



# Editorial 241

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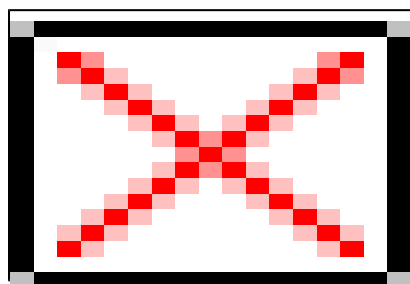
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## Happy **World Book Day**

Last week was **World Book Day**, that enormous celebration of children's books and reading. No-one, even those with little interest in the world of children's literature, could fail to notice this national event which sparks huge amounts of coverage across the media and inspires children the length and breadth of the country to show off their love for their favourite fictional character by dressing up. For children's authors, the week of **World Book Day** has become the busiest of the year by far, diaries packed with school and event bookings. Meanwhile, the range of £1 **World Book Day** books dominate the bestseller lists. Good news all round.



And yet ? behind the PR and celebrations comes more sobering news: new research from the **National Literacy Trust**, published on **World Book Day**, shows that fewer children and young people are reading daily and that fewer are enjoying reading than they did in the past. Findings from the **NLT's Annual Literacy Survey** reveals that only 25.8% of children said they read daily in their free time. This is the lowest level the **National Literacy Trust** recorded since it first surveyed children in 2005.

Some of the key findings of the report include:

### **Reading enjoyment**

53% of children and young people said they enjoy reading in 2019

Children and young people's levels of reading enjoyment continue to decrease: children's reading enjoyment decreased between 2016 and 2017/18 ? the first decrease in six years. This decline continued in 2019 and we are now back at a level last evidenced in 2013

Children and young people's levels of reading enjoyment are at their lowest since 2013: 53% of children say they enjoy reading in 2019 vs 53.3% in 2013

### **Daily reading frequency**

25.8% of children and young people said they read daily in 2019

Children and young people's daily reading levels are the lowest ever recorded: just 25.8% of children say they read daily in their free time in 2019; this is the lowest level we have recorded since we first surveyed children in 2005

## Reading attitudes

Attitudes towards reading have remained stable over the past couple of years

52.3% of children and young people would be happy to get a book as a present

40.7% of children and young people think reading is cool

34% of children and young people cannot find things to read that interest them

The decline in reading frequency and enjoyment are a concern, particularly among certain groups, as highlighted by the **NLT** report: reading enjoyment has particularly decreased for boys, children aged 9 to 11, and those who don't receive free school meals. Daily reading levels have fallen for young people aged 16 to 18 and those who don't receive free school meals.

What to do? Campaigns such as **World Book Day**, the work of the **NLT** around the country to boost reading enjoyment, the activity of the **OU** and **UKLA** with the Reading for Pleasure programme are more crucial than ever. And we can all help too, as the World Book Day campaign advised, by sharing books, and making every story count. (You could start by having a look at Rebecca Butler's article on running a book group).

The **NLT** report: [Children and young people's reading in 2019](#) [2] can be found on their website.

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### Links:

[1] <http://edbtjyw.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/241>

[2] <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/children-and-young-peoples-reading-in-2019/>