

1 in 5 Can't Name an Author, New Survey Finds

Last fall, Pew Research found that 27 percent of Americans had [not read a book](#) in the preceding year.

Unfortunately, our friends across the pond aren't much better in this respect. According to a [2014 survey](#), roughly 26 percent of adults in Great Britain admitted to not reading and finishing a book for pleasure.

One might be able to dismiss such statistics to busyness or other similar factors. But is it possible that the growing numbers of the non-reading public are instead a sign of the decline of knowledge about books and the canon of literature in general? A March 2017 survey suggests such might be the case. Produced by The Royal Society of Literature, [the survey](#) asked nearly 2,000 British adults about their literature reading habits. Similar to the aforementioned 2014 survey, roughly 1 in 4 British adults had not read a piece of literature in the previous six months.

But even more interesting were the responses when researchers asked respondents to name an author of a literary work. As it turns out, 20 percent of respondents were unable to name even one. Of those who were able to name an author, more than half selected a modern, living author, such as J.K. Rowling.



Much of the world in which we live today is laid upon a foundation of knowledge. These ideas can be found in the great literary works of William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and other men and women who are no longer with us. If many in today's society can't even name these authors, how can we expect them to participate in the "[Great Conversation](#)" of ideas, insights, and knowledge which still have profound

effects on us today?

“Upon the presence of the past in the present depends all conduct directed by knowledge.” – Richard Weaver, 1948

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