

# INSTA-READING

Dutch Reading Habits According  
to Social Media

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### Abstract:

This research tests whether early adolescents could benefit from a targeted reading encouragement approach through the use of social media appliances. Recent academic research combined with an empirical sample should provide the best method for a continuingly functional approach. As language and appliances in the world of social media are ever evolving, research will have to keep moving forward alongside these changes. Early adolescents could benefit most from targeted reading encouragement through the use of social media platforms if a separate account exists, aimed especially at youth, using engaging posts and the right influencers. These influencers can be famous Dutch citizens with a public interest for literature but they can also be peers. Instagram and Tiktok are the best available methods at the moment and should be employed with qualitative pictures and relevant and necessary content. It would be wise to invite some early adolescents into the posting process to avoid a communication gap between researchers and the researched. Due to the interference of COVID-19, this research sadly received a lot less response than originally intended. The empirical part of this research therefore functions as a sample, more attentive than argumentative. Further research should be supported by broader empirical research. This research uses social media's probable popularity as a tool to further the educative purpose of reading encouragement. How could early adolescents benefit from targeted reading encouragement through the use of social media platforms?

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## 1. Introduction

Fifteen minutes of fame, that is all you need to become an 'Instastar': someone who gained fame through Instagram. Instagram is only one of the many well-known social media platforms used by modern teenagers. The popularity of such outlets is on a continuing rise and there is an influencer on every digital corner. Wherever your interest lies, social media can guarantee an expert that can tell you what to do, how to live, and what to buy. Printed media continue to lose ground to digital media. The relationship between the two tends to be symbiotic in the Netherlands though, as literary vloggers and bloggers use their online power to share their experience and advice to influence their followers into purchasing what has been written.

This research intends to investigate whether early adolescents could benefit from a targeted reading encouragement approach through the use of social media appliances. According to the Dutch Foundation for Reading, for early adolescents, teenagers between the ages of 11 and 15, reading encouragement is of great importance. A young brain is stimulated greatly by frequent reading sessions. Not just reading skills improve but vocabulary, coherence recognition, empathic development, and memory also benefit. Although reading is a great way to learn, it is not a very popular custom anymore. At the moment 1,3 million Dutch citizens are illiterate. (Lezen) This is problematic as this number is ever growing and reading is an unavoidable skill in our society. The Foundation has therefore started many different programs aimed at reading encouragement in primary and secondary education. Most of these programs however, have trouble keeping up with current online surroundings children and adolescents find themselves in, in my opinion. Because of the endless options for communication that social media provide, digital language is evolving faster than ever. The popularity of most social media platforms is fleeting: to understand the tenability of social media, researchers and educators must keep in touch closely with their subjects. Even the researches that attempt to include social media in their approach cannot deliver meaningful results. It is almost as if the researchers and the researched do not speak the same language. That is why the

approach to this research is more functional: a combination of institutional and direct empirical research, performed by someone who is close in age to the target group. The empirical target group in this research exists of 12- to 14-year-old VMBO students in Zwolle. Initially the results of the empirical part of this research were supposed to stem from several classes from seven different schools. Due to the interference of COVID-19, this research received a lot less response: only two schools were able to find the time in a chaotic period to participate. The empirical part of this research therefore functions as a sample, more attentive than argumentative. Further research should be supported by broader empirical research. This particular research will be carried out with support of Stadkamer: a library and a center for literature and culture in Overijssel. Stadkamer is based in Zwolle, has access to a large archive consisting of reading encouragement research, has connections with many educative institutions in Zwolle, and some available data on the current reading habits of the students in these institutions. That is why the target group exists of students from Zwolle, a matter of accessibility. The early adolescents form the target group because previous institutional research has proven that this group benefits greatly from proper reading encouragement as VMBO students in general read less on a daily basis than HAVO and VWO students. (Lezen) The students in the target group will not be asked for their age or their cultural heritage: these factors do not matter for the outcome of this research. The respondents are aged between 12 – 15. Therefore this research focuses on the different reading levels within this age group, rather than the precise age. In some cases a reading level might not match an age at all. If this is the case, the reading level can say more about that particular student than his/her/its age might. The results of the empirical research will be divided per school level. Within VMBO there are several levels, ranging from practical learning to mixed and theoretical learning, and each level will complete their own survey. The questions are identical, the only difference is the link they receive. Through these different links, the results will remain separate from each other, separated by level. The empirical results are supposed to present a clear picture of a functional social media approach for reading encouragement. Such an approach must be executable for libraries, schools and non-profit

organizations. In today's society it is not acceptable, nor is it to me, to present racially divided approaches for reading encouragement on social media. Companies who would do so, would be socially slaughtered by the online masses. Connecting reading levels, reading enthusiasm, cultural heritage, and reading encouragement could be an interesting subject for a different research. This research attempts to design a functional approach to reading encouragement for less enthusiastic readers, regardless of their cultural background. Especially these less enthusiastic readers deserve some empirical attention as literary influencing on social media in general does not apply to them. From what I have seen so far, I expect to witness that most literary influencers concern themselves with followers that already enjoy reading. The non-readers fall by the wayside: they cannot be reached by the typical literary influencer. This is why Stadkamer can be of great assistance to this research. Through the connections Stadkamer has with high schools in and around Zwolle, the target group can be reached. This group is also young enough to still respond to influence coming from education or their parents, which makes reading encouragement through education worthwhile. In order to perform successful empirical research, the researchers must be able to fluently speak the language of its target group. In order to influence a follower, an influencer merely needs an understanding of its audience's language. Might reading encouragement aimed at adolescents and executed through social media with the use of the most recent online language be more effective than the existing approaches?

The methodology will consist of an analysis of youngsters and their growing use of social media, zooming in on early adolescents. Such an overview provides insight into the role social media play in the lives of average early adolescents. Subsequently the different institutions responsible for online literary influencing will be examined. These institutions provide the online content available to youngsters on social media platforms and the professional goals of these institutions are relevant for the intentions behind this content. Then the research turns to empirical exploration to capture the current value youngsters attribute to literature and social media. Also the possible options to improve the strategy concerning reading encouragement through social media will be examined.

The research is an academic analysis, put to the test with empirical research, though be it on a smaller scale than planned. The exploratory nature of the empirical research is necessary to examine the possibly positive effects of reading encouragement through social media. As proper and functional reading encouragement for early adolescents is the main topic of this research, it functions as institutional exploration in the educative literary field. The book *Plugged In* by Patti M. Valkenburg and Jessica Piotrowski functions as a very important reference and will often be referred to. *Plugged In* is based on cognitive empirical research, suggesting that the authors support the effectivity of empirical literary research. The authors had access to a large testing group and published their book very recently, which is a necessity in order to be of importance to the reading encouragement approach including the ever evolving social media. Stadkamer provides a great number of researches performed to explore the development of youngsters in combination with social media. Lenhart's *Teens, Social Media and Technology Overview* (Lenhart) for example, who stands by methodically substantiated surveys on a large scale. The conclusions of these researches are in alignment: contrary to popular belief, there is no evidence that social media have predominant negative consequences for the development of young minds. (Valkenburg and Piotrowski) Valkenburg and Piotrowski use this neutralized conclusion to make room for a simple but immense upside to social media: kids love it. There is also the most recent research performed which matters in the case of the constantly innovating digital world. This research will use social media's probable popularity as a tool to further the educative purpose of reading encouragement. How could early adolescents benefit from targeted reading encouragement through the use of social media platforms?

As a means, I expect social media to contribute more to reading encouragement targeted at young VMBO students than tips from teachers, parents and/or caretakers can. Peer communication plays a large role within the use of social media, therefore I assume that the influence peers have on each other will be equal or almost equal to that of social media influencers in general. The only head start social media have on peer reading encouragement, is the extra of literary influencers. However,

it is hard to predict the probable popularity of literary influencers amongst VMBO students, which is why I will test that.

## 2. Media, Marketing, and Youth in Contemporary Society

Madonna once sang: 'Time goes by, so slowly' (Hung up, Madonna). However, nothing could be less true for the digital world. Digital innovation comes and goes faster than even Madonna's record sales. Innovation has always been a game for the young and no one knows the digital playground better than adolescents. What content do they come across? Where did it come from?

### Youth and Media

As a society, we still have a lot to learn about youth and their media, according to Patti M. Valkenburg and Jessica Taylor Piotrowski. This gap in our knowledge is partially explained by the dramatic changes in how youngsters have used the media over the years. On average, children spent about four hours a day with media in the 1990s. Their media use has increased largely since then, to six hours a day in the case of young children and nine hours a day for adolescents. This means the average teen nowadays spends more time with media than with school on a daily basis. The other part of the lacking knowledge concerns the ongoing change within the media landscape. Every entity in this landscape must continually innovate to stay ahead of its competitors. Even the traditional media outlets cannot escape this approach. Scheduled programs on television have to compete with the flexibility of online television, streaming services, and binge viewing. Teens still read the news, yet the morning papers are not very involved in this process anymore: they pick up short articles from whichever on- or offline source is the most convenient. The commercial environment surrounding youth has changed alongside the media. The traditional thirty-second tv commercial is no longer the best way to reach youngsters. With the rise of mainstream gaming, played on smartphones and tablets, personalized advertisements surrounding the game are fed to the screen-bound eyes. The developments mentioned above have drawn attention from the academics in several scientific disciplines. Psychiatry and pediatric medicine focus on the 'effects of media use on



aggressive behavior, attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and obesity' whereas neuroscientists research whether 'media use causes changes in brain areas responsible for aggressive behavior, spatial awareness, and motor skills' (Valkenburg and Piotrowski 3). In the field of sociology, the dynamics of young culture and behavior in online environments are studied closely. According to Valkenburg and Piotrowski, within public debate the tone is set by a pessimistic current, created by sought-after negative headlines, extraordinary incidents, misused quotes from experts, and a lack in nuance. These mechanisms make sure that scientific books denouncing media use for youngsters are very popular. However, this is not the picture that arises from the empirical research performed, concerning development in a digital era. This research reveals neither a utopian, nor a dystopian environment where youngsters and media are concerned. 'Media effects are not simple – not all media are the same, not all children are the same, and not all environmental contexts are the same' (Valkenburg and Piotrowski 9).

### **Adolescents**

Whereas older generations seemingly fight against the rise of digitalization in public debate, the young generation of adolescents is largely in favor of implementing digital means in education. (Valkenburg and Piotrowski) The gap between old and young is anything but new, it has existed for years. Adolescent behavior has been a source of complaint for adults since earlier than the beginning of time. About 400 years BC, Socrates already expressed his concerns about the youth's bad manners, their contempt for authority, their tyrannizing of their teachers. Adolescents nowadays are massive media users: from watching shows and movies and playing electronic games to old-fashioned texting, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, they do it all. In a research involving this target group, the communication gap between researchers and their subjects should be bridged to provide a meaningful outcome. Valkenburg and Piotrowski divided adolescents up in two groups: early ( ages 12 – 15) and late adolescence (ages 16 – 19). Especially the early adolescents will be taken into account in the rest of this research. Their media use depends on their cognitive and social-emotional development. Both groups must tackle three social-emotional tasks:

‘developing an identity, learning about intimacy, and discovering their sexuality’ (95). Therefore the early adolescents are constantly looking for peer communication and validation, they feel the need to belong. Social media offer an easy communicative way of peer interaction, explaining the many hours adolescents clock in front of a screen. On top of that, social media is a gateway to media heroes and their public approach to social situations such as relationships. Social media hereby support the adolescent search for an (sexual) identity. Late adolescents are on their way to adulthood, with an increased sense of autonomy, more self-control, and more mature media preferences. Friendship is no longer focused on quantity, yet more on quality. On average, this period is often marked by a first sexual relationship, which is why the autonomous identity is usually established. The traditional approach, treating these adolescents as teenagers, is therefore often unsuccessful. Instead, the media producers should approach this audience as the ‘autonomous individuals they are striving to become’ (95).

### **Advertising and commercialism**

The upcoming adults in question are of great importance to the economy. Through the popularity of social media, children in general have become a very important target group for advertisers. A child can be aged anywhere between 0 and 18 years, the approach advertisers use applies to all children, therefore also to early adolescents. Children are not only a primary market, they are also a market of influencers themselves. Valkenburg and Piotrowski describe influencing with a slightly different intention than that of the social media influencer, who promotes certain products with some level of expertise on a social media platform to a large following and is often sponsored by commercial companies. In Valkenburg’s and Piotrowski’s case, children influence the elders within their family on what to buy during weekly grocery shopping and as presents over the holidays. Subsequently, children also form the future market for advertisers. According to the authors of *Plugged In*, childhood is increasingly commercialized which has resulted in children and adolescents being increasingly affected by advertising. The ideas of brand awareness, brand appeal, and product requests are more present in adolescent lives. Materialism, parent-child conflicts, and a heightened

risk of eating disorders are further side-effects of targeted advertising. Problematic as this may be, a ban on advertising is unrealistic and unreasonable. The role of advertising is too important in our consumer society. Valkenburg and Piotrowski propose limitations for advertising targeted at the youngest age group and encouraging self-regulation. Subsequently, the youth must be encouraged to identify and manage the huge amount of advertising they come across.

### **Media and education**

This encouragement can be greatly supported by the educational system. The first few digital revolutions have been integrated in most educational programs within the Netherlands. However, digital revolutions do not come in waves as most revolutions do. Digital innovation tends to be a continuing force and the only way for education to keep up, is to continually innovate themselves. Social media outlets may seemingly be filled with disturbing content, sponsored advertising, and bad examples, yet Valkenburg and Piotrowski point out that today's youth can learn just as many positive as negative lessons from media content. (193) As long as the content is appropriate, educational, and entertaining for its target group, teens and especially young children can benefit. Teens can draw lessons about social-emotional behavior from narrative entertainment. As bolstering as this is, the authors still spot two important problems in our knowledge of 'the effectiveness of educational media' (194): a missing balance and a lack of understanding how educational media content works best. Infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their parents have a wide range of options when it comes to media content. As the children within these groups grow older they lose the luxury of wide-spread choices. As education on serious topics through media content can be very effective for children of all ages, the focus should be broadened further. Subsequently, it must be identified which children could benefit most from educational media and why, thereby making it possible to create the most effective personalized content for youth.

### **Social media**

The involvement of media within education is highly relevant as there are very few teens nowadays

who do not use one or another form of social media. The particular platforms change all the time, their popularity is often fleeting. Their most important appeal is the possibility of endless communication. Teens have a 'strong, developmentally induced need for control and autonomy [...] allowing them to determine what, with whom, when, and how they communicate' (242). This need is enabled by the affordances of social media which foster a teen's concept of clarity, self-esteem, and self-awareness. Through social media they can develop friendships, sexual self-presentation, and sexual experimentation. Unfortunately, in the dark side of social media Darth Vader presides in the form of cyberbullying and sexual grooming. Although these behaviors do not occur frequently, their impact is of such magnitude that teens must be supported in managing social media in a safe and healthy way. The positive/negative balance to social media seemingly depends on the goal teens use it for. In the case of maintaining existing contacts, the overall effects seem positive. Luckily, this is the approach most teens use. On the other hand, negative effects are created by communication with strangers, unusual profile pictures, and negative responses. Therefore, teens can seemingly control and shape the effects of their own media use. However, no one can control someone else's use which means the risk of negative responses is ever present. A popular objection to youngsters using media is the theory that a teen's cognitive development is hindered by 'today's mediated world of bit-size information and multitasking' (243). Yet, there is no scientific evidence supporting the claim that media multitasking leads to concentration problems. Social media and the Internet supply us with accessibility, scalability, and retrievability. In your back pocket at all times is an encyclopedia, a helpline, a reassurance. On the other hand, that same pocket holds temptation. With a practice of reasonable and realistic agency, teens can reap the benefits of social media and dodge the risks.

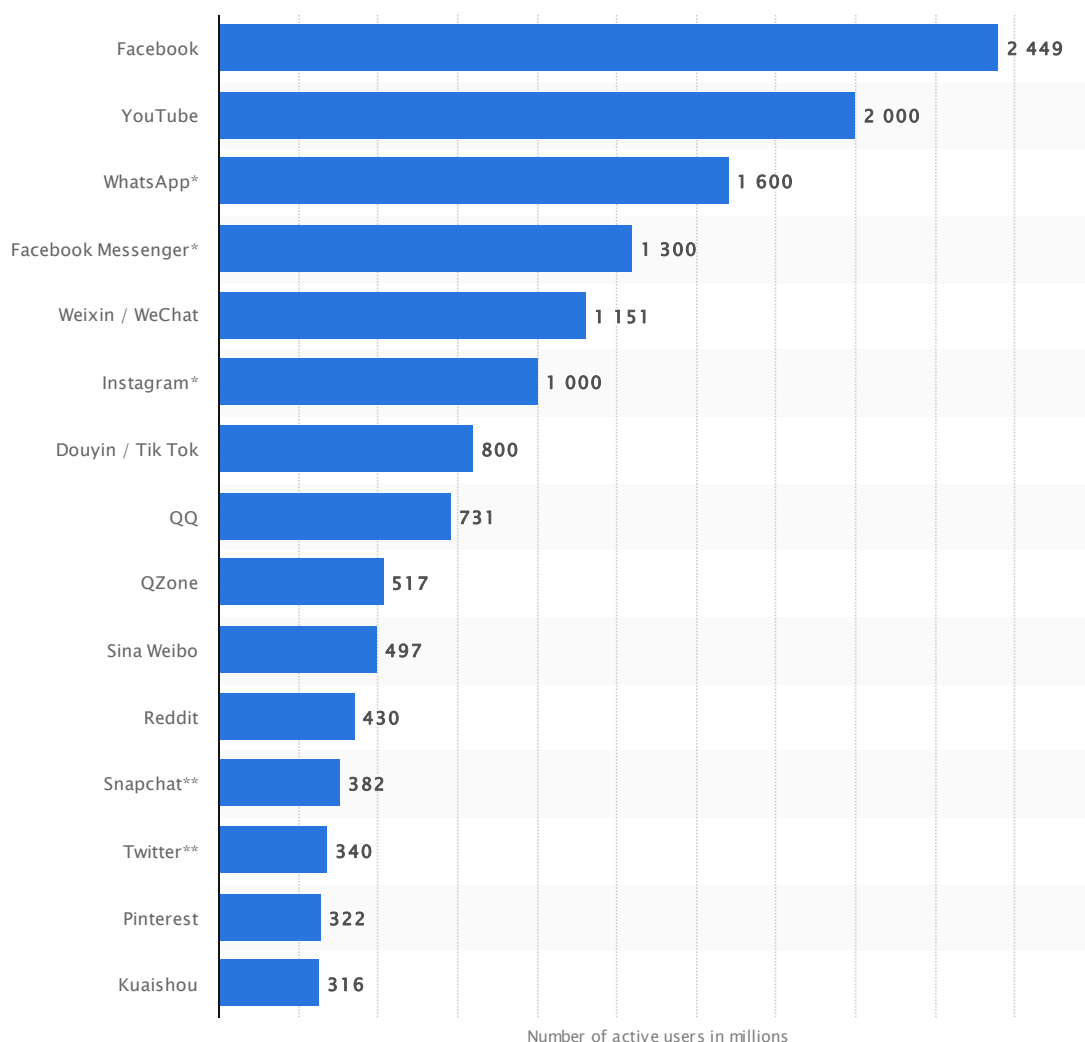
(Valkenburg and Piotrowski)

## Reflection

Valkenburg and Piotrowski prove the neutralization of social media: it is not a danger for the general development of early adolescents. They even take it one step further by showing the connection between the popularity of social media amongst youngsters and the effectiveness it therefore earned. Their findings are of use to this research as social media would hereby be the perfect method for reading encouragement for early adolescents.

### Parameters explained: Twitter/Instagram/Facebook/Snapchat/YouTube

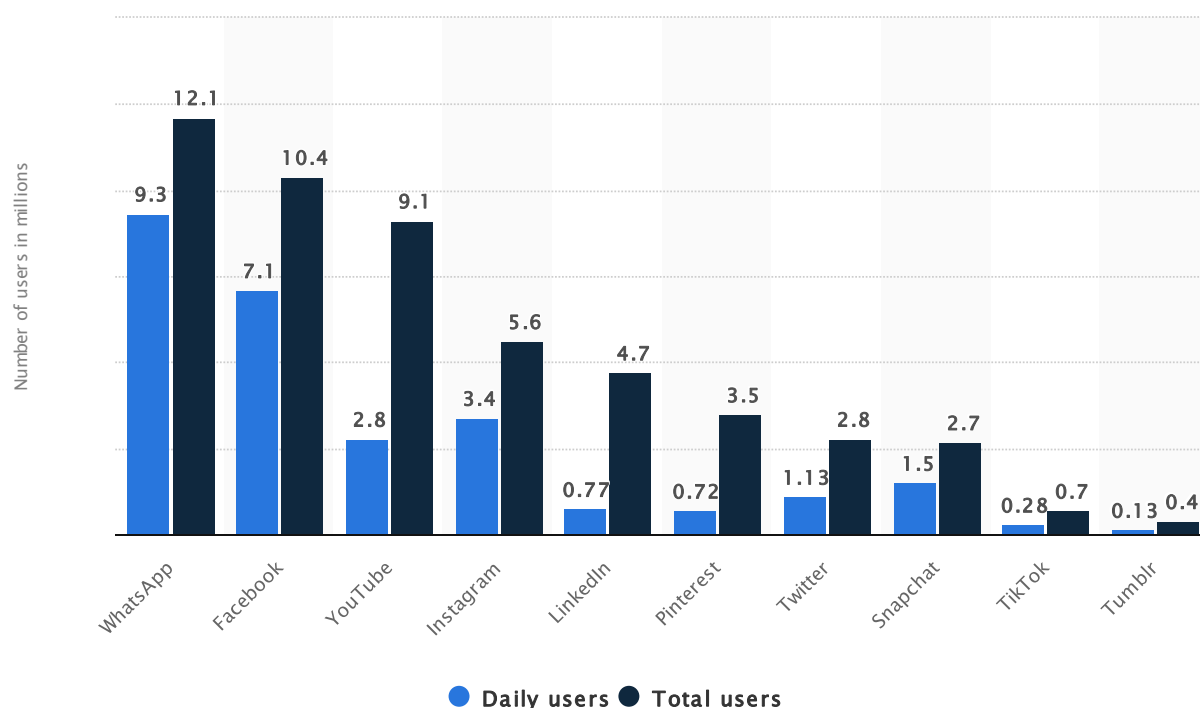
As mentioned earlier, the popularity of the particular platforms changes constantly. The graph below portrays the current standing of social platforms in February 2020:



(Clement Graph 1)

This graph is world-wide, the results might be slightly different for each particular country. In the

Netherlands, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Linked-In, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, and Twitter are the most well-known platforms. (See graph 2 below) WhatsApp differs from the other platforms as it is aimed at communication between known parties, an online version of texting. Linked-In is mostly used by adults as a professional public profile. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest and Twitter are online public profiles, used a lot by teens. A user creates a personal profile, gathers followers and watches content of friends and selected celebrities. The public nature of these last few platforms used by teens is more relevant to this particular research as such platforms involve personal displays ranging from the direct social environment to the portrayal of interest in certain categories, celebrities, and /or causes. Therefore Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and Pinterest will be involved in this research whereas Linked-In and WhatsApp will largely be ignored.



(Best Graph 2)

### 3. Framework of Institutions

The available platforms and their popularity are an important part of this research, but perhaps an even more important part is the available content on these platforms. For every bit of content the particular source matters, as this influences the goal of the message. On social media there are a lot of different parties who promote reading encouragement for different reasons. Several institutions are involved within the online literary field: education, nonprofit organizations, personal initiatives, and commercial companies.

#### Education

Reading in school is mandatory, one way or another. What is best way to stimulate adolescents and their reading habits? Can the education system oblige?

#### **Problems with book selection**

The right book at the right time, that is the most important stimulating factor in a student's literary development, according to researcher Theo Witte (Witte, Het Juiste Boek op het Juiste Moment Deel 1 Wat belemmert een goede keuze?). A well-chosen book makes reading meaningful and provides its reader with satisfaction and confidence. Unfortunately, the process of choosing a book often knows many bumps in the road. Witte researched the frequent problems surrounding Dutch book choices in secondary education and proposed solutions. In his experience, a certain book choice is successful when a student selects a book perfectly aligned with their reading level. By selecting a matching book, this student can automatically enjoy it more. A fine outcome would also be for a student to choose a book that is close to their reading level. Problems arise when the book differs two or more levels from the concerning reading level. Witte has divided potential students up in to six groups. Category one students have a hard time articulating what they want to read. They are largely indifferent towards literature and could benefit from direct guidance. Level two students also need guidance although they have some idea of preferred literary genres. Level three students cannot quite make up their minds on their own but have little trouble putting in to words where their

interest lies, giving their teachers a good starting point. Level four students are rather independent. They can use some advice and like a challenge. Level five and six students are respectively advanced and very advanced. If they are in need of guidance, they will ask. Pairing students with the right book gives them an opportunity to initiate learning from their own starting point. According to Witte, this will enhance their internal motivation. A major issue standing in the way is the lack of a reliable reading list, known in the Netherlands as 'De Leeslijst'. Most secondary school students need to read a certain amount of books during their school career to compile their reading list. Often this list is restricted by certain rules integrated by teachers to maintain the overall qualitative level of the list. Witte regrets an overall lack of goal and intention in case of the reading list. In his opinion, students often cannot grasp the intended lesson to be learned as described in the syllabus, as the phrasing is left too vague. He also desires a collection of more substantiated options to present to the students. For the lower reading level students a list comprised of mere titles means very little. Witte also discusses several researches that prove a gap between the reading experiences of adult literate teachers and adolescent students. Therefore, giving students advice on which books to read can be problematic. The simple problem of availability adds on to this, as students tend to give up quickly if their selected book is not available. Finally, the obligation of reading something for school can lead to a negative reading attitude: homework cannot be considered to be fun. (Witte, *Het Juiste Boek op het Juiste Moment Deel 1 Wat belemmert een goede keuze?*)

### **Solutions to book selection problems**

It is vital that students are permeated with the idea of fitting books for every student of every reading level. The Dutch website [www.lezenvoordelijst.nl](http://www.lezenvoordelijst.nl) was developed in 2009 to support students in their literary choices. Several colleagues of Witte implemented the six levels system and discovered that the system motivated their students to climb to the next level. The levels present students with more grip and a clear vision of their goals. Class discussion of the available books could also help encourage the students, especially beforehand, as a means of introduction. Closer guidance in book selection by spending an entire class on the topic also helped students pick more precisely.



One of Witte's colleagues even asked his students to only put books on their list they actually enjoyed. Subsequently, their selection process became much more critical and elaborate. The role of the teacher as an advisor and guide is important but their influence can only go so far. Giving students time to read in class on a weekly basis is also encouraged by Witte. (Witte, *Het Juiste Boek op het Juiste Moment Deel 2 Wat bevordert een Goede Keuze?*)

### **Free reading**

Witte is not the only one promoting free reading time in class. In this case free reading means providing a student with time in class to read a book of their choosing. Kees Broekhof and Tessa van Velzen report in their 2016 research that free reading can contribute a lot to the development of language skills, precisely the skills that are often required when working with exams. However, free reading has not been given a clear official place in education, as it is not an exam requirement on its own. They state that most educational texts are too pragmatic and hardly ever fictional or narrative. (Broekhof en van Velzen) Witte, Broekhof, and van Velzen are backed up by Suzanne Mol and Adriana Bus, who dedicated an entire research to the topic of free reading and its benefits. The researchers analyzed 85 studies with a total of 6639 respondents to determine whether free reading has a positive effect on language skills in general. They divided the respondents up into three groups: infants, adolescents and students. Adolescents who read fiction/magazines in their free time do better on average when it comes to language skills than their peers without this reading experience. Vocabulary, technical reading and spelling are influenced more by free reading than by the basic reading skills taught in school. Mol and Bus found that the vocabulary progress made through free reading by skilled readers is just as strong as the progress made by weaker readers. Therefore, the starting point in this case is irrelevant, progress is a given for everyone who reads in their spare time. Weaker readers who read in their free time have more basic reading skills to gain than frequent free readers, which they often do. These basic skills help them decode fiction and non-fiction texts in class. (Mol and Bus)

### Digital thresholds within education

Free reading is a beneficial activity, that much is clear. So how does this translate into the contemporary digital society? Around 2009, digital methods as a means of supporting a classroom have largely been implemented in the Dutch education system. However, since then this progress has been halted. Due to an academic neglect of the possibilities for further digitalization within education and therefore a lack of financial and research-based support, the opportunities and finances required for this process are limited. (H. v. Staaldune) Further digitalization could have a positive effect on Dutch high schools. My own previous research performed for the master course Publishing: From Manuscript to Bestseller brought several advantages of digital learning forward. That paper was largely supported by research executed by Bert Zwaneveld and Herman Rigter, *Crossing Thresholds towards More Incorporation of ICT in Secondary Education* [Over Drempels naar meer ICT-Gebruik in het Voortgezet Onderwijs] (Zwaneveld en Rigter). Digitalization makes learning more attainable for all students, as long as there is Wi-Fi and a means of access. Digital objects have tremendous storage space, possibilities for constant updating, and incorporated search engines. Most digital objects are also quite portable. Readers can personalize the object to their preferences, such as an enlarged font for dyslectic readers. The overall costs are cheaper as the production costs are lower in the case of online publication than with print versions. Finally, digital learning methods provide students with the opportunity to incorporate intertextuality and multimedia in their work. Within the Netherlands, schools handle the ongoing digital revolution very differently. (H. v. Staaldune) Some schools are mostly non-digital still, some have digital course methods, interactive assignments, and school-provided laptops for students. Often the language teachers tend to stick to paper though, preferring the print versions to digital ones. (H. v. Staaldune) Yet, precisely the language courses could gain from digitalizing. All the reading and research required for the annual reading list, all the sources, all the intertextual links, could all be combined in one light-weight device. And if this device would be provided by the school, the overall costs for the students and their parents, would decrease.

### **Education initiatives on social media**

Most schools have their own Facebook page, some also have Instagram pages. In most cases, the Facebook pages have more followers than the Instagram pages. This might be due to the fact that Facebook is still a more popular platform in the Netherlands. The platform has also existed longer. Although Facebook school pages have more followers than Instagram school pages, the total number is not very high. On the other hand, some personal initiatives with specific goals do much better. An example of one single teacher's presence on social media is history teacher Joost van Oort. Under the name JORTgeschiedenis, he posts explanatory clips on YouTube. Originally he made these clips for his own students in the Dutch Driessen school. He decided to share them online on 19 April 2011 and since then has gathered a following of a staggering 27.186.759 views. (Oort) Perhaps the immense popularity is due to the practicality of the videos. Van Oort is to the point and very clear. His videos concern the subjects for the central exams every Dutch secondary scholar must take. Perhaps the lesson here is to adapt the Dutch central exams in such a way that informative videos on social media become a necessary aid to the students. That way, they might decide to follow a source of such videos, saturating their minds with literature on a daily basis.

### **Reflection**

Witte presented a clear front on the relevance of level-based reading, preferably in class. Broekhof, Van Velzen, Bus, and Mol added on to this that free reading is the best way to help students develop language skills. Although all of them are absolutely right, their approaches are somewhat outdated. They fail to take into account the experiences and daily lives of modern adolescents. Witte's articles were published in 2009, the same year most Dutch schools finally started implementing digital learning methods. His attempt to match this development was to create a website offering advice to teachers and students about the reading list. A website is a good effort but by 2009, social media were on the rise. His approach works, he has proven as much in his research. Had Witte anticipated the popularity of social media and created profiles promoting accurate book selection on several

platforms right away, then he could have had a gigantic following by now. Van Oort did understand the growing popularity of social media platforms and he has gathered a huge online audience over the years. Although van Oort has an easier job drawing students in as his content is of vital importance for the students' exams, Witte could have proven his relevance. In many schools, in-class free reading is a normal incorporated part of the week. Witte's book selection method could have become indispensable to students in the process of selecting a book for free reading time, if only the students or the teachers had known about him.

### Non-Profit Organizations

Knowledge is key, the same applies to non-profit organizations. Sometimes the most functional researches can be ignored because the results do not reach the target group. As stated earlier, reading has a positive effect on the development of children, which is why the Dutch government happily supports its encouragement. One of the categories in charge of doing so, is non-profit organizations. There are quite a few non-profit organizations that encourage reading for students but the biggest one in the Netherlands by far is the Dutch Foundation for Reading, or 'Stichting Lezen'.

#### Foundation for Reading

This foundation supports several programs concentrating on reading encouragement. One of these programs is called Library in School, 'Bibliotheek op school'. This program ensures a current and varied collection of books, offered to students in book cases on wheels. The portable library is open during and after school time, all students are members automatically and the books may be taken home. Schools that take part in the Library in School program should spend at least 15 minutes a day on activities that encourage reading, for instance free reading and book conversations. 183 secondary VMBO schools participate in the program, which reaches about 110.000 VMBO students. Other programs supported by the foundation include Read2Me, the Young Judges (Jonge Jury), and the Literatour. Read2Me is a competition where 12-year-olds read to each other, the Young Judges challenges young readers to vote for their favorite children's book, and for the Literatour 21 authors

go on tour to visit 100 schools. Schools can also ask the foundation for advice on the use of literature in courses, creating a reading plan, and providing their teachers with workshops and training.

According to the research numbers of the foundation, free reading is the most organized reading encouragement activity for VMBO students. 71% of the Dutch language teachers have made this a structural part of the program. Reading aloud to students on a weekly basis is only performed in 28% of the cases, 26% provides their students with book advice, 17% introduces books, and 17% maintains book conversations. Even rarer are literary activities outside of the classroom: school libraries are only visited once a year by 25% of the responding teachers. The number of librarians within secondary education is declining: from 709 in 2012 to 561 in 2019. Visits to local bookshops hardly ever happen. According to these teachers, their students find reading dull, their students' reading skills are insufficient to encourage reading in the first place, and their class programs are too tight to include reading encouragement. They regret this situation as much as researchers like Theo Witte, Suzanne Mol, and Adriana Bus do, as they consider a larger vocabulary, reading skills, and reading pleasure to be important developmental features.

On its website, the Dutch Foundation for Reading offers the following solutions and facts for reading encouragement:

- Proper instruction, motivating texts and a competent teacher are crucial for reading comprehension.
- Teachers stimulate the reading motivation with methods that strengthen the relationship, autonomy, and competence of students.
- Teachers that read a lot themselves, spend more time on reading encouragement during their classes.
- The presence of a specialized reading coordinator in school, improves the reading climate.
- Special programs in both primary and secondary education meant to stimulate

reading have been proven effective.

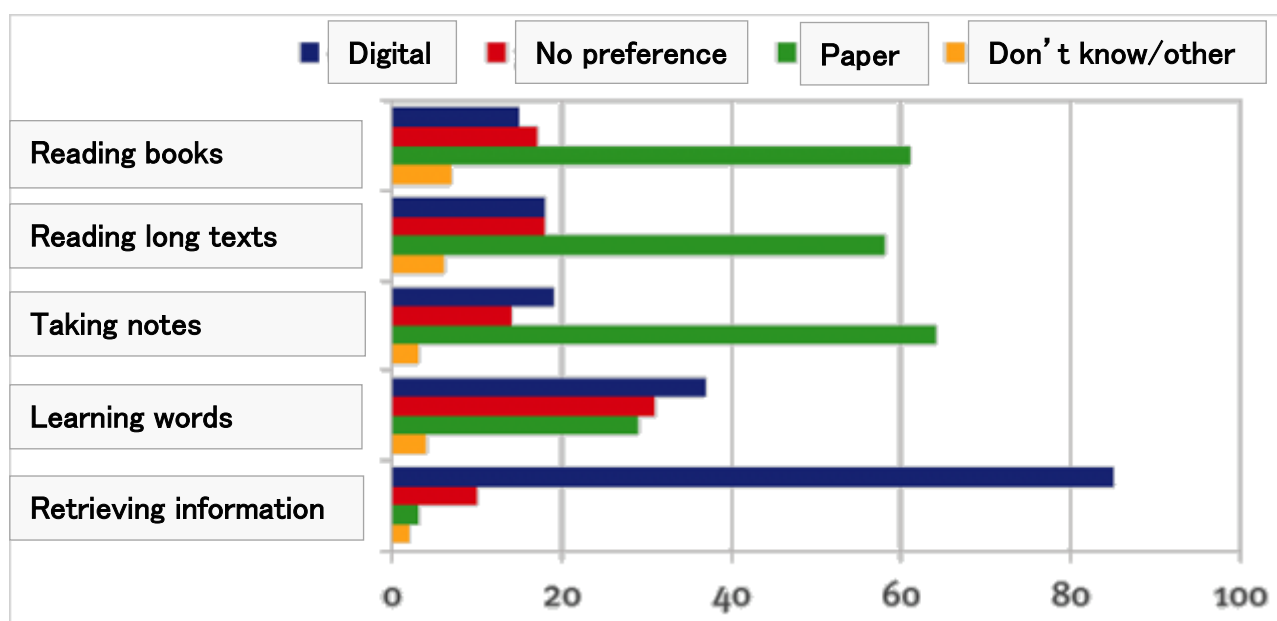
-Book conversations in class stimulate the conversation and interpretation skills of children.

-In their reading development, children can benefit from reading authentic texts over condensed ones.

-Schoolbook texts should be presented with signaling words, a continuing lay-out and in a 'to the point' manner.

-Training and paying teachers more would work in favor of the students' reading results. (Lezen My Translation)

Although that last one is practically a given, the other results correspond with the scholarly outcomes of the previous chapter. The Foundation also researched digital reading for the youth. Amongst secondary school students, almost half occasionally reads e-Books. Reading of a screen is slightly less popular than reading from paper, most digital readers use these screens next to the media of paper. Only 3% of primary and secondary students exclusively reads through e-Books. Children between the ages 10 – 18 prefer paper in the case of long texts, books, and taking notes. To retrieve information and study lists of words children tend to prefer digital media:



*Reading preference 10 – 18 year-olds in percentages (Lezen Graph 3 my translation)*

Experimentally designed studies show the opportunities digital media can offer reading encouragement, even in the cases of books and long texts. However, reality has not caught up to these studies yet. The foundation's website does offer some hope to digital reading fans. Through the love of digital gadgets raging amongst youngsters, e-reading could be popularized. Children, especially boys, are technologically quite advanced in general. Studies performed with a tablet seemingly prove this theory: 11- through 16-year-olds prefer the tablet to paper after having read a story on the device and after about two months they portray a more positive attitude towards reading. Videogames could have the same effect. As interactive fiction a game can enhance a student's reading skills whilst being entertaining. For the children growing up in the midst of the continuing digital revolution, interactive fiction could be the perfect new way to get in touch with written stories. On the other hand, the foundation also has some bad news for the digital reading world: informative texts read on a digital appliance are understood slightly less thoroughly than an informative text read on paper. This might have to do with the physical presence of paper, which can be felt, turned, and rumped. Digital reading requires scrolling and the appliance hides the size of the reading material. According to research by Mangen, featured on the foundation's website, this breaks a student's concentration and disturbs their capability of remembering content. Subsequently, the opportunities for task switching create distractions for young readers, thereby shallowing their reading experience. (Lezen)

### **Nudging to Read**

The Foundation for Reading supported a research performed in 2019 that explored the effects of digital reading reminders for students, so-called nudges. The research was meant to portray the effect of nudges on reading frequency, motivation and comprehension. One of the groups researched consisted of VMBO first and second graders. According to a 2017 research by DUO, another non-profit organization that nonetheless focuses on much more than reading encouragement, VMBO students read relatively little compared to other secondary school levels. By

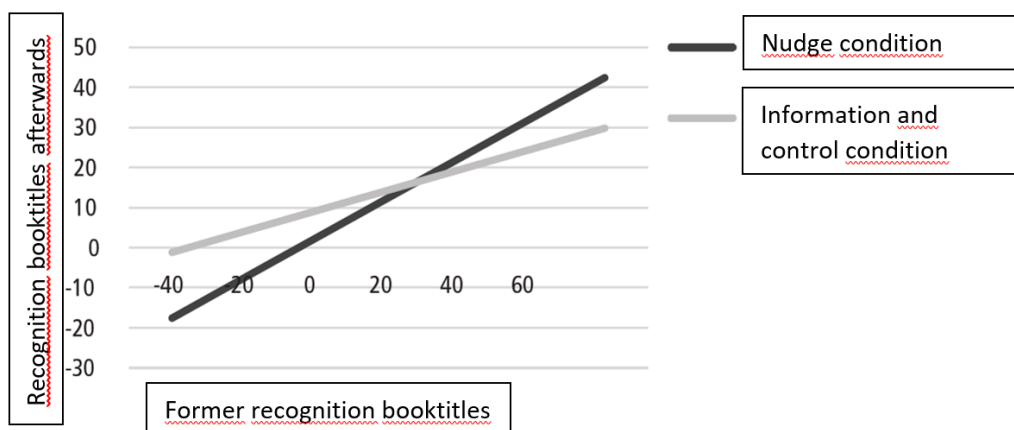
sending reading reminders via WhatsApp during a period of fourteen weeks, the researchers hoped to establish certain reading habits with the students. The subjects were divided into three groups: nudge-condition, information-condition, and control-condition. There were 146 students in total, amongst which 66 were male and 80 were female, with an average age of 13. The first two groups, nudge and information, received an informative message through WhatsApp at the start of the research. The message stated the importance of reading for a well-supported vocabulary, general knowledge, and empathic skills. Students were asked subsequently to read for a bit every day: from a book, newspaper, magazine, or online text. Nudge group students received nudges over the following weeks, no new information, simply reminders. They were sent twice a week on varying



*Example of nudges used in research (van der Sande, Wildeman and Bus)*

moments. The control group students received nothing during the whole research. In this case, the exact conditions of the performed research are highly relevant. Of the 50 students in the nudge group, 2 students unsubscribed to the nudges before the end of the research, 16 students may not have received all the nudges, probably due to blocking the messages. The remaining 32 are therefore the only ones considered for the results. The investigators found that students with a better prior knowledge of book titles and a habit of free reading, benefit most from the nudges. They also saw that girls benefit slightly more from them than boys.





(van der Sande, Wildeman and Bus graph 4 my translation)

Although the recognition of book titles improved, hardly anything changed for the students' reading motivation and their comprehension skills. In fact, some of the results implied that nudges even had a negative effect on the reading comprehension skills for the involved girls. Whereas nudges seemingly do not bring about major positive changes in the reading habits of children, reading reminders sent to parents might contribute more. An increase in their general knowledge could positively influence the children.

### The Dutch Library

Another big non-profit organization in support of reading encouragement is the Online Library [Online Bibliotheek]. Online Library is a national organization that offers online listening-books, e-Books, reading tips, colorful quotes, literary questions, new arrivals, and inspiration. Up until the first of March, there was a matching youth profile: Youth Library [Jeugd Bibliotheek]. This was a profile aimed at reaching youngsters. The profile offered vlogs, executed by a teenage girl named Léora. Within the time span of one minute, Léora describes the content of a book, complete with her own tagline: a book you should really check out ([een boek dat je dus



zeker moet checken]. De vlogs have only 130 to 150 views on average and barely receive reactions.

Online Library has 2458 followers whereas Youth Library only reached 699 followers. (Bibliotheek) As the numbers for the Youth Library page are quite low for a national organization, the discontinuation of this page is not surprising. Léora's vlogs are here to stay though, Youth Library's final post announces her transfer to the Online Library profile.

Below is a table portraying the numbers concerning the booktips given by Youth Library on Instagram, ordered by reading levels. These levels are part of the method used in public libraries to indicate the required reading skills for certain books. Level A books are intended for children between the ages of 6 to 8, B for children between 9 and 12, C for children aged 13 and older, D for children aged 15 and older.

<i>Position on 05-03-2020</i>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<i>Total number of posts</i>	167	154,6%
<i>Total amount of booktips</i>	108	100%
<i>Level A tips</i>	0	0%
<i>Level B tips</i>	0	0%
<i>Level C tips</i>	7	6,5%
<i>Level D tips</i>	78	72,2%
<i>Adult tips</i>	23	21,3%

The lack of level A books is not very surprising for a youth account aimed at teenagers. However, level D is far too present as compared to levels B and C. These two levels are of interest to developing readers. Children with a lower starting point can hardly use this Instagram account as inspiration. As Witte stated, a book should match a reading level to be of use to its reader.

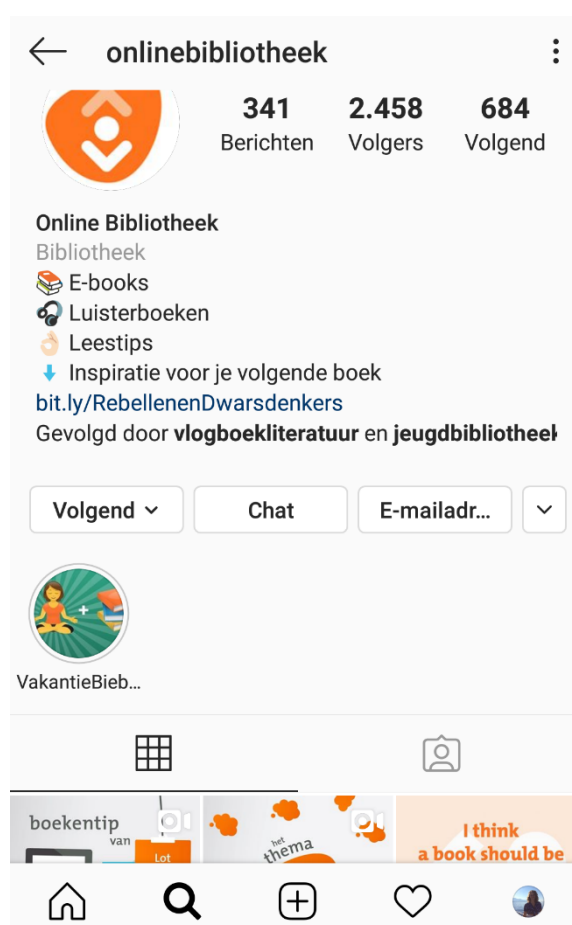
To draw a comparison, a library from Zwolle is also examined: Stadkamer. As the following empirical features of this research will be executed with VMBO students in Zwolle for whom Stadkamer is the most attainable library, Stadkamer's online media presence is also relevant. The profiles Stadkamer has on several social media platforms, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, differ from each other slightly yet they are recognizable: the Stadkamer logo is present but the accompanying photos vary. Therefore, every platform looks interesting by itself which makes following all of them worthwhile. The following on each of the platforms lies in the same ballpark and these numbers are quite high for a regional organization. However, Stadkamer's profile description is not very strong compared to the one for Online Library. The national page is to the point: 'listening books, e-Books, reading tips, inspiration' (Bibliotheek my translation). A curious visitor immediately knows what this page offers and the line-up of colorful pictures and texts is encouraging. Stadkamer's description is the same as its original website tagline: 'Stadkamer is the place in Zwolle where art, culture, and education meet. For the Language Point film, see (YouTube link) [www.stadkamer.nl](http://www.stadkamer.nl)' (Stadkamer, Instagram my translation). This is a great tagline for a website but it is too vague for a social media profile. The vagueness is amplified by the varying collection of photos making up the profile page: coffee, food, books, people of all ages and random event posters. The content of Stadkamer's Instagram account portrayed in numbers:

<i>Position on 05-03-2020</i>	<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
<i>Total number of posts</i>	230	100%
<i>Total amount of booktips</i>	29	12,6%
<i>Level A tips</i>	14	6,1%
<i>Level B tips</i>	6	2,6%
<i>Level C tips</i>	2	0,9%
<i>Level D tips</i>	0	0%
<i>Adult tips</i>	7	3%

<i>Café/living area/refreshments</i>	7	3%
<i>Music/culture/theatre</i>	31	13,5%
<i>Games/media</i>	15	6,5%
<i>Calls for volunteers</i>	4	1,7%
<i>Promotional activities to represent image Stadkamer</i>	135	58,7%
<i>Language point (Taalpunt)</i>	1	0,4%
<i>Other</i>	8	3,5%



Instagram profile Stadkamer: 1445 followers (Stadkamer, Instagram)

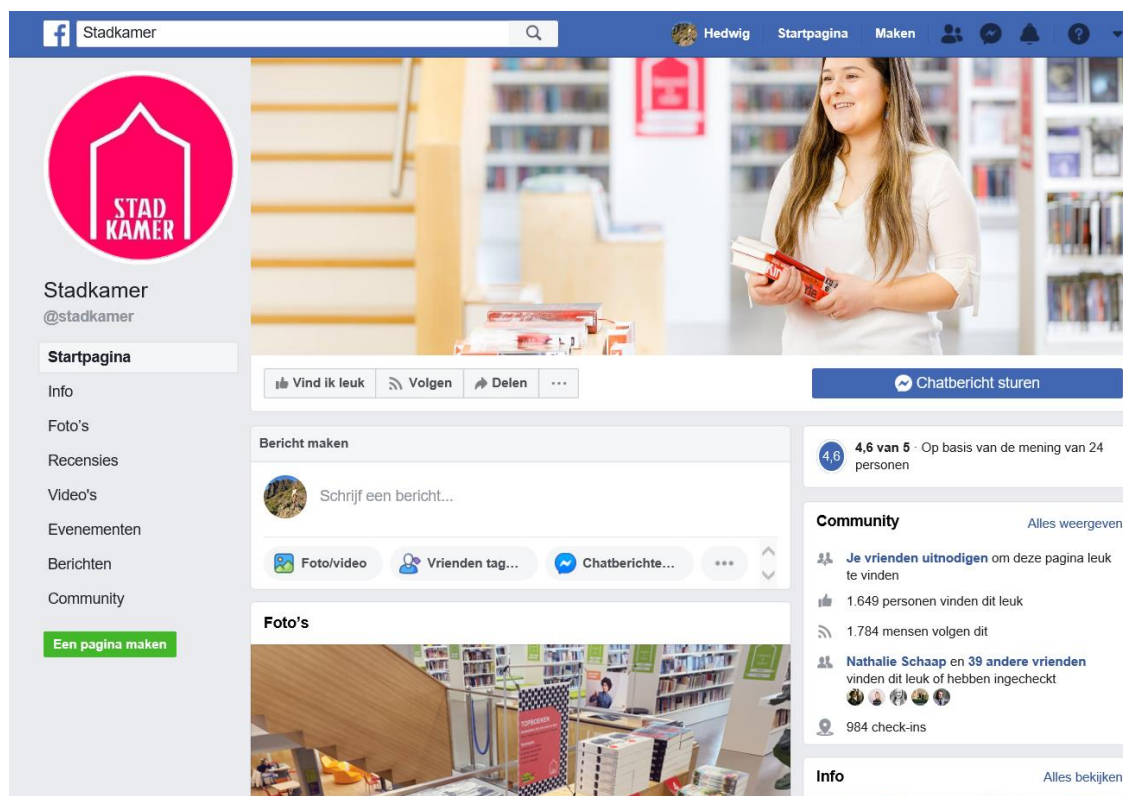


Instagram profile Online Library: 2458 followers (Bibliotheek)



Twitter page Stadkamer: 2860 followers, 437 likes, whereas Online Library has no separate Twitter profile.

(Stadkamer, Twitter)



Facebook page Stadkamer: 1649 likes, 1784 followers whereas Online Library has 2341 (Stadkamer, Facebook)

### **Smaller Supported Initiatives**

In the sea, next to literary non-profit whales, smaller literary non-profit fish feed off the whales.

Jörgen Apperloo created the idea of vlogbook [Vlogboek], in 2014 on YouTube on behalf of the Foundation for Reading. He posts short videos concerning novels, children's books, historical books and scientific background information on reading in general. He has a steady following with good numbers, especially for such a small initiative: 470 followers on Instagram, 779 followers on Twitter, 337 followers on Facebook. The same applies to Marla Drenth with her program PABOreads [PABOleest]: the profile that encourages northern Dutch PABO students, the teachers of the future, to read as much as possible. The library in The Hague supports a reading offensive on Twitter: Read Now [Lezen Nou]. In some cases, the literary non-profit organizations start supporting a personal online literary initiative because of its success and effectiveness. The Giant Friendly Podcast [Grote Vriendelijke Podcast] discusses books on a monthly basis. In 2020 the GFP was made possible by the Foundation for Reading and several other smaller non-profit organizations.

### **Reflection**

There is a great number of initiatives from non-profit organizations. The only challenge left is to bridge the gap between their existence and their notoriety amongst the audience. The biggest organization, the Foundation for Reading, comprises existing relevant research on their website. This information is available to everyone but its notoriety is rather low. Those involved in reading encouragement could truly benefit from these scientific researches though. Non-profit organizations should publish important findings somewhere more attainable for their target group. Whenever the target group for reading encouragement research exists of children and adolescents, social media should be involved in this process. It could also be helpful to involve teachers and parents, as they are influential. Students can also be encouraged to use the opportunities these machines offer for their own reading comprehension. Task switching can break concentration, as Mangen stated in his research. However, there is also a positive side to multimedia appliances. Instead of reading and

summarizing a text, maybe a student should be asked to read a text on a tablet and subsequently create a short video summarizing that text. The natural popularity of digital appliances amongst youngsters might provide such an exercise with a more enthusiastic approach from the students. The reading encouragers should try to meet the reading 'encouragées' halfway by stepping into their digital world and language. The same situation applied to the case of reading encouragement through nudges. The nudges in case were not very stimulating: they were old-fashioned and in disregard of the current digital surroundings of modern children. Like Theo Witte's reading levels, these nudges should match a student's reading level and current environment. There is too much distance between the researcher and the researched. And again, the same distance problem applies to the following for social media accounts. Separate accounts for youth and adults work better. The current Stadkamer account is too general in terms of its description and its content. On social media, a little bit for everyone means nothing for most. Possible followers are not going to take the time to figure a page out, the page has to do it for them. Yet, the execution must be considered thoroughly, as the youth page for Online Library did not reach a lot of followers on its own.

### Personal initiatives

Going it alone, some brave bloggers and vloggers make the effort. The individuals within this category do not reach a very large audience. As soon as they do, they usually start receiving back-up from commercial, educative, or non-profit organizations. A striking story is the one of Callum Manning, a 13-year-old boy from South Shields, Great-Britain. He enthusiastically started an Instagram account to share his thoughts on the books he had read, only to be met with mean comments in group chats from his peers. His older sister posted a request on her account to encourage her connections to follow and like Callum's book profile, in order to provide some extra support. She was hoping for 20 to 30 reactions, instead she got 150.000 reactions that same day. Callum was over the moon and his book profile now features 26 posts on 25 books with 360.000 followers. (Cals\_Book\_Account) As Callum's profile went viral in the media, the sponsoring offers quickly rolled in. 'Shops, authors, publishers and members of the public were offering to send him



more books to read and review' (Mills). Cal's presence in this category becomes questionable in this regard: the free supply of reading material might disturb his literary independence. He is not the first one to feel the need for online literary sharing though, there are thousands of small personal literary accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. Only a few of those are selected for this research in a random manner: whichever stood highest in the social media search results and showed no sign of being backed by an organization, passed the test.

Twitter provides a platform for R. Aalderink to share their profile *Poetry is Everywhere!* [Poëzie is overal!]. The account was started in May 2013 and features poetry found in and on the streets of the Netherlands. (Aalderink) Aalderink reaches a steady following with 922 followers. Much smaller is the initiative by Lineke van Oostrum on Facebook. She started a group surrounding an educative method by Trijntje de Wit: *Reading Must be Done* [Lezen Moet Je Doen]. In this group van Oostrum invites members to share their experiences and advice when it comes to reading encouragement. (Oostrum) The group only has 16 members, yet these members are all personally involved in education and they respond to each other with great enthusiasm. The qualitative level of this group might outshine the quantitative idleness that comes with a large yet unresponsive following. Jeroen L. draws his following in with an interactive review website called [www.LekkerLezen.net](http://www.LekkerLezen.net). The website is made by a true book fan for fellow book fans, features independent reviews, and has a following of 613 followers on Facebook. (L Jeroen) The biggest platform within this category is represented by Jorien and her account *What is Jorien Reading?* [Wat Leest Jorien?]. She posts carefully curated pictures with selective color schemes, featuring a book in the center, accompanied by a short caption and a question. With a great number of responses and a following of 1187 followers on Instagram, she is quite successful. (Jorien) Finally, someone with a profile called *bookontube* posts pictures of people



(Aalderink)



reading books on the tube. Although this purpose seems to be redundant, the profile still accounts for 264 followers. (bookontube) All these platforms are functional within their own radius.



(bookontube)

## Commercial initiatives

The fourth and final category in the social media reading encouragement scene is made up from commercial parties such as publishing companies and bookstores. These parties still enthusiastically support reading encouragement but their goals differ when compared to the categories above.

Naturally, their companies are supposed to earn money. Libris is an online national bookstore that supports local bookstores. Most local shops have a hard time competing with the endless flexibility of digital shopping opportunities. By ordering a book through Libris, a customer can choose to either support Libris and assign the yield to the website or to award the proceeds to a local bookstore of their choosing. There are 180 bookstores involved in this process. On its website, Libris maintains an overview of books recently mentioned within the media. It should be noted that the media they are referring to in this case are the traditional platforms: television programs, newspapers, and radio shows. The company does have a profile on Facebook and Instagram though, with respectively 7162 and 2927 followers. On these platforms they promote new arrivals and award-winning novels, accompanied by a purchasing link. (Libris, Facebook) Libris also has a public children's books Facebook group with book tips for levels A, B, C, and D. This group has 486 members. (Libris,

Facebook - Kinderboekeninspiratie) A public Facebook group can be found and viewed by everyone on Facebook, a member profits from a membership through personal notifications when a new post appears. The biggest fish in the pond is a company called Hebban, an online community platform that is made by readers and for readers. Their tagline claims they are 'the biggest and most fun reading community of the Netherlands and Flanders' [De grootste en leukste lezerscommunity van Nederland en Vlaanderen]. This is not very hard to believe as their Facebook page has a staggering following of 13.836 followers. Hebban is financially supported by a commercial company called Book Communities. On Hebban's website a visitor can find new book releases and detailed reviews written by independent peer reviewers. Hebban also offers the opportunity to start digital reading clubs. Everyone can start a public reading club to share thoughts on certain books. Hebban regularly invites and selects active members to join a specific reading club in order to review a coming novel. Hebban's Facebookpage also offers a direct link to a private Young Adult Hebban group with 456 members and a private Hebban children's literature group with 289 members. In case of a private group, a curious visitor must request permission to become a member and be accepted by Hebban's editors. (Hebban) Another online well-known reviewing platform is Goodreads. This is a social media page where you can track what you have read and communicate with other readers. Goodreads can also point you in the direction of new book recommendations. Goodreads is visibly present on social media platforms: Facebook with 1.216.197 followers (Goodreads, Facebook), Instagram with 473.000 followers (Goodreads, Instagram), and Twitter with 369.000.000 followers (Goodreads, Twitter). Besides online bookstores and reviewing communities, the publishing industry also forms an important portion of the commercial parties. Based in Utrecht, yet nationally known publisher The Fountain [Uitgeverij De Fontein] specializes in children's literature. They produce picture books, graphic novels, thrillers, feel-good novels and more, all to be found at their website. They have accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, with respectively 8536, 7021, 1728, and 277 followers. They post on a daily basis and portray new arrivals, award-winning novels, open prize competitions, and their daily news. (Fontein) Closer to the homes of VMBO students in Zwolle is

publishing company WBooks. This is the largest Dutch publisher in the area of art, history, and lifestyle books. They sell their products in more than 1500 Dutch bookstores and through their own website. Their target group consists mostly of adults, they post messages on Facebook every other day concerning adult book tips. Their Facebook profile has 3242 followers. (WBooks)

#### 4. Advertising: Marketing and Free Publicity through Media Buzz

All the parties within the four categories described above somehow need to let their audiences know who they are and what they offer: they need to advertise themselves, either through targeted and paid marketing or (accidental) free publicity. The difference between marketing and free publicity comes down to one thing: money. Functional marketing through advertising requires financial funds, publicity, either through accidental media buzz or conscious promotion is free. Media Buzz appears when a certain topic, post, or theme is read, shared, and commented on by a large number of people. This indicates that the topic, post, or theme is so important to many social media users that it goes viral: it spreads widely.

Educative parties mostly enjoy free promotion. Social media platforms are attainable to everyone, fund-free. Facebook offers the opportunity to create a business profile page, free marketing. This is a free public profile with which you can post messages, links, event announcements, comments, photos, and videos. A separate existing personal profile on Facebook is not a prerequisite. Some extra services require money: it is possible, for example, to make sure your post appears first on the timelines of your followers for a certain number of days if money is transferred to the platform. One of the upsides to paid advertising through Facebook is the fact that this platform provides you with the opportunity to approach your target group in a very direct manner. The algorithm behind paid Facebook advertising ensures the ads are shown to precisely the right group of people, instead of a vague demographic. (Entrepreneur) The researches on educative reading encouragement measures can be publicized and promoted by literary influencers on their personal platforms. As the papers on the researches are often available for free, curious followers

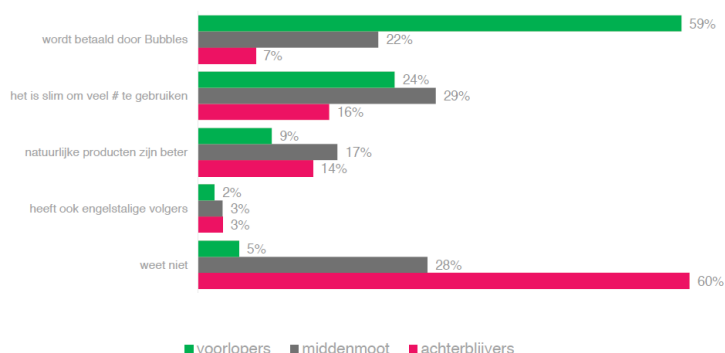
can find their results easily. Through platforms like Google Scholar, knowledge is available for those who are interested. Non-profit organizations like The Foundation for Reading have a subsidized budget for paid advertising. They also profit from the effects of Media Buzz. A personal initiative does not have the budget available to pay for advertising. Besides, the goal of such initiatives is to share personal experiences and advice with an interested audience through social media. The same predictability applies to commercial parties such as bookstores and publishers: they mostly depend on paid advertising. As most commercial parties also have social media accounts, 'free' Media Buzz can still be of assistance to them. In this case Media Buzz is not completely free: the workers responsible for social media earn their wages.

### **Reflection**

As Valkenburg and Piotrowski stated, modern teenagers are growing up in the midst of a digital time. Being so used to the social media environment might make it difficult for them to recognize the difference between Media Buzz, promotionally created Media Buzz, simple advertising, and surreptitious advertising. Therefore, as this paper intends to insert social media as a reading encouragement tool, children should be taught and encouraged to view their digital surroundings with a critical eye. In 2018 the Dutch Network for Media Wisdom [Nederlands Netwerk voor Mediawijsheid] studied Dutch adolescents between the ages of 13 – 18 and their knowledge of reading in between the (on)lines. They asked 1,2 million adolescents to fill out a questionnaire concerning recurring media posts. A media genius could score a 100 points, identifying the difference between sponsoring, influencing, and advertising. The Dutch Networks divided the respondents into three groups, based on their portrayed media wisdom: precursors [voorlopers], mid-range [middenmoot], and laggards [achterlopers]. On average the respondents scored 49,2 points. The highest score attained was 78 points, the lowest one was 7. Girls, with 52 points on average, do a slightly better job understanding the ins and outs of social media than boys: 47 points on average. (Plantinga en Kaal) According to this study, the education level and income of parents influence the

media wisdom of kids: 53 points on average for the higher social class, 41 on average for the lower. If you take into account that adolescents in secondary education need to score 55 out of 100 points to achieve a sufficient grade, only 36% of the respondents in this research possesses sufficient media knowledge. The two most important lessons drawn from the Dutch Network research are portrayed below:

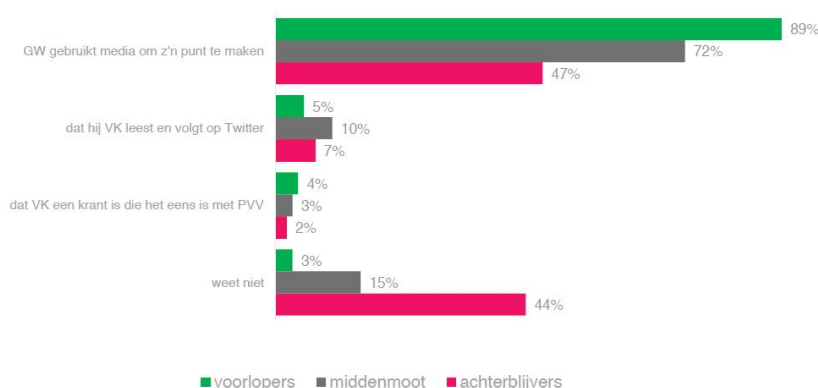
Deze hashtags bij een Instagram-bericht van Morethanamom betekenen:



#bubblesbodycare  
#natuurlijkecosmetica #duurzaam  
#natuurlijk #spon #douchegel #bath

The information adolescents should draw from hashtags. (Plantinga en Kaal)

Deze tweet van Geert Wilders geeft aan dat:



The meaning behind retweeting, in this case political retweeting. (Plantinga en Kaal)

Many schools already offer courses like social studies: introducing adolescents to the way society works and to the way information is exchanged. In my opinion, social media should be an inherent part of this course. Adolescents need to learn to critically view the source of an online post. What do the hashtags tell me? Who wrote this post and why? What is the reasoning behind this retweet? Is the content of this message real?

## 5. Success and Statistics

All of the above can be ascertained by the collection of national data provided by Hibou's *Social Insights*. Hibou is a small corporation that performs a thorough research into literary themes on Dutch social media twice a year. The group that statistically most often discusses the library and everything involved with a library, consists of females between the ages of 45 and 54, followed by females between 18 and 24. The most popular platforms for these conversations are Twitter, personal blog and vlogs. Blogs and vlogs originating from mothers, mommy blogs, seem to be the most popular in this category. The activities performed by libraries concerning illiteracy and media tutoring are welcomed with open arms by those surveyed by Hibou. Yet, questions are often raised on social media about whether the library is the right source for these subjects, as the online followers of libraries are often not the target group. The general opinion on social media seems to be that those who could benefit from tutoring are the less educated people, whereas the usual library visitor is often of higher education. (Hibou) Many libraries make an effort to resolve loneliness for the elders by starting discussion groups, but some youngsters request the same treatment online. Loneliness is a problem for many teenagers nowadays as well, so it seems. As far as influencers go, the employees of a library should work on their digital footprint, according to Hibou. With their expertise, they are the perfect influencers, especially when they connect with the popularized mommy blogs. According to Hibou's results, influencers should increase online engagement by asking questions, posting polls, reacting to others, and posting live videos on Instagram. They should search for active popular ambassadors on other platforms and combine their influence to discuss relevant societal themes. Contests and awards could also work very well as a weapon of engagement. Followers could be gathered by portraying a child online presenting its favorite book, a visitor asking for booktips after having introduced its taste in books, hypes, tips, guess-the-book contests, librarians highlighting a certain book. Two very visible social media users that could be of use to a reading encouragement front are Merel Wildschut and Sylvia Witterman. They have a large following and their feed proves their interest for reading, durability, and the library. By getting them to

retweet or repost a message, a very large audience can be reached. Students and scholars do not discuss the library online very often, however, when the library is discussed the conversation has a positive note. These conversations mostly concern the subjects of possible memberships, e-Books, physical books, and the general supply. For Instagram, quotes and short questions work best. Facebooks rakes in the most followers with posts about a top 5 of books. Twitter has a very flexible and wide ranging field of popular methods and topics. (Hibou)

## 6. Operationalization

The time has now come to put this academic analysis to the empirical test. A survey drawn from 12 to 14-year-old VMBO students in Zwolle combined with in-depth questions will present a clear picture of their current reading habits and their interests on social media. Originally this survey was supposed to be completed in several classrooms of 7 schools within Zwolle. However, as of March 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 the Netherlands is subject to a virus, COVID-19. The entire country is in an intelligent lockdown, which means public facilities are mostly closed, including schools. Therefore some changes to the empirical research had to be made. The classroom research has been transformed to a digital worksheet which is to be completed by the students at home. The worksheet is sent to the students by their teachers through an email, accompanied by a short introduction movie. The students are supposed to watch the movie, fill out the complete worksheet, and then send it to me. The complete document is available in the appendix for reviewing. Since the research is performed in the Netherlands with Dutch students, the documents (both the original and the digital version) are written in Dutch. Because of the measures taken to contain COVID-19, there is less empirical response than originally intended. Before the intelligent lockdown 7 schools pledged to participate. Each school had at least 3 to 4 classes available, leading to a total of about 550 participating students. Since such a lockdown requires a lot of attention and time, some of the schools have withdrawn their participation. Luckily, some schools remain, ensuring valid results. Each school is supposed to decide on its own how to cope with the intelligent lockdown. In general, the

government asked the Dutch teachers to attempt to teach from home through digital routes.

Teachers can use digital apps to make interactive contact with their students. They can also assign homework and perform weekly checks on the progress. The schools that still participate in this empirical research made the worksheet part of the obligated homework for the students.

The worksheet concerns questions about social media and reading habits. How much time is spent on social media pages and on which part of the day? Who or what do you enjoy following? Do you know any of the national reading encouragement initiatives listed below? How often do you read and what do you read? How did you come by that title? The students are also asked to read two short stories posted on a Twitter page. The stories are divided up into tweets with a maximum of 280 signs, an attempt at literary cliffhangers. Having read the stories, they must answer a few questions. The final question matters most: did reading one tweet make you curious about the next tweet? Finally, the students are asked to ponder some in-depth questions about reading through digital means. Eventually two schools participated with a total of twenty-two students.

Since keeping track of and encouraging reading progress is one of the primary responsibilities of Stadkamer, there was quite some data available concerning reading habits of students in Zwolle, collected in 2019. This data has some relevance for this research as it concerns the 7 schools that originally intended to participate. However, this data was collected with a larger group in mind. Not just 12 to 14-year-old VMBO students took part in the previous research, students between 12 and 14 from every learning level in Zwolle participated. Also, since some of the schools withdrew their participation since the COVID-19 outbreak, the data collected by Stadkamer prior to this research is collected from a broader group than the data about to be collected from the empirical target group in this research. Therefore, the Stadkamer data is merely intended to offer some perspective of the reading habits of students in Zwolle in general. If the results from the empirical research for this paper differ immensely from the data collected by Stadkamer, that might say something about the

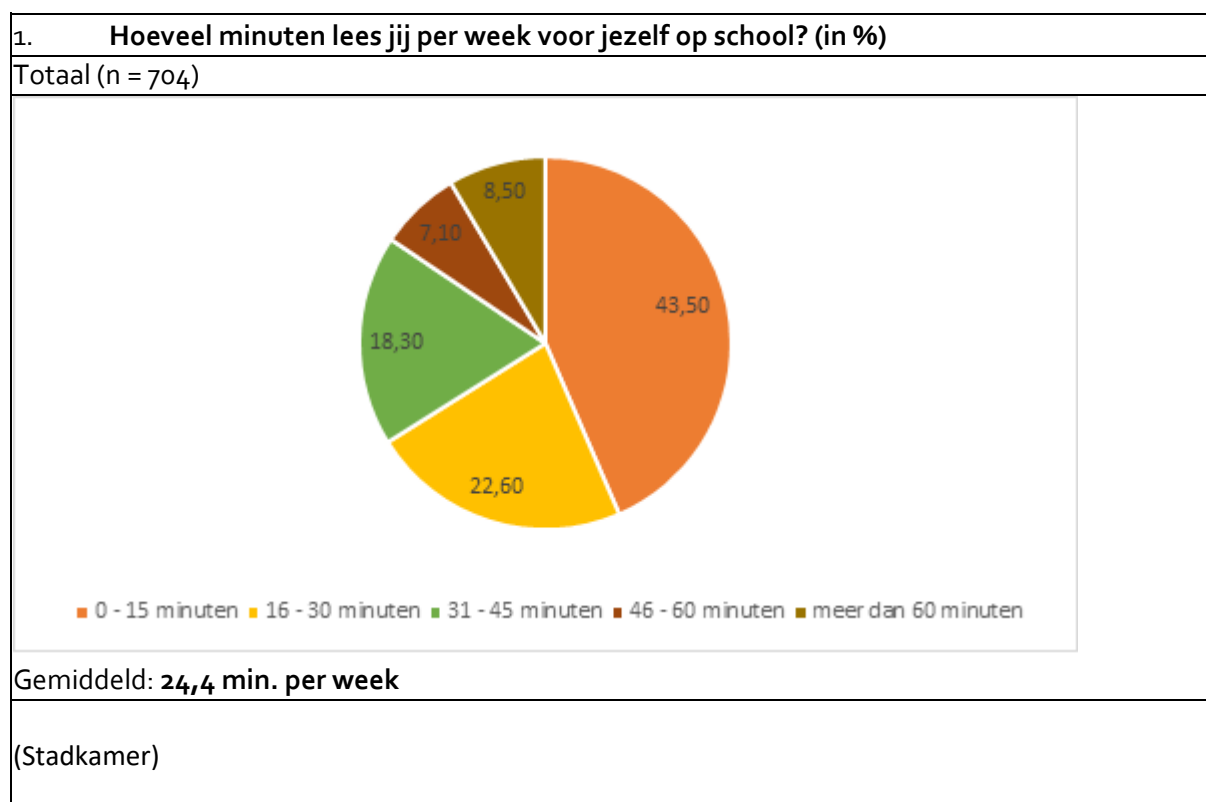


differences in reading habits between VMBO and the other learning levels. A more comprehensive conclusion can only be drawn with further research though.

## 7. Empirical results

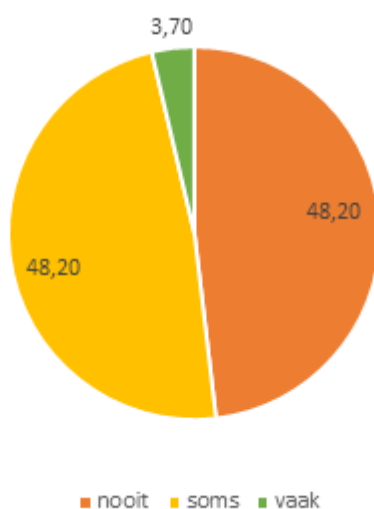
### Data Stadkamer

In 2018 and 2019, Stadkamer performed a research concerning reading habits amongst first and second graders of secondary education in Zwolle. The research is referred to as measurement 0 [0-metingen]. The outcome of this research was intended to provide Stadkamer with a starting point, a general idea of the current literary situation in Zwolle. Seven schools participated in this research with a total of 705 responding students. The students answered the following questions: How many minutes a week do you read for yourself in school? How often do you visit Stadkamer, the library? Do you enjoy reading? Do you enjoy reading in class? How often do you read at home? How often do you discuss books with your parents/caretakers? How often do you visit the library with your parents/caretakers? The answers are portrayed below in graphs: (Stadkamer)



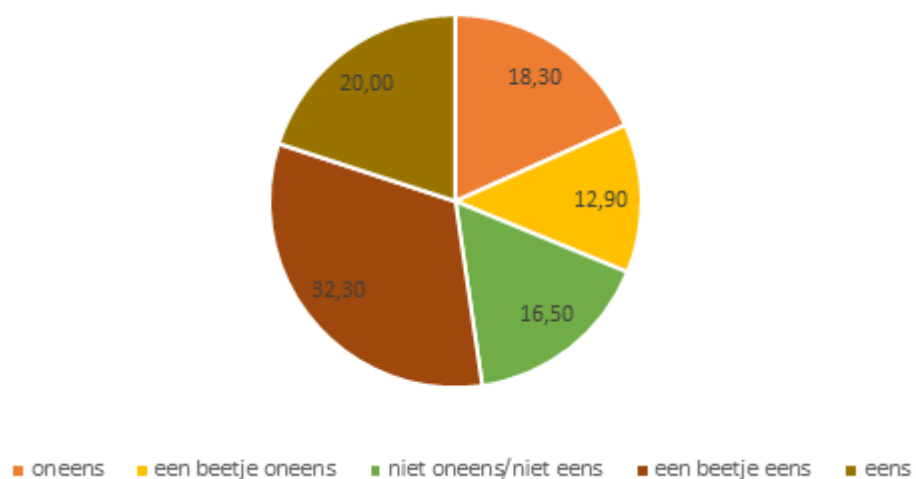
## 2. Hoe vaak ga je naar Stadkamer (de bibliotheek)? (in %)

Totaal (n = 704)



## 3. Stelling: Ik vind lezen leuk. (in %)

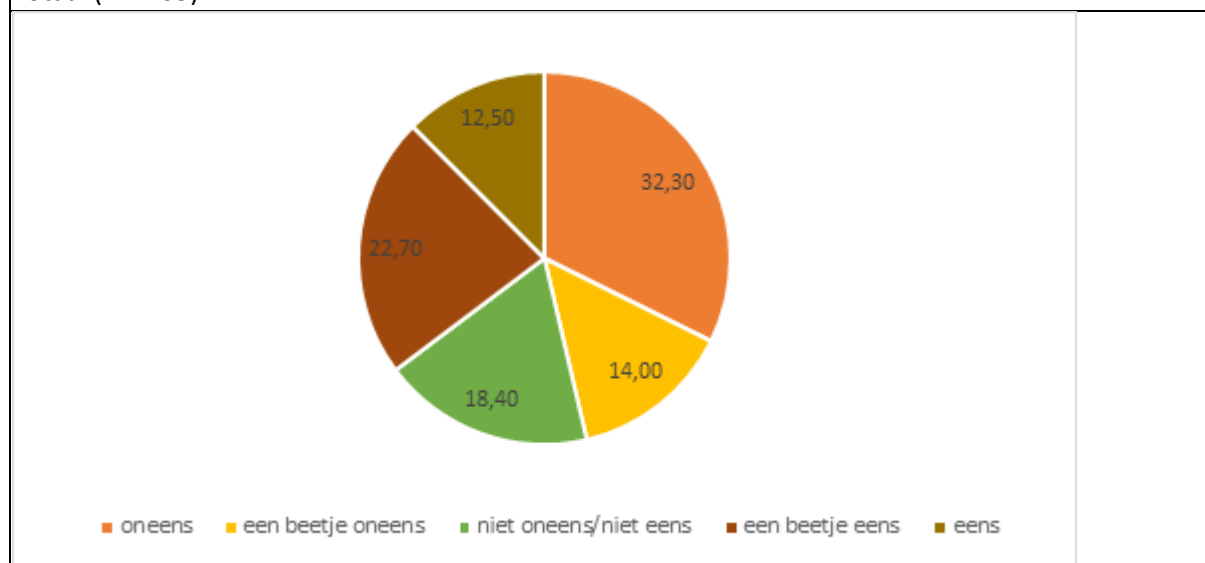
Totaal (n = 705).



(Stadkamer)

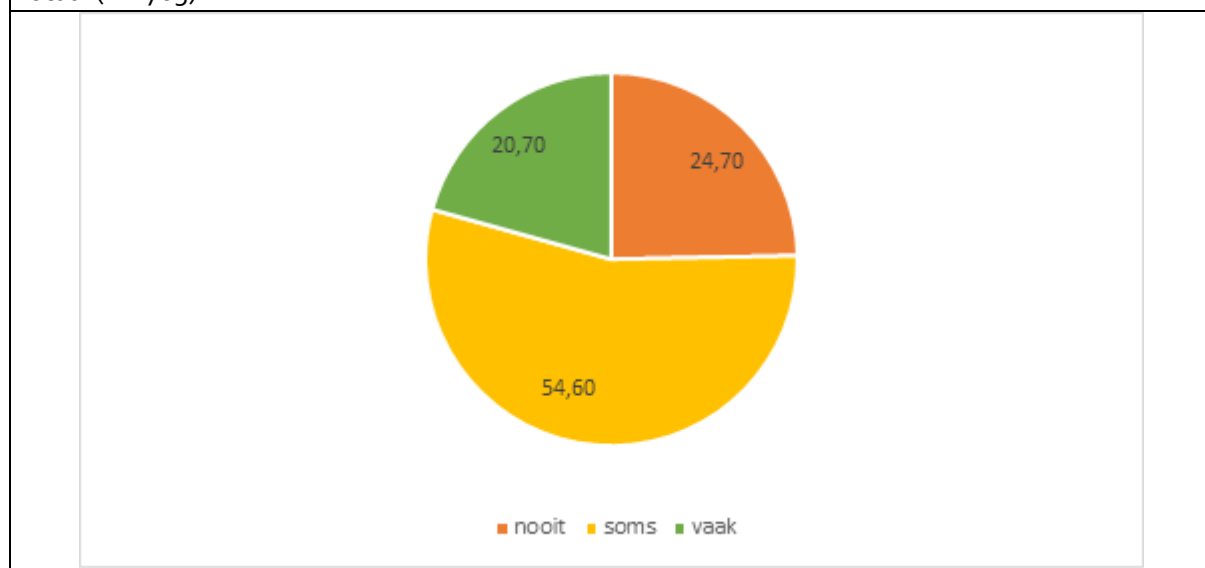
4. Stelling: Ik vind het leuk om in de klas een boek te lezen. (in %)

Totaal (n = 705)



5. Hoe vaak lees je thuis in een boek? (in %)

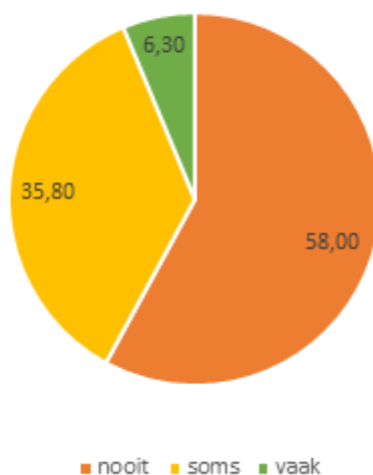
Totaal (n = 705)



(Stadkamer)

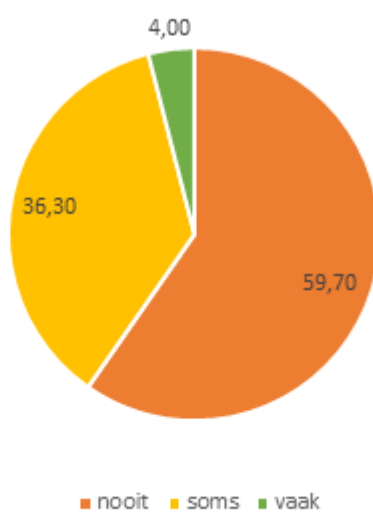
6. Hoe vaak praat jouw vader of moeder (of je voogd/verzorger) met jou over boeken? (in %)

Totaal (n = 704)



7. Hoe vaak gaat jouw vader of moeder (of je voogd/verzorger) met jou naar de bibliotheek? (in %)

Totaal (n = 705)



(Stadkamer)

On average early adolescents in Zwolle read 17,2 minutes a week. 51,9% often visits the library (Stadkamer) in Zwolle and 52,3% enjoys reading. 35,2% enjoys reading within the four walls of a classroom. 75,3% reads at home and 42,1% discusses reading or books with their parents. 40,3% often visits a library with their parents. (Stadkamer)

## Representativeness target group

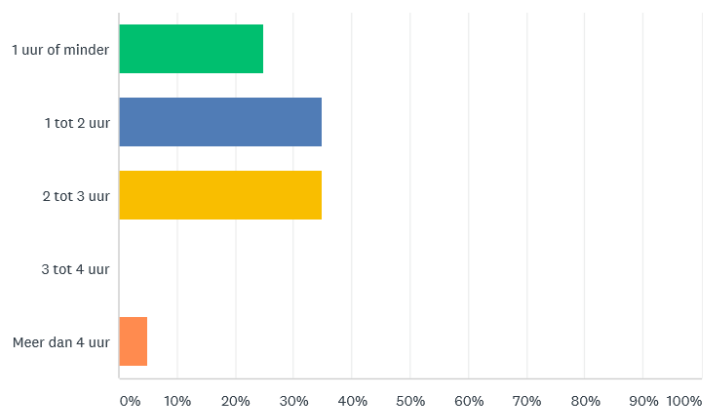
As there are many different levels within the Dutch level of VMBO, I have separated two levels below. The first list of results stems from students that are part of a 'theoretical mixed learning' class (Theoretisch Gemengde Leerweg). The second list of results comes from students that follow practical education (praktijkonderwijs).

## Results

Exercise 1 consisted of an online survey. The results are shown below in Dutch as the respondents are Dutch.

Hoeveel minuten besteed jij gemiddeld per dag aan Twitter/Instagram/Facebook/overig?

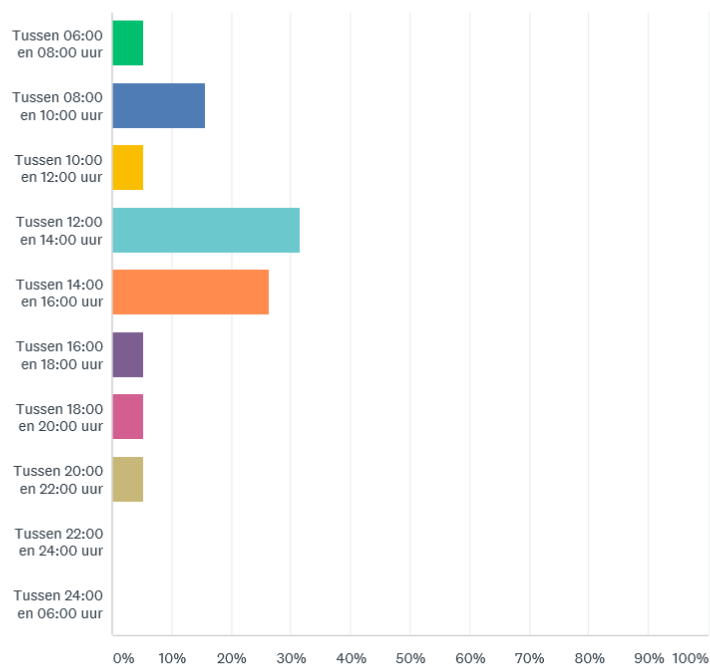
Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



ANTWOORDKEUZEN	REACTIES
▼ 1 uur of minder	25,00% 5
▼ 1 tot 2 uur	35,00% 7
▼ 2 tot 3 uur	35,00% 7
▼ 3 tot 4 uur	0,00% 0
▼ Meer dan 4 uur	5,00% 1
<b>TOTAAL</b>	<b>20</b>

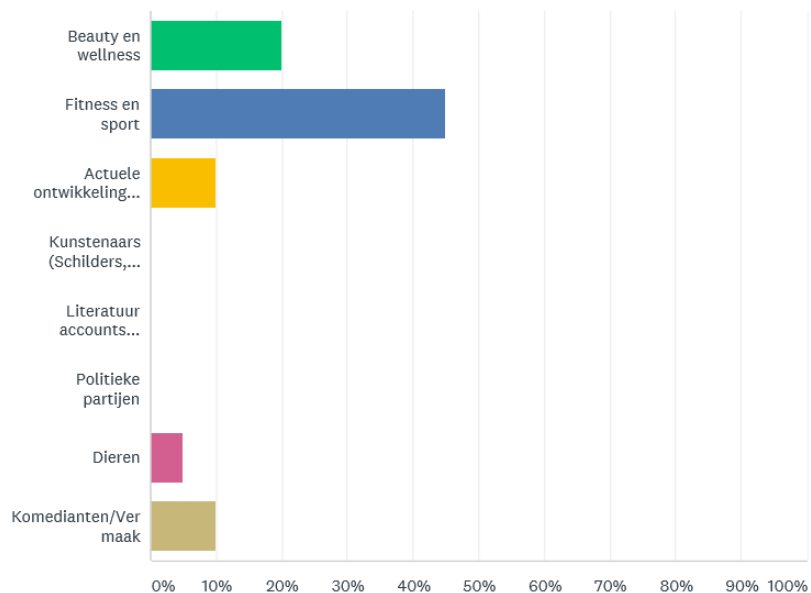
## Op welk moment van de dag kijk jij het meest op Instagram?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 1



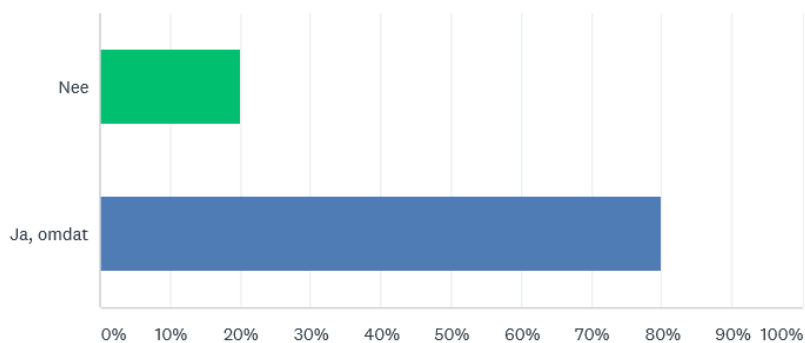
## Welke influencers/onderwerpen volg jij het liefst op sociale media?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



## Heb jij wel eens een account ontvolgd?

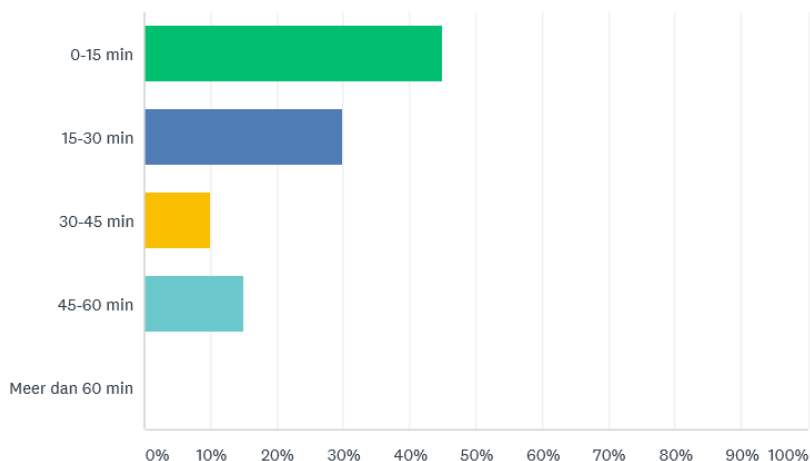
Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



-Niet meer leuk/ruzie/rare posts/bot

## Hoeveel minuten per week lees jij thuis, voor de lol?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

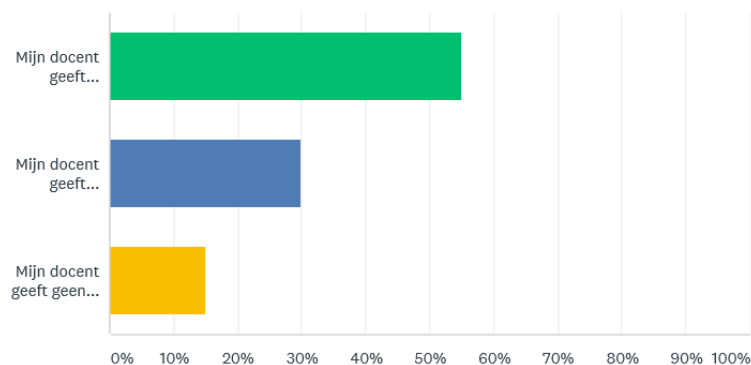


Hoe kies jij het boek dat je leest voor de lol? Waar let je op? (Bijvoorbeeld de achterflap, titel, stickers, getipt via sociale media)

-Voor- en achterkant/titel/samenvatting online/schrijver

## Geeft jouw docent wel eens boekentips? En kun je wat met die tips?

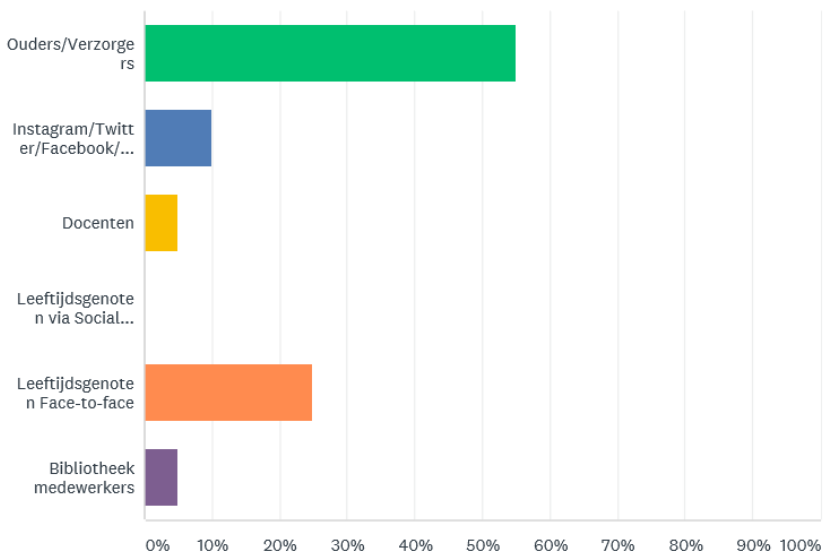
Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



ANTWOORDKEUZEN	REACTIES
▼ Mijn docent geeft boekentips en daar kan ik iets mee	55,00% 11
▼ Mijn docent geeft boekentips en daar kan ik niets mee	30,00% 6
▼ Mijn docent geeft geen boekentips	15,00% 3
<b>TOTAAL</b>	<b>20</b>

## Van welke bron ontvang jij de meest bruikbare boekentips?

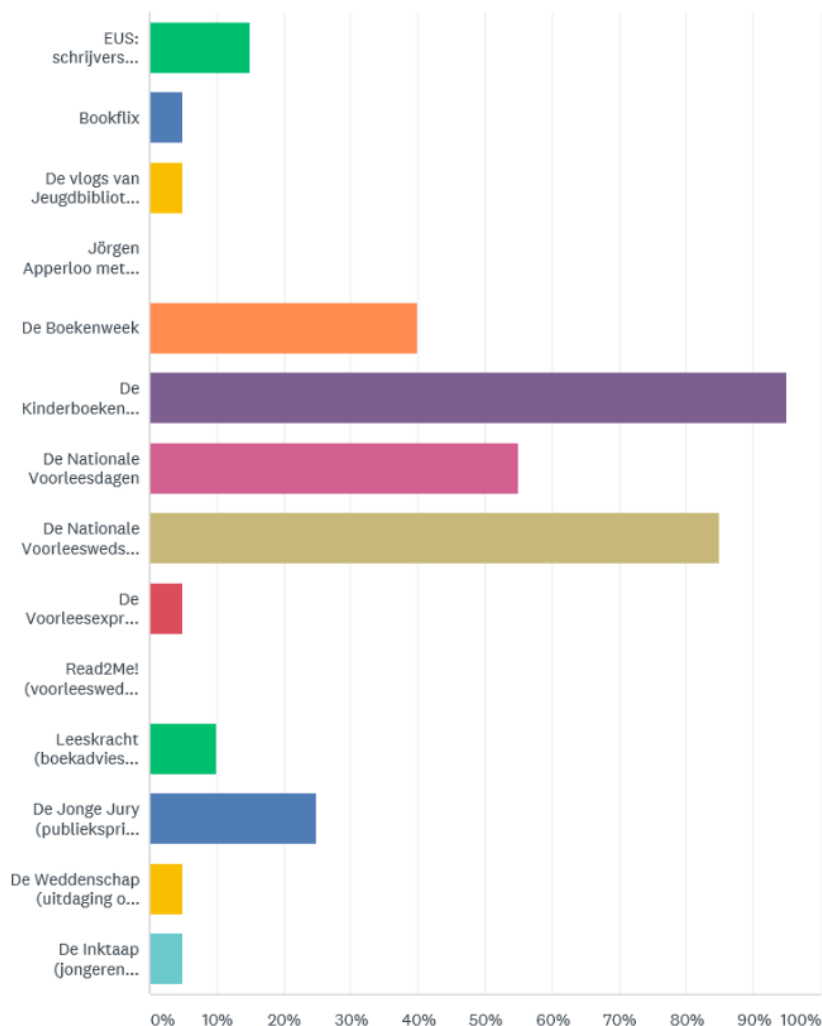
Answered: 20 Skipped: 0





## Heb jij wel eens gehoord van... (vink de opties die je kent aan)

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



### Reactions to in-depth questions in worksheet, exercise 2 and 3, theoretical mixed learning

Exercise 2 mostly contained questions about a text students were asked to read. The content of the answers to these questions does not matter as much as the engagement does. Exercise 2 was meant to test whether reading through Twitter would incise interest amongst early adolescents. The length of and effort put into their answers shows the effectiveness of this experiment. The answers to the final question of exercise 2 (Did these pieces of a story entice you to read more of the story?) do matter to the outcome. Of the total number of responders three students were interested in the rest of the story. Eleven students were not interested in the rest of the story. Five did not fill in an answer to this question.

The most frequent occurring reaction to the text-related questions in exercise 2 was 'I don't know'. With a few exceptions, the answers different from 'I don't know' were very short. A few students answered in complete sentences. Funnily enough some of the provided answers were precisely the same. The same colors appeared, the same space between answers, the same spelling errors in exactly the same spots. It is possible that some of these results were filled out by 1 student and then sent to a group of friends to 'save' them some work. However, this is impossible to prove from a distance, as the intelligent lockdown prevents physical contact. This means that the results cannot be relied upon completely. A conclusion that can be drawn from these suspicions is that some early adolescents are not motivated to fill out a survey on reading behavior.

Exercise 3 contained in-depth questions about reading behavior and social media. The answers will be categorized by the questions asked.

#### **Reading through digital means:**

Sixteen students filled out an answer to this question. Two students deemed reading through digital means equal to reading on paper. To them reading digitally would not be easier but equally fine. Three students mentioned reading through digital means seemed just as boring to them as normal reading. A total of five students preferred digital reading to normal reading because it made it easier for them. One student mentioned how digital reading is nicer than normal reading because there more books available for downloading. Five students deemed digital reading as not very nice.

#### **Literary accounts:**

Sixteen students filled out an answer to this question. Fourteen students would not find it embarrassing to follow a literary account in public. One student would find it a little bit embarrassing. One student would find it very embarrassing to follow a literary account in public.

Fourteen students then also gave an answer to the question of the visibility of this literary account on social media. Eight students thought a literary account should not be too visible on Instagram. One student commented that two posts a day from one account would be too much. One

student considered one post a day as too much and added that an Instagram story should not be too long. One student thought that too much repeating of the same photos would be annoying. Three students mentioned that a page must not continuously share posts that are not interesting to the follower as that makes the account no longer interesting as a whole.

Sixteen students considered the possibility of a separate youth account for Stadkamer. Twelve students would prefer a separate youth account. For three students this would not make a difference. One student mentioned that a separate account would not make a difference as book selection is a personal process anyway.

#### **Most used platform:**

Twenty students provided answers to this questions. The total number of mentioned platforms is higher than the number of respondents as some students mentioned several platforms. Fifteen students often use Instagram. Thirteen students often use Tiktok. Eleven students often use Whatsapp. Seven students often use Snapchat. One student mentioned often using Youtube and one student often uses Discord.

#### **Best reading motivator:**

Thirteen students mentioned what would be the best reading motivator for them. One student enjoyed reading short fragments through Twitter. One student would be tempted to read after having viewed a book trailer. One student looked only for specific subjects, books concerning their specific interests. One student mentioned reading a sequel to a previously read prequel would spark their interest. Two students kept it simple: if a book is fun to read that would motivate them. One student wished for a book that was exciting to read. One student would be motivated by being given something in return. Two students would read a book after someone with the same interests of a friend recommends it. One student would follow a book vlog. One student would read a book as long as it is already in line with their interests. Finally, one student would read recommendations by friends and teachers.

### **Reactions to in-depth questions in worksheet, exercise 2 and 3, practical education**

Exercise 2 mostly contained questions about the text students were asked to read. The content of the answers to these questions does not matter as much as the engagement does. Exercise 2 was meant to test whether reading through Twitter would incite interest amongst early adolescents. The length of and effort put into their answers shows the effectiveness of this experiment. The answers to the final question of exercise 2 (Did these pieces of a story entice you to read more of the story?) do matter to the outcome.

Of the total number of responders one student was interested in the rest of the story. One student did not fill in an answer to this question. Although fewer students from this school have filled out the worksheet, those who completed it have used full sentences that show consideration.

Exercise 3 contained in-depth questions about reading behavior and social media. The answers will be categorized by the questions asked.

#### **Reading through digital means:**

One student answered reading through digital means is nicer and easier. One student had no experience with reading through digital means.

#### **Literary accounts:**

One student answered following a literary account would be embarrassing, the other student would not find it embarrassing. They both preferred a separate youth account to a general library account. One student also added that a literary account should not include too much repetition.

#### **Most used platform:**

The students both mentioned YouTube as their most used platform. One student also added Instagram to their answer.

### **Best reading motivator:**

The best reading motivators according to one student would be short fragments through Twitter and a book list from the library. The other student did not answer this question.

## **8. Conclusion**

Initially the results of the empirical part of this research were supposed to stem from several classes from seven different schools. Due to the interference of COVID-19, this research received a lot less response. Therefore the character of this research changed somewhat. The numbers and conclusions below now can only function as suggestions which will have to be backed up by large-scale research at some point. On top of that there was little to no control over the way students filled out the worksheet. The target group consisted of early VMBO adolescents and as they are less strong readers on average, their motivation for reading is also less present. Empirical research performed without live contact is therefore anything but ideal. Some, if not most, of the answers in the worksheet were short and unspecific. Due to the smaller than intended amount of students that filled out the worksheet and the suspicion of cheating, these results cannot present a complete picture. However, it is quite certain that reading through Twitter would not motivate early adolescents very much. The tough nut to crack here is motivation in general though. The lack in motivation might not be linked specifically to reading encouragement, but possibly to COVID lethargy in general. By the time the worksheet reached the students, they had been 'schooled' digitally at home for two months already. Perhaps a quarantine idleness is partially responsible for the less than enthusiastic response. At present it is hard to say anything about motivation because COVID-19 is not done with us yet. Time may have to tell whether to attribute the lacking motivation to reading encouragement or COVID.

Since fourteen out of sixteen students would have no problem with following a literary account in public as long as it posts relevant content for them, a social media platform is a functional method of conveying literary content. The literary account in question should be wary not to post too much. The line is hard to pin down but according to the students more than one post a day is

definitely too much. Furthermore a literary page should make sure to only post interesting content for their followers. Therefore, a profile should have a clear audience to aim their targeted posts at. For most of the questioned students, a separate account aimed at youth would be more interesting for them than the general library account. The apps Instagram, Tiktok, Whatsapp and Snapchat would have won the app popularity contest amongst early adolescents, had there been a contest. These apps therefore are the most useful ones to employ for reading encouragement. Instagram and Tiktok also provide the possibility for public profiles whereas Whatsapp and Snapchat are mostly exchanges between existing friends. Instagram and Tiktok might hereby be the most functional social media platforms for early adolescent reading encouragement. Open questions leave room for broad answers and those broad answers were given to the question concerning reading motivation. Some motivators appeared in several answers, although in different forms. Students trusted in recommendations from friends, teachers and people with the same interests. Some kind of introduction to a new book is also helpful, may it be in the form of a book trailer, a snippet exposed on Twitter, or a book vlog.

### **Additional chapter on Tiktok**

Earlier on in this research I suggested that a communication gap often exists between researchers and their targets as researchers cannot fully understand the digital world early adolescents live in. They cannot understand their language and the therefore faulty communication leads to irrelevant research results. In my opinion researchers needed to fully understand the language of their subjects. I am currently 23 years old which puts me roughly in the same ball park, the same generation, as the early adolescents I am questioning. This led me to believe I would be a functional researcher. However, having read the filled out questionnaires I have to admit that I too am a slight victim of the 'communication gap'. I greatly underestimated the popularity of the app Tiktok. Tiktok is a fairly new app, intended to help users make short video's that usually are involved in some kind of challenge. One user thinks of a challenge, its followers view the video and if the challenge is picked up the followers attempt to recreate the challenge. During the first stages of this research I had

heard of this app once or twice. Amongst my peers the app seemed rather unpopular, bearing a close resemblance to other video apps. Yet, this app apparently is very popular amongst early adolescents as the research results show. Therefore, a reading encouragement experiment might be more effective through Tiktok than it could have been through Twitter. Additional research in this area would not be ill-advised.

As Valkenburg and Piotrowsky suggested, the early adolescents of today are growing up amidst of digitalization. Therefore, they must be encouraged to view their digital surroundings critically, especially when it comes to the content that comes across their screens on a daily basis. The level of education and reading should not be of concern in this case. Almost every early adolescent nowadays is present on social media which means almost every adolescent should learn to see the difference between influencing and advertising, with the methods suggested earlier. Secondary education should adapt itself to their student's reading level as Theo Witte argues. Especially the less enthusiastic readers, those who find reading more difficult or boring can benefit from the development of the basic reading skills. The selection process for reading during free reading in class should be personalized and unbounded. An educative literary social media page should offer something to early adolescents they cannot go without. The efforts made by such a page should be relevant to the target audience. In order to be relevant and avoid the communication gap, the page owner should include early adolescents in the posting process. A post needs to have the right lay-out: a certain personal color scheme, a centralized book or subject, a short captivating caption and preferably a direct question for the followers. Such an interactive approach is what works best for popular websites like Hebban. The research performed by Biebpanel, sponsored by Hibou, suggests that librarians are the most appropriate literary influencers because of their expertise. According to them, adolescents rely on their professionalism. The empirical results of this research do not support that statement, as can clearly be seen in the graphs of exercise one. This does not mean that their statement is wrong, however. It might mean that there is a difference between the preference for influencing between stronger readers and less strong readers. This

research solely focuses on VMBO students, who on average are less strong readers. Also, as mentioned earlier, in VMBO schools there is quite a bit of space for free reading in class but not much time yet for other reading encouragement activities. Perhaps the VMBO student respondents in this research have not been able to apprehend the possibilities that a library and a librarian can offer yet. In extension of this, literary accounts should make sure they cater not only to strong readers but also to less strong readers. The national youth library account, intended for youth specifically, mostly posts books of level D and those meant for adults. The early adolescents that are less strong readers have no use for such an account whatsoever. All organizations involved in reading encouragement can benefit from the same advice: education and non-profit, personal, and commercial initiatives. Education needs to include media wisdom in its curriculum for all learning levels, starting as soon as possible, as children are surrounded by social media from a young age on. Non-profit organizations should support and start media wisdom projects. The visibility of non-profit, personal, and commercial initiatives on social media should be concerned with separate literary youth accounts, involving several popular apps. These apps and their matching communication trends need to be researched on a continuing basis, as their popularity might be fleeting.

Early adolescents could benefit most from targeted reading encouragement through the use of social media platforms if a separate account exists, aimed especially at youth with engaging posts and the right influencers. These influencers can be famous Dutch citizens with a public interest for literature but they can also be peers. To a less strong reader, a librarian probably is less influential. Parents are of influence in their direct surroundings, to their own children. A parent, like a librarian, would not be the perfect online influencer. Instagram and Tiktok are the best available methods and should be employed with qualitative pictures and relevant and necessary content. It would be wise to invite some early adolescents into the posting process to avoid the communication gap.

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## 10. Appendix

Original empirical research documents

Inquiry

Vragenlijst

<https://nl.surveymonkey.com/r/J83MSD7>

<https://nl.surveymonkey.com/r/NDZ8F2C>

1. Hoeveel minuten besteed jij gemiddeld per dag aan Twitter/Instagram/Facebook/overig?

Minder dan 1 uur

1 -2 uur

2 – 3 uur

3 -4 uur

meer dan 4 uur

2. Op welk moment van de dag kijk je het meest op Instagram?

Tussen 06:00 en 08:00 uur

Tussen 08:00 en 10:00 uur

Tussen 10:00 en 12:00 uur

Tussen 12:00 en 14:00 uur

Tussen 14:00 en 16:00 uur

Tussen 16:00 en 18:00 uur

Tussen 18:00 en 20:00 uur

Tussen 20:00 en 22:00 uur

Tussen 22:00 en 24:00 uur

Tussen 24:00 en 06:00 uur

3. Welke influencers/onderwerpen volg jij het liefst op sociale media?

Beauty/wellness      Fitness/sport      Politieke partijen      Kunstenaars (Muzikanten,  
schilders, ontwerpers)      Literatuur accounts (schrijvers, dichters, bibliotheken)      Actuele  
ontwikkelingen in de wereld (NOS en/of andere nieuws programma's)      Dieren  
komedianten/vermaak      Anders

4. Heb je wel eens een account 'ontvolgd'? Zo ja, waarom?

5. Hoeveel minuten per week lees jij thuis, voor de lol?

0-15 min      15-30 min      30-45 min      45-60 min      Meer dan 60 min

6. Hoe kies jij het boek dat je leest voor de lol? Waar let je op? (Bijvoorbeeld de achterflap, titel, stickers, getipt via sociale media)

7. Geeft jouw docent wel eens boekentips? Zo ja, kun je wat met die tips?

8. Omcirkel de bron waar jij de meest bruikbare boekentips van ontvangt:

Ouders/Verzorgers      Instagram/Twitter/Facebook/Anders      Docenten

Leeftijdsgenoten via social media      Leeftijdsgenoten Face-to-face      Bibliotheek  
medewerker

## Recognition test

Heb jij wel eens gehoord van...?

- EUS: campagne, met auteurs langs middelbare scholen gegaan om boeken te promoten. Via CPNB gegaan wellicht. Zijn ze hier geweest?
- Bookflix
- De vlogs van Jeugdbibliotheek
- Jörgen Apperloo met Boekvlogs
- De Boekenweek en de Kinderboekenweek zijn de leescampagnes met de grootste naamsbekendheid, gevolgd door De Nationale Voorleesdagen en De Nationale Voorleeswedstrijd.
- De VoorleesExpress introduceert jaarlijks bij ruim 5.000 taalzwakke gezinnen het voorleesritueel. Het voorleesgedrag en boekenkennis in deze gezinnen gaan blijvend vooruit.
- Read2Me! is een voorleeswedstrijd waaraan jaarlijks rond de 29.000 brugklassers meedoen. Zij zijn afkomstig van een kwart van de middelbare scholen.
- Dertienduizend jongeren kenden de publieksprijs van de Jonge Jury voor het vijfde jaar op rij toe aan jeugdboekenauteur Mel Wallis de Vries.
- Leeskracht is een boekadvieswebsite voor vmbo-scholieren die ruim 7.000 bezoekers per jaar trekt.
- De Weddenschap daagt jaarlijks ruim 2.500 vmbo-leerlingen uit tot het lezen van drie boeken in een half jaar tijd.

- De Inktaap is een literaire jongerenprijs waaraan jaarlijks ongeveer negenhonderd jongeren deelnemen, afkomstig van ongeveer vijftig middelbare scholen.

### Experiment: Reading through Twitter

Twitter boek experiment – (Leescoalitie)

140 tekens - Wedstrijd op Zaterdag

1. 'Meester, hoe laat is het?', vraag ik. 'Bijna half negen', zegt hij. 'We moeten nog één wedstrijd. Hoezo?' 'Ik moet op tijd thuis zijn.' 'Als je ouders boos worden, kunnen ze mij bellen. Dan leg ik het wel uit.' Ik wil niet weer zeggen dat mijn ouders geen Nederlands spreken. Ze komen nooit op een ouderavond. Bij een verplichte afspraak moet altijd een tolk mee. Dat moet de meester toch weten.
2. Via de achterdeur glijp ik naar binnen. Mijn moeder zit aan de keukentafel. Ik zie het meteen aan haar gezicht: problemen. Ik verstop mijn batje weer onder de gootsteen. 'We zijn door naar de finale', zeg ik. 'Goed, hè?' 'Turis is woedend', zegt mijn moeder. 'Misschien komen we in de krant. Als we winnen van de Chinezen.' 'Ga naar bed. Als Turis wat zegt, loopt je gewoon door.'
3. Ik durf niet goed de woonkamer in. Maar ik denk: wat kan er gebeuren? In het ergste geval breekt Turis mijn botten. Dan bellen we een ambulance. Daarna word ik beter. En dan gaan we gewoon verder met leven. Ik ga de woonkamer in. De fles op tafel is leeg.
4. 'Ik ben nog niet klaar met hem', zegt Turis. 'Die jongen voelt zich te goed voor ons. Als hij niet wil luisteren, moet hij maar voelen. Haal dat batje!' Mijn moeder trekt me tegen zich aan. 'Turis, hij moet morgen naar school.' 'Godverdomme, ik wil dat batje hebben! Ik betaal hier de rekeningen, dus ik ben de baas. Haal dat ding!'
5. 'Dat batje is van school!', roep ik. Ik moet zaterdag de finale spelen! 'Jij speelt zaterdag helemaal niks! Begrepen?' 'Mama', roep ik wanhopig. Mijn moeder zegt niets. Haar mond trilt. Dan breekt Turis het batje op zijn knie doormidden.

6. 'Staat er iets over ons in krant?', vraag ik. 'Ja, dat we wegens persoonlijke problemen niet konden spelen. Terwijl we wel kans maakten.' 'Zie je? Dat is allemaal de schuld van die Turk', zegt Ramon. 'Nee man. Dat is juist gunstig', zegt Carlos blij. 'Nu denkt iedereen dat we heel goed zijn. We hebben niet verloren omdat we slecht zijn maar wegens persoonlijke problemen. Prima, toch?' 'Krijg jij ook maar de klere', zegt Ramon.

140 tekens - Waar is Jelmer?

1. Willem heeft geen adem over om te kunnen praten. Zelf hou ik ook mijn mond. Ik kan niks bedenken waar we het nu 'gezellig' over zouden kunnen hebben. Als het aan Jelmer lag fietste ik hier nu niet met Willem. Jelmer had mij het liefst voor zichzelf alleen. Ik heb het laten gebeuren.
2. Van mijn basisschoolklas was ik de enige jongen die naar de havo mocht. Ik had de namenlijst van mijn nieuwe klas wel tien keer doorgelezen: ik kende niemand. Zelfs geen meisje.
3. Langzaamaan werd de klas voller. Een jongen ging naast mijn tafels staan. 'Is deze nog vrij?', vroeg hij. Zijn stem was zacht. 'Ja', zei ik.
4. Jelmers onderlip trilde. Volgens mij was hij nog zenuwachtiger dan ik. 'Ik ben van het weekend naar de film geweest,' zei hij. 'Dat was zo leuk.' 'Oké...' zeik. Wat was dit voor raar gesprek? 'Ga jij wel eens naar de film?' Ik knikte.
5. Tijdens het avondeten hoorden mijn ouders me uit over hoe mijn dag was geweest. Toen vroeg mijn vader ook: 'Wat voor jongen is dat, naast wie je zit?' 'Weet ik veel,' zei ik. 'Gewoon, Een jongen.' Dat klopte niet. Ik wist dat toen ook al. Maar ik kon moeilijk zeggen: een soort meisjesjongen.
6. Want dan zou mijn vader meer willen weten. En hij zou misschien vragen waarom ik naast een meisjesjongen was gaan zitten. Ik zou dan snel moeten zeggen: hij kwam naast mij zitten. Maar dan nog zou mijn vader vast denken: ja ja.

7. De eerste keer dat Willem me echt opviel was tijdens basketbal in de gymles. Het was in de week dat Jelmer griep had. Ik herinner me dat nog goed: het was heerlijk rustig.
8. Ik geef het toe: de eerste schoolweken was het best handig geweest dat ik hem had. In m'n eentje door de school lopen was erger geweest. Maar nu had ik een échte vriend gevonden en wilde ik liever met hem omgaan. Dat begreep Jelmer niet, hoe vaak ik hem ook negeerde.
9. Willems moeder zit op de bank. Ze neemt een laatste trek van haar sigaret en drukt hem uit in de asbak die op tafel staat. Ernaast ligt de brief die we van school hebben meegekregen. Ik herken hem meteen. [...] 'Gaat het een beetje met jou, schatje?' Ze trekt me aan mijn hoofd tegen zich aan. 'Hoe kan zo'n jongen zoiets doen, hè.'
10. Het idee ontstond tijdens een tussenuur. I kweet niet meer wie van ons drieën het bedacht. Het was er opeens. En misschien waren we er nooit aan begonnen als Rico niet zo hard had gelachen.
11. 'Zo kan-ie wel weer,' zegt Pelleman streng. 'Eén op de tien is homo of lesbisch, dus twee en een half persoon hier in de klas is het, statistisch gezien. En ik niet, want ik ben getrouwd. 'Homo's kunnen anders ook trouwen, hoor,' zegt Marjolijn zonder haar vinger op te steken. 'Oké, oké', zegt Pelleman, 'maar je snapt wat ik bedoel. Ik ben écht getrouwd.'
12. Willem sluit de map met filmpjes. Hij kijkt naar me om alsof ik zijn moeder ben en moet zeggen dat het goed is dat hij de filmpjes wist. Ik knik.

### **Vragen bij Twitter boeken:**

Wie is het belangrijkste hier?

Wie boeit jou het meest?

Wie vind jij minder aardig?

Wie vindt de verteller minder aardig? Waarom?

In hoeveel tijd speelt dit verhaal zich in totaal af?

Wat zou er echt gebeurd kunnen zijn?

Wat zou jij veranderen als de schrijver je om tips vroeg?

- ➔ Maakt dit je nieuwsgierig naar het complete verhaal? Werkt dit beter dan boekenvlogs op Instagram, titellijsten van Online Bibliotheek of boekentrailers op YouTube?

## In-depth

### Verdieping

- Is lezen voor nerds? Waarom dan? Wat is het verschil met film kijken?
- Wat vind je van lezen via de tablet/Ipad/eReader?
- Zit het taalgebruik dat je op Twitter/Instagram/Facebook gebruikt wel eens in de weg op school? Bij een toets bijvoorbeeld?
- Zou jij het gênant vinden om openbaar een literair account te volgen?
- Wanneer wordt een account met een overvloed aan content irritant?
- Staat er wel eens een boek/schrijver/dichter in het 'aanbevolen voor jou' rijtje op jouw Twitter/Instagram/Facebook/overige pagina?  
Zo ja, van wie?
- Welk platform gebruik je het meest?
- Zou jij een apart account voor jongeren van een bibliotheek/Stadkamer eerder volgen dan een algemeen account?

Ga in op onderwerpen die door leerlingen n.a.v. vragenlijst en experiment worden aangekaart.

## Extra Test (for fun in case of spare time)

Test: Welke lezer ben jij?

**Serie-spons** (blijven het liefst binnen dezelfde categorie) (1-10 punten)

**Fanaten** (lezen voor de lol) (10-20 punten)

**Volgers** (lezen in de klas) (20-30 punten)

**Laat maar-lezers** (opgegeven omdat lezen hen lastig valt) (30-40 punten)



<https://nl.surveymonkey.com/r/YZK8TRT>

Ben je blij met de uitslag? Wil je toch liever in een andere categorie vallen? Doe de test dan niet meteen nog eens, maar probeer een ander boek. Dan kom je vanzelf in de gewenste categorie.

### E-mail to Schools

Hallo,

Ik ben Hedwig van Staalduine, masterstudent aan Universiteit Utrecht, en momenteel loop ik stage bij Stadkamer in Zwolle. Bij Stadkamer doe ik onderzoek naar de invloed van sociale media op het leesgedrag van VO scholieren. Invloed is uiteraard moeilijk meetbaar, daarom kijk ik naar Nederlandse literaire sociale media profielen, hun volgers en de effectiviteit. Linda de Vries begeleidt mij hierbij. Met dit onderzoek zoek ik de beste oplossing om de boekentips zo praktisch mogelijk aan te pakken voor docenten en leerlingen. Hierbij wil ik graag jullie hulp inroepen.

Voor het empirische gedeelte van mijn onderzoek wil ik bij vmbo onderbouw klassen in Zwolle langsgaan om een gesprek aan te gaan over hun leesvoorkeuren en de aanwezigheid op sociale media. Ik stuur bij deze een (onderstaande) link naar 8 vragen die leerlingen voor aanvang van de les in moeten vullen. Ik heb eenmalig een lesuur nodig op school. In dit uur stel ik de groep ongeveer 20 klassikale ja/nee vragen. Daarnaast ga ik een lees experiment uitvoeren genaamd Lezen op Twitter. Vervolgens is er nog tijd gereserveerd voor verdiepende vragen omtrent lezen en groepsgedrag, lezen op schermpjes en digitaal taalgebruik. Mocht er behoefte zijn aan meer informatie, dan stuur ik graag het uitgebreide lesplan door.

**Link naar vragenlijst:** <https://nl.surveymonkey.com/r/J83MSD7>

Mijn vraag is nu: zou ik ergens tussen 30 maart en 21 april langs mogen komen op jullie school om tijdens mentoruur of een les Nederlands dit onderzoek te verrichten? Ik ben beschikbaar op maandagen, dinsdagen en donderdagen.

Daarnaast wil ik je graag vragen om (kort) antwoord te geven op de onderstaande vragen voor aanvang van de betreffende les.

Heb jij een profiel/account op een van de sociale media platformen? (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube)

Zou jij een account volgen dat wekelijks moderne jeugdboeken aanraadt?

Zou een wekelijkse of maandelijkse e-mail nieuwsbrief voor jou functioneel zijn?

Ik hoor graag van je.

Vriendelijke groet,

Hedwig van Staalduine

**Stagiaire Team MTE VO**

0641327847

[hedwig.vanstaalduine@stadkamer.nl](mailto:hedwig.vanstaalduine@stadkamer.nl)

Aanwezig op maandag, dinsdag, donderdag

Zeven Alleetjes 1A

8011 CV Zwolle



**stadkamer.nl**

Digitalized empirical research documents

Worksheet (accompanied by explanatory movie)



# Hallo

Wat fijn dat je aan de slag gaat met deze worksheet! Ik ben [Hedwig van Staalduine](#), zangeres en docente maar momenteel ook een enthousiaste stagiaire bij Stadkamer in Zwolle. Vanuit mijn studie aan Universiteit Utrecht loop ik stage bij Stadkamer om deze organisatie in het algemeen te ondersteunen en vooral om onderzoek te doen naar het 'leesgedrag' van VMBO leerlingen in de onderbouw van de middelbare school.

Met leesgedrag bedoel ik alles wat te maken heeft met lezen. Dat is natuurlijk heel erg veel, je bent op dit moment zelfs aan het lezen. In het onderzoek gaat het vooral om boeken die je leest in je vrije tijd en om sociale media. Met deze worksheet wil ik onderzoeken waar, wanneer en waarom jij leest of juist niet leest. Ik wil vooral graag uitvinden of de sociale media kanalen zoals Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube en de overige opties hier invloed op hebben.

Met de resultaten wil ik ontdekken hoe de profielpagina's die Stadkamer heeft bij deze kanalen jullie het best kunnen ondersteunen bij het lezen. Door deze worksheet volledig in te vullen help je mij natuurlijk, met afstuderen en het voltooien van mijn stage. Maar ik hoop dat juist jullie er uiteindelijk ook veel aan hebben, doordat Stadkamer haar aanpak kan aanpassen naar wat jullie belangrijk vinden. In Zwolle en binnen Overijssel is Stadkamer namelijk heel belangrijk voor alles wat met lezen te maken heeft.

Eigenlijk wilde ik langskomen in de klas om met jullie te kunnen kletsen. Dat zit er dankzij een hardnekkig virus even niet in dus gaan we voor de veiligere digitale optie. Het volledig invullen van de vragen hieronder duurt gelukkig niet zo lang en je maakt mij er erg blij mee. De worksheet bestaat uit drie onderdelen. Bij ieder onderdeel staat uitgelegd wat je moet doen. Als je klaar bent, mag je de ingevulde worksheet mailen naar mij: [hedwig.vanstaalduine@stadkamer.nl](mailto:hedwig.vanstaalduine@stadkamer.nl). Mocht je ergens niet uitkomen, dan mag je mij ook even mailen. Samen komen we er vast wel uit. Alvast [bedankt](#) en succes!

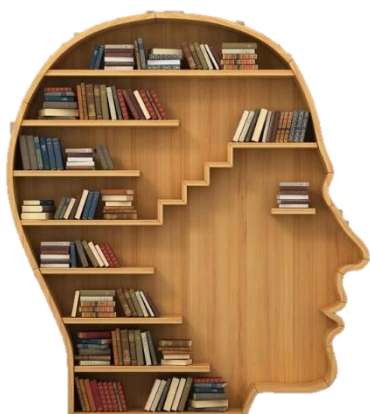
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De sheet bestaat uit 3 onderdelen.

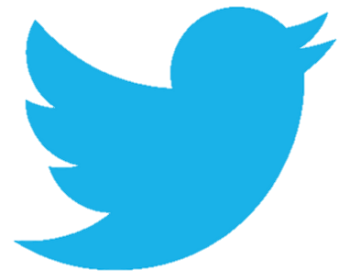
## 1. Quiz

Het eerste onderdeel is een korte online quiz. Hier staat een QR code en een link (voor als de QR code niet mee wil werken). Deze quiz mag je online invullen.

<https://nl.surveymonkey.com/r/NDZ8F2C>



## 2. #LezenopTwitter



Voor deel twee nemen we een kijkje op Twitter. Er staan twee korte verhalen op Twitter, speciaal voor dit onderzoek. De eerste heet Waar is Jelmer? Via deze link kun je het verhaal met een klik vinden: <https://twitter.com/HedwigvanS/status/1234461940501618695>

Het tweede verhaal heet Wedstrijd op Zaterdag. Deze is te vinden via: <https://twitter.com/HedwigvanS/status/1234399282545004545>

Als je deze twee verhaaltjes gelezen hebt, mag je kiezen welke van de twee je het leukst vond. Over dat verhaal beantwoord je de volgende vragen:

Wie boeit jou het meest?

Wie vindt de verteller minder aardig? Hoe merk je dat?

In hoeveel tijd speelt dit verhaal zich in totaal af?

Wat zou er echt gebeurd kunnen zijn?

Wat zou jij veranderen als de schrijver je om tips vroeg?

Ben je nu benieuwd naar hoe het verhaal afloopt?



### 3. Verdiepende vragen

We zijn al bij het laatste onderdeel. Na het beantwoorden van deze onderstaande vragen ben je klaar en mag je het ingevulde document mailen naar [hedwig.vanstaalduine@stadkamer.nl](mailto:hedwig.vanstaalduine@stadkamer.nl)

- Wat vind je van lezen via de tablet/Ipad/e-Reader?

- Zou jij het gênant vinden om openbaar een account over boeken te volgen?

- Wanneer wordt een account met een overvloed aan content irritant?

- Welk platform (Twitter/Facebook/Instagram/Overig) gebruik je het meest?

- Wat zou jou het meest aanmoedigen om te gaan lezen? (Verwijder wat niet van toepassing is)

*Een korte vlog over een boek, een lijst met tips voor leuke boeken van de bibliotheek, korte fragmentjes lezen via Twitter of een gefilmde trailer over een boek?*

- Zou jij een speciaal apart account voor jongeren van Stadkamer eerder volgen dan een algemeen account van Stadkamer voor iedereen?