

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE UNASSIGNED BOOKS READ  
BY SENIORS AT MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL

by 1264

KENNETH ROSS McCORMIC

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Major Professor

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## THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

The necessity of reading has never been in question; the same cannot be said for the best method of promoting student reading. Many teachers of English have doubted that assigning book reports was a good way to stimulate and encourage student reading outside the classroom. Teachers have often wondered what books students would read if they were not required to read books from a specified list. Would students' optional choices reflect their academic abilities? Would they read serious literature and the so-called classics, including reading recommended for the college-bound student, or would their reading be just light fiction?

If students demonstrate that they do read of their own volition an extensive variety of suitable materials, then the necessity for required classroom reading would be lessened. The teacher's guidance, suggestions, and encouragement could then be aimed at promoting an individual reading program which would be both worthwhile and interesting to the student. According to Townsend, this area of reading interest is one of current concern:

. . . the current growth of research looking toward better descriptions of reading interests, the studies of individualized reading, the criticism of monolithic textbook assignments, and increasing emphasis on individual differences in reading growth patterns - all these reflect the tendency to rely more and more on understanding the pupil in order to build a psychologically sound reading program.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Agatha Townsend, "Standards and Preferences in Reading," Reading Teacher, 18:301, January, 1965.

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this report was to study the out-of-class reading habits of a group of 124 seniors at Manhattan Senior High School. A descriptive study of the books read by students according to sex, academic achievement, and post-graduate plans was made. This report was concerned with the following questions:

1. What were the numbers and types of books read according to sex? What were the most frequent choices of books for both sexes?
2. What difference, if any, did sex make in the per cent of reading in the category of classics and recommended reading?
3. What relationship, if any, did the kinds of books read have with the students' seventh semester grade point averages?
4. What relationship, if any, did the number of classics read by students have with their grade point averages?
5. What kinds of books were read by college-bound seniors?
6. What kinds of books were read by those seniors not planning to attend college?
7. How many classics, if any, were read by both college-bound seniors and those not planning to attend college?

### Importance of the Study

As Bennett Cerf has said, 'Reading is like eating peanuts. The more one indulges the more one wants.' If a young person achieves some success and pleasure in reading something that is interesting and appealing to him, he will continue to 'indulge' with a minimum of 'pushing' and 'guidance.'<sup>1</sup>

If student reading could be encouraged, something worthwhile would have been accomplished. But if one could encourage reading, it would still

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<sup>1</sup>Alma L. Marni, "Developing an Interest in Reading," Reading Improvement, 2:34, Winter, 1965.

be necessary to determine what material the students would probably read in such a freely selective program. Before establishing such a program, studies of the books students actually read when they are free to choose would reveal much about their tastes and attitudes toward reading. Studies might reveal whether or not college-bound seniors make any effort to read recommended works as preparation for college. Studies might also reveal student interest in contemporary fiction. Rouse suggested the importance of this knowledge when he said:

If we are ever going to make readers of young people, then we will have to turn to the fiction of contemporary writers. And this means not just the work of the best writers, but the work of popular writers of all kinds.<sup>1</sup>

Student interest studies might also indicate the place of nonfiction and light fiction in the reading program of high school seniors. The point seems to be whether or not we "push" too much when there might be little need for pushing.

#### Limitation of the Study

The study was limited to 124 seniors enrolled as full-time students for two semesters in the writer's English 12 classes at Manhattan Senior High School. Two students visiting the school from France and Thailand and one student who was repeating English 12 were excluded from the study. Also eliminated were several students who were not enrolled at Manhattan High School for the entire school year. In order that the sample of both sexes could be divided into quarters according to grade point average, it was

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<sup>1</sup>J. Rouse, "In Defense of Trash," Educational Digest, 32:48, December, 1966.

necessary to eliminate, by random drawing, one boy and three girls, leaving a total of fifty-two boys and seventy-two girls.

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Much has been written about reading instruction, reading interests, and reading appreciation; however, in this report only a summary of the work done in the last six years in the area of student reading interest, except for reference to particularly significant and often quoted studies, has been included.

### Literature on Student Reading Interests

Huus summarized the conclusions reached as the result of research by Jordan, Terman and Lima, Sister M. Celestine, Lazar, and Rankin as follows: (1) children's reading interests varied with grade level and age; (2) sex difference in reading interests began to show up after nine; (3) girls read more than boys, but boys had a wider range and read a greater variety of materials; (4) romantic adult fiction had an earlier interest for girls than for boys; (5) boys liked chiefly adventure and girls liked fiction, but mysteries appealed to both; and (6) boys seldom read a "girl's" book, but girls would read boys' books to a greater degree. Huus went on to report that George Norvell's research was similar and indicated that sex differences were evidenced early, that girls preferred poetry and boys prose, and that all children liked adventure and action, human characters, animals and patriotism, but not always in that order. Boys preferred physical struggle, humor, courage, and heroism, while girls liked home and school, romantic

love, sentiment, mystery and the supernatural.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing early research in reading, Squire listed several significant studies:

Among the more significant of the early studies are those by Terman and Lima, Thorndike, and Wollnar. The findings reveal broad agreement on the factors involved: intelligence, for example, is not a markedly significant factor in affecting the reading preferences of a majority of readers; sex difference, on the other hand, is quite significant.<sup>2</sup>

Squire went on to summarize that age was more significant during elementary years than later, that television played an important role in directing interests as did differences in socio-economic backgrounds, and that various racial groups had different reading interests. He reaffirmed the opinions that boys liked sports, action, and adventure, and that girls responded to romance, growing up, and fiction in general.<sup>3</sup>

In 1964, Shores made one of the most important recent studies with one of its primary purposes to find out what high school students want to read. His sample consisted of 6,614 students in grades ten, eleven, and twelve, and his method was that of a questionnaire. As far as reading interests were concerned, Shores used fourteen major categories and many sub-categories. He found that most high school students want to read fiction (49 per cent). However, considerable reading interest was apparent in the areas of social science (14 per cent), science (13 per cent), and recreation and hobbies (6

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<sup>1</sup>Helen Huus, "Interpreting Research in Children's Literature," Children, Books, and Reading (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1964), p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>James R. Squire, "About Attitudes Toward Reading," English Journal, 58:523, April, 1969.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 524.

per cent). He found only slight interest in vocations, the arts, religion, psychology, philosophy, and social adjustment. Within the field of literature Shores found that the strongest interest was in mystery stories, followed by adventure, novels not specified as to type, and stories about young people. There was also considerable interest in biography, historical fiction, fiction not specified as to type, romance, science fiction, and sports fiction. There was less interest in humor, war stories, classics, stories of the outdoors, westerns, sea stories, short stories without mention of type, poetry, travel, and drama. Shores found girls more than boys interested in mysteries, novels, stories about young people, romance, biography, social adjustment, and religion. He found that boys preferred adventure, science fiction, sports, war stories, and science. Shores also found that by the senior high level the interest in animal stories had greatly decreased.<sup>1</sup>

That same year, Speigler, in an article written for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, related his experiences in helping sons and daughters of blue collar workers to develop positive attitudes toward book reading by finding their interests. He discussed many possibilities for motivation, such as locating an area which was personally vital to the students' work, the influence of wanting to "get beneath" something shown on television or in the movies, and replacing some of the classics at the lower grades with more contemporary work.<sup>2</sup> He concluded his article by stating we

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<sup>1</sup>J. Harlan Shores, "Reading Interests and Informational Needs of High School Students," Reading Teacher, 17:536-44, April, 1964.

<sup>2</sup>Charles G. Speigler, "Give Him a Book That Hits Him Where He Lives," Improving English Skills of Culturally Different Youth, Bulletin 1964, No. 5, Doris Gunderson, editor, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, as cited by Lawrence E. Hafner (ed.), Improved Reading in Secondary Schools (New York: MacMillan, 1967), pp. 437-45.

should listen to the students, who say:

The subject has to be worth it to us. We like books about animals, aviation, careers, hobbies, sports, the sea, westerns. We love lots of adventure, plenty of excitement, slews of interesting facts about science and things.<sup>1</sup>

In 1967, Rice and Sellers determined certain interests in student magazine and book reading by the use of a questionnaire answered by a small sample. They observed that the subjects of articles read fall roughly into these categories: history, current events, hobbies and sports, fiction, humor, sex, and dating. Through this study Rice and Sellers reached the impression that books are a much less live option for teen-agers than are periodicals. Their study showed, however, that teen-agers can handle serious reading if they are motivated.<sup>2</sup>

That same year, Emans and Patyk made a study which was primarily concerned with the factors influencing reading interest, not with the nature of the topic itself.<sup>3</sup> However, on the subject of interest they quoted Helen K. Smith, who said:

Books of adventure are the decided favorites of boys, while stories of love and romance lead for girls. According to research, boys also like scientific and technical books, war stories, mysteries, detective stories, some humor, animal and aviation stories, and history. Girls, on the other hand, favor books concerned with home and school life, teen-age problems,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 444.

<sup>2</sup>Richard H. Rice and James E. Sellers, "What Do Teen-agers Read?" International Journal of Religious Education, 37:6,7,38 as cited in Hafner, op. cit., p. 408.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Emans and Gloria Patyk, "Why Do High School Students Read?" Journal of Reading, 10:300-4, February, 1967.

mild types of adventure, and biographies, especially of women. They like poetry better than boys do.<sup>1</sup>

Burton wrote of the reading interests of the early adolescent, stating that he is likely to be overwhelmingly interested in animals and sports.<sup>2</sup> Various types of adventure continued to be of interest to the student through high school. Burton discussed at length and listed many examples in the additional areas of growing up, social problems, historical fiction, biography, poetry, and drama.<sup>3</sup>

Also in 1967, La Rocque in her column brought to the reader new titles which might be of interest to young people. In evaluating the books she discussed, she placed them in certain categories of student interest. She discussed books for the exceptionally proficient high school reader; the student interested in biographical and sociological books; the student interested in science fiction, careers, fine arts, war, romance, and growing up; and finally, books suitable for a particular sex.<sup>4</sup>

In early 1968, Walberg made a study to determine the reading habits and interests of the elite group of students who take physics in high school. As far as the interests in specific areas were determined, he found sex to be a significant factor:

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<sup>1</sup>Helen K. Smith, "A Survey of Current Reading Interests in Grades Ten Through Fourteen," Developing Permanent Interest in Reading, Helen K. Smith (ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 66 as cited in ibid., p. 300.

<sup>2</sup>Dwight L. Burton, Literature Study in the High Schools (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1967), p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 56-226.

<sup>4</sup>Geraldine E. La Rocque, "Book Marks: Books for Widening Horizons," English Journal, 56:1214-23, November, 1967.



Girls indicate more enjoyment for historical novels, mystery stories or novels, literary classics, biographies and autobiographies. Boys more often enjoyed technical or professional books. In order of enjoyment, both boys and girls ranked mystery stories first, and then in order, literary classics, biographies and autobiographies, historical novels, and lastly, technical or professional books.<sup>1</sup>

Walberg felt this was especially surprising for students in physics, many of whom aspire to scientific careers. However, he felt that the students may rightly feel that technical-professional writing is to be referred to or studied rather than enjoyed.<sup>2</sup> Walberg, in his conclusion, noted this limitation: "Notwithstanding the high mental ability and educational aspirations of students in physics, a quarter have not read much nonfiction. A few have not even read fiction outside of school work."<sup>3</sup>

Later that year, Gallo made a survey by questionnaire of 262 eleventh graders in two New York State schools with some of the results as follows:

In the ten-month period preceding the questionnaire, students reported that they had read for their own private reading (not for school work) an average of thirteen books each. The basic groups averaged eleven books each, while the top groups averaged better than twenty books each. Fewer than eight per cent of the students had not read a book on their own. The range within each class was tremendous: in most classes some students had not read a book while others reported fifty or more. In all groups, girls read more than boys, a finding corroborated by all previous research.<sup>4</sup>

In examining the titles reported, Gallo discovered that the majority of all

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<sup>1</sup>H. J. Walberg, "Reading and Study Habits of High School Physics Students," Journal of Reading, 11:332, February, 1968.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 387.

<sup>4</sup>Donald R. Gallo, "Free Reading and Book Reports - An Informal Survey of Grade Eleven," Journal of Reading, 11:533, April, 1968.

titles listed were light fiction and that serious fiction and then true stories generally followed.<sup>1</sup> On the influence of movies Gallo made the following statement: "Movies, contrary to many beliefs, have a positive effect on reading. More than 62 per cent of the students had read a book after seeing the movie version."<sup>2</sup> Gallo did not divide the books into categories, as was done in the present study, but he did note those books which most frequently appeared on the reported listed.

In summary, research has suggested that sex and age are significant factors in student reading interest. Girls read more than boys, but the latter usually has a wider range of interest. Most studies suggest that intelligence is not a factor in interest. Mystery stories, other adventure types, and social science seem to be some of the most popular areas. In a second interest group, biography, science fiction, romance, and sports fiction seem to be grouped, as shown by some studies. Some research suggests that of least interest are humor, war stories, philosophy, classics, westerns, poetry, travel, drama, and sea stories.

Since all studies of student interest have not used a uniform system of categories, it is difficult to combine all of the conclusions about student interest into a single ranking of preference. In addition, other variables in each group studied undoubtedly affect these ranks. Lastly, each study had slightly different objectives, but some of the above conclusions may be observed in the research.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 534.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 535.

## PROCEDURE AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Procedure

In September of 1968, each student in the writer's twelfth grade English classes was instructed to maintain a record of all books read, exclusive of the required classroom materials. No specifications as to the type of material to be read were made, except that the students were asked to read what they wanted to read and what they felt they needed to read. Lists of suggested classics and other works for the college-bound student were posted and made available, but there was no pressure to persuade the students to read from any specified list. Throughout this report the term "classics" has included certain posted works recommended by the American Library Association for college-bound students. It was not the writer's purpose to define "classics" any way but operationally.

The students were aware that their instructor would examine their lists from time to time, but they were told at the beginning of school that they would not be graded on the number of books they read nor on the kind of books they read. They were requested to be honest in recording only those books which were completely read. That they probably did so was evident to the writer upon examination of their reading lists: several books were designated as "incomplete."

The students were responsible for recording the titles of their books as they completed them, and they were given opportunities at various times to list the books in their individual files.

At the end of each grading period and at other times when the schedule permitted, the instructor examined the lists to ascertain the reading progress of the students. Those students whose reading seemed extensive or varied or

both were encouraged to continue, while those whose lists were small were encouraged to find books in which they were interested. The instructor suggested books which he felt might meet the students' interests, but he did not place undue stress upon selecting these books.

To be certain that the students would record all that they had read, they were reminded at the beginning of the second semester that their lists would not be graded as to the number of books read, nor would the instructor evaluate them in any way on the basis of the quality of the books they read and recorded.

Available data consisted of the seventh semester grade point average for each student, the number and types of books read by each student, and the students' statements as to whether or not they planned to attend college in the near future. The students were divided into quarters on the basis of their cumulative grade point averages at the end of the seventh semester.

After the lists had been completed and submitted to the instructor at the end of the school year, the major task was that of assigning categories. In placing the books in categories, the writer of this report assigned priorities. The first priority was that of classics, already defined as including recommended reading for the college bound. This brief list (appendix A) was compiled from lists published by the American Library Association, from other library sources, and from the writer's experience. Upon examining the lists, the writer found other books, in addition to those listed in appendix A, which he felt could best be described as classics. These books were so labeled and were listed in appendix B. Therefore, all books labeled "classic" were those listed in either appendix A or B.

The category of second priority was that of bestseller. As well as

consultation with local librarians, two sources of recent bestsellers were used. Seventy Years of Best Sellers by Alice P. Hackett provided lists of bestsellers from 1957 to 1966. The source for the years 1967 to 1969 was the New York Times Book Review. The importance of bestsellers would seem to be that of demonstrating the students' interest in current literature. On a reading ladder, bestsellers would be near the top. In speaking of the value of current fiction, Rouse said:

Young people need books in the modern idiom, then, to help them work through - emotionally and intellectually - the concerns they feel are important. And any book that helps them to do this will be a good book, whether or not it is admired by the cognoscenti.<sup>1</sup>

From reading in the literature, preliminary assessment of the students' reading lists, and suggestions by the writer's advisor, certain categories were established with which to describe the students' reading. In addition to the two categories already discussed, given below are the categories used to describe the reading and examples from the students' book lists:

1. CLASSICS - Jane Eyre, Othello, Tom Jones
2. BESTSELLERS - Exodus, Topaz, Valley of the Dolls
- FICTION
3. ANIMAL - Old Yeller
4. MYSTERY, SPY, DETECTIVE - Psycho, The Cool Cottontail
5. FANTASY, SUPERNATURAL, SCIENCE FICTION - Martian Chronicles,  
Fahrenheit 451
6. SEA - The Wake of the Red Witch
7. WAR - Von Ryan's Express
8. WESTERN - Rim of the Desert
9. MISCELLANEOUS ADVENTURE
10. CAREER, GROWING UP, FAMILY - Sandy, Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones
11. CURRENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS, HUMAN RELATIONS, MINORITY GROUPS -  
Forgive Us Our Trespasses, All the King's Men, The Child Buyer
12. DRAMA - The Lion in Winter, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
13. HISTORICAL FICTION - Forever Amber, Ben Hur
14. HUMOR - A Time for Laughter

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<sup>1</sup>Rouse, op. cit., p. 49.

15. ROMANCE - All My Love, Sister of the Bride
16. STORY COLLECTIONS - Black Voices
17. MISCELLANEOUS (RELIGIOUS, SPORTS, ETC.) - The Robe

#### NONFICTION

18. AUTOBIOGRAPHY, BIOGRAPHY - The Story of Jim Ryun
19. CAREER - Careers in the Foreign Service
20. PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, MYTHOLOGY, ETHICS - Zen, Wisdom of China
21. POETRY - The Prophet
22. SOCIAL SCIENCE (SOCIAL PROBLEMS, PSYCHOLOGY, EDUCATION, HISTORY, CUSTOMS, ETC.) - Hiroshima, This Crowded Earth
23. SCIENTIFIC - By Apollo to the Moon
24. TECHNICAL - Pen and Ink Drawing
25. MISCELLANEOUS (SPORTS, CRIME, TRAVEL, SUPERNATURAL PHENOMENA, ETC.) - Ghosts of the West, Gymnastics

It is acknowledged that most books could be placed in more than one category; however, the writer attempted consistently to place each book according to its major emphasis. For the many books with which the writer was unfamiliar, several sources of information were used, the most important being card catalogs at the Manhattan Senior High and Public Libraries, consultations with librarians at the local libraries, the Fiction Catalog by H. W. Wilson Company, the Senior High School Library Catalog by H. W. Wilson Company, the Book Review Digest by H. W. Wilson Company, Books for You published by the National Council of Teachers of English, and miscellaneous pamphlets and book lists.

#### The Design of the Study

1. The first step was to ascertain the average number of books read by the students in each group considered. Also of interest were those titles which most often appeared on the students' lists.

2. A bivariate frequency distribution table was constructed showing the per cents of books read by boys and girls in four major categories - classics, bestsellers, fiction, and nonfiction. Next, bivariate frequency tables were constructed for the sub-categories of fiction and nonfiction to

determine what specific type of reading was of most interest to the students. Data in all tables was rounded off to one/tenth of a per cent.

3. A distribution chart was constructed to determine the reading preferences, according to sex, of the college-bound students and those not planning to attend college.

4. According to grade point average, the students were divided into four groups with thirteen boys and eighteen girls in each. One distribution table was made for boys and one for girls, both showing the preference in the four main categories according to quartiles of the grade point average.

5. Next, tables were constructed showing the girls' preferences for the sub-categories of fiction and nonfiction, according to grade point average. Similar tables were constructed for boys.

6. It was expected that examination of the above-described tables would reveal both similarities and differences in the preferences of the various groups classified. It was hoped that answers to the questions asked in the section "Purposes of the Study" would be found. Based on the preceding research, it was assumed that valid conclusions could be made as to student interest in reading.

#### REPORT OF FINDINGS

The first consideration in a study of the data was the amount of reading done by both boys and girls. The fifty-two boys read a total of 424 books for an average of 8.2 each; the seventy-two girls read a total of 885 books for an average of 12.2. These data supported the research which had stated that girls read more than boys. The number of books read by an individual boy ranged from one to thirty-four; the number of books read by

an individual girl ranged from one to forty-three.

Table I illustrates the per cent of reading done in each of the four main categories by both boys and girls. It may be observed that fiction is the area in which most reading was done for both boys (44.4 per cent) and for girls (46.0 per cent). Boys read more nonfiction than girls, but girls read more classics. Both groups placed bestsellers last and read about the same per cent.

Table II on page eighteen shows the preferences by sex of the sub-categories of fiction. In order of preference, boys placed science fiction first, followed by war stories, historical fiction, mystery and detective stories, and humor, which was tied with story collections. Girls preferred growing up and family, romance, science fiction, mystery and detective stories, followed by historical fiction. Both groups shared a lack of interest in animal stories, sea stories, and westerns. Boys also showed little concern for growing up, romance, and drama. Girls seemed not to be as interested in humor and adventure as a whole. Considering the interest in fiction, as seen in Table I, it may be observed that approximately 17.7 per cent of all the reading done by boys was in the area of science fiction. Girls showed no corresponding major interest area in fiction, except that of the major division of classics. It is of interest to note that boys indicated their interest in classics (16.2 per cent) to be only slightly below science fiction. *In neither group did the interest in mystery stories rank as high as was reported in most studies of this type.*

The preferences in nonfiction sub-categories are illustrated in Table III. Boys ranked social science first (41.4 per cent) and autobiography and biography second (32.3 per cent); however, girls reversed that order with



TABLE I  
PER CENT OF BOOKS READ IN MAJOR CATEGORIES  
ACCORDING TO SEX

	PER CENT OF TOTAL (424) READ BY BOYS (52)	PER CENT OF TOTAL (885) READ BY GIRLS (72)
CLASSICS	16.2	23.0
BESTSELLERS	7.7	9.9
FICTION	44.4	46.0
NONFICTION	31.7	20.9
	100.0%	99.8%

TABLE II  
FICTION SUB-CATEGORIES SHOWING THE PREFERENCES  
IN PER CENTS ACCORDING TO SEX

	PER CENT OF TOTAL (190) READ BY BOYS (52)	PER CENT OF TOTAL (407) READ BY GIRLS (72)
ANIMAL . . . . .	2.6	.5
MYSTERY, SPY, DETECTIVE . . . . .	6.3	10.1
SCIENCE FICTION . . . . .	40.0	11.8
SEA . . . . .	.5	.2
WAR . . . . .	11.0	2.9
WESTERN . . . . .	1.6	1.7
MISCELLANEOUS ADVENTURE . . . . .	11.0	1.7
GROWING UP, FAMILY . . . . .	1.0	18.2
CURRENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS, HUMAN RELATIONS . . . . .	2.1	5.9
DRAMA . . . . .	1.6	5.7
HISTORICAL FICTION . . . . .	7.4	8.6
HUMOR . . . . .	4.2	3.7
ROMANCE . . . . .	1.6	15.5
STORY COLLECTIONS . . . . .	4.2	4.2
MISCELLANEOUS . . . . .	4.7	9.3
	99.8%	100.0%

TABLE III  
NONFICTION SUB-CATEGORIES SHOWING PREFERENCES  
IN PER CENTS ACCORDING TO SEX

	PER CENT OF TOTAL (133) READ BY BOYS (52)	PER CENT OF TOTAL (184) READ BY GIRLS (72)
AUTOBIOGRAPHY, BIOGRAPHY . . . . .	32.3	38.6
CAREER, VOCATIONS . . . . .	.7	1.6
PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, MYTHOLOGY, ETHICS . . . . .	4.5	13.0
POETRY . . . . .	3.8	3.8
SOCIAL SCIENCE . . . . .	41.4	31.0
SCIENTIFIC . . . . .	1.5	1.1
TECHNICAL . . . . .	6.7	3.3
MISCELLANEOUS . . . . .	9.0	7.6
	99.9%	100.0%

biography first (38.6 per cent) and social science second (31.0 per cent). Girls read more philosophy, religion, and ethics than boys, but, contrary to most research, girls did not read more poetry than boys. Boys read more social science than girls. Of least interest to both groups were the areas of career and scientific reading. Generally speaking, sex differences showed up less in nonfiction reading than in fiction reading.

Table IV contrasts the reading interest by sex and post-graduate plans. Both boys and girls were divided into groups according to their statements as to whether or not they planned to attend college in the near future. Of the fifty-two boys and seventy-two girls, five boys and fourteen girls said they planned not to go to college. Only the four main categories were considered in table form because of the small sample planning not to attend college. In Table IV it is readily observed that boys rank the four categories in the same order as in Table I on page seventeen. It is likewise observed that college-bound girls rank the categories in the same order. The only group which indicated any change in rank of categories was the group of girls planning not to attend college. The latter group showed a greater interest in nonfiction than in classics, perhaps an indication they felt no need to read in preparation for college.

College-bound boys read 17.5 per cent classics compared to the remaining boys' 4.8 per cent. College-bound girls read 26.2 per cent classics compared to the remaining girls' 13 per cent. Bestsellers were read most by college-bound girls and least by boys planning not to attend college. Fiction was read most by the latter group and least by college-bound girls. The only category in which college-bound girls did not lead college-bound boys was social science. In the group planning not to attend college, the only

TABLE IV  
BIVARIATE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF MAJOR CLASSIFICATIONS  
OF BOOKS READ BY COLLEGE-BOUND AND NON-COLLEGE  
BOUND ACCORDING TO SEX

	BOYS		GIRLS	
	% OF BOOKS (382) READ BY COLLEGE- BOUND (47)	% OF BOOKS (42) READ BY NON- COLLEGE (5)	% OF BOOKS (674) READ BY COLLEGE- BOUND (58)	% OF BOOKS (211) READ BY NON- COLLEGE (14)
CLASSICS	17.5	4.8	26.2	13.0
BESTSELLERS	8.1	2.4	11.3	5.8
FICTION	42.3	69.0*	44.9	49.3+
NONFICTION	32.2‡	23.8‡	17.4‡	31.9‡
	100.1%	100.0%	99.8%	100.0%

\* 62% of this group of books are located in the adventure category.

+ 28% of this group of books are located in the romance category.

‡ In each of the four groups the two sub-categories containing the greatest number of books were biography and social science.

area in which girls did not lead boys was fiction.

There was very little difference in the average number of books read by either boys going to college (8.1) or boys planning not to go to college (8.4). There was, however, a significant difference for girls with those planning not to go to college having an average of 15.1 and college-bound girls an average of 11.6.

The boys were divided into quarters on the basis of their seventh semester grade point averages. The first quarter ranged from 1.305 to 1.931, the second from 1.942 to 2.441, the third from 2.461 to 3.055, and the fourth from 3.187 to 3.794.

In this same manner the girls were divided into quarters. The first quarter ranged from 1.382 to 2.558, the second from 2.617 to 3.000, the third from 3.030 to 3.468, and the fourth from 3.485 to 4.000.

Table V shows the per cent of books in the four main categories read by boys divided according to grade point average. Boys in the upper quarter read the most classics, and boys in the upper two quarters read more classics than boys in the lower two quarters. However, there was no consistent relationship between classics read by boys and grade point average. In the category of bestsellers boys in the first quarter led (11.5 per cent) with the boys in the fourth quarter second (8.7 per cent). The per cent of books in fiction read by the boys in the second quarter (61.6 per cent) was almost double that of the per cent in the first quarter (33.3). Again, boys in the fourth quarter ranked second. In nonfiction, boys in the first quarter had a rather substantial margin over boys in the third quarter, who ranked second. The smallest per cent of nonfiction in the group was read by boys in the fourth quarter. The group with largest average number of books read by each

TABLE V  
PER CENT OF BOOKS READ BY BOYS IN THE FOUR MAIN  
CATEGORIES ACCORDING TO QUARTERS  
OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE

	I BOOKS (96) READ BY 13	II BOOKS (125) READ BY 13	III BOOKS (111) READ BY 13	IV BOOKS (92) READ BY 13
CLASSICS	12.5	8.8	20.7	25.0
BESTSELLERS	11.5	4.0	7.2	8.7
FICTION	33.3	61.6	37.8	42.4
NONFICTION	42.8	25.6	34.2	23.9
	100.1%	100.0%	99.9%	100.0%

individual were those in the second quarter (9.6). Those in the third quarter had an average of 8.5, and boys in the first and fourth had similar averages, 7.4 and 7.1 respectively, with the students in the highest quarter reading the fewest books.

Table VI presents the same data for the girls. Girls in the fourth quarter read the most classics, and girls in the second quarter read the fewest. These results were similar to those found for boys. But in contrast in the bestseller category, girls in the third quarter read the most (12.3 per cent), almost twice that of the lowest (6.8 per cent). In fiction, those in the first quarter read substantially more than the others (62.1 per cent), and those in the fourth quarter read the least (35.7 per cent). In the area of nonfiction, members of the second and third quarters read the most and those in the first the least. Again, as with the boys, those who read the most books were those in the second quarter (13.5). As with the boys, girls in the third quarter ranked second (12.7). Whereas boys in the first and fourth quarters had similar averages, girls in the first and fourth quarters had identical averages (11.5). The number of books in the fiction category read by girls decreased as the grade point average increased. There was a relationship between the per cent of classics read by girls and grade point average, but it was not consistent.

Table VII divides the girls' preferences of fiction into sub-categories in relationship to quarters of their grade point averages. Girls in the first quarter preferred romance (21.9 per cent) and growing up (21.9 per cent), followed by historical fiction (10.9 per cent), and then mystery stories (10.2 per cent). Girls in the second quarter preferred growing up (21.2 per cent), followed by mysteries (14.1 per cent), and then science



TABLE VI  
PER CENT OF BOOKS READ BY GIRLS IN THE FOUR MAIN  
CATEGORIES ACCORDING TO QUARTERS  
OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE

	I BOOKS (206) READ BY 18	II BOOKS (244) READ BY 18	III BOOKS (228) READ BY 18	IV BOOKS (207) READ BY 18
CLASSICS	19.9	13.9	21.9	39.1
BESTSELLERS	6.8	10.7	12.3	9.7
FICTION	62.1	46.3	40.8	35.7
NONFICTION	11.2	29.1	25.0	15.5
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TABLE VII  
 FICTION SUB-CATEGORIES SHOWING GIRLS' PREFERENCES  
 ACCORDING TO QUARTERS OF  
 GRADE POINT AVERAGE

	I BOOKS (128) READ BY 18	II BOOKS (113) READ BY 18	III BOOKS (93) READ BY 18	IV BOOKS (74) READ BY 18
ANIMAL	.8	.9	.0	.0
MYSTERY	10.2	14.1	10.7	2.9
SCIENCE FICTION	8.6	9.6	19.4	10.4
SEA	.0	.0	1.1	.0
WAR	2.3	4.4	3.2	1.4
WESTERN	3.1	.0	2.1	1.4
MISCELLANEOUS ADVENTURE	2.3	3.5	.0	.0
GROWING UP	21.9	21.2	11.8	13.5
CURRENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS	4.7	5.3	6.4	8.1
DRAMA	3.1	7.1	3.2	12.1
HISTORICAL FICTION	10.9	6.2	9.7	9.5
HUMDR	4.7	5.3	2.1	1.4
ROMANCE	21.9	7.9	9.7	22.9
STORY COLLECTION	.8	4.4	9.7	2.9
MISCELLANEOUS	5.5	9.6	10.7	13.5
	100.8%	99.5%	99.8%	100.4%

fiction (9.6 per cent). Those in the third quarter were interested in the same categories in a different order - science fiction (19.4 per cent), growing up (11.8 per cent), and mysteries (10.7 per cent). Girls in the fourth quarter preferred romance (22.9 per cent), growing up (13.5 per cent), and drama (12.1 per cent). Generally speaking, of least interest to girls in all quarters were the various adventure categories, except for science fiction and mystery. Mysteries, while of interest to those in the lower three quarters, were not as popular for girls in the fourth quarter. Growing up was of either first or second rank for girls in all quarters. The greatest interest in romance was shared by those in the first and fourth quarters. Other sub-categories showed more similarity than contrast. The greatest difference in interest was between girls in the first and fourth quarters, with the second and third showing little difference in fiction reading interest. There was a very gradual positive relationship between girls' readings in the area of social problems and human relations and quarters of grade point average.

Table VIII illustrates the boys' preferences of the fiction sub-categories according to quarters of their grade point averages. Boys in the first quarter preferred mystery stories (21.9 per cent), science fiction (12.5 per cent), and war stories (12.5 per cent), and then animal stories (6.3 per cent) and humor (6.3 per cent). Those in the second quarter showed interest in science fiction (55.8 per cent), story collections (10.4 per cent), and war stories (7.8 per cent). Boys in the third quarter preferred science fiction (40.5 per cent), historical fiction (21.4 per cent), and war stories (11.9 per cent). Those in the fourth quarter expressed their preference for science fiction (28.2 per cent), war stories (15.4 per cent), and

TABLE VIII  
 FICTION SUB-CATEGORIES SHOWING BOYS' PREFERENCES  
 ACCORDING TO QUARTERS OF  
 GRADE POINT AVERAGE

	I BOOKS (32) READ BY 13	II BOOKS (77) READ BY 13	III BOOKS (42) READ BY 13	IV BOOKS (39) READ BY 13
ANIMAL	6.3	.0	.0	7.7
MYSTERY	21.9	.0	2.4	10.3
SCIENCE FICTION	12.5	55.8	40.5	28.2
SEA	.0	.0	.0	2.6
WAR	12.5	7.8	11.9	15.4
WESTERN	.0	2.6	2.4	.0
MISCELLANEOUS ADVENTURE	21.9	7.8	11.9	7.7
GROWING UP	3.1	.0	2.4	.0
CURRENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS	3.1	.0	2.4	5.1
DRAMA	.0	2.6	.0	2.6
HISTORICAL FICTION	3.1	3.9	21.4	5.1
HUMOR	6.3	1.3	.0	12.8
ROMANCE	3.1	2.6	.0	.0
STORY COLLECTIONS	.0	10.4	.0	.0
MISCELLANEOUS	6.3	5.2	4.8	2.6
	100.1%	100.0%	100.1%	100.1%

humor (12.8 per cent). Romance was an area of minor interest only to boys in the lower two quarters. Science fiction noticeably led all other fiction areas, regardless of grade point average. Interest in war stories was either second or third for boys in all quarters. The greatest interest in humor was shown by boys in the first and fourth quarters. It would seem that interest in adventure fiction was affected very little by grade point average. However, all boys expressed an extensive interest in adventure fiction, the per cent read ranging from sixty-nine to seventy-five. There was apparently no relationship between grade point average and any sub-category.

Table IX shows the girls' preferences according to grade point average in the nonfiction sub-categories. Girls in the first, third, and fourth quarters showed the largest per cent of interest in biography. Those in the second indicated more interest in social science. Girls in the first, third, and fourth quarters rated the social science area second in interest preference, whereas those in the second quarter rated social science first. For girls in the first and third quarters, biography and social science contained almost eighty per cent of the nonfiction reading interest. Only those in the second and fourth quarters indicated substantial interest in other areas - poetry and philosophy. There was a relationship between reading poetry and grade point average. No other relationships with grade point averages were evident.

Table X on page thirty-one shows the boys' preferences according to grade point averages in the nonfiction sub-categories. Boys in all four quarters showed the greatest interest in the social science area. All four groups indicated their second greatest interest area to be biography. As with the girls, the boys had the same two interest areas, and these comprised

TABLE IX  
NONFICTION SUB-CATEGORIES SHOWING GIRLS' PREFERENCES  
ACCORDING TO QUARTERS OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE

	I BOOKS (23) READ BY 18	II BOOKS (71) READ BY 18	III BOOKS (57) READ BY 18	IV BOOKS (32) READ BY 18
BIOGRAPHY	65.2	29.6	43.9	31.3
CAREER	.0	.0	5.3	.0
PHILOSOPHY	.0	25.3	3.5	12.5
POETRY	.0	1.4	3.5	12.5
SOCIAL SCIENCE	13.0	36.6	37.1	18.7
SCIENTIFIC	.0	.0	.0	6.3
TECHNICAL	.0	4.2	1.8	6.3
MISCELLANEOUS	21.7	2.8	5.3	12.5
	99.9%	99.9%	100.4%	100.1%

TABLE X  
NONFICTION SUB-CATEGORIES SHOWING BOYS' PREFERENCES  
ACCORDING TO QUARTERS OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE

	I BOOKS (41) READ BY 13	II BOOKS (32) READ BY 13	III BOOKS (38) READ BY 13	IV BOOKS (22) READ BY 13
BIOGRAPHY	34.2	34.4	31.7	27.3
CAREER	2.4	.0	.0	.0
PHILOSOPHY	4.9	.0	5.2	9.1
POETRY	4.9	3.1	.0	9.1
SOCIAL SCIENCE	41.4	46.9	34.2	45.4
SCIENTIFIC	4.9	.0	.0	.0
TECHNICAL	2.4	12.5	10.5	.0
MISCELLANEOUS	4.9	3.1	18.4	9.1
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

the predominant interest in reading, ranging from sixty-five to eighty per cent of all that they read. There was a tendency for greater interest in philosophy and poetry by those in the upper quarters, but it was not consistent. There was a slight inverse relationship suggested between interest in biography and grade point average.

One final area of concern was a study of the individual titles which appeared on the students' lists. Boys most frequently listed the following in order of preference: Nineteen Eighty-Four, The Graduate, Lord of the Flies, Gone with the Wind, and Catcher in the Rye. Girls most frequently listed these books in order of preference: Jane Eyre, Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones, Gone with the Wind, Topaz, Rebecca, Catcher in the Rye, Rosemary's Baby, and To Kill a Mockingbird. Combining lists and disregarding sex, the six books which appeared most often in order of preference were Jane Eyre, Gone with the Wind, Nineteen Eighty-Four, Catcher in the Rye, Rosemary's Baby, and Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones. It may be noted that the first four books all appeared on the recommended list for college-bound seniors, that the fifth is a best-seller and recent movie, and that the sixth is a new book about teen-age marriage and growing up.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Summary

Previous research stating that girls read more than boys was supported by this study which reported an average of 8.2 books for boys and 12.2 books for girls. Boys read the major categories in the following order: fiction, nonfiction, classics, and bestsellers. Girls' preferences were ranked fiction, classics, nonfiction, and bestsellers. All students read more fiction



than any other kind of reading. The books most often read by boys were, in order, Nineteen Eighty-Four, The Graduate, Lord of the Flies, Gone with the Wind, and The Catcher in the Rye. Books read most often by girls were, in order, Jane Eyre, Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones, Gone with the Wind, Topaz, Rebecca, Catcher in the Rye, Rosemary's Baby, and To Kill a Mockingbird.

Boys ranked their interest in fiction in this way: science fiction, war stories, historical fiction, mystery stories, and humor. Science fiction, the major interest area in fiction for boys, comprised 17.7 per cent of the total books read by boys. In nonfiction reading, boys preferred first social science and second biography, the two combining for 73.7 per cent of the total nonfiction read by boys.

Girls ranked fiction in this way: growing up, romance, science fiction, mystery stories, and historical fiction. In nonfiction reading girls preferred biography first and second social science, combining for 69.6 per cent of the total nonfiction read. Girls read more philosophy, religion, and ethics than boys but, contrary to most research, not more poetry. It may be concluded that sex differences are slightly more apparent in fiction than in nonfiction.

Girls ranked their preference for classics second, while boys ranked classics third. Of girls' total reading 23.0 per cent was classics, for boys 16.2 per cent. Therefore, it may be concluded that girls tend to read more classics than boys. Girls also read more bestsellers.

There was no consistent relationship between grade point average and the number of classics read by boys or by girls. In the area of fiction, boys indicated the following preferences by quarters of grade point average: I - mystery, and science fiction in II, III, and IV. In the area of fiction,

girls indicated the following preferences by quarters: I - romance and growing up, II - growing up, III - science fiction, and IV - romance. Girls in all quarters were least interested in adventure. For boys there was no relationship between grade point average and per cent of reading in any of the four main categories or in any of the fiction sub-categories. For girls there was an inverse relationship between fiction and grade point average, but there was no relationship between grade point average and any fiction sub-category. Students in the second quarter, both boys and girls, read more than those of any other quarter. Perhaps this fact is an indication of more interest in reading and less in studying for achievement in class.

Boys ranked the four main categories in the same order, regardless of their college plans, however, the interest in fiction was much greater for those planning not to attend college. Girls planning not to attend college ranked the four main categories in the same order as boys. College-bound girls, however, read more classics than those planning not to attend college. The latter's preference was romance fiction.

In nonfiction reading, boys preferred social science whereas girls preferred biography. For girls there was a relationship between poetry reading and grade point average.

### Conclusions

As supported by the literature, girls read more than boys. Also, reading interest, for fiction more than nonfiction, was influenced by sex. Boys preferred science fiction and war stories, whereas girls preferred growing up and romance. This conclusion was supported by the book read most by boys, Nineteen Eighty-Four, and the book read most by girls, Jane Eyre.

One could conclude from this study that intelligence is less significant in reading interest than sex, a fact supported by research. For both sexes there is a direct relationship between reading both classics and best-sellers and planning to attend college. This relationship perhaps indicates their concern about preparation for college. There was also an inverse relationship between reading fiction, excluding bestsellers and classic fiction, and planning to attend college.

Further research needs to be conducted on the basis of post-graduate plans to determine just how they affect the student's reading interest. Additional research also needs to be done in those interest areas where there is a relationship with grade point average.

It would seem from this study that if lists of recommended reading are posted, if assignments allow time for outside reading, and if the teacher encourages individual reading, one need not worry about the reading interests and achievements of most seniors at Manhattan High School.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

Posted list of classics and suggested readings for college-bound seniors

- A ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS by Sherwood  
ACT ONE by Hart  
ACTORS TALK ABOUT ACTING by Funke and Booth  
THE ADVENTURES OF DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA by Cervantes  
THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN by Twain  
AH, WILDERNESS by O'Neill  
ALICE IN WONDERLAND by Carroll  
ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT by Remarque  
ALWAYS THE YOUNG STRANGER by Sandburg  
THE AMBASSADORS by James  
AMERICAN DOCTOR'S ODYSSEY by Heiser  
AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY by Dreiser  
ANGEL STREET by Hamilton  
ANIMAL FORM by Orwell  
ANNE FRANK: THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL by Frank  
ANTIGONE by Sophocles  
ARIEL: THE LIFE OF SHELLEY by Maurois  
ARSENIC AND OLD LACE by Kesselring  
AS YOU LIKE IT by Shakespeare  
ATOMS IN THE FAMILY by Fermi  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENVENUTO CELLINI by Cellini  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK TWAIN by Clemens  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY by Franklin  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY by Steffens
- B THE BARRETS OF WIMPOLE STREET by Besier  
BARUCH: MY OWN STORY by Baruch  
A BELL FOR ADANO by Hersey  
BEN-GURION by St. John  
BEST PLAYS SERIES by Dodd  
BILLY BUDD by Melville  
BISMARCK by Taylor  
THE BOUNTY TRILOGY by Nordhoff-Hall  
BRAVE NEW WORLD by Huxley  
THE BRIDGE OF SAN LUIS REY by Wilder
- C THE CAINE MUTINY by Wouk  
CANNERY ROW by Steinbeck  
THE CANTERBURY TALES by Chaucer  
THE CATCHER IN THE RYE by Salinger  
CAVALCADE by Coward  
THE CHERRY ORCHARD by Chekhov  
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, MARINER by Morison  
CLARENCE DARROW FOR THE DEFENSE by Stone  
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT by Dostoevski  
CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY by Paton  
CYRANO DE BERGERAC by Rostand



## Appendix A (cont.)

- D DAVID COPPERFIELD by Dickens  
DEATH OF A SALESMAN by Miller  
DIARY OF SAMUEL PEPYS by Pepys  
THE DIVINE COMEDY by Dante  
DOCTOR FAUTUS by Marlowe  
DR. SCHWEITZER OF LAMBARENE by Cousins
- E EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS by Adams  
ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE AND THE FOUR KINGS by Kelly  
ELECTRA by Euripides  
ELIZABETH THE GREAT by Jenkins  
ETHAN FROME by Wharton
- F FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD by Hardy  
FATHERS AND SONS by Turgenev  
FIFTH CHINESE DAUGHTER by Wong  
FLUSH: A BIOGRAPHY by Woolf  
THE FORSYTHE SAGA by Galsworthy  
FRANKENSTEIN by Shelley
- G GIANTS IN THE EARTH by Rolvaag  
THE GLASS MENAGERIE by Williams  
GONE WITH THE WIND by Mitchell  
THE GOOD EARTH by Buck  
THE GRAPES OF WRATH by Steinbeck  
THE GREAT GATSBY by Fitzgerald  
GREAT EXPECTATIONS by Dickens  
GREEN MANSIONS by Hudson  
GREEN PASTURES by Connelly  
GULLIVER'S TRAVELS by Swift
- H HAIRY APE by O'Neill  
HARVEY by Chase  
THE HASTY HEART by Patrick  
THE HAUNTED PALACE by Winmar  
HEDDA GABLER by Ibsen  
THE HEIRESS by Goetz  
HENRY DAVID THOREAU by Krutch  
HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY by Llewellyn  
THE HUMAN COMEDY by Saroyan
- I THE ILIAD by Homer  
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST by Wilde  
INHERIT THE WIND by Lawrence and Lee  
I REMEMBER MAMA by Druten  
IVANHOE by Scott
- J J.B. by MacLeish  
JANE EYRE by Bronte  
THE JUNGLE by Sinclair

## Appendix A (cont.)

- K KENILWORTH by Scott  
 KIDNAPPED by Stevenson  
 KING LEAR by Shakespeare  
 KRISTIN LAVRANDATTER by Undset
- L LES MISERABLES by Hugo  
 LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON by Boswell  
 LIFE WITH FATHER by Lindsey  
 LIVES by Plutarch  
 LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL by Wolfe  
 LORD JIM by Conrad  
 LORD OF THE FLIES by Golding  
 LORNA DOONE by Blackmore  
 LUST FOR LIFE by Stone
- M MADAM CURIE by Curie  
 THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT by Giraudoux  
 MAIN STREET by Lewis  
 THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING by McCullers  
 MEN OF MATH by Bell  
 MICROBE HUNTERS by De Kruif  
 THE MILL ON THE FLOSS by Eliot  
 THE MIRACLE WORKER by Gibson  
 MISTER ROBERTS by Heggen and Logan  
 MOBY DICK by Melville  
 THE MOONSTONE by Collins  
 MORTE D'ARTHUR by Malory  
 MY ANTONIA by Cather  
 MY LORD, WHAT A MORNING by Anderson  
 MY SEVERAL WORLDS by Buck
- N NAKED TO MINE ENEMIES by Ferguson  
 NAPOLEAN I by Guerard  
 NORTHWEST PASSAGE by Roberts
- O THE ODYSSEY by Homer  
 OEDIPUS REX by Sophocles  
 OF HUMAN BONDAGE by Maugham  
 OF MICE AND MEN by Steinbeck  
 OKLAHOMA by Rodgers and Hammerstein  
 THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA by Hemmingway  
 OTHELLO by Shakespeare  
 OUR TOWN by Wilder
- P PAUL REVERE by Forbes  
 PEABODY SISTERS OF SALEM by Tharp  
 THE PEARL by Steinbeck  
 PERE GORIOT by Balzac  
 PETER THE GREAT by Grey  
 PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY by Wilde

## Appendix A (cont.)

- P PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD by Synge  
 THE PRAIRIE YEARS by Sandburg  
 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE by Austen  
 PROFILES IN COURAGE by Kennedy  
 PROMISED LAND by Austin  
 PYGMALION by Shaw
- Q QUEEN OF FRANCE by Castellet  
 QUEEN VICTORIA by Strachey  
 QUO VADIS by Sienkiewicz
- R A RAISIN IN THE SUN by Hansberry  
 REBECCA by Du Maurier  
 THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE by Crane  
 THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE by Hardy  
 RICHARD III by Shakespeare  
 ROBINSON CRUSOE by Defoe  
 RVR - THE LIFE OF REMBRANDT by van Loon
- S THE SCARLET LETTER by Hawthorne  
 THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL by Sheridan  
 THE SEA OF GRASS by Richter  
 A SEPARATE PEACE by Knowles  
 SEVEN STORY MOUNTAIN by Merton  
 SHAKESPEARE OF LONDON by Chute  
 THE SOUND AND THE FURY by Faulkner  
 STORY OF MY LIFE by Keller  
 THE STRANGER by Camus  
 THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE by Stevenson
- T TALES AND POEMS OF E. A. POE by Poe  
 TALE OF TWO CITIES by Dickens  
 THE TALISMAN by Scott  
 THEY CALLED HIM STONEWALL by Davis  
 THIS I REMEMBER by E. Roosevelt  
 THE THREAD THAT RUNS SO TRUE by Stuart  
 TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD by Lee  
 TOM JONES by Fielding  
 TREASURE ISLAND by Stevenson  
 THE TREE OF LIBERTY by Page  
 TWELFTH NIGHT by Shakespeare
- U UP FROM SLAVERY by Washington
- V VANITY FAIR by Thackery
- W WAITING FOR GODOT by Beckett  
 WAR AND PEACE by Tolstoy  
 THE WAY OF ALL FLESH by Butler  
 WINDOWS FOR THE CROWN PRINCE by Vining

- W THE WINSLOW BOY by Rattigan  
WINTERSET by Anderson  
WUTHERING HEIGHTS by Bronte
- Y YANKEE FROM OLYMPUS by Bowen  
YEARS AGO by Gordon  
YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU by Hart and Kauffman

## Appendix B

Additional classics read by students but not posted and listed in Appendix A

ANNA KARENINA by Tolstoy  
ARROWSMITH by Lewis  
BABBIT by Lewis  
CANDIDE by Voltaire  
DAVID BALFOUR by Stevenson  
EAST OF EDEN by Steinbeck  
EMMA by Austen  
A FAREWELL TO ARMS by Hemmingway  
FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL by Hemmingway  
THE GOLD BUG by Poe  
HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES by Hawthorne  
LITTLE WOMEN by Alcott  
LITTLE MEN by Alcott  
MAN AND SUPERMAN by Shaw  
MANSFIELD PARK by Austen  
RAMONA by Jackson  
THE RED PONY by Steinbeck  
ROMEO AND JULIET by Shakespeare  
SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON by Wyss  
TOM SAWYER by Twain  
TORTILLA FLAT by Steinbeck  
THE TURN OF THE SCREW by James  
TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST by Dana  
UNCLE TOM'S CABIN by Stowe  
WALDEN by Thoreau  
THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT by Steinbeck

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE UNASSIGNED BOOKS READ  
BY SENIORS AT MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL

by

KENNETH ROSS McCORMIC

B. A., Kansas State University, 1961

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
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Many teachers of English have doubted that assigning book reports was a good way to stimulate and encourage student reading outside the classroom. Teachers have often wondered what books students would read if they were not required to read books from a specified list. This report was a survey of the reading habits of 124 seniors at Manhattan High School for the 1968-69 school year. Information about the reading preferred by the students and discovery of possible relationships between reading and sex, reading and post-graduate plans, and reading and grade point average were purposes of this report. Four main categories were considered in studying the unassigned reading of students; these were classics, bestsellers, fiction, and nonfiction. Sub-categories in fiction and nonfiction were also studied.

Fifty-two boys and seventy-two girls divided into quarters by sex and grade point average comprised the population studied. Each student maintained a reading list for nine months. The individual lists of books were divided into designated categories. On the basis of the totals in the established categories, the books were placed in bivariate frequency distributions which revealed the relationship of the books read to sex, post-graduate plans, and grade point average.

Girls read more books (12.2) than boys (8.2). The three books read most often by boys were Nineteen-Eighty-Four, The Graduate, and Lord of the Flies; whereas girls selected Jane Eyre, Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones, and Gone with the Wind. Fiction was most popular for both boys and girls. Boys seemed most interested in science fiction, war stories, and historical fiction. Girls preferred growing up, romance, and science fiction. Sex differences were slightly more apparent in fiction than in nonfiction. Girls read more classics and bestsellers than boys, and boys read more nonfiction

than girls. Science fiction was of greatest interest to boys in the upper three quarters of grade point average. Either romance or growing up was the major interest for those girls in three of the four quarters based on grade point average. Interest in fiction was greater for those students planning not to attend college. There were many other indications of suggested relationships between reading and grade point average, but the evidence was insufficient to more than suggest a relationship. In nonfiction, social science was of greater interest to boys, whereas girls preferred biography.

The study seemed to indicate that, if seniors are given time and encouragement, their reading interests and achievements need not be an area of undue concern for teachers of English.