



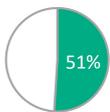
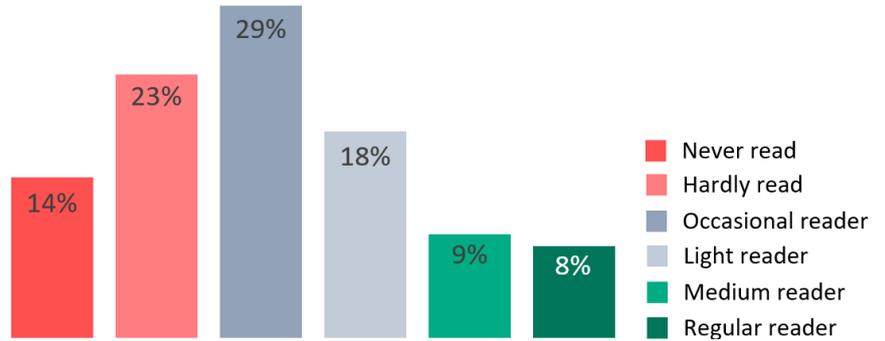
A snapshot of our reading culture in South Africa

A summary based on the South African Book Development Council's 'National survey into the reading and book reading behaviour of adult South Africans 2016'.¹

Survey sample: 4 000 adults (16 years and older), of which 1 955 were parents/caregivers

We are 'very light' readers:

Two in every three of us (66%) do not engage much in reading - only reading occasionally, **hardly** or **never at all**.



Half of us say we do read for leisure (mostly newspapers and magazines, and mostly in English).



But just one quarter of us read printed books.

Most of us prefer reading material that is:

Enjoyable

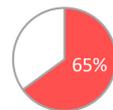
Easy to understand

Current/modern

Quick and easy to read

Those who are most likely to read tend to:

- have matric or higher education → **Strongest predictor**
- be from higher socio-economic classes
- be young(er)
- be English or Afrikaans speaking.



Two in every 3 of us who are parents or caregivers say we **never read** to our children.

We read less now than 10 years ago:

The incidence of reading declined significantly by 22% from 2006 to 2016.

What drives our reading behaviour?



Only a third of us agrees that everyone should be able to read.

Attitudes

Ability

Most of us (97%) can read and understand at a basic level.



Only about half (51%) of us agree that reading increases knowledge, and that it is a relaxing activity (47%).

Research shows that people with stronger reading ability read more because reading doesn't strain them.²



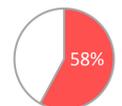
Only 5% of parents/caregivers agree that reading to children before they can talk or read helps them to learn.

6% of us who don't read report physical barriers, such as poor eyesight, and 7% of us say we don't read because we find reading so difficult we would rather do something else.

Time/Priority

Access

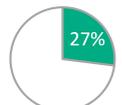
Almost 60% of us don't have any books at home.



Reading makes up about 6% of our leisure time (4 hours per week).

We are more likely to - and spend more time - watching TV/DVDs (20% of leisure time), listening to the radio (18%), socialising (21%), shopping (7%) and cooking (7%).

Just over a quarter of us make use of a public library. But only 7% of us take out books.



22% of us say there is no library near to where we live.



20% of us say we don't have time to read books.

8% of us say we cannot afford to buy books.



27% of us who said we won't be joining a library, said this was because we don't have time or have other commitments.

¹ Available at: <http://sabookcouncil.co.za/wp-content/uploads/Final-Report-NRS-2016.pdf>

² Krashen, S. 2004. 'The Power of Reading: Insights from the Research'. Libraries Unlimited. Westport