

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
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Words of Wisdom: Youth Reading More than Adults
By Paul Asay

What Happened:

“People don’t read anymore.”

“The Internet is killing books.”

“Youth can’t focus on an entire novel—just 140-character tweets.”

At least, that’s what some people say. They worry the Internet is reshaping our minds, making it impossible for us to enjoy reading for fun anymore; but according to a new study, those worriers couldn’t be more wrong.

According to the Pew Research Center’s Internet and American Life Project, 83 percent of youth between the ages of 16 and 29 have read a book in the past year. While that may not sound like a lot, keep in mind only seven in 10 older Americans read a book in 2012.

Youth go to the library pretty frequently, too, with 60 percent saying they’ve plucked some reading material from there lately. While many do read on tablets or e-readers, most youth consider them more of a supplement to traditional books than a replacement.

It makes sense when you look at what sells these days. What sorts of books have become runaway bestsellers in recent years? *The Hunger Games*. *Twilight*. The Harry Potter Series. All are books written for voracious young-adult readers. More than three-fourths of youth say they’ve recently read something just for fun.

Talk About It:

Do you read? Have you read a book in the past year? How many have you read? Do you typically read for school, fun or both? Do you think you’re reading more these days or less?

What do you like to read? Do you enjoy science-fiction and fantasy stories such as Harry Potter books or *The Hunger Games*? Are you more in tune with realistic fiction? What about non-fiction? What do you *not* like to read?

Do you think reading is good to do? Why? What sorts of benefits can you receive from reading? Are some books better for you to read than others?

Speaking of reading, do you read your Bible? How often? Do you have a favorite book? A favorite verse? What do you think God thinks of the written word?

What the Bible Says:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” (John 1:1).

“My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer” (Ps. 45:1).

“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, O Lord; teach me your decrees” (Ps. 119: 11-12).

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Ps. 119:105).