



Paper and Productive Learning

The Fourth Annual Back-to-School Report

Compiled by
The Paper and Packaging Board
2018 Edition



Introduction

In today's fast-paced, highly competitive classrooms, paper continues to be the preferred tool for productivity among students, teachers and parents. 94 percent of college students say paper is essential to helping them achieve their academic goals, and 89 percent of students in grades 7th through 12th agree¹. Meanwhile, 92 percent of educators and 90 percent of parents agree that reading 15 pages a day on paper can benefit any student. Paper's enduring role in education comes as no surprise: 8 in 10 people say that paper and paper-based packaging are relevant in their daily lives. After all, paper is a versatile material that helps us ideate and create, accomplishing our objectives². It also offers peace of mind as it secures our information and provides proof of our hard work³. Indeed, paper's many uses in the classroom — and beyond — help design our future.

“90 percent of parents agree that reading 15 pages a day on paper can benefit any student¹.”



Building beneficial connections with paper is as simple as opening your favorite paperback and reading 15 Pages A Day or taking handwritten notes during a lecture or meeting. Paper has no flashing notifications that command us to respond immediately, so as we spend more time with paper, the more our senses are engaged. We can feel the texture of the page beneath our hand. We can hear the crinkle of a page turning. We can see the ink of our pen forming letters, our thoughts coming to life before our eyes. It is through this sensory contact that we absorb, comprehend and retain information⁴. We're focused and undistracted. We are learning more deeply⁵.



Because paper tools are so readily accessible, cultivating deeper-learning techniques can easily begin at home with 15 Pages A Day, a sustained reading practice with a wealth of benefits. Nearly 90 percent of teachers and parents say reading 15 pages on paper each day can help improve a student's memory and language development¹.

There's also the added bonus of extra parent-kid time: 81 percent of Millennial parents say they read with their child every night¹. And time spent with paper is time not spent on the screen: 83 percent believe it's important to "unplug" from digital devices once in a while, and 59 percent are trying to limit their family's screen time³. In an always-on world where 59 percent say they're suffering from "digital overload," paper provides a welcome respite. That's why 73 percent say reading a printed book or magazine was more enjoyable than reading on a digital device⁶.



74%

of parents believe that taking notes by hand should be encouraged in their child's education¹



94%

of college students say paper is essential to helping them achieve their academic goals¹



91%

of Millennial parents believe reading 15 pages on paper a day can help improve a student's memory and language development¹



92%

of Millennial parents of K-12 students believe writing things down by hand has helped their child develop skills as hand-eye coordination¹

Paper & Productivity Beyond the Classroom

Paper's positive effect on productivity doesn't end with reading and comprehension in the classroom, but rather it extends far beyond and into the professional workplace. 45 percent of college students agree that they learn things best when they write them down by hand — a practice that 85 percent of college educators encourage. 81 percent of college students say they use paper materials such as flash cards, printouts, study sheets and printed lecture notes to prepare for exam, a practice that makes learning easier and improves memory⁷.

Writing on paper can also keep us on track in other ways. Experts say putting pen to paper has therapeutic value that can offer benefits similar to meditation⁷.

Expressive writing can even allow us to operate in the past, present and future at the same time, which allows our brains to make sense of the recalled past, while choosing and shaping words at the moment of creating and, at the same time, imagining a person reading what is being written⁸.

“Experts say putting pen to paper has therapeutic value that can offer benefits similar to meditation⁷.”

Add to that the sensory engagement of the texture of each blank sheet, the weight of the writing instrument, and the visual and physical satisfaction of making marks on paper, and we understand why 45 percent of students in grades 7 through 12 say they learn best writing on paper.



81%

of college students say they use paper materials such as flash cards, printouts, study sheets and printed lecture notes to prepare for exams¹



85%

of college educators encourage taking notes by hand¹



62%

of adults agree paper-based products are an environmentally smart choice because they come from trees, a renewable resource³



Such productivity habits will serve students well as they move from classroom to workforce, where 64 percent of employees say they prefer to distribute printed agendas and other documents at the workplace³ — pieces of paper that are perfect for taking notes to be studied and referenced later. It's also important to know that paper doesn't just make us smarter — it is a smart choice: 62 percent of adults agree paper-based products are an environmentally smart choice because they come from trees, a renewable resource³.

“77% of students grades 7-12 believe that no matter their literacy level, any student can benefit from reading (or being read) 15 pages a day¹.”

So, as the new school year approaches and new objectives are set, students, teachers and parents will intuitively recognize the value of paper as the preferred learning tool — the smart tool that works hard to help keep us focused so we can achieve our goals. When it's time to jump-start your productivity by reading 15 Pages A Day or sketching out your next big idea in a favorite notebook, you can trust paper to help you make it happen.

All Hands on Books: The Power of Print

Penny Kittle

Author of *Book Love*, president of the Book Love Foundation, teacher and speaker

On the night *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*¹ was released in London, my family stood outside Waterstones Books chanting with thousands, “We want Harry!” The covers of our books are worn. They hold our history as a young family.

Today, we are all still habitual readers, even with the relentless pull of technology. The thrill of reading is one of my most important gifts to my children and to the thousands of students I’ve taught in the last 33 years.

Today, teens read for an average of just six minutes a day². How do we charm a child back to a hunger for books? The key is to find a book that will surprise the child with its pull, like the haunting images in Neil Shusterman’s brilliant *Arc of a Scythe* series³.

Reading is an antidote for lives lived at top speed, because reading lowers your heart rate. After an hour of deep reading, a person is less tired and less neuro-chemically depleted⁴. In the book *Bored and Brilliant*, Manoush Zomorodi contrasts the frantic nature of social media and the speed of our hurry-up lives with the peace and deep satisfaction of following a writer’s carefully-crafted sentences to ease into our own original thinking⁵. Reading can reduce stress. We need it; our children and co-workers need it.

“Perhaps it shouldn’t surprise us that when thousands of students were asked for a preference, nearly two-thirds of children chose paper over reading on digital devices⁶.”

When we read on devices we don’t linger; we look for the next rush of new information. Perhaps it shouldn’t surprise us that when thousands of students were asked for a preference, nearly two-thirds of children chose paper over reading on digital devices⁶.



Penny Kittle
Author, teacher, speaker

As you hold a book, you begin to feel what’s coming because you know where you are. There is a predictable arc from learning about characters and the setting, to the trouble that brews as characters and situations collide, to the resolution of that conflict and the understanding it brings. Investor and philanthropist Warren Buffett says knowledge builds up like compound interest when you commit to reading. He reads 500 pages a day—almost all on paper⁷.

In January my first grandchild was born. We read to her. We read to each other. We experience the contentment that books provide as we pursue the questions we need answers to.

Nothing satisfies quite like the weight of a book in your hand. I encourage each of you to join this campaign: turn off your devices and read at least 15 pages on print every day. Make it a habit to rediscover the immense and lasting rewards of sustained reading. I promise: adventure, beauty and joy await you.

Research References for “The Productive Learning Report”

¹ These are the findings from an Ipsos poll conducted March 25–April 6, 2018, on behalf of the Paper and Packaging Board. For the survey, a sample of 1,803 students and adults ages 13 and older from the United States was interviewed online, in English. The sample includes 400 college students, 501 students in grades 7 through 12, 602 parents with children in kindergarten through grade 12, and 300 educators.

² Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. 2014. “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking.” *Psychological Science*, 25(6), 1159-1168.

³ “Consumer Attitudes and Usage Toward Paper and Packaging: Wave 7.” Isobar survey conducted April 23 – May 4, 2018, on behalf of the Paper and Packaging Board. For the survey, 904 men and women, ages 18 to 49, from the United States were interviewed online.

⁴ “Make Books a Daily Habit: Why Regular Reading Matters, Especially in Print.” by Naomi S. Baron, 2017, Paper and Productive Learning: The 3rd Annual Back-to-School Report.

⁵ “Staying Productive with Paper: A Q&A With 2012 National Teacher of the Year Rebecca Mieliwocki.” 2016, Paper and Productive Learning: The Second Annual Back-to-School Report.

⁶ “Print and Paper in a Digital World: Consumer Preferences, Attitudes & Trust.” Toluna survey conducted in June 2017 on behalf of Two Sides North America. For the survey, 2,131 men and women, 18 and older, from the United States were interviewed.

⁷ “Pen, Paper, Power! Five Benefits of Journal Writing” by Kathleen Adams, LPC, The Center for Journal Therapy, for the Paper and Packaging Board. October 2016.

⁸ “Expressive Writing: A Path Forward for Your Health” by Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH, for the Paper and Packaging Board. October 2016.

Research References for “All Hands on Books: The Power of Print”

¹ Rowling, J.K., “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows,” Scholastic: 2007.

² Bureau of Labor Statistics, “American Time Use Survey.”

³ Shusterman, Neil. “Arc of a Scythe,” Simon & Schuster BFYR: 2016.

⁴ Mercola, Dr. Martin. “Read in a Quiet Place for a Better Life,” April 18, 2016.

⁵ Zomorodi, Manoush. “Bored and Brilliant: How Spacing Out Can Unlock Your Most Productive and Creative Self,” St. Martin’s Press: 2017.

⁶ “Scholastic Kids and Family Reading Report,” 5th edition, Key Findings, p. 7. Scholastic: 2015.

⁷ Merle, Andrew. “If You Want to be like Warren Buffett and Bill Gates, Adopt Their Voracious Reading Habits.” Quartz: April 23, 2016.

