

Book-reading habits in Italy

Year 2010

- In 2010, 46.8% % of the population aged 6 and over said they had read at least one book (over 26,400,000 people) in their leisure time during the 12 months prior to the interview.
- Compared to 2009 there was an increase in the proportion of book readers from 45.1% to 46.8%. Gender differences decreased slightly, while regional and social differences increased.
- Women read more than men: the figure for female readers was in fact 53.1%, compared with 40.1% for male readers. Gender differences are found in all age groups and are extremely marked between the ages of 20 and 24, an age range in which the percentage for female readers was 64.8% while for male readers it was 41.3%.
- The highest percentage of readers was found among the 11-17 age group (over 59%), peaking between the ages of 11 and 14 (65.4%). The lowest percentage was to be found among the 75-plus age group (22.9%).
- In geographical terms the highest percentage of readers is found in the North and in the Centre, where more than 50% of the population aged 6 and over had read at least one book in the 12 months prior to the interview. In the South and Islands the percentage of readers fell to 34.5% and 36.9%. In addition, there is a significant regional variation in reading levels.
- Educational level has a strong impact on reading levels, ranging from a maximum of 80.8% among graduates to a minimum of 28.9% among those with a primary school leaving certificate or no qualifications.
- Taking into account professional status, among people over 15, higher-than-average reading levels are found among managerial staff and employees (69.2%), executives, business people and self-employed professionals (67.3%), and, obviously, students (66%). In contrast, the lowest reading levels are found among manual workers (31.7%), individuals who have withdrawn from the labour force (35.3%) and housewives (36.1%).
- Individuals who have read a maximum of 3 books during the 12 months prior to the interview are considered “weak readers”, while those who have read 12 or more books over the same period are considered “strong readers”. The figures confirm that book readers are weak readers: 44.3% in fact said they had read up to 3 books during the past year, while only 15.1% had read 12 or more books.
- In 2010, 90.1% of households said that they possessed books at home: 62% of households had up to a maximum of 100, 12.2% 101-200, 15.9% more than 200. 9.6% of households said they did not have any books at home (2,338,000 households).
- On the family front the stimuli provided by parents can have a decisive influence on children's and young people's interest in reading.
- Of these stimuli, important elements are the reading habits of parents and the number of books possessed. The figures show an increase in the percentage of young readers in those households where books are present (in particular in those where the home library is larger) and in those households where parents read books (especially when both parents read).

TABLE 1 - INDIVIDUALS AGED 6 AND OVER WHO HAVE READ AT LEAST ONE BOOK IN THEIR LEISURE TIME DURING THE 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW BY NUMBER OF READ BOOKS, SEX, GEOGRAPHICAL MACRO-AREA AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL. YEAR 2010

SEX, GEOGRAPHICAL AREA AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	Have read books (a)	NUMBER OF BOOKS READ (b)				
		From 1 to 3	From 4 to 6	From 7 to 11	12 or more	Total
Males	40.1	47.2	23.9	14.8	14.1	100.0
Females	53.1	42.2	25.8	16.1	15.9	100.0
North-west	54.3	38.1	25.6	17.8	18.6	100.0
North-east	53.5	39.8	24.8	17.1	18.2	100.0
Centre	50.6	43.5	25.8	15.5	15.3	100.0
South	34.5	57.5	23.2	11.8	7.5	100.0
Islands	36.9	53.3	24.7	11.9	10.2	100.0
Degree	80.8	28.4	27.8	19.8	24.0	100.0
Upper secondary	60.8	42.7	25.7	16.1	15.5	100.0
Lower secondary	40.4	50.7	23.7	14.1	11.5	100.0
Primary	28.9	52.4	22.8	12.9	11.8	100.0
Total	46.8	44.3	25.0	15.6	15.1	100.0

(a) Per 100 individuals aged 6 and over of the same sex, geographical macro-area and educational level

(b) Per 100 readers aged 6 and over of the same geographical macro-area and educational level

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