



Children's and Young People's Diary Writing in 2015

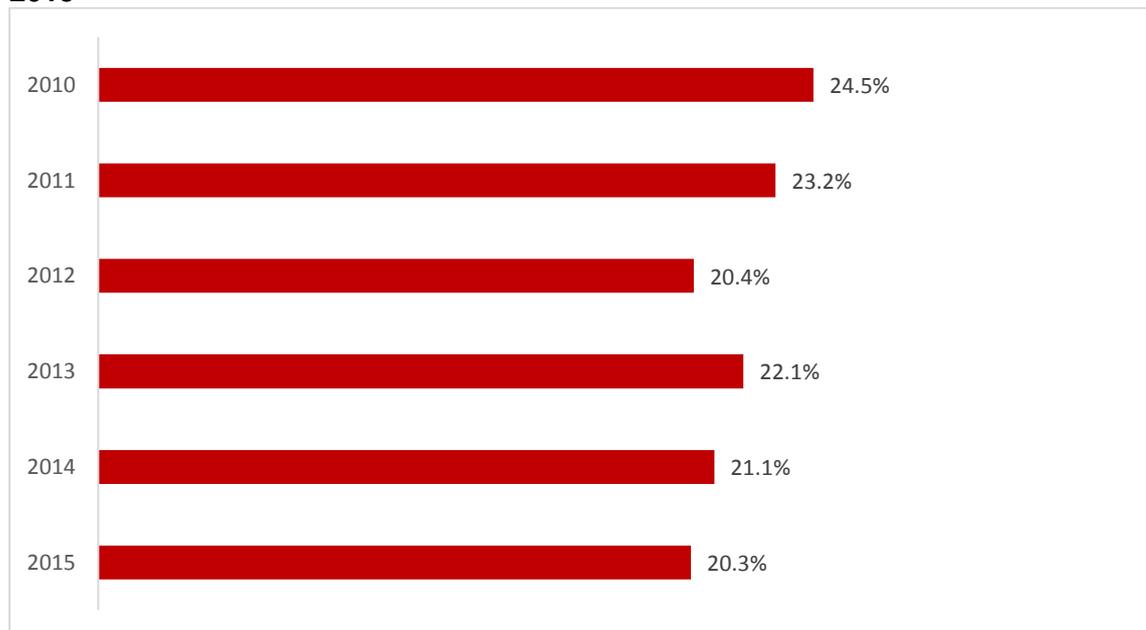
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The following findings are based on responses from 32,596 8- to 16-year-olds who participated in the National Literacy Trust's annual literacy survey in November / December 2015.

Diary writing

- A fifth of children and young people (20.3%) said in 2015 that they write in a diary outside class at least once a month.
- There has been a steady decline in the percentage of children and young people who say that they write in a diary since 2010 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percentage of children and young people writing in diary from 2010 to 2015



- Three times as many girls as boys say that they write in a diary (29.5% vs. 10.3%).
- 3 in 10 (29.4%) pupils aged 8 to 11 (KS2) say that they write in a diary compared with 2 in 10 (18.9%) of pupils aged 11 to 14 (KS3) and 1 in 10 (11.9%) of pupils aged 14 to 16 (KS4).
- There was no difference by economic background in whether or not children and young people write in a diary at least once a month, with 22.4% of pupils who receive free school meals writing a diary compared with 19.6% of pupils who do not receive free school meals.
- Writing attainment data were available for 3,311 pupils aged 8 to 11. Of those who write in a diary at least once a month (N = 876), 5.5% write below their expected

level; 67.4% write at the expected level and 27.1% write above the expected level. By comparisons, of those who have not ticked that they write in a diary at least once a month, 9.4% write below the level expected for their age, 75.1% write at the expected level and 15.5% write above their expected level.

Wider private writing

We also asked children and young people whether they ever write something in their free time that they don't share with anyone else. Of the 21,000 children and young people who answered this question:

- Nearly half (46.8%) said that they do write something that they don't share with anyone else in their free time.
- Of those who said this, nearly 1 in 5 (18.8%) write something daily, 27.5% a few times a week and 15.6% about once a week.
- Children and young people were also asked in an open-ended question to tell us what sorts of things they write that they don't share. Of the 6,300 pupils who answered this open-ended question, the majority said that this writing relates to writing in a diary or journal, stories, fanfiction, poems and song lyrics.
- As with writing in a diary, girls are more likely than boys to say that they engage in private writing in their free time (54.4% vs. 36.8%). Girls also more frequently engage in this type of writing than boys, with more girls than boys doing it daily (20.1% vs. 16.6%) or a few times a week (29.3% vs. 24.5%)
- More pupils aged 8 to 11 (60.5%) say that they write something they don't share in their free time compared with pupils aged 11 to 14 (45.3%) and pupils aged 14 to 16 (34.1%). However, the differences between the ages were less prominent, with 23.0% of pupils aged 8 to 11, 17.3% of pupils aged 11 to 14 and 18.1% of pupils aged 14 to 16 saying that they write something private in their free time on a daily basis.
- More pupils who receive free school meals say that they write something they don't share in their free time compared with pupils who do not receive free school meals (53.8% vs. 44.8%). Pupils who receive free school meals also write more frequently in private than pupils not receiving free school meals, with 24.0% of free school meals pupils writing something they don't share with anyone else on a daily basis compared with 17.6% of pupils who do not receive free school meals.