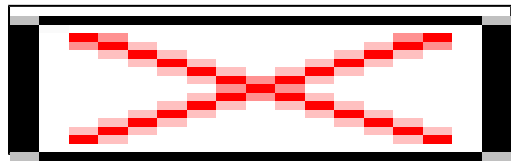




CHILDREN READING MORE IN LOCKDOWN



A survey commissioned by **The Reading Agency** (conducted by **Beano Brain Omnibus 2020**) to mark the launch of the **Summer Reading Challenge 2020** reveals that 89% of 7-11-year-olds surveyed have been reading during lockdown, with 37% of them reading more than before schools closed. The survey also reveals the importance of digital influencers in reading inspiration, with 45% of children turning to YouTube and 28% to social media for ideas though almost one third (31%) rely on friends for advice.

Reading was cited as something that made children feel relaxed and happy during lockdown, with a quarter (26%) saying characters in books have made them laugh during this difficult time.

This research provides some silver lining to our current situation, and [a contrast to figures from the National Literacy Trust](#) [1], published on **World Book Day** in March, which recorded fewer children and young people are reading daily and that fewer are enjoying reading than they did in the past. Findings from the **NLT's Annual Literacy Survey** revealed that only 25.8% of children said they read daily in their free time.

The **Summer Reading Challenge**, delivered in partnership with public libraries, encourages children aged 4-11 to read during the long summer break, with research showing a dip in reading levels if children do not have regular access to books.

This year, the Challenge's **'Silly Squad'** theme places an emphasis on funny books, encouraging children to read whatever makes them happy, whether that's a book, a comic, a silly poem or a funny joke book - in digital or print format, from e-book lending through the public library service or from what they already have at home. The official **Summer Reading Challenge** book collection will also act as a guide.

With almost half of the children surveyed (45%) saying they're most looking forward to seeing their friends after lockdown ends, The Reading Agency's invitation to **'Join Our Silly Squad'** is timely. Children taking part in the **SRC** are encouraged to form their own virtual Silly Squads and talk about the stories they love, reinforcing social connections and helping to combat feelings of isolation and loneliness, which many children have felt during this time of social distancing.

The survey found:

89% of children have been reading in some form during lockdown.

68% of boys and 70% of girls surveyed reported a love of reading.

The majority of children look to digital influencers for reading inspiration, with 45% of children turning to YouTube and 28% to social media for ideas, and almost one-third (31%) following the advice of friends. Traditional media was also a popular source, with 27% getting ideas from seeing books on TV and 18% from hearing about them on the radio.

Reading has helped 40% of children relax and made over a third (35%) happy, with almost a fifth (17%) talking to friends about books as a way of staying connected and a quarter (26%) saying characters in books have made them

laugh during lockdown.

The **Summer Reading Challenge** will run from June to September, launching on Friday 5 June with a virtual **Let's Get Silly** programme running from the Summer Reading Challenge's Facebook page. The launch will feature special super silly readings, family activities and draw-a-longs from guest celebrities and authors. Over the summer, libraries will continue to run the Challenge in partnership with The Reading Agency, delivering it via virtual services and e-lending platforms, and adapting their delivery if social distancing measures develop and change.

Children can sign up at www.sillysquad.org.uk [2].

Source URL (retrieved on Dec '20): <http://www.w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/news/children-reading-more-in-lockdown>

Links:

[1] <http://www.w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/241/childrens-books/articles/editorial/editorial-241>

[2] <http://www.sillysquad.org.uk>