

# BOOKPALS READING HABITS SURVEY 2018

## 1. The survey

### 1.1. Methodology

117 students from the six middle and secondary schools involved in the project participated in the second survey on reading habits and reading motivation. Overall, 74 (63%) girls and 43 (37%) of boys took part. The age of the participating students ranged from 14 to 19 years, with the majority of pupils being 15 and 17 years old (36% and 42%, respectively).

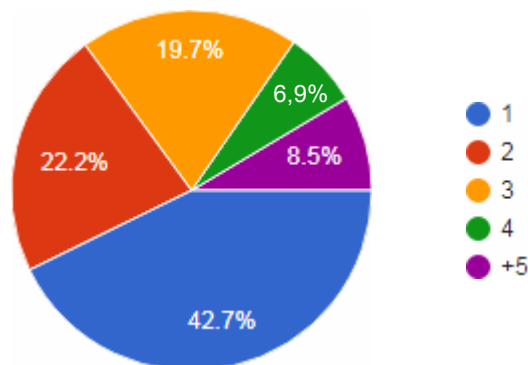
To evaluate the impact of the project, the students were given a 12-point questionnaire that, in addition to some background information, contained items on students' attitudes and habits towards reading. There was also one open-ended question about their favourite books.

## 2. Results

Reading enjoyment has significantly increased during the duration of the project. 97% of students stated that, in the last two years, they read for pleasure.

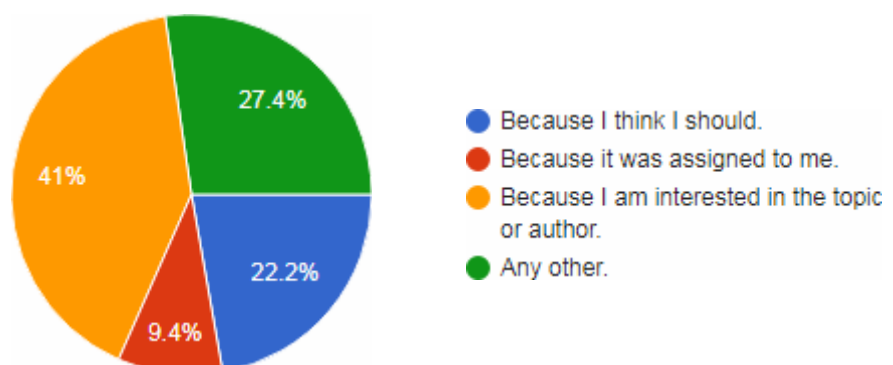
On average, 43% of students read one book per month, and 9% read more than five books per month (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Why did students usually read a book? 41% of students read fiction or non-fiction books because they were interested in the topic or author, 22% because they thought they should, and 9% because the book was assigned to them (Figure 2).

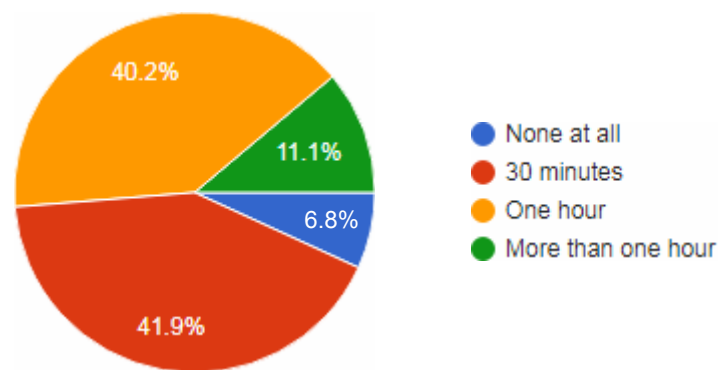
Figure 2



The pupils were asked to indicate the sources from which they obtained their books. 59% of students stated that the books were purchased at a store, 25% borrowed the books at the public library and 44% at the school library, 25% of students downloaded e-books, and 42% borrowed books from friends.

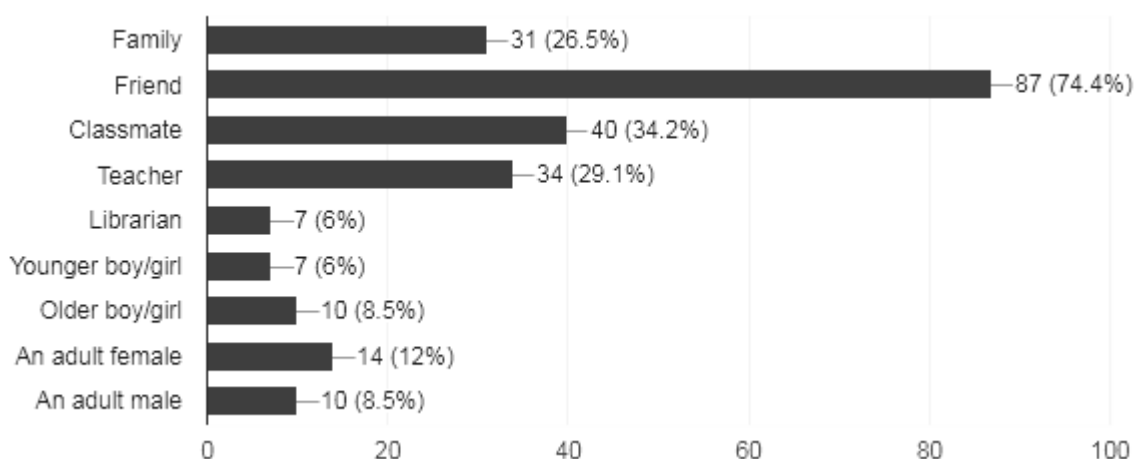
When asked how much time they spent reading for pleasure per day away from school, 42% of students stated that they had spent 30 minutes per day reading, and 40% one hour. 11% spent more than one hour per day reading for pleasure (Figure 3). 89% of students preferred printed books, and 11% e-books.

**Figure 3**



When asked who they preferred to discuss their reading with, 74% of students stated that they enjoyed doing it with a friend, 27% chose family members to discuss their reading, 34% shared their points of view with a classmate, and 6% preferred to talk about their reading with a librarian (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**



When asked if participation in BookPals has had an impact on their thinking/attitude, 91% of students answered affirmatively. 37% stated that now they are able to express themselves better, 33% acknowledged that they have become social, 31% declared that the activities increased their motivation, and 21% are now more confident.

### 3. Discussion

The majority of students in the survey stated that, in the last two years, they read for pleasure, some of them more than five books per month. This is particularly relevant since secondary pupils are less likely to enjoy reading. Research has shown that reading enjoyment, as well as attitudes towards reading, decline with age. In this case, the project not only promoted reading, but also engaged students in activities they considered rewarding.

Pupils chose their books autonomously, according to their interests. Only 9% stated that the books were assigned to them. This means that the recommendations, pitched at the right cognitive level, managed to close the gap between student preferences and materials that schools usually provide and recommend.

The majority of students purchased the books they read, but there was also a considerable percentage that borrowed them from the public or school libraries. It is interesting to notice that 89% of students prefer printed books, and 11% spent more than one hour per day reading for pleasure.

Given the evidence about the benefits that reading for pleasure can bring, it is encouraging to note that, when asked about their favourite books, the students were able to provide a wide and varied selection of titles, some of them they knew through the project. Since their reading outside of school was freely chosen, built on their preferences, it is particularly important that they could find and discuss the books that really interested them.

The vast majority of students (91%) also stated that their participation in BookPals has had a positive impact on their thinking/attitude, which is relevant because the amount of reading not only influences educational attainment, but also increases general knowledge, social skills, and community participation.