

NEWS RELEASE

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Renaissance Learning Releases Groundbreaking Reading Habits Report: *What Kids Are Reading: The Book-Reading Habits of Students in American Schools*

May 6, 2008, Wisconsin Rapids, WI – While online booksellers offer lists of bestselling children’s books, and libraries collect circulation data, Renaissance Learning, Inc., has just released a groundbreaking report about the books American students are actually reading—cover to cover. The first of its kind, *What Kids Are Reading: The Book-Reading Habits of Students in American Schools* compiles lists of the top 20 books students read in 2007 by grade, gender, U.S. region, and reading achievement level.

Renaissance Learning’s unique perspective into the books students are reading comes from the Accelerated Reader (AR) database, which, for last year alone, included 78 million book reading records of more than 3 million students in grades 1–12 at more than 9,800 schools nationwide. The Accelerated Reader software, which helps teachers accurately and efficiently monitor student book reading, and other Renaissance Learning reading programs are in use at 63,000 U.S. schools.

“We hope the publication of *What Kids Are Reading* will help promote high-quality book reading in schools and at home,” said Roy Truby, Renaissance Learning’s Senior Vice President of State & Federal Programs. “Reading is a skill that must be practiced, and we cannot expect to see improvement in reading without adequate reading practice.”

Among the report’s key findings:

- **Students are still reading the classics.** Even with recently published books dominating best-seller lists for weeks and months at a time, the classics have a strong representation in the report’s most-read lists. In fact, the top read book overall in grades 9–12 was Harper Lee’s *To Kill A Mockingbird*. And other classics, including S.E. Hinton’s *The Outsiders*, E.B. White’s *Charlotte’s Web*, and Dr. Suess’s *Green Eggs and Ham* consistently topped several of the various grade-level lists.
- **Lists of frequently read books include very few nonfiction titles.** Notably missing from the lists of top 20 most-read books by U.S. students are nonfiction or historical works, critical to rounding out the repertoire of a well-read student.

Four award-winning authors whose books frequent the most-read lists contributed essays to *What Kids Are Reading*: Mary Pope Osborne, S.E. Hinton, Daniel Handler, and Christopher Paul Curtis.

To read the full report, visit www.renlearn.com/whatkidsarereading.

About Accelerated Reader

Renaissance Learning, Inc., developed the Accelerated Reader software to make the job of managing book reading, often called reading practice, easier, less burdensome, and more reliable. Accelerated Reader is a progress-monitoring system. It helps teachers accurately and efficiently monitor student progress in the quantity and quality (comprehension) of their book reading. Introduced in 1986, Accelerated Reader has become one of the most popular educational software programs. While AR has become increasingly sophisticated over the years, its basic three-step approach has not changed: First, a student reads a book either at school or at home. Next, the student takes a computerized quiz of 5, 10, or 20 items depending on the length of the book. Then, the student and teacher receive immediate feedback and reports detailing books read, number of words read, book reading level, and comprehension (percent correct on the quiz). There are currently quizzes on more than 120,000 books, so students can read and quiz on just about any book available in a school or public library. AR also includes quizzes to assess

vocabulary and literacy skills, as well as quizzes on leading reading textbooks and content-area leveled readers. With the company's newly released Home Connect feature for use with Accelerated Reader Enterprise Edition, parents can keep track of their children's reading progress, including books read, average percent correct on AR quizzes, and results on the last quiz.

About Renaissance Learning, Inc.

Renaissance Learning, Inc. is the world's leading provider of computer-based assessment technology for pre-K–12 schools. Adopted by more than 74,000 North American schools, Renaissance Learning's tools provide daily formative assessment and periodic progress-monitoring technology to enhance core curriculum, support differentiated instruction, and personalize practice in reading, writing and math. Renaissance Learning products help educators make the practice component of their existing curriculum more effective by providing tools to personalize practice and easily manage the daily activities for students of all levels. As a result, teachers using Renaissance Learning products accelerate learning, get more satisfaction from teaching, and help students achieve higher test scores on state and national tests. Renaissance Learning has seven U.S. locations and subsidiaries in Canada, India, and the United Kingdom.

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