

# NEWS RELEASE

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## U.S. Study of 7.6 Million Students Reveals Most Popular Books and Reading Trends *'What Kids are Reading' Sparks Discussion on What Kids Should be Reading*

**March 13, 2012, Wisconsin Rapids, WI** – The newest edition of the largest study on students' book selections expands from a popular annual report on reading trends to a discussion on what kids *should* be reading. *What Kids Are Reading 2012: The Book-Reading Habits of Students in American Schools*, released today by Renaissance Learning, presents detailed information about the top 40 books read by students in grades 1–12. The report also fans the flame of debate about what kids *should* be reading with commentaries by education experts as well as noted authors.

Based on the reading records of 7.6 million students who read more than 241 million books during the 2010–2011 school year, the report confirms that America's youngest readers continue to feast on *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss, while students in grades 3–6 prefer to devour books from Jeff Kinney's *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, which dominate the Top 5 spots in those grades. Kinney wrote the introduction to this year's report.

"The fourth edition of *What Kids Are Reading* continues to serve as a key resource to assist educators and parents in book selection," said Glenn R. James, CEO of Renaissance Learning. "The new commentaries on what students should be reading add a fresh perspective to this year's edition, adding insight to the long-standing debate about popular books students choose to read versus classics and other books that may be assigned to them."

Commentaries are shared by Sandra Stotsky, professor of education reform, University of Arkansas; David Coleman, Student Achievement Partners and contributing author of the Common Core State Standards; Terri Kirk, Librarian, Reidland High School, Paducah, Kentucky; Barry Gilmore, chair of humanities and English teacher, Hutchison School, Memphis, Tennessee; Dav Pilkey, author of the *Captain Underpants* series; Dan Gutman, author of *My Weird School* series; and Ellen Hopkins, author of the *Crank* trilogy.

The newly released edition of the world's largest study on reading trends provides information about books kids are reading by grade, gender, and reading level. Findings are based on records from Accelerated Reader (AR), the most widely used K12 reading software and largest single database of book-reading behavior. Data are based on quizzes students have passed, providing documentation beyond best-seller lists and library circulation, which report on books that were purchased or checked out, not necessarily read cover to cover.

The new edition includes the Top 40 Graphic Novels, examines Common Core State Standards exemplar texts, and presents the results of an annual Librarians' Picks Survey. The final section of the report is the Top 10 Challenged Books by Year, 2009–2011, from the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom. To read the full report, visit [www.renlearn.com/whatkidsarereading](http://www.renlearn.com/whatkidsarereading).

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### About Renaissance Learning, Inc.

Renaissance Learning, Inc. is a leading provider of technology-based school improvement and student assessment programs for K12 schools. Renaissance Learning's tools provide daily formative assessment and periodic progress-monitoring technology to enhance core curriculum, support differentiated instruction, and personalize practice in reading, writing and math. Renaissance Learning products and school improvement programs help educators make the practice component of their existing curriculum more effective by providing tools to personalize practice and easily manage the daily activities for students of all levels. As a result, teachers using Renaissance Learning products and programs accelerate learning, get more satisfaction from teaching, and help students achieve higher test scores on state and national tests.