

the increasing use of new technology platforms by kids. It just strikes me as extremely logical that that's a big factor."

Jamahri Sydnor and Chiamaka Anosike are ninth-graders waiting for the bus outside Wilson High School in Washington, D.C. How do they relax?

"I don't really read for pleasure," says Sydnor. "Generally I talk on the phone. Or I watch Netflix shows, or Hulu shows, mostly TV. That's it."

"I don't read for pleasure either, unless it's for a school assignment," says Anosike. "I'm usually on my phone or watching TV, too."

Of course, some students say they love to read but have too much homework — or are swamped with sports.

Researchers want to know more about how teens are spending their time in the digital age. But Kathryn Zickuhr of the Pew Research Center says it's tricky. If a kid is looking at a book, you can assume he or she is reading. But when it comes to looking at a smartphone or tablet, who knows?

"We've heard from middle and high school teachers that sometimes the Internet is wonderful for highly motivated students to do deep and expansive research," says Zickuhr. "But on the flip side, obviously there are many distractions on the Internet." Despite those distractions, Jim Steyer of Common Sense Media says, parents can do a lot to promote reading.

"Kids with parents who read, who buy or take books out of the library for their kids, and who then set time aside in their kids' daily schedule for reading, tend to read the most," he says — whether it's on a book, an e-book or some other gadget.

Possible Response Questions:

- Do you read as much as you used to? Explain.
- Why do you think there has been a drop-off in reading? Explain.
- Discuss a "move" made by the writer in this piece that you think is good/interesting.