

## Impact of Extensive Reading Programs on Students

Insights from an Alumni Survey

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### I. Introduction

#### ER Time Allocation

#### 1st year

Class	Frequency	Time for ER
Main Text Lessons	4 times/week	60 minutes/week
LL Class	1 time/week	30 minutes/week
<b>In-class Reading</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>90 minutes/week</b>
Lunch break, after school (LL Library) on the train, at home		+ 60(minutes/week(average))

### ER in 2nd & 3rd Years

#### 2nd Year

Weekly Reading class (includes ER) (1.5 hour/month)  
Biweekly LL classes with ER (1 hour/month)

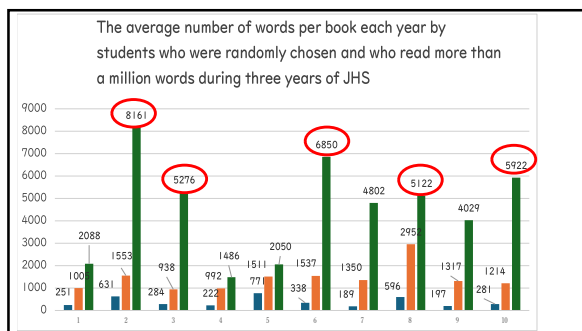
#### 3rd Year

•ER in LL classes (2 hours/month)  
•Occasional ER in Reading class (classroom or library)

#### Progress Milestones

#### •Start of 3rd Year:

Steady readers already read 500,000 words  
•**Reading stamina:** Avg. 5,000 words per book  
•**Top achievers:** 1,000,000 words in total at the end of the third year



### Goal of One Million Words

#### Target

Read 1,000,000 words by junior high school graduation  
**Achievement rate varies** each year  
Example: About **25%** had read over 1,000,000 words during the three years of junior high school

In high school, in-class reading time decreases. Teachers try to schedule time for ER approximately once a month. Some eleventh graders take an **elective extensive reading (ER) class**. Weekly Elective ER class mainly consists of reading time.

### 2. Results of the Alumni Survey

#### Survey Overview

Respondents: 156

Breakdown:

Undergraduate students 55.8%  
Graduate students 9.6%  
Working adults 33.3%  
Other 1.3%

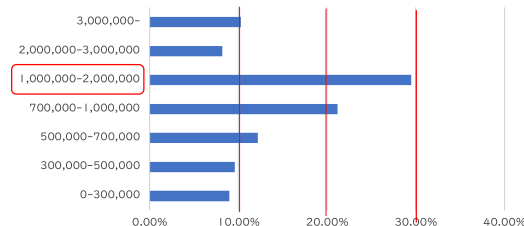
The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms

\*Teachers checked students' word counts several times a year, so most knew their totals.

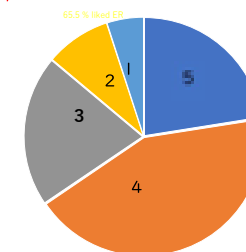
\*Since some respondents no longer had their own records after leaving home, they chose the option closest to their number.

\* To encourage honest responses, the questionnaires were submitted anonymously.

### Number of words read during six years of junior high and high school

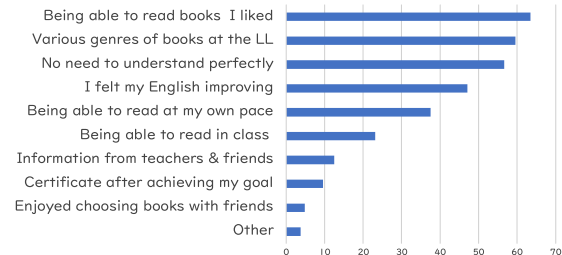


Please select a rating on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means "I really liked ER" and 1 means "I didn't like it at all." (N=156)



Group5+Group4=104 (65.3%)

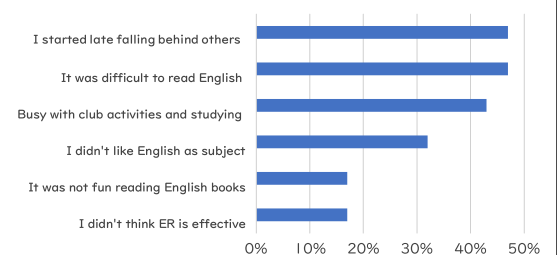
Reasons why you like ER (%) (N=104) (multiple responses)



Reasons why you liked ER

1. Reading books I liked	63.5%
2. Various genres of books at the library	59.6%
3. Not need to understand English perfectly	56.7%
4. Feeling my English improving	47.1%

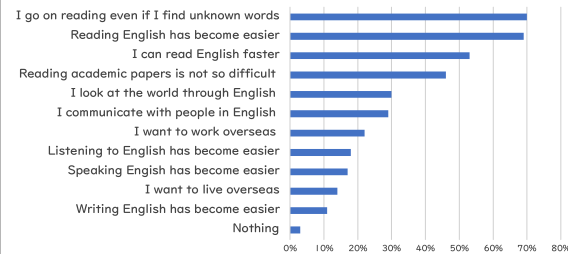
Reasons why you did not like ER (n=52)



Reasons why you did not like ER

1. Difficulty of reading English books	46.3%
1. Falling behind others and starting late	46.3%
3. Busy schedule with club activities and studying	42.6%

What kind of benefit from ER do you feel after graduation?



Benefits you feel from ER

1. Ability to keep reading even with unknown words	69.9%
2. Greater ease in reading English texts	69.2%
3. Improvement in reading speed	52.6%
4. Reduced difficulty in reading academic papers in English	45.5%

### 3. The Effects of ER

Their responses from the open-ended section were coded into three concepts:

1. English Proficiency
2. Cultural Awareness
3. Global Mindset

#### 1. English Proficiency

##### <Speaking, Listening>

I feel like I'm **no longer shy about speaking English**.  
I think it's thanks to extensive reading that **I can now respond smoothly in English when someone speaks to me.**  
(2 million-3 million)

The opportunities to read not only "textbook English" but also "everyday English that includes dialogue and is useful in real life" has enabled me **to develop "practical English"** that I can use in daily life and class discussions **when studying abroad**, which I feel is more developed than that of other science students.  
(700,000-1 million)

#### <Reading>

Since I work overseas (in a non-English-speaking country), I also read English news articles, but **I don't feel much resistance to reading English** on a daily basis. In my IELTS scores, reading has consistently been my strongest section. (300,000-500,000)

I was happy to **read my favorite book in its original form** in English. (3 million- )

I didn't reread passages, which allowed me to read faster and develop the ability to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words from the context.

(700,000-1 million)

My reading speed has increased dramatically. It was really good to develop the habit of understanding English sentences as they are, rather than translating them into Japanese, and to be exposed to English classics. (700,000-1 million)

### <Reading Academic Papers>

I took a class at university where we had to read an English book, and I found it easy to read.

People are often surprised that I can read English papers, but I believe it's thanks to my extensive reading. (1-2million)

Even when I started reading long academic texts at university after graduation, I was able to read them without difficulty. (1 million-2 million)

### <Increasing Vocabulary >

I was able to learn words from various fields with pictures and photos, which made studying fun and helped me memorize English words for the long term. I felt that this method was more suitable for me than using a vocabulary book to compare English and Japanese. I was reading children's books, so it didn't feel like studying and was just fun. (1-2million)

Memorizing vocabulary using flashcards felt like studying, but reading extensively felt more like a hobby, and I enjoyed it. (2 million-3 million)

### <Optimal Approach to Learning English >

Extensive reading allowed me to start with simple picture books, understand through imagery, accept that it's okay not to understand everything, lower the difficulty level if something was too challenging, listen to audiobooks and practice reading aloud, and share interpretations with others in class.

These were activities I could do during my middle and high school years when I had more time, and they helped me internalize English intuitively. (1-2million)

### <Writing >

Before I knew it, I found myself understanding the meanings of words that came up frequently and natural English expressions had become part of my knowledge, which I was able to put into practice in my writing. I felt like I had gained a lot. (2 million-3 million)

### <Being Fond of English>

I am currently working as a private tutor, and I sometimes teach students who struggle with English. Since they do not have the habit of reading English, their aversion to the language grows stronger, and they end up disliking English.

Thanks to the extensive reading environment provided by our school, I was able to avoid disliking English. (2 million-3 million)

### <People Think I Am a Returnee >

Many books came with audio CDs, so I was able to listen to the audio while reading, which helped me learn English in English. I have no experience studying abroad, but when I use English at work, people often mistake me for someone who grew up abroad. I believe this is because I was exposed to a lot of real English at a young age and learned through all five senses—it's truly the gift of extensive reading! Long live Ohyu. (3 million- )

## 2.Cultural Awareness

I learned about foreign cultures. I was able to appreciate cultural differences that cannot be learned in class, such as the atmosphere and descriptive techniques used in picture book illustrations.(500,000-700,000)

There were times when we got excited talking about books that are not very well known in Japan but are famous in English-speaking countries. (700,000-1 million)

## 3.Global Mindset

I am planning to start working or studying in the US this year, and the process of getting to this point required a lot of communication in English. I think my good pronunciation (I think the CDs I listened to while reading extensively were helpful) and, above all, the experience of becoming naturally familiar with English, have been useful. (700,000-1 million)

Extensive reading eliminated my aversion to English, lowered the barriers to challenging overseas cultures, and undoubtedly expanded my world.(1 million-2million)

I have never really felt any resistance to reading long English texts, and I don't dislike reading or listening to English. This has allowed me to avoid narrowing my world, which I think is a significant advantage in my life. (700,000-1 million)

I am currently working in a job that requires English, and I believe that my extensive reading has greatly helped me! (3 million - )

Thanks to extensive reading throughout middle and high school, I was able to easily adapt to living and working in English. (3 million- )

#### Four Major Sources of Information for Self-Efficacy

Bandura, A (1977)

1. Performance accomplishments
2. Verbal Persuasion
3. vicarious experiences
4. Physiological States

Vicarious experiences motivate some students to restart ER after graduation.

#### <An Example of Less Enthusiastic Readers>

I didn't read particularly a lot in middle and high school, but I've come to realize that it was beneficial to have had the opportunity to read many English books during that time, especially when I was a university student and now that I work overseas.

In college, I chose a foreign language (not English), but since I was already somewhat accustomed to extensive reading in English, I found it easiest to study that language by regularly reading news articles and books. (300,000-500,000)

#### Bandura: Four Sources of Self-Efficacy

##### Active readers

- performance accomplishments
- stronger self-efficacy

##### Less active readers

- vicarious experience by observing peers
- "I can do it, too"

#### 4. The Importance of Creating a Long-Term Reading Community

Some students who are not enthusiastic at first begin reading after seeing their peers' experiences.

This happens because they have been a part of the reading community for a long time.

Such a community is important for two reasons:

1. Students read more if they start early
2. Each student starts reading extensively at a different time.

#### Questionnaire to JI Factor Analysis (Motivation)

- Method: Promax rotation

- Criterion: Scree test

- Factors extracted: 3

- df: 18  $p = 0.0324$

- Cronbach's  $\alpha$ : 0.81

1 Metacognition

2 Desire to improve English proficiency

3 Enjoyment of reading

Yoko Yamashita (2016) ER of Junior High School Students: How to start and Sustain Reading for Lasting Enjoyment, Kansai ER Leaders' seminar

Table: Preferred Instruction for Second-Year JHS Students  
Cronbach's  $\alpha$ : 0.790 (n = 255)

Rank	Item	Mean (5-point scale)	SD	Min	Max
1	Guidance on what book to read next	4.106	0.917	1.000	5.000
2	Guidance to increase reading speed	4.004	0.872	1.000	5.000
3	Knowing whether the current book matches their level	3.969	0.917	1.000	5.000
4	Guidance to raise the level of books they read	3.937	0.945	1.000	5.000

Yoko Yamashita (2016) ER of Junior High School Students: How to start and Sustain Reading for Lasting Enjoyment, Kansai ER Leaders' seminar

#### The Digital Book Diary for Senior High School Students

The digital book diary has shortened checkout waiting times and allows teachers to check records anytime. Listening reading (reading while listening) is now easily available through "Basket Books."

Moreover, a new reading community has emerged across classes, grades, and faculty, where users freely connect through nicknames, follow each other, and share comments.



#### 5. How ER Can Contribute to Students' Learning

When a reading community is cultivated through a long-term ER program, students start to read with autonomy, developing their own reading skills and becoming more independent in their learning.

Even those who were not fond of reading can be inspired by their peers' progress and become motivated to improve their English, and other foreign language skills after graduating from high school. As Ro (2013) stated, "providing opportunities to realize the value and usefulness of ER can also motivate the reader" (Ro, 2013, p227)

ER not only develops students' ability to read academic texts in English, but also enhances their listening, speaking, and writing skills. These competencies empower them to study abroad, use English professionally, and even pursue careers overseas.

In short, the skills fostered through ER nurture a global mindset and expand students' future possibilities.

Their future is indeed bright.

### References

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