# The Young People's Reading Project

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THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

# UK context

> "...in 2023, we find that children and young people's reading enjoyment is at crisis point"
>
> *National Literacy Trust report 2023*

- 2 in 5 (43.4%) of 8-18-year-olds said they enjoy reading, the lowest level reported since 2005.

- In the last 50 years, overall time spent reading for pleasure has declined amongst adolescents.

- Children often have high levels of reading motivation and engagement when they start school, but these often decline as they move through secondary school

*References:*
*Picton, I., Clark, C., & Galway, M. (2023) Children and Young People's Reading in 2023. National Literacy Trust Report.*
*Schiefele, U., & Löweke, S. (2018). The nature, development, and effects of elementary students' reading motivation profiles. Reading Research Quarterly, 53(4), 405–421*
*Twenge, J. M., Martin, G. N., & Spitzberg, B. H. (2019). Trends in US Adolescents' media use, 1976–2016: The rise of digital media, the decline of TV, and the (near) demise of print. Psychology of Popular Media Culture, 8(4), 329.*

# Is that the whole picture?

Adolescents read for different reasons, e.g., for entertainment, to relax, to learn about others, for absorption in a story, to develop empathy, for social capital, for excitement, to escape their problems, to enhance their imagination, and/or for reassurance.

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# Project overview

- Phase 1: Young People's Advisory Panel (Sept 2021 – Sept 2022)

- **Phase 2: Interviews with young people (March 2022 – May 2022)**

- Phase 3: Pilot programme design with Scottish Book Trust (Jan 2022 – present)



## Charlotte Webber

Charlotte is a PhD researcher working on a project with the University of Edinburgh and Scottish Book Trust. Alongside a panel of young people, Charlotte is exploring their reading experiences and hoping to find ways of supporting them to read for pleasure.

Read articles from other authors →

Why is reading especially important for teens? →

Collaborating with teen researchers to understand teenage reading experiences →
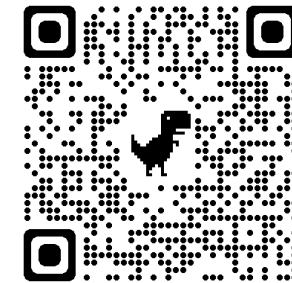
What stops teens reading books for pleasure? →

How can we support teens to read more books for pleasure? →

Beyond books: School libraries as sources of safety, inclusivity, and wellbeing →

Motivating teenagers to read – how you can encourage reading for pleasure at school →

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**Findings paper: Adolescents' perspectives on the barriers to reading for pleasure:**

Webber, C., Wilkinson, K., Duncan, L. G., & McGeown, S. (2023b) Adolescents' perspectives on the barriers to reading for pleasure. *Literacy*. https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12359

**Findings paper: Adolescents' own perspectives on how to motivate their volitional reading** (manuscript under review)

**Presentations:** SBT, UKLA, LALco, SLA (Jan 24)

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**Jan 2022 – Sept 2023**

Development of 4 pilot projects, each piloted in a different school

**1. Pupil-staff book group**
**2. Take-home shared reading toolkit ('Bookbox')**
**3. 'Bibliotherapy' with P7 transition**
**4. Reading preferences toolkit**

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# Reading preferences toolkit
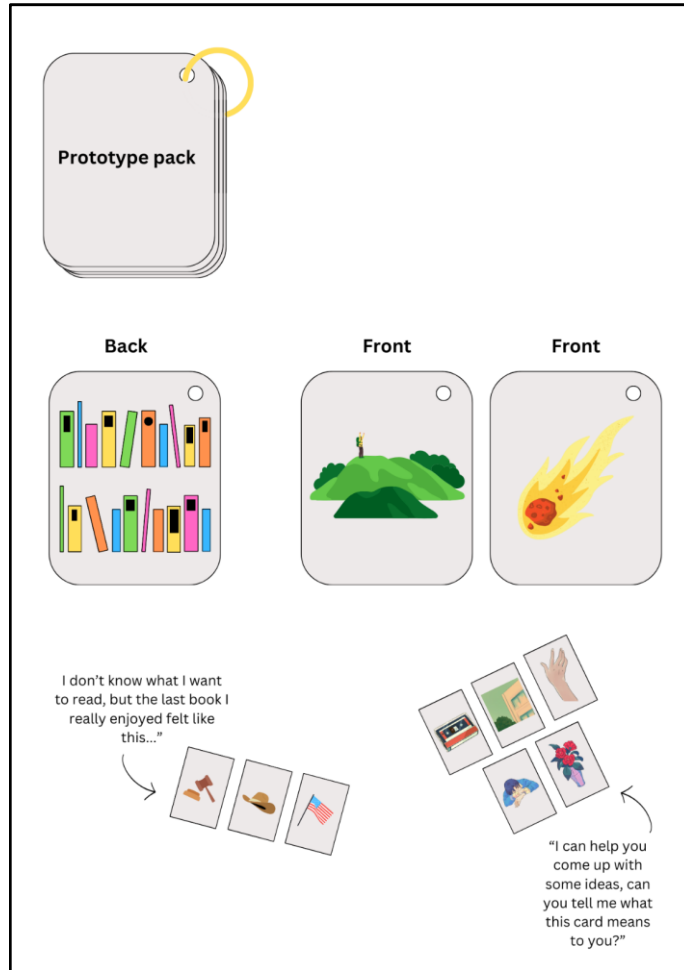


*Visual illustration of the Reading Preferences Toolkit prototype*



*Prototype reading toolkit developed by an S3 pupil*

# Secondary School Librarians project

**Secondary School Librarians project with Scottish Book Trust** (manuscript under review)
Interviews with 18 secondary school library practitioners about their role in supporting reading and personal development https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/articles/beyond-books-school-libraries-as-sources-of-safety-inclusivity-and-wellbeing

**Reader development (beyond reading for attainment):**
- Cultivating a love of reading
- Aligning reading with pupils' lives
- Expanding pupils' worldview through books

**Personal development:**
- Championing pupils' needs
- Providing specific support for marginalised and vulnerable pupils
- Creating a safe space
- Supporting pupil autonomy

# Appendix

**Narrative review of approaches previously used to support adolescent reading motivation:**

Webber, C., Wilkinson, K., Duncan, L. G., & McGeown, S. (2023a) Approaches for supporting adolescents' reading motivation: Existing research and future priorities. *Frontiers in Education*, 8. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1254048

**Manuscripts under review**

- Chapter in 'The Reading Lives of Contemporary Teens' (*Routledge*)

- Special Issue (*Language and Education*)

**Other projects**

- Neurodiversity and Narrative Fiction project

- Love to Read Libraries