This article presents a brief summary of research pertaining to the reading interests of elementary school pupils and contains a 48-item bibliography. (Author)
THE READING INTERESTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS: A SUMMARY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

by

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Abstract

This article presents a brief summary of research pertaining to the reading interests of elementary school pupils, and contains a 48-item bibliography.
A review of literature, from 1897 to the present, on pupils' reading interests reveals that the questionnaire is the most widely used method for ascertaining reading interests. Other methods used for determining reading interests include selection ratings and interviews. The studies of Ramsey (1962), Stanchfield (1962) and Chiu (1973) support the hypothesis that there is no difference between the reading interests of good and poor readers.

There is evidence that primary and intermediate grade pupils have different reading interests. As early as 1898 Wissler wrote about differences in pupils' interests. Generally, primary grade pupils appear to be interested in animals and fairy tales. This was discussed in studies by Witty, Coomer and McBean (1946), Edith and Amatora (1951), Rudman (1955), Wolfson (1960), Ramsey (1962), Stanchfield (1962) and Chiu (1973).

Intermediate grade pupils become more interested in action and adventure stories, sports, science and mysteries. This was highlighted by Garnett (1924), Witty, Coomer and McBean (1946), Edith and Amatora (1951), Rudman (1955), Wolfson (1960), Ramsey (1962), Stanchfield (1962) and Chiu (1973).

Sex differences in reading interests become apparent after the primary grades. Intermediate grade boys prefer sports, adventure, mystery, biographies and science. Girls prefer to read about mysteries, children with familiar experiences, humor, romance and adventure. These sex differences in interests appear in the early reports by Henderson (1897) and Vostrotsky (1899). They also appear in later studies by Garnett (1924), Ramsey (1962) and Chiu (1973).

Finally, studies by Emans (1968), and Johns (1973, 1975) indicate that inner city children prefer stories with middle-class settings rather than true-to-life inner-city themes and settings. McCloskey (1967) and
Barchas (1971) found that lower socioeconomic children, in the intermediate grades, preferred adventure, mystery, humor and sports stories. Barchas further discovered that the reading interests of ethnic groups are similar with the exception that each ethnic group preferred characters of its own ethnic background.

For a more detailed review of children's reading interests, the following articles and books may be read:


Butterworth, Robert F.; and Thompson, George G. "Factors Related to Age-Grade Trends and Sex Differences in Children's Preferences for Comic Books." Journal of Genetic Psychology 78 (March 1951): 71-96.


Geesley, Dorine H. and Wilson, Richard C. "Effect of Reading Age on Reading Interests." Elementary English 49 (May 1972): 750-756.


Stanchfield, Jo M. "Boys' Reading Interests As Revealed Through Personal Conferences." Reading Teacher 16 (September 1962): 41-44.


Thorndike, Robert L. *A Comparative Study of Children's Reading Interests.* New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941.

Thorndike, Robert L; and Henry, Florence. "Differences in Reading Interests Related to Differences in Sex and Intelligence Level."


Witty, Paul; Coomer, Ann; and McBean, Dilla. "Children's Choices of Favorite Books: A Study Conducted in Ten Elementary Schools."

*Journal of Educational Psychology* 37 (April 1946): 266-278.
Witty, Paul; and Lehman, Harvey C. "The Reading and Reading Interests of Gifted Children." Pedagogical Seminary and Journal of Genetic Psychology 45 (December 1934): 466-481.


Wolfson, Bernice J. "What Do Children Say Their Reading Interests Are?" Reading Teacher 14 (November 1960): 81-82 and 111.