



# LOW HANGING FRUIT

## It's the Annual Summer Reading Edition!

By Jeannie Standal

When we think of summer reading programs, we often picture the littles or elementary-aged kids settling down with stacks of library books. There may or may not be a hammock involved. But how how how do we get those older students to continue to read throughout the summer? Between summer jobs, sports, travel, caring for younger siblings, and all the other pieces of a hectic teen summer, what is the trick to pulling reading to the top of the summer priority list?

### Tie reading to their priorities

According to a recent study, the best way to prepare for the SAT's and ACT's is, you guessed it, reading. Novels, nonfiction, magazines, graphic novels, or biographies, whatever the genre, the acquired vocabulary and general knowledge from reading for pleasure is more helpful than traditional test prep. Yes, that's right, a free library card is more valuable than expensive review courses. In this added note to a [very short letter to the editor](#) of the LA Times, the study's author says: "It is not surprising that states that have the best school and public library systems also tend to have the better SAT scores, controlling for other types of school spending." (McQuillan, 1996).

### The cool kids (and cool grown-ups) are doing it

Many public libraries in Idaho have started some variation of a very popular program called Extreme (or Ultimate) Book Nerd Challenge. There are versions for kids, teens, and adults that span the calendar year and are not necessarily linked with summer reading programs. Bonus: patrons that complete the challenge get pretty cool gifts like sweatshirts or tote bags. Usually the challenge provides categories, and participants choose books that are both interesting and fit the category.

### It's supposed to be fun

Many readers love reading lists and book challenges, but for others the idea of a reading list is about as fun as a poke in the eye. Popular and accessible alternatives to print, like audio books and graphic novels are real reading, with benefits of their own. Audio allows readers to expand vocabulary and hear proper pronunciation of words (which benefit avid readers, too, preventing the embarrassing "readers' vocabulary" gaffs). Graphic novels require a complex type of literacy where we read both the work and the art to comprehend meaning. Most importantly, especially when it comes to summer reading, let kids read *whatever they want* to read. Then it's fun.

Low Hanging Fruit is available through school libraries, and made possible with support of the Idaho Commission for Libraries. For previous editions, go to <http://libraries.idaho.gov/lowhangingfruit>.

#### LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



##### Read to Ace the SAT, New Test Taking Tips

Reading for pleasure is better (and less expensive) prep for the SAT.

<https://www.languagemagazine.com/2017/06/08/read-ace-sat/>

##### Goodreads and The StoryGraph

Readers can track their progress with tools like [Goodreads](#), which is like social media for book lovers, but not especially private, or [The StoryGraph](#), for those that like something not connected to Amazon, and don't mind paying a subscription fee for a Plus version.

##### Idaho Battle of the Books

The 2022-2023 school year will see an IBOB program for high school students! Give them the opportunity to get a jumpstart on the reading over the summer at [idahobattleofthebooks.org](http://idahobattleofthebooks.org).

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



##### For your own learning:

On another topic, the Idaho STEM Ecosystem wants to know about your PD wants and needs. Both formal and informal educators are encouraged to complete this survey that will take about 10 minutes, and results will be shared for the benefit of all.

Survey link: <https://form.jotform.com/icfl/stem-ecosystem-pd-2022>

#### DIGITAL TOOLS



##### NoveList Plus (K-8 available)

NoveList Plus is *the* readers advisory database for booklovers! With a complete listing of books, new and old, and reviews and read-alike recommendations, users will never run out of TBR pile material.

[www.lili.org](http://www.lili.org)

*Happy Reading*



