



GCSE

3700U20-1A



S25-3700U20-1A

FRIDAY, 23 MAY 2025 – MORNING

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

UNIT 2

Reading and Writing: Description, Narration and Exposition

Resource Material

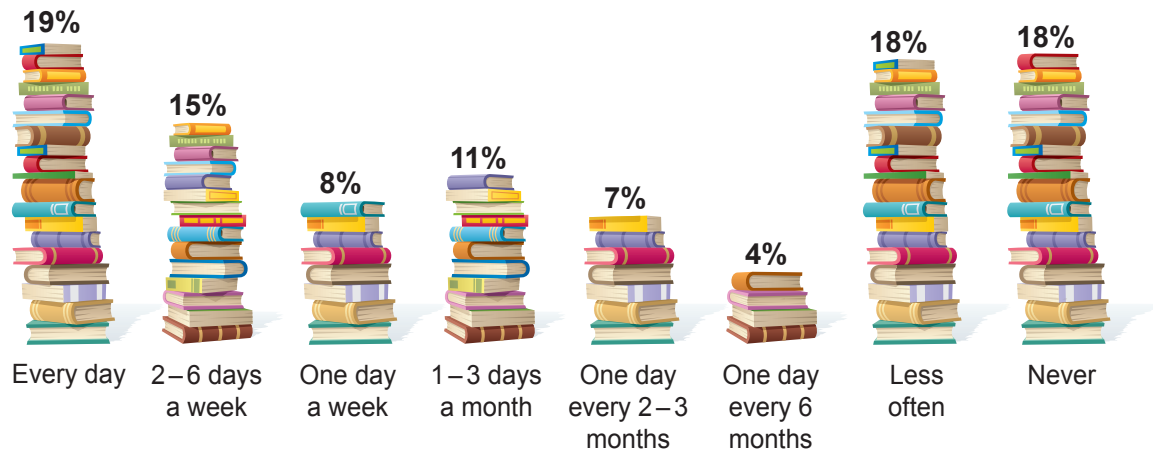
For use with Section A

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Text A is an infographic that gives information about the reading habits of British people.

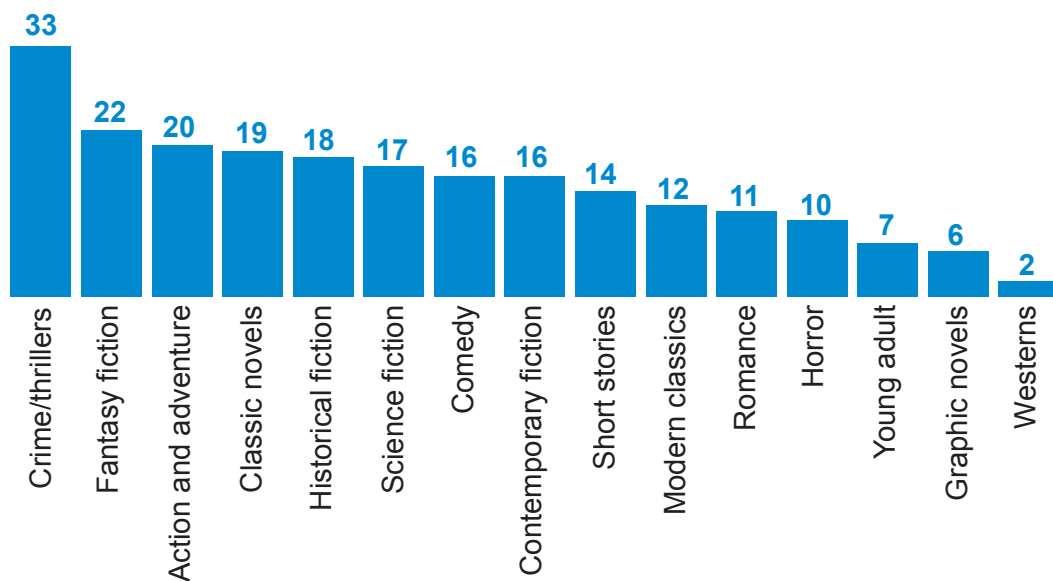
21% of British people describe themselves as keen readers – but what is the nation's favourite genre? Have we finally joined the digital dark side and swapped to e-readers? And when in our busy lives do we find the time to read?



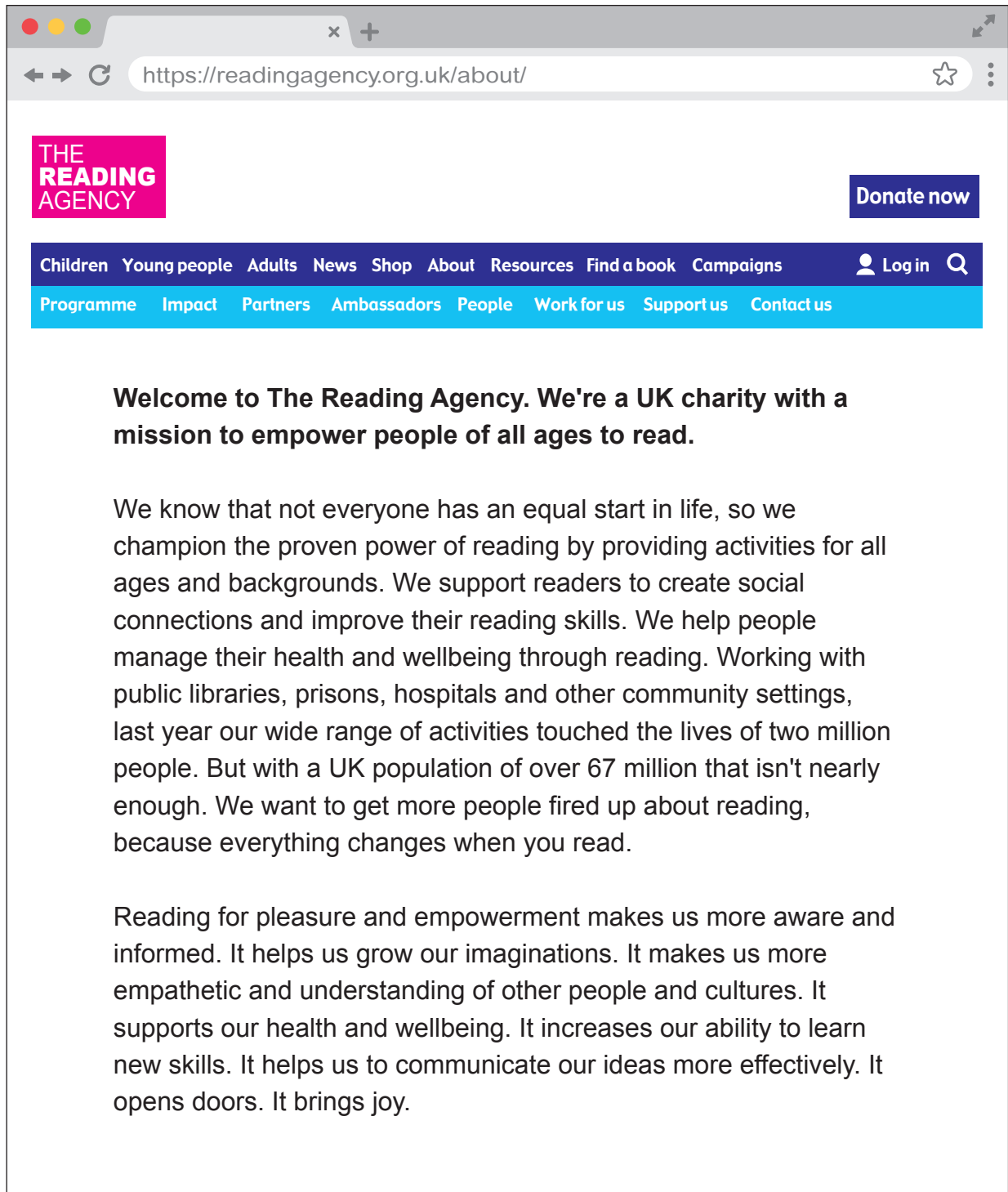
British bookworms: 42% of British people say they read for pleasure at least once a week, with 34% doing so multiple times a week and 19% reading every day.

Which fictional genres do British people prefer?

The survey asked a group of British people which type of fictional genre they prefer.



Text B is taken from the website of the reading charity 'The Reading Agency'.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <https://readingagency.org.uk/about/>. The website header features the 'THE READING AGENCY' logo on the left and a 'Donate now' button on the right. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links: Children, Young people, Adults, News, Shop, About, Resources, Find a book, Campaigns, Log in, and a search icon. A secondary menu below that includes: Programme, Impact, Partners, Ambassadors, People, Work for us, Support us, and Contact us.

Welcome to The Reading Agency. We're a UK charity with a mission to empower people of all ages to read.

We know that not everyone has an equal start in life, so we champion the proven power of reading by providing activities for all ages and backgrounds. We support readers to create social connections and improve their reading skills. We help people manage their health and wellbeing through reading. Working with public libraries, prisons, hospitals and other community settings, last year our wide range of activities touched the lives of two million people. But with a UK population of over 67 million that isn't nearly enough. We want to get more people fired up about reading, because everything changes when you read.

Reading for pleasure and empowerment makes us more aware and informed. It helps us grow our imaginations. It makes us more empathetic and understanding of other people and cultures. It supports our health and wellbeing. It increases our ability to learn new skills. It helps us to communicate our ideas more effectively. It opens doors. It brings joy.

Text C is adapted from a speech about the importance of reading.

It's important for people to tell you what side they are on and why, and whether they might be biased. I am going to be talking to you about reading. I'm going to suggest that reading fiction, that reading for pleasure, is one of the most important things a person can do. And I am biased, obviously and enormously: I'm an author, often an author of fiction. I write for children and for adults. For about 30 years I have been earning my living through my words, mostly by making things up and writing them down.

Fiction is a gateway to reading. The drive to know what happens next, to want to turn the page, the need to keep going, even if it's hard, because someone's in trouble and you have to know how it's all going to end ... that's a very real drive. And it forces you to learn new words, to think new thoughts, to keep going. To discover that reading in itself is pleasurable. Once you learn that, you're on the road to reading everything. And reading is key. Words are more important than they ever were: we navigate the world with words. People who cannot understand each other cannot exchange ideas; they cannot communicate.

The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read and to show them that reading is a pleasurable activity. And that means finding books that they enjoy and letting them read them. I don't think there is such a thing as a bad book for children. Every now and again it becomes fashionable to point at a subset of children's books, a genre, perhaps, or an author, and to declare them bad books, books that children should be stopped from reading. I've seen it happen over and over; Enid Blyton was declared a bad author, so was RL Stine, so were dozens of others.

It's rubbish. It's snobbery and it's foolishness. There are no bad authors for children because every child is different. They can find the stories they need to and they bring themselves to stories. A worn-out idea isn't worn out to them. This is the first time the child has encountered it. Well-meaning adults can easily destroy a child's love of reading. If you stop them reading what they enjoy, or give them worthy-but-dull books that you like, you'll wind up with a generation convinced that reading is uncool and worse, unpleasant.

Fiction builds empathy. When you watch TV or see a film, you are looking at things happening to other people. Prose fiction is something you build up from 26 letters and a handful of punctuation marks, and you, and you alone, using your imagination, create a world and people it and look out through other eyes. You get to feel things, visit places and worlds you would never otherwise know. You're being someone else, and when you return to your own world, you're going to be slightly changed. You're also finding out something as you read that is vitally important for making your way in the world. And it's this: the world doesn't have to be like this. Things can be different.

Text D is an infographic that gives information about the use of libraries in Wales in 2018.



Text E is adapted from an autobiographical account of childhood reading.

When I look back, I come out in a cold sweat of relief at all the lucky breaks being a bookworm gives you. Beyond the pure and simple joy it brings, a love of reading grants you an easy life at school. It pleases teachers, who also assume you are clever (I was not) and hard working (I was, but only because giving into my natural laziness would have earned me a stern telling off at home). It gives you an ability with language which means all essay-based exams are made easier (and later makes job applications and covering letters a great deal more persuasive) and altogether eases your passage through life far more than any lucky break should.

Once you are out of the education system, things even up a bit. The genuinely clever people get the promotions and the money, which is as it should be (and sometimes they will buy you a nice bunch of flowers if you help them with their job applications and covering letters). We bookworms don't mind, because we only need enough money for books, and promotion would mean longer working hours and less time to read.

As I have got older, I have occasionally questioned whether it is possible to take the bookworm thing too far. Yes, I have thought in my weaker moments, but you really do need to live some life, don't you? But then I come back to myself and think – no. No, I don't. I have lived so many lives through books, gone to so many places, so many eras, looked through so many different eyes, considered so many different points of view. The fact that I haven't had time to do much myself seems but a small price to pay. I live my life quite as fully as I want, thank you. Books have not isolated me – they have connected me. What non-bookworms get by meeting actual people, we get from reading.

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