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Leisure Book Reading of Keokuk Middle School Students, 1985-1986

Barbara Miller

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LEISURE BOOK READING OF KEOKUK
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS,
1985-1986

A Research Paper
Presented to the
Faculty of the Library Science Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

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Abstract

Leisure Book Reading Keokuk Middle School Students, 1985-86

Barbara J. Miller

This study provided data about what books Keokuk Middle School students were reading, where students obtained their books and who influenced what they read. Finally, the study obtained data about why Keokuk Middle School students read the books they did during the first three quarters of the 1985-86 school year.

The data were gathered by a survey of the 427 students in attendance on February 19, 1986. The data showed that the students read 1,311 different titles. The title most read was The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton.

The survey revealed that the students are most influenced by browsing at the school library (61.4 percent) when choosing books. Other major influences included the recommendations from peers (68.1 percent) and the students reading teacher (42.2 percent).

According to the results, students obtained their books from a variety of sources. Most students (58.7 percent) listed two or three sources.

Most students stated that they read in order to meet book report requirements (71.7 percent). Other major reasons for reading included an interest in a topic (63.9 percent) and reading for pleasure or fun (58.3 percent).

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

For some time there have been conflicting reports and rumors about the reading tastes and habits of young adults in America. Such reports have brought about great confusion.¹ There has been a barrage of articles in the literature on why young adults do not read and how to reach these seemingly unwilling readers.

One such study, entitled "Why Johnny Can Read... But Doesn't," looked at a variety of factors pertaining to the reading habits of seventh grade students in the Regina, Canada, Schools. The results of the study showed that on the average these seventh grade students read one book per month.² Several reasons were stated for these findings. First, non-readers had seldom experienced any pleasurable associations with reading. Second, non-readers had not been encouraged to read. Finally, educators had not taken advantage of auditory media which was probably the best way to reach these students.³

Another article on why young adults do not read stated that students are unable to read. Teachers face the problem

¹Rema Freiburger, The New York Times Report on Teenage Reading Tastes and Habits (New York: New York Times Company, 1973), p. 3.

²Sarah Landy, "Why Johnny Can Read... But Doesn't," Canadian Library Journal, 34 (October 1977), pp. 380-381.

³Ibid., p. 387.

of their students' "general lack of interest, indifference or sheer rejection of reading".⁴ This article also reiterated that students who will not read have probably never experienced pleasure in reading. Another reason expressed for students refusing to read was that some adolescents are incapable of sitting for long periods of time. In some cases reading may be considered an "antisocial" activity or not the "in thing to do" by the peer group, therefore, students will not read.⁵

The last example of this type of article stated that young adults are often forced to read those books which adults think are good for them.⁶ The article further stated that often young adults are not old enough to understand and enjoy the books they read.⁷

A second type of article attempted to identify how to reach the students who will not read. Elana Rabban stated that the most able students do not have time for leisure reading. They spend much of their free time studying for

⁴Lance M. Gentile and Merna M. McMillan, "Why Won't Teenagers Read?," Journal of Reading, 20 (May 1977), p. 649.

⁵Ibid., pp. 650-652.

⁶Ken Donelson, Young Adult Literature in the Seventies, ed. Jana Varlejs (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press Inc., 1978), p. 76.

⁷Ibid., p. 80.

tests, doing homework and writing papers. Rabban suggested that the attitude, more is better, in assigning homework should be discouraged. An abundance and variety of reading materials will be needed to reach all types of readers. Variety in reading material is defined as books which are easy to demanding in difficulty, classics to modern novels, serious to frivolous stories and hardcover to paperback formats. The most important advice Rabban gives her readers is that reading must be a source of relaxation. It should be something that is fun and enjoyable.⁸

Norma B. Kahn in an article, "Helping More Students Become More Mature Readers," discusses what it takes to become a mature reader and how to accomplish this with students. Kahn states that mature readers enjoy choosing their own reading, read various types of books, respond to what they have read in appropriate ways, remember what they read, try consciously to learn new words and can concentrate when they read. She further describes these traits and discusses how to make mature readers out of students. She suggests that librarians should be involved in this process. First, librarians can be involved by giving regular book talks. Second, librarians can help students to find appro-

⁸Elana Rabban, "Reaching the Able But Unwilling Reader," SLJ/School Library Journal, 27 (December 1980), p. 37.

priate materials in the library. The final point that Kahn makes is that to help students to become more mature readers, teachers and librarians should be examples of mature readers themselves.⁹

Along with the barrage of articles on students who do not read, there is also a sizable body of literature which deals with student reading habits. Observations of students in schools show that adolescents do in fact enjoy reading as a leisure time activity. School librarians can probably name at least one if not several students who ask for guidance in choosing books to read. Librarians can also probably name those students who check out books and whether or not they read them prior to returning them. The students a librarian really wonders about are those students who carry a free reading book with them but did not get the book from the school's library. Librarians do not know for sure which books teenagers are reading and enjoying or whether in fact these young people are reading at all.¹⁰

THE PROBLEM

The problem for this study was a three-fold one. The

⁹Norma B. Kahn, "Helping More Students Become More Mature Readers," English Journal, 69 (March 1980), pp. 51-53.

¹⁰Freiberger, loc. cit.

study dealt with what Keokuk Middle School students chose to read, where middle school students got these materials and why middle school students chose to read what they read.

The portion of the study that asked the question, "What books are Keokuk Middle School students reading in their leisure time?" would aid in identifying a list of titles read most by middle school students.

The second portion of the study asked the question, "Where do Keokuk Middle School students get their books for reading?". It was divided into two parts. The study asked where middle school students physically obtained the books they read. Second, the study solicited information about where students got their ideas for what they read.

The last portion of the study asked the question, "Why do Keokuk Middle School students read the books they do?" This section dealt with the student's motivations for reading. Do they read to learn how to deal with problems or just to learn about some topic in which they are interested? Do they read just for fun? Was the book read because it was recommended by someone? Did they see a movie and like it so much that they wanted to read the book? Are there other factors that motivate middle school students to read the books they do?

HYPOTHESES

Based upon the literature review and experiences in

working with adolescents, the following hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. No title will be listed by more than twenty percent of the students surveyed.

2. Forty percent or more of the students will respond that one influence in what they choose to read will be their reading teacher.

3. Forty percent or more of the students will respond that their friends are an influence in their choice of reading materials.

4. Fifty percent or more of the students get their books from two or more sources.

5. Thirty percent or more of the students will read to learn about themselves, others or life.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were defined as stated below:

Middle School Students - students in grades six through eight. The terms young adults and adolescents may be used as synonyms later in the study.

Leisure Reading - The term is used to define a type of reading done by a student over and above assigned reading for a class. It includes any book read by an adolescent which was chosen by the student. It does not include books assigned to be read for a class. It could include a book a

student chooses to meet a requirement for a book report.

Influence - the power of persons or things to effect others, seen only in its effects.

Reading Habits - the tendency of students to read certain types of books. It also pertains to the specific titles young adults read as a whole.

Reading Interests - pertains to the titles and topics about which young adults are curious or want to read.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine the reading interests and habits of middle school students. The study more specifically examined the reading habits and interests of the students attending Keokuk Middle School in Keokuk, Iowa. The study might aid the librarian in the selection and acquisition of new materials for use by students in leisure reading in the future. Maybe, having more books in the collection in which students have expressed interest will help to get the reluctant reader started and the student body as a whole involved in leisure reading. The study also provided information about where students got their reading materials outside the school library. This gave the librarian additional clues as to what students were reading.

Finally, the study shed some light on the subject of why students chose to read what they did. If librarians know why young adults read what they read, they may be

better able to help young adults choose books from the library's collections. The "why" of the matter may be really an additional motive to read for the students. Reading for enjoyment may not be their only purpose for reading. Not only could this information be used as an aid in reading guidance, but it could also be used in the selection and acquisition of materials. For instance, if most students read to learn about life, the librarian may wish to stock up on "problem novels" rather than fantasy.

LIMITATIONS ON THE STUDY

Reading habits and interests can be influenced by a number of factors. There are several factors with which the study will not deal because of the nature of the study. These factors include intelligence, literacy or grade level of students. The study was not intended to examine any correlations among these factors.

The data were limited to those gathered in one school from students in grades six through eight. The limitations in grade levels were chosen because sixth through eighth grade students are all served by the same media center in the school district chosen for the study.

The study was limited to collecting data about books read for leisure reading. Books assigned to be read for a class are not necessarily representative of student reading interests or habits as defined by the study. Inclusion of

assigned materials could affect the conclusions drawn from the data and the reliability of the study's results. Books chosen and read by students to meet book report requirements were included in the study. Suggested reading lists were available to students for use in choosing books to read.

For the purposes of this study magazines, newspapers and comic books were omitted as types of materials which young adults read in their leisure time. It was recognized that young adults read newspapers, magazines and comic books in their leisure time. Many classics as well as modern stories have been published in comic book formats. Some comic book editions of such stories may have been counted in the study because there was no way of knowing if the student had read the comic or original editions of books.

The reliability of the data supplied by the students also limited the study in several ways. First, the study required that students remember all the books they had read during the first three quarters of the school year. Second, there may have been students who attempted to answer the questions on the survey in the manner they thought the researcher expected.

The final limitation of the study involved the researcher's ability to administer the data gathering instrument. A problem arose in administering the survey to all students on the same day. The researcher had to rely on other faculty members to administer the instrument to the

students in each of their classes.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

There were three underlying assumptions in this study.

First, it was assumed that young adults could read. If they could not read they would not use reading as a leisure time activity.

Second, it was assumed that young adults had time which they could and would use for leisure reading. This assumption also implied that young adults wanted to spend some of their leisure time reading. Lastly, this assumption implied that young adults actually did spend some of their leisure time reading.

Third, it was assumed that young adults had access to reading materials from a variety of sources. If the young adults did spend some of their leisure time reading, they would have to get their reading material from somewhere.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a rather large body of literature on the topic of young adult reading habits. The sources reviewed for this study are representative of the ideas and present knowledge on the topic. Literature included in the review deals with reports on studies of adolescent reading habits from about 1920 to the present.

Literature describing the reading habits prior to 1920 has been left out of the review for several reasons. First, there are not many sources available about young adult reading habits prior to 1920. Second, young adult reading habits have changed rapidly during the period from 1920 to the present. It is felt that the literature representative of this time period will be more helpful in defining the problem for this study.

The review is organized in the following manner. Sources will be reviewed on the history of young adult reading. Next the literature will be reviewed on what young adults read. The third section of the review will deal with where young adults get their reading material. The fourth major section will deal with why young adults read what they do. The last section will deal with sex differences in reading interests. This section will be followed by brief summary remarks.

HISTORY

A survey of the articles indexed in Library Literature, prepared by Margaret Hutchinson, reviews the history of young adult reading from 1921 through 1971.

Young adults of the 1920's could be characterized as needing to develop reading taste. Adolescents had not learned to discriminate between "the good and the cheap" books. Young adults liked books with a great deal of excitement. Mystery and western stories were the favorite types of books read by adolescents. The 1920's were a time when individualized reading was beginning to become evident along with reading guidance. Up to that time young adults and adults read the same books. Young adults read adult books because there were no authors writing books aimed at this age. There was also no market yet for and consequently no authors writing what was to be later known as the young adult novel.¹¹

The 1930's arrived and young adults were still reading adult books. Romance and adventure stories were among the most popular followed by animal stories and mysteries. Polls during this time found that adolescents disliked slow-moving books and anything which contained long descrip-

¹¹Margaret Hutchinson, "Fifty Years of Young Adult Reading 1921-1971," Top of the News, 30 (November 1973), pp. 24-25.

tions. Young adults had a tendency to read books by a particular author or books in a series. Young adults were becoming reluctant to read. There was much speculation as to why this was happening. Reasons cited included: a need for realistic stories; a need for simplicity in style, language and plot, and finally a need to "select books with values". It was determined that "reading should not be over-classified and over-regulated". Young people should read about everything, even love.¹²

As the United States became involved in World War II, there were few changes in young adult reading habits and interests. Young adults were reading adult fiction. War stories became popular because of the U.S. involvement in the war. The amount of reading done by young people, at this time, dropped. Several reasons were offered for this decline in reading. To begin with, adolescents were reading books which were beyond their developed reading skills. Second, young people were needed and exploited in the work force allowing them little time to read. Lastly, books were expensive during war time and young adults could not always obtain books. In 1948 Booklist began to examine and develop "standards in relation to the adult books for use by young people". This began the adult examination of what

¹²Ibid., pp. 26-30.

adolescents were reading.¹³

The 1950's brought about changes in young adult literature. Richard Alm criticized the books young adults were reading, saying that they were often distorted with problems solved too easily, over-simplification, single motivation and inconsistencies of characterization.¹⁴

The 1950's also brought J. D. Salinger's Catcher In The Rye. It was controversial with its vulgar language and a main character who was depicted as needing psychiatric help. "Young people read the book and accepted or rejected it as it answered their needs."¹⁵

Young adults still read the adult best sellers in the 1950's. Sex was a favorite topic along with romance and adventure stories.¹⁶ A new type of book peaked during the 1950's. This type of book was called the "vocational story". It was intended to "give vocational information painlessly".

Teens loved them because the vocation was always portrayed as aggressively humanitarian and the hero was always successful in a short period of time. Usually there was romance on the side.¹⁷

The 1960's saw more and more of the old "taboos"

¹³Ibid., pp. 30-33. ¹⁴Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 34. ¹⁶Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁷G. Robert Carlsen, Young Adult Literature in the Seventies, ed. Jana Varlejs (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press Inc., 1978), p. 76.

broken. The language in the novels read by young people seemed to be more permissive. It has progressed so that today there "seems to be no language" that is not used in books read by adolescents.¹⁸

The way sex was handled in young adult novels also changed. Originally sex was only for adults reading. Soon adolescents found that "sex is a game of fixed rules". Characters in novels began to see "how far they could go on a date". Pregnancy soon followed. This brought about a new progression from mandatory marriage to abortion and the adoption of babies.¹⁹

The 1960's brought about what is known as the young adult novel. Authors began to write books specifically with the adolescent in mind. These books are still being written today. The novels attempt to deal with adolescent problems and use characters to whom young adults can relate.²⁰

The 1970's brought about what is known as the "Era of New Realism". The books published during this period were new, different and often controversial. They were also known as "problem novels", because they dealt with the problems adolescents faced in their own lives. Such problems

¹⁸Ibid., p. 74. ¹⁹Ibid., pp. 74-75.

²⁰Margaret Hutchinson, "Fifty Years of Young Adult Reading 1921-1971", Top of the News, 30 (November 1973), p. 42.

include drugs, drinking, sex, suicide, crime, runaways, abortion, college, marriage and family life.²¹

The 1980's are a continuation of the "Era of New Realism". More will be discovered about young adult literature in the 1980's as time progresses.

WHAT YOUNG ADULTS READ

Rema Freiburger did a study for the New York Times Company on the reading habits and tastes of young adult readers. The study was a survey of 7,000 secondary and intermediate students. It was conducted by mailing questionnaires to English department chairmen in schools. Another questionnaire, seeking different information, was sent to school librarians.²² The results of the study showed these people's impressions of what young adults read. The conclusions, drawn from the data received, showed that young adults, especially high school students, were concerned about learning to cope with their problems from day to day. They wanted to read realistic books which contain strong moral lessons without preaching.²³ Other trends in young

²¹Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen, Literature for Today's Young Adults (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980), pp. 181-182.

²²Rema Freiburger, The New York Times Report on Teenage Reading Tastes and Habits (New York: New York Times Company, 1973), p. 4.

²³Ibid., p. 5.

adult reading habits include: finding a favorite author and reading all of his/her books; a reluctance on the part of adolescents to move on to more difficult reading levels; showing a wide range of interests; selection of books with topics or characters they can identify with; selection of books which are brief; selection of books made into movies; and finally an interest in books which do not necessarily have happy endings.²⁴ The last pages of the study included a list of the 300 most popular books indicated by school librarians "as having the largest circulation". Bookstore polls were also consulted and those titles which were listed on a bookstore poll were marked.

In an article entitled, "Trends and Topics in YA Books," Marian Calabro surveyed over two dozen teachers, librarians, editors, agents, writers and book retailers about what young adults were reading. She concluded that there were nine types of books which are read by adolescents. These types include realistic or "problem" novels, humor, mysteries, sports, science fiction and fantasy, romances, books for minorities, biographies and histories, and poetry.²⁵ The study further mentions favorite authors of young adults and titles from the various categories which

²⁴Ibid., pp. 6-7.

²⁵Marion Calabro, "Trends and Topics in YA Books," Media and Methods, 16 (April 1980), p. 24.

were popular.

A study has been included in the literature which surveyed secondary-school pupils in Greece. Students were given a paper and pencil survey to fill out. The purpose of the study was to find out how much time students had for reading, if they spent any of their "free time" reading; if so, how much time did they read, and finally, what kinds of books did they read. This study was one of the few studies which included a copy of the survey used. It was the type of survey where students checked or circled the responses which applied to them.²⁶

Anne G. Scharf, an English teacher at Watseka Community High School in Watseka, Illinois, conducted a study on the relationship between the books adolescents read and their intelligence, sex and grade level.²⁷ It was this article which was instrumental in limiting areas of this study. It was felt that although intelligence, sex and grade level do effect reading interests and habits, these areas could be the topics for another study and would be cumbersome for this study. The results of the study did, however, show that young adults were interested in sports, war, crime,

²⁶N. Sikiotis, "Reading Habits and Preferences of Secondary-School Pupils in Greece," English Language Teaching Journal, 35 (April 1981), pp. 300-306.

²⁷Anne G. Scharf, "Who Likes What in High School?" Journal of Reading, 16 (May 1973), p. 604.

fashion, movies, poetry, drama, homemaking, romance and biographies.²⁸

In an opinion article, Thomas Roberts stated that many young adults are nonreaders. When they do read, they often read what many teachers call "junk" books. Junk books are defined as those books with lurid covers, deceptive testimonials and predictable formulas. Many teachers and librarians would like to eliminate such books from their collections. Roberts advocates keeping such books around for two reasons. First, some students enjoy reading these books. Second, it might be the only way to get students to read anything.²⁹

The article, "Kids Will Read What Kids Will Read; or, the Books Young Adults Spend Their Money on," was written by the owners of Coventry Books in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Ms. Hauserman and Ms. Taxel share what they know about the book buying habits of the adolescents who frequent their store. Young adults read every sort of book.³⁰

Specifically they like science fiction, comic books,

²⁸Ibid., pp. 605-606.

²⁹Thomas J. Roberts, "Before You Dump Those 'Junk' Books," Media and Methods, 15 (May/June 1979), pp.27-28, 46.

³⁰Ellen Strong Hauserman and Laura Faye Taxel, "Kids Will Read What Kids Will Read; or, the Books Young Adults Spend Their Money on," Top of the News, 34 (Fall 1977), p. 76.

books about sexuality, occult science, food and nutrition.³¹ The most books sold are science fiction, followed by books for English literature class and then comic books. Young adults as a group do not buy many mysteries or books that are about the "ologies" (biology, psychology, etc.). They purchase more paper backs or used hardcover books because they are less expensive.³²

WHERE YOUNG ADULTS GET THEIR READING MATERIAL

The first place some adolescents think of when they are trying to find a good book to read is to go to the library. It is important to note that "the library" can mean both the school and public library. The library is more often than not a good place to browse. Often libraries have displays of books which change frequently.³³ Young adults may also get some ideas from book talks given by the librarian.³⁴ Finally, the adolescent may see the librarian reading a book which may interest him/her.

Another place where adolescents may go to get ideas for books to read is the local book store. Hauserman and Taxel

³¹Ibid., pp. 76-77. ³²Ibid., p. 77.

³³Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen, Literature For Today's Young Adults, (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980), p. 655.

³⁴Ibid., p. 655.

tell how students will come to their store and browse. Often young adults will spend sometime reading in the store. Assuming that someone who works in the store has some knowledge about adolescent literature, the young adult might contact this person for a lead on a good book.³⁵

A study was done by William J. O'Rourke who looked at parental influences on young adult reading habits. A survey was filled out by 595 ninth graders and 300 parents. The results of the survey showed that the relationship between parent and child reading habits is not strong enough to be considered significant.³⁶

Peers are also a good source for young adults to find ideas for books to read. Peer advice can be probably the most influential at the adolescent age. Peer pressure makes adolescents do many things they would normally not do. Reading a book because it is popular with one's crowd is another thing an adolescent would do whether he/she really wanted to or not.³⁷

The final idea, that the literature gives us about how adolescents get ideas for books to read, is implied by Norma

³⁵Ibid., p. 75.

³⁶William J. O'Rourke, "Are Parents an Influence on Young Adult Reading Habits?", Journal of Reading, 22 (January 1979), pp.340-341.

³⁷Donelson, 1980, op. cit. p. 182.

Kahn. She stated in her article, "Helping More Students Become Mature Readers," that the best way to achieve this is for teachers to demonstrate that they are mature readers themselves.³⁸ Students may read a book because they saw their teacher read it. Teachers may also suggest titles to students. Some teachers prepare reading lists to distribute to their students.

Once the young adults have the title, author or some other idea of what they would like to read, they have to get the book in their possession to read it.

Students may check out those books found while browsing the shelves of the public or school library. Likewise they could check out those books found in a book display³⁹ or introduced at a book talk.⁴⁰ For that matter, assuming the particular library has the book the adolescent wants, he/she could check the book out no matter where the idea came from.

Book stores are an especially good source for the adolescent who likes to own his/her own books. Students who frequent bookstores in search of books to read could buy the

³⁸Norma B. Kahn, "Helping More Students Become More Mature Readers," English Journal, 69 (March 1980), p. 53.

³⁹Donelson, 1980, op. cit., p. 658.

⁴⁰Donelson, 1980, op. cit., p. 655.

books they found while browsing.⁴¹ Here again the adolescent has access to reading material no matter where the adolescent gets his/her ideas.

Young adults who get their ideas from parents probably read their parent's copy of the book. Parents tend to buy more books than their children.⁴² In some families it is possible that parents and children continually exchange books.

A similar situation occurs between adolescents and their peers in regard to borrowing and lending books.⁴³ It is possible that when one friend buys a book, it will make the rounds of all the person's friends, especially if it is a really good book.

In some cases students are able to borrow books from their teachers. Many teachers keep a few books in their rooms which they themselves own. In order to encourage students to read, they are more than happy to loan these books to students.

In addition to going to the sources of their ideas, there are other places where young adults can gain access to

⁴¹Ellen Strong Hauserman and Laura Faye Taxel, "Kids Will Read What Kids Will Read; or, the Books Young Adults Spend Their Money On," Top of the News, 34 (Fall 1977), p. 75.

⁴²O'Rourke, op. cit., p. 342.

⁴³Donelson, 1980, op. cit., p. 182.

reading material. The availability of these sources depend upon where the young adult lives. Some of these things occur more frequently than others. These ideas could be responses later in this study so they will be included in the literature review.

Book fairs might be held in the school or at the public library. Book fairs are defined as a day where books are brought into a school or public library. Adolescents can then come in, browse and purchase any books they wish. Frequently this is held as a fund raiser. Book fairs may also be a source of ideas for reading in addition to being a place where adolescents can get books. Book fairs can also be extended to meet the needs of more adolescents.⁴⁴

The last article, pertaining to where young adults may get their books, presents two ideas which may be seen less frequently in this part of the country. Philip Conors and Richard Gray mention teachers⁴⁵ and book fairs⁴⁶ as a way in which students get books to read. They also mention that book clubs might be a source of reading material. Students may become part of a book club in several ways. Schools

⁴⁴Leon Gersten, "The Book Fair as a Stimulant to Reading," English Journal, 68 (February 1979), p. 65.

⁴⁵Philip M. Conors and Richard H. Gray, "Selling Books: Literally and Figuratively," English Journal, 68 (October 1979), p. 37.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 38.

may sponsor them by sending in orders to such companies as Scholastic or Troll Books. Young people may also become members of other book clubs which are not school sponsored. Conors and Gray also mention "in school paperback stores" as a source of reading material. These stores are year-round fund raisers for some school organization. The books are purchased for the store at a 20% discount and students may buy them at a 10% discount.⁴⁷ This type of source, if it is available, can work like the local book store source. Adolescents may go there to browse, read and buy books.

WHY YOUNG ADULTS READ WHAT THEY DO

There are a variety of reasons why young adults read what they do. The literature provides many qualities which young adults are looking for as they choose their leisure reading material.

The reasons why people read give us a few clues as to why adolescents might choose one book over another. Lewis and Teale offered four categories of reasons for reading. These categories are the utilitarian factor, enjoyment factor, individual development factor, and combinations of

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 37-38.

the first three factors.⁴⁸ The utilitarian factor is reading to attain educational or vocational success or for managing in life. The enjoyment factor is reading for "pleasure".⁴⁹ The individual development factor is defined as "a means of gaining insight into self, others, and/or life in general". Adolescents or even adults may read for a combination of the above. These factors will be determining factors in choosing books. For instance, if adolescents want to read about vocations, they certainly will not pick up a romance novel unless it was like those available in the 1950's. In those novels the hero was successful not only in the vocation but also in love.

Anthony Soares offers several valid reasons why adolescents read and also states specific characteristics young adults seek in their leisure reading material. He states that the benefits derivable from reading include pleasure and entertainment, psychological and emotional relief, experience and achievement of things vicariously, information and examples for how to resolve problems and finally to determine what roles we are to assume in life and

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 188.

⁴⁸ Ramon Lewis and William H. Teale, "Another Look at Secondary School Student's Attitudes Toward Reading," Journal of Reading Behavior, 12 (Fall, 1980), p. 190.

how to carry out these roles.⁵⁰

Soares conducted a study to determine what elements in stories appealed most to junior high students. In general, the group studied seemed to prefer the narrative type of story which was realistic, set in contemporary times and most often about animals, sports or teenage problems. Other characteristics preferred by these students included a high amount of physical action with one main character who was very active, clear writing style, a subject that was of interest, concrete rather than abstract language, and a story which offered an implicit rather than explicit moral.⁵¹

Calabro also named several characteristics that young adults look for in books. She said that young adults are looking for books that not only point out the problems in life but show people how to live with them. They are looking for books that illuminate what it is to be human.⁵² They like to read books by authors who speak their language. They want to read about interpersonal relationships.⁵³ Young adults like books which are humorous.

⁵⁰Anthony T. Soares, "Salient Elements of Recreational Reading of Junior High School Students," Elementary English, 40 (December 1963), p. 843.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 844.

⁵²Marion Calabro, "Trends and Topics in YA Books," Media and Methods, 16 (April 1980), p. 24.

⁵³Ibid., p. 26.

They respond to humor as one of the best ways to deal with life--and they absolutely love awful jokes.⁵⁴

They want books which are just entertaining. Young adults want to read more psychological thrillers and semi-occult mysteries such as those written by Lois Duncan and Stephen King. They like sports books, science fiction, romance and books which have been made into movies for the theatre or television.⁵⁵

Donelson also dealt with what appeals to young adults. He mentioned some things already noted by the other authors and some new ideas. To begin with, young adults choose their books to find solutions to problems. They find comfort in the fact that they are not alone. The books they read have the "appeal of the exotic". This is especially true for adolescents who do not have any of the problems involved in many of the "problem novels". The "problem novel" wins an audience by flattery. Authors use simple language so the stories are easily understood. The topics covered in the books are indisputably adult. This appeals to the adolescent's egocentrism especially since "problem novels" are aimed at the young adult audience. These books also appeal

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 28. ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 31.

to peers.⁵⁶ Peer pressure, as it has been mentioned before, influences young adults in all other aspects of reading dealt with by this study.

Donelson says that adolescents are looking for "mirror images" of themselves.⁵⁷ They enjoy the realism and colloquial language used in these books.⁵⁸ The fact that young adults portrayed in the novels can achieve independence appeals to young adults. Young people can be "someone". They can be persons in their own right. There is "someone", a character in the books, with whom they can relate. Parents are depicted as having flaws and being really human.⁵⁹

SEX DIFFERENCES AND READING TASTES

Much of the research conducted in the past twenty years has concentrated on the effects of several factors on reading interests and attitudes. Such factors have included sex, age, intelligence and reading ability, socio-economic characteristics and home environment,

⁵⁶ Kenneth L. Donelson and Alleen Pace Nilsen, Literature For Today's Young Adults, (Glenview: Scott Foresman and Company, 1980), p. 182.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 184. ⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 185.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 190.

and television.⁶⁰

Mary K. Biagini did some research which examined several of these factors. In her study of past research on the topic of reading interests she found that "the gender of the subject" has received the most attention from researchers.⁶¹

In her study of the literature, Biagini found that past research supported several premises. First, girls tend to be better readers than boys are especially at the elementary level. Girls not only tend to be better readers than boys, but also tend to read more books than boys do.⁶² She also found that among middle-grade students, girls have a more favorable attitude toward reading than do boys and that girls with the highest academic achievements had the most favorable attitudes toward reading.⁶³

Biagini quotes the research of Sylvia-Lee Tibbitts as suggesting that "sex differences are forced upon students by teachers who have expectations about what each sex should enjoy reading".⁶⁴ Biagini also quotes Maia P. Mertz as saying, "girls are not confronted with a barrier against

⁶⁰Mary K. Biagini, "Measuring and Predicting the Reading Orientation and Reading Interests of Adolescents: the Development and Testing of an Instrument," Diss. University of Pittsburgh, 1980, p.173.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 15. ⁶²Ibid., p. 16.

⁶³Ibid., p. 16. ⁶⁴Ibid., p. 17.

reading faced by boys--the cult of masculinity".⁶⁵

The last area covered by Biagini dealt with what adolescents preferred to read about. She reports the findings of several researchers including those of George Norvell.

Norvell found that boys will not tolerate books primarily about women, and girls generally read books about men with satisfaction.⁶⁶ Both sexes preferred fiction to non-fiction.⁶⁷

In terms of what adolescents actually preferred to read about, Norvell studied student responses for forty years. He came to the following conclusions.

Girls preferred to read about adventure without grimness (mild outdoor adventure, games, school life, detective and other mysteries), humor, animals, patriotism, love, other gentle sentiments, home and family life, and male and female characters.

Boys preferred to read about adventure (outdoor adventure, war, scouting), outdoor games, school life, mystery (including activities of detectives), obvious humor, animals, patriotism, and male rather than female characters.

Girls reacted unfavorably to grim adventure (including war), extended descriptions, didacticism, form or technique as a dominant factor, and "nature" (flowers, trees, birds, bees).

Boys reacted unfavorably to love, other soft sentiments, home and family life, didacticism, religion, reflective or philosophical approaches, extended description, "nature," form or technique as a dominant factor, and female characters.⁶⁸

Biagini concluded that research findings concerning

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 17. ⁶⁶Ibid., p. 17.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 18. ⁶⁸Ibid., p. 20.

reading interests and sex differences supported the assumption that boys and girls have different reading interests and that those differences reflect traditional sex-role definitions.⁶⁹

An interesting point was made in Biagini's literature review. She quoted a 1974 study by Sylvia-Lee Tibbitts. "Tibbitts studied research from the past fifty years and concluded that researchers had consistently studied the differences between the sexes rather than the similarities."⁷⁰

In her study Biagini looked at the relationships among four variables; sex, grade level, activity orientation and gregariousness of adolescents. Biagini found that males and females differ significantly in their orientation to reading.⁷¹ These data upheld what other researchers had found. Girls enjoy reading more than boys and also read more books than boys.⁷² Further, there was no significant difference between the interest of males and females in books about vicarious experiences/escape. Males and females are equally interested in reading books about these subjects.⁷³

Biagini looked at what adolescents liked to read about

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 21. ⁷⁰Ibid., p. 17.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 175. ⁷²Ibid., p. 176.

⁷³Ibid., p. 178.

most. She looked specifically at three subjects: physical activity, vicarious experiences/escape and interpersonal relationships. She found that physical activity ranked first with males. Physical activity was followed by vicarious experiences/escape and interpersonal relationships respectively. Females ranked interpersonal relationships first, followed by vicarious experience/escape and physical activity respectively.⁷⁴

Biagini felt that these results would help librarians and English teachers to instill a lifetime reading habit in their students. She also hoped that the results would help them look beyond the traditional considerations of sex and age in making suggestions for reading. Teachers and librarians can also look to activity orientation and gregariousness of the students in making suggestions for reading.⁷⁵

SUMMARY

Young adult literature has developed rapidly, especially in the past twenty years. Prior to 1960 young adults read adult novels because there were no young adult books. After 1960 the young adult novels, also known as the "problem novel", were born. These novels were often considered controversial by adults. The novels dealt with real prob-

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 183. ⁷⁵Ibid., p. 187.

lems in realistic situations. They were fast moving books written in colloquial language. The novels showed young adults how to solve problems without being "preachy". Young adults were shown roles they should assume in life and how to assume them. This was again handled without preaching. The books were written on a variety of topics to appeal to a variety of adolescents. These characteristics reflect the things young adults are looking for in their books. Young adults also read for personal development, attaining educational or vocational success, for enjoyment or pleasure and a combination of the factors mentioned previously.

Adolescents read books on a variety of topics. Such topics were science fiction, romance, adventure, occult science, psychological thrillers, and problem novels.

Young adults obtained their ideas for books to read from libraries, bookstores, parents, teachers, librarians, peers and book fairs. They acquired their books from the same places as they obtained their ideas. They also acquired books from libraries and bookstores even though they obtained their ideas elsewhere. Additional sources of books included book clubs and in-school book stores.

The literature contains numerous studies in which researchers have identified the differences in reading tastes and habits between the sexes. Researchers agreed that there are differences in the topics boys will read and the topics girls will read. To date there is little

research which looks at the similarities in the reading tastes and habits of male and female adolescents.

The literature also pointed out that young adults are reluctant to read. It is believed that if adults understand what young adults like to read, where they get their reading material and why they read, that more young adults might be reached. It is important that young adults are introduced to the pleasures of reading. To do this one must appeal to them through what they prefer to read.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In order to find out about the reading habits and interests of middle school students, a group of students were chosen to be surveyed. They were asked about what books they had read during the first three quarters of the 1985-86 school year, where they obtained them and why they chose those books to read.

POPULATION

The population chosen for this study was the student body of Keokuk Middle School in Keokuk, Iowa. Students who attend Keokuk Middle School are in grades six through eight. These grade levels were chosen because they were all in the same building and were served by the same media center.

Keokuk is a river town located along the Mississippi River in southeastern Iowa. The community of Keokuk is primarily an industrial community. There is some agricultural land in and around the Keokuk community; however students coming from this area are in the minority. The community of Keokuk is served by five public grade schools (K-5), two parochial grade schools (K-6), one public middle school (6-8), one public high school (9-12), and one parochial high school (7-12). The community also has a pre-school and head start program.

Keokuk Middle School was nationally recognized for its

educational programs. The National Excellence in Education Award was received during the 1982-83 school year. During the next year other awards were presented to the school's principal, staff and students from President Ronald Reagan, Congressman Jim Leach and the local American Legion Post.

Keokuk Middle School began the 1985-86 school year with 566 students; of those students 267 were boys and 299 were girls. The school day begins for Keokuk Middle School students at 8:00 A.M. and ends at 2:35 P.M. The schedule allows ten minutes to purchase lunch tickets and to get to homeroom. Homeroom period lasts for five minutes while the daily bulletin is read and students receive information to take home to parents. The remainder of the day is divided into seven, fifty minute class periods.

The educational program of Keokuk Middle School offers students a large variety of classes. Students are required to take reading in the sixth and seventh grades. Eighth grade students are required to take language arts, which is primarily a literature class. The fifty lowest ability readers in eighth grade are also required to take a reading class.

The reading curriculum in the sixth grade is built around a basal reading series. Students are also involved in the Pizza Hut Book It program through their reading teachers. As part of this program, students are required to read a certain number of books per month in order to win a

personal pan pizza from Pizza Hut. Each class can also earn a pizza party if all members of the class reach their goal for every month in the year.

The seventh grade reading curriculum also is built around a basal reading series. In addition to this work, students read a novel each semester in class. The students are required to turn in two book reports each quarter.

The eighth grade language arts class is primarily a literature class. There is some work done in this class with writing skills. As part of this course, students read two novels in class. Students are also required to read two books and turn in book reports about these books each quarter.

The eighth grade reading class is designed to help the lower ability readers improve their reading skills. The class is not built around a particular basal reading series. A variety of materials are used to improve oral and silent reading skills. Students are required to do two book reports as part of this class each quarter. One book report is over a novel that has been read in class. Students also review library skills and write a research report on a topic of their choice.

Keokuk Middle School also provides educational opportunities for special students. The staff includes six teachers who teach Learning Disability, Mental Disability and Behavioral Disability students. There are students who are

in these rooms all day while others may come to these teachers only for a few periods. The program also includes a class for talented and gifted students. Currently talented and gifted students only take this class for one semester each year.

Keokuk Middle School students also are offered a variety of extra-curricular activities.

The Keokuk Middle School library houses the school's newspapers, magazines and library books. Some school media lease items are also housed in the library. The school has a computer laboratory and an audio-visual laboratory that are located near the library. Teachers have classroom collections of audio-visual materials acquired either through school media lease arrangements or purchased through departmental budgets. Teachers also borrow materials from Great River Area Education Agency 16. Some teachers also rent films from a variety of sources.

The library's collection includes approximately 14,000 volumes. The library subscribes to the Daily Gate City and Des Moines Register newspapers and thirty-three magazines.

The librarian is responsible for ordering, maintaining and organizing the library's collections and services. Currently the librarian teaches library skills as a part of the language arts curriculum in the sixth grade and the reading curriculum in the seventh grade. Library skills are reviewed in the eighth grade reading class. Periodically the

librarian makes special presentations to students and schedules the time for student research projects. Generally the library is a busy place and is well used by the students and faculty.

There are several other sources of leisure reading material for students. Keokuk has a public library, four book stores and book stands at local drug and grocery stores where students may obtain reading material. Students have also borrowed some material from libraries at Southeastern Community College and Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois. Students might stop by the bookstore in the Mall at Quincy, Illinois while shopping. There are also other libraries and book stores in Quincy.

DATA GATHERING

A survey instrument was prepared to be administered to the students of Keokuk Middle School. Approval for the use of the survey instrument was obtained from the school board of Keokuk Community Schools. In order to protect the spontaneity of student responses to the survey questions, the survey was administered to all students the same day. In the planning and preparation stages for administering the survey, arrangements were made with the sixth and eighth grade language teachers and the seventh grade reading teachers to administer the survey in their classes. The researcher administered the survey to Team A sixth grade

students in library skills classes. The survey was administered to the remainder of the students by their respective classroom teachers. Mrs. Ramaker administered the survey to eighth grade language and seventh grade upper ability reading classes. Mrs. Knapp administered the survey to the remaining eighth grade language classes. Mrs. Gehrt administered the survey to the seventh grade lower ability reading groups and Mrs. Vandersall administered the survey to the Team B sixth grade reading classes. The language arts and reading teachers were chosen because students come to the library primarily from their classes to check out books for leisure reading. With these arrangements made, the Keokuk Community school board was informed about the purposes of the study, the survey instrument itself, how it was to be administered, when it would be administered and how the data would be used.

The survey instrument was administered February 19, 1986. This week was the middle week in the third quarter. Usually students are required to have part of their book reports turned in for mid-term grades. Students had participated during the first three quarters in leisure reading activities.

Procedures for the actual administration of the survey instrument were kept uniform to retain the reliability of the findings. A notice was sent to teachers describing these procedures. (See Appendix A) Students were given the

survey instrument and were informed that the survey was designed to help the library staff identify their reading habits and interests. Students were asked to fill out the survey honestly because one of the uses of the information from the survey would be the future purchasing of books for the school library. In order to keep responses confidential, students were instructed not to put their names on their papers. The researcher or the teacher who administered the survey went over the survey items, emphasizing the definition of leisure reading. Students were instructed to take their time in reading and responding to each question and were allowed as much time as they needed to fill out the survey. If students had any questions regarding the survey, they were asked to raise their hands, and the researcher or teacher would answer them to the best of their ability. Students were asked to turn their papers over and sit quietly until the other students had finished.

When all students were finished writing the papers were collected. The students were then thanked for their participation in the study. Students were informed that other students would be given the chance to participate in the survey and students were cautioned not to divulge the contents of the study to other students. The importance of the spontaneity of responses in relation to the reliability of the results was explained to the students.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The content of the survey instrument (See Appendix A) was designed to test the hypotheses. There were some brief instructions at the top of the survey. The instructions included a brief description of the purpose for the study and defined "leisure reading", emphasizing that books which were assigned reading for a class were not to be included. The instructions cautioned students to read the questions carefully and respond honestly. Finally, the students were reminded not to put their names anywhere on the survey.

The first question on the survey asked the student to list all the titles for the books they have read in the 1985-86 school year not including those required as reading for a class. At the same time the students were asked to list the authors, (if they knew them), for each title and where they obtained the book.

The next question dealt with where the students acquired their ideas for books to read and where they obtained the books to read. The question asked students to check those responses that applied to them based upon where they acquired their ideas about what books to read. The last question dealt with why young adults chose their books for leisure reading.

Students were asked to identify their sex on the survey instrument. The questionnaire was also printed on different

colored paper. Sixth graders were given blue surveys. The seventh and eighth graders were given pink and yellow surveys respectively. In this way, sex and grade level categories could be used in the display of data.

CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS

On February 19, 1986, the survey instrument was administered to 427 Keokuk Middle School students. Table 1 below shows the number of students by grade and sex.

Table 1
Number of Students by Grade Level and Sex

Grade	Males	Females	Total
Six	64	92	156
Seven	49	51	100
Eight	73	96	169
Total	186	239	425(*)

* Two students did not indicate sex.

The number of students surveyed in the seventh grade was representative only of those students who had reading class on the survey day. Approximately sixty students in the upper ability reading groups in the seventh grade were not surveyed because they did not have reading class February 19th.

The first question on the survey asked the students to list the titles, authors, (if they knew them) and where they obtained the books they had read for leisure reading since school started. A wide variety of titles was listed by students. In all, students listed 1,311 different titles. Table 2 lists the number of titles listed by student grade level and sex.

Table 2
Number of Individual Book Titles
Listed by Students

No. of Titles	Number of Students							
	Grade Six		Grade Seven		Grade Eight		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	No.	%
0	2	0	3	2	6	1	14	3.3
1-5	28	31	37	28	41	46	211	49.6
6-10	27	52	8	15	19	38	159	37.4
11-15	7	7	1	3	5	10	23	7.8
16-20	0	2	0	2	1	1	6	1.4
21-25	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	.2
26-30	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	.2
Total	64	92	49	51	73	96	425	99.9

The number of titles listed by the students was often the same as the number of book reports required. Of the students surveyed 327 or 87.1 percent listed the number of titles needed to meet book report requirements for the first two quarters plus those due by mid-term of the third quarter.

The seventh and eighth grade students were required to turn in two book reports per quarter. Sixth graders had three book reports per quarter unless they were involved in the Pizza Hut Book It contest, in which case the number of book reports depended on the student's ability group in reading and the student's reading teacher. Generally, students should have had about six to nine books read for the first through third quarter book reports. Sixth graders in the upper ability groups might have had more book reports due. Of the students surveyed, 37.4 percent or 159 students listed six to ten books. Students listing one to ten books

on question one were 87.1 percent of those surveyed. In the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, 88.5 percent, 88 percent, and 85.4 percent respectively of the students listed one to ten books on question number one.

The first hypothesis tested in this study was that "No title will be listed by more than twenty percent of the students surveyed". Table 3 shows those titles listed most often by students.

Table 3

Number and Percent of Students Listing
Individual Book Titles(*)

Titles	Students	
	No.	%
Outsiders	26	6.09%
When We First Met	24	5.62%
Blubber	22	5.15%
Superfudge	22	5.15%
Tiger Eyes	20	4.68%

* Titles listed by 19 or fewer students are not included. (See Appendix B, Table 7)

Hypothesis number one was accepted because no title was listed by 86 or more students. The book most often listed by students was The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton. An interesting point to note about this book was that it was listed by nineteen eighth graders. Since the book was read in eighth grade language arts classes as part of the curriculum, the book should not have been listed by any eighth grade student.

When We First Met by Norma Fox Mazer was the second most frequent book to be listed by Keokuk Middle School Students. Of the 24 students listing the book 17 were eighth graders, 6 were seventh graders and one student was in sixth grade. The title was on the masterlist for the Iowa Teen Award and the book also appeared on the eighth grade reading list. Eighth grade students were required to choose books for book reports from this list.

Blubber and Superfudge by Judy Blume were listed by 22 students. When data were broken down by grade level each book was quite different. Blubber was listed by 18 eighth graders. It was on the eighth grade reading list which would explain why it was most often read by eighth graders for book reports. Superfudge on the other hand was listed by nine students in the sixth and seventh grades. It appeared on the seventh grade required reading list for the upper ability groups. Other seventh grade students used the list as a suggestive list. Sixth graders had a suggestive reading list on which Superfudge was listed.

The last book, Tiger Eyes by Judy Blume, was listed by twenty students. It appeared on the eighth grade reading list and eighteen eighth graders listed it.

Table 7 (See Appendix B) lists all titles recorded by two or more students. Of the 1,311 titles listed, 902 titles were listed by only one student and 409 were listed by two or more students. Table 7 shows how often each title

was listed and the percent of the students who listed them. The titles listed most frequently by students can be categorized. Some books were on the Iowa Teen Award masterlist. Others were written by authors such as Judy Blume or William Sleator who are recommended by teachers on a frequent basis. A last category might be books which have been made into movies. The "First Blood" books and Stephen King novels would fit into this category.

The second hypothesis stated, "Forty percent or more of the students will respond that one influence in what they choose to read will be their reading teacher".

Table 4 enumerates student responses to influences on choice of books by grade and percent. Hypothesis two was accepted because 180, or 42.2 percent, of the students surveyed checked the "reading teacher's recommendation" response.

Sixth grade students seemed to have been influenced least by their reading teachers. Of the sixth graders surveyed, only thirty, 19.2 percent, checked the "reading teacher's recommendation" response.

Table 8, (See Appendix B), shows student responses to question number two on the survey by sex and grade level. Generally, girls appeared to be most influenced by their reading teacher's recommendations in both the seventh and eighth grades. In the sixth grade, boys were slightly more influenced by the reading teacher's recommendations than

Table 4

Student Responses to Categories of
Influences by Grade Level

Response	Six (N=156)		Seven (N=100)		Eight (N=171)*		Total (N=427)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Browsing at the school library	123	78.8	81	81.0	129	75.4	333	78.0
Browsing at the public library	94	60.3	66	66.0	102	59.6	262	61.4
Browsing at a bookstore	71	45.5	50	50.0	78	45.6	199	46.6
Browsing at a grocery or drug store	33	21.2	19	19.0	50	29.2	102	23.9
Public librarian's recommendation	28	17.9	31	31.0	33	19.3	92	21.5
School librarian's recommendation	37	23.7	31	31.0	48	28.1	116	27.2
Parent's recommendation	41	26.3	39	39.0	39	22.8	119	27.9
Reading teacher's recommendation	30	19.2	53	53.0	97	56.7	180	42.2
Friend's recommendation	101	64.7	68	68.0	122	71.3	291	68.1
Media (TV, Movies etc.)	72	46.2	65	65.0	107	62.6	244	57.1
Other	30	19.2	38	38.0	58	33.9	126	29.5

* Responses of two eighth grade students who did not identify their sex are included in this table.

sixth grade girls.

Keokuk Middle School students were not influenced greatly by the public librarian's recommendations. Only 21.5 percent, or 92 students, checked this response. The students were also not influenced greatly by the school librarian's recommendations. This response was checked by 116 or 27.2 percent of the students surveyed.

When these two factors were analyzed by grade, sixth graders were influenced least by the public librarian's recommendations. Only 17.9 percent or 28 students checked this response. Eighth graders were influenced only slightly more by the public librarian's recommendations, with 19.3 percent or 33 students checking this response. Seventh graders were influenced the most by the public librarian's recommendations with 31 percent of the students checking this response.

In studying the data concerning the school librarian's influence on student leisure reading choices, a similar pattern was discovered. Sixth graders were least influenced by the school librarian's recommendations, followed by the eighth and seventh grade students. Of the students surveyed; 23.7 percent of the sixth graders, 28.1 percent of the eighth graders and 31 percent of the seventh graders checked this response.

Table 8, (See Appendix B), shows student responses by sex and grade level. The public librarian least influenced

sixth and eighth grade males. Of the male students surveyed, 15 or 16.3 percent of the sixth grade males checked the public librarian's recommendation response, while 13 or 17.8 percent of the eighth grade males checked the same response. The public librarian influenced the seventh grade females most. Twenty-one or 41.2 percent of the seventh grade females checked this response.

In terms of whether the school librarian influenced the students, there were similar findings. The data show that eighth grade boys were least influenced while the seventh grade girls were most influenced by the recommendations of the school librarian. Of the eighth grade boys surveyed, 16 or 21.9 percent of the boys checked the school librarian's recommendation response. Of the seventh grade females surveyed, the same response was checked by 19 or 37.3 percent of the respondents.

The third hypothesis in this study stated that "Forty percent or more of the students will respond that their friends are an influence in their choice of reading materials". Table 4 shows that 291 or 68.1 percent of the students surveyed said that a friend's recommendation influenced their choice of reading materials. These results were consistent with the findings of other researchers. The hypothesis was accepted because more than 40% of the students surveyed responded that a friend's recommendation influenced their choice of leisure reading books. Peer

influence was the second most frequent response after the "browsing at the school library" response. Eighth grade students were influenced most by their peers in selection of books. Students checking the "friend's recommendation" response in the eighth grade numbered 122 or 71.3 percent. Seventh grade students checked this response in 68 percent of the cases. Sixth grade students were least influenced by peers.

Table 8, (See Appendix B), shows that Keokuk Middle School girls were influenced more by their peers than boys were. In the eighth grade, 86.5 percent of the girls surveyed checked the "friend's recommendation" response while only 52.1 percent of the males checked the response. Likewise, 86.3 percent of the seventh grade girls checked the same response, while only 49 percent of the seventh grade boys checked the same response. The sixth grade girls checked the "friend's recommendation" response less often than the seventh or eighth grade girls. Only 73.9 percent of the sixth grade girls checked the response. Sixth grade males checked the "friend's recommendation" response in 51.6 percent of the cases. It would seem that boys chose their leisure reading books with or without the influence of their peers.

It was interesting to note that the strongest influence on Keokuk Middle School students' choices of leisure reading materials was browsing at the school library. Of the 427

students surveyed 333 or 78 percent checked the "browsing at the school library" response. The sixth, seventh and eighth grade students checked the response 78.8, 81 and 75.4 percent respectively.

When the data for this response were examined by sex of respondent, sixth grade boys and girls differed only 1.4 percent in their responses. In both the seventh and eighth grades the girls checked the response at a percentage rate higher than did the boys. Although more than half of the boys in the seventh and eighth grades browse at the school library, fewer boys were influenced in their choice of leisure reading books by browsing in the school library.

The fourth hypothesis stated that "Fifty percent or more of the students get their books from two or more sources". These data were gathered from the responses students gave on question number one. Table 5 data show that the number of sources listed by students ranged from zero to seven. The hypothesis was accepted because 296, or 69.3 percent, of the students listed from two to seven sources from which they obtained their leisure reading books. Most of the students (147) obtained their books from two sources. Another 104 students obtained their books from three sources. This indicated that the students of Keokuk Middle School obtained their books from very few different sources. Differences among responses by grade level are small.

Table 5

Number of Sources Used To Obtain Books
by Number and Percent of Students

Number Of Sources	Students							
	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0	4	2.6	7	7.0	7	4.1	18	4.2
1	34	21.8	30	30.0	49	28.7	113	26.5
2	55	35.3	25	25.0	67	39.2	147	34.4
3	47	30.1	26	26.0	31	18.1	104	24.4
4	11	7.1	7	7.0	10	5.8	28	6.6
5	5	3.2	5	5.0	5	2.9	15	3.5
6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	.6	1	.2
7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	.6	1	.2
Total	156	100.1	100	100.0	171	100.0	427	100.0

The fifth hypothesis was that "Thirty percent or more of the students will read to learn about themselves, others or life". Data were gathered from responses to question number three which asked students "Why do you read? Check those responses which are true for you". Table 6 shows the data from question three by grade level.

This hypothesis was rejected because only 106 or 24.8 percent of the students checked the "to learn about yourself/others or life" response. In the sixth grade only twenty-three or 14.7 percent of the students said they read to learn about themselves/others or life and 23 seventh graders or 23 percent read for the same reason. Sixty or 35.1 percent of the eighth graders checked this response. This might indicate that the older the student, the more

Table 6

Number and Percent of Responses
to Reasons for Reading Books By Grade Level

Response	Six (N=156)		Seven (N=100)		Eight (N=171)		TOTAL (N=427)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
For pleasure or fun	99	63.5	53	53.0	97	56.7	249	58.3
For something to do	107	68.6	68	68.0	108	63.2	283	66.3
To learn about yourself/others or life	23	14.7	23	23.0	60	35.1	106	24.8
To learn how to solve problems	17	10.9	21	21.0	30	17.5	68	15.9
To learn about a career or job	25	16.0	21	21.0	30	17.5	76	17.8
Interested in the topic	93	59.6	66	66.0	114	66.7	273	63.9
Meet a book report requirement	114	73.1	78	78.0	114	66.7	306	71.7
Other	21	13.5	19	19.0	32	18.7	72	16.9

interested they were in reading about themselves, others or life. This type of reading interest may develop as the students' lives develop and they are exposed to the problems of being an adolescent or other problems in life.

Table 9, (See Appendix B), shows student reasons for reading by grade level and sex of the respondents. Thirty-eight or 39.6 percent of the eighth grade girls said they read to learn about themselves/others or life. The eighth grade boys checked this response 28.8 percent of the time while seventh grade girls checked it 25.5 percent of the time.

It was interesting to note that the number one reason Keokuk Middle School students read was to meet book report requirements. This response was checked by 306 or 71.7 percent of the students surveyed. These results are similar when the statistics by grade are examined. The seventh grade students, (78 percent), were most apt to read books for book reports while in the sixth grade 114 or 73.1 percent of the students said they read to meet book report requirements. Eighth grade students, (66.7 percent), were least likely to check this response.

When the data are analyzed by the sex of the respondent, there is a higher percentage of males in grades eight, (91.8 percent), and seven, (79.6 percent), than females in the same grades, (91.7 and 76.5 percent respectively), who read to meet book report requirements. The pattern is

reversed for sixth graders. Females, (79.7 percent), and males, (68.5 percent), read books to meet book report requirements.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUMMARY

Conclusions

Generally, the students of Keokuk Middle School read a variety of books as was evident from the 1,311 different titles listed by students on question number one. A number of students listed no titles on question number one of the survey. In some cases students also wrote a reason for not listing titles. Several students admitted reading several books but could not remember the titles or authors of the books. Another possible reason for students listing no titles might have been that students chose not to meet book report requirements each quarter and would turn in all book reports for the year in the fourth quarter. Thus they might not have read any books by February 19th. Some teachers accept book reports in this manner. Another reason for a zero response might be that the students chose not to meet the book report requirements at all. In most cases, the penalty was to fail the course. However, students chose not to do book reports just the same. A final reason might have been that the students may not have understood the directions or the definition of leisure reading. If they did not know what to do they might have chosen to write nothing rather than ask for help or take a chance on doing something wrong.

Students were influenced in their choice of books by a variety of sources. The reading teacher's recommendation was a greater influential factor for seventh and eighth grade students than for the sixth graders. A possible reason for these results might have been that sixth grade students could choose any book for their book reports. They were not required to read from a particular list as many seventh and eighth graders were.

Another possible reason for these results may have had something to do with the number of teachers involved with bringing students to the library. Sixth grade students at Keokuk Middle School could have had one of five teachers for reading. Seventh graders could have had one of two reading teachers while the eighth graders could have had one of three teachers for reading or the literature portion of language arts. Two teachers had most of the seventh and eighth grade students in their classes. The books chosen by the students of these teachers are more predictable because the teachers have required reading lists and recommend a number of their favorite books to all of their students. This may explain the seventh and eighth grade students responses. Fifty-three percent of the seventh graders and 56.7 percent of the eighth graders surveyed checked the "reading teacher's recommendation" response. The eighth grade students were influenced most by reading teachers because they were required to read books from a list

prepared by their teacher. Seventh graders were influenced by reading teachers also for the same reason. Approximately one-half of the seventh grade students surveyed were required to read books from the seventh grade reading list to meet book report requirements.

Another possible reason for these results pertained to who brought students to the library to check-out leisure reading books. Seventh and eighth grade students came to the library with the teacher to whom they were to submit their book reports. They had the opportunity to ask the teacher which books would meet those requirements. Sixth graders on the other hand came to the library, in most cases, with a teacher other than their reading teacher. Only two of the five reading teachers brought students to the library to check-out books for book reports. The other students checked-out books during their language arts classes. Most sixth grade students did not have the opportunity to ask for the recommendations of their reading teachers when they were looking for books as the seventh and eighth grade students did.

The results of the survey also show that although students are influenced by the recommendations of the public and school librarians, they are not influenced greatly. Many students were required to choose books from a required reading list. This often makes the student dependent on the teacher and the list in choosing books for book reports.

Although the librarians at the public library have copies of the lists from each class available, they may not be familiar with many of the titles. This would be especially true if their speciality is work with children. The youth librarian may not always be on duty when students visit. The librarian, (public or school), can not say what will or will not be accepted for a report on a book which is not on the list. They can only recommend a good story and suggest the student talk to the teacher about whether or not the title will be acceptable.

The school librarian also runs into some special problems when large groups are in the library. The library aide is only scheduled part time. Many times the librarian is limited to checking out materials to students. There have also been times when the school librarian has had research classes in the library at the same time that a class came to check out books. In this instance the aide checks out materials, the librarian works individually with students on research and the teacher works with the students on book selection.

The data also showed that the students were greatly influenced in selecting leisure reading material by browsing at the school library. This would suggest that middle school students like to "see what they are getting". They have been encouraged by both their teachers and the school

librarian to read several pages to determine if they will like the book. Students also like to look at other criteria in choosing books. Such criteria might include length, illustrations, print size, etc. Some students judge a book by its cover illustrations and summaries.

The findings of this study were consistent with those of other researchers concerning the influence peers have on each other through their recommendations of books to read. A possible reason why peer recommendations were influential was that peers were readily available to students when they were checking out books. In a limited period of time, the reading teacher and the librarian may reach only a few students. In a class of twenty to thirty students there were more peers to ask for recommendations. Students also may have felt more comfortable asking for help from a peer than the teacher or librarian. Adolescents know what other adolescents are looking for in books. This might have been why their advice was sought rather than a teacher's or librarian's recommendation.

Question number one on the survey also gathered information concerning sources where students obtained their books. Of those students surveyed, 58.7 percent of the students obtained their books from two or three sources. There were several possible reasons for these results. Keokuk is a relatively small town. The economy was not good at the time of the survey. Two major industries had been out on

strike for several months. Local businesses had begun to fail. Several places where students could buy books had gone out of business. Students began to rely more heavily on the public and school libraries. Many students may not have had the money to buy books while their parents were out on strike. They had to either borrow books from a library, family or friends.

Question three on the survey revealed that 71.7 percent of the students read to meet book report requirements. If students used their book report cards while completing the survey, they might have automatically checked the book report response. These results indicate that there might be an over-emphasis on book reports. A number of the students surveyed checked only the book report response. Students may have felt that they had to read. Students may not have enjoyed reading at all. The philosophy behind having the students do book reports was to expose them to good books so that they might enjoy what reading had to offer. This objective may not have been accomplished with these students. The data indicated that 66.3 percent of the students read because they were interested in the topic. Only 58.3 percent of the students read for fun or pleasure. These statistics also supported the premise that book reports may have been over-emphasized with the students. This may keep them from enjoying leisure reading in the future.

Recommendations

The first recommendation regards the administration of a student reading survey. A method should be devised to limit the number of student respondents. A representative sample of students from both upper and lower ability groups should be chosen in each grade. The researcher should administer the survey to all the student respondents. The results of the survey would be more accurate and the procedures used more consistent.

Data gathered from this survey can be used in several ways. The titles listed by the students in question one could be helpful to librarians in ordering new materials for the library and for selecting materials to be replaced after they wear out or are lost. Student recommendations influence reader choice of books. The librarian could suggest these books listed most often by middle school students on a recent survey in order to get students reading these titles. Another way that student influence on peer reading interests could be used is by encouraging students to write or give oral book reviews. Such reviews could be published in the school newspaper or presented to library skills or reading classes.

A data base could be developed so that students could submit data about their favorite books for others to use. They in turn could use the data submitted by other students

when they are in the library looking for books. The library's computer could be used by students to review and print lists of materials as they search the data base.

A final recommendation could be made to the faculty of Keokuk Middle School. Teachers might wish to reconsider the use of required book reports. The primary reason why students are reading is to meet book report requirements. The faculty's primary objective is to foster student enjoyment of reading by exposing students to good books. This goal is not being met through the use of book reports and another method needs to be selected to enable students to enjoy their reading more.

Summary

This study provided data about what books Keokuk Middle School students were reading, where students obtained their books and who influenced what they read. Finally, the study obtained information about why Keokuk Middle School students read the books they did during the first three quarters of the 1985-86 school year.

The data gathered by a survey of the 427 students in attendance at Keokuk Middle School on February 19, 1986 showed that the students read 1,311 different titles. The titles most read by the students were: The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton, When We First Met by Norma Fox Mazer, and Blubber, Superfudge, and Tiger Eyes all by Judy Blume.

The survey revealed that 42.2 percent of the students were influenced by their reading teacher's recommendations, while 68.1 percent of the students were influenced by a friend's recommendations. The data gathered showed that 78 percent of the students were most often influenced by browsing at the school library and 61.4 percent were influenced by browsing at the public library when they chose books.

According to the results, students obtained their books from a variety of sources. In 58.7 percent of the cases, students selected their books from two or three different sources. The number of sources ranged from zero to seven.

When asked why they read, students responded in a somewhat predictable manner. Most students (71.7 percent) read to meet book report requirements for school. Originally it was predicted that 30 percent or more of the students would read to learn about themselves, life or others. This hypothesis was rejected because only 24.8 percent of the students responded in this manner. Other major reasons students had for reading were for "something to do" (66.3 percent), for "pleasure or fun" (58.3 percent) and because they were interested in the topic of the book (63.9 percent).

The results of this study were consistent with those of other researchers. The data will be useful to the librarian in ordering materials. The librarian will also be more a-

ware of those factors which influence students as they chose leisure reading material. Maybe through the use of these influences more students will enjoy reading as a leisure activity.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Instructions For Administering The Survey

READING SURVEY

You are about to complete a survey about your reading habits and interests. It will help the library staff to better serve you. Please read each question carefully and respond to it as honestly as you can.

The term "leisure reading" is defined as any book you have read which you chose to read. It does not include books that everyone is required to read in a class. It can include those titles you have read for your book reports. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THE SURVEY!!!

1. List the titles and authors (if you know them) for all the leisure reading books you have read so far this school year. Also state where you got the book. (e.g. school or public library, book stores, borrowed from a friend etc.)

Title

Author

Where Obtained

2. Check all those responses which are true for you in terms of where you get your ideas for what books you will read. If you check "other", name the "other" source of reading ideas on the blank to the right of "other".

- Browsing at the school library
- Browsing at the public library
- Browsing at the book store
- Browsing at a grocery or drug store
- Public librarian's recommendation
- School librarian's recommendation
- Parent's recommendation
- Reading teacher's recommendation
- Friend's recommendation
- Media (TV, Movies etc.)
- Other _____

3. Why do you read? Check all those responses which are true for you.

- For pleasure or fun
- For something to do
- To learn about yourself, others or life
- To learn how to solve problems
- To learn about a career or job
- Interested in the topic
- To meet a book report requirement
- Other _____

Check: Female Male

TO: TEACHERS ADMINISTERING THE READING SURVEY WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 19, 1986.

FROM: BARB MILLER

RE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY

1. Pass out the survey, instructing the students to NOT PUT THEIR NAMES ANYWHERE ON THE SURVEY.
2. Read through the instructions with the students. Make sure they understand what is meant by leisure reading. Books you read as a class do not count as books that students chose to read on their own. Books read for book reports do count and should be listed.
3. Students should try to list the titles as best they can. They should list an author if they know it. If they don't they should not worry about it. I can get this information later.
4. Students should include titles they read no matter if they liked them or not. This study is designed to find out what titles they read not their favorite book.
5. Books read out loud by the teacher in class should not be listed either. We want the titles read by students.
6. For the questions on the back, students should check any or all those items which are true for them. They also should check the appropriate sex.
7. AFTER THE PAPERS HAVE BEEN COLLECTED, you may tell the students what the survey was for. CAUTION THEM TO NOT TELL OTHER STUDENTS WHAT WAS ON THE SURVEY. Explain to them that I need honest and spontaneous responses from their classmates.

THANK-YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORTS IN ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY. WE WILL BE ASKING STUDENTS TO FILL OUT THE SURVEY TODAY ONLY. WHEN YOU FINISH GIVING THE SURVEY RETURN THE COMPLETED SURVEYS AND ALL UNUSED SURVEYS TO MY BOX.

BARB

APPENDIX B

TABLE 7

TABLE 8

TABLE 9

APPENDIX B

TABLE 7

Titles Listed by Two Or
More of the Students Surveyed

Title	No. of Students	%
About David	13	3.04%
Accident	2	.47%
Ace Hits The Big Time	2	.47%
Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes, Book 1	4	.94%
Adventures Of Sherlock Holmes, Book 2	2	.47%
Al(exandra) The Great	4	.94%
Album Of Modern Horror Films, An	2	.47%
Aldo Ice Cream	2	.47%
Alfred G. Graebner Memorial High School Handbook of Rules & Regulations	5	1.17%
Amy And Laura	2	.47%
Anastasia Krupnik	4	.94%
Anastasia Ask Your Analyst	2	.47%
Anastasia Again	2	.47%
And This Is Laura	2	.47%
Animal, The Vegetable & John D. Jones, The	8	1.87%
Anne Of Green Gables	3	.70%
Anne's House Of Dreams	2	.47%
Anything For A Friend	8	1.87%
Are You There God? It's Me Margaret!	15	3.51%
Banana Split Affair	3	.70%
Banjo	5	1.17%
Basket Case	3	.70%
Battlestar Galacica	2	.47%
Beach Towel	2	.47%
Beanpole	11	2.58%
Bear Called Paddington, A	3	.70%
Beat The Turtle Drum	2	.47%
Beezus And Ramona	2	.47%
Best Christmas Pageant Ever	5	1.17%
Best Friends	2	.47%
Big Wave, The	2	.47%
Billion For Boris, A	2	.47%
Black And Blue Magic	2	.47%
Black Stallion	3	.70%
Blackbriar	2	.47%
Blubber	22	5.15%
Borrowers, The	2	.47%
Box Car Children, The	3	.70%

Title	No. of Students	%
Breaker Nine	2	.47%
Breaking Up	2	.47%
Bridge Of No Return	2	.47%
Bridge To Terabithia	3	.70%
Bruce Weber's Inside Pro Football	3	.70%
Buckaroo	2	.47%
Bunnacula	6	1.41%
Burned Letter, The	2	.47%
Bus Ride	5	1.17%
Busybody Nora	2	.47%
By The Shores Of Silver Lake	2	.47%
Call Of The Wild	7	1.64%
Campus Mystery	2	.47%
Can You Sue Your Parents For Malpractice?	3	.70%
Carnival Mystery	2	.47%
Carrie	2	.47%
Case Of The Flying Fingers, The	3	.70%
Case Of The Phantom Frog, The	3	.70%
Case Of The Secret Scribbler, The	3	.70%
Case Of The Nervous Newsboy, The	3	.70%
Case Of The Condemned Cat, The	3	.70%
Case Of The Treetop Treasure, The	2	.47%
Cat Ate My Gymsuit, The	13	3.04%
Celery Stalks At Midnight	4	.94%
Charlie And The Great Glass Elevator	2	.47%
Charlie And The Chocolate Factory	2	.47%
Charlotte's Web	10	2.34%
Child Abuse	2	.47%
Children Of The Corn	3	.70%
Christine	2	.47%
Christmas Carol, A	2	.47%
Combat Aircraft	2	.47%
Come Alive At 505	2	.47%
Comeback Dog, The	2	.47%
Conrad's War	10	2.34%
Cover Girl	2	.47%
Crash Landing	2	.47%
Cujo	4	.94%
Cybal War, The	7	1.64%
Dangerous Love	2	.47%
David	2	.47%
Day No Pigs Would Die, A	5	1.17%
Deadly Game, A	2	.47%
Dear Mr. Henshaw	3	.70%
Declaration Of Independence, The	2	.47%
Deenie	5	1.17%
Demon Tree	3	.70%

Title	No. of Students	%
Desert Road Racer	2	.47%
Dexter	6	1.41%
Different Twist, A	2	.47%
Dinah And The Green Fat Kingdom	2	.47%
Divorce Express	5	1.17%
Dollhouse Murders, The	2	.47%
Don't Blame The Children	3	.70%
Double Love	2	.47%
Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde	2	.47%
Dreadful Future Of Blossom Culp	8	1.87%
Dreamland Lake	2	.47%
Duet	2	.47%
Dune	3	.70%
E.T.: The Extraterrestrial	4	.94%
E.T.: The Story Book Of The Green Planet	2	.47%
Earthseed	2	.47%
Ellen Tebbits	2	.47%
Empire Strikes Back	4	.94%
Escapes And Rescues	2	.47%
ESP	2	.47%
Executioner, The	2	.47%
Fatal Attraction	3	.70%
Felina	2	.47%
Fifteen	4	.94%
Figure Of Speech, A	2	.47%
Firefighter	2	.47%
Firestarter, The	2	.47%
Five Were Missing	5	1.17%
Flood	2	.47%
Flowers For Algernon	2	.47%
Flowers In The Attic	6	1.41%
Flying Wheels	2	.47%
Forever	17	3.98%
Fourth Grade Celebrity	2	.47%
Freaky Friday	6	1.41%
Freckle Juice	4	.94%
Fridays	3	.70%
From The Mixed Up Files Of Mrs. Basil E. Frankwiler	2	.47%
Gang Girl	2	.47%
Ghost Belonged To Me, The	5	1.17%
Ghost Boy, The	2	.47%
Ghost Of Peaceful End	3	.70%
Gimme A H.E.L.P.	4	.94%
Girl Who Wanted A Boy, The	2	.47%
Give And Take	4	.94%
Give Me One Good Reason	2	.47%

Title	No. of Students	%
=====		
Gone With The Wind	3	.70%
Good Night Mr. Tom	2	.47%
Goof-Up, The	3	.70%
Grand National Racer	2	.47%
Great Brain At The Academy, The	4	.94%
Great Brain Does It Again, The	3	.70%
Green Futures of Tycho	4	.94%
Gremlins	3	.70%
Hail, Hail Camp Timberwood	5	1.17%
Haunted Houses, Ghosts & Specters	3	.70%
Haunting Of Cassie Palmer, The	4	.94%
Haunting, The	2	.47%
Have You Seen This Girl?	5	1.17%
Hazel Rye	2	.47%
Heaven	4	.94%
Hello...Wrong Number	3	.70%
Help I'm A Prisoner In The School Library	2	.47%
Henry And Beezus	5	1.17%
Henry And The Paper Route	3	.70%
Henry And Ribsby	2	.47%
Henry Huggins	3	.70%
Henry Reed's Baby-Sitting Service	4	.94%
Hobbit, The	3	.70%
Homecoming	2	.47%
Honey Of A Chimp, A	4	.94%
Horse And His Boy, The	2	.47%
Hot Fudge Sunday Affair	2	.47%
House Of Thirty Cats	2	.47%
House Of Stairs	5	1.17%
House On Barkham Street	2	.47%
How To Eat Fried Worms	10	2.34%
Hunter In The Dark	4	.94%
I Am The Cheese	2	.47%
I And Sproggy	3	.70%
I Know What You Did Last Summer	15	3.51%
I Will Call It Georgie's Blues	4	.94%
If I Should Die Before I Wake	2	.47%
If I'm Lost How Come I Found You?	2	.47%
If There Be Thorns	2	.47%
Iggie's House	2	.47%
In The Middle Of The Rainbow	6	1.41%
Incredible Journey, The	3	.70%
Initiation, The	4	.94%
Into The Dream	2	.47%
Island Of The Blue Dolphins	10	2.34%
It's Not The End Of The World	11	2.58%
It's Not What You Expect	3	.70%

Title	No. of Students	%
Jackie Robinson Of The Brooklyn Dodgers	2	.47%
Jenny	2	.47%
Journey Of Natty Gann	2	.47%
Journey To The Center Of The Earth	2	.47%
Julie Of The Wolves	2	.47%
Jungle Book, The	2	.47%
Just Between Us	2	.47%
Just Plain Cat	3	.70%
Karate Kid	8	1.87%
Karen Kepplewhite Is The World's Best Kisser	2	.47%
Kathy	5	1.17%
Katie John	2	.47%
Katie's Baby-Sitting Job	3	.70%
Kavik, The Wolf Dog	2	.47%
Keep Tomorrow For Me	2	.47%
Kid Dynobite	2	.47%
Kirk's Law	6	1.41%
Kiss And Tell	2	.47%
Last Was Lloyd	2	.47%
Left Handed Shortstop	3	.70%
Lillies Of The Field	2	.47%
Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe, The	13	3.04%
Little Arliss	2	.47%
Little House On The Prairie	3	.70%
Little House In The Big Woods	3	.70%
Little Men	2	.47%
Long Winter, The	3	.70%
Look To The Light Side	3	.70%
Lord Of The Flies	3	.70%
Lost On The Amazon	2	.47%
Lottery Rose, The	7	1.64%
Luckiest Girl	2	.47%
Maggie Too	2	.47%
Magician's Nephew, The	5	1.17%
Maine Is A Million Miles Away	2	.47%
Marlin, The	2	.47%
Me And Fat Glenda	2	.47%
Me And My Little Brain	2	.47%
Memo: To Myself When I Have A Teenage Kid	3	.70%
Merry Adventures Of Robin Hood	3	.70%
Midnight Colt, The	3	.70%
Midnight Fox	2	.47%
Moby Dick	3	.70%
Mom, The Wolfman & Me	2	.47%
Monsters, Monsters, Monsters	3	.70%
More Adventures Of Spider	2	.47%
More Strange But True Football Stories	2	.47%

Title	No. of Students	%
Mountain Lion	2	.47%
Mouse & The Motorcycle, The	3	.70%
Mrs. Frisby & The Rats Of NIMH	3	.70%
Mummy Case, The	2	.47%
My Brother Ange	2	.47%
My Darling, My Hamburger	4	.94%
My Side Of The Mountain	5	1.17%
My Sweet Audrina	5	1.17%
Mystery Of The Crying Child	3	.70%
Mystery Of The Spider's Web	3	.70%
Mystery Of The Midnight Message	3	.70%
Mystery Of The Green Ghost	2	.47%
Mystery Of The Pink House	2	.47%
Mystery Of The Frightened Aunt	2	.47%
Naomi In The Middle	5	1.17%
Night Swimmers, The	3	.70%
Nobody Has To Be A Kid Forever	4	.94%
Nobody's Fault	2	.47%
North And South	4	.94%
Nothing's Fair In The Fifth Grade	5	1.17%
November's Wheel	2	.47%
Old Yeller	7	1.64%
Oliver Twist	2	.47%
On The Banks Of Plum Creek	2	.47%
Oscar Noodleman TV Network, The	2	.47%
Otherwise Known As Sheila The Great	5	1.17%
Our Snowman Had Olive Eyes	2	.47%
Outsiders	26	6.09%
Owls In The Family	4	.94%
P.S. Write Soon	3	.70%
Paddington Marches On	2	.47%
Parasite, The	2	.47%
Perfect Summer	2	.47%
Pet Cemetery	8	1.87%
Petals In The Wind	3	.70%
Pidgeon, The	2	.47%
Pigman's Legacy, The	3	.70%
Pigman, The	2	.47%
Pinballs, The	6	1.41%
Pippi Longstocking	7	1.64%
Pistachio Prescription, The	7	1.64%
Place For Me, A	2	.47%
Play With Fire	2	.47%
Playing Beatie Bow	3	.70%
Popnut	4	.94%
Prince Caspian	7	1.64%
Pursuit	11	2.58%

Title	No. of Students	%
=====		
Pyewacket	2	.47%
Quarterback Walk-on	2	.47%
Rainbow Kid, The	2	.47%
Ralph S. Mouse	4	.94%
Rambo: First Blood Part I.	6	1.41%
Rambo: First Blood Part II.	8	1.87%
Ramona And Her Father	10	2.34%
Ramona And Her Mother	8	1.87%
Ramona Forever	5	1.17%
Ramona Quinby At Age 8	3	.70%
Ramona The Pest	3	.70%
Ramona, The Brave	4	.94%
Ramona, The Great	2	.47%
Raspberry One	4	.94%
Ratcatcher Of Whitestone, The	3	.70%
Rebel Witch	2	.47%
Rebound Caper	4	.94%
Red Badge Of Courage	2	.47%
Red Skelton's Ghost Stories	2	.47%
Return Of The Great Brain	3	.70%
Return Of The Jedi	3	.70%
Return To Oz	2	.47%
Rich Mitch	2	.47%
Robbie And The Leap Year Blues	3	.70%
Robinson Crusoe	2	.47%
Rumblefish	6	1.41%
Runaway's Diary, The	3	.70%
Runaway, The	4	.94%
Savage Sam	4	.94%
Say Hello To The Hit Man	3	.70%
Seance, The	3	.70%
Secret Friend, A	6	1.41%
Secret Garden, The	3	.70%
Secret Lies	5	1.17%
Secret Of The Stone Idol, The	3	.70%
Secret Of Battle Creek, The	3	.70%
Secret Of The Pyramids	2	.47%
Secret Of NIMH: Storybook	2	.47%
Secret Window, The	2	.47%
Secret, The	2	.47%
Secrets Of The Shopping Mall	3	.70%
Seeds Of Yesterday	2	.47%
Seven Heroes	2	.47%
Seventeen And In-Between	2	.47%
Shivers & The Case Of The Secret Hamburgers	2	.47%
Sinister, Strange & Supernatural	2	.47%
Sister Of The Bride	5	1.17%

Title	No. of Students	%
=====		
Slumber Party	2	.47%
Snowbound	5	1.17%
Socks	2	.47%
Something For Joey	2	.47%
Son Rise	3	.70%
Souder	4	.94%
Soup	1	.23%
Soup For President	6	1.41%
Soup And Me	3	.70%
Soup's Drum	6	1.41%
Special Christmas	2	.47%
Spector, The	4	.94%
Stage Fright	2	.47%
Star For The Latecomer, A	4	.94%
Star Trek	4	.94%
Star Wars	2	.47%
Starring Sally J. Freedman As Herself	3	.70%
Stock Car Racer	2	.47%
Stranger With My Face	3	.70%
Strawberry Girl	2	.47%
Stuart Little	5	1.17%
Summer Of The Swans, The	6	1.41%
Sunshine	2	.47%
Super Susan	2	.47%
Superfudge	22	5.15%
Surrender	3	.70%
Sword of Shannara	2	.47%
Taffy Sinclair Strikes Again	2	.47%
Taking Of Terri Mueller	3	.70%
Taking Sides	4	.94%
Tales Of A Fourth Grade Nothing	11	2.58%
Tank Driver	2	.47%
Taste Of Blackberries, A	4	.94%
Tell Me If Lovers Are Losers?	3	.70%
Tell Me When I Can Go	6	1.41%
Tex	4	.94%
That Was Then, This Is Now	3	.70%
Then Again Maybe I Won't	3	.70%
There's A Bat In Bunk Five	4	.94%
Third Eye	2	.47%
Third Planet From Altair, The	2	.47%
This School Is Driving Me Crazy	4	.94%
Tiger Eyes	20	4.68%
Time Machine	2	.47%
Time To Love, A Time To Mourn, A	3	.70%
Time Trap	2	.47%

Title	No. of Students	%
=====		
Timequake	7	1.64%
To All My Fans With Love From Sylvia	3	.70%
To The Tune Of A Hickory Stick	3	.70%
Tomboy	5	1.17%
Tomboy Teacher	2	.47%
Tough Luck Karen	8	1.87%
Trapped	2	.47%
Trig	5	1.17%
Trouble River	2	.47%
Trouble With Soap, The	2	.47%
Turtle Time	2	.47%
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea	2	.47%
Two Thousand Pound Goldfish	4	.94%
Two Towers	2	.47%
U.F.O.'s	2	.47%
Undertaker's Gone Bananas	2	.47%
Upchuck Summer	4	.94%
Vans	2	.47%
Wade's Place	2	.47%
Wanted: A Date For Saturday Night	3	.70%
War Games	2	.47%
Watership Down	2	.47%
We Interrupt This Semester For An Important Bulletin	3	.70%
Weekend, The	3	.70%
Welcome Home Jellybean	3	.70%
What It's All About	2	.47%
When We First Met	24	5.62%
Where The Red Fern Grows	6	1.41%
Where The Lilies Bloom	3	.70%
White Fang	2	.47%
Wifey	6	1.41%
Wild Heart, A	2	.47%
Witch Of Black Bird Pond, The	2	.47%
Wizard Of OZ	2	.47%
World Series	2	.47%
World's Greatest Athlete, The	2	.47%
Wren: The Story Of Karen	2	.47%
Wrinkle In Time, A	3	.70%
You Can't Make Me If I Don't Want To	2	.47%
You Shouldn't Have To Say Good-bye	3	.70%
You're Going Out There A Kid But Coming Back A Star	5	1.17%
Young Razzle	3	.70%
Your Old Pal Al	3	.70%
Yours Till Niagara Falls Abby	2	.47%

APPENDIX B

Table 8

Number and Percent of Students Responding in Each
Category of Influences by Grade Level

Response	Grade 6				Grade 7				Grade 8			
	Male (N=64)		Female (N=92)		Male (N=49)		Female (N=51)		Male (N=73)		Female (N=96)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Browsing at the school library	51	79.7	72	78.3	37	75.5	44	86.3	47	64.4	81	84.4
Browsing at the public library	35	54.7	59	64.1	25	51.0	41	80.4	37	50.7	65	67.7
Browsing at a bookstore	25	39.1	46	50.0	22	44.9	28	54.9	28	38.4	49	51.0
Browsing at a grocery or drug store	18	28.1	15	16.3	8	16.3	11	21.6	20	27.4	29	30.2
Public librarian's recommendation	13	20.3	15	16.3	10	20.4	21	41.2	13	17.8	20	20.8
School librarian's recommendation	15	23.4	22	23.9	12	24.5	19	37.3	16	21.9	32	33.3
Parent's recommendation	22	34.4	19	20.7	20	40.8	19	37.3	18	24.7	21	21.9
Reading teacher's recommendation	13	20.3	17	18.5	18	36.7	35	68.6	40	54.8	57	59.4
Friend's recommendation	33	51.6	68	73.9	24	49.0	44	86.3	38	52.1	83	86.5
Media (TV, Movies etc.)	39	60.9	33	35.9	30	61.2	35	68.6	47	64.4	58	60.4
Other	13	20.3	19	20.7	19	38.8	20	39.2	24	32.9	33	34.4

APPENDIX B

Table 9

Reasons For Reading Books by Grade Level and Sex,
Number and Percent of Responses

Response	Grade 6				Grade 7				Grade 8			
	Male (N=64)		Female (N=92)		Male (N=49)		Female (N=51)		Male (N=73)		Female (N=96)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
For pleasure or fun	39	60.9	60	65.2	18	36.7	35	68.6	35	47.9	60	62.5
For something to do	41	64.1	66	71.7	30	61.2	38	74.5	34	46.6	73	76.0
To learn about yourself/others or life	7	10.9	16	17.4	10	20.4	13	25.5	21	28.8	38	39.6
To learn how to solve problems	6	9.4	11	12.0	13	26.5	8	15.7	13	17.8	17	17.7
To learn about a career or job	18	28.1	7	7.6	13	26.5	8	15.7	14	19.2	16	16.7
Interested in the topic	45	70.3	48	52.2	31	63.3	35	68.6	46	63.0	67	69.8
Meet a book report requirement	51	79.7	63	68.5	39	79.6	39	76.5	67	91.8	88	91.7
Other	7	10.9	14	15.2	13	26.5	6	11.8	18	24.7	14	14.6