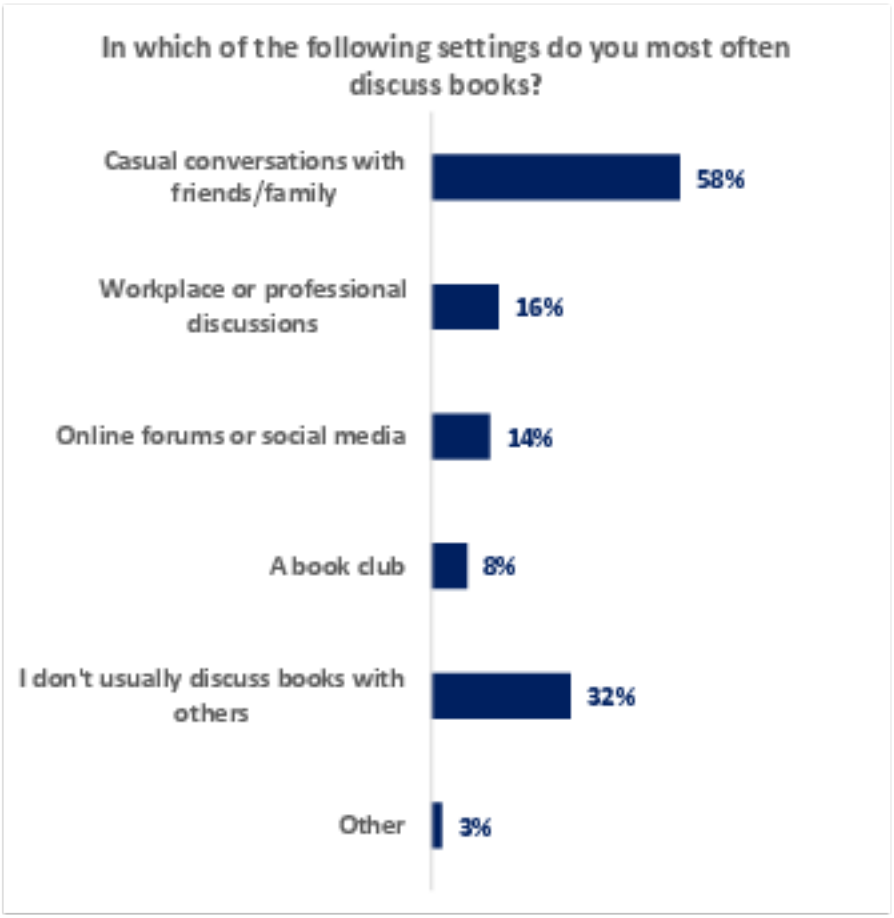
Discussing books

58% of readers discuss books as part of casual conversations with friends or family.

16% discuss books at the workplace or in professional discussions.

14% discuss in online forums.

32% said they don't usually discuss books with others.



Base: Read book in past 12 months n=654

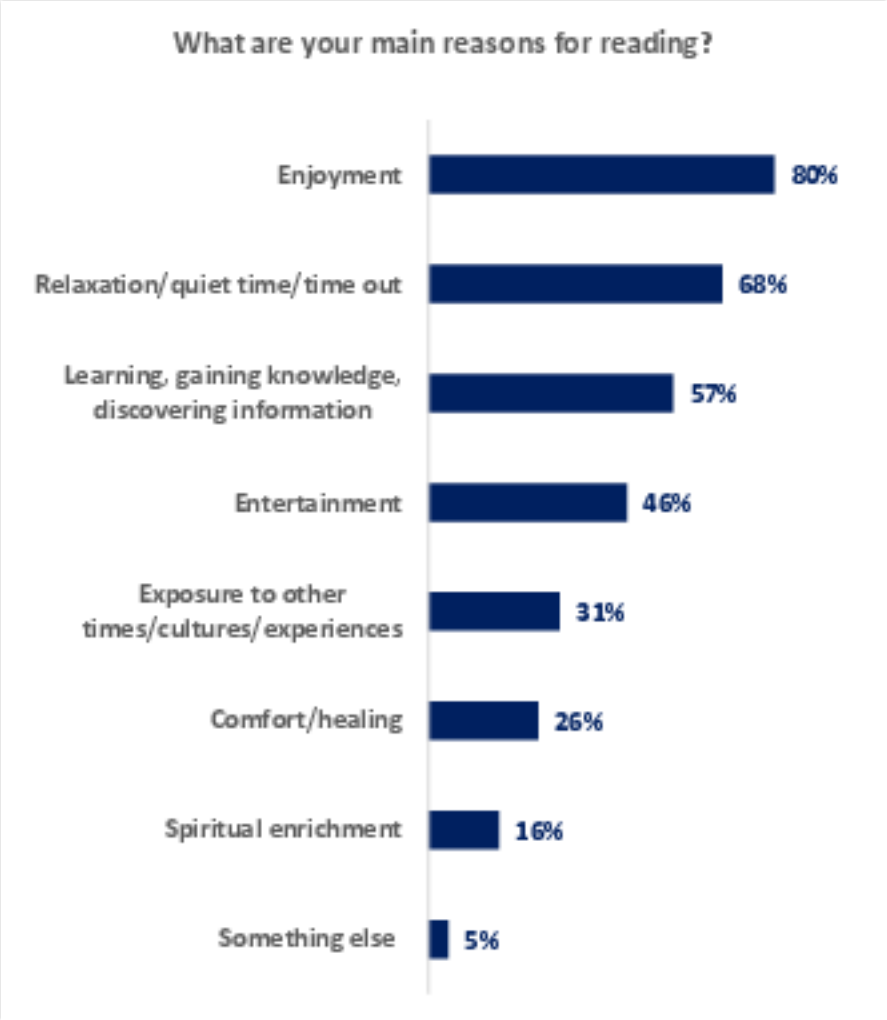
There are some differences across age groups with settings in which they discuss books. Under 35 year olds are more likely to discuss books in an online forum or at a book club.

In which of the following settings do you most often discuss books?	All readers	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
Casual conversations with friends/family	58%	53%	55%	64%	55%	60%
Workplace or professional discussions	16%	19%	21%	9%	18%	13%
Online forums or social media	14%	25%	18%	3%	16%	11%
A book club	8%	16%	5%	7%	7%	9%
I don't usually discuss books with others	32%	30%	35%	32%	34%	31%
Other	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%
N (unweighted)	654	158	215	281	305	347

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

Reasons for reading

When asked why they read, **80%** said it was for enjoyment and **68%** said it was to relax/have quiet time/time out.



Base: Read book in past 12 months n=653

Older readers re more likely to say they read for enjoyment and relaxation.

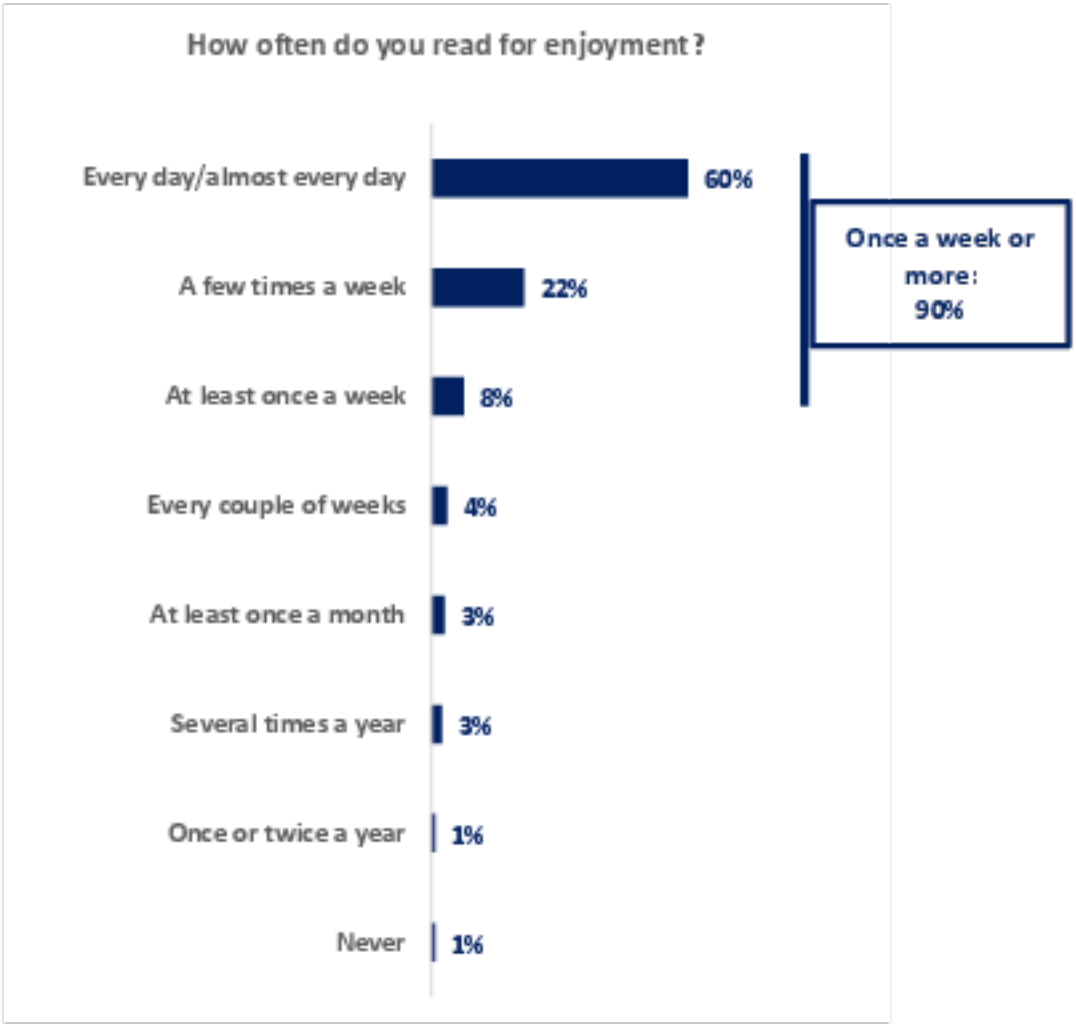
What are your main reasons for reading?	All readers	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
Enjoyment	80%	63%	83%	89%	75%	85%
Relaxation/quiet time/time out	68%	55%	65%	79%	62%	74%
Learning, gaining knowledge, discovering information	57%	47%	59%	61%	58%	57%
Entertainment	46%	46%	46%	47%	7%	9%
Exposure to other times/cultures/experiences	31%	28%	26%	36%	34%	31%
Comfort/healing	26%	33%	26%	21%	23%	28%
Spiritual enrichment	16%	21%	16%	14%	14%	19%
Something else	5%	3%	5%	5%	4%	5%
N (unweighted)	654	158	214	281	305	347

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

Reading for enjoyment

80% of readers say they read for enjoyment. Out of this group **90%** of them read for enjoyment at once a week or more and they read on average **4.5 days** a week.

- **60%** read every day/almost every day.



Base: Read for enjoyment n=524

47% of under 35 year olds read for enjoyment every day/almost every day.

50% of 35-54 year olds read every day/almost every day.

72% of 55+ year olds read every day/almost every day.

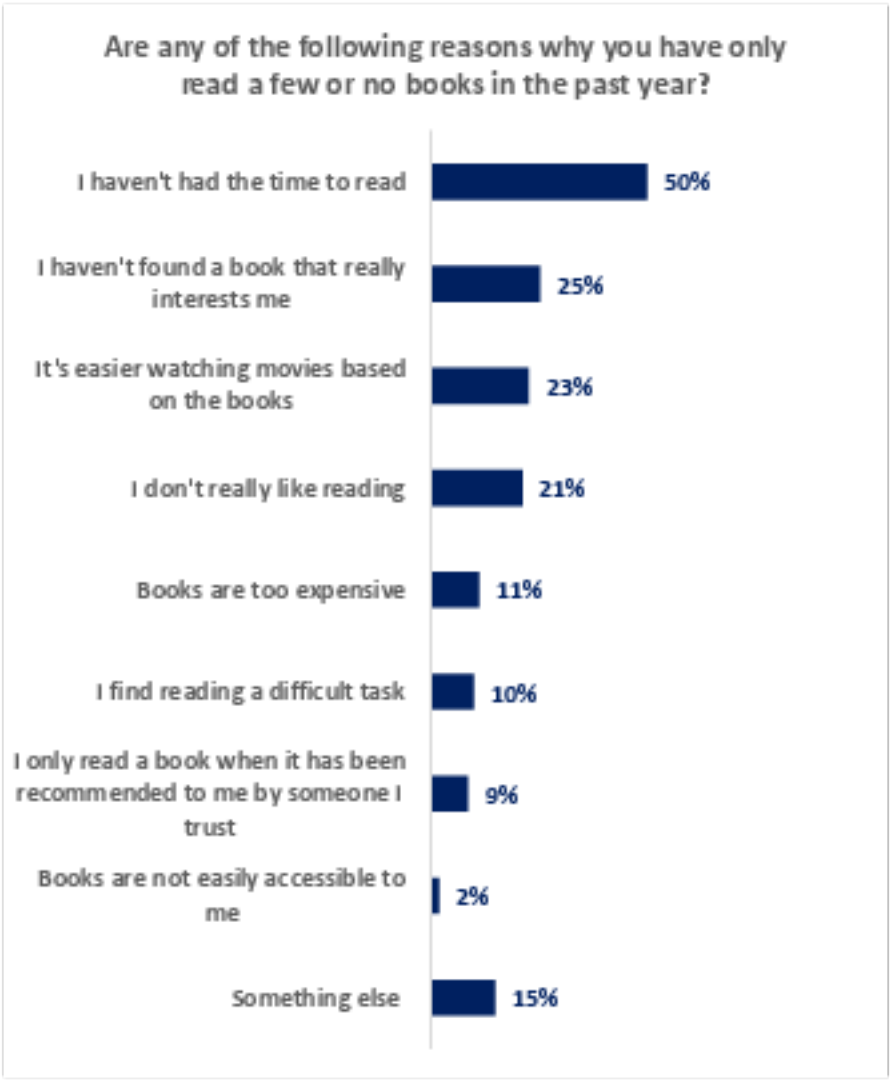
Reasons for not reading

50% of people who have read less than 3 books in the past 12 months said it was due to not having time to read.

25% have not found a book that interests them.

23% find it easier to watch movies based on books.

21% don't like reading.



Base: Read less than 3 books in past 12 months

15% said that their reasons for reading a few was due to something else and were asked to write down why. The list of answers is in Appendix 3.

There are few differences across groups of non-readers apart from **39%** of 18-24 year olds who don't really like reading.

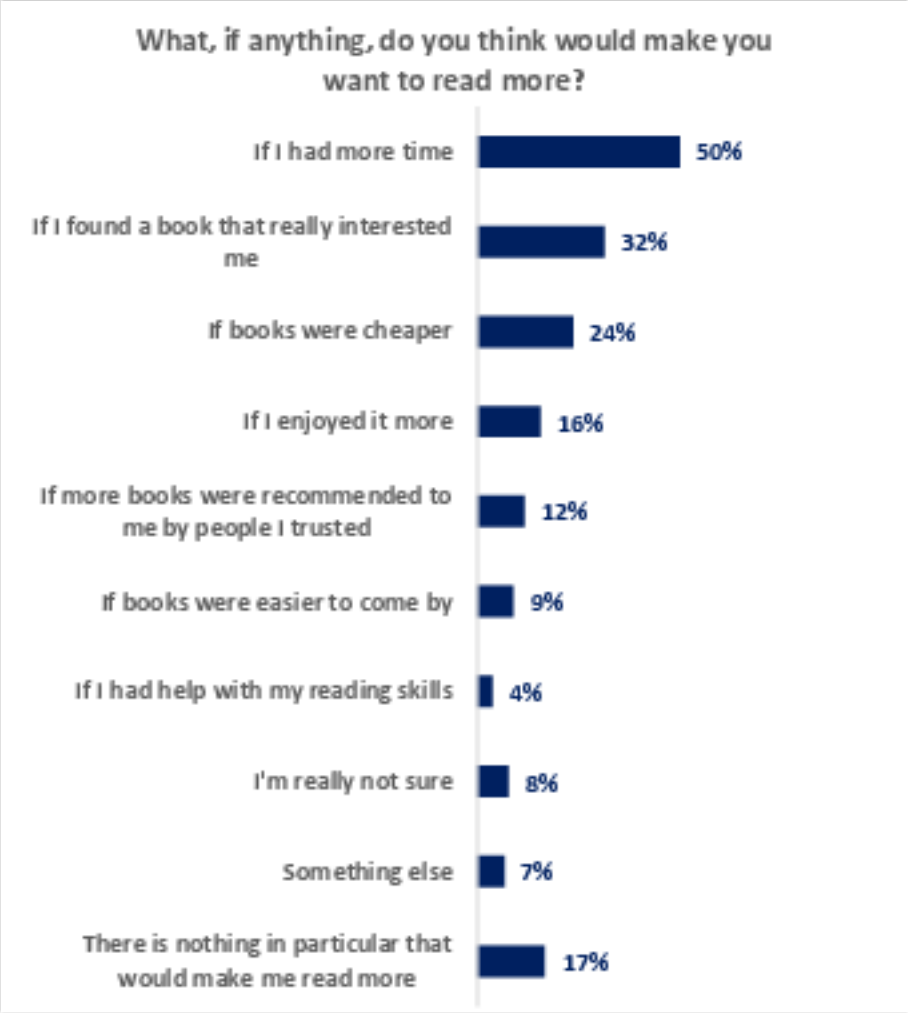
People more likely to say they don't have time to read are:

- 25-34 year olds – **62%**
- Household income between $50k-$150k a year – **59%**
- Two parent family, one or two children at home – **63%.**

What would make people read more?

All respondents were asked what would make them want to read more. Time is the biggest factor with **50%** saying *If I had more time*.

32% said if they *found a book that interested them* and **24%** mentioned *if books were cheaper*.



Base: Total Sample n=1,018

62% of 35-54 year olds would read more if they had time and **30%** of under 35s said they would read more if they enjoyed it more.

10% of under 35s said they would read more of they had help with reading skills.

What, if anything, do you think would make you want to read more?	All readers	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
If I had more time	50%	51%	62%	40%	45%	56%
If I found a book that really interested me	32%	38%	35%	23%	35%	28%
If books were cheaper	24%	24%	26%	22%	22%	26%
If I enjoyed it more	16%	30%	16%	4%	18%	13%
If more books were recommended to me by people I trusted	12%	16%	11%	9%	13%	11%
If books were easier to come by	9%	11%	10%	7%	11%	7%
If I had help with my reading skills	4%	10%	3%	1%	6%	1%
I'm really not sure	8%	5%	7%	11%	8%	8%
Something else	7%	4%	5%	11%	7%	7%
There is nothing in particular that would make me read more	17%	6%	12%	30%	21%	13%
N (unweighted)	1,018	295	337	386	494	520

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

What motivates people to read?

Respondents were shown a list of statements and asked which applied to them. The statements in the table below have been split into three themes.

55+ year olds and females are more likely to have chosen statements about enjoying reading.

Under 35s are more likely to have said that they are not sure what books interest them (**17%** vs **9%** for total sample).

13% of under 35s also say that books are too long which stops them from reading.

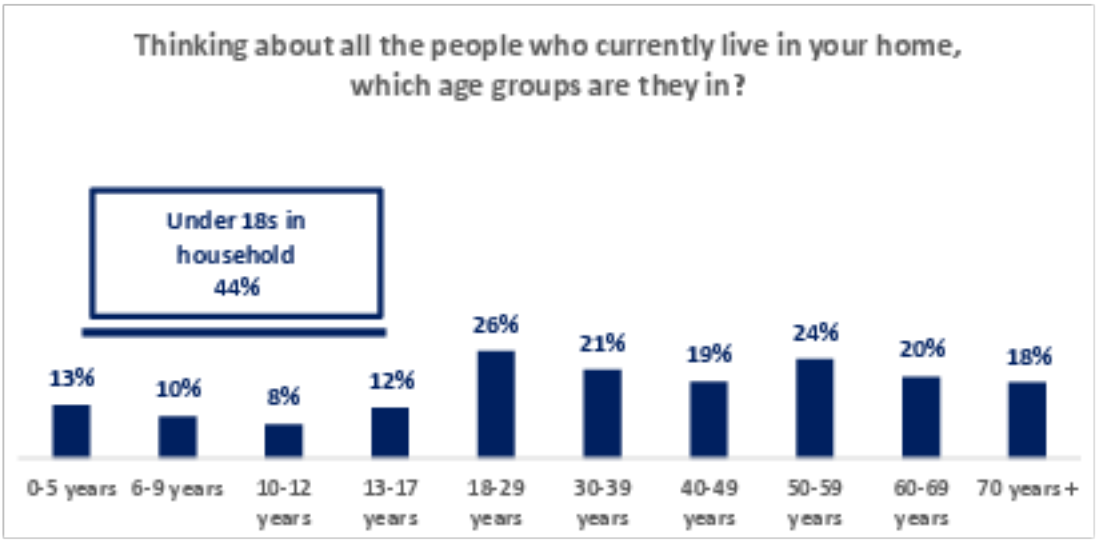
Overall, males are less likely to enjoy reading or have motivations to read.

	All	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
Reading enjoyment/motivation to read						
I really enjoy reading	52%	33%	51%	68%	43%	61%
The time spent reading a book is worthwhile	50%	35%	48%	63%	43%	57%
I want to read	49%	40%	48%	57%	40%	57%
I find it easy to read	46%	29%	41%	63%	40%	51%
Reading improves my mental health and well-being	43%	33%	47%	48%	36%	50%
Reading helps me understand different life experiences	36%	27%	37%	43%	28%	44%
Reading can help me sleep	32%	26%	34%	36%	26%	39%
Finding books I enjoy is easy	32%	22%	30%	41%	25%	39%
I am a fast reader	30%	28%	28%	34%	23%	37%
I'll read a book if I get one as a gift	29%	30%	25%	32%	25%	34%
Reading improves my concentration	27%	28%	26%	27%	25%	29%
I finish every book I start	26%	14%	21%	40%	24%	28%
Reading boosts my creativity	23%	25%	28%	19%	20%	26%
I can find out about books I want to read on social media	15%	19%	18%	10%	11%	19%
Influences						
I grew up with books in my home/family	56%	41%	54%	70%	51%	61%
Those important to me do see reading as valuable	27%	22%	29%	29%	23%	30%
Barriers to reading						
I wish I had more time to read	41%	42%	49%	34%	36%	46%
I'm not sure what books would really interest me	9%	17%	9%	3%	12%	6%
Books are usually too long and this stops me from reading	9%	13%	10%	5%	11%	7%
N (unweighted)	1,022	296	339	387	497	521

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

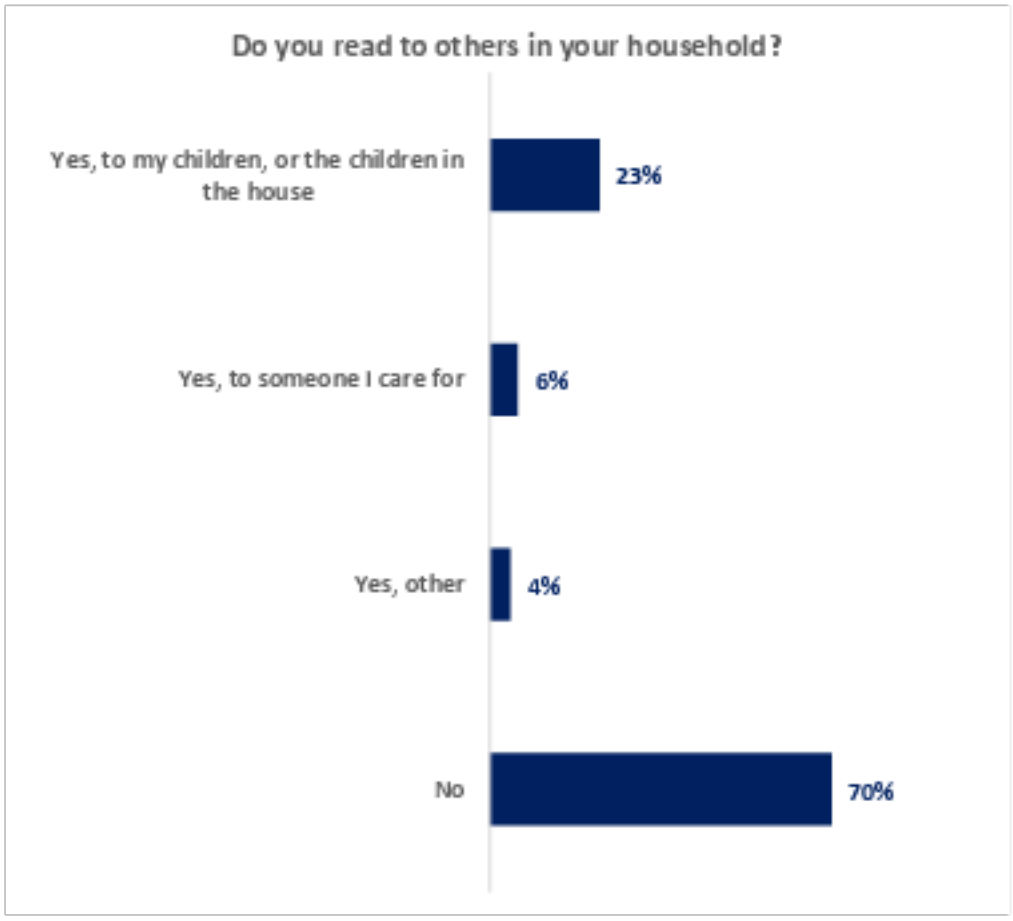
Reading in home

44% of respondents said they have people under 17 living in their household.



Base: Total Sample N=1,005

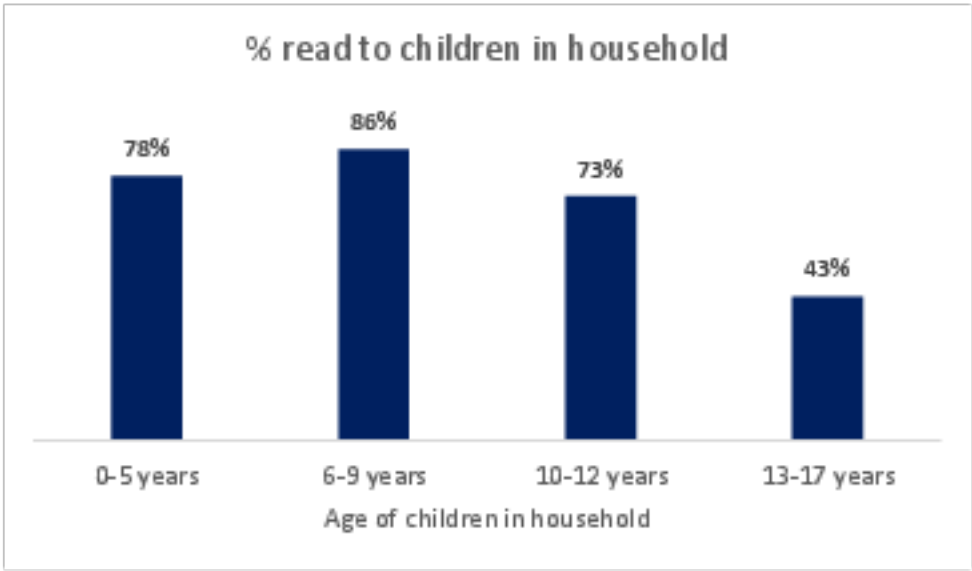
23% read to children in their household.



Base: Total Sample N=1,005

78% of children under 6 are read to at home. This goes up to **86%** of 6-9 year olds.

43% of 13-17 year olds are read to at home.

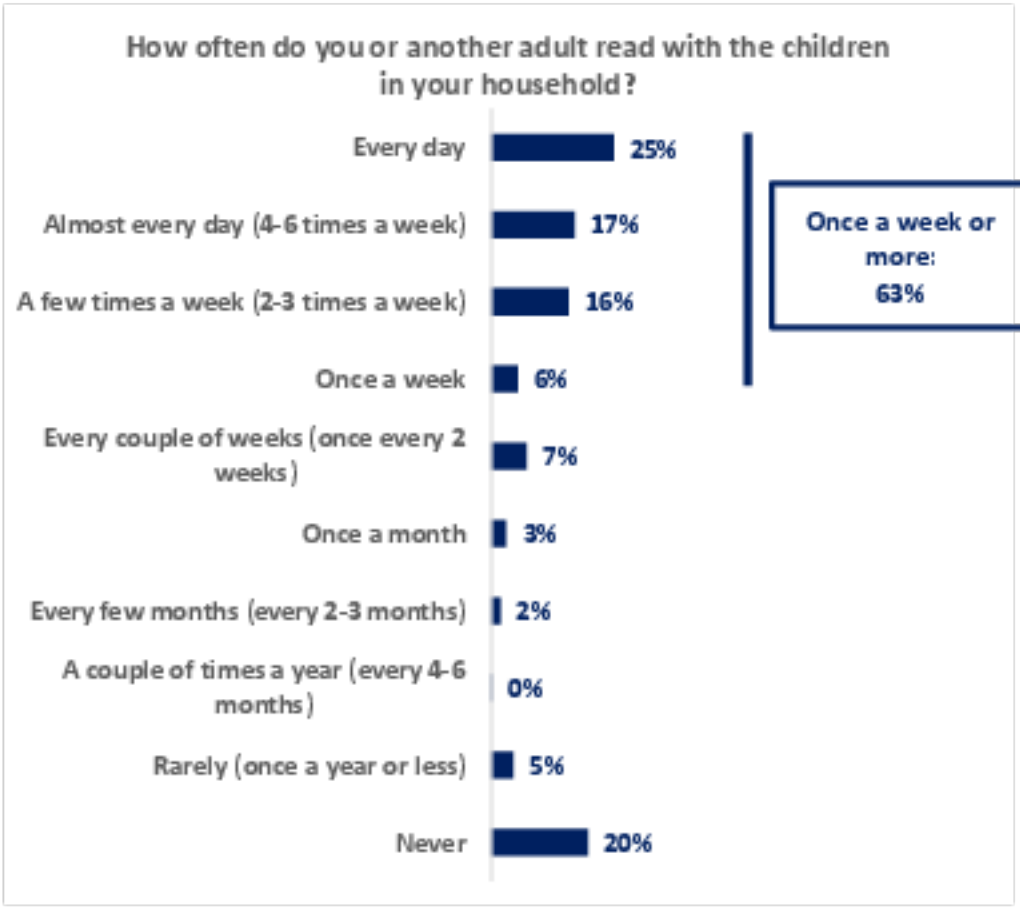


Reading to children in household

On average, people read to children (under 17 years) in their household **3 times a week.**

63% said they read to their children once a week or more.

20% never read to their children.



Base: Have children aged 17 and under in household n=303

78% of adults with children aged 0-5 read to them once a week or more and **39%** read to them every day.

This starts to drop with **66%** of adults with children aged 10-12 reading to them once a week or more and **46%** with children aged 13-17 years.

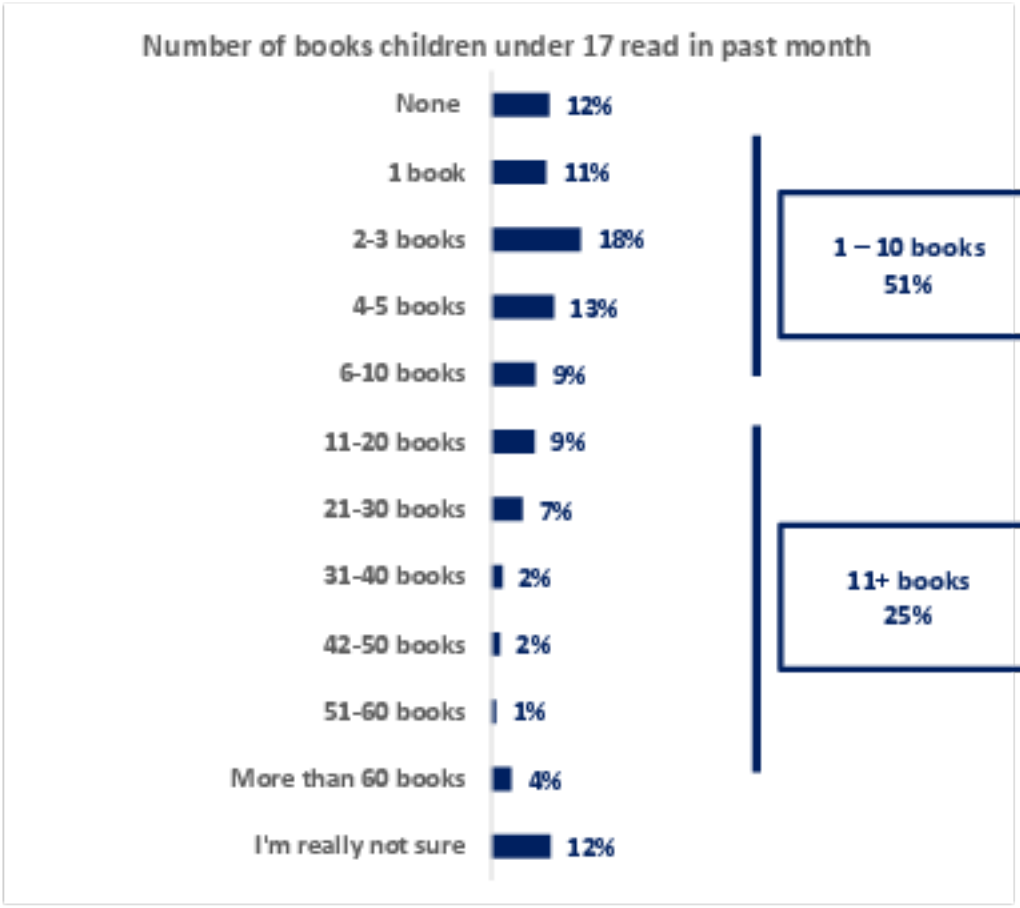
How often do you or another adult read with the children in your household?		Age of children in household			
	ALL	0-5 years	6-9 years	10-12 years	13-17 years
Every day	25%	39%	33%	16%	9%
Almost every day (4-6 times a week)	17%	19%	20%	27%	16%
A few times a week (2-3 times a week)	16%	16%	17%	11%	14%
Once a week	6%	4%	7%	12%	7%
Once a week or more	**63%**	**78%**	**77%**	**66%**	**46%**
Every couple of weeks (once every 2 weeks)	7%	6%	15%	10%	7%
Once a month	3%	3%	1%	5%	3%
Every few months (every 2-3 months)	2%	1%	1%	7%	5%
A couple of times a year (every 4-6 months)	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Rarely (once a year or less)	5%	3%	1%	3%	7%
Never	20%	10%	6%	10%	32%
Average number of times per week	**3.1**	**4.2**	**3.9**	**2.9**	**1.9**
N (unweighted)	303	127	101	84	124

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

Number of books children have read in past month

76% of children 17 or under have read at least one book in the past month.

- **51%** have read up to 10 books
- **25%** 11 or more books
- **12%** haven't read any.



Base: Have children aged 17 and under in household n=303

On average children 17 or under have read or had read to them **9.8 books** in the past month.

17% of 13-17 year olds have not read a book or had a book read to them in the past month and on average have had **5.6 books** read to them.

Households with 6-9 year olds have read or been read the most books in a month – **15.2 books.**

Thinking about the child (under 17) in your household who will be next to have a birthday, approximately how many books have they read, or have you read with them, in the past month?	ALL	Age of children in household			
		0-5 years	6-9 years	10-12 years	13-17 years
None	12%	10%	5%	7%	17%
1 book	11%	8%	9%	12%	14%
2-3 books	18%	16%	19%	18%	19%
4-5 books	13%	9%	14%	16%	16%
6-10 books	9%	13%	11%	11%	5%
1-10 books	**51%**	**46%**	**53%**	**56%**	**55%**
11-20 books	9%	10%	11%	11%	4%
21-30 books	7%	11%	7%	2%	3%
31-40 books	2%	3%	4%	3%	1%
42-50 books	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%
51-60 books	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%
More than 60 books	4%	8%	9%	1%	1%
11+ books	**25%**	**35%**	**34%**	**20%**	**12%**
I'm really not sure	12%	9%	8%	17%	15%
Average number of books a month	**9.8**	**14.6**	**15.2**	**7.5**	**5.6**
N (unweighted)	303	127	101	84	124

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

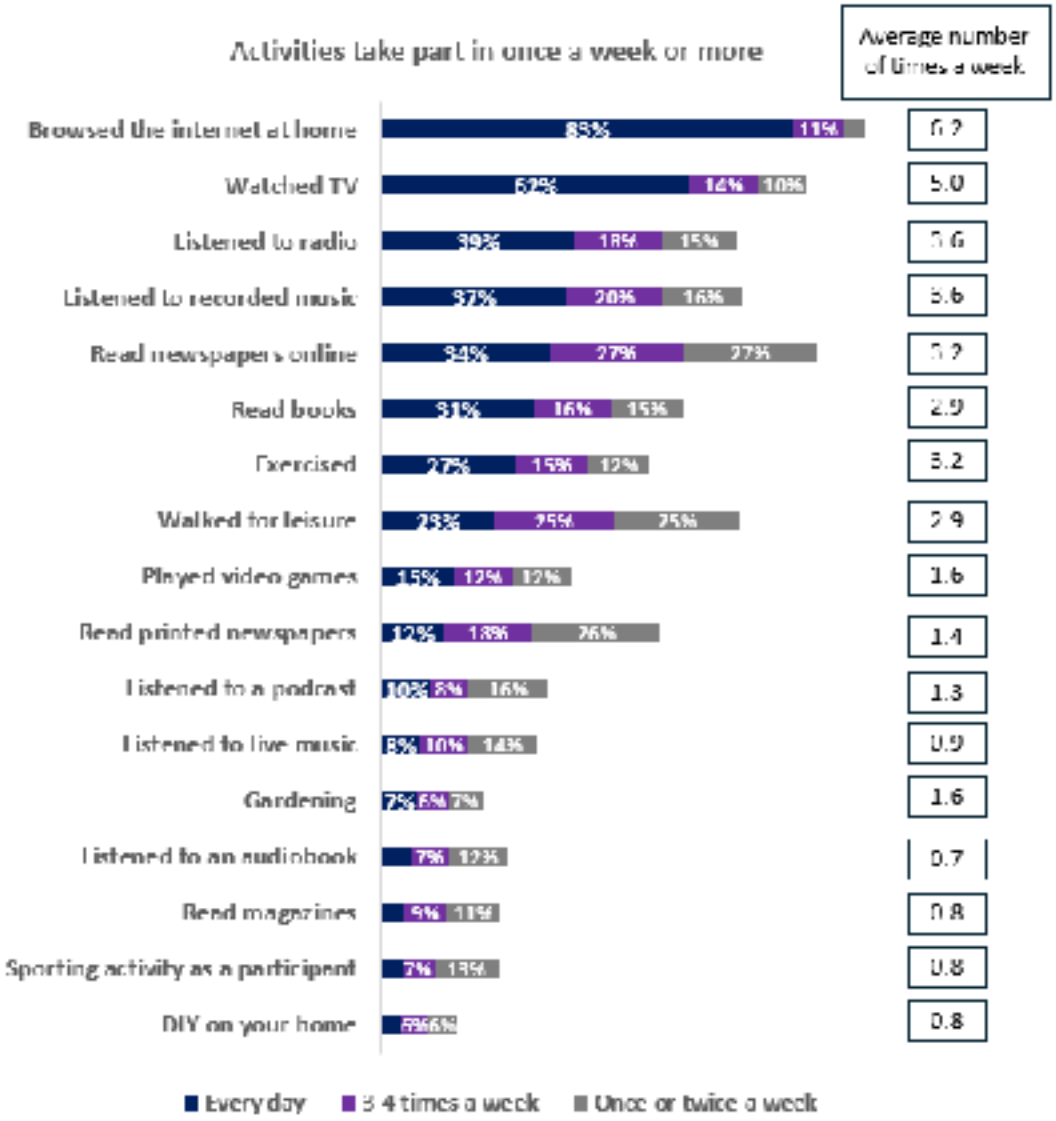
Activities engaged in the past 12 months

Respondents were asked which activities they had engaged in during the past 12 months and how frequently.

Browsing the internet at home is the activity people engaged in the most. **83%** browsed at home every day and on average **6.2** times a week.

31% read a book every day and on average **2.9** times a week.

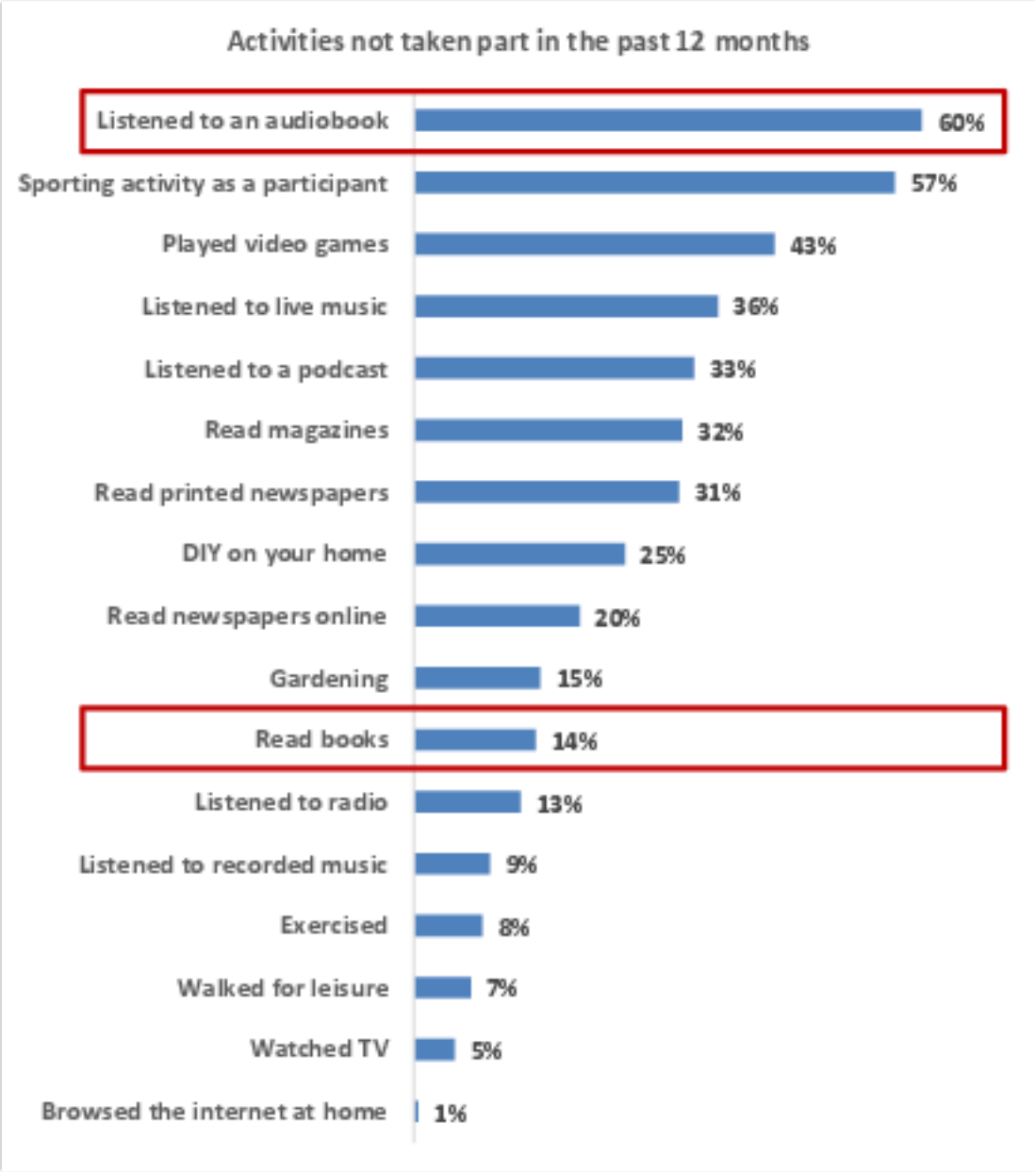
6% listened to an audio book every day and just less than once a week on average.



Base: Total sample

Overall, reading books is big part of New Zealander's lives, with **86%** saying they have read books in the past 12 months. **14%** have never read a book in the past 12 months.

60% said they have never listened to an audiobook in the past 12 months.



Base: Total sample

Under 35s are less likely to read books frequently.

44% of people aged 55+ read every day.

In the past 12 months, approximately how often would you say you have engaged in the following activities?	Read books					
	All readers	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
Every day	31%	19%	26%	44%	27%	35%
3-4 times a week	15%	15%	16%	15%	15%	15%
Once or twice a week	12%	15%	15%	8%	12%	12%
Once a month	12%	16%	12%	9%	12%	11%
Once every 2-3 months	5%	9%	5%	2%	5%	4%
Once every 4-6 months	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Once every 7-12 months	6%	6%	6%	6%	7%	5%
Never in the past 12 months	14%	18%	15%	11%	17%	12%
N (unweighted)	1,018	295	337	386	494	520

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

People under 35 are more likely to have listened to an audio book in the past 12 months.

77% of people aged 55+ have never listened to an audiobook in the past 12 months.

In the past 12 months, approximately how often would you say you have engaged in the following activities?	Listened to an audiobook					
	All readers	Under 35 years	35-54 years	55+ years	Male	Female
Every day	6%	9%	7%	3%	6%	6%
3-4 times a week	6%	8%	7%	3%	7%	5%
Once or twice a week	6%	8%	8%	2%	7%	4%
Once a month	6%	9%	6%	4%	6%	6%
Once every 2-3 months	6%	7%	8%	3%	6%	6%
Once every 4-6 months	4%	5%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Once every 7-12 months	7%	7%	8%	5%	6%	7%
Never in the past 12 months	60%	47%	53%	77%	58%	62%
N (unweighted)	1,006	296	334	376	486	516

BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

Appendix 1 - Sample

The survey was of 1,024 adults (18+) who are members of the nationwide HorizonPoll and Horizon Research Māori panels, and a third-party respondent panel (used for source diversity). The survey was conducted between 17 and 23 March, 2025.

The total sample is weighted on age, gender, personal income, ethnicity, education and region to match the adult population and, at a 95% confidence level, has an overall margin of error of ±3.1%.

Contact

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Graeme Colman, telephone 021 84 85 76, email gcolman@horizonresearch.co.nz.

Appendix 2 - How did you first hear about the books you read in the past 12 months? – *Something else* answers

Email picks I have notated through i.e. Amazon etc
Pick up cheap at markets
Continuing with a series
Given to me
Publishers list
Auckland Libraries website
Kids show
On the shelf
swapping from a neighbourhood book shelf
I usually read all the Whitcoulls Joan's picks books plus a few other recommendations
Gifts
Goodreads, Libby
Browsing in op shop. Titles I had heard of over the years.
Browsed library
Follow the authors
I SAW THEM IN THE LIBRARY
saw them and liked the author
I read the books my partner selects generally
Casual reading
Recommended on website online
Free book library
2nd hand book stalls.
Books from previously read authors
Announcement by the author
Book shop newsletter
following authors
Authors I have followed for several years, I look out for these in 2nd hand shops
Publisher emails
Opportunity shops
Buy certain authors
Browsing op shop
Church recommended
Authors I was familiar with
OFFERED BY BOOK REVIEWING PLATFORMS
Browsing in library. Librarians picks or on display.
Given to me
Own library
Used book sales
Narrative Muse. Email newsletters. Magazines.
Recommended reads on e-reader, next in series by author I already know
Recommended by another author
Podcast interviewees who have written books
I started reading the first few in a series, then carried on reading the rest
Specific Authors

Subscribing to specific writer's substack blogs & following up the authors they interview
Browsing in op shop
Author mentioned in a YouTube video I was watching
Second hand book sales
It was there at dentist when I was waiting for my appointment
Goodreads friends recommendations
Referenced as a source in history themed blogs
Googling fine print like Suntup, Conversation Tree, Amaranthine...
University library search. Supervisors recommendations.
Firstly knowledge or attracted to author and located books in second hand stores
Gifts
Goodreads
Favourite author
Personal opinion from friends
Found them at a friend's place
I already had them or my wife already had them
Looking in opshops.
Goodreads app
Reused in charity shop
Author on a Podcast
Browsing in an op shop.
Opportunity Shop
I've read them before
Game
Kindle recommendations
Pubby
studies
mum
Substack
Saw at a friend's house
I don't read book
AO3, Fanfiction
Library
Little Libraries
In room I was staying in
Friends
Never read books
Newspaper
Christian shop
They were in a freebies bin
Read them previously
New books by preferred authors
Something looked interesting to read
Given as present
Web site about author, followed books as released
Just stumbled across them.
Recommended by store
From Op Shop

Appendix 3 - Are any of the following reasons why you have only read a few or no books in the past year? – *Other* answers

Have been meaning to but other things have taken priority.
I used to read books a lot every year but now I guess I am looking at stuff on my computer and phone
A little bit of reading before bed, takes time to complete a book
Eye sight problem
I got out of the habit at about 18
Prefer a doco to fiction
I generally read books in the morning as I eat breakfast, but do other things at other time in the day
I have ADHD and struggle to concentrate
Generally I do not sit down and read a book but always check the local newspaper
My time is spent listening to podcasts
Laziness
If it is of interest to me
Always have something else to do
Online reading more now
I need prescription glasses
I'm just getting back into it and now reading every day
I read large amounts of material on the internet (including eBooks), so don't always have time for reading hard-copy books.
You Tube
I am teaching my daughter to read
Have cataracts and waiting for surgery
Limited attention span
I'm dyslexic so it takes me a long time to read things
I tend to fall a sleep when reading
I fall asleep
Too many other choices on the internet
I am heavily medicated and reading a book is exhausting and my concentration is very limited. I used to read all the time but that was many years ago now.
I read my Bible every day which often takes two hours to check all the Books in the Bible (there are 66 books there.
Procrastination. I want to but always forget
Can't stay awake to read
Reading becomes more difficult as your eyes get old
LOST THE HABIT...
I've found it hard to concentrate on a book recently
Browse through my phone
I forget about the book and pick it up again when I find the time
I like reading but it's not my first go to option. I'd have to have exhausted my other options before I'd sit down and read a book
Have aphasia
I read newspapers, or the occasional magazine
I prefer audiobooks

I was forced to read a lot when I was young, and ended up hating reading for the rest of my life.
Getting older - needing glasses in bed is a pain. Also after Covid I found it harder to read and not everything has returned to pre Covid.
Spend too much time on phone
Social media taken over
I will read for relaxation, usually on holiday more often an autobiography.
I'm complicated. I only read when in the mood
Reading puts me to sleep. It is difficult to get through a book
It's normally a holiday activity
Only tend to read books at night before going to sleep or on holiday.
Not enough spare time
I always have a book in the car to read while waiting for appointments, etc
I blame my cell phone
I have two small children that don't allow much time for reading these days. I do love to read books
Being burnt out at work stopped me liking to read