

News Release

Boo Radley or Katniss Everdeen: Who's Motivating Kids to Read?

Renaissance Learning's What Kids Are Reading 2013 Report Finds Pop Culture, College Readiness, and Required Reading Influencing Students' Reading Selections

April 22, 2013, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis. — What do *The Hunger Games*, required reading lists, and state standards have in common? According to the largest annual report of its kind, all three have a huge impact on what today's students are reading. With the increased influence of popular culture, the report also finds that students are increasingly choosing books with lower text complexity, a concern for many educators.

Released today, Renaissance Learning's fifth-annual What Kids Are Reading report highlights the top 40 books read by students in grades 1-12. In addition to students' top picks, the report looks at what motivates students to select certain titles. For a look at Common Core State Standards exemplars, required reading from 1907 to now, and top book selections overall, download [What Kids Are Reading](#) and the [infographic](#).

"The classics are still the classics, but popular culture has a clear impact on the books that students select," said Eric Stickney, director of educational research at [Renaissance Learning](#). Stickney noted that when movies based on books are released, such as *The Lorax* or *The Hunger Games*, those books spike on the list. "However, with the rise of these books, we also see a steady decline in the text complexity levels of required reading during the last 100 years – approximately a three grade-level decline."

Based on [Accelerated Reader Quizzes](#) taken by 8.6 million students in the 2011-2012 school year, What Kids Are Reading gives educators, parents, and administrators critical insight on reading. The report finds that while popular culture clearly influences title choices, other factors, such as the Common Core State Standards exemplars, are also beginning to influence students' reading choices.

The report includes insight from guest essayists, who share their thoughts on what kids are reading and why:

- Avi, author of *Nothing But the Truth*, said, "I believe there are two powerful ways to motivate young people. The first is that they see their own parents, guardians, and siblings reading...The second most powerful motivator is to read to young people."
- Christy Levings, executive committee member, National Education Association, said, "Not unlike adults, [students] used recommendations from friends and classmates as a major source of finding new things to read."
- Doreen Cronin, author of *Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type*, said, "The books kids read largely depend on which part of the world is calling to them, confusing them, scaring them, or making them laugh."
- Donald Driver, author of *Quickie Makes the Team*, said, "Kids read what they read to have fun! No other activity invites kids to use their imagination quite like reading does."
- Dr. Roger Farr, chancellor's professor emeritus at Indiana University, said, "High-interest books motivate students to read. When books that engage adolescent readers feature interesting topics...students will read."

Learn more and download the What Kids Are Reading report at <http://www.renlearn.com/whatkidsarereading/>.

About Renaissance Learning, Inc.™

Renaissance Learning 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 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 accelerate learning, get more satisfaction from teaching, and help students achieve higher test scores on state and national tests.