





THESIS





RECREATIONAL READING HABITS OF 462 JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS  
IN A CENTRAL MICHIGAN CITY

by  
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A THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate School of Michigan  
State College of Agriculture and Applied  
Science in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Sociology

1940



LIBRARY

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### Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express her gratitude to the principal of John Doe Junior High School who made this study possible, to the teachers and pupils who so willingly cooperated in filling out the questionnaires, to Dr. Ernest B. Harper, Dr. James F. Thaden and Dr. Duane Gibson of the Sociology Department, Michigan State College, who have been of invaluable aid in methodology, to the librarians who have so agreeably given of their time and information, to the office girls who mimeographed the questionnaires, and to my roommate who has patiently retyped pages and checked tables.

E.M.F.



## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

The average person of junior high school age has many leisure hours which may be spent in many different ways, reading being one of the more important and socially significant. "By the age of 15, the reading interests of both boys and girls are more or less definitely formed," says William S. Scott.<sup>1</sup> This same truth is stated in the report of the Subcommittee on Children's Reading representing the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection.<sup>2</sup> The committee found that most people began to lose interest in books at 14 or 15, which they attribute to a failure to develop new reading interests as our boys and girls grow older.

It has also been proven that adolescence is the period of most rapid reading, many young people reading several books a week in addition to their school work. Consequently, since the junior high school, age 12-15, is the period during which recreational reading seems to reach its height a study of the interests of junior high school reading should prove of value in showing not only what is read during this period, but also the factors which make reading of interest.

Reading is a means by which people can expand beyond their immediate environment. It can, therefore, be a potent factor

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<sup>1</sup>Gray, William Scott and Munroe, Ruth, READING INTERESTS AND HABITS OF ADULTS. New York: MacMillan Co. 1930, p. 113

<sup>2</sup>Kilam, Carl H. Chairman, Children's Reading. Report of the Subcommittee on Reading of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. New York: Century Co. 1932 p. 7

in shaping public opinion. While it lacks the vividness of the movie and the convenience of the radio, yet reading is something which is becoming more and more universal. With the increase of leisure time among adults it is more possible for them to read books as well as newspapers and magazines. If we can determine what motives induce junior high school boys and girls to read, we may be able to create similar incentives in later life, thus promoting more reading among adults.

The purposes of this study are, therefore, first to learn the reading habits of junior high school pupils through questionnaires filled out by seventh, eighth, and ninth grade pupils; second to determine the amount of time spent on reading in comparison with time spent listening to the radio and attending movies. Next, the reading habits of junior high school pupils will be compared by grade, chronological age, by scholastic attainment, by economic level, and by race. A fourth purpose involves a study of authorities recommending reading material, and an analysis of the pupil's basis for choosing books and magazines in the effort to discover the factors most influential in determining selection of material. Finally some effort will be made to ascertain how recreational reading influences the ideals of adolescents by portraying their heroes, and to appraise the values which they claim to derive from reading.

### The Setting

This study was carried on in 1940 in a junior high school, which we shall call John Doe Junior High School, having an en-

rollment of 1,400 pupils, located in central Michigan in a metropolitan area. The pupils come from the worst slums as well as from the finest homes in the city. The majority however, are children of industrial workers in moderate circumstances. Twenty five of the pupils filling out questionnaires were negroes while one or both parents of seventy-seven were born in Europe. There were only two foreign-born children, one a Hungarian girl who came to this country when she was in the eighth grade, the other an American, who was born in Berlin while her father was consul there.

John Doe Junior High School is fortunate in having a full-time librarian and a library of its own. The personal charm of the librarian has much to do with the children following her suggestions with regard to reading.

#### Methods Used to Obtain Data

During the school year, 1938-39, for nine consecutive weeks, questionnaires such as the one following were given out to about 40 seventh graders, 125 eighth graders, and 35 ninth graders.

#### Weekly Questionnaire

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

How much time did you spend reading on school days? \_\_Sat. & Sun.?\_\_

Newspapers read:

Check the parts of the paper read: Make an "x" if you read it

every day; an "o" if you read it some; a "-" if not at all.

Headlines    Crime News    Editorials    Sports    Ads    Comics

Dorothy Dix    Society    Foreign News    National News    Local News

Continued Story	Theatre Page	Financial Page
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
5	5	5
6	6	6
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91	91	91
92	92	92
93	93	93
94	94	94
95	95	95
96	96	96
97	97	97
98	98	98
99	99	99
100	100	100

Name any other parts:

[illegible]

<u>Books read:</u>	Title	Author	Favorite Character
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<u>Movies attended this week:</u>	
<u>Name of Movie</u>	<u>Character you liked best</u>

What radio programs have you heard this week?

With this weekly questionnaire as a basis, a tentative longer questionnaire was submitted to several students. After going over these the following questionnaire was drawn up. These were given in 7A and 9A Social Studies classes and in 8A



home rooms. With the seventh grade the questions were carefully explained as the pupils filled in the blanks. In the other grades the sheets were handed to the pupils and they filled them out with no help. A total of 800 were given out, 709 of which returned.

### Questionnaire

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Address\_\_\_\_\_ White\_\_\_ Colored\_\_\_ Home Room\_\_\_\_\_  
 Birth Date\_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace\_\_\_\_\_ Have you ever failed a grade?\_\_\_\_  
 Which ones?\_\_\_\_\_

Check Honor Roll you were on last marking period. 1st\_\_\_ 2nd\_\_\_  
 3rd\_\_\_ None\_\_\_

Country of Mother's birth.\_\_\_\_\_ Language your Mother reads\_\_\_

Country of Father's birth.\_\_\_\_\_ Language your Father reads\_\_\_

Is your Father working?\_\_\_ If so, state definitely what he does,  
 as foreman at Olds\_\_\_\_\_

Is your Mother working away from home?\_\_\_ If so, state definitely  
 what she does.\_\_\_\_\_

Did your Mother finish grade school?\_\_\_ High School?\_\_\_ Attend  
 College?\_\_\_ Graduate from College?\_\_\_

Did your Father finish grade school?\_\_\_ High School?\_\_\_ Attend  
 College?\_\_\_ Graduate from College?\_\_\_

How much time do you spend reading for fun on school days?\_\_\_\_\_  
 Saturday?\_\_\_ Sunday?\_\_\_

Since starting school this fall how many times have you read  
 things suggested by

Your parents?\_\_\_ Your brothers or sisters?\_\_\_ Other relatives?\_\_\_

Radio?\_\_ Other adults?\_\_ Friends your own age?\_\_ Your  
 teachers?\_\_ Movies?\_\_ Librarians?\_\_ Ministers?\_\_  
 Advertisements?\_\_ Reviews?\_\_

Check your reasons for reading outside of school:

To please parents\_\_\_\_ Because you have nothing else to do\_\_\_\_  
 To please teachers\_\_\_\_ To be able to take part in conversa-  
 tion\_\_\_\_ To get information\_\_\_\_ Because your friends do  
 it\_\_\_\_ To forget your troubles\_\_\_\_ Because you like to  
 read\_\_\_\_ List any others\_\_\_\_\_

Can you read any language other than English?\_\_ If so, what?\_\_

How many movies have you attended in the past week?\_\_ The past  
 month?\_\_

How much time do you listen to the radio on school days?\_\_\_\_\_

Saturday\_\_\_\_\_ Sunday\_\_\_\_\_

Check any of the following you have at home: Cromptons\_\_\_\_  
 Britannica\_\_\_\_ International\_\_\_\_ Book of Knowledge\_\_\_\_  
 Americana\_\_\_\_ List any other encyclopedias:\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have papers or magazines in any foreign language at home?\_\_  
 Name of foreign publication\_\_\_\_\_  
 Language in which it is written\_\_\_\_ Members of family read-  
 ing it\_\_\_\_\_

How many books did you read last week?\_\_ The past month?\_\_\_\_\_

Check the places from which you get your books: School library\_\_\_\_  
 Other library\_\_ Friends\_\_ At Home\_\_ Gifts\_\_ Purchase\_\_\_\_\_

How do you decide which books and magazines to read?\_\_\_\_\_

List the book you liked best which you have read during this  
 school year:

Title	Author	Favorite Character
_____	_____	_____

Name two of your favorite characters from magazines, books, or  
 newspapers:

Character_____	Why do you like him?_____
"_____	"_____
"_____	"_____

What character would you like to resemble when you grow up?\_\_  
 Why\_\_\_\_\_

Check the kinds of books you like best: Put a "1" after your first choice; a "2" after your second choice; a "3" after your third; a "4" after your fourth; etc:-

Stories of Long Ago\_\_ Stories of Other Lands\_\_ Stories of School Life\_\_ Detective Stories\_\_ Adventure Stories\_\_ Animal Stories\_\_ Stories for Children\_\_ Love Stories\_\_

Do the same for the following:

Biography\_\_ Scientific Books\_\_ Historical Books\_\_ Travel Books\_\_ Religious Books\_\_ Fiction\_\_

List the newspapers you have at home:\_\_\_\_\_

Mark the parts of the paper you always read "x"; Mark the parts you sometimes read "o"; Mark the parts you never read "-".

Headlines\_\_ National News\_\_ Sports\_\_ Foreign News\_\_ Financial Page\_\_ Crime News\_\_ Theatre Page\_\_ Comics\_\_ Local News\_\_ Continued Story\_\_ Editorials\_\_ Dorothy Dix\_\_ Society\_\_ School News\_\_ Believe It or Not\_\_ Ads\_\_ Name any other parts which you read:\_\_\_\_\_

Magazines read:

DIRECTIONS: Check the first blank if you have this in your home regularly. Write the word "all" in the second blank if you read it all regularly; write "jokes", "ads", "stories", "pictures", "articles", "cartoons", if only that part of the magazine was read.

News Magazines

Commentator\_\_ Nations Business\_\_ Time\_\_ Literary Digest\_\_ Nition\_\_ Christian Century\_\_ New Republic\_\_ Pathfinder\_\_ News Week\_\_ Name any others:\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Romance Magazines

True Story\_\_ True Romances\_\_ True Confessions\_\_ Modern Romances\_\_ Ranch Romances\_\_ Western Story\_\_ Name any others:\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Picture Magazines

Life\_\_ Look\_\_ Click\_\_ Pic\_\_ Name any others:\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sports Magazines

Hunting and Fishing\_\_ Field and Stream\_\_ American Field\_\_ Name any others:\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Movie Magazines

Photoplay\_\_ Movie Magazine\_\_ Screenland\_\_ Name any others:\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Airplane Magazines

Flying Aces  
 Model Builders  
 Air Trails  
 Model Airplane News  
 Name any others:

Radio Magazines

Radio Guide  
 Radio Magazine  
 Name any others:

Monthly Magazines

Readers Digest  
 Atlantic Monthly  
 Harpers  
 Coronet  
 National Geographic  
 American  
 Ladies Home Journal  
 Good Housekeeping  
 Womans Home Companion  
 McCalls  
 Red Book  
 American Home  
 Pictorial Review  
 Better Homes and Gardens  
 Cosmopolitan  
 Delineator  
 House Beautiful  
 Fortune  
 Parents Magazine  
 Name any others:

General Weeklies

Colliers  
 Saturday Evening Post  
 Liberty  
 Name any others:

Young Folks Magazines

St. Nicholas  
 Child Life  
 Playmate  
 Wee Wisdom  
 American Boy  
 Boys Life  
 American Girl  
 Open Road for Boys  
 Name any others:

Science Magazines

Science  
 Popular Mechanics  
 Popular Science  
 Nature  
 Name any others:

Comic Magazines

Action Comics  
 Detective Comics  
 Fun Comics  
 Tiptop Comics  
 Name any others:

Detective Magazines

True Detective  
 Detective  
 Name any others:

Sunday School and Church Papers

List the ones you get:

Farm Magazines

Country Life  
 Horde's Dairyman  
 Name any others:

Lodge Magazines

List the ones you get:

How has reading been of value to you this school year? List as many ways as possible.

In addition to tabulated data from the questionnaires some recorded data such as library statistics have been included. Much information has come to the author through observation of her classes over the two year period, through watching reactions to new reading material put out in her room, and through chance interviews with pupils who wanted to talk about books or magazines.

### Method of Recording and Grouping Data

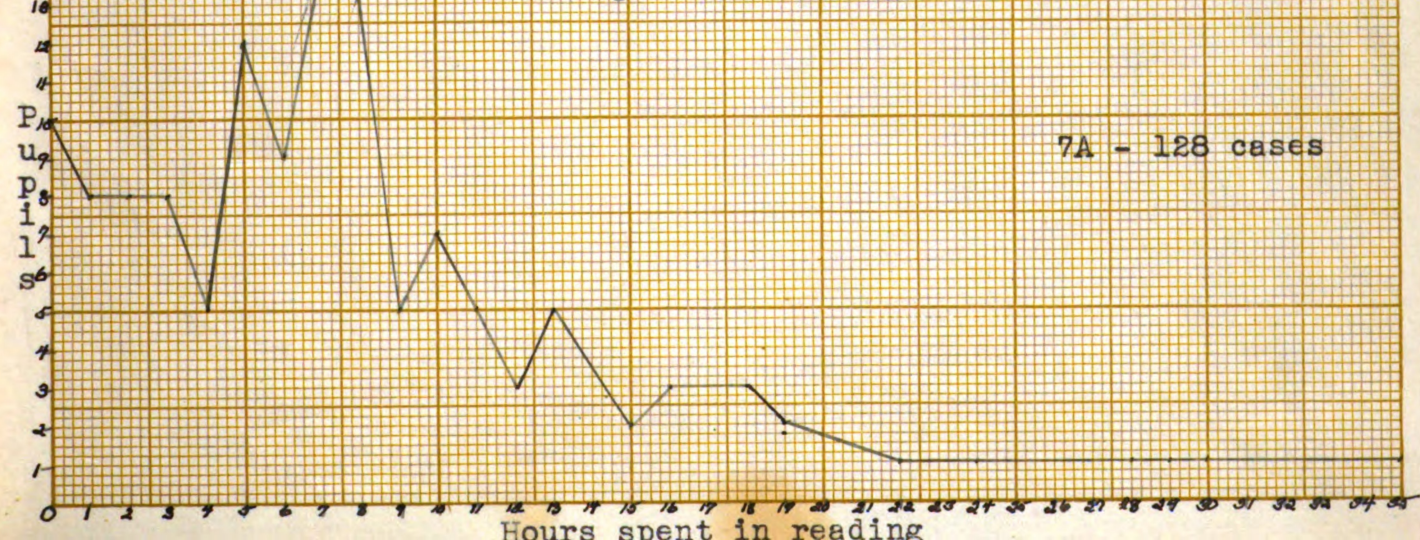
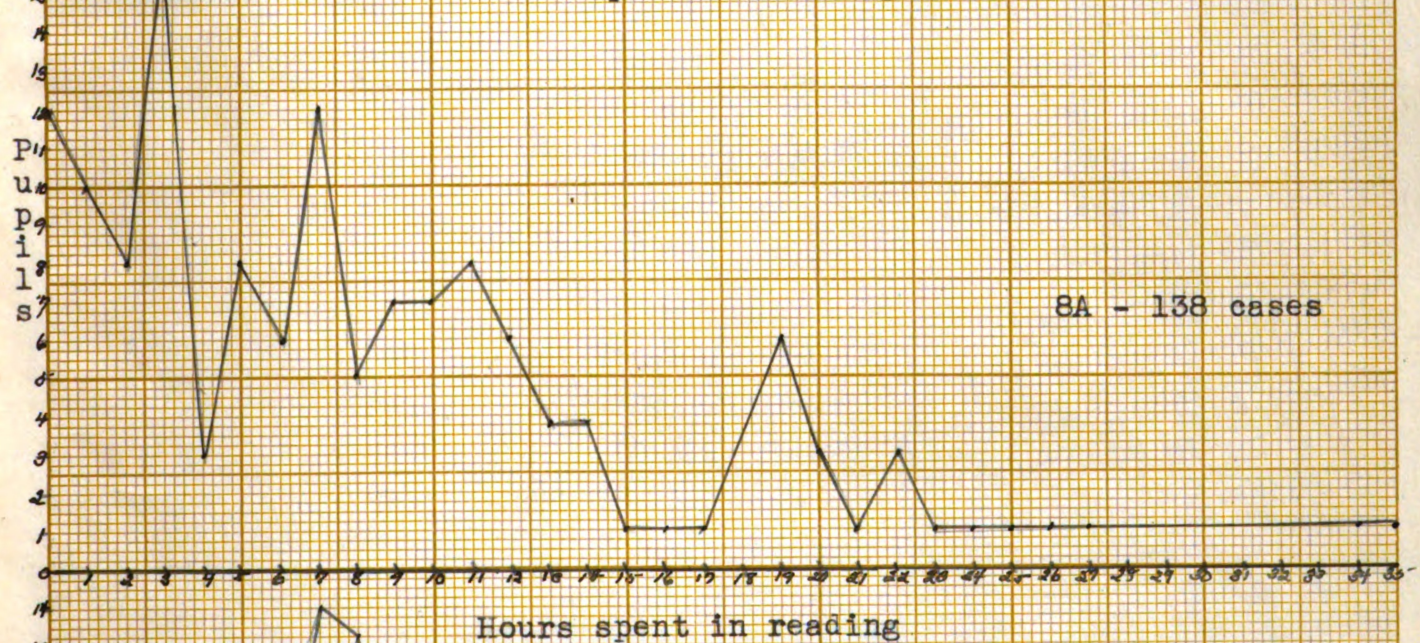
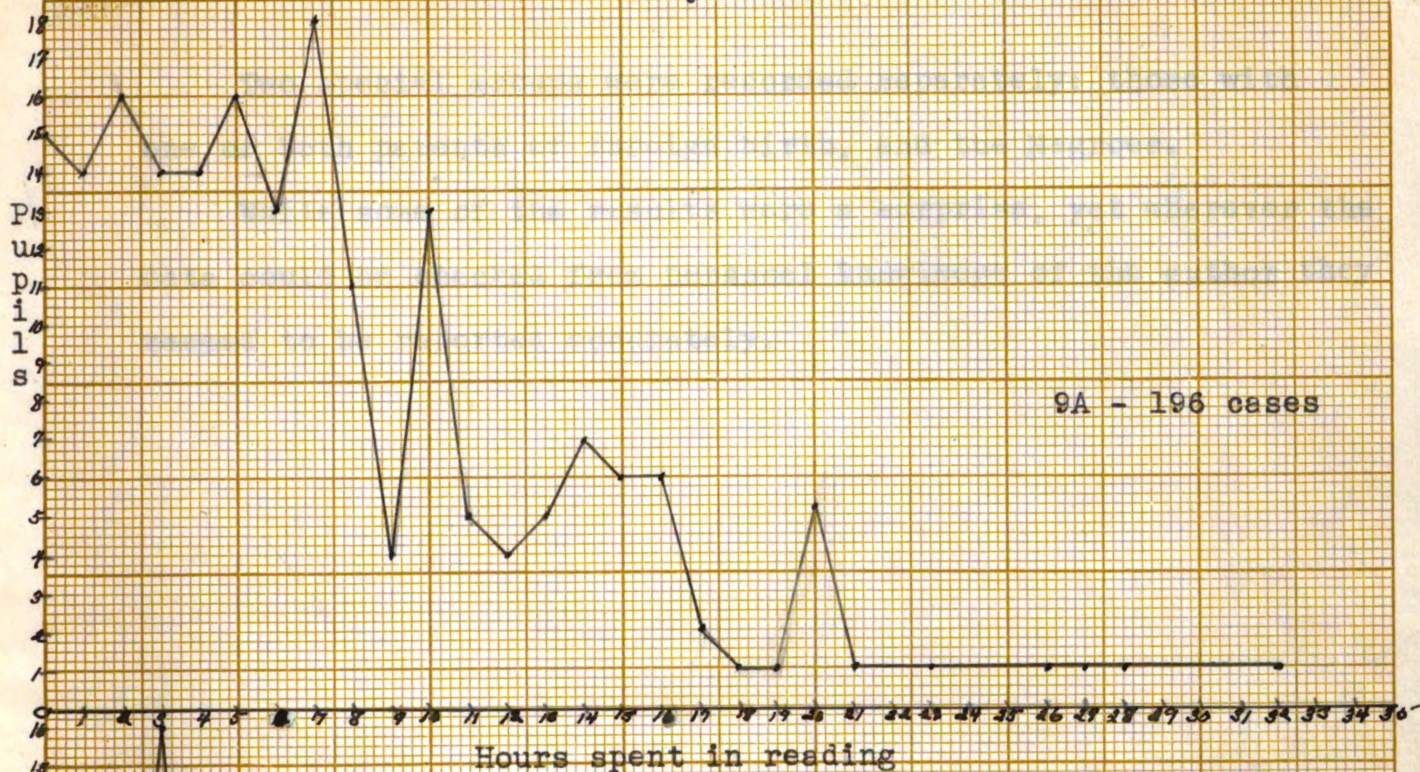
Since reading speeds vary considerably it was decided to group the questionnaires according to time spent on reading per week rather than on the basis of amount of material read. In 201 cases the time stated was indefinite or omitted entirely. Consequently these papers were eliminated. The schedules from children of native-born parents were further reduced by taking out those that were incomplete in many ways. This eliminated blanks from those pupils with the poorest intelligence, as they were unable to answer the questions. There remained a total of 462 questionnaires: 128 from the seventh grade, 138 from the eighth, and 196 from the ninth. The 462 remaining were then divided into five fairly equal groups, those reading from 0-2 hours per week in group I, 101 cases, from 3-5 hours in group II, 96 cases, from 6-8 hours in group III, 101 cases, from 9-14 hours in group IV, 99 cases, and 15 or more hours in group V, 65 cases. The mid-point, of seven hours per week, falls in group III. This coincides with the findings of Myron M. Stearns among Boy Scouts, who averaged one hour per day reading outside of school.<sup>1</sup> Graphs showing the time spent in reading are shown.

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<sup>1</sup>Milam, Carl H. Chairman, Children's Reading. Report of the Subcommittee on Reading of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection. New York: Century Co. 1932 p. 12



Graph A - Reading Time of Pupils  
All Cases by Grades





Two special groups were recorded separately: those with one or both parents of foreign birth, and the Negroes.

While some of the results were a surprise, yet wherever the data could be checked from personal knowledge of the author they seemed to be reported accurately.

## CHAPTER II - THE HOME SITUATION

"Bring a child up in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Surely home environment has much to do with a child's tastes in reading and his desire to do it. One of the reasons why children from foreign homes often fail in the early grades is a lack of knowledge of English. Even as late as the junior high school many of them still have difficulty with idioms and especially with grammar. This language difficulty will reflect itself in their reading, as few of them can read their parent's native tongue. As shown in Table I, of the 462 cases, 77 or 16 per cent had one or both parents of foreign birth. There were also 25 colored children for whom separate tabulations were made, as were tables for children of native white parents. Tables for these special groups are included only where the data show sufficient chance from the group totals to be significant. The following points were considered in connection with the home situation: languages read by parents and pupils, foreign publications and reference books in the home, education of parents, and the economic status of the family.

Table I

## Parentage of Cases - Number of Cases by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent			
		Native White	One or Both Parents of Foreign Birth	Negro	Total
I 7A	26	73	19	8	100
8A	30	90	7	3	100
9A	45	82	16	2	100
Total	101	82	14	4	100
II 7A	25	88	8	4	100
8A	27	59	33	8	100
9A	44	83	13	4	100
Total	96	78	17	5	100
III 7A	36	80	20	0	100
8A	23	78	22	0	100
9A	42	69	24	7	100
Total	101	75	23	3	100
IV 7A	25	76	16	8	100
8A	36	78	8	14	100
9A	38	74	18	8	100
Total	99	76	14	10	100
V 7A	16	82	12	6	100
8A	22	86	9	5	100
9A	27	74	22	4	100
Total	65	80	15	5	100
Grand Total	462	78	16	6	100



Foreign Languages Read by Parents

With this division in mind let us examine the languages read by the parents. Three illiterate mothers and two illiterate fathers were reported, the mothers all being of foreign birth while one father came from another country and one was colored. A slightly higher percentage of fathers read foreign languages, the highest percentage, 20, for mothers falling in group IV for the seventh grade and 26 per cent for fathers coming in group II for the eighth grade. The proportion of those whose parents read English seems to increase slightly as one moves from the groups who read little to those who read a great deal.

Table II

Languages Read by Mother - Totals for all Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent				Total
		Unanswered	Illiterate	English	Other Languages	
7A	128	0	1	85	14	100
8A	138	0	1	93	6	100
9A	196	2	1	89	8	100
Total	462	1	1	89	9	100

Table III

Languages Read by Father - Totals for all Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent				Total
		Unan- swered	Illiterate	English	Other Languages	
7A	128	0	0	84	16	100
8A	138	0	1	89	10	100
9A	196	1	1	87	11	100
Total	462	0	1	87	12	100

Table IV

Languages Read by Mother and Father- All Cases by Reading Groups

Mother

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent				Total
		Unan- swered	Illiterate	English	Other Languages	
I	101	2	0	90	8	100
II	96	0	1	92	7	100
III	101	1	2	84	13	100
IV	99	1	0	90	9	100
V	65	0	0	91	9	100
Total	462	1	1	89	9	100

Table V

## Languages Read by Mother and Father - All Cases by Reading Groups

Father						
Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Unan- swered	Per Cent			Total
			Illiterate	English	Other Languages	
I	101	0	1	88	11	100
II	96	0	0	84	16	100
III	101	0	0	83	17	100
IV	99	1	1	90	8	100
V	65	0	0	91	9	100
Total	462	1	1	86	12	100

The foreign-born parents naturally read many more languages, one Hollander reading five including English. Languages read included Swedish, German, Polish, Belgian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, Syrian, Italian, Arabic, Hebrew, Russian, Dutch, French, Spanish, Hungarian, Slavakian, Armenian, and Rumanian. Greek, German, French, and Italian were most frequently listed. Apparently there is little connection between parents reading foreign languages and the amount of reading done by pupils, as the percentage of fathers using other languages is seven points less for group II than group I. Nevertheless, in the father's table, there is a drop of two points between groups II and III and a drop of 30 points between groups III and IV. This may be sufficient to be significant and to justify the statement that

reading of other languages at home does not stimulate pupils to do large amounts of reading.

Table VI  
Languages Read by Foreign-Born Parents  
Mother

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent				Total
		Unan- swered	Illiterate	English	Other Languages	
I	14	7	0	50	43	100
II	17	0	6	59	35	100
III	22	5	9	36	50	100
IV	14	0	0	71	29	100
V	10	0	0	60	40	100
Total	77	3	4	53	40	100

Table VII  
Languages Read by Foreign-Born Parents  
Father

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent				Total
		Unan- swered	Illiterate	English	Other Languages	
I	14	0	7	29	64	100
II	17	0	0	29	71	100
III	22	0	0	27	73	100
IV	14	0	0	57	43	100
V	10	0	0	50	50	100
Total	77	0	1	36	63	100

No colored and very few native white parents read languages other than English. The largest percentage for mothers comes in group IV and the next in group V. For the father's the largest percentage is in group V and the next in group I. The higher percentages in groups III, IV, or V probably show more training and ability on the part of the parents. These two things will influence children's reading.

The illiteracy of the parents does not seem to have affected the children's reading. One illiterate was found in group I, one in group II, two in group III, and one in group IV. It is a reflection of the ineffectiveness of our night school program. While the percentage of illiteracy is not large, yet it shows the need for much more thorough adult education.

#### Foreign Languages Read by Pupils

Having discussed the foreign languages read by parents, let us now turn to those read by pupils. Very nearly the same percentage (12 per cent) of pupils as parents read other languages, the percentage for those with foreign parentage being considerably larger (29 per cent). Here our largest percentage is in group I, showing that those children who know and read the native tongue of their parents do not do as much reading as the rest. There are probably two factors which have a bearing on this--first, the difficulty of trying to master two languages, one at home, the other a new and strange one at school, and secondly, the fact that the child is instructed in reading English and picks up the reading of the foreign language

as best he can. Further, books and magazines in his parent's native tongue are not available in any large quantity, nor suited to his age and interests. Thus the child forced to read in the language he does not understand too well comes to dislike the printed page and never overcomes this aversion. The very bright child, however, will quickly master both languages, but will read more in English, since books in this language will be at hand.

Fewer languages were reported read by the students than by their parents. Those listed were: German, Belgian, French, Polish, Spanish, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Austrian, Hebrew, Finnish, Italian, and Greek. Latin was given by nine pupils in the 9A class. The author doubts whether these pupils can do much reading of Latin. Nevertheless the report was included. Greek and Hebrew are read well by most Greek or Jewish youngsters because of their fine instruction through the church or in the home.

Latin and French were most commonly reported for the native white group. The most unusual was a report of Esperanto by a child from a very ordinary home. The highest percentage of pupils reading foreign languages, 13, was in reading group IV. The lowest percentage was in group I, and probably indicated as much a lack of general ability as a definite relationship between reading and foreign languages. For all cases the highest percentage of those reading other languages comes in groups III and IV.



Table VIII

## Foreign Languages Read by Pupils

## Totals for All Cases by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent		Total
		None	Other Languages	
7A	128	89	11	100
8A	138	91	9	100
9A	196	85	15	100
Total	462	88	12	100

Table IX

## Foreign Languages Read by Pupils

## All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent		Total
		None	Other Languages	
I	101	91	9	100
II	96	89	11	100
III	101	86	14	100
IV	99	85	15	100
V	65	91	9	100
Total	462	88	12	100

Table X

Foreign Languages Read by  
Children of Foreign Parentage

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent		Total
		None	Other Languages	
I	14	64	36	100
II	17	71	29	100
III	22	68	32	100
IV	14	71	29	100
V	10	90	10	100
Total	77	71	29	100

Foreign Language Publications in the Home

While only 12 per cent of the fathers and nine per cent of the mothers can read a foreign language, yet foreign language publications are found in 15 per cent of the homes. Nevertheless in seven cases out of 38, or ten per cent, no one reads the foreign publications. In three cases the whole family reads it, in 12 cases the father, in ten cases both parents and in five the pupil.

The pupil had no idea of the names of these publications but could record the languages in which they were written. The same languages were reported as those spoken by the parents with these additions: Hawaiian, Norwegian, Chinese, and Arabic.

For all cases the highest percentage of foreign language publications in the home, 21, comes in group I, seven points

higher than any other group. Does this indicate that the more foreign the home the less reading the children do? This increase is shown more plainly in the table on "Foreign Publications in Homes of Pupils with Foreign Parentage," where the percentage for the first group is 72, this being 27 points greater than the amount for the whole group. There is also a large percentage in the second group, but the third and fifth have about the same percentage. The smallest percentage however is 29, or 43 points below the first group. This would indicate that a positive answer to the question raised above would be correct. The findings shown in the other tables are not significant.

Table XI

## Foreign Language Publications in the Home

## All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent			Total
		Unanswered	None	Foreign Publications	
7A	128	1	77	22	100
8A	138	9	84	7	100
9A	196	4	80	16	100
Total	462	5	80	15	100

Table XII

## Foreign Language Publications in the Home

## All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent			Total
		Unanswered	None	Foreign Publications	
I	101	6	73	21	100
II	96	4	82	14	100
III	101	6	80	14	100
IV	99	5	83	12	100
V	65	3	84	13	100
Total	462	5	80	15	100

Table XIII

## Foreign Publications in Homes of

## Pupils of Foreign Parentage

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent			Total
		Unanswered	None	Foreign Publications	
I	14	7	21	72	100
II	17	0	53	47	100
III	22	14	45	41	100
IV	14	14	57	29	100
V	10	0	60	40	100
Total	77	8	47	45	100

### Education of Parents

In examining factors in the home situation which would be likely to promote reading among pupils, one would surely consider the education of parents as a deciding factor. The findings of this investigation do not seem to bear this belief out, except in the case of children of foreign parentage. For all cases the percentage range for mothers with college training is only from 17 per cent in group IV to 20 per cent in group V, group I having one point more than group IV. For college trained fathers there is even less range, from 20 per cent in group I to 21 per cent in groups II and V. In both cases children doing the most reading are children of college people. The percentage for fathers with college training is two points higher than for mothers.

When high school training is considered, we find the mothers ranking nine points higher than fathers. As maternal efficiency is supposed to be the most important factor in training children, we should expect the children of mothers who had high school training to be much more interested in books. Again, however, we are disappointed, as the percentage of mothers with children in reading group I who have had high school training is higher, 37 per cent, than for that in group V, which is 35 per cent, while the percentages for reading groups II and IV vary by only one point. For the fathers with high school training, their training and the amount of reading done by their children show more association, as groups III and IV have the largest percentage. Nevertheless, there is a drop of one point for group V, but group V is still three points above group I.

When one considers mothers with grade school training, he finds the highest percentage in group I, with a drop for groups II and III respectively. After that the percentage rises when one might expect it to continue downward. For the fathers the lowest percentage occurs in groups II, IV, and V, the highest coming in I and III.

The group which did not finish grade school is too large, but can be explained in part by the difference in grading in foreign countries. Only five illiterates were recorded under the question concerning languages read by parents. The questions on schooling began with "Did your mother finish grade school?" Of these 58 individuals who had less than grade school training, 53 got far enough to be able to read for their own enjoyment. These answers and those answered with a question mark may also show a lack of intimacy between parents and pupil. It is interesting to note that 28 did not know about their father's training while only 17 did not know about their mother's. Probably they have spent much more time with their mothers, while they were only slightly acquainted with their deas.

Table XIV

Education of Mother - All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unan- swered	Less than Grade	School	Grade School	High School	
7A	128	7	3	33	42	5	100
8A	138	4	2	41	38	15	100
9A	196	2	7	31	38	22	100
Total	462	4	5	34	39	18	100

Table XV

## Education of Mother by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unan- swered	Less than Grade School	Grade School	High School	College	
I	101	2	4	40	37	17	100
II	96	4	5	31	42	18	100
III	101	4	6	32	38	20	100
IV	99	4	3	36	41	16	100
V	65	5	6	34	35	20	100
Total	462	4	5	34	39	18	100

Table XVI

## Education of Father - All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unan- swered	Less than Grade School	Grade School	High School	College	
7A	128	11	5	33	33	18	100
8A	138	6	7	42	25	20	100
9A	196	3	10	34	31	22	100
Total	462	6	8	36	30	20	100

Table XVII

## Education of Father by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unan- swered	Less than Grade School	Grade School	High School	College	
I	101	6	9	38	27	20	100
II	96	5	13	36	25	21	100
III	101	6	4	38	33	19	100
IV	99	8	6	32	34	20	100
V	65	5	8	34	32	21	100
Total	462	6	8	36	30	20	100

Among the children of foreign-born parents, there were no college trained parents of children in group I. In group II, one mother was college trained. The fathers with college training and amount of reading done by their children seem to correlate, as the amount of reading done increases steadily with the percentage of education. This is not true of the mothers, where the largest percentage having a college education comes in group IV. The balance of this table and the tables for Negroes and native white parents show no correlation.



Table XVIII

## Education of Foreign-Born Parents

## Mother

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unan- swered	Less than Grade	School	Grade School	High School	
I	14	7	21	29	43	0	100
II	17	6	18	35	35	6	100
III	22	14	18	45	14	9	100
IV	14	14	14	36	22	14	100
V	10	10	30	20	40	0	100
Total	77	10	20	35	29	7	100

Table XIX

## Education of Foreign-Born Parents

## Father

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unan- swered	Less than Grade	School	Grade School	High School	
I	14	7	29	35	29	0	100
II	17	6	35	35	24	0	100
III	22	14	14	50	18	4	100
IV	14	14	22	29	21	14	100
V	10	0	20	20	30	30	100
Total	77	9	23	37	23	8	100

### Encyclopedias in the Home

An unexpectedly large percentage of the pupils were found to have encyclopedias in the home. Two hundred sixty-nine, or 58 per cent of the pupils, had one or more sets of reference books. Many pupils were able to give the names of the sets, 259 of which were reported. The Book of Knowledge outnumbered any other listed by two to one, while the World Book and Americana were next in order. Again, as one looks through the tables he sees little association between the number of reference books in the home and the amount of reading done by boys and girls. The presence of these books among the groups reading little seems to show a lack of resistance to high pressure salesmanship rather than a desire for knowledge.

Table XX

#### Encyclopedias in the Home - All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unan- swered	None	One	Two	Three or more	
7A	128	2	31	47	13	7	100
8A	138	3	46	34	12	5	100
9A	196	1	42	42	11	4	100
Total	462	2	40	41	12	5	100

Table XXI

Encyclopedias in the Home  
All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unan- swered	None	One	Two	Three or more	
I	101	4	40	36	12	8	100
II	96	1	35	45	13	6	100
III	101	2	43	44	10	1	100
IV	99	0	40	40	14	6	100
V	65	2	41	40	12	5	100
Total	462	2	40	41	12	5	100

Economic Status

Education of parents, encyclopedias in the home, home language, all influence the child, but the amount of income is vitally more important. A rough estimate of the family income was gleaned by asking pupils to state exactly what kinds of work their parents did. Then the families were divided into three groups: those with no income, W.P.A. or menial tasks; those with moderate income, factory workers, clerks, stenographers, and the like; and the well-to-do, professional men, business executives and directors in the factories or state departments. The division is very crude, but does put the data in usable form.

As might be expected, 59 per cent come from homes with

moderate income, the other two groups being almost equal, 18 and 19 per cent respectively. For the low income group, one finds the two largest percentages in reading groups I and II, for the moderate income groups III, IV, and V, for the well-to-do groups II, III, and IV, the peaks in the last two cases coming in group III.

Of the foreign-born parents, there are five per cent more families in the low income class than from the group as a whole, and ten per cent fewer families in the well-to-do division. Naturally the most successful do not migrate to another country unless forced to do so. A very large proportion, however, are able to provide their families with necessities. Here again the highest percentages of well-to-do and moderate income families are found in groups III and IV.

The Negro group does not fare so well, as 60 per cent of them either have no work or are janitors and scrubwomen. None of them gave occupations which would put them in the well-to-do class and the percentage for the moderate income group is 19 points below that of the group total. The largest percentage, 60, represents Negroes with moderate incomes, and falls in reading group IV.

Consequently, one can say that low income tends to make children less interested in books; and that children from financially adequate homes will probably not spend more than 15 hours a week reading, but will engage in other recreations, too.

Table XXII

## Economic Status of the Families

## All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent				Total
		Unanswered	Low or No Income	Moderate Income	Well-to-do	
7A	128	0	19	69	12	100
8A	138	4	19	58	19	100
9A	196	8	14	60	18	100
Total	462	4	18	59	19	100

Table XXIII

## Economic Status

## of the Families

## All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent				Total
		Unanswered	Low or No Income	Moderate Income	Well-to-do	
I	101	3	24	60	13	100
II	96	5	24	51	20	100
III	101	4	7	67	22	100
IV	99	5	15	57	21	100
V	65	5	18	59	18	100
Total	462	4	18	59	19	100

We have seen then that other languages read by the parents have little influence on the time which pupils spend on reading; that the majority of pupils who read other languages spend from three to four hours reading, that the more foreign language publications there are in the home the less reading is done by the children, that children doing the most reading have the largest number of college trained parents but that the number of parents trained with less than college education and the amount of reading done by the children do not correlate; that reference books in the home do not stimulate the use of books; and, finally, that if a family has at least a moderate income the children are likely to spend from three to 14 hours reading per week.

### CHAPTER III - IS READING HELPFUL IN SCHOOLWORK?

Ability to comprehend what is on the printed page is probably more useful in school work than any other tool subject. Are the pupils who read most the best students? In order to answer this question, let us look at the ages of pupils in the various grades and in the five reading groups, at the number who have failed to pass grades, and at the number on the honor roll.

### Relation of Amount of Reading to Age

If a child starts school at five and is promoted each year, he will reach the seventh grade at twelve, normally becoming thirteen during his seventh year at school. Fifty-six per cent of the seventh graders studied were thirteen at the end of their 7A semester when the blanks were made out. Likewise 55 per cent of the eighth grade were fourteen and 56 per cent of the ninth grade were fifteen. The age range for all cases was from eleven to nineteen.

Turning now to the age distribution by reading groups we find both the oldest and the youngest in group I. The eighteen year olds all come in groups I, II, and III, while two of those who are seventeen are in groups IV and V respectively. The sixteen year olds are divided largely into reading groups I and V, with 20 per cent in the former and 26 in the latter. This may be explained by the many reasons for retardation in school other than lack of ability, like sickness which may stimulate a child to read, since he can do nothing else.

The fifteen year olds show a fairly even distribution for



all grades. Nevertheless when the ninth grade is examined alone the percentage of pupils aged 15 reaches its height, 71 per cent in group IV, showing that the ninth grader who makes normal progress through school does a considerable amount of reading.

The fourteen year old group has the smallest percentage in group I, the percentages in the other four being about the same. Let us look at the distribution of eighth graders who are fourteen, the normal age for this grade. The two largest percentages are found in groups II and IV, and by far the smallest in group I. The seventh graders who are of normal age, thirteen, show a distribution similar to the ninth graders of normal age. The percentage rises steadily to group IV dropping several points in group V. One would seem justified in concluding that pupils who make normal school progress will read more than those who fail, the greatest number of them reading from nine to fourteen hours per week,

The range of ages for children of foreign-born parents, for negroes, and for those of native white parents was so similar to the whole group that the conclusions above should be valid.

Table XXIV

Relation of Amount of Reading to Age of Pupils

All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent									Total
		Age 19	Age 18	Age 17	Age 16	Age 15	Age 14	Age 13	Age 12	Age 11	
7A	128	1	0	2	4	16	16	56	5	0	100
8A	138	0	0	0	4	13	55	27	0	1	100
9A	196	0	2	6	20	56	16	0	0	0	100
Total	462	1	1	3	10	32	27	24	1	1	100

Table XXV

## Relation of Amount of Reading to Age of Pupils

## All Cases by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent									Total
		Age 19	Age 18	Age 17	Age 16	Age 15	Age 14	Age 13	Age 12	Age 11	
I 7A	26	4	0	0	4	35	15	42	0	0	100
8A	30	0	0	0	10	17	30	40	0	3	100
9A	45	0	5	13	38	40	4	0	0	0	100
Total	101	1	2	6	21	31	15	23	0	1	100
II 7A	25	0	0	4	4	20	16	52	4	0	100
8A	27	0	0	0	4	7	74	15	0	0	100
9A	44	0	2	4	14	64	16	0	0	0	100
Total	96	0	1	3	8	36	32	19	1	0	100
III 7A	36	0	0	3	5	14	17	53	8	0	100
8A	23	0	0	0	0	9	52	39	0	0	100
9A	42	0	2	7	14	53	24	0	0	0	100
Total	101	0	2	4	8	29	27	27	3	0	100
IV 7A	25	0	0	0	4	4	8	76	8	0	100
8A	36	0	0	0	3	19	67	11	0	0	100
9A	38	0	0	3	13	71	13	0	0	0	100
Total	99	0	0	1	7	35	31	24	2	0	100
V 7A	16	0	0	0	0	6	25	63	6	0	100
8A	22	0	0	0	0	9	50	41	0	0	100
9A	27	0	0	4	18	52	26	0	0	0	100
Total	65	0	0	2	8	26	34	29	2	0	100
Grand Total	462	1	1	3	10	32	27	24	1	1	100

Relation of Amount of Reading and Failure

The number of failures and the age of pupils in the grade should show association. Therefore, we should expect to find the same tendencies in the tables above. For the whole group 61 per cent had not failed at all. This corresponds to the average of 56 per cent who were of normal age for each grade. Table LXVII shows the association between the amount of reading done by junior high school pupils and failures. The 197 pupils in groups I and II (those who spend less than five hours per week in reading) have experienced more failures, 49 and 38 per cent respectively, than the pupils who read more than five hours per week. The percentage of failures is practically the same in groups III, IV, and V. This indicates that a reasonable amount of reading is conducive to reasonable progress in school but that excessive reading is not. There is even a faint suggestion that excessive reading might be a barrier to school progress since 34 per cent of the 65 pupils who do much reading (15 or more hours per week) exceeds those who read only six to fourteen hours weekly.

Among the colored and the children of foreign-born parents 48 per cent had not failed while the remainder had not been promoted regularly. Among children of native-born white parents the percentages of failure are 47, 34, 29, 27, 27, for the five reading groups, respectively. This evidence shows that the amount of reading a child does is indicative of success in school work, but that more than 15 hours per week of reading is of no further help toward regular promotion.

Table XXVI

Failures in School Work  
Totals for All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent			Total
		Unan- swered	No Failures	Failures	
7A	128	0	63	37	100
8A	138	4	71	25	100
9A	196	1	53	46	100
Total	462	2	61	37	100

Table XXVII

Failures in School Work - All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent			Total
		Unan- swered	No Failures	Failures	
I	101	2	49	49	100
II	96	2	60	38	100
III	101	0	0	68	100
IV	99	1	67	32	100
V	65	3	63	34	100
Total	462	2	61	37	100

### Relation of Amount of Reading and Honor Roll

Third we shall discuss scholastic attainment and its relation to pupils' reading. Since the honor rolls are determined by the marks on the report cards, it was assumed that ascertaining the numbers on the various rolls would indicate the grading of pupils in sufficient detail for this study. While the pupils known to the author have given accurate statements, yet the large number on the first honor roll may show the results of wishful thinking on the part of some pupils. Further the abnormally large number of pupils on the first honor roll may be at least partially explained by the fact that of the 247 questionnaires that were discarded for incompleteness the majority were contributed by scholastically poor students.

The honor rolls of John Doe Junior High School are made up as follows: Each pupil takes six subjects in which he is marked "A", "B", "C", "D", or "E."

A=4	points
B=3	points
C=2	points
D=1	point
E=no	points

The pupils are also marked in citizenship in every subject. To be on the first honor roll, a student must have 18 points or more in scholarship and nothing below a "C" in citizenship. This means he has at least a "B" average. For the second honor roll he must have 15 points in scholarship and again at least "C's" in citizenship. This is a "C $\frac{1}{2}$ " average. For the third, he must get 12 points and nothing below "D" in citizenship, or a "C" scholastic average. While a pupil may fail to get on the

honor roll because of poor citizenship this happens very rarely, for usually a good student behaves at least well enough for a "C" grade.

Table XXVIII shows by grades the honor rolls as reported by the 462 cases. The median, 231, would fall in group III where one would expect to find it. It is also reasonable that the largest number of pupils are on none of the honor rolls.

Table XXVIII

Relation of Amount of Reading and Honor Roll

All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unanswered	First	Second	Third	None	
7A	128	0	24	27	16	33	100
8A	138	2	25	16	17	40	100
9A	196	3	24	18	15	40	100
Total	462	2	24	20	16	38	100

This first chart is then broken up into the five reading groups. Here naturally we find a very small proportion on the first honor roll among those who spend little time reading. The percentage of the "B" or above students increases through the fourth reading group and then drops decidedly in the fifth. It would seem safe to conclude that more than fifteen hours of reading per week proved detrimental to school work. Nevertheless in the second honor roll column the per cent is greatest for

those doing the most reading. It may be that these wide readers are generally very well informed but do not care to exert themselves in school work. Nineteen per cent of those reporting the least reading were able to get a "C+" average. These individuals are the plodding type. As one would expect, half of the poor readers were on no honor roll at all. Everyone is familiar with the fact that inability to do a thing well makes one not want to do it. These pupils are undoubtedly glad to drop all books and reading material, except comics, as soon as possible. The rise of four points in the fifth group readers who were on no honor roll is a little surprising. It may be that these pupils take refuge in the realm of books in order to escape from a too painful reality.

Table XXVIII-a

## Relation of Amount of Reading to Honor Roll

## All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unanswered	First	Second	Third	None	
I	101	3	12	19	16	50	100
II	96	3	27	20	17	33	100
III	101	1	29	20	17	33	100
IV	99	0	31	18	16	35	100
V	65	2	23	25	12	38	100
Total	462	2	24	20	16	38	100

Next we have tabulated the honor rolls as reported by children of foreign-born parents. Out of the 77 cases 18 per cent are on the first honor roll. This is five points less than for all the cases. On the other hand, they have 23 per cent on the second honor roll. The percentage of those on no honor roll is about the same as for the whole number. It should be noticed that the average readers of foreign-born parentage are able to make the best scholastic record, while those in the fourth reading group have the largest proportion on the second honor roll. It should also be noted that by far the largest number on no honor roll is in the fourth group. This may be due to the smallness of the group, however. The foreign-born in the lowest reading group have the lowest percentage on no honor roll found on any chart. This may indicate a lack of reading opportunity for these individuals.

Table XXIX

Relation of Amount of Reading to Honor Roll  
Children of  
Foreign-born Parents

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent				Total
		First	Second	Third	None	
I	14	14	14	43	29	100
II	17	18	18	23	41	100
III	22	32	23	9	36	100
IV	14	14	29	0	57	100
V	10	10	40	20	30	100
Total	77	20	23	18	39	100



Among the Negroes, we find the smallest percentage on the first honor roll and the largest percentage on none. By junior high school age, the Negro boy and girl has begun to feel his racial handicaps acutely and to realize that there is little to be gained by getting more training, since the world will let him do only menial tasks.

Among children of native-born parents, one again finds the highest percentage on the first honor roll in the fourth reading group, with diminishing percentages thereafter. One also finds the lowest number on no honor roll in this same category. No positive conclusion can be drawn as to the relationship of amount of reading to scholastic attainment. The findings seem to show, as do the data on ages and failure, that more than 15 hours per week in reading may be detrimental and that little reading and low scholarship usually go together.

Summarizing, the age of pupils and the amount of reading show relationship for reading groups I, II, III, and IV. This is also true of the data on failure. Similarly, the findings from the honor rolls show association for these four groups. Consequently, we may conclude that scholastic attainment appears to improve as the amount of reading increases up to 15 hours per week. Among students reading more than 15 hours there appears to be a decline in scholastic attainment.

#### CHAPTER IV- THE MOVIE AND THE RADIO TOO HAVE THEIR PLACE

As stated before, reading is only one form of recreation. The movie is much more dramatic and the radio an easier way of diversion. How does the place of these two compare with that of reading in the schedules of John Loe Junior High School pupils?

### The Movie

Out of the 462 pupils, 59, or 13 per cent, had not attended any movies in the past month. There were almost twice as many, 95, 21 per cent, who had attended six or more. One boy said he went every day. Counting two hours for each performance attended even those going to four a month are spending no more time in a month on movies than the average spend on reading in a week. It is the emotional strain so ably discussed in Eastman's Our Movie Made Children, which makes too many movies dangerous. If these pupils attend double features of course their movie going time is doubled.

Even though less time is spent in movies than on reading, movies have a much more powerful influence because of their speed of action, their dramatic appeal, and the greater vicariousness with which we all watch a picture. We actually live it. This vividness is experienced from the printed page only by our most capable pupils, the slow ones being so occupied with the mechanics of reading that the thought escapes them.

While there seems to be no regularity in the tables showing the number of movies by reading groups, yet when the average for each group is computed, there is a gradual rise, only the second

group failing to fall into line.

Reading Group	Average Number of Movies Attended per Month
---------------	--

I	3.0
II	3.0
III	3.2
IV	3.3
V	3.9

Thus the more recreational reading a pupil does the more movies he sees, probably because he gets the same thrill from both.

Table XXX

Movies Attended per Month

All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent							Total
		None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six or more	
7A	128	15	11	15	19	15	10	15	100
8A	138	15	8	12	12	20	9	24	100
9A	196	10	12	13	17	15	11	22	100
Total	462	13	10	13	16	17	10	21	100

Table XXXI

Movies Attended per Month  
All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent							
		Number of Movies Attended							
		None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six or more	Total
I	101	13	17	11	18	15	8	18	100
II	96	15	9	17	15	13	14	17	100
III	101	15	6	17	17	14	11	20	100
IV	99	11	15	9	15	20	9	21	100
V	65	9	2	14	12	23	11	29	100
Total	462	13	10	13	16	17	10	21	100

Movies also are apt to suggest interesting reading for pupils. Thirty six per cent of the whole group reported reading books suggested by movies, the largest percentages, 48 and 53 respectively for the seventh and ninth grades coming in reading group IV and 55 per cent for the ninth grade coming in group V. It is interesting to note that while in the eighth and ninth grades the percentage for group I is low, 16 and 23, yet for the seventh it is 46 per cent. Several pupils gave Gone With the Wind as a favorite book or characters selected from it as favorites. The movie was shown in town this spring. No one who filled out his blank in January listed the book or characters from it, all references to it being found in the June questionnaires.

Several pupils would like to resemble movie stars when they

grow up, Mickey Rooney, Deanna Durbin, Spencer Tracy, and Sonja Henie being mentioned. Their chief reasons for wishing to be like them are either fame or good looks, although Spencer Tracy's qualities of character were mentioned. Movies in the past have influenced people to read fiction. With the current trend toward biographical pictures like Stanley and Livingstone we may see a rise in reading of biography.

### The Radio

As one might expect, the number of hours spent listening to the radio varied greatly, the largest number reported being 51 per week, or more than an average of seven hours a day. The median would fall in the group 10-14 hours, and is usually given as one to two hours on school days the rest divided between Saturday and Sunday. Beginning with 20 hours the percentages drop sharply. The colored and those of foreign-born parents use the radio more than any other group, the highest percentage for each coming between 15 and 19 hours. When the average for each group is computed a rise in number of hours spent listening to the radio appears for each successive reading group except the third. It would seem then that the amount of time spent listening to the radio, like that spent in movies, increases with the amount of reading.

Reading Group	Average Time Spent Listening to the Radio in Hours per Week
I	13.2
II	14.9
III	13.9
IV	15.3
V	16.7

Table XXXII

Amount of Time Spent Listening to the Radio  
All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent								
		Number of Hours								
		0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35 or more	Total
7A	128	11	20	23	16	12	9	5	4	100
8A	138	15	15	23	18	9	11	2	7	100
9A	196	18	22	20	17	12	6	3	2	100
Total	462	15	20	22	17	11	8	3	4	100

Table XXXIII

## Amount of Time Spent Listening to the Radio

## All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent								Total
		Number of Hours								
		0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35 or more	
I	101	20	20	25	15	10	4	3	3	100
II	96	17	17	20	21	11	6	5	3	100
III	101	15	26	22	14	10	8	2	4	100
IV	99	10	15	20	25	12	12	1	5	100
V	65	12	18	21	9	15	15	6	4	100
Total	462	15	20	22	17	11	8	3	4	100

One hundred twenty three, or 27 per cent, reported reading material suggested by the radio, a slightly smaller number than those reading material suggested by the movies. The seventh grade reported the largest percentages, 42 for reading group I and 44 for group IV. The highest eighth grade percentage, 30, comes in group III, and the highest ninth grade percentage, 34, in group IV. Apparently our younger students are more apt to read as a result of radio or movie suggestion than the older ones.

When it came to favorite characters, however, news and other broadcasters were not mentioned until the eighth grade, and then continued to be listed through the ninth. This was also true of characters the pupils wish to resemble. Undoubtedly the types of programs are of much more significance than the number of hours the radio runs. As one pupil reported, "The



radio is on all the time I'm home but I don't hear it much." Modern youth has come to use the radio as a background to many other activities, only heeding it for something as exciting as Orsen Wells' invasion by the people from Mars.

The amount of time spent both attending movies and listening to the radio increases with the amount of reading done. Furthermore, material suggested by both of these is read, particularly by younger pupils; while the movie and radio personalities are favorites and heroes for some of the boys and girls.

## CHAPTER V - WHY THE PUPILS READ.

We have discussed at length the amount of time pupils spend reading but have said little so far about why they read or how they choose from the wealth of material about them. In this chapter, the discussion deals with the reading recommendations that were heeded, the reasons pupils give for reading, and their methods of deciding what to read.

### Reading Suggestions

In order to find out who recommended the material for pupils to read, they were asked to give the number of times they had read things suggested by the groups listed. The number varied from one to fifty times each, the largest number of times going to friends and librarians. What their friends say about reading matter is of most concern to the pupils, as 66 per cent of them follow their playmates' advice. Librarians come next for all cases, with 60 per cent, teachers being a close third, 59 per cent, and parents being only slightly less important in the pupil's judgment, this advice being followed by 53 per cent of the pupils. In the case of parents, other adults, librarians, friends, teachers, and reviews, the percentage has a fairly regular rise reaching a peak either in reading group IV or V. Advertisements and ministers influence the fewest number of pupils. In spite of this 44 per cent of the Negro children reported reading because of advertisements. The librarian has less weight with the children of foreign-born than with the others, their percentage going down twelve points below that for all cases. We may conclude that friends their own age, librarians, teachers, and parents, in that order, may expect to have their reading

suggestions heeded by about 60 per cent of the junior high school group.

Table XXXIV\*

Reading Suggestions - All Groups by Grades

	7A	8A	9A	Total
Total Number of Cases	128	138	196	462
	Per Cent			
Parents	54	59	49	53
Other Adults	32	30	26	29
Librarians	55	75	51	60
Brothers and Sisters	39	33	27	32
Friends	63	71	63	66
Ministers	16	22	14	17
Relatives	30	24	15	22
Teachers	59	61	59	59
Advertisements	24	20	15	19
Reviews	21	30	17	22

\* The vertical percentage totals more than 100 as pupils could check as many answers as they wished. This is also true of many of the subsequent tables.

Table XXXV

## Reading Suggestions - All Cases by Reading Groups

	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
Total Number of Cases	101	96	101	99	65	462
	Per Cent					
Parents	40	50	54	65	62	53
Other Adults	23	25	24	32	45	29
Librarians	47	57	61	70	65	60
Brothers and Sisters	24	30	36	41	29	32
Friends	48	68	66	79	69	66
Ministers	19	11	16	22	15	17
Relatives	23	13	24	25	26	22
Teachers	53	53	59	65	69	59
Advertisements	18	19	19	18	25	19
Reviews	19	18	22	24	29	22

### Reasons for Reading

The pupils were asked to check eight reasons for reading and list any others they cared to give. Very few gave others; and, if so, these were covered by those printed on the questionnaire. Consequently only those printed will be discussed here.

There are two chief reasons why these boys and girls read: because they like it and to get information. Worthy of note is the fact that the greatest percentage reading to please parents and teachers comes in reading group I. It looks as if these children only read under compulsion. Those who have nothing else to do but read come also in the lower reading groups, the percentage going erratically downward. Two tables show a steady rise in percentage in the successive reading groups, those for getting information and for liking to read. The percentage for group V is more than 20 points higher than that for group I in both cases.

Summing up, we can see that junior high school boys and girls read more just for recreation than for any other one reason and have begun to know that books contain valuable bits of information. They have not yet begun to get any deeper meanings, like a better understanding of life, from books, or at least they are not ready to say so. They are still at the curious stage when everything new is of interest.

Table XXXVI

## Reasons for Reading - All Groups by Grades

	7A	8A	9A	Total
Total Number of Cases	128	138	196	462
	Per Cent			
Please Parents	25	17	11	17
Please Teachers	23	22	17	21
Information	72	66	71	70
Forget Troubles	25	11	10	14
Nothing Else To Do	61	53	52	56
For Conversation	25	25	27	26
Friends Do It	7	6	3	5
Like To Read	79	83	76	79

Table XXXVII

## Reasons for Reading - All Cases by Reading Groups

	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
Total Number of Cases	101	96	101	99	65	462
	Per Cent					
Please Parents	26	13	14	14	17	17
Please Teachers	27	22	21	13	20	21
Information	56	67	75	77	77	70
Forget Troubles	12	11	18	12	20	14
Nothing Else to Do	53	64	57	49	49	56
For Conversation	22	21	26	32	29	26
Friends Do It	8	4	4	4	5	5
Like To Read	51	75	86	92	92	79

### How Pupils Decide What to Read

How do the pupils decide what to read? This they were asked to give with no suggestions put in front of them. The answers were so varied that grouping was difficult. Only ten items were agreed upon by more than five per cent of the group as a whole. Fourteen per cent gave indefinite reasons like, "I just go in and pick out a swell book."

Fifty-seven per cent select reading material by its physical make-up including three per cent who look at the print, an item not included in the table, the title being the most compelling feature. Forty-two per cent looked at the inside, glancing through the volume or reading some. Here again we see the herd instinct, so prevalent among adolescents, as 18 per cent, the second highest single percentage, read by recommendation, mostly that of their friends. The percentage for this item proceeds upward for the reading groups. Worthy of note is the fact that the percentage reading by recommendation increases steadily by grades.

In the ninth grade several looked at the library card to see what pupils had read the book before. More of these pupils also said they took their parents' recommendation. Moreover it is here that we find the highest percentage in all groups reading on a special topic. We find in addition a desire for information which is "beneficial" or will "help in later life." In general the percentages show no connection with the amount of reading.



Table XXVIII

Reasons for Choosing Books and Magazines - All Groups by Grades

	<u>7A</u>	<u>8A</u>	<u>9A</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total Number of Cases	128	138	196	462
	<u>Per Cent</u>			
Cover	5	1	0	2
Pictures	7	14	6	9
Title	25	17	14	19
Looked Good	9	10	8	9
Table of Contents	15	15	13	14
Glanced Through	6	9	7	7
Read Some	10	7	16	11
Interesting	13	8	9	10
Recommendation	12	19	22	18
Special Topic	2	7	8	6

Table XXXIX  
Reasons for Choosing Books and Magazines  
All Cases by Reading Groups

	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
Total Number of Cases	101	96	101	99	65	462
	Per Cent					
Cover	2	1	1	2	3	2
Pictures	4	9	11	5	17	9
Title	20	18	13	18	26	19
Looked Good	9	8	10	7	9	9
Table of Contents	15	11	17	13	9	14
Glanced Through	6	5	8	10	8	7
Read Some	14	9	10	14	9	11
Interesting	7	14	9	11	5	10
Recommendation	7	18	16	24	29	18
Special Topic	5	9	4	6	3	6

We may infer, then, that pupils read most those books recommended by friends their own age, librarians, teachers, and parents, that they read chiefly to get information and for fun, and that the title of the publication and what people say about it largely determine what things will be read. Those who read least do so more often to please parents and teachers and because they have nothing else to do.

## CHAPTER VI - THE TREASUREHOUSE OF BOOKS

With an increasing amount of printed matter being pressed upon us all the time, the proportion of book reading to other reading becomes constantly less. This does not decrease its importance, however. The bound volume is the only way to get permanence; and the more permanent a piece of literature is the longer its influence will last. It is our purpose here to discuss the place of books in the pupil's reading. To learn this we shall first investigate from where their books come, second the number read each week, third the books available in the school library, fourth the types of books and stories pupils prefer, and fifth books which they as individuals like best and the ones chosen as school favorites.

### Sources of Books

John Doe Junior High School is fortunate in having available not only its own school library but several other libraries as well. All but nine per cent of the pupils use the school library, while 70 per cent have books enough in the home to report that as a source of supply. The source of the next highest importance, listed by 58 per cent of the pupils, is gifts. There are several well stocked book stores in the community which may help to account for the prevalence of books as gifts. The habit of borrowing has been formed by 57 per cent, who obtain books from their friends. Forty per cent of the pupils actually report buying their own books. While only 37 per cent say they use other libraries, yet the school library is usually adequate and if not the librarian will secure material from outside for the pupils.

The eighth grade appears to use the school and home libraries more, to borrow more, and to purchase more books than any other grade. As the seventh graders are less familiar with the school building, that may explain why fewer of them use the school library. The younger pupils, too, are not so well acquainted with the student body which may account for their obtaining fewer books from their friends. Being younger, they also have less opportunity for earning money and may, therefore, be able to buy fewer books.

The ninth grader may have outgrown or exhausted his home library. This may also be true of the home libraries of his friends. The drop in percentage is so slight for the school library that it has little significance. The author has no explanation for the drop for buying books except a broadening field of recreation which demands more money from the older pupils.

Table XL

## Sources of Books - All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					
		School Library	Other Library	Friends	Home	Gift	Purchase
7A	128	88	38	51	70	60	30
8A	138	92	36	67	72	57	48
9A	196	91	35	55	68	57	38
Total	462	91	37	57	70	58	40

Let us now turn to Table XLI, which lists the percentages of pupils using various sources of books by the reading groups. In every case the smallest percentage making use of the various sources is in group I. The percentage of pupils using the school library, the home, and purchases as sources of their books rises steadily from reading group I to group IV or V. The percentages using the school library and the home are the same in the last two groups. It is clear from these data that those who read most make use of the largest variety of sources, and use all of them more frequently.

Table XLI

## Sources of Books - All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					
		School Library	Other Library	Friends	Home	Gift	Purchase
I	101	85	22	42	58	51	32
II	96	90	27	60	70	59	32
III	101	90	39	59	73	52	40
IV	99	95	52	64	75	66	44
V	65	95	48	63	75	63	52
Total	462	91	37	57	70	58	40

For the children of native white parents, the percentage does not vary more than four points from the percentages for the group as a whole. When comparing the percentages for the foreign-born with the whole group one finds three irregularities which should be mentioned. The number using the school library is eight points lower than for the whole group, nor is this made up by an increased use of some other source. Only sixty-five per cent of these pupils instead of seventy per cent read books from their own home libraries. This percentage was largest (79 per cent) in group IV. While 58 per cent of the 462 pupils receive books as gifts, this practice is followed by only 44 per cent of the children of foreign-born parents. Fewer books are also purchased by this group than the others.

Table XLIII

Sources of Books as Given by Children of  
Foreign-Born Parentage

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					
		School Library	Other Library	Friends	Home	Gift	Purchase
I	14	86	36	43	71	43	21
II	17	82	18	59	59	59	24
III	22	77	41	59	59	41	23
IV	14	86	43	71	79	50	36
V	10	90	40	40	60	20	60
Total	77	83	35	56	65	44	30

The colored children must have access to more libraries than the rest, as the percentage using this source is 25 points higher than for the whole group. They borrow many fewer books, however, and have fewer in the home, the difference being 21 and 14 points respectively. This may be a reflection of the low wages earned by negroes in most communities. Correspondingly the negro buys fewer books and gets fewer by gifts. Notwithstanding, 40 per cent get reading matter which keeps them sufficiently busy to put them in reading group IV.

#### Number of Books Read

With all these places from which to get books, how many books actually are read? Nearly one half or 45 per cent of the pupils read from two to four books during the month preceding the filling out of the questionnaire. That is from one half to a whole book per week, not a bad figure. It is especially good when one considers that 28 per cent read five or more books per month or considerably more than one per week.

As there are 5,000 volumes in the school library or 3.5 books per child and a circulation of 31,941 for the school year, this is an average of 22.6 books per year used by each pupil or an average of 3.5 per month, which corresponds well with our findings, that the greatest number of pupils read from two to four books per month.

Logically the largest percentages reading no books or



only one book are in reading group I, those percentages continuing downward in the successive reading groups. There is a steady rise in the number of pupils reading from two to four books per month through groups I, II, and III, with a slight decline for IV and a decided decline for V. While only 25 per cent in reading group V have read 2-4 books yet this is counterbalanced by the 57 per cent in this same group who read five or more. Further, among those who read five or more the number of points of increase between each group is large.

Table XLIII

## Books Read Monthly - All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent				
		Unanswered	Number of Books			
			None	One	Two to Four	Five or more
7A	128	3	8	16	47	26
8A	138	1	7	12	43	37
9A	196	2	11	18	45	22
Total	462	2	9	16	45	28

Table XLIV

## Books Read Monthly

## All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					Total
		Unanswered	None	One	Two to Four	Five or more	
I	101	1	23	21	39	16	100
II	96	1	10	17	55	17	100
III	101	2	6	13	52	27	100
IV	99	3	2	14	48	33	100
V	65	3	3	12	25	57	100
Total	462	2	9	16	45	28	100

The table for Negroes was the only one to show any marked deviation from the totals for the whole group. Here we found the percentage of pupils reading no books six points higher than that for the group as a whole. Again, the percentage who read only one book in the month before the questionnaire was circulated was sixteen points higher among the Negroes than in the group as a whole. It then dropped correspondingly 17 points for two to four books and eight points for five or more. Not only do Negroes have more difficulty in getting books, but they also appear to read them much less, while the children of the foreign-born have access to fewer books but seem to read just as many.

#### Books Pupils Like Best

From the discussion of sources of books and number read we shall turn to books the pupils like best. They were asked to rank types of books in the order in which they liked them, doing likewise with types of stories, and to give their favorite of the books read during the past school year.

The pupils were asked to give a first and second preference in types of literature, 63 per cent ranked fiction either first or second. Books of travel came next with 38 per cent. After this came books of history with 28 per cent. The others had less than 25 per cent each, the lowest, 13 per cent, going to books of religion. Many of the books of travel, like those by Richard Haliburton, are written in fiction style, and thus make an appeal to boys and girls. Many of the newer non-fiction historical books

are also playing up interesting incidents, minimizing dates and wars, and make really fascinating reading. Leo Huberman's We, the People is of this type. Those who read most, groups IV and V, listed fiction the most times.

A drop of 16 points is found in the tabulation for children of foreign-born parents in the column for fiction. There is also a drop of eight points for biography, but a rise of 12 for science, the higher percentages being found in the last three reading groups. For the Negroes, the percentage is eleven points higher for books of religion with eleven less for fiction.

Table XLV

Types of Books Given First and Second Choice

All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					
		Bio-graphy	Travel	Science	Religion	History	Fiction
7A	128	16	44	13	15	23	63
8A	138	13	39	17	13	22	67
9A	196	16	33	19	12	35	64
Total	462	15	38	17	13	28	63

Table XLVI

Types of Books Given First and Second Choice

All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					
		Bio-graphy	Travel	Science	Religion	History	Fiction
I	101	18	44	13	18	23	54
II	96	14	42	20	10	32	65
III	101	19	31	19	13	31	63
IV	99	12	40	14	15	25	67
V	65	14	31	20	6	28	69
Total	462	15	38	17	13	28	63

Table XLVII

Types of Books Given First and Second Choice

by the Children of Foreign-Born

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent					
		Bio-graphy	Travel	Science	Religion	History	Fiction
I	14	7	58	21	14	14	43
II	17	12	53	24	12	29	35
III	22	5	27	36	18	32	50
IV	14	0	29	29	7	21	71
V	10	10	10	30	10	30	30
Total	77	7	36	29	13	26	47

When we consider the types of stories preferred we still see how young these pupils are. Adventure stories are preferred by 80 per cent of the pupils. In this tabulation the pupils could give three choices, but out of the three one was usually adventure. Detective stories were second in favor, with 54 per cent followed by a tie, 34 per cent, for animal stories and those of long ago. Stories of other lands, love stories, and stories of children have the least appeal. Out of the 75 checking stories of children only two were boys, one of them being colored. The amount of reading done and types of stories preferred seem to have no relationship.

The colored group again showed deviation from the group as a whole. The percentage for love stories rose 22 points, for stories of children 24 points. It dropped 10 points for stories of long ago and 14 points for animal stories. While this may be due to the small group, yet it may also be an evidence of the earlier maturing of the colored race, as shown by the interest in love stories. It also may reflect again the future the Negro must face. He can marry and raise children like a white person but he does not have equal opportunities vocationally.

Table XLVIII

Types of Stories Given First, Second, and Third Choice by Pupils  
All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent							
		Long Ago	Detec- tive	Child- ren	Other Lands	Adven- ture	Love	School Life	Animal
7A	128	35	63	22	25	81	16	16	29
8A	138	31	55	13	20	80	21	31	36
9A	196	34	43	15	21	80	27	36	35
Total	462	34	54	16	22	81	22	29	34

Table XLIX

Types of Stories Given First, Second, and Third Choice by Pupils  
All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent							
		Long Ago	Detec- tive	Child- ren	Other Lands	Adven- ture	Love	School Life	Animal
I	101	35	59	18	20	77	26	16	36
II	96	33	53	15	22	82	24	31	34
III	101	35	58	17	25	87	16	24	32
IV	99	29	47	16	26	83	20	37	31
V	65	37	55	15	15	72	28	45	38
Total	462	34	54	16	22	81	22	29	34

Every year during book week each pupil in John Doe Junior High School is asked to cast his vote for his favorite book. During 1938, O'Brien's Silver Chief, a dog story, received the most votes; McNeeley's Rusty Ruston, the story of an orphaned school girl came

next, with Little Women third. In 1939, Little Women came to first place with Burnett's Secret Garden second. These are all young folk's classics. While no non-fiction book won, yet all these are first rate fiction.

On the questionnaire the pupils were asked to give the book read this year which they liked best. The wide variety of answers defied tabulation. Two gave comic magazines, evidently classing them as books. About a fifth replied they liked them all or they didn't remember or none were much good, most of them showing an inability to decide about their preference. Those of foreign-born parents and the colored gave the same types of books as those with native white parents.

While adventure stories prevailed, of the whole group, 16 per cent listed books which are children's or adult's classics, many of them old favorites like Treasure Island, Lady of the Lake, Les Miserables, and The Last of the Mohicans. The highest percentage choosing fiction, 23 per cent, were in reading group IV, the lowest ten per cent in group I.

Only seven per cent listed books in a series. Since the Nancy Drew and Sue Barton stories were given most frequently, these answers came chiefly from girls. The Nancy Drew series is not considered very good literature according to John Doe Junior High School's librarian. The stories are made up according to a pattern to provide plenty of hair-breadth escapes and are put out in a cheap form for sale. Our book stores keep a large supply of these. The Sue Barton series is better literature, has been approved occupationally by the National Nurses Association, and represents real life situations. The Nancy Drew



series is listed more often in the seventh and eighth grade, while the Sue Barton books continue in popularity throughout the ninth. The largest percentage, 12, reading a series is in reading group IV.

Animal stories were given by five per cent of the boys, the largest percentage coming in Group I. Those by Albert Terhune and Jack London are very popular. There were also four folk tales reported, two Paul Bunyan and two King Arthur.

While only one non-fiction book, Dr. Wilfred Grenfell's Adrift on an Ice Pan, was reported in the seventh grade, six were given by the eighth, and nineteen by the ninth grade. This is a really hopeful trend. Some of the books told how to do things. One, for instance, was on raising rabbits. Two people gave their eighth grade history text, one liking best the part about John D. Rockefeller, a ten page biography. In the ninth grade, these non-fiction books were mostly biography, the life of Will Rogers being the most popular. That these young people are becoming self conscious is shown by a report of Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People. It seems fair to conclude that our older boys and girls are to a very small degree learning to appreciate non-fiction.

Summing up, these data show that the native white child obtains books in more different ways than the foreign-born. or colored, and that the colored group reads the smallest number of books, the other groups reading from two to four per month. These figures agree with the library circulation statistics of 3.5 books

per month per child. The pupils prefer fiction decidedly to any other type of book, liking adventure stories best, but when they vote as a group they choose very good literature. As they grow older they tend to read fewer series books and slightly more non-fiction, particularly biography.

## CHAPTER VII - NEWSPAPER READING

While books are read by only a small percentage of the adult population, newspaper reading is almost universal. Michigan ranks twelfth among the states in number of newspapers per person, having one for every 3.04 of the population.<sup>1</sup> How many newspapers and which parts of the paper are used by John Doe Junior High School pupils?

### Newspapers in the Home

Only six pupils or one per cent, reported no newspaper coming to their homes daily. Even in two cases here the home was not always without a paper as one pupil took one occasionally and another always had Sunday papers. One paper was found in 44 per cent of the homes, this usually being the local one but a few listed a Detroit publication instead. Over half, 55 per cent, have two or more papers, several have three, and one listed six. Detroit or Chicago papers are taken in addition to the local one, The Christian Science Monitor and The New York Times entering a very few homes. In homes of the foreign-born a larger percentage had one newspaper but a slightly smaller percentage had two or more. Percentages for the colored and native white were approximately the same as for the group as a whole. The percentage of those having more than one paper in the home increases irregularly with the amount of reading; a corresponding decrease is shown with pupils having one newspaper at home. Therefore the pupils had ample opportunity for newspaper reading. How did they use this

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<sup>1</sup>Gray, William Scott and Munroe, Ruth, READING INTERESTS AND HABITS OF ADULTS. New York: MacMillan, 1930. Chapter I

opportunity?

Table I

Newspapers at Home - All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent			Total
		None	One	More than one	
7A	128	2	44	54	100
8A	138	1	53	46	100
9A	196	2	37	61	100
Total	462	1	44	55	100

Table II

Newspapers at Home - All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent			Total
		None	One	More than one	
I	101	0	51	49	100
II	96	3	45	52	100
III	101	1	41	58	100
IV	99	1	43	56	100
V	65	2	37	61	100
Total	462	1	44	55	100

### Parts of the Newspaper Read

Ninety-four per cent of the junior high school pupils involved in this study first read the comics, the percentage being slightly less in the seventh grade, 91 per cent, than in grades eight and nine. While almost all must know what Boots is doing only 81 per cent care enough about the world in general to read the headlines. The percentage drops only four points for Ripley's "Believe It or Not." After reading these three they must find out about the movies. Sixty-nine per cent study the theatre page. Of course they must know the school news because they have spent six hours there during the day, so 58 per cent check up to see whose name was included in the paper. Then, too, 47 per cent must be informed on sports. After these are taken care of, 43 per cent find time for the foreign news, probably because of the European situation, and 36 per cent take time to read national news, which has not been nearly so exciting this year as the foreign. Only 31 per cent report reading the crime news and almost as many, 30 per cent, are interested in local events. Dorothy Dix, social events, the continued story, editorials, advertisements, and the financial page are read by a decreasing number of pupils. The percentage increases with the grade for Dorothy Dix advice, reflecting the immaturity of our younger pupils. For some inexplicable reason crime makes more of an appeal to our seventh graders.

From reading groups I to IV the percentage of those reading national news increases steadily. This is also true of local news. It would probably be true of foreign news were it not for

the march of Hitler throughout Europe. This indicates that those who read most, read more factual parts of the paper.

The fact that the percentages for reading editorials run 10, 15, 5, 12, and 14 respectively for the reading groups is interesting as it seems to indicate that both those who read least and those who read most pay at least some attention to this part of the paper. Since many seventh graders asked what the word "editorial" meant, it may be that several pupils reported reading this part of the paper without realizing what they were checking.

The continued story is read most by groups I and V, indicating an interest in thrills and plenty of patience to persevere through a long drawn out affair. Group I also has more interest in crime. Those in reading groups IV and V are slightly more interested in school news than the others.

Table LII

## Parts of Newspaper Read by Pupils - All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	7A	8A	9A	Totals
Total Number of Cases	128	138	196	462
Parts of Newspaper	Per Cent Reading It			
Comics	91	96	95	94
Headlines	74	78	88	81
Ripley	75	81	73	77
Theatre Page	71	69	68	69
School News	46	61	65	58
Sports	41	43	46	47
Foreign News	41	44	43	43
National News	27	48	39	36
Crime	37	28	29	31
Local News	28	27	33	30
Dorothy Dix	7	15	20	15
Society Page	9	9	10	14
Serial	11	12	13	12
Editorials	8	12	12	11
Ads	5	12	12	10
Financial Page	1	3	3	3



Table LIII

## Parts of Newspaper Read by Pupils - All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
Total Number of Cases	101	96	101	99	65	462
Parts of Newspaper	Per Cent Reading It					
Comics	94	94	95	92	92	92
Headlines	77	86	80	87	69	82
Ripley	72	80	72	80	78	78
Theatre Page	64	72	70	75	62	69
School News	54	56	58	62	62	58
Sports	46	41	47	50	28	47
Foreign News	37	50	41	46	37	43
National News	30	34	40	38	34	36
Crime	36	27	29	34	26	31
Local News	24	28	34	30	32	30
Dorothy Dix	9	15	9	25	17	15
Society Page	14	15	11	20	9	14
Serial	14	9	11	12	15	12
Editorials	10	15	5	11	14	11
Ads	8	10	11	2	9	10
Financial Page	4	4	1	11	2	3

Let us now turn to the ranking of the children of the foreign-born and the parts of the newspaper read. Quite naturally while only 37 per cent of the whole group read foreign news, 51 per cent of those of foreign-born parentage read it. They have relatives and friends suffering in Europe and feel much more keenly

the events of the past few months. The percentages also rise in the reading of headlines, national and local news, and crime.

For the colored group we find the biggest increases, 13 per cent each higher than the totals for all cases, in sports, foreign news, and Dorothy Dix. Joe Louis' recent success accounts for the former. The desire to read Dorothy Dix is in harmony with the Negro preference for love stories and the fact that the race appears to mature earlier than the white. The Negro too has more interest in the theatre page, his percentage being 80, while the group percentage is 62. Sixty-two per cent of the whole group turn to the school news regularly but only 42 per cent of the Negroes do so. Local news drops also from 32 per cent to 16. The Negro may here be showing his growing awareness of what it means to be born black. Since the Negroes are not given positions of leadership in a white community, they may not care to read much about its doings.

It appears then that almost every child has access to one or more newspapers; that comics, headlines and "Believe It or Not" are most frequently read; that foreign, national, and local news is read more by pupils who read from three to 14 hours per week; that the child of foreign-born parents is much more interested in foreign affairs than the others; and that the colored group also read more foreign news but in addition are more interested in sports and Dorothy Dix and less interested in school and local news.

## CHAPTER VIII - MAGAZINE READING

The reading of magazines is almost as common as newspaper reading. According to John Doe Junior High School pupils they have approximately 5.9 magazines per family. Here as with newspapers the pupils seem to have an ample supply of printed matter. Where the data showed an average of more than one magazine in a given group present in each home, the number in each group was tabulated separately. This was necessary for monthly, general weeklies, comics, and pictorial news magazines.

#### Monthly, General Weeklies, Pictorial News Magazines

The largest number of magazines listed was the monthly periodical of general interest including women's magazines, The Reader's Digest, and literary magazines such as Harper's. Only 27 per cent of the homes lack these magazines but 56 per cent of the pupils do not read any of them. (See table LIV.) More homes have from one to three of these periodicals than any other number. The largest percentage of pupils also reads from one to three. When the averages are computed for the reading groups one finds an almost even rise through groups I to V, the averages being 1, 1.7, 1.7, 2.4, 2.5. No such regular progression is found for the children of foreign-born parents nor for the Negro groups.

Table LIV

## Monthly Magazines in the Home and Read by Pupils

## All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent									
		None		1-3		4-6		7-9		10 or more	
		At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read
7A	128	36	51	36	34	22	12	6	2	2	1
8A	138	33	51	31	33	28	12	7	4	1	0
9A	196	20	34	41	46	23	12	11	7	5	2
Total	462	27	44	37	39	24	11	9	5	3	1

Table LV

## Monthly Magazines in the Home and read by the Pupils

## All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent									
		None		1-3		4-6		7-9		10 or more	
		At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read
I	101	35	59	40	34	19	7	4	0	2	0
II	96	26	39	41	48	23	9	9	3	1	1
III	101	28	44	33	41	26	11	9	3	4	1
IV	99	23	36	34	36	24	14	14	10	3	2
V	65	24	37	30	34	33	18	6	9	7	2
Total	462	27	44	37	39	24	11	9	5	3	1

General Weeklies were also tabulated separately. An increase in the average per pupil by grades is found, the averages for the three grades being .5, .6, .7, respectively. This is in line with the fact that more ninth graders are interested in news and general monthlies. The averages also show an irregular increase by reading groups rising from .5 to .8, those in reading groups IV and V reading the same number. By far the largest percentage, 68, who read none of these come in group I with the percentage dropping to 49 for group V. One may conclude, therefore, that those who read most and the older pupils read general weeklies more.

Table LVI

## General Weeklies in the Home and Read by Pupils

## All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent							
		None		One		Two		Three	
		At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read
7A	128	45	68	29	16	18	12	8	4
8A	138	41	56	32	26	21	14	6	4
9A	196	29	51	39	31	22	13	10	5
Total	462	37	58	34	25	21	13	8	4

Table LVII

## General Weeklies in the Home and Read by Pupils

## All Cases by Reading Groups

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent							
		None		One		Two		Three	
		At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read
I	101	37	68	35	20	19	8	9	4
II	96	39	59	39	29	20	11	3	1
III	101	40	59	28	21	24	16	8	4
IV	99	30	50	39	28	18	14	13	8
V	65	40	49	29	29	25	16	6	6
Total	462	37	58	34	25	21	13	8	4

A much closer association is found between the number of pictorial news magazines in the home and the number read by pupils than was found in the case of monthly magazines. Here there is not more than two points difference between those read and those available to the pupil. While the largest number of homes have but one of these magazines, yet four were reported from 18 per cent, nearly one-fifth of the families. Here again when the averages are compared an increase in number per pupil is shown as the amount of reading increases. (Tables LVIII and LIX)

Reading Group	Average Number Read per Pupil
I	1.2
II	1.3
III	1.3
IV	1.5
V	1.5

Table LVIII

## Pictorial News Magazines-All Groups by Grades

## Read and in the Home

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent									
		None		One		Two		Three		Four	
		At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read
7A	128	32	35	32	31	16	15	5	4	16	15
8A	138	33	36	23	22	13	13	8	7	23	22
9A	196	28	30	34	33	16	15	7	6	16	16
Total	462	31	33	30	29	13	15	7	6	18	17



Table LIX

## Pictorial News Magazines - All Cases by Reading Groups

## Read and in the Home

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent									
		None		One		Two		Three		Four	
		At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read	At Home	Read
I	101	30	35	25	24	14	14	10	8	21	19
II	96	33	38	34	32	9	8	7	6	16	16
III	101	34	35	32	32	14	13	4	4	16	16
IV	99	24	26	34	32	17	17	3	3	20	20
V	65	31	31	22	22	23	23	9	9	15	15
Total	462	31	33	30	29	13	15	7	6	18	17

Comic Magazines

Since every pupil who had a comic magazine read it and a few must have been borrowed, as more were reported read than in the home, the number in the home was omitted from the table on comic magazines. These are by far the favorite periodicals of the pupils, especially the eighth graders. Nevertheless a considerable portion of the pupils, 38 per cent, do not read them at all. While the average number read per pupil remains about the same through reading groups I to IV, the highest average, 2.6, the highest per cent for the eighth (3.4) and the ninth (2.0) grades, and the second highest (2.6) for the seventh, are all in group V.

Table LX

## Comic Magazines Read - All Groups by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent							
		None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
7A	128	32	10	12	5	23	7	3	8
8A	138	30	10	9	6	22	7	4	12
9A	196	49	10	11	8	13	3	3	3
Total	462	38	10	11	7	19	5	3	7

Table LXI

## Comic Magazines Read - All Cases by Grades

Reading Group	Total Number of Cases	Per Cent							
		None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
I 7A	26	26	12	12	0	23	15	0	12
8A	30	40	7	10	3	23	7	0	10
9A	45	44	11	11	5	13	7	2	7
Total	101	38	10	11	3	19	9	1	9
II 7A	25	32	8	12	8	24	12	0	4
8A	27	30	0	7	0	30	18	4	11
9A	44	61	11	7	14	2	2	2	0
Total	96	45	7	8	8	16	9	2	4
III 7A	36	30	14	14	8	17	3	3	11
8A	23	35	22	8	0	22	0	8	4
9A	42	47	14	10	10	10	2	2	5
Total	101	38	16	11	7	15	2	4	7
IV 7A	25	40	8	12	0	20	4	12	4
8A	36	27	14	3	14	22	6	6	8
9A	38	50	5	11	11	23	0	0	0
Total	99	40	9	8	9	22	3	5	4
V 7A	16	31	6	6	6	38	6	0	6
8A	22	18	9	18	9	14	0	5	27
9A	27	41	4	22	0	22	0	7	4
Total	65	31	6	17	5	23	1	5	12
Grand Total	462	38	10	11	7	19	5	3	7

Since John Doe Junior High School pupils live largely in town, farm magazines mean little in their lives. Lodge papers too seem not to have much influence.

Boys magazines were frequently reported by girls but boys very seldom checked a Woman's, a romance, or a girl's magazine. Most airplane, science, and radio publications were listed by the boys, however. Nevertheless, one 9A said he read six romance magazines.

### Magazine Reading and Special Groups

It is interesting to note the influence of age on magazine reading. An increasing interest in news is shown by the increasing percentage who read news magazines through the three successive grades, beginning at 16 per cent and rising to 40. This is much more marked in romance and movie publications, our seventh graders not yet being ready for these. Again, we see the same thing more definitely in monthly magazines where the average for the three grades is 1.5, 1.8, and 2.5 respectively. Pupils' interest in comics decreases or continues decidedly. Half of the 9A's no longer read these periodicals at all. Younger pupils either go to Sunday School more or else read their papers more regularly. In sports we see a decided rise in interest in the ninth grade. We can predict, therefore, that young pupils will grow out of comics and into publications about sports, general topics, news and romance.

The people in reading group I prefer picture and sport periodicals. Groups I and V seem to join in reading the greatest

number of airplane, romance, and comic magazines, although the interest in romance continues into reading group II. The similarity between the percentages of news magazines in the home and those read by pupils is striking, those having the greatest opportunity reading them the most. The same similarity can be seen with other magazines too. Here once more we find the people in reading groups II, III, and IV choosing the less sensational magazines.

A good deal of deviation from the group as a whole was shown by the children of foreign parents, their percentages rising for romance, comic, and pictorial news magazine, and dropping for news, general monthlies, Sunday School, sports, general weeklies, and young folks periodicals. The striking differences are in the table for the Negroes. When the news was presented in pictures the percentage of publications in the home rose 26 points and those reading them 23 for four pictorial news weeklies. The number of homes not having these papers dropped 23 points and the pupils failing to read them 21. Both the foreign and colored parents and pupils like the pictorial news weekly.

Reading Group	Average Number Read per Pupil	
	Children of Foreign Parentage	Negro Pupils
I	1.3	1.7
II	1.3	2.2
III	1.4	2.0
IV	1.9	2.5
V	2.1	2.3
Group Average	1.5	2.2

Since these individuals have limited education or language handicaps, the illustrations must help them to get a clearer understanding of the printed page.

While more young folks' magazines are in the Negro homes, many less monthly and general weeklies are taken. For the monthly magazines the average drops from 1.8 for the whole group to .8 for the Negro, 56 per cent of the homes having none and 76 per cent of the pupils reading none. What the Negro misses from the former source, he makes up by reading romance magazines, for he has an average of 1.6 in the home and each pupil reads an average of one magazine. As 68 per cent do not read any, the others have to make up for it, 12 per cent reading one or two, the same percentage reading three or four, and eight per cent reading five or six. The highest average, 1.6, comes in reading group III.

While romance magazines are fascinating to the Negro, comics are more so. The average for the group as a whole is 2.1 per pupil but for the colored child the average is 3.6, with the highest, 4.7, coming in reading group I. Here 12 per cent read none, which represents a drop of 26 points below the group percentage. The rise is 17 points for those who read three and nine points for those who consume seven or more. Another difference lies in the fact that the Negro continues to read just as many comics in the ninth grade, while other pupils have begun to find something else.

Table LXII

Other Magazines Read by Pupils - All Groups by Grades				
	7A	8A	9A	Totals
Total Number of Cases	128	138	196	462
Magazines	Per Cent			
News Magazines				
At Home	45	41	57	49
Read	16	14	40	26
Romance Magazines				
At Home	50	86	80	74
Read	27	48	68	50
Airplane Magazines				
At Home	27	37	38	36
Read	26	32	32	30
Sunday School and Church Papers				
At Home	60	47	54	54
Read	41	35	37	38
Sports Magazines				
At Home	36	35	56	44
Read	20	20	40	29
Movie Magazines				
At Home	45	67	68	61
Read	31	43	57	46
Radio Magazines				
At Home	34	25	29	29
Read	23	17	24	22
Young Folk's Magazines				
At Home	63	56	57	58
Read	45	38	45	43
Science Magazines				
At Home	52	36	49	46
Read	34	28	39	34
Detective Magazines				
At Home	38	22	30	29
Read	27	20	26	24

Table LXIII

## Other Magazines Read by Pupils

## All Cases by Reading Groups

	I	II	III	IV	V	Totals
Total Number of Cases	101	96	101	99	65	462
Magazines	Per Cent					
News Magazines						
At Home	35	70	31	62	49	49
Read	14	28	22	37	29	26
Romance Magazines						
At Home	75	67	61	70	111	72
Read	45	51	43	45	78	50
Airplane Magazines						
At Home	47	39	29	22	48	36
Read	46	22	27	15	48	30
Sunday School and Church Papers						
At Home	57	41	56	65	48	54
Read	36	30	47	46	26	38
Sports Magazines						
At Home	49	42	39	44	49	44
Read	35	26	28	25	29	29
Movie Magazines						
At Home	57	52	44	82	77	61
Read	48	41	42	50	49	46
Radio Magazines						
At Home	24	23	34	34	31	29
Read	14	17	29	26	23	22
Young Folk's Magazines						
At Home	56	48	47	85	54	58
Read	46	36	46	43	46	43
Science Magazines						
At Home	46	36	38	52	63	46
Read	34	25	27	40	54	34
Detective Magazines						
At Home	28	22	20	34	49	29
Read	20	18	18	29	43	24



Summing up, we may say that all groups have access to a large number of magazines, that reading interest lies first in comics, then in general monthlies and pictorial magazines, that reading interest changes with the children of native-born parents, comics growing less interesting as the children grow older; that the Negroes lean more toward romance and comics, that once more those who read from three to fourteen hours per week read the less fantastic and sensational material, and that the greatest variation from the group as a whole comes in the colored group.

## CHAPTER IX - FAVORITE CHARACTERS

An idea held constantly in mind tends to work itself out into action. This can be also somewhat true of an ideal. In order to find out what heroes or ideals these pupils were most eager to follow they were asked to name first any two characters from printed material which they liked best and to give reasons for their choice, second to name their favorite from the best book read during the year, and third to name a character which they would like to resemble.

### Favorite Characters from Newspapers, Books, or Magazines

Since the pupils could choose from any printed material their answers had a very wide range. Some of them thought the field too limited and stepped over into the movies or used contemporary persons who do not write, like Queen Elizabeth. An average of 31 per cent said, "None," or put a question mark.

Where more than three per cent in a grade gave one character the results were included in a table. Of eleven characters included eight are from comics. The group as a whole prefer Superman to any other character, 13 per cent listing him, the largest percentages coming in reading groups I and II. Boots has a percentage only five points lower than Superman. Wash Tubbs also had a much higher percentage in reading groups I and II. Freckles was preferred by more ninth graders, his escapades being of senior high school grade at present.

The book which furnished the favorite character for most pupils was Little Women, even though it was not listed in either reading groups I or II in the seventh and eighth grades. Nancy

Drew ranked highest in group IV. While Gone with the Wind is not listed except by ninth graders it was included to show the results of movies on reading. With both Little Women and Gone with the Wind several characters were mentioned, but were grouped together, Jo and Scarlett being given most often. The seventh grade group I listed no characters from books at all while only four from the seventh and eighth grades together listed anything but comic characters.

Table LXIV

## Favorite Characters from Books, Magazines and Newspapers

## All Groups by Grades

	<u>7A</u>	<u>8A</u>	<u>9A</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total Number of Cases	128	138	196	462
	<u>Per Cent</u>			
Boots	9	6	8	8
Superman	9	17	8	13
Popeye	9	7	3	6
Dick Tracy	6	1	2	3
Batman	4	3	1	2
Easy	3	7	5	5
Wash	3	9	5	6
Freckles	3	4	7	5
Little Women	4	5	3	4
Nancy Drew	5	6	1	3
Gone with the Wind	0	0	3	1

Table LXV

## Favorite Characters from Books, Magazines and Newspapers

## All Cases by Reading Groups

	I	II	III	IV	V	Total
Total Number of Cases	101	96	101	99	65	462
	Per Cent					
Boots	7	4	12	9	5	8
Superman	18	16	9	10	14	13
Popeye	7	5	8	4	5	6
Dick Tracy	3	5	4	1	2	3
Batman	2	2	2	2	5	2
Easy	5	4	4	7	3	5
Wash	8	7	3	5	5	6
Freckles	3	4	6	9	2	5
Little Women	2	0	3	8	6	4
Nancy Drew	2	3	2	8	2	3
Gone with the Wind	0	2	0	2	2	1

Their reasons for liking the characters were as diverse as the persons chosen. These reasons were given frequently in all grades: adventurous, courageous, exciting, clever, interesting, strong, (particularly for Superman), kind, amusing, and typically American. The seventh grades are more intrigued by action than the rest, while the ninth graders were the only ones to mention success. Here also the widest range of vocabu-

lary was shown, and a larger number of characteristics per person were listed.

By the eighth grade , news broadcasters were being mentioned as favorites; more definite reasons were given for the choice of characters and much more variety of choice was shown. In the ninth grade we continue to find less emphasis on comic strips, particularly in reading group V, still more diversity, and many more characters from classics and real life like Lincoln and Will Rogers.

#### Favorite Characters from Favorite Books

In listing their favorite characters from books, the pupils almost invariably gave the hero or heroine. In the seventh grade these were all from fiction. Louisa May Alcott's wholesome real personalities influence all grades. Heidi is a favorite even with some ninth graders. Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Penrod and Sam continue to suggest mischief to modern boys and girls. Jim Hawkins, John Silver, Jane Eyre, Scarlett O'Hara, Rhett Butler, and Melanie, are listed by older pupils while Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm and Anne of Green Gables delight the younger ones. Sue Barton is spreading the romance of the nursing profession among all groups. These are the fine characters who meet the problems of everyday life. But most of the heroes listed are found in an unreal world, perhaps not definitely bad, but which gives the pupil a great deal of thrill. They like excitement and adventure, and as a result when they grow older they turn to the movie and romance magazine as pastimes which can provide the fears and heart throbs they got from Nancy Drew in their childhood.





Characters Pupils Wish to Resemble

When asked to give the character they wished to resemble the pupils became reticent. Further, in the majority of cases they thought in terms of vocations instead of qualities, one saying she could think of no character who was engaged in the vocation she wished to follow. By the end of the ninth grade most pupils have been forced to make some kind of occupational decision to know which course to take in high school. This may explain why 50 per cent of the seventh grade, 26 per cent of the eighth, but only 15 per cent of the ninth grade said they did not know whom they wished to be like.

It was impossible to group these results into any kind of table. Here again characters from comic strips were chosen more by younger pupils and by those who read the least. Sonja Henie was mentioned several times by the seventh graders for her skill in skating. On the whole few movie stars were given. The following are statements from seventh grade papers:

"She solves mysteries and I want to."

"Mrs. Roosevelt--intelligent, good speaker, and has personality."

"Chiwee--told his friends good things."

"My mother, who is kind, loving, forgiving, and ready for anything."

These show a beginning of idealism and discrimination. One seventh grader showed his scepticism by replying, "It is useless to dream."

Five per cent of the seventh grade, eight of the eighth, and two of the ninth wished to be original. One said "I want to live a life of my own not a copy." One said she lacked the physical

attractiveness to resemble anyone else.

By the eighth grade, some pupils began listing outstanding national figures like Lincoln, Florence Nightingale, and Edison. Nevertheless most of the heroes given were still recorded because of their occupations. One teacher was given a fine compliment when a child said she wished to be like this instructor because she was "pretty, kind, friendly, gracious, and a good teacher." Several mentioned members of the family, one boy saying he wished to have a face like his father's.

In the ninth grade the vocational emphasis was still more pronounced although some of the answers show an interest in several phases of character. One admires Jo from Little Women because she "combines poise and boyishness together and gets away with it." Another wants to be like Napoleon because he is "a forceful character, has perseverance, a wonderful personality and leadership." Another looks up to Will Rogers because he was "a friend to everyone, rich or poor," another adding about Rogers "honest, frank, faithful, and courageous." A girl speaking of Queen Victoria said, "a great woman, she knew and got what she wanted."

Several colored children listed Joe Louis. One each gave Marion Anderson and Dr. Carver, because of service to their race.

One knows that favorite characters do not give the whole story concerning a group's idealism. Moreover, few pupils gave any reason for copying anyone except his professional success. Nevertheless it is disappointing to find such a large number of young people so absorbed in comics as to give Superman first place on any list of characters. It is also disappointing not to find more boys and girls giving heroes because of their service to

humanity. Napoleon was much like Hitler. Possibly the boy giving Napoleon hopes to dominate by force. In my judgment we have failed as teachers and parents to give our boys and girls heroes which are so real, so absorbing, and so compelling that they will be more than glad to follow them.

CHAPTER X - ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES  
FROM SIX ALL "A" PUPILS

In an effort to shed some light on the reading habits of the more able, the individual questionnaires from six all "A" pupils in the authors home room were carefully analyzed. All of them are white, all of native-born parents, both parents and pupils read only English, and there are no foreign language publications in these homes. All the fathers are employed, there being two insurance agents, three associate directors of state departments, and a minister of a large local church, and none of the mothers work away from home. All of the parents are well trained, five of the fathers being college graduates. and three of the mothers, all having graduated from high school. While two reported no encyclopedies in the home, the others had from one to four sets, and all of the Britannicas reported in the eighth grade came from these homes. Thus we have an unusually fine home background economically and educationally.

The youngest one in the group and the youngest child for all grades is in reading group I. Until this fall he has lived in upper Michigan where he has had poor library facilities and frequently moved from place to place. His use of the library has increased during this school year. Since much of his reading is done in school he has probably understated his reading time, as he reads eight comic magazines regularly outside of school. There is one 13 year old who is in reading group III. The others are all 14 years of age, two being in reading group II, and two in group IV reading nine hours per week each. Since all these youngsters are active in many kinds of recreation, group as well as individual, nine hours of reading is the maximum they can allow for one activity.

### Health

One of the pupils in reading group II has a serious eye difficulty and is only permitted to read the amount reported,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  hours, 15 minutes on school days and one hour each on Saturday and Sunday. Another in group IV has had a bone infection and cannot do many outdoor activities. The others appear to be healthy and attend school regularly.

### Movie and Radio

They attend from two to eight movies per month, the larger numbers corresponding with the lower reading groups. Those in group IV attend two and three respectively. They listen to the radio from  $6\frac{1}{4}$  to 18 hours per week. Time devoted to the radio and movie is about the same as for the 462 pupils as a whole. Number of books read were from two to nine per month, a range corresponding with that of other pupils.

### Reasons for Reading

They all take suggestions as to their reading, two using twelve of the people and sources listed, the lowest report being four. While they take recommendations of other people, only one reports reading to please his parents, none do it to please teachers or because their friends do. Nevertheless they all read to get information and because they like it. One reads to forget his troubles but only two because of a lack of something else to do. Two added reasons of their own stating reading was a "lot of fun" and "I find interesting things in books." The one in

reading group I gets books from the school library, gifts, and purchase, while all the others get them from the six sources listed in the questionnaire. The boy in group I reports not getting books at home, and that the family has no encyclopedias. Perhaps his moving from place to place as his father's work shifted indicates no chance for accumulation of books and makes the boy seek other means of recreation.

### Characters and Reading Matter Preferred

The group all prefer adventure stories to any other type, detective stories falling in second place. Fiction is the favorite of five while one, our little fellow in group I, likes historical books best. In reply to their methods of choosing books and magazines, their answers are worth quoting:

Case	Reading Group	Method of Choosing Reading Material
A	I	"Material in it."
B	II	"Librarian's recommendation and specific information."
C	II	"Interesting and worth the time."
D	III	"Contents, frontispiece, title, read first two pages."
E	IV	"Asking others who have read them, also teachers, and parents. Other books by authors I like."
F	IV	"Books of the same series or which tell how to make things."

These answers show more discrimination than those of most pupils, as well as a desire for certain types of knowledge. When one reads for definite information he has begun to read with a purpose.

All the favorite books listed by this group were mystery or adventure stories and many of their favorite characters were taken from these. They are still very imaginative and love to deal with the improbable. Superman, Our Bill, Freckles, Pep Morgan, Pug, Jerry Todd, and Dick Knight were characters from comic strips listed by this superior group. Nancy Drew, heroine of a mystery series, was given three times, while Judy Bolton, a girl detective, was given once. Sue Barton was chosen by one pupil because she likes nursing stories. The three boys all gave characters from comic strips while all but one of those listed by girls were from books.

In giving the characters they wished to resemble, two pupils gave leaders in occupations which they would like to follow. Nancy Drew and Judy Bolton were given because they have adventure and solve mysteries. As she knew no character who was a great accompanist one girl gave "No one," in response to this question. Only one boy gave an outstanding national character. He selected Edison for his inventions and work with electricity. The lack of idealism shown by this group of our finest boys and girls would indicate a need for more careful training in the elements which go to make up a fine individual. None of them wished to resemble a person because of honesty, or service, or some quality other than material success. They need to read more biography, and they like it when it is given to them. One of these six was in bed three months this year and read five or six books a week. Even with opportunity to improve her reading tastes her mother made no effort to interest her in anything but the lightest fiction.



### Newspaper Reading

Having seen something about the books these boys and girls read, let us now look at the parts of the newspaper to which they devote their attention. The local newspaper was in every home. Three reported the presence of other papers. All of them read the headlines, all but one the comics and "Believe It or Not," four read the theatre page and school news. Two boys read the crime news, sports, foreign news, and local news. One boy and one girl reported reading national news. The boy in reading group I reads eleven parts of the paper regularly while the boy in group II reads nine. The boys read more of the news than the girls. The paper is obviously not a very great influence in the lives of the remaining four of these pupils.

### Magazine Reading

Comic magazines seem to appeal more to the boys than to the girls, or else the boys are the only ones with enough spending money to buy them. Perhaps, too, the girls read them but are ashamed to say so. Whatever the truth may be, the three boys in this group read, five, six, and seven of these magazines regularly. The girls read none.

Two of these boys also read "all" of Time and the other "all" of News Week, while only one girl read a news magazine, even though there was one present in each home. Of the picture news magazines the boy in group I reads three, one girl reported two, and one none. This tendency of boys to read the news would explain their greater interest in current happenings and social studies in general. Most girls are somewhat bored by

a current events discussion.

To the boys exclusively go the airplane, radio, science, and movie magazines. The latter is an accident as more girls than boys are interested in movies. Two boys and two girls reported the Reader's Digest. All of them read the stories from some woman's magazine but none read all of the monthly magazines in their homes. Harpers and Fortune are in two homes but make no appeal as yet to these pupils. All but one reported some young folks magazine, two of the boys having both The American Boy and Cren Road for Boys. All of these magazines except Child Life are devoured from cover to cover. Only three had Sunday School papers, two of which were read. Only one lodge magazine was listed and no romance magazines. On the whole this group have more and better magazines in their homes than most pupils, and use their opportunities to read them. One hopes that our finest boys will grow out of comics and our girls into news magazines.

In answer to the question, "How has reading been of value to you this school year?", the replies were unsatisfactory. Three did not consider the question of sufficient importance to answer it at all. The others have read for enjoyment "because it's fun," and to gain knowledge. Reading clearly has become as yet nothing but a recreation to most of these youngsters. There is much that librarians, teachers, and parents can do to see that these superior children learn of the tremendously interesting benefits to be derived from non-fiction. Scholarship and

amount of reading do not seem to have any relation for this group. The boy in group I, however, reads the cheapest magazines and the greatest number of them. It would be interesting to learn whether his scholarship drops later on and whether his reading interests change.

**CHAPTER XI - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Having completed our survey of the data in detail, our next task is to summarize the results. Some items, languages read by parents and pupils, and reference books in the home, were found to have no connection with the amount of reading the pupils did. The children of parents with only high school training did not appear to read more or less because of it.

Another group of items had some relationship to the amount of reading done. The economic status seemed to have importance, particularly for reading groups II, III, and IV. The largest number with low incomes were in groups I and II. Reading groups II, III, and IV also had the highest percentages for those who were the most successful in school, as is shown by the fact that they were of average age for their grade, that they failed less, and that they were on the first and second honor rolls more often than other groups. Comic magazines were read most by reading group V while those in groups II, III, and IV read more of the factual and less sensational magazines.

#### Items Having a Definite Association with Amount of Reading

A large number of items had a definite association. The children of college trained parents tend to read more while those whose parents have merely a grade school education read less. The more foreign language publications in the home, the less reading the student does. This also is borne out by the fact that as the proportion of English speaking parents increases the amount of reading increases slightly. Pupils who read a great deal also spend much time in going to movies and listening to the radio. In addition, those who read most do so in-

creasingly at the suggestion of parents, librarians, teachers, other adults, book reviews, and especially their friends. Again, as the amount of reading increases, the pupils do it more and more because they like it and for information, those in reading groups I and II reading much more to please parents and teachers.

When it comes to books, those who spend more time definitely read more, get books from a wider variety of sources, and like fiction best. When permitted to give their methods of choosing books, the title and the recommendation of friends were listed the most frequently, the percentages for the latter rising very definitely with the amount of reading. With newspapers the same situation is apparent, those having the most reading the most. The reading of national and local news increases decidedly through group IV while crime news is read largely by group I and the continued story by I and V. The proportion of monthly and pictorial news magazines per pupil rises with the amount of reading. As to favorite characters, those listing them from books were largely in reading groups III, IV, and V, while Superman was given most in groups I and II.

### Differences by Grades

Some differences were noticed by grades. As our pupils grow older more read because of their friends' or parents' recommendations. More also read on special topics and for material which will be valuable in later life. In addition there is a slight increase in non-fiction reading. The older pupils gave more favorite characters from books and real life,

and a wider range of characters. The preference for comic magazines and characters reaches its height in the eighth grade and falls off decidedly after that. Romance, news, general weeklies, and monthly magazines are read much more by ninth grade pupils, while the younger ones read the biggest number of Sunday School papers.

### Differences for the Children of the Foreign-Born

The children of foreign-born parents follow the librarian's suggestions less than any other group. They also use the library less, have fewer books at home, get fewer as gifts, and do not buy so many. Of the types of books on which they were questioned they prefer less fiction, and have the highest percentage liking science. Quite naturally, they read more foreign news. Headlines, national and local news, and crime also seem to appeal more to them. In magazines they read fewer monthlies and more pictorial news and comic magazines.

### Differences for the Negroes

The most decided differences from the group norm were found in the colored group. They are the poorest economically, none being well-to-do. They read the fewest books and get them from fewer places. While they do use other libraries, probably the community center library established for Negroes, yet they have many fewer books in their homes, buy less and have fewer given them. The Negroes had the highest percentage of any group preferring books of religion, stories about children, and

love stories. In newspaper reading, they show less interest in local and school news and more interest in sports, foreign news, Dorothy Dix, and the theatre. Among magazines, they read many **fewer** monthly and general weeklies and many more pictorial news, romance, and comic magazines.

### General Conclusions

In conclusion, it may be said that the home situation has less to do with the amount of reading done by pupils than one might think, that from three to fourteen hours of reading leads to **more** successful school work, that pupils who read most tend also to spend the most time in other recreations like the movie and the radio, that those reading from three to fourteen hours per week tend to read more books, prefer more book characters, read more news, read fewer comics and sensational magazines than those in other groups, and that the most compelling motives for increasing the amount of reading are the desire for information and for pure enjoyment.

### How Reading Benefits Pupils

After a good deal of time and energy has been spent collecting and recording data, the question as to whether the topic warranted such labor naturally arises. The answer lies with the young people themselves. How much do they feel they get out of reading? While several said they got nothing and a few that it merely filled up waste moments, yet the majority gave interesting and stimulating replies. The majority read



for enjoyment and information, two very good reasons. Some have stumbled upon new knowledge and have gotten an explorer's delight in discovery. They have "learned to speak more correctly," have increased vocabulary, have found that reading helps in conversation, and have learned how "people lived long ago" and in foreign countries. One pupil even reads because reading gives her a better view of life.

### Recommendations for Parents, Teachers, and the Community

While the grouping for this study has been based on the amount of time pupils spend in reading, the kind of material read is of more significance sociologically. Since those in reading group I in general are the least able students, reading will probably never mean much in their lives. As they do not seem to enjoy the printed page now, it is unlikely that they will ever become wide readers. They will be more likely to continue to look at publications which are profusely illustrated, as many of the cheaper periodicals are. An interesting experiment could be carried on to show what could be done through physical make-up of publications to broaden and improve the reading habits of this group.

It may be that the individuals reading more than fifteen hours per week do so because they have limited chances for new experiences, such as travel and camping. Since all their thrills must be gotten vicariously, they use reading as well as the movie and radio excessively. As these individuals have already established the habit of much reading, perhaps by careful guidance they could be taught to like non-fiction and could

be led to read more magazines other than those of the romance and comic variety. With the exception of the Negroes, the tendency to outgrow the latter has been demonstrated. Here again is a fertile field for experimentation.

It is the majority of the students, those reading from four to 14 hours who should be given the most attention. As has been indicated in the summary, these are the most successful in school work, come more often from well-to-do homes, and read the less fantastic and sensational material. How can we as adults help them to get the most from the printed page?

The home can do more than any other single agency to set up standards not only in reading but in every other phase of life. Our first heroes are our parents. For this reason, parents must be very careful of the example they set. If they read cheap, sensational material, their children will do it too. On the other hand, if nothing but the best literature is found in the home, the child will develop a taste for good publications which will be difficult to overcome. Another thing parents can do is to use the library themselves, urging the children to have cards and to go regularly through the summer months when the school library is closed. If the parents will become acquainted with children's books, they can recommend things for the children to read. The magazines brought into the home should be of non-sensational, true-to-life variety so that the child will become accustomed to seeing this type of material. He should also be supplied with fascinating publications suited to his age and interest. Discussion of the news at the dinner table not only raises the level of the conversation above Jane's and Bob's

quarrelling, but also stimulates the children's interest and gives them knowledge of current events.

One of the most effective means of increasing the amount of reading is doing it aloud. Younger members of the family are thus able to get much they could not read to themselves, and the older ones benefit also. With our growing tendency to individual instead of group activity within the home, reading together can be used as a unifying influence. The home can, then, be of value in helping children read by setting up high standards, by giving the child an example of an adult's enjoyment of books, by guiding children in their choice of books, by showing them how reading can be of value in conversation, and by giving them the opportunity to hear material read aloud.

Through the school, also, reading is stimulated. The grade school teacher does her part in starting youngsters on the path to good literature by teaching the fundamentals of reading and urging them to read much. In the junior and senior high schools pupils have more freedom and can, therefore, obtain a much larger supply of reading matter than in the grades. Furthermore they have spending money in increasing amounts, which means they can buy more publications if they choose. Because of this the high school teacher has a responsibility for setting up standards by which the pupil can judge the worthwhile and reject the tawdry.

As shown in the study, almost all the pupils use the school library and will grow into using the high school library; but these libraries are closed through the summer, so that not only the pupil's chief source of supply but his surest means of get-

ting at least harmless literature is shut off. The author would recommend that our junior high school libraries be kept open at least half a day through the summer months. Since the schools are open anyway so that pupils may go swimming, and the librarian is on duty much of the time, the library service could become a part of the city recreation program without great expense and with benefit to the pupils.

Teachers can also increase the pupil's interest in magazines by having them about the room and urging pupils to use them during spare moments. For example the Reader's Digest and the National Geographic are of untold value in teaching social studies. The author has increased the seventh grade pupils' reading of the former by having copies available and asking pupils to read certain articles. No reports were required, but the boys and girls soon began prefacing their remarks with "I read in the Digest." With the slower pupils the magazine was taken to the individual and he was requested to finish the article only if he liked it. In two cases the pupils were successful in persuading their families to subscribe to the magazine. Both newspaper and magazine material can be used in the discussion of current events. While boys have a natural interest in news, the girls need to have their interest quickened. As they care about marks, requiring reading of news does make the better students do it.

Another way in which teachers can show to pupils the fun there is in books is to tell interesting incidents from them, being careful to state clearly the title and author and where the book can be found. With this, too, the author has had

success. Pupils have come several days later to ask more definitely about the book, and many have read those books suggested. This method is particularly effective in stimulating non-fiction reading. One pupil after reading a biography of Martha Berry remarked, "I didn't know such interesting things happened to real people."

In addition, teachers need to be more careful not to condemn too much the reading of a classic if it is being done at the wrong time. Pupils are human, too, and if they become fascinated by a story are apt to try to glance at a page during a mathematics class. Since recreational reading will probably do more to shape a pupil's ideals than square root, teachers should not be too harsh, even though they may find it necessary to have the pupil return to the work at hand. The school can help, therefore, by offering library service through the summer and employing teachers who will stimulate reading of non-fiction and other factual material in the class room.

The home and the school must do the largest amount of work but the community, too, must play its part. Ample and convenient library service is the right of all individuals. Mothers' clubs can do much to raise the standards of children's literature and to advise on wise guidance so that the most profitable material is read. For the Negro, greater security and recognition would probably bring his reading habits more nearly to those of the group as a whole.

While in the last analysis, what an individual reads should be his own choice; yet our young folks should be protected from some types of periodicals. While comic magazines introduce

the pupil to an unreal world, yet they may take the place of fairy stories for junior high school pupils and are outgrown by all but the Negroes. The romance magazines with their decided sex appeal are in the author's judgement definitely harmful. If the community could do something to curb their sale or at least to restrict it to adults, it might lead fewer young people to read them. If public opinion were strong enough to stop their publication, that would be a fine step. Nevertheless, this will not be done for a long while, and our boys and girls must meanwhile be protected if possible by guidance at home, at school, and through substitution of more wholesome material for the objectionable publications.

The printed page is the only way by which civilized man can pass on his experience from one generation to another. Does it not, therefore, behoove all adults to do their utmost to see that our youth is provided with wholesome, adequate, and interesting supplies of reading matter, that he may preserve this heritage given to him and perhaps contribute new ideas which will help to solve the problems faced in the chaos of to-day?

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