

## The Importance of Independent Reading

The lack of exposure to text and the resulting lack of productive practice on the part of less-skilled readers contribute to the gap between good and poor readers that tends to increase as these students progress through the grades. This phenomenon- in which students who learn to read early continue to improve in reading, or get “richer,” and students who do not learn to read early get “poorer,” or become increasingly distanced from the “rich” in reading ability- Stanovich calls the “Mathew effect.”

Variation In Amount Of Independent Reading				
Percentile Rank	Minutes of Reading per Day		Words Read per Year	
	Books	Text	Books	Text
98	65.0	67.3	4,358,000	4,733,000
90	21.2	33.4	1,823,000	2,357,000
80	14.2	24.6	1,146,000	1,697,000
70	9.6	16.9	622,000	1,168,000
60	6.5	13.1	432,000	722,000
50	4.6	9.2	282,000	601,000
40	3.2	6.2	200,000	421,000
30	1.8	4.3	106,000	251,000
20	.7	2.4	21,000	134,000
10	.1	1.0	8,000	51,000
2	.0	0	0	8,000

Percentile rank on each measure separately. Books magazine and newspapers. Adapted from “Growth in Reading and How Children Spend Their Time Outside of School” (1988) by R.C. Anderson, P.T. Wilson and L.G. Fielding. *Reading Research Quarterly* 23 (3), p. 292.