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### A Survey of the reading interests of the freshman (1958-59) of Fredonia, Kansas, Junior High School and an annotated list of books recommended for the school library

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A SURVEY OF THE READING INTERESTS OF THE FRESHMAN (1958-59)  
OF FREDONIA, KANSAS, JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND AN  
ANNOTATED LIST OF BOOKS RECOMMENDED  
FOR THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

A Problem Submitted to the Department of Education in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Course in Research Problems 390b

By

Erma Hollingsworth

**PORTER LIBRARY**

KANSAS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

Pittsburg, Kansas

January, 1959

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

The problem involved in this study was to determine the reading interests of the 1958-59 Freshman Class of the Fredonia, Kansas, Junior High School. This was done by means of a questionnaire distributed to the pupils themselves. From the results of the questionnaire and documentary research, the writer has compiled an annotated bibliography of recommended book listings, according to expressed interests, for the school library.

### Need for the Study

Inasmuch as the library of the Fredonia Junior High School was designed to serve only seventh and eighth grade students until the last two years, but now includes the ninth grade, the writer, as librarian, felt the need to know the interests of the new group for which she was required to purchase books.

There was a day when the books every child should know were part of a library collection. Then, the problem was to get the child interested in every book. Now, it is known that it is better to try to serve the reading interests and needs of the child by acquiring books on his reading level that fulfill his needs and interests. Ⓢ

In order to help guide children into worthwhile reading experiences that may help them to develop their ability to live creatively and effectively in society, this study was made.

### Setting of the Study

The Freshman Class of the Fredonia, Kansas, Junior High School is composed of eighty-nine students, part of a total enrollment of 250 in the junior high school. A descriptive classification, according to mental abilities, as rated by the Hoizinger-Crowder Uni-Factor Test, Form A M, follows: three rated very superior, fourteen superior, thirty-three average, twenty-eight low average, and eleven inferior.

These students are attending a school that not only emphasizes scholastic achievement, but also makes outstanding records in debate over the state. Eleven members of this class are debating and rating among the highest in competition with schools of any size. During the last two years honorable mention has been received for journalism entries. The school has an active Vocational Agriculture Department which wins many honors each year. Fourteen boys of the Freshman Class are members of this group. The basketball and football teams win their share of the games. Thirteen Freshman boys were out for football, and twelve boys are now playing basketball. The school also has a good band and the vocal music department wins many firsts at the Music Festival each spring.

About twenty per cent of the students' parents live on farms; over twelve per cent are in professional work; approximately thirty per cent own businesses or are employed around the Square; and approximately thirty-eight per cent are employed at one of the hometown industries. The cement plant employs the most people. Other places of employment are: Kansas Bank Note, three grain elevators, brick plant, two alfalfa mills, and at least two turkey farms. The Rayonon Turkey Farm ships turkeys everywhere; about 3,000 were in the last shipment. The Kansas Bank Note sells forms of checks all over the world.

Most of the people own their own homes so there is little shift in the school population. Most of the homes are in good repair and many new ones are being built.

The town evidences interest in its youth by sponsoring a year round recreational program.

Both the wide range in I.Q. and the wide range of environmental factors would seem to account for some of the unusual number of reading interests checked by each student.

### Research Design

Educators have realized the importance of the functions of research design in carrying out studies. Jahoda, Deutsch, and Cook (7:28) have outlined these functions in the following manner: "The functions of research design are to reduce errors and to economize the expenditure of effort in the collection of relevant evidence." The manner in which these

functions are fulfilled, however, will vary, depending upon the purpose of the specific investigation.

Although any typology of research study is inevitably arbitrary, it nevertheless seems possible to classify an investigation crudely in terms of its major intent: (1) as a formulative or exploratory study when its prime purpose is the formulation of a problem for more precise investigation, or the development of hypotheses, or the establishment of priorities for further research; (2) as a descriptive or diagnostic study when it has the function of assessing the characteristics of a given situation; or (3) as an experimental study when it has the function of testing hypotheses. (7: 28-29)

Both the documentary and the normative survey methods of research were used for the purpose of conducting this study.

The Documentary Method of Research. The documentary method of research involves the use of records that already exist. The first step is to locate the materials which possibly may help the writer identify his problem and refine it for his use. The second step is to sort and cull any material which does not apply to his problem. The third step is to collate and organize the material by establishing headings. The fourth step is to synthesize sections with his own report.

Having selected a problem for investigation the investigator must seek sources of information. The Educational Index, the library card catalog,

and secondary sources will be those first consulted.

But the preparation of a scientific report involves much more than even a careful reading of secondary sources. In serious research one will search for documentary evidence and original sources. Among the aids available to the student are bibliographies of various kinds, encyclopedias, source collections, and numerous periodicals. Data may be found in court records, legislative enactments, diaries, newspapers, memoirs, private correspondence, and other contemporary records. Beginning with indexes, bibliographies, and general references one works deeper and deeper into his subject; each source is scanned for evidence of yet other sources until every possible available source of information has been examined. (2:216)

In establishing a working bibliography, the writer includes all items of research information available from the worker's past experience in reading, other courses, and research, as well as all new reports related to the problem under study.

Educational research draws upon current events to a large extent, although documentary research is necessary if we are to understand how they came about. Studies of the past help the researcher extend the intellectual horizons by indicating how things have originated and how these may have affected the present. From these files one will find attitudes, values, and emotionalized values which almost have a history. It is necessary to understand this particular history if the behavior of the investigation is to be understood. (2:311-12)

Documents that have been gathered can and are used in many different ways by different individuals. The same

diaries and autobiographical records will have entirely opposite information available to researchers working in two or more fields of research. For that reason the individual making the research must use material available that will make the problem he is working on more important and understandable.

The beginning graduate student has many things he needs to learn about collecting documentary materials. He must be cautioned against copying materials for theses or papers which he himself does not understand. He may think that because the material was published it is authentic. This could be wrong. If the manuscript has no meaning for the student, he will not likely reproduce material that has meaning to the reader. (6:593)

Every professional school person can use the documentary method of research to an excellent advantage by simply explaining that current practice originated in attempts to meet needs of the past. This often leads the way to consideration of new ways to meet the needs of the present. This information also helps the professional educator perform three duties: evaluation of present practices, prediction of trends and avoidance of mistakes. (1:321)

To gain the desired information on the reading interests of the Freshman Class (1958-59), the writer used the normative survey method of research.

The Normative-Survey. The normative-survey is essentially a method of quantitative description of the general characteristics of the group. A normative-survey seeks to answer the question: "What are the real facts with regard to the existing conditions?"

<sup>Some of the</sup>  
^ Tools that may be used under normative-survey are: check lists, interviews, and questionnaires. Results of data obtained by the typical questionnaire is generally achieved through tabulation and counting. Refinement of results in tabular form in totals, percentages, or averages, and calculation of coefficients of correlation often is made in order to suggest relationships among data. The writer used a questionnaire consisting of check lists to secure the data for this study. Tabulations were made for easy interpretation of the results.

The questionnaire is a systematic compilation of questions that are submitted to a sampling of population from which information is desired. (2:65)

The questionnaire is used when the interview would be costly or difficult to arrange. It is possible to make contacts with large numbers of people that otherwise could not be reached through the interview. "Information of a personal nature often may be obtained more readily by means of a questionnaire, especially if the respondent is permitted to omit his signature or if specifically assured that his replies will be regarded as confidential." (2:66)



In forming the questionnaire one must have a clear purpose in mind so that he will ask questions in a desirable fashion. He must see how each question fits into a pattern of essential knowledge about the problem on which the questionnaire has been based. It is important that each question can be interpreted properly by the receiver. According to Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook (8:425) the questionnaire can be composed of questions that may be answered either by check responses or free responses. The check responses are most satisfactory when the questions that are asked require answers which are fact. They require less skill than free answers; are easier for respondents; and above all, they enormously facilitate tabulation and analysis operations. (8:426)

According to Good and Scates, (6:606)

The questionnaire tends to standardize and objectify the observations of different enumerators by singling out particular aspects of the situation (regarded as significant to the purpose of the study), and by specifying in advance the units and terminology for describing the observations. The survey blank is a device for isolating one element at a time and thus intensify the observation of it. A questionnaire is a form prepared and distributed to secure responses to certain questions; as a general rule, these questions are factual, intended to obtain information about conditions or practices of which the respondent is presumed to have knowledge. The questionnaire has been used increasingly, however, to inquire into the opinions and attitudes of a group.

Good, Barr and Scates (5:246) state that the data coming from the field represent field conditions; they tend to be practical because they grow out of practical situations and they generally answer the questions of the man in the field because they are likely to be cast in the terms in which he thinks.

Procedure. In gathering documentary material for this study, the writer used the resources that were found in the library which included magazines, books, pamphlets, and surveys. The books were obtained from the Fredonia City Library, The Fredonia High School and Junior High School Libraries, and Porter Library, Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg, Kansas.

A check-list questionnaire was constructed by the writer and administered to the forty-six girls and forty-three boys of the Freshman Class. The questionnaire was administered in the three sections of the Freshman English class. One section is taught by the writer and the other two sections are taught by Willard Schrag, teacher and minister.

The data from the questionnaire were tabulated and are presented in this paper.

Documentary study of the materials already published helped identify data from the questionnaire and locate the books for the annotated bibliography. By research, the writer identified and compared the reading interests of teenagers through the years and the modern youth with the interests reported by the Freshman Class of the Fredonia, Kansas, Junior High School.

#### Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study and some of the limitations are listed below:

1. The survey included only the Freshman Class (1958-59), composed of eighty-nine students, part of a total enrollment of 250 students in the Fredonia, Kansas, Junior High School.

2. In compiling the related research for this study, the writer was unable to find information of an identical nature. However, in all the materials examined, not only the importance of determination of reading interests was accentuated, but also the great need for an extension and refinement of investigation in this field. Of even greater importance was the need for studies which identified latent as well as developed interests and those which were the product of the environment such as movie and television productions and the availability of the books.

3. No definite distinction of reading interests was made according to age or mental ability.

4. The short length of time spent on the study was a limitation.

5. The writer's inexperience with research and interpretation of results was the greatest limitation.

6. *Expressed interests of the sample were investigated. No data on latent interests of persons not interested in reading.*

## RELATED RESEARCH

Today's World a Reading World

Gagliardo (4:35) has stated that in some areas recognition of the essentiality of books followed Russia's launching of Sputnik I; in other regions--and certainly in Kansas--the necessity for more and more good books to satisfy the varying needs and abilities of children and youth is no new thing. Frank Glenn compared serious reading in Russia, which he himself has witnessed, with serious reading in the United States. His observations should give pause to every educator. The United States has one book to every 60,000 persons; U.S. S.R. has one to every 10,000. Book publishing in Russia far exceeds that in the United States with far more serious publishing overseas. Mr. Glenn saw many farm homes with several hundred books in each but few electric dishwashers, and every place people were seen reading, in buses, at stations, on trains.

'If we do lose the war of ideas, the cold war,' said Mr. Glenn, 'we must remember we can freeze to death as well as burn to death.' Frank closed his speech with these ominous words of Bulganin: 'Russia is not interested in stockpiling gold; we are stockpiling brains, and when the history of the last half of the Twentieth Century is written, it will be found that the nation with the largest stockpile of brains will have other nations crawling at its feet.' (4:35)

We Americans believe it takes more than buried gold and a stockpile of brains for the survival of mankind. We believe in stockpiling Christianity and love of fellow-men above all else. However, today's world is a reading

world. Today's child is born into a reading world. In this country, with universal education well established as a goal, tomorrow's citizen who cannot read will be out of step with his fellowman. Reading is needed at home, at school, in the shop, in the factory, or on the street. In a complex modern society, reading is even more important than formerly, as a means of emotional release, as a way of extending experiences, and as a source of information.

#### The Need to Find an All Absorbing Reading Interest

Carlson (3:134) says that each person must discover that reading is an absorbing and a fascinating activity. For most individuals this discovery comes late in childhood or early adolescence. It comes when the individual has developed enough competence in reading skills so that these do not interfere with his interaction with the reading material. It usually comes when the individual has gained some maturity in his own living so that his interests have some stability. He finds a focal point for reading that meets a need he has.

Sometimes the interest crystallizes around a type of book. Numbers of young people become absorbed in animal stories. Others become avid readers of space fiction, or of sea stories. A few find their love in a historical period as the Ante-Bellum South. Others discover a particular tonality or quality; they want books that give a warm secure feeling in their relationship between people. Or the first

exciting reading interest may crystallize around informational books. A young person may discover the joy of reading when he wants to know everything there is to know about snakes or jets, or the stars and planets.

Surveys of the reading interests of adolescents show us something about the kinds of things to suggest to young people at various stages of their development. Interests have remained fairly constant over the fifty-year period that they have been studied. They show singularly few geographic variations. Young people in Texas and in Minnesota find pleasure in the same type of book at approximately the same periods of their lives. Thus by knowing the basic patterns of reading interest, we can make some shrewd guesses in suggesting books to boys and girls who come to us. (3:135)

Boys and girls should be told that a book should interest them to be worthwhile. After reading a chapter or so, if they do not like it, return it, and try something else. Students who have not done a lot of reading may begin with books we might consider too immature for them. We must be tactful in finding a student's interest and adding to its growth. A question we might ask him is: "If you could have a story written just for you, what would it be about?"

In helping young people find a satisfying reading experience we must keep in mind some possible false assumptions. We have assumed that a person's general interest will coincide with his reading interests. We may try to feed a football

player sports stories, but he may want to read books about space or deep sea diving.

We should not be too concerned with the quality of books young people read. Students from rich or poverty-stricken reading backgrounds alike seem to go through periods of reading "trash" literature. Most of us have gone through Zane Grey and others and feel that it served a real function in developing our love of reading.

To be sure when a student is in the middle of a reading interest, we do try to build reading ladders within it by suggesting to him books of increasing subtlety within the area. For the readers of Silver Chief, we suggest that he try Big Red, then Old Yeller, moving slowly to things like Good Bye My Lady. All are dog stories, but each one is a bit more significant in its dealing with dog and human beings.

With every reader, there is a crucial stage when he comes to the end of an interest. Either he outgrows the type of book he has been reading (he may simply become tired of it) or he finally has read everything available. Perhaps more readers are lost at this point than any other, because the individual does not bridge the gap between one reading interest and another. (3:136)

Carlsen (3:136) says that here is a spot where the professional worker may serve a vital function. The young reader needs constant exposure to the many avenues in reading that can be opened to him. Nothing is more discouraging than shelves of books classified by the Dewey Decimal system when one is looking for something interesting to read but does not know what specifically. Consequently, small selections of books attractively displayed are needed. One

library used a shelf in every stack of books for display purposes. With a background picture or a few symbolic objects, the librarian displayed ten or more books on a single subject such as the sea, mountain climbing, acting, or dark mysterious happenings. Table tops and window sills occasionally can be used in the same way. Thus, the reader constantly sees before him a handful of books selected around a particular theme and through this exposure he may find the impetus he needs when he is in the period of hunting for a new reading interest. Bulletin boards may serve a similar function.

Sometimes extrinsic devices will give the teenager suggestions of directions that he may want to take. However, the jump from one interest to another may be the result of an accidental work, but there are a few things that can be done to scatter sparks for young people. (3:136)

Reading is usually thought of as an intensely personal affair; it apparently is a basically social activity. Time after time people mention the influence of an aunt, a friend, a librarian, or a teacher who influenced their reading interests.

One has to examine one's own reading habits to realize the importance of the interaction between persons in determining what one reads. Through discussion and exchange of books, most of us find the things that we want to read. If we are away from people who talk about, own, and lend books, most of us taper off severely in our reading. (3:137)



We must plan opportunities for students to discuss books and share their enthusiasms for them. We have tried book reports in every conceivable form, but they are almost a threatening situation, as too often they are tied into a class performance that the teacher is judging for a scholastic rating (grade). We wonder how many youth are driven away from reading rather than toward it. The student needs a situation in which he can discuss his book informally with his peers. He also needs an enthusiastic adult who shares his interest when he is ready for the next step on his reading ladder.

The English teacher may help create interest by occasionally bringing an arm load of attractive books to class and reading selections of special interest to the class. Keeping up with the books that are made into movie or TV productions will center the interest of the whole group in a channel with his family, community, and nation. (3:137)

A teacher may call attention to a group of books about people who are faced with important decisions to make, and bring about a class discussion of the factors that determined the decision. On the subject of conflict in human relations, the students might have a very interesting and normal discussion as to cause and how the pupils worked them out. A panel discussion might be held on what differentiated a good science fiction or space books from poor ones. This all takes careful planning and a wide personal knowledge of books on the

part of the teacher. For only through knowing first-hand many of the books that youth read can she help them move from one stage of reading maturity to another.

Carlsen (3:139) says:

For most people, reading is an enjoyable activity. There is nothing magical or profound in stimulating and guiding the reading interests of an individual. If we have books and make them easily available, if we can know books so that we can help the individual find an initial interest in reading, if we can help bridge the gap between one reading interest and another, if we bring to bear the social interaction between people in regard to reading, we can develop enthusiasm for books that will exceed our greatest expectancies.

According to a study made by Lazar, (10:99-103) of students between the ages of twelve to fifteen, broader interests are exhibited in their social and natural environment.

History, biography, and adventure become increasingly interesting; books and articles on hobbies, how to make things, and specialized interests, are read widely; furthermore fiction of the sensational and mystery types is very popular. A more detailed analysis of published evidence shows that reading interests at any one level merge gradually into those of another, varying with such factors as mental age, sex, background of experience, home influence, and availability of materials.

By the age of fifteen, reading interests of both sexes are more or less definitely established. As indicated by the results of various studies, boys prefer newspapers and current events, accounts of sports, and materials relating to topics of special interests in the field of vocational activities. Girls express increasing interest for biography, books of humor, the all-fiction type of magazine, and poetry.

Reading Related to Mental Ability

Thorndike (12:2) says that the following generalizations seem warranted by previous studies of children of different intelligence levels:

1. Bright children do more reading than average children, and these in turn do more reading than slow children.

2. If books are classified into types according to subject, it is found that the most frequent choices of bright, average, and dull children fell in the same categories. In the upper elementary grades, adventure and mystery stories in the case of boys and these, together with home and school stories in the case of girls, account for the largest fraction of choices for all levels of intelligence.

3. The reading of the bright children, however, includes a wider range of titles and higher quality materials.

4. Very bright children are differentiated from average children less by the material which they read than by the age at which they read it.

Terman and Lima, as recorded in Monroe, (11:983) reported that gifted children read more science, history, biography, travel, folk tales, nature and animal stories, informational material, and less "emotional fiction and stories of adventure and mystery."

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study was made in an effort to determine the reading interests of the forty-six girls and the forty-three boys of the Freshman Class (1958-59) of the Fredonia, Kansas, Junior High School. The expressed interests are to be used as a basis for purchasing new books for the school library. A check-list type of questionnaire was administered in the Freshman English classes. The students were asked to give honest answers and opinions, state their sex, and leave the questionnaire unsigned.

Question No. 1 asked each student to list the title of his favorite book. Table I lists the fourteen most popular favorites and indicates the number of times each was chosen by each sex.

TABLE I

FAVORITE BOOKS OF EIGHTY-NINE FRESHMEN STUDENTS  
(1958-59) OF FREDONIA, KANSAS,  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Title of Book	Boys (N = )	Title of Book	Girls (N = )
Air Force	3	Angel on Skis <sup>1</sup>	2
Black Beauty	4	Angel Unaware	4
Black Stallion	4	Black Beauty	4
Call of the Wild	2	Black Stallion	4
Comanche, Seventh	2	Cow Girl Kate	2

(Cont'd)

TABLE I (Cont'd)

Title of Book	Boys	Title of Book	Girls
Jets Away	2	Doctor Kate	2
Kon-Tiki	3	Family Shoes	2
Old Yeller	2	Fifteen	4
Over the Hurdles	3	Little Women	5
Pilot Jack Knight	3	More Than Glamour	2
Rifles for Wattie	3	Sayonara	4
Stock Car Racer	2	Seventeenth Summer	3
Wahoo Bobcat	4	Trish	3
White Falcon	2	The Yearling	3

Little Women was checked most often by the girls with Angel Unaware, Black Beauty, Black Stallion and Sayonara as well as Fifteen listed the next highest number of times. Black Beauty, Black Stallion, and Wahoo Bobcat were the three most popular favorites of the boys.

Of the girls' most popular favorite books, Little Women, Angel Unaware, and Sayonara are not now in the library. All of the boys' most popular favorites are in the school library, but the copy of Black Beauty is an old one.

Table II compares the favorite books of the Fredonia Freshmen (1958-59) with the favorite books of Freshmen in the state of Kansas, according to a survey made by LaVerne

Carroll in 1957. A high correlation is evident.

TABLE II

FAVORITE BOOKS OF KANSAS FRESHMEN (1957) COMPARED  
WITH FAVORITE BOOKS OF FREDONIA  
FRESHMEN (1958-59)

Top Choices of Kansas Freshmen (N = )	Top Choices of Fredonia Freshmen (N = 89)
Hot Rod	*Black Stallion
Gone With the Wind	*Angel Unaware
Street Rod	Black Beauty
*Black Stallion	*Little Women
*Angel Unaware	Fifteen
*Seventeenth Summer	Sayonara
Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo	Wahoo Bobcat
*Little Women	*Seventeenth Summer

\*Marks the titles that were the same in both surveys.

Four of the eight top favorites were the same titles; also, fifteen of the thirty total titles were the same. Availability of the books and environmental influences would have some effect on their choices.

The writer asked the respondents to list the types of books they would choose for the school library, if they could not recall any titles. Table III lists the types of books suitable for a school library, according to the students' opinions.

TABLE III

## FAVORITE TYPE OF BOOK WHEN TITLE IS NOT KNOWN

Type of Book	Boys (N = )	Girls (N = )	Total (N = 89)
Animal, Jungle	2		2
Aviation	2		2
Biography	6	9	15
Information on Cars	3		3
Cartooning	2		2
Dog Stories	3	4	7
Horse Stories	4	5	9
Current Science	4		4
More Science		2	2
Sports	6		6
Romance		3	3
Skiing, Surf		1	1
Weather	1		1

Books of biography were preferred by both boys and girls. Horse stories ranked second in popularity and dog stories ranked third. Some additional recommendations were: historical novels, etiquette, armed forces information, F.B.I., and journalism.

The next section of the questionnaire listed areas of personal growth and development. The respondents were asked to check the areas on which they felt there should be some information (books) available in the school library. Table IV shows the responses to this section.

TABLE IV

AREAS OF INFORMATION ON PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT  
DESIRABLE FOR THE SCHOOL LIBRARY

Area of Information	Boys (N= )	Girls (N= )	Total (N= 89)
Inspirational	25	30	55
Social	22	26	48
Dating	23	38	61
Etiquette	20	38	58
Personality	25	35	60
Self-control	23	39	62
Occupational	30	34	64

Books of information about occupations were chosen most often by the boys with books of inspiration (ideals and moral values) ranking second. The girls were more interested in books of information on dating, etiquette, self control, and occupations.



Nineteen fields of personal reading interest were listed in the next section of the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to check those in which they were most interested so that books containing information to satisfy these interests might be placed in the school library. Table V lists the fields of interest with the number of students interested in each field.

TABLE V

FIELDS OF PERSONAL READING INTEREST  
OF FREDONIA FRESHMEN (1958-59)

Fields of Personal Interest	Boys (N= )	Girls (N= )	Total (N= 89)
Astronomy	6	9	15
Satellites	10	3	13
Space Travel	11	5	16
Airplanes	24	1	25
Rockets and Guided Missiles	12	2	14
Television	10	15	25
Hi-Fi	4	15	19
Radio	13	7	20
Photography	7	15	22
Rocks, Sea Shells	6	10	16
Insects	6	4	10
Snakes	0	0	0
Birds	10	12	22

(Cont'd)

TABLE V (Cont'd)

Fields of Personal Interest	Boys	Girls	Total
Animals	18	22	40
Plant Life	6	8	14
Weather	9	2	11
Chemistry	10	8	18
Desert Life	0	0	0
Gardening	4	14	18

More students were interested in information about animals than any other field listed. Airplanes and television were the next two highest ranking fields of interest.

The respondents were given the opportunity of listing of fields of interest on which they would like to have books of information. The boys listed medicine, science, sports, skin diving, radar, cars, and money making ideas. The girls wished information on the United Nations, art, science, drama, nursing, and medicine.

As pointed out before, the junior high student is more eager to read books of information than any other age.

A third section of the questionnaire was concerned with recreational reading. This section was divided into three parts: books on sports, books of fiction, and books on hobbies.

Table VI shows the sports which the students are most interested in reading about.

TABLE VI

## SPORTS ABOUT WHICH FRESHMAN STUDENTS WISH TO READ

Sport	Boys (N= )	Girls (N= )	Total (N=89)
Baseball	20	11	31
Basketball	20	17	37
Football	23	11	34
Swimming	24	24	58
Tennis	12	26	38
Track	21	11	32
Diving	25	28	53
Skiing (water)	17	32	59
Surf Riding	12	20	32

More students were interested in reading about water skiing than any other one sport. This can probably be accounted for by the fact that most of the students spend a part of every Sunday at Fall River Dam on the lake throughout the summer and early fall where they participate in all kinds of water sports.

The respondents were given an opportunity to add other sports about which they would like to read. The boys listed

wrestling, bowling, boat racing, car racing, and rodeo. The girls added ice skiing, hockey, golf, and volley ball.

In the section of the questionnaire concerned with recreational reading, the writer listed ten types of fiction and asked the respondents to check those in which they were most interested. These are shown in Table VII.

TABLE VII

## TYPES OF FICTION MOST INTERESTING TO FRESHMEN STUDENTS

Type	Boys (N= )	Girls (N= )	Total (N= 89)
Humor	15	24	39
Horse Stories	20	25	45
Dog Stories	15	20	35
Science Fiction	15	5	20
Romance	5	30	35
History Fiction	18	6	24
Biography	17	18	35
Travel	8	6	14
Adventure	28	20	48
Mystery	25	25	50

Mystery stories were the most popular with both the boys and the girls. Horse stories ranked second with the boys; romance rank second with the girls, but, according to the totals, horse stories ranked second.

In the third part of the section concerned with recreational reading, the respondents were asked to check the hobbies in which they are most interested and about which they would like to have some books on file in the school library. Table VIII lists the hobbies and the number interested in each.

TABLE VIII

## HOBBIES ABOUT WHICH FRESHMEN STUDENTS WISH TO READ

Hobby	Boys (N= )	Girls (N= )	Total (N= 89)
Crafts	6	8	14
Paper Sculpture	1	4	5
Ceramics	1	10	11
Leather Tooling	17	6	23
Cartooning	8	15	23
Sketching	6	17	23
Woodcraft	19	1	20
Wirecraft	3	3	6
Collections	8	17	25
Stamp Collections	9	16	25
Coin Collections	8	14	22
Magic Tricks	4	7	11
Puppets and Marionettes	2	8	10
Square Dancing	6	25	31

(Cont'd)

TABLE VIII (Cont'd)

Hobby	Boys	Girls	Total
Needle Work	0	17	17
Camping	20	15	35
Fishing, Hunting, Trapping	34	5	39
Tricks, Stunts, Skits	9	19	28

Outdoor life, fishing, hunting, and trapping, received the most checks from the boys while the girls checked a wide range of hobbies, showing a high rate of interest in each. When given an opportunity to list others, the boys added model planes, electronics, rifles, and target shooting; the girls added dancing, dramatics, ballet, etching, and horse-back riding.

The information in this section will be of special help to the writer as there were no books on hobbies in the library two years ago when the writer first became librarian.

#### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### Summary

"Never again in his life does the average individual read as many books in one year as he reads at this time." (9: 27) The junior high age level affords ample opportunity for reading guidance and for motivation toward good, discriminate,

and varied reading. It offers as well a challenge to attempt to establish an enjoyment of reading that will be continued in the adult years.

The writer realizes that although the importance of reading depends upon the cultural patterns of the community, and that the causes of reading can be explained by individual and group motives, there should be a similar pattern or trend of interest for each level of maturity.

A knowledge of the general trends is helpful to a teacher in allowing him to anticipate the interests of his pupils, but it does not relieve him of the responsibility of trying to discover the particular interest of each pupil.

Interests are characterized by voluntary self-identification with some activity. Upon his own volition a child develops interest in books, newspapers, radio programs, movies, personal hobbies, and in activities related to various fields of study.

The value of a pupil's interests for the general aim of education lies primarily in his motivation. This must be discovered and appropriately related to school activities because of the emotional satisfactions involved. A wide variety of wholesome interests tend to affect school activities favorably.

The more thoroughly librarians know the full range and the possibilities of individual reading, the more wisdom can be exercised in book selection and the more effectively can library service be carried on.

From Dr. Waples's (11:38) intensive investigation of reading interests this truth emerges: "Most literate people read many kinds of material for many different reasons." The goal of a librarian may be summed up in a slogan similar to this: To supply the right book to the right reader at the right time. "This involves knowledge of the extent and character of the reader's demands, knowledge of books that meet those demands, and satisfaction of those demands in terms of the highest book values." (11:38)

### Conclusions

All things being equal, availability of books is a vital factor in promoting reading interests. Difficulty of comprehension also affects the pupil's interest in what is read. Books that are within the pupil's grasp are discussed more freely, are completed in a larger percentage of cases, and serve more frequently as a point of departure for additional reading than is true of material that cannot be understood readily by the pupils.

Interests have remained fairly constant through the years. Regardless of the geographical location, young people find pleasure in the same type of book at approximately the same time of maturity.

As was brought out by all the surveys in this study, information such as history, biography, hobbies, sports, "how to do it" books, personality, and special interests are avidly read. Fiction of the sensational type is very popular.



The special interest shown in animal stories, in this study, came as a surprise to the writer. Television and movie productions have a great influence on the current interests of students.

Probably the most important single finding about reading interests is their intensity and tremendous range of individual choices at this age.

### Recommendations

Since this study was limited to only one group of Freshmen students, the writer recommends that a similar survey be made each year for the next few years and comparisons made.

The writer recommends that, in order to provide for the expressed reading interests of the Freshman Class of 1958-59, the following books be added to the library:

#### Personal Growth and Development.

Armstrong, David. Questions Boys Ask. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1955. 160 pp.

Based on talks with boys and on consultations with youth leaders, teachers and others.

Carnell, Betty. Teen-Age Popularity Guide. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953. 146 pp.

A guide for the social problems of teen age youth.

Gregor, Arthur. Time Out for Youth. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951. 235 pp.

A discussion of teen-age problems which treats such vital subjects as relations with family, teachers, and fellow students.

Jenkins, Gladys G. Teen-agers. New York: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1955. 288 pp.

The story of how teen-agers mature, the problems they have are answered for either sex.

Jonathan, Norton. Guide Book for the Young Man About Town. Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1948. 239 pp.

The way to more popularity and personality for modern young men.\*

Post, Emily. Etiquette, the Blue Book of Social Usage. New York: Funk and Wagnells Company, 1955. 671 pp.

Comprehensive, authoritative guide covering principles of good taste as well as details of good etiquette.\*

#### Books of Information for Personal Reading Interests.

Bendick, Jeanne and Robert. Television Works Like This. (Rev. ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1954. 64 pp.

They have combined full knowledge and long experience in television with the unique ability to illustrate factual material in simple drawings understandable to all ages.\*

Canby, Edward. High Fidelity and the Music Lover. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, Inc., 1958. 302 pp.

It gives basic information on the components, construction, and operation of high-fidelity systems, but it is written primarily for the person interested in high quality reproduction of music. Examples of low priced equipment are included; two chapters cover tape recorders.\*\*

Gantz, Kenneth, ed. The United States Air Force Report on the Ballistic Missile. New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1958. 338 pp.

A compilation of material written mostly by officers concerned with the design, development, and production of the ballistic missiles in use or proposed by the U. S. Air Force.\*

\*West, Dorothy and McConnell, Marian. Standard Catalog for High School Libraries. New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1957. pp. 136, 137, 162.

\*\*Vanek, Edna, ed. The Booklist. Chicago: American Library Association, September, 1958. pp. 12, 40, 48.

Gould, Jack. All About Radio and Television. New York: Random House, Inc., 1953. 143 pp.

The author explains how a television wave is made, how to send and receive waves, how a picture is changed into electricity, and how to communicate with the moon by radar.\*

Krieger, Firmin. Behind the Sputniks: A Survey of Soviet Space Science. Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1958. 380 pp.

Composed almost entirely of translations of articles and papers from available Russian literature.\*\*

McCausland, Elizabeth. Careers in the Arts, Fine and Applied. New York: John Day Co., Inc., 1950. 278 pp.

A survey of the whole art field to help the beginning artist learn where he can best apply his talents. Complete coverage.\*

Shapley, Harlow, ed. A Treasury of Science. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958. 776 pp.

About fifty pages are added with new articles on radio, astronomy, the origin of life and possibility of life on other planets, rocket and space travel developments and atomic energy.\*\*

#### Books About Sports.\*\*\*

Bancroft, Jessie H. Games. (Rev. and enl. edition of Games for the Playground, Home, School and Gymnasium) New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937.

A guide to play--activities, games, and sports of all kinds.

Bonner, M. G. How to Play Baseball. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1955.

A guide for young readers who want to learn to play baseball; clear, diagrammatic drawings explain the text.

\*West and McConnell, Loc cit.

\*\*Vanek, Loc. cit.

\*\*\*Eaton, Anne T. Treasure for the Taking. New York: The Viking Press, 1957. pp. 261-262.

Keith, Harold. Sports and Games. (New ed.) New York: Crowell Publishing Company, 1953.

Historical accounts of the origin of certain games, as well as tips for players and up-to-date directions with diagrams.

Koch, Tom. Tournament Trail. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Company, 1950. 185 pp.

Dannburg High School first won the sectional, then the regionals, the semi-finals and came to the fore as State Champions. Dave had had a little trouble getting into the team, but it had been worthwhile for him as well as the team.

Pope, Dick. Water Skiing. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Company, Inc., 1958. 242 pp.

The owner of Florida's Cypress Gardens speaks in a genial and personal tone of the history of the sport, fundamentals of skiing, trick skiing, major tournaments, teaching the sport, and the staging of water shows.

Scott, Barbara Ann and Kirley, Michael. Skating for Beginners. Photographs and drawings. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1953.

By means of photographs, diagrams, and explanations, the authors show the basic principles of ice-skating and figure-skating and make suggestions for home practice.

Tunis, John. The Kid from Tompkinsville. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940.

A baseball story. Followed by: World Series (Harcourt, 1941) and The Kid Comes Back (Morrow, 1946).

Tunis, John. Sports for the Fun of It. (Rev. ed.) New York: A. S. Barnes Company, 1950.

A handbook of information on twenty sports.

### Books of Fiction.

Alcott, L. M. Little Women. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1868. 368 pp.

A story of the New England home life of the four March sisters. Their personalities were as different as night and day.

Caidin, Martin. Air Force: A Pictorial History of American Air Power. New York: Rinehart and Company, 1957.  
232 pp.

A pictorial documentation of fifty years of the development of planes that have made vital contributions in war or as vehicles used in peacetime.

Comandan, Adela. Doctor Kate, Angel on Snowshoes. New York: Rinehart and Company, 1956. 265 pp.

Kate had wanted very much to be a doctor. She was in love with a very handsome man. With his help she was given the title of "Angel on Snowshoes," because of her tireless efforts in the Far North.

Craig, Margaret Maze. Trish. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1956. 190 pp.

A high school girl faces the problem of dating in the wrong crowd.

Daly, Maureen. Seventeenth Summer. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1942. 255 pp.

Novel about the love affair of a boy 18 and a girl of 17 that occupied three months of the summer in a typical American locality.

DuJardin, Rosamond. Double Date. New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1952. 191 pp.

Twins in a family without a Dad is something that just doesn't happen very often and as the Howard girls say, it shouldn't. When they plan to move, they have a difficult time trying to sell their house.

Farley, Walter. Black Stallion Mystery. New York: Random House, 1957. 202 pp.

The possibility of finding the sire of the Black Stallion drove Alec to take his horse overseas. Together with his old friend, Henry Daily, they traveled a long and perilous path which led finally to a fantastic mountain retreat in a far-off land.

Felsen, Henry. Hot Rod. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1950. 188 pp.

The problems in this book are true, and the rodeo described is based on a similar rodeo devised by the Des Moines Safety Council.

Michener, James. Sayonara. New York: Random House, Inc., 1954. 214 pp.

In this fierce and tender tale of love and war, a Pulitzer Prize winner, James Michener probes unflinchingly into the question of why so many American men prefer the tender women of the exotic East.

Montgomery, Rutherford. Husky. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956. 185 pp.

Husky is a very expensive dog. Kent couldn't do without him. They have fought many battles and storms together.

Rogers, Dale E. Angel Unaware. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1953. 63 pp.

This is the story of Robin Elizabeth Rogers written in brilliant, tender words by her mother, the wife of Roy Rogers, America's foremost cowboy star, who tells the story of their daughter, who passed away in August, 1952.

London, Jack. Call of the Wild. Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1912. 254 pp.

Adventures of a St. Bernard dog in the Klondike, and his final reversion to type, when he obeyed the "call of the wild" and became the leader of a pack of wolves.

Saunders, Marshall. Beautiful Joe. Philadelphia: Charles H. Banes, 1903. 304 pp.

Joe was a dog who belonged to a cruel master. He was rescued from them and taken to a pleasant home.

Street, James. Good-Bye My Lady. New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1954. 222 pp.

A story about a boy in the wilderness who hears a haunting laugh and discovers that it is a lost dog. How he makes this dog his own is a very unforgettable story.

Wallop, Douglas. The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1954. 250 pp.

A baseball novel in which a long loyal fan of the Senators tells of the operations of the Devil, himself, as a ball player, which brought the downfall of the Yankees.

Books on Hobbies.

Johnson, Pauline. Creating With Paper: Basic Forms and Variations. Washington: University of Washington, 1958. 207 pp.

The craft teacher or hobbyist will find well illustrated directions for projects in paper cutting and paper sculpture varying from simple to complex.\*\*

Leeming, Joseph. Tricks Any Boy Can Do: Fun with Magic. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1943. 86 pp.

How to make magic equipment; how to perform tricks with handkerchiefs, coins, cards, and rings.\*

Musciano, Walter. Building and Flying Scale-model Aircraft. New York: The McBride Co., Inc., 1953. 174 pp.

The author shows how the novice as well as the experts can build and fly scale-model planes.\*

Parsons, Tom. How to Make Earthworms Pay. New York: Abelard-Schuman, Ltd., 1958. 126 pp.

Although addressed specifically to young people, this is a simple and thorough how-to manual for anyone interested in making extra income from earthworms. Very complete.\*\*

Popular Science Monthly. Everybody's Car Manual. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1953. 255 pp.

What every car owner should know; things to make for your car, hot rods, customs, and antiques and practical hints from the model garage.\*

Zarchy, Harry. Here's Your Hobby. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950. 233 pp.

Easy to follow instructions, clear, simple diagrams for step by step procedures make this a valuable book for helping individuals choose suitable hobbies within one's price range as well as special interest.\*

\*West and McConnell, op. cit., pp. 186, 144, 145, 181.

\*\*Vanek, op. cit., p. 42.

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## APPENDIX

### Check-list Questionnaire

To the student of grade \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

This survey is being made to determine the reading interests of your class which will be used as a basis for purchasing books for the school library. Your answers are expected to be of real help; so, feel free to state your honest opinions, as you do not need to sign your name to the questionnaire.

1. What is the title of your favorite book?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. If you could choose two or more books for the school library, which ones would they be? If you do not know the titles, which types of books would you choose?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please place an "x" in front of the areas of interest that you think should be considered in choosing books for a school library to accommodate any Freshman student.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Inspirational (Ideals and Moral Values)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Social (Growing up socially)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Dating
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Etiquette (Manners)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Personality (Impressions we make on other people)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Self-control
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Occupational Interests
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Add any others \_\_\_\_\_

## Information

Please place an "x" in front of the field, or fields, of information in which you are most interested and on which you feel there should be some books in the school library.

- ☐ 1. Astronomy
- ☐ 2. Satellites
- ☐ 3. Space Travel
- ☐ 4. Airplanes
- ☐ 5. Rockets and Guided Missiles
- ☐ 6. Television
- ☐ 7. Hi-Fi
- ☐ 8. Radio
- ☐ 9. Photography
- ☐ 10. Rocks, Sea Shells
- ☐ 11. Insects
- ☐ 12. Snakes
- ☐ 13. Birds
- ☐ 14. Animals
- ☐ 15. Plant Life
- ☐ 16. Weather
- ☐ 17. Chemistry
- ☐ 18. Desert Life
- ☐ 19. Gardening
- ☐ 20. Others \_\_\_\_\_

## Recreational Reading

Please place an "x" in front of any of these types of books that interest you.

## Sports:

- ☐ 1. Baseball
- ☐ 2. Basketball
- ☐ 3. Football
- ☐ 4. Swimming
- ☐ 5. Tennis
- ☐ 6. Track
- ☐ 7. Diving
- ☐ 8. Skiing
- ☐ 9. Surf Riding
- ☐ 10. Add Others \_\_\_\_\_

## Fiction:

- ☐ 1. Humor
- ☐ 2. Horse Stories
- ☐ 3. Dog Stories
- ☐ 4. Science Fiction
- ☐ 5. Romance
- ☐ 6. History Fiction
- ☐ 7. Biography
- ☐ 8. Travel
- ☐ 9. Adventure
- ☐ 10. Mystery
- ☐ 11. Others \_\_\_\_\_

## Hobbies:

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ 1. Crafts          | _____ 10. Stamp Collections |
| _____ 2. Paper Sculpture | _____ 11. Coin Collections  |
| _____ 3. Ceramics        | _____ 12. Magic Tricks      |
| _____ 4. Leather Tooling | _____ 13. Puppets and       |
| _____ 5. Cartooning      | Marionettes                 |
| _____ 6. Sketching       | _____ 14. Square Dancing    |
| _____ 7. Woodcraft       | _____ 15. Needle Work       |
| _____ 8. Wirecraft       | _____ 16. Camping           |
| _____ 9. Collections     | _____ 17. Fishing, Hunting, |
|                          | Trapping                    |
|                          | _____ 18. Tricks, Stunts,   |
|                          | Skits                       |
| 19. Others _____         |                             |