What and How Do Children Read?

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Authorship Declaration

I, Jana Hájková, am aware of the plagiarism laws. I have used my own ideas and have written this thesis myself. When using any thoughts of other persons, I have cited the authorship in the Works Cited page and in the text itself.

In Prague, April 8, 2011

Signature: ________________________________

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Abstrakt

Cílem této bakalářské práce je zjistit, jakou roli hrají čtenářské návyky v životě dětí, především u dětí ve věku mezi 13 a 15 lety. Práce se skládá ze dvou částí. První je teoretická, vysvětluje, jak jsou důležité čtenářské návyky a definuje dva typy čtenářství – čtení nahlas a čtení si sám pro sebe. V potaz jsou vzyty tři faktory jako je rodinné zázemí, škola a knihovny. Prodiskutujeme jejich role a navrhneme různé aktivity, které děti zaujmou, aby četly. Druhá část práce zahrnuje samotný průzkum provedený v Praze na gymnáziích a základních školách v roce 2011.

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to find out what role reading habits play in children’s lives, specifically in the lives of children at the age of 13 to 15 years. The thesis consists of two parts. The first one, theoretical, explains the importance of reading habits and defines two types of reading – reading aloud and silent reading. Three factors are taken into account such as family background, school and libraries. Their roles are discussed and various activities to draw children’s attention to reading are suggested. The second part of the thesis is the research carried out in Prague at grammar and basic schools in 2011.
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Introduction

The topic chosen for this thesis is “What and how do children read?” The reason for the selection of this topic was to analyse a current situation of the reading habits of today’s pubescent children (at the age of 13 to 15). Many researchers have carried out surveys on this topic throughout this past decade, this new research would cast light on today’s situation of children at this age. This topic was chosen because results of the survey may help one in their professional life to prepare lesson plans for students of the English language.

The first part of this thesis will explain why reading is crucial in children’s lives. The debate of prime initially reading age will be raised, as well as how parents and family background may help children with their first reading experience. Reading habits will be divided into two main parts – reading aloud and silent reading. The functions of both types of reading will be elaborated on in more detail at the beginning as their benefits will be discussed.

In addition, the thesis will deal with reading habits – if they can be shaped or changed by the surrounding factors such as family and school. The role of libraries in children’s lives will be also taken into account. These three factors will be discussed as three basic pillars of children’s reading processes.

The research itself will chart new trends in children’s reading habits and will attempt to find out similarities or if there are any differences in reading habits of pubescent children. The hypotheses will be set in accordance with the latest results of the previous surveys and these hypotheses should be confronted with current results. Thus, they will be refuted or confirmed at the end of the survey.

The bachelor thesis could serve as a tool for teachers giving them an idea of what kind of literature pupils at the ages of 13-15 years old are keen on and what they would rather choose. Foreign language teachers might appreciate the results and prepare their lesson plans according to this survey. Some teachers may want to prepare an article or a short passage from a book or a magazine for their students. These short texts are usually administered as they help children to experience the real situations in English. The teachers may also explain certain grammatical rules or the use of vocabulary and different registers. That is the reason why teachers may be attracted to the results of the survey since they can choose the book to take a passage from or an article from a newspaper.
1. Importance of reading habits

Before we begin to analyse what and how children at the age of 13 to 15 years read, a crucial question should be answered: Why is it so important for children to read and when is the best time to start reading? A general opinion seems to be the sooner the better. However, reading is closely associated with the ability of a child to comprehend. In the Czech Republic, children begin to learn to read around the age of six or seven. On the other hand, some parents try to teach their children how to read before going to school, for example at the age of five or six.

Children usually encounter a book for the first time thanks to their parents. They often purchase them their first books with pictures and read them the story aloud. As Eva Katrušáková points out both teachers and some experts believe that habitual reading to children before going to bed (at least twenty minutes a day) develops children’s brain and mainly their character. A unique project called “Celé Česko čte dětem” (Every Czech reads to children) has set a goal to draw parents’ attention to the advantages and benefits of reading books aloud to their children at least twenty minutes per day.

According to the project, reading aloud is valuable from many points of view:

- It creates a bond between a child and his/her parents.
- It contributes to emotional progress of a child.
- It teaches children to create moral values and helps with their upbringing.
- It develops children’s mother tongue, memory and imagination.
- It forms reading habits and supports them in gaining knowledge and experience for their entire life.
- It improves concentration, facilitates reading and extends knowledge.
- It is the best investment to the future of our children.

(Translated by Jana Hájková)

Thanks to reading aloud, a child is well provided with the basic skills needed for the reading on his/her own such as paying attention or extending the vocabulary. Nightly reading can be a daily routine children look forward to every day. Children can expand their horizons of thinking throughout the book, as well as they may realize moral principles. Children are introduced to other worlds of misery, greed, dishonesty etc. and thanks to books, they can
understand why we need to behave properly in our world. Moral values are presented and reading aloud can help children to become aware of these values before they are old enough to read themselves.

Children’s imaginations are most vivid between ages three and seven. If parents manage to establish the reading habits at this age, at least by reading aloud to them, the future of the reader can be influenced to a great extent (Koťátková 41). Communication and cognitive skills (necessary for next stages of development of children) are developed during this period (Wildová 24). On the other hand, if reading habits are created at the basic school, it need not be guaranteed that children will continue with the same habits as readers mature, differentiate and change their interests (Prudký 48). Thus, even though a child has established his/her reading habits, changes in his/her mind can greatly influence them later and everything done so far can be spoilt.

Around the age of seven or earlier, a child is able to read on his/her own. Rajdová suggests that a child and his/her parents should swap reading aloud from time to time since it helps to motivate children to read because they would not tire immediately. It gives a child the room for relaxation and helps him/her to pay attention when someone else is reading at the moment. This system should be widely supported, mainly, at the first stage when a child is in his/her first class of elementary school and reading aloud still poses a difficulty.

In addition, if a child is able to read on his/her own, books provide them with the ability read whenever the child wants and put it off whenever they wish (Chaloupka 135). They may also reread the stories at their leisure time and enjoy themselves once again. What is more, children may skip uninteresting passages and continue with another part of the story, just as they may do if they watch a fairytale on videotape or DVD. Nevertheless, watching the story restricts children, as they cannot always watch it at their convenience, for instance, on the bus, at school, during breaks or wherever. They can open a book and read for a while whenever they are in a good mood to imagine and experience the story.

Pavel Vacek highlights that reading helps children develop their personality since children, while reading, learn to be alone, independent and find a pleasant activity which they can do on their own (Vacek 22). Thus, parents do not have to find a new activity for a child all the time and can make them read on their own without any help of parents. Afterwards they can discuss the story and enjoy it once again.
To sum up, Lederbuchová emphasises the following major advantages and benefits if children read on their own:

- Children may expand their views on the world.
- It enriches their lives emotionally and reading stimulates their imagination and fantasy.
- It forms children’s moral conscience, conventions, and rational stands.
- It helps to put them into someone else’s shoes and understand, sympathize or disagree with the characters in the book, which helps to create their own opinions and willingness to express their view aloud.
- Children may find their proper place in the family or friendship ties and the place in the society.
- Children get to know culturally diverse worlds.
- Children gain awareness of their mother tongue, how it can work as a form of written language.

(Lederbuchová 7-8, as translated by Jana Hájková)

It is apparent that no one is born as a bookworm. As a matter of fact, the relationship between a child and a book develops throughout the time as the child grows. It also depends on what type of books he/she reads. When the child reaches the stage and switches from fairy tales or fantasy stories to books that force the child to think about other realistic issues, it may be possible to see the change in the relationship to a book. The chosen age group for this thesis (13 to 15 years old pupils) should reach this stage.

It is understood that certain moral principles are inculcated when children read their first books, mostly fairy tales (Toman and Vondrů 190). However, later, when children change their demands concerning the choice of books, they might come across certain ideas or beliefs. They can consider whether they agree or disagree with them, especially if the issues are controversial and no right answer exist; racism or drugs, for instance. Then, if they are successful with the choice of books, they can find out that they are good companions. At this stage, parents and teachers are very happy that they managed to show children the way to read.

Generally speaking, reading books, either aloud or silently, may bring many advantages and help children develop not only their language skills but also their character and opinions. They form moral values, experience lives of other people, so that they can
understand better, and empathise with the feelings of others. The next chapter will reveal the importance of family, school and a library in the lives of children ages 13 to 15.

2. Three pillars of reading – family, school and libraries

If we want to make children read in their leisure time, we have to ensure that at least one of the main pillars of reading helps children find the way to read for pleasure. Parents should definitely be the first to introduce reading to their children. Then, school should apparently be the second stage on children’s way to reading. In addition, libraries are one of the best resources of knowledge for children as many books are stored there and parents do not have to buy books for children. The library fee seems to be affordable for most people; therefore, there should be no other obstacle for children to read.

2.1. Family background

With regard to reading habits, family, school, and libraries go hand in hand with one another and all of them help children to encourage them to read. Nonetheless, it depends on parents to a great extent whether a child learns reading habits and would read books for their own pleasure as well as to find out information, moral principles, and useful experience into their adulthood.

The significance of the family background is about twice to three times higher for the growth of reading in contrast to school (Věřišová et al. 10). If parents do not lead their children to reading (because they do not prefer reading either, for instance), the probability that a child will read more than their parents is very low. According to a survey in 2007, forty per cent of adult people visited the library regularly, twenty-seven per cent had visited it only in that past and thirty-three per cent had never attended it (Trávníček 80). It is apparent that if only more the one third of people go to the library from time to time, children cannot learn those reading habits if no one has set an example for them. It seems to be a challenge for children to read books if they do not have anyone to follow.

The discussion of books between a parent and a child is necessary; for example, a child may come across some information he/she does not understand and the help of a parent is essential. If children do not understand the book properly, they may become frustrated and put it down. Equally, a child might suffer a loss of motivation to read again.
Chaloupka points out that verbal communication between a parent and a child is important as the family ties develop. Talking about the books serves as a means of improving the communication skills of a child and shows the child that he/she is seen as an equal partner in conversation (Chaloupka 138).

As a matter of fact, it might help a child to gain confidence when talking with close friends and relatives as well as when public speaking and expressing their views and opinions. In the hustle and bustle of today’s family lives, the space for talking with children about other matters besides daily routines may be rather rare. A child can even realise that there is not only one explanation or correct answer to everything and what is more, children may learn to listen to the others and their views. Reading books may allow them to explore the world and their role in it.

In fact, the positive effects of reading on children’s character and their brain should be highlighted. While reading, children may come across different cultural environments and may understand better what life is about. They may realize the seriousness of global issues and appreciate their own life and family support.

A study carried out in 2002 reveals that 70% of children who read books on a daily basis were read to by their parents as toddlers. On the other hand, only one quarter of children who do not read anything in their free time claim that their parents read books to them in the past. The authors of the study also found out that when children saw their parents read, they took it for granted and it helped them to find how to read books as well (Gabal, Václavíková Helšusová).

2.2. School

School plays an important role in children’s lives as it is generally believed that it positively influences one to become a more active reader. At the basic level of the Czech education system, children encounter a book very often during their first classes of Czech language. Teachers usually choose children’s books to be read during Czech language classes so that children are positively stimulated and are introduced to these types of books. Teacher’s task is “to make students aware, or heighten their awareness, of different text types” (Roberts 3). Later, the students around the age of 13 to 15 years old have already developed a relationship with reading.
If children have an affirmative approach to reading, it may go hand in hand with their grades at school (Gabal, Václavíková Helšusová). This view could be supported by Lederbuchová’s survey when the first groups of children (with grades 1 or 2) like reading more than the second group of children with grade 3 (Lederbuchová 56). This might not be true in all cases. Sometimes, children are keen on reading but hate school in general or they just want to read what they want and not compulsory reading.

Even though a child does not grow up in a family with reading habits, thanks to a teacher, he/she might develop reading habits if the teacher gives pupils suitable and useful assignments concerning reading (Věříšová et al. 12). Children may have a task to read a short passage from a book, for example; then, a teacher may discuss the plot of the book so far and may discuss the possible ending of the story. Children may find the link between the topic of the book and their own life (Scrivener 155). We can “draw children´ attention to their own experience, which helps them to attract the text” (Grant 80). They may compare their views and “confirm their expectations about the information they think the text will contain” (Harmer 153). The final stage may be finishing reading and discussing the end.

Writing or oral feedback is necessary in all cases as it supports the communication between the inexperienced child and a higher experienced authority - the teacher. The feedback should be in the form of a dialogue and there should be open space for other possible answers, too. Children may be divided into pairs and answer the questions, a teacher may help them when needed (Davies 113). A child should never be forced to agree with one possible explanation. The main point is to get “a clear idea of the overall meaning of a text” (Swan 1). Children should not pay attention to individual points but should understand the basic notion of a story.

If a teacher chooses only a chapter or shorter passages from books, children may find the genre they like better and if they take a liking to a book they read at the moment at school, they may borrow the book from the library and read the rest of the book. On the other hand, if they dislike a particular book their teacher chose, they would not have to have bad memories reading that awful book all the time at school.

At elementary school, children are frequently made to keep a reading diary and record every book they read. This is usually teacher’s initiative (Gabal, Václavíková Helšusová) and it could be argued whether pupils would keep the reading diary if they did not have to. Children who love reading do not seem to have any problems writing everything they read there but for some children it can pose a problem and de-motivate them. However, keeping
such a diary may serve a useful function as well. Children can see how their choice of books changed throughout the time and they may recollect the stories they read several years ago.

It is not only the teacher of the Czech language but also other teachers who can stimulate and motivate a child to read books about a certain subject. Various activities can be organised by teachers. Pupils might be supposed to gain information about a certain topic in general and then, the teacher could demonstrate the results outright when using interactive methods, for example.

However, school cannot substitute the role of parents, as there is not enough time to communicate about books that children read in their leisure time. However, the reading experience increases its importance when a child has an opportunity to discuss it with somebody else (a teacher, a friend, a family member).

Another important factor is what books a teacher chooses as compulsory reading. The best recommendation for the Czech language teachers would apparently be a wider choice of books concerning a particular author or a historical era and it would be up to students at the age of 13 to 15 what to choose. The freedom of choice could work as a positive stimulus to support reading habits of children.

The goals children should achieve while studying at the basic school are specified by Rámcový vzdělávací program (Framework Educational Programme). Some of the key competences in regard to reading habits are: to be able to think about what children are reading about, reveal the obscure meanings of vocabulary, compare the text with other ones, think of the conclusions of books, value benefits of the text, ask questions and find answers in books and finally, empathise with the environment and characters in books. Božena Blažková says that a teacher should assign the key aims to each class of the basic school and gradually try to achieve them (Blažková 33).

These targets are set to be achieved by students from the basic schools. These competences are precisely fixed and teacher of the Czech language and literature have to prepare the lesson plans so that children can manage to cope with these competences.

2.3. Libraries

Libraries are a resource that not all children and their families take advantage of. If a child is familiar with a library atmosphere and finds motivation to read, then, they are on a good track to academic success. Many programmes that support children’s reading are held in
Firstly, many librarians are willing to show children around the library. Librarians are able to introduce library collections to pupils and instruct them how to observe the rules in the library; schools may attend even kinds of programmes. Thus, pupils may start to be familiar with the library, which is the first step to success in reading.

Secondly, libraries may organise discussions over books with a librarian for kindergarten, primary and secondary schools. In fact, many topics are offered; literature teachers may take advantage of an individual lesson and participate in choosing the topic. Librarians or special guests might, for instance, speak on the subject of one author, introduce his or her work and then elaborate more on one particular book. In addition, a library may choose one general topic and discuss it with students on how writers contributed to their work on this topic and if the students agree with this view.

The discussions may be supplemented with several activities and it is only up to the children in which activity they will partake. A library should not only be a place full of literature, but there should also be a friendly atmosphere since if children do not feel comfortable in this environment they will probably not attend a library in the future.

Thirdly, librarians also offer reading aloud for children from time to time. If they enjoy the beginning of the story, they may borrow the book and read the rest of the book at home on their own. The benefit of this activity is that children may borrow a book that they would not have borrowed previously because its cover or the title of the book would not attract them, for instance.

For example, “The night with Andersen” was a very successful organised activity originally held in Uherské Hradiště (Rajdová). Two librarians came up with this idea for the first time. They were thinking that if children spend a night in the library and would listen to the reading aloud plus participating in several activities, it could be fun for them. This idea received such positive and enthusiastic feedback that “The night with Andersen” is now held regularly in many libraries and even in other states such as Poland and Slovenia. Thanks to this activity, children are motivated to take part in similar activities organised by libraries.

Another possibility to attract children’s attention is organising competitions revolving around books. It may be possible to increase children’s motivation if there are contests and prizes for them. As a matter of fact, many libraries already arrange such activities.

The Municipal Library in Kráľfky organised a competition about the human body.
Children that signed up for the competition received a set of questions every month concerning the human body or first aid. The competition lasted from November 2010 to March 2011. At first glance, some may argue that children would just write a key word in an Internet search engine and find the answers there. Nevertheless, the main point of the competition is to become aware of where to find information and that the books are on options. Thanks to that competition, children learnt a large amount of information about our health, how to keep our bodies in shape and how to take care of someone who is hurt.

Moreover, librarians may organise such competitions and choose a new topic each time. In addition, a particular book may be chosen and then children would be asked to answer the questions or write an essay dealing with the plot of the book or the main characters, therefore children would have to read the book first and then would be able to participate in the contest.

Another option might be to proclaim a competition based on active and creative writing (e.g. a poem, a short story etc.) Children are motivated by the idea of winning the competition and may ask their parents for help. Children may discuss the topic with them, likewise with their siblings. As a result, the family ties improve because it may enhance their relationship. Some libraries often allow the children to attend special activities as a reward for their participation in the contest. These activities may be held at night (e.g. something similar to “The Night with Andersen”) or at some special occasion, so children may be motivated to experience something extraordinary.

If the process of introducing the library to the child’s life fails, the result of that all may be the lack of interest in attending the library. Gabal and Václavíková Helšusová claim that children do not use the service of libraries for several reasons.

- The family of a child does not use a library as they do not know where it is.
- A family does not have reading habits and does not see attending libraries as important.
- A child is not surrounded by peers with reading habits.
- A teacher of the Czech language and literature does not introduce them to a library or librarians do not catch children’s attention.
- A child does not have a good relationship to reading nor library, or the environment in the library is not appealing to them.
- A child believes that his/her family has enough books at home.
As is ensues from the study by Gabal and Václavíková Helšusová in 2002, children are very much influenced by their friends and classmates. Therefore, if they cannot find someone who would go to the library with them and enjoy the time there as well, they may lose interest in it. If they read a book or an article and do not have anyone else with whom to discuss it they may become frustrated. In that case, it is up to parents to try to go to the library with the children themselves or at least make older siblings go there with the younger inexperienced children.

Almost all schools have various school facilities including the school library. They are usually well supplied and include the books which children prefer most. Nonetheless, the statistics show that if children read and attend the library, they often prefer to go to the municipal library to the school library. They frequently use the school library to borrow books for compulsory reading only (Gabal, Václavíková Helšusová).

Another reason for not attending the library is the teacher’s lack of influence. If a teacher of the Czech language requires reading books as compulsory reading, he/she should bear in mind that some interesting books could be on the list of required reading too. What is more, they should give the students the list of possible books to choose from and then the pupils can choose the books according to their own preferences. This may help to improve the relationship between the student and reading.

According to the list of the Most borrowed books (the period from 1.1.2005 to 31.12.2008) of the Municipal Library in Prague (Appendix 3), it is evident that most of them are certainly compulsory reading. It seems that all people would support the idea that people read Neruda’s Povídky Malostranské because they truly enjoy it. The book probably will be on the list of required reading of almost all schools. On the other hand, it is very surprising that the book about a ginger cat Garfield appears to be one of the most favourite fairytale stories (places: 26th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 43rd, 44th, 47th). It is obvious that these fairytales are usually not a part of an obligatory reading list.

Lastly, it should be emphasised that children do not attend libraries only to read books but also to borrow magazines, search the Internet, borrow CDs, tapes, study encyclopaedias and heavy books that cannot be brought home.
3. Survey of children’s reading

This part of the thesis consists of the survey itself. Attention will be drawn to its methodology, the way children were polled, and the system of questions. The results will be analysed. They will be compared with previous results and typical trends in reading. On the basis of these trends, the stereotypical theses will be presented and confronted with the results of this research. Finally, the results will be compared with the goals set in the introduction of this bachelor thesis and the debate should shed light into the matter if the goals were met.

3.1. Methodology of the survey

In Appendix 2, the questionnaire distributed among Czech children at the age of 13 to 15 years is to be found. The questionnaire was anonymous, only gender, age and school were asked about. There was a set of twelve closed questions (the options were given) and one open question (to write favourite books). Two closed questions (number 8 and 12) contained a second question to be answered if there was a positive answer.

In all cases, children were supposed to tick only one option, with the exception of question 7 where they could choose three alternatives (genres of literature) at most. All the questions were designed in the way that all the possible answers would be covered. If not (as in question 12, second part), children could write another reason.

Some pupils did not answer correctly (for instance, they chose more options or forgot to answer the question completely). This means that although 152 students in total were asked to fill in the questionnaire, not all the answers were used in the survey so that it would not spoil the results. The survey is qualitative rather than quantitative. In the second part of this chapter, the precise figures will be shown.

The schools chosen for the survey were all located in Prague. The research was carried out at both grammar schools and basic schools. The list of schools included in this survey is in Appendix 4. In addition, some questionnaires were also distributed among children of ROLINO language studio to see if there are any differences between children who take extra lessons in the language studio and other students.
3.2. **Hypotheses of the survey**

According to the latest surveys of Leberbuchová in 2004 and Gabal and Václavíková Helšusová’s in 2002, the hypotheses below can be set before this research is carried out:

1. Girls read more than boys do.
2. Students of grammar schools testify the higher reading competence.
3. Students who earned better grades in their Czech language class are fond of reading in more cases than the rest of the class.
4. Students prefer newspapers and magazines to books.
5. Favourite genres children usually choose to read are fairy-tales, adventure stories and stories connected with animals or animal heroes and heroes of their age. Fantasy and science fiction stories are increasingly popular among children nowadays.
6. If the story is produced as a film, students usually choose the film version of the story.

3.3. **Results of the individual questions of the survey**

Every single question is presented separately and possible connections with the other questions are dealt with. The results are compared with other sources and surveys. The overall results will follow in Chapter 3.4.

3.3.1. **Schools, age and gender of respondents**

- Students came from basic schools in 71 cases and from grammar schools in 81 cases. Thus, the proportion of the school types is quite even.
- The questionnaires were filled in by 26 respondents at the age of 13 years, 46 and the age of 14 and 80 students form the last group of 15 years old pupils. Hence, the core age group of the survey is around 14 and 15 years of age.
- The research deals with 84 male students and 68 female students.
- The differences between the students of both school types and gender issues are raised again when they are presented from the viewpoint of each question.
3.3.2. Would you consider yourself a reader?

The questionnaire starts with a difficult question about readers. Even well known researchers, such as Jiří Trávníček, cannot concur with one another as far as the definition of the reader is concerned. Trávníček considers readers as those who read one or more books while non-readers are those who read none (Trávníček 55).

This marker is rather lenient so that in this case, Trávníček came up with the figure of 83 per cent of readers in the survey of adult readers in 2007. On the other hand, he set the second marker to one contact with a book per month. In this case, people could just read several pages a month and would still belong to this group. However, he shows a different result as the figure of readers dropped to 64.5 per cent (Trávníček 55-56). Gabal and Václavíková Helšusová set the mark to one book per month and showed the result of 73 per cent of readers in their survey of children in 2002.

In the survey of this thesis, the children were not told who should be regarded as a reader and who not. It was absolutely up to them how to classify themselves. 86 students (57%) claimed to be readers while 66 students (43%) tended to answer they were non-readers.

According to the other answers in the questionnaires, students incline to choose “reader” if they read once/twice a week or more. This condition seems to be quite realistic even though reading once/twice a month may also be seen as a possible solution for creating a borderline for readers and non-readers.

Graph 1: Link of readers/non-readers and the frequency of reading

However, there is a large group of students who do not consider themselves as readers but their answers belong to the same category as the readers. On the other hand, some students do not like reading very much and do not read very often but selected the “reader” option. As we can see in Graph 1, the proportion is very even, some respondents read only
monthly or once/twice a half a year but still regard themselves as readers while some students read quite regularly and with high frequency and assume to be non-readers. These two groups are rather equal although there is approximately 10 per cent difference, which proves that students tend to underestimate themselves to some extent.

The survey reveals some basic differences concerning the gender of the readers. While the proportion between readers and non-readers is 43%: 57% (figures 36: 48 out of 84) as regards boys, the girls obtained better results 74%: 26% (figures 50: 18 out of 68). Therefore, a connection between the gender and reading habits can be established. Girls obviously read more than boys do and hence, regard themselves as readers in a higher proportional representation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart 1: Link between the type of school and reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>readers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic school (71 students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grammar school (80 students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1 deals with the issue if there is any link between the type of school and reading habits. As we can see, students of basic schools mainly think about themselves as non-readers (55%), while grammar school students considers themselves as readers mainly (66%).

3.3.3. What mark did you earn in your Czech language class?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart 2: Link between the mark in Czech language and reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>readers in total 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-readers in total 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This kind of question was added to the questionnaire to see if there is any link with the grade in Czech language and the reading habits. In the survey, 32 students receive the mark of one in their Czech language class last semester, 69 got a two, 40 obtained a three, and only 10 students answered a four. None of students received a five last semester. Chart 2 shows these
significant differences between the group of readers and non-readers. The core group (in bold) of readers received a two while the core group of non-readers obtained a three. This result establishes a significant connection between readers/non-readers and marks at school.

3.3.4. What do you read most?

Although children wanted to tick several options, they were allowed, according to the rules of the questionnaire, to choose only one alternative. They were supposed to tick what they read in most cases. The results are shown in Graph 2.

Not surprisingly, magazines, newspapers, and Internet articles are popular with children ages 13 to 15 but what is startling is that the most popular option is the books for fun. Compared to Gabal and Václavíková Helšusová’s survey in 2002, where the most popular option was newspapers and magazines, the survey of this thesis shows a different result. Magazines, comic books, and newspapers gained 30 per cent in total and still did not overtake the leading position of books for fun if counted together.

![Graph 2: What do you read most?](image)

These results show the children’s positive attitude towards reading and books themselves. The prophets of doom and gloom would be confronted with these results and it shows promising prospects to the future of reading books.

3.3.5. How often do you read books in your leisure time?

While the question above takes into account many forms of reading material, this question focuses only on books and Graph 3 may illuminate the matter more clearly. The answers “daily”, “daily a while” and “once/twice a week” form sixty-three per cent of the overall results, which may appear to be a satisfying result. Thirty-seven per cent consists of the answers “daily” and “daily for a while” and this particular result shows that not a minority
of students read often and regularly.

**Graph 3: How often do you read books in your leisure time?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Grammar School</th>
<th>Basic School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily a while</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once/twice a half a year</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results stand for an irrefutable proof against the common belief that children do not read at all. What is more, this question is interested in books only but also magazines, comic stories, and newspapers can serve as a good tool for improvement of children’s reading skills as well. Those students who read this material may belong to the group of non-readers as well as to the group of students who responded that they read once/twice a month, rarely or never. In addition, the group of 63 per cent of regular readers may become bigger in reality.

**Chart 3: Link between the gender/type of school and the frequency of reading**

It was already mentioned that girls see themselves as readers in more cases than boys and Chart 3 supports this claim once again. This new approach deals with the link of the frequency of reading and the gender issue. Boys reached the best result at the option “daily a while” whereas girls have the best result connected with the alternative “once/twice a week”. This result might be explained in favour of boys.

On the other hand, if we count regular reading “daily” and “daily a while”, we see these results: boys gained 31% and girls obtained 43%. This difference is rather significant in girls’ profit. This explanation is apparently more objective than the previous point of view.

The similar result was expected as far as types of school are concerned. In accordance with the chart above (Chart 3), students of basic schools do not read as frequently as students of grammar schools do. The core group of basic school readers read primarily “once/twice a
week” as we can see the percentage in bold. On the contrary, grammar school readers read “daily” in most cases.

The difference between the grammar school and basic school readers is rather even in case of the option “daily”. The most striking difference is in option “never” which basic school readers have chosen in more cases (16%) whereas grammar school readers have almost not polled this possibility (1%).

3.3.6. Do you enjoy reading books?

Children could choose from four possible answers: “very much”, “I quite enjoy it”, “not very much” and “not at all”. The graph in Appendix 1 (Graph 10) confirms that majority of the children who responded to the survey like reading very much or quite enjoy it; this group creates 77 per cent in total. Only 23 per cent of students do not enjoy reading very much or at all, which is only a minority. Gabal and Václavíková Helšusová’s survey in 2002 shows slightly lower numbers of those who like reading – in total 54.5% quite enjoy reading or they enjoy it very much.

The reasons for not enjoying reading may be various; some of the most crucial ones can be summarized as some children wrote the reasons to the questionnaire:

- Reading a book is time-consuming.
- Children have to read books for school that they are not particularly keen on and that is the reason why they lose motivation to read.
- The rest of their friends do not read either. Children presumably need to belong socially to a certain group and the reading habits would not correspond to the habits of the group they have chosen.
- On the other hand, the reason that children would not understand the story or vocabulary is not seen as an obstacle by children.

3.3.7. Why do you read books?

The next graph (Graph 4) deals with the reason for reading books by children at the age of 13 to 15. Most of the students responded that they read for pleasure, which means 39% of all the children in the survey.
The next most common answer was because they have to (as compulsory reading, for instance). In that case, children probably read books but do not enjoy it. The results of those respondents who like reading (25%) and those who do not like it (75%) prove that they read only owing to school requirements.

Other responses go in line with the fact that children like reading even though the reason for reading is slightly different. Nevertheless, they still read books because they enjoy it. The reasons are the yearning for new information, to get to know something new, to experience a story that is different from the real life and finally the reason to relax.

3.3.8. What genres of literature do you read most?

The trend in the last couple of years was reading legends, fairy tales, and adventure stories. Adventure stories keep up with the latest trends in reading but fairy tales and legends are not very popular with children any more. The survey substantiated (Graph 5) that children prefer stories with supernatural powers and different worlds such as the tales and stories in fantasy genres, science fiction, and adventure stories.
On the other hand, humorous books demonstrate their strong appeal among young readers nowadays, too. The next position is occupied by detective stories that also show the popularity with children as children become older by reading a book and try to find the wanted criminal. It corresponds to the effort to put oneself into someone else’s shoes and experience the story on one’s own.

The set hypothesis (Hypothesis 5) was corroborated only to a certain extent because the point about the animal heroes was not confirmed by this survey. The books about nature and animals obtained only 17 polls. The result of the books with heroes of children’s age was rather a surprising one. They gained 21 polls and did not belong to the group of mainstream genres read by the children at the age of 13 to 15 year.

To sum up, the hypothesis was supported only up to a point:

- The trend of fantasy genres is seen very well.
- Adventure and detective stories hold the stable position.
- Humorous stories unexpectedly gained a high figure of readers.
- Books about animal heroes (or animals and nature) and books with the heroes at the same age as readers are not popular any more as the main pillars of children’s genres.

The last point that should be brought into limelight from the survey is the gender issue. Graph 11 in Appendix 1 substantiates a clear difference between female respondents and male respondents. Nevertheless, according to this survey, boys adhere to the overall results and prefer adventure stories most of all. Secondly, fantasy and science fiction hold the third place. They do not like poetry and stories with animal or children’s heroes. Those students who read absolutely nothing are also among boys.

Girls also favour adventure stories, however, the second place is held by love stories that replaced fantasy stories. Thirdly, girls enjoy reading humorous books. Girls do not like scientific and technical books at all, science fiction is not popular with girls either. These two genres are perhaps related to general branches of knowledge in which boys and girls may diametrically differ. None of the girls answered that she read nothing.
3.3.9. Do you talk to anyone about books?

What are the reasons for students not to talk about books if they love reading, are readers and read mainly books? Lederbuchová points out that there are several reasons for not discussing the thoughts included in the book:

- Children do not remember what the book was about.
- Some of them are afraid they would be confronted with a significantly different view.

On the other hand, reasons why children talk about books are also rather intriguing:

- They can experience the story again thanks to the debate over the book.
- They can understand the story better if they discuss it with someone else, they can be confirmed that they understand the story properly.

(Ledebochová 52-53, as translated by Jana Hájková)

The discussion about books is highly crucial to support reading habits of children. The graph, for better illustration, is attached in Appendix 1 (Graph 12). According to the results, only 7 per cent of respondents ticked the alternative very often. These students almost in all cases (with the exception of one pupil) responded to consider themselves as readers. They usually talk about books with their friends. In this case, pupils are likely surrounded by those who also like reading as they can speak with them about books.

The highest percentage of students (37%) replied the option “sometimes”. They also choose mainly their friends to discuss books with. However, this group also contains students who speak with their parents about books very often, too. This shows that if parents try to encourage children to speak about their opinions and discuss the matters together, it stands for the best follow-up activity after reading books. A book should provoke and make other people think about the contents of the book.

The third group of pupils, consisting of 35% of children (54 students), talk about books with somebody only rarely. Twenty-three children consider themselves as readers and the rest of 27 children are non-readers. Thus, these two groups are quite even.

It goes without saying that if children are non-readers, they tend not to speak about books they have read because they usually read only compulsory reading that they do not take pleasure in. Twenty-one per cent answered that they never talk about reading books. Only eight students (out of thirty-two) are those who never talk about books and are readers.
The graph above (Graph 6) shows the proportion between groups of male readers and female readers and their willingness to talk about books. The graph is a proof that female readers are likely to read in more cases than male readers are.

3.3.10. Who do you talk about books to?

The issue who to talk about books to was touched on in the previous question. To sum up, if students speak about books with someone, they choose their friend in most cases (overall 77% as Graph 13 shows in Appendix 1), the next person is usually a parent. To talk with another member of the family or a teacher is not a common case (only 7% and 8%).

The reason why children prefer their friend or coeval may be the generation gap. Children who never talk about books are also afraid that their opinions would be confronted with other people’s views. Apparently, their friend would understand better the view a child beholds because there is not such a significant difference in their mental abilities and life experience.

Those who talk about books with a teacher probably take into account the lessons of the Czech language and literature in most cases. This would mean that children actually do not speak about books because they want but because they are nominated and have to answer.

3.3.11. Do you receive books as presents from your family?

Children could choose one out of four alternatives. Graph 14 in Appendix 1 demonstrates that 39 children (26%) always receive at least one book. Only eight children out of thirty-nine belong to non-readers. The second group answered that they received books very often (32 children; 21%). Twenty-four students regard themselves as readers. Thus, again only eight students are non-readers.
The highest figure is the alternative “only sometimes”, it gained 56 polls (37%). Twenty-two children believe they are readers and thirty-four think they are non-readers. The last group consists of 24 respondents (16%) who answered that they had never received books as gifts. Sixteen students are mostly non-readers and the rest (only eight children) are readers.

These overall results prove that if children are supported and encouraged by their parents or other members of their family, they are more likely to become readers and take a liking to this hobby activity. If children do not receive any books at all, the possibility that they would belong to the group of readers and learn reading habits is rather low.

**3.3.12. How often do you attend a library?**

In overall results (Graph 7), most children attend a library once/twice a month. The second position is held by the answer “I was there only several times” and then “never”. The worst result was reached at the alternative once/twice a week. The graph below also displays the proportion between readers and non-readers. Readers tend to go to the library monthly.

**Graph 7: How often do you attend a library?**

What is rather surprising is that some of the groups of readers do not visit the library at all or they were there only few times. Then, the issue where they get the hold of books can be raised. Perhaps, they read the books that they receive from their family of a friend, either borrowed or bought, and that would be the reason why they do not attend the library.

Another reason can be that children take advantage of the school library and they find all the books they need there. Then, they probably do not feel any necessity to attend another library if they have it close enough.
Those who ticked the option “I was there only several times” usually claim that it was in terms of the subject Czech language and literature. Their school organised the sessions with librarians and exposed the mysteries of the library so that children would find the way to go to the library more often. These students were probably not captured by the library atmosphere.

3.3.13. If there is an opportunity to choose between a book and a film adaptation, what do you choose?

Sixty-two per cent (90 students) chose the film adaptation over reading a book. Fifty-three students out of 90 were non-readers while thirty-seven readers. Hence, this proportion demonstrates that mainly non-readers prefer the film adaptation to the original book. Some of the students also say that if they like the story, subsequently, they borrow the book and read it.

Thirty-eight per cent of students (54) decided to poll the original book. Only twelve of them were non-readers, the rest (42 children) would choose a book first.

Lederbucová explains the reasons why students prefer a book:

- Children can very easily go back to the chapter or passage they did not understand or wanted to read more thoroughly, wherever and whenever they wish.
- They can use their vivid imagination and are not in a straightjacket.

The same source asserts that children choose the film version for several reasons:

- The accessibility of the media such as CDs and DVDs is better than books.
- Experiences from the audiovisual performance are more intense than reading.
- Reading is time-consuming.

(Lederbucová 53-54, as translated by Jana Hájková)

3.3.14. Have you ever read any books in English (or any adapted versions)?

Graph 8 proves that children usually do not read books in English. The alternative “never” and “few books” gained the same amount of polls.

The differences between basic school readers and grammar school readers of English books are significant. The graph also shows the proportion of these two groups and the results in favour of grammar school students can be seen. The most chosen option was “never”. Nevertheless, grammar school students chose the alternative “one or two” in most cases.
Grammar school students who chose the option “several books” read books in English four times more often than basic school students did.

**Graph 8: Have you ever read any books in English?**

![Graph showing book reading habits by school type]

It was already mentioned that some questionnaires were also distributed in ROLINO language studio. It is the high time some results were shown in connection with this point of view. Students of the language studio and other students in general were compared in Graph 15 in Appendix 1. It is taken into consideration that some of the students of the “others” group also attend extra lessons of English but it must be generalised. It is taken for granted that the results are only approximate and may not be valid to so great extent. On the other hand, in this survey, those who study in ROLINO are mainly from basic schools that showed worse results (22 pupils) and 16 pupils are from grammar schools that proved better results in overall research. Therefore, these results should be rather valid in the end.

Despite this all, students who take extra lessons in English prove better results as they core group of students read one or two books in English. Other cases are rather even, although there are always higher figures of students from the language studio. In both groups, the core figures are at the alternatives “never” and “one or two”.

**3.3.15. Why do you read books in English?**

The graph below (Graph 9) presents those students who have read at least one or two books in English. They agree that they read them to improve their language and reading skills (88%). The other two options were polled only rarely. Secondly, students chose the original book over the Czech translation (8%) and the last place is held by 4% of those who answered that they read the English books because it was not translated at that time.
Students could choose the option “another reason”; however, they usually answered that they liked reading books in English or that they had to read it as a part of school requirements. Other reasons were not mentioned in this survey.

3.3.16. Name your five favourite books

Children usually wrote their favourite books with the fantasy theme, then detective stories, and lastly adventure books. The list below demonstrates the most common books or authors if they were mentioned in more cases, not just by one respondent.


- **Detective stories:** Agatha Christie (Hercule Poirot), thriller stories by Dan Brown (Da Vinci Code, Angels and Demons, Lost symbol), Arthur Conan Doyle.

- **Adventure books:** Jules Verne, Jaroslav Foglar, Mark Twain.

- **Science fiction:** Stephen King, series of books Otherland, The Host

- **Historical novels:** The Egyptian (about Sinuhe) – M. Waltari, The Name of the Rose – U. Eco., Ancient Greek myths and legends

- **Humorous books:** about Švejk – J. Hašek

- **Love stories:** Lenka Lanzcová, Cecily von Ziegesar (Gossip Girl), P. S. I love – C. Ahern

Athletics related books: Jaromír Bosák

Technical or scientific books: about geography, photography, weather, guns, soldiers, animals (especially horses, fish and dogs)

Non-fiction: Berlin Zoologishe Garten Railway Station, The Truth about Kájínek, Memento – Radek John, about manipulation of the mind – Derren Brown

Comic books: Manga

Specific authors: Oscar Wild, Shakespear, sisters Bröntes, Jane Austen

3.4. Overall results of the survey

The latter part of the thesis dealt with the results of the distributed questionnaires. Groups of children ranging in ages 13 to 15 years were chosen to demonstrate what today’s pubescent students are interested in. The aim of this survey is to show what genres of literature students like; this thesis may serve as a tool for teachers when preparing their lesson plans. If results are known now, teachers can better choose topics for reading and discussions in their English lessons.

The questionnaire consisted of thirteen questions plus two supplemental questions. The data acquired from individual questions were analysed as single matters; but as well, some crucial links between them were established. The main interrelated matters were first and foremost gender issues followed by the type of school and lastly readers versus non-readers. Question 12 attempted to focus on the reading exposure children have with the English language.

Six hypotheses were initially presented against the research. The hypotheses were chosen according to the research of previous years, specifically in 2002 (Gabal and Václavíková Helšusová) and 2004 (Lederbuchová). The hypotheses were supported in most cases by this new survey, only slight differences were found.

Girls tend to read more often than boys and consider themselves as readers in more cases. They like discussing their thoughts and issues triggered by books; they are found to read more than boys do as well. Girls also choose slightly different genres of literature; they preferred adventure, love, and humorous stories. On the contrary, boys do not often enjoy
reading and talking about books, the figures of readers among boys are lower. The genres boys usually choose to read are adventure (as girls); however, secondly, they choose fantasy and then science fiction. Girls also like talking about books with their friends or parents. Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

The students at grammar schools proved to be better readers. Hypothesis 2 was corroborated. They read more often and read more books in English as well. Students who take lessons in English confirm that they read more books in English than other students do. The main reason for reading books in another language was to improve student’s language skills. As seen in question 12, many students state they want to improve their language skills. Very few others selected the option “The Czech translation is not so good”.

Many children seemed not to identify themselves in the appropriate “reader” versus “non-reader” box. They frequently ticked the reader box if they read weekly or more often. However, some students underestimated themselves and even though they like reading, read for pleasure and regularly, did not consider themselves as readers. Moreover, the reverse situation (students do not read regularly, preferably compulsory reading but consider themselves as readers) was common too. Readers usually receive books as presents from their families, which supports their reading habits, too. Non-readers ordinarily claimed to receive books very rarely.

It was established that there existed a connection between the mark in Czech language at school and children’s reading habits. Those who earned better marks at school are fond of reading in more cases than students who are not so good at the subject of Czech language and literature. It goes hand in hand, if a child reads a lot, he/she is able to find arguments and discuss the matters in the books. Hypothesis 3 was vindicated.

It was rather surprising that children prefer reading books to reading other reading material such as newspapers, magazines, comic books, or Internet articles. It was also mentioned that the question requested only one answer so that some other children may read books very often as well but if they think about what they usually read, they could choose another answer. Some students who read technical, scientific or other educational magazines may also create good reading habits. Hypothesis 4 was disproved.

Children depicted in their answers that they quite enjoy reading or enjoy it very much; both answers formed more than three-fourths of overall polls. Even though current common view is that children do not read, the results are very satisfying.
Students preferably read books for pleasure; nevertheless, they also read books as they have to as compulsory reading for school. Other alternatives (for relaxation, to find out information or to experience and lead a different life) were rather even.

Students showed the differences in gender in terms of genres of literature as mentioned above; however, the overall results showed that adventure books are read to a great extent, secondly, fantasy books and thirdly, humorous books. Hypothesis 5 was defended only up to a point. The new leading trend of fantasy and science fiction proved to be on the increase, adventure stories still have a leading position, and even girls prefer these stories. Nonetheless, fairy tales and legends, stories of animals and nature, and heroes of children’s age have declined.

Children who are non-readers do not like talking about books; readers show higher percentage but still there is not any visible increasing trend. If students discuss books with anyone, they prefer their friends, the options parents or teachers were not chosen very frequently.

The groups of readers visit a library mostly monthly or they were there only several times. Readers also prefer an original book to a film adaptation of the book. Non-readers attend the library very rarely; they were usually there with their teacher of Czech language and literature. They chose the film adaptation over the original book in most cases.

Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to elaborate on the current situation of reading habits of children at the age of 13 to 15 years. Firstly, the question of why it is so important for us to know these results was answered. It was established that reading habits help children to mature, gain moral values and sympathise with other people’s feelings.

Secondly, the reading habits were divided into two types of reading. Reading aloud guarantees that a child becomes familiar with reading, creates a bond with a book and is motivated to learn reading to reach the second stage of reading on one’s own. Reading on one’s own is valuable as children’s imagination is used, vocabulary is extended and children come across various life situations.

Thirdly, outside influences impact on children’s reading habits. Three crucial pillars were established – family, schools and libraries. It was found out that the most important factor is family. School cannot substitute the role of parents. It also depends on teachers of
Czech language and literature to create an atmosphere where a child would be motivated to read. Many reading activities, useful lectures or discussions with authors take place in libraries.

The practical part dealt with the results of this research carried out at Prague grammar and basic schools. Children at the age of 13-15 years answered the questionnaire. Hypotheses based on the surveys from the years 2002 and 2004 were set. A goal of this research was to confront the hypotheses.

Most of them were supported. Children proved to be readers in more cases than not. Girls and generally grammar school students showed to be better readers as they read more often, talk about books with friends, and are encouraged by their family to read. Students with extra English lessons read books in English more frequently. The hypothesis about the genres of literature students read differs from the results only up to a point.

This thesis brings the current results of the topic of children’s reading habits. It extends the results of previous years and enables us to understand better children’s needs in reading in the 21st century.

This bachelor thesis may serve as a tool for creating a syllabus of mainly English lessons. Teachers who are considering using original or adapted texts during their lessons can take advantage of this survey and choose the genres of literature pupils mostly prefer.
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Appendix 1: Additional graphs

Graph 10: Do you enjoy reading books?

- I enjoy it very much: 28%
- I quite enjoy it: 49%
- not very much: 14%
- not at all: 9%
- I enjoy it very much: 28%

Graph 11: Genres male and female respondents read

- science fiction
- nothing
- historical books
- traveller’s books
- poetry
- technical, scientific
- humorous
- fairy tales, legends
- love stories
- detective stories
- nature and animals
- with heroes of my age
- fantasy
- adventurous

Graph 12: Do you talk to anybody about books?

- very often
- sometimes
- rarely
- never

- 7%
- 37%
- 35%
- 21%
Graph 13: Who do talk about books to?

- with parents: 19%
- with a teacher: 8%
- with another member of my family: 7%
- with friends: 66%

Graph 14: Do you get books as presents from your family?

- never
- only sometimes
- very often
- always

Graph 15: Proportion of ROLINO and other students as regards reading English books

- I often read them
- several
- one or two
- never
## Appendix 2: Questionnaire

**Anonymous questionnaire: Mini-research of reading** (data found will be used in thesis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Gender:</th>
<th>Age:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**TICK ONLY ONE OPTION** (with exception of question 6 where you can choose up to 3 options) and do not forget to ANSWER THE SECOND PART OF QUESTION 8 AND 12!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Would you consider yourself a reader?</td>
<td>☐ yes ☐ no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What mark did you earn in your Czech language class?</td>
<td>☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do you mostly read?</td>
<td>☐ magazines ☐ newspapers ☐ books for fun ☐ compulsory reading ☐ technical, scientific books ☐ comic books ☐ Internet articles ☐ I read nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How often do you read books in your leisure time?</td>
<td>☐ daily ☐ daily a while ☐ once or twice a week ☐ once or twice a month ☐ once or twice a half a year ☐ rarely ☐ never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you enjoy reading books?</td>
<td>☐ very much ☐ I quite enjoy it ☐ not very much ☐ not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Why do you read books?</td>
<td>☐ for pleasure ☐ because I have to (compulsory reading) ☐ to find out information ☐ to experience something I cannot experience in real life ☐ as a way to relax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What genres of literature do you mostly read (up to 3 options):</td>
<td>☐ adventure ☐ with heroes of the same age as I am ☐ detective stories ☐ fairy tales, legends ☐ technical, scientific ☐ poetry ☐ traveller’s books ☐ historical books ☐ sci-fi ☐ fantasy ☐ about nature and animals ☐ love stories ☐ humorous books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do you talk to anyone about books (e.g. parents or friends),</td>
<td>☐ very often ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if yes, who do you talk about books to?</td>
<td>☐ parents ☐ friends ☐ a teacher ☐ another member of my family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do your get books as presents (e.g. as a Christmas/birthday present)?</td>
<td>☐ always ☐ often ☐ only sometimes ☐ never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How often do you attend a library?</td>
<td>☐ once or twice a week ☐ once or twice a month ☐ once or twice a half a year ☐ I was there only several times ☐ never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. If there is an opportunity to choose between a book and a film adaptation, what do you choose:</td>
<td>☐ an original book ☐ a film adaptation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Have you ever read any book in English (or any adapted versions),</td>
<td>☐ never ☐ one or two ☐ several ☐ I often read them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>if yes, why do you read books in English?</td>
<td>☐ to improve my English skills ☐ the Czech translation is not so good ☐ the book was not translated ☐ another reason (name):</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix 3: Fifty most borrowed books in the Municipal Library in Prague from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2008

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<tr>
<th>Pořadí</th>
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2. LIDSKÉ  
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3. GAARDER, Jostein  
   Sofiín svět  
   L 1885
4. FROMM, Erich  
   Umění milovat  
   L 1779
5. KOSMAS  
   Kosmová kronika česká  
   D 1768
6. MACHIAVELLI, Niccolo  
   Vladař  
   L 1768
7. MISZTAŁ, Mariusz  
   Tests in English  
   R 1682
8. FROMM, Erich  
   Mit nebo být?  
   L 1650
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   Hrničková kuchařka  
   C 1617
10. STOERIG, Hans Joachi..  
    Malé dějiny filozofie  
    L 1590
11. CAP, Jan  
    Psychologie pro učitele  
    L 1537
12. NAKONEČNY, Milan  
    Sociální psychologie  
    L 1522
13. HAVLIK, Radomír  
    Úvod do sociologie  
    G 1472
14. DEARY, Terry  
    Strašná druhá světová válka  
    D 1425
15. KOMENSKY, Jan Amos  
    Labyrint světa a ráj srdce  
    L 1416
16. FRANCIE  
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18. ARNOLD, Nick  
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    Naše květiny  
    K 1368
20. FISHER, Jude  
    Pán prstenu  
    S 1347
21. PLATON  
    Euthyfrón. Obrana Sókrata. Kritón  
    L 1339
22. DĚJINY  
    Dějiny zemí Koruny české 1.  
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23. SAMUELSON, Paul Anth..  
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24. KRKONOSÉ  
    Krkonoše  
    EM 1290
25. DEARY, Terry  
    Ještě prohniléjší Římané  
    D 1281
26. GIDDENS, Anthony  
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    G 1275
27. DEARY, Terry  
    Francie  
    D 1273
28. DEARY, Terry  
    Mízerná první světová válka  
    D 1271
29. DEARY, Terry  
    Prohnilí Římané  
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30. DEARY, Terry  
    Tenmi rytíři a ošumělé hrdy  
    D 1246
31. STO  
    100 Čarodějních způsobů, jak přežít..  
    L 1239
32. PRAHA  
    Praha  
    E 1237
33. STO  
    100 Čarodějních způsobů, jak si p..  
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37. HEROUT, Jaroslav  
    Staletí kolem nás  
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49. PEČINOVSKÝ, Josef  
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    K 1159
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    S 1159

Stránka 2
## Appendix 4: List of schools included in the survey

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