

# The long, steady decline of literary reading

By Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post

The percentage of American adults who read literature – any novels, short stories, poetry or plays – fell to at least a three-decade low last year, according to a new report from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 2015, 43 percent of adults read at least one work of literature in the previous year. That's the lowest percentage in any year since NEA surveys began tracking reading and arts participation in 1982, when the literature reading rate was 57 percent.

The NEA's numbers, released last month, are meant to capture reading for pleasure. They explicitly exclude required readings for work or school. The survey also makes no differentiation between physical books and works read on e-readers, in an attempt to capture the broadest possible range of leisure reading.

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