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College Students are Reading Less, but Summer Bridge Programs Can Help Fix That

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College students are reading less than ever, and it's not by design.

The Atlantic recently delivered this uncomfortable truth to the masses in its article *The Elite College Students Who Can't Read Books*. We literature professors have observed this issue firsthand for some time. Where books, sonnets, and plays used to be read in their entirety, skinny excerpts are now skimmed ... sometimes.

The Atlantic article discusses a variety of reasons for college students' inability to read a novel from cover to cover. Namely, an increased focus on test scores, teacher shortages, faltering student attention spans and disrupted learning outcomes during the pandemic in high school are contributing to the problem. As a result, when students make it to college, they are reading less; they are unable to muster enough focus to get through Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short novella, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, let alone Bram Stoker's denser *Dracula*.