



Unit 1 Weekend activities

Before you read

Think about these questions. Do you enjoy reading in your free time? If not, what's your favorite leisure activity?

Read the article

Reading for Pleasure

What do you enjoy doing in your free time? If you like to sit down with a good book, you are not alone. Recent surveys in several countries show that reading is one of the most popular leisure activities.

In the U.S., a recent survey asked people to name their three favorite leisure-time activities. The largest number of people (26 percent) said that reading was their favorite activity, while only 15 percent said watching TV was their favorite activity and 11 percent chose spending time with family. In fact, since 1995, Americans have consistently ranked reading as their favorite activity.

A similar survey in Japan shows that reading is also a popular leisure-time activity among the Japanese. The survey also showed that there are some differences between age groups. People aged 30 to 50 listed reading as their favorite activity. People over age 50 said reading was their second favorite activity, after gardening. Teenagers listed reading as their third favorite activity, after playing video games and watching TV. People in their 20s were the only group that did not list reading as one of their top three activities.

A survey done in the U.K. also shows that reading is a favorite pastime. Overall, 64 percent of people in the U.K. say they read during their free time, although the survey showed some differences between men and women. Seventy-one percent of women said they read in their free time, while only 58 percent of men read. The survey does not explain the reason for the difference between the sexes.

With the increase in the number of TV channels, video games, and computers, many people worried that reading would become less popular. It was feared that people would stop reading books completely. Fortunately, this hasn't happened. As these surveys show, reading is still a popular activity around the world for people of all ages.

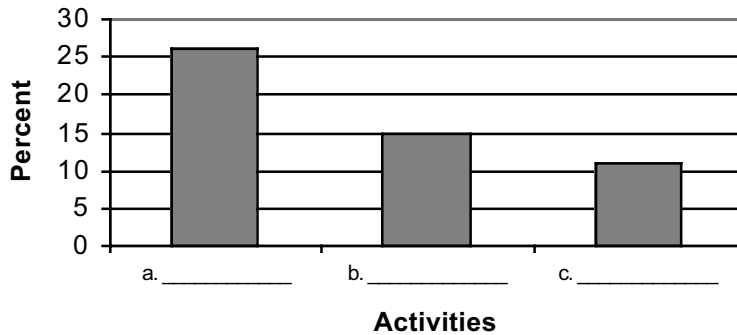


Build your reading skills: Identifying the main idea

1. What are the favorite leisure activities in the U.S.? Look at the graph and label each bar. Choose the labels from the box.

Watching TV	Reading	Spending time with family
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Figure 1
Favorite leisure-time activities in the U.S.

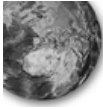


2. How do the various age groups in Japan rank reading as a favorite activity? Write the age group next to the rank.

Teenagers	20-30	30-50	50 and above
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How the various age groups in Japan rank reading as a leisure activity

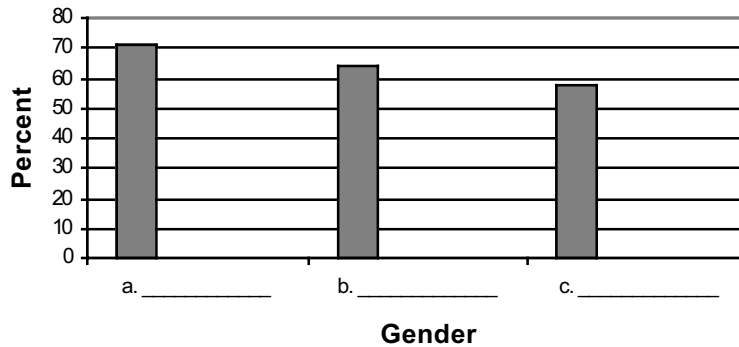
Rank	Age
a. Favorite activity	_____
b. Second favorite activity	_____
c. Third favorite activity	_____
d. Not in top 3	_____



3. What percentage of men and women in the U.K. read for pleasure? Look at the graph and label each bar. Choose the labels from the box.

Men and women	Men	Women
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Figure 2
Number of men and women in the U.K. who read for pleasure



Check your comprehension

Read the article again. Complete the sentences with the missing information.

- Recent surveys showed that reading is one of the most popular leisure activities across cultures and ages.
- In the U.S., _____ is the third favorite activity, after reading and watching TV.
- The survey from Japan showed that different _____ groups ranked reading differently.
- The survey from the U.K. showed that _____ women than men read for leisure.
- People worried that reading would be less popular because of _____, _____, and _____.