

On Loan: Library Use in Canada

2021



**BOOKNET
CANADA**

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Introduction

Libraries are a vital part of the Canadian book supply chain, providing millions of Canadians with access to books each year. Library book borrowing in Canada also supports book purchasing, as we explored in the study [Borrow, Buy, Read: Library Use and Book Buying in Canada](#). Since the release of *Borrow, Buy, Read* in 2019, BookNet Canada has continued to examine the role of libraries in the Canadian book market with the launch of our [LibraryData](#) service, which monitors the collections and circulation of libraries across the country.

On Loan: Library Use in Canada 2021 benchmarks library use in Canada by exploring the browsing, borrowing, and reading habits of Canadian library patrons. Comparing data from 2021 with past years, the study also reveals the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on library circulation.

Methodology

This study incorporates data from our annual publications the [Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021](#) and [Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2021](#), relying on both published and unreleased data from these consumer surveys.

The *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021* includes results from quarterly surveys of Canadian book consumers about their book acquisition behaviour during April, June, September, and December 2021. The 2021 edition of this study contains data from 10,218 Canadians, 2,065 of whom were considered book buyers.

For the purposes of this study, 1,898 Canadians surveyed for the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021* were considered book borrowers, having borrowed a print book, ebook, or audiobook from a public library in 2021.

The *Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2021* presents data from a survey of Canadians about how they spent their leisure time in 2021, with a focus on reading. The 2021 edition of this study contains data from 1,282 Canadians, 1,000 of whom were considered readers.

For the purposes of this study, 576 Canadians surveyed for the *Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2021* were identified as book borrowers, having read a print book, ebook, or audiobook that came from a public library in 2021.

For both the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021* and *Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2021*:

- The survey was fielded online through an external provider, to their consumer panel of nearly two million Canadians. The survey was limited to those with internet access who were able and wanted to participate in our panel in exchange for non-monetary incentives as offered by our survey partner (e.g., loyalty reward “point” programs).
- Respondents were English-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older, located throughout Canada, and representative of the Canadian population based on age, gender, and geographical region. Selective sampling was based on demographic results from Statistics Canada.
- There is a margin of error of ± 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, meaning that statistics for this group could fluctuate about 3% in either direction if the survey was fielded to the entire Canadian population.
- The data is unweighted.

The study also includes data from [LibraryData](#), BookNet Canada’s national library collection and circulation analysis tool, which covers an estimated 20% of Canadian library print circulation.

This study was prepared by BookNet Canada staff.

Highlights

- 19% of all Canadians borrowed a book from the library in 2021.
- Canadian book borrowers borrowed on average 5.5 books a month in 2021, with print being the most popular format.
- The number of digital library book loans increased 4% in Canada in 2021, according to OverDrive.
- Most Canadian book borrowers visited the library between one and four times in 2021, increasingly in-person.
- Canadian book borrowers were 4% more likely to read or listen to books every day than all Canadian readers in 2021.
- In 2021, Canadian book borrowers were 10% more likely than all Canadian readers to read diversely.

Library use in Canada

Libraries play a pivotal role in providing Canadians with access to books and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to statistics from Canada's provincial governments, British Columbia had the highest number of library cardholders, making up approximately 43% of [British Columbia residents in 2020](#). Of the remaining provinces that provided this data publicly, the percentage of library cardholders ranged from 18% to 37% over the last five years. Across all provinces with publicly available statistics, Canadian libraries have served on average 33% of the population between 2017 to 2021.

How did libraries support Canadian book consumers and readers in 2021?

The following sections delve into how Canadians engage with their public libraries, from borrowing books to reading books taken out on loan.

Borrowing books

Reported in the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021*, 19% of all Canadians borrowed a book from a public library in 2021.

In 2021, the average Canadian book borrower and the average Canadian closely resembled one another in a couple of ways. The average book borrower was the same age as the average Canadian — 54 years old. They were also equally likely to identify as belonging to a non-dominant, poorly represented, or not advantaged group in Canada as all Canadians, at 60%.

However, there were some differences. Canadian book borrowers were 7% more likely than the average Canadian to identify as a woman — 60% were women and 40% were men.

Taking a closer look, Canadian ebook and audiobook borrowers in 2021 were younger than the average book borrower and average Canadian, aged 51 and 46 respectively. Ebook and audiobook borrowers also were more likely to identify themselves as belonging to a non-dominant, poorly represented, or not advantaged group in Canada, although book borrowers of all formats consistently identified as women more than men.

Compared to the average Canadian, book borrowers were 5% more likely to live in a city or urban area, 4% more likely to have a university or college degree, and another 4% more likely to have a graduate or professional degree, while being equally likely to either work full time or be retired. Among book borrowers, ebook and audiobook borrowers were even more likely to live in a city or urban area, to hold a graduate or professional degree, and to work full time than print book borrowers.

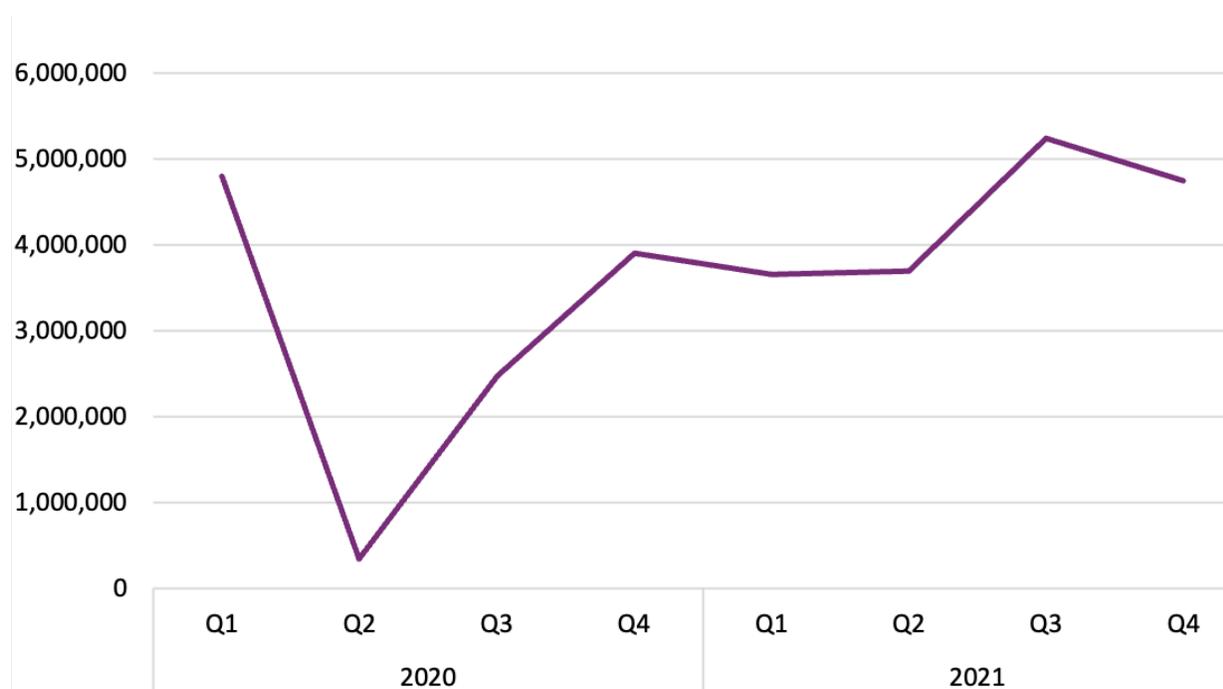
In their personal lives, book borrowers were 5% more likely to be married than the average Canadian and 14% less likely to live with someone under the age of 18, trends also consistent with borrowers of all formats.

Complete demographic information for book borrowers, including format-specific borrowing, is available in Appendix A.

Canadian book borrowers borrowed books in all formats in 2021. As tracked by the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021*, print books remained the most popular format for library loans in 2021, at 68% of all books taken out on loan. In 2021, ebooks and audiobooks accounted for 25% and 7% of all books taken out on loan, respectively. For the most part, Canadian book borrowers took books out on loan for themselves (60%) and the average Canadian book borrower took out 5.5 books a month in 2021 – 3.7 print books, 1.4 ebooks, and 0.4 audiobooks.

According to data from [LibraryData](#), BookNet Canada’s national library collection and circulation analysis tool, the total number of library print book loans increased 34% from 2020 to 2021, likely due to changing COVID-19 restrictions for public libraries. The graph below compares the number of print book loans in Canadian libraries by quarter in both years and shows the impact of pandemic-related library closures on loans throughout 2020 and 2021.

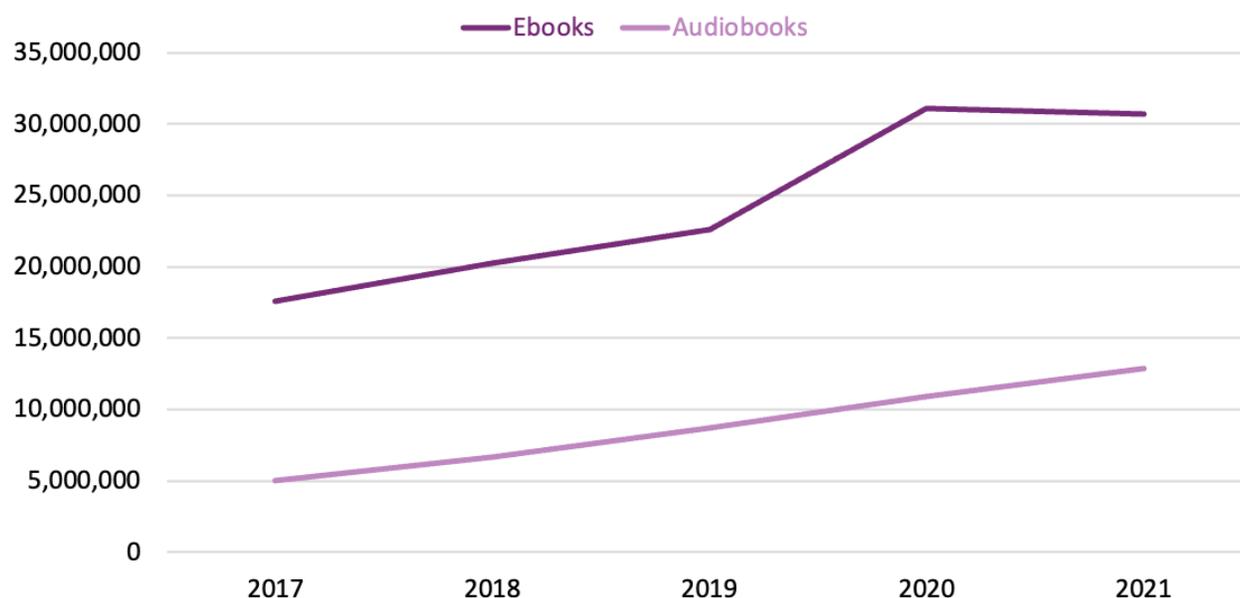
Print book loans in Canadian libraries by quarter, 2020–2021



In 2021, the number of digital library loans by Canadian book borrowers also increased, according to OverDrive, the world’s leading digital reading platform for libraries and schools. The total number of digital loans increased 4% in 2021 and

93% since 2017. The graph below shows the steady growth of ebook and audiobook loans in Canadian libraries from 2017 to 2021.

OverDrive digital book loans, 2017–2021



Over the last five years, the number of ebook loans in Canadian libraries increased 74%, with a significant 38% increase in 2020. Yet, ebook loans decreased 1% in 2021. In contrast, the number of digital audiobook loans steadily increased 156% between 2017 and 2021, seeing an increase of 18% between 2020 and 2021.

In 2021, 70% of all digital library loans were ebooks and 30% were audiobooks, according to OverDrive. This is consistent with data presented by the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021*. While the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021* doesn't differentiate between physical and digital audiobook loans, audiobooks did account for 27% of non-print book loans in 2021, with ebooks at 73%.

Canadian book borrowers became aware of the books they borrowed in many ways in 2021, but primarily by browsing a genre or subject area (39%); searching specifically for a book (36%); or browsing books by author (34%). These top three reasons were the same for print book borrowers, ebook borrowers, and audiobook borrowers in 2021. However, there were ways audiobook and ebook borrowers became aware of the books they borrowed that were distinct from print book

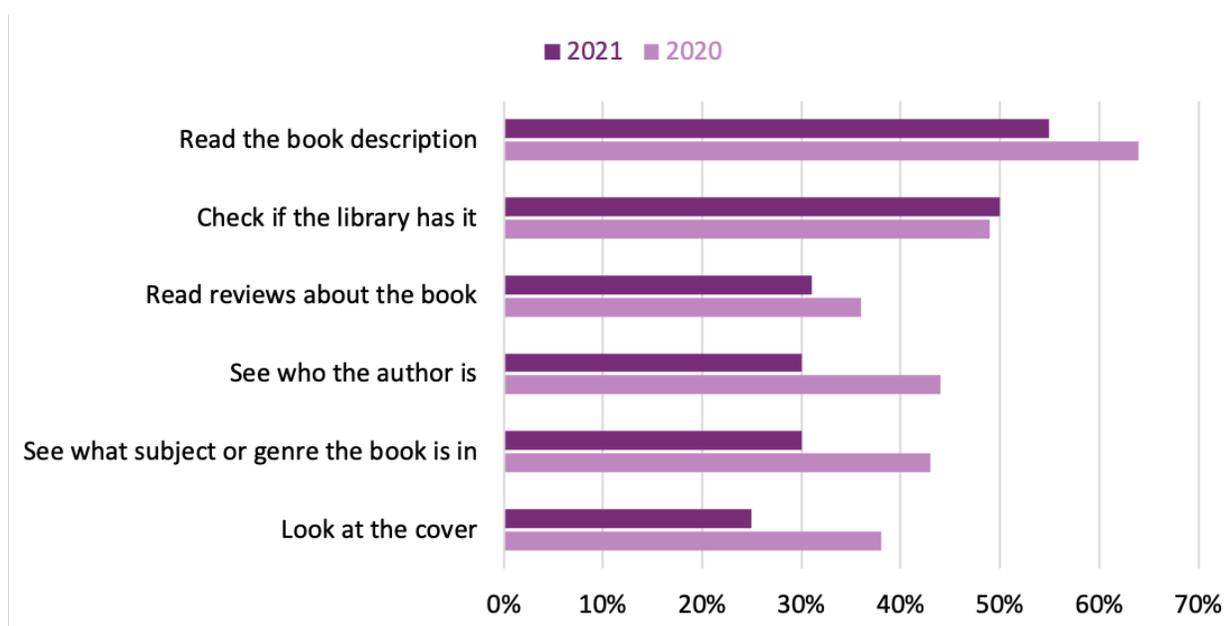
borrowers. Audiobook borrowers, especially, were more likely to become aware of a book:

- having searched for another book (26% of audiobook borrowers, 18% of ebook borrowers, and 17% of print book borrowers);
- having seen the book on a bestseller list (19% of audiobook borrowers, 13% of ebook borrowers, and 11% of print book borrowers);
- having read the book before (18% of audiobook borrowers, 11% of ebook borrowers, and 8% of print book borrowers); and
- having seen the book on social media (17% of audiobook borrowers, 10% of ebook borrowers, and 8% of print book borrowers).

Just as in 2020, the top actions taken by all book borrowers before choosing to borrow a book in 2021 were:

- reading the book description (55% in 2021 vs. 64% in 2020);
- checking its availability at the library (50% in 2021 vs. 49% in 2020);
- reading reviews about the book (31% in 2021 vs. 36% in 2020);
- seeing who the author is (30% in 2021 vs. 44% in 2020);
- seeing what subject or genre the book is in (30% in 2021 vs. 43% in 2020); and
- looking at the book cover (25% in 2021 vs. 38% in 2020).

Actions taken by book borrowers before borrowing a book, 2020–2021



While these top actions were consistent across borrowers in all formats, ebook and audiobook borrowers were significantly more likely than print book borrowers to read or listen to a sample or excerpt before borrowing a book in 2021, at 27% of audiobook borrowers, 20% of ebook borrowers, and only 13% of print book borrowers.

Most Canadian book borrowers only took books out on loan from the library in 2021 (79%). Yet for 21% of Canadian book borrowers who also borrowed other items, they were most likely to borrow DVDs (43%), magazines (28%), or movies (25%).

As we explored in *Borrow, Buy, Read: Library Use and Book Buying in Canada*, many Canadian book borrowers are also book buyers. According to the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021*, 25% of all book borrowers also bought new books. Of these borrowers, 76% bought print books, 36% bought ebooks, and 19% bought audiobooks. Compared to all Canadian book buyers, borrowers were 3% more likely to purchase ebooks and 4% more likely to purchase audiobooks, while being equally likely to purchase a print book.

Book borrowers also bought books second hand in 2021 and were 3% more likely to purchase a used book than all Canadian book buyers, accounting for 18% of all book borrowers. Canadian book borrowers also purchased more used books on average than book buyers, buying an average of 3.2 used books each month compared with book buyers' 2.6.

Ultimately, Canadian book borrowers chose to borrow books from the public library in 2021, instead of buying them, to save money (56%), to not spend money (49%), and so that they could read the book, but not own it (41%).

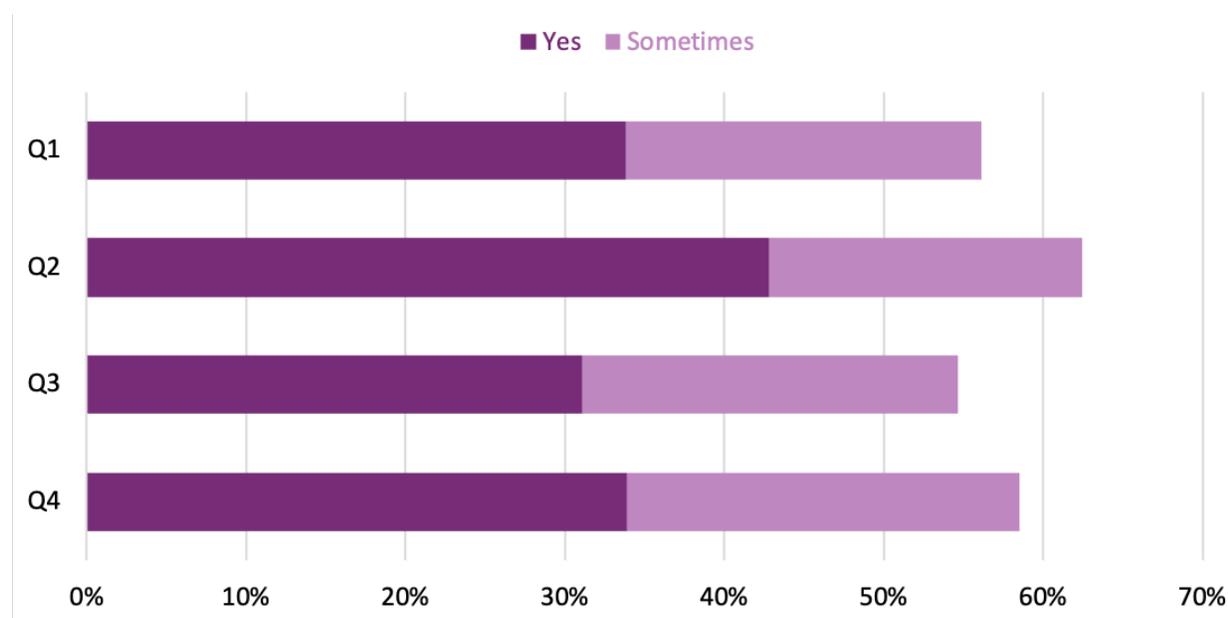
Visiting the library

According to data collected for the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021*, 25% of all Canadians visited a public library either online or in-person in 2021, Canadian book borrowers included.

With library closures and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 58% of Canadian book borrowers agreed or sometimes agreed that COVID-19 was

impacting their ability to borrow books in 2021. Shown in the graph below, this percentage fluctuated throughout the year and was reported at its highest in 2021's second quarter and its lowest in its third quarter, at 62% and 55% of book borrowers respectively.

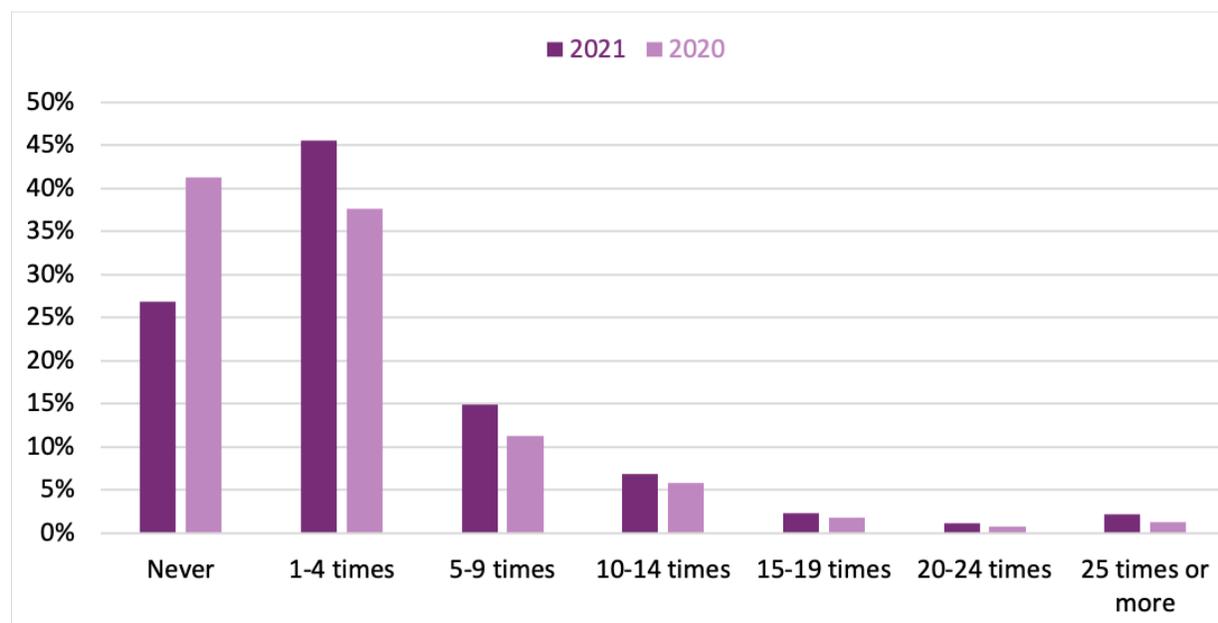
Perceived impact of COVID-19 on book borrowing by quarter, 2021



However, as COVID-19 pandemic restrictions lifted for libraries in 2021, Canadian book borrowers increasingly visited their local library both in-person and online.

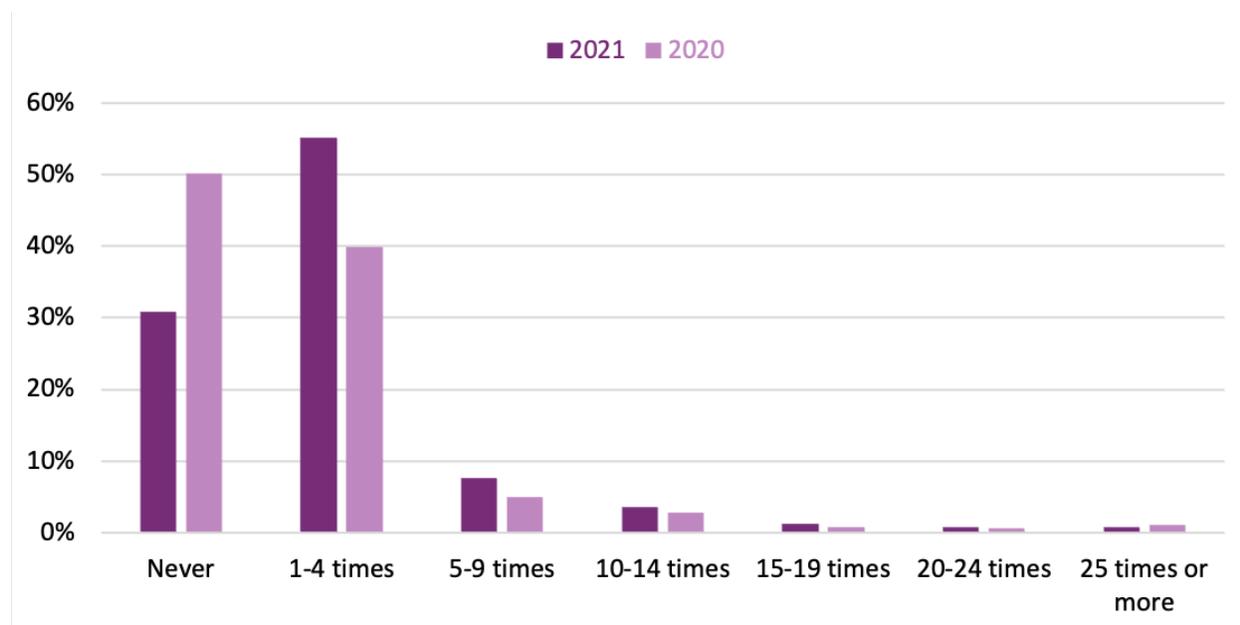
In 2021, 96% of book borrowers reported having a public library branch located near them and 73% of book borrowers visited their local library in person at least once, up significantly from 59% in 2020. Interestingly, book borrowers who borrowed ebooks or audiobooks in 2021 visited the library in-person more frequently than those who borrowed print books. All told, 97% of ebook borrowers, 93% of audiobook borrowers, and 77% of print book borrowers visited a public library at least once in 2021. The graph below shows the frequency of in-person library visits for all book borrowers in 2021 and 2020. The highest frequency of in-person library visits in 2021 was one to four times, at 46%.

Frequency of in-person library visits, 2020–2021



Online library visits continued to be popular in 2021 for Canadian book borrowers, interestingly even more so than the year before. In 2021, 69% of book borrowers visited their local library online at least once, compared to 50% in 2020. Here, print book borrowers visited the library online the most frequently in 2021 at 94%, compared to 68% of audiobook borrowers and 48% of ebook borrowers. The graph below shows the frequency of online library visits for book borrowers from 2021 and 2020. The majority of Canadian book borrowers visited the library online one to four times in 2021, at 55%.

Frequency of online library visits, 2020–2021



In 2021, as for 2020, the most popular reasons for book borrowers to visit the library were:

- to pick up hold(s) (49% in 2021 vs. 41% in 2020);
- to browse displays and shelves for books to borrow (26% in 2021 and 2020); and
- to put books or materials on hold (19% in 2021 vs. 18% in 2020).

Reading library books

Reported in the *Canadian Leisure and Reading Study 2021*, 45% of all Canadians surveyed borrowed a book from a public library in 2021.

Just as for book borrowers in the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021*, book borrowers in the *Canadian Leisure and Reading Study 2021* were 2% more likely than the average Canadian to identify as a woman – 54% were women, 44% men, 1% non-binary, and 1% chose not to disclose their gender identity. Similarly, 60% of book borrowers identified as belonging to a non-dominant, poorly represented, or not advantaged group in Canada, 4% more likely than all Canadians. Unlike the previous study, these book borrowers were slightly younger than all Canadians – 5% more likely to be aged 18 to 29 and 4% more likely to be aged 30 to 44.

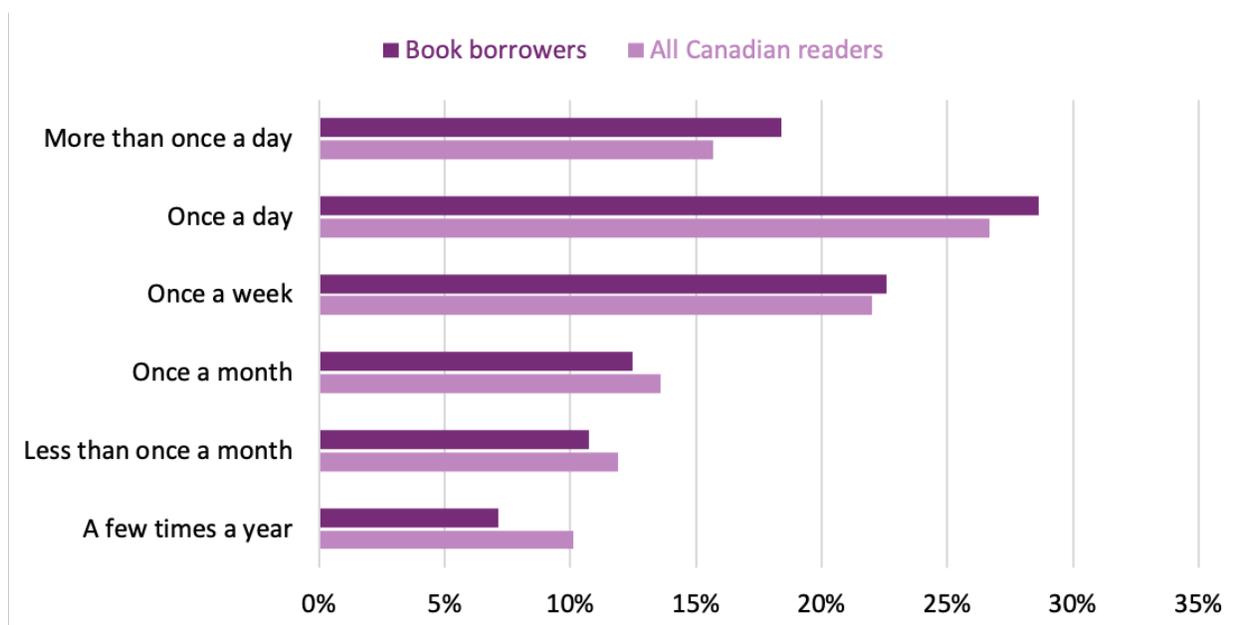
Looking more closely, book borrowers who read ebooks and listened to audiobooks were more likely to belong to a non-dominant group, and be in a younger age bracket when compared to borrowers who read print books in 2021. While book borrowers who read print books and ebooks were more likely to be women, audiobook listeners were more likely to be men.

All Canadian book borrowers were 3% more likely than the average Canadian to live in a city or urban area, 3% more likely to have a college or university education, and another 3% more likely to have a graduate or professional education. In their personal lives, book borrowers in this study were 6% more likely to be providing care for someone – 28% provided care for a child or young adult, while 11% provided care for a parent or elder in 2021. These trends are consistent across all formats read by book borrowers.

Complete demographic information for book borrowers, including format-specific borrowing, is available in Appendix A.

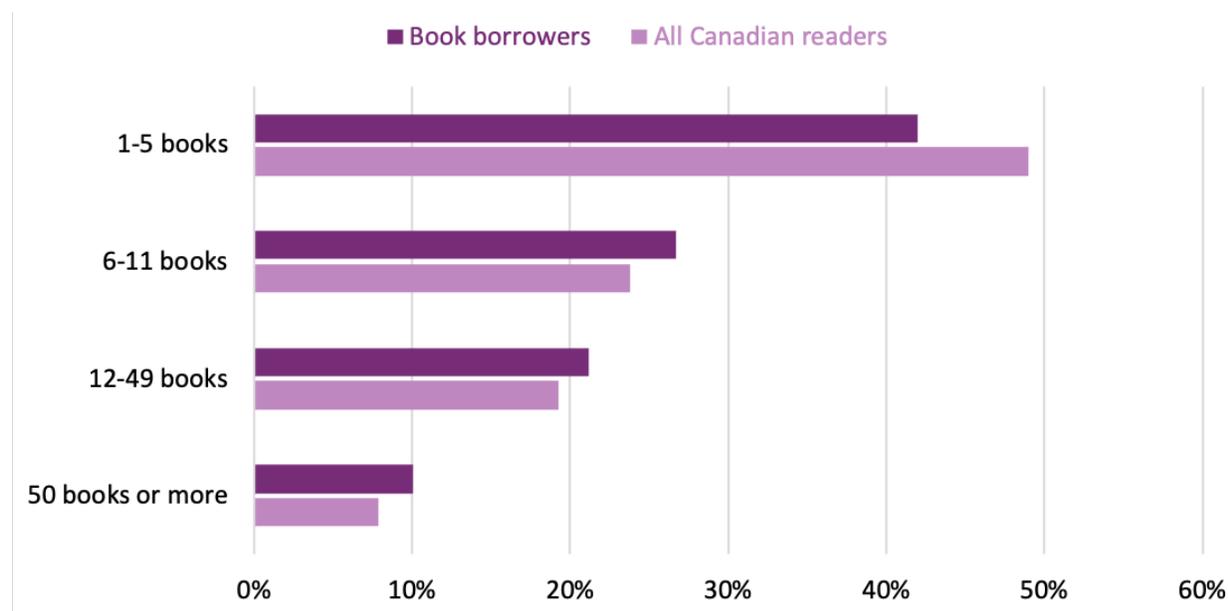
In 2021, 58% of all Canadian readers borrowed books, slightly higher than 55% in 2020. But compared to all Canadian readers, book borrowers in 2021 read and listened to books more frequently, with 47% reading or listening to a book every day. The graph below shows the reading frequency of book borrowers and all Canadians in 2021. While the majority of Canadian readers and book borrowers read or listened to books once a day, book borrowers are 2% more likely to do so and another 2% more likely to read or listen to books more than once a day.

Reading frequency of book borrowers and all readers, 2021



Canadian book borrowers also read more books in 2021, compared to all Canadian readers. The graph below shows the number of books read by Canadian book borrowers and readers in 2021. Even though the majority of book borrowers read between one and five books, book borrowers were 3% more likely to read six to 11 books, 2% more likely to read 12 to 49 books, and another 2% more likely to read 50 books or more than all Canadian readers in 2021.

Number of books read by book borrowers and all readers, 2021

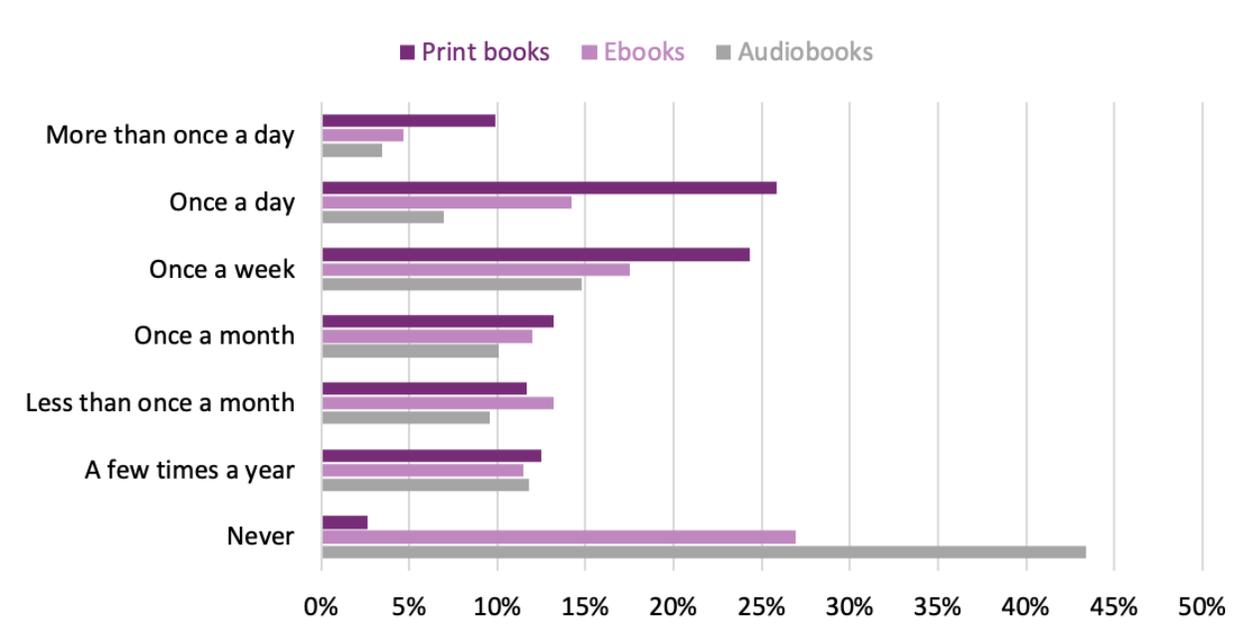


In 2021, Canadian book borrowers had more time to read books in all formats compared to all Canadians but not when compared to the year before. Canadian book borrowers in 2021 saw increases in reading time for print books, but not for ebooks or audiobooks like in 2020:

- 27% of book borrowers had increased reading time for print books in 2021 (compared to 22% of all readers in 2021 and 25% of book borrowers in 2020);
- 22% of book borrowers had increased reading time for ebooks in 2021 (compared to 17% of all readers in 2021 and 30% of book borrowers in 2020); and
- 17% of book borrowers had increased listening time for audiobooks in 2021 (compared to 13% of all readers in 2021 and 21% of book borrowers in 2020).

Print books remained the most popular book format for Canadian book borrowers. In 2021, 97% of book borrowers read print books, 73% read ebooks, and 57% listened to audiobooks. Book borrowers also read print books more frequently than they read or listened to other formats, shown in the graph below. Here, a combined 36% of book borrowers read a print book every day, compared to 19% who read an ebook and 10% who listened to an audiobook.

Frequency of reading by format for book borrowers, 2021



What subject categories were Canadian book borrowers reading in each format? For print books and ebooks, book borrowers read more Fiction titles than Non-Fiction titles in 2021. Of book borrowers who read print books, 78% read Fiction titles and 70% read Non-Fiction, while for book borrowers who read ebooks, 69% read Fiction titles and 65% read Non-Fiction. The reverse was true for audiobooks. In 2021, only 62% of book borrowers who listened to audiobooks listened to Fiction titles, while 66% listened to Non-Fiction.

Across all formats book borrowers were listening and reading to similar subjects within the Fiction and Non-Fiction categories. The most popular Fiction subjects for book borrowers in 2021 were:

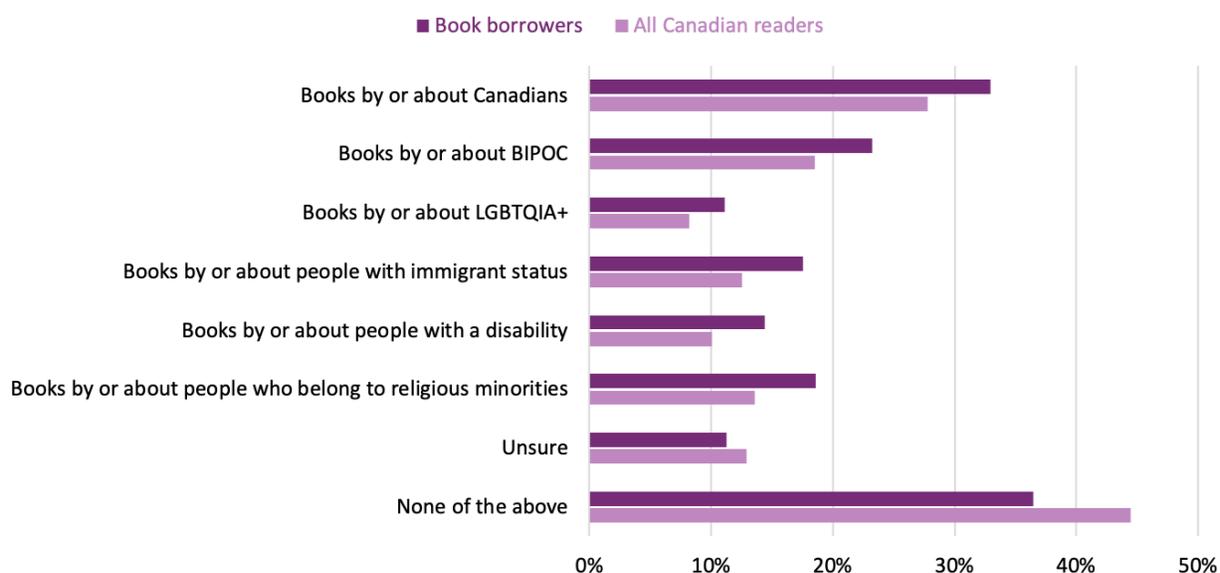
- Mysteries or Thrillers (59% of Fiction print book readership, 51% of Fiction ebook readership, and 26% of Fiction audiobook listenership);
- Historical Fiction (32% of Fiction print book readership, 26% of Fiction ebook readership, and 8% of Fiction audiobook listenership); and
- Science Fiction (31% of Fiction print book readership, 31% of Fiction ebook readership, and 14% of Fiction audiobook listenership).

The most popular Non-Fiction subjects for book borrowers in 2021 were:

- History (45% of Non-Fiction print book readership, 35% of Non-Fiction ebook readership, and 30% of Non-Fiction audiobook listenership);
- Biographies or Memoirs (44% of Non-Fiction print book readership, 31% of Non-Fiction ebook readership, and 25% of Non-Fiction audiobook listenership); and
- True Crime (31% of Non-Fiction print book readership, 29% of Non-Fiction ebook readership, and 31% of Non-Fiction audiobook listenership).

Regardless of subject category, Canadian book borrowers were 10% more likely than all Canadian readers to read diversely in 2021, at 52% of book borrowers. The graph below compares the readership of book borrowers and all Canadians on diverse topics. In 2021, Canadian book borrowers were 5% more likely than all Canadian readers to read books by or about Canadians; 5% more likely to read books by or about Black, Indigenous, or people of colour; and 5% more likely to read books by or about people who belong to religious minorities. This trend is consistent with data collected by the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021*, where book borrowers were found to also search for books by these communities at higher rates than all Canadians.

Readership of diverse topics by book borrowers and all readers, 2021



Considering the number of Canadians who borrowed books and read books from their local library in 2021, it is without question that Canadian libraries are an important part of their communities and the Canadian book supply chain. With the lessening of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in 2021, Canadian libraries saw increases in library circulation and readership of books in all formats. As pandemic-related restrictions continue to recede, it will be important to monitor this impact on Canadian libraries and the widespread community of Canadians that they serve across the country.

About BookNet Canada

BookNet Canada is a non-profit organization that develops technology, standards, and education to serve the Canadian book industry. Founded in 2002 to address systemic challenges in the industry, BookNet Canada supports publishing companies, booksellers, wholesalers, distributors, sales agents, and libraries across the country.

BookNet Canada acknowledges that its staff, board, and partners work upon the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Anishnawbe, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat Indigenous Peoples, the original nations of this land. We endorse the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and support an ongoing shift from gatekeeping to spacemaking in the book industry.

The book industry has long been an industry of gatekeeping. Anyone who works at any stage of the book supply chain carries a responsibility to serve readers by publishing, promoting, and supplying works that represent the wide extent of human experiences and identities, in all its complicated intersectionality. We, at BookNet Canada, are committed to working with our partners in the industry as we move towards a framework that supports “spacemaking,” which ensures that marginalized creators and professionals all have the opportunity to contribute, work, and lead.

BookNet Canada’s services and research help companies promote and sell books, streamline workflows, and analyze and adapt to a rapidly changing market. BookNet Canada sets technology standards and educates organizations about how to apply them, performs market research, and tracks 85% of all Canadian English-language print trade book sales through BNC SalesData.

BookNet Canada has extensive research available on our [website](#), both free and for purchase.

- [Listening In: Audiobook Use in Canada 2021](#): new results on how Canadians purchase, borrow, and listen to audiobooks.

- [Must-Watch, Must-Read: Book-to-Screen Adaptations in the Canadian Book Market 2022](#): data on the impact of book-to-television and book-to-film adaptations on Canadian book sales and library circulation.
- [Canadian Leisure & Reading Study 2021](#): insights into how Canadians are spending their leisure time and the behaviours of Canadian readers in 2021.

To stay updated on current and future research, subscribe to our monthly [BNC Research newsletter](#). To stay up-to-date on all BookNet Canada news and information, [subscribe to our weekly eNews](#).

If you have any questions or comments about this or other studies, please contact the research team at research@booknetcanada.ca.

Industry-led and partially funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage, BookNet Canada has become, as *The Globe and Mail* puts it, “the book industry’s supply-chain nerve centre.”

Learn more at booknetcanada.ca.

Appendix A: Demographics

Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021

The following tables compare the demographics of all Canadian book borrowers, print book borrowers, ebook borrowers, audiobook borrowers, and all Canadians in 2021, as collected by the *Canadian Book Consumer Study 2021*.

Gender identity

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
Male	40%	41%	34%	38%	47%
Female	60%	59%	66%	62%	53%
Non-binary	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Age

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
18-24	7%	7%	9%	9%	7%
25-34	10%	9%	14%	23%	10%
35-44	13%	13%	13%	16%	12%
45-54	18%	19%	17%	20%	17%
55-64	20%	20%	18%	17%	23%
65+	33%	32%	29%	15%	31%
Avg. age	54	54	51	46	54

Location

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
City or urban area	50%	49%	53%	52%	46%
Suburban area	35%	34%	37%	35%	35%
Small town or rural area	15%	17%	10%	12%	18%

Education

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
Less than highschool	2%	2%	2%	0%	3%
Highschool graduate or equivalent	15%	14%	13%	10%	21%
Some post-secondary education, not completed	11%	9%	15%	14%	13%
College or university degree/diploma	52%	54%	50%	52%	48%
Graduate or professional degree	19%	20%	20%	23%	15%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Employment status

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
Employed full time	32%	32%	34%	41%	32%
Employed part time	10%	11%	8%	14%	9%
Self employed	8%	8%	8%	9%	8%
Not employed	6%	5%	7%	7%	7%
Retired	34%	33%	32%	21%	34%
Student	3%	4%	5%	3%	4%
Homemaker	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Other	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%

Relationship status

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
Single (never married)	25%	24%	26%	26%	28%
Living with partner	9%	9%	10%	10%	9%
Married	50%	51%	48%	48%	45%
Separated	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Divorced	8%	8%	7%	7%	9%
Widowed	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%

Household

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
One - myself	25%	24%	23%	22%	26%
Two	40%	39%	40%	34%	41%
Three	17%	18%	16%	17%	16%
Four	12%	13%	14%	18%	11%
Five	5%	5%	5%	7%	4%
Six	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Seven	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Eight	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Nine	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ten or more	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Household avg.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.3

Children under 18 living in household

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
Under 3 years of age	3%	3%	4%	6%	2%
3-5 years of age	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%
6-8 years of age	6%	7%	7%	14%	3%
9-10 years of age	5%	6%	6%	8%	3%
11-12 years of age	5%	5%	5%	6%	3%
13-17 years of age	16%	18%	15%	19%	9%
None under 18 years of age	71%	68%	72%	62%	57%

Non-dominant identity

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
Class	16%	15%	16%	16%	17%
Religion	8%	8%	11%	11%	7%
Blackness	1%	2%	2%	5%	2%
Indigeneity	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
People of colour	13%	12%	15%	14%	10%
Gender	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%
Sexuality	5%	5%	6%	9%	5%
Disability	9%	9%	9%	11%	10%
Neurodiversity	2%	2%	1%	4%	1%
Family structure/single	9%	9%	9%	7%	9%
Age	27%	26%	27%	24%	25%
Language	9%	10%	10%	14%	9%
Other	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Prefer not to say	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%
No	40%	41%	37%	36%	40%

Canadian Leisure and Reading Study 2021

The following tables compare the demographics of all Canadian book borrowers, print book borrowers, ebook borrowers, audiobook borrowers, and all Canadians in 2021, as collected by the *Canadian Leisure and Reading Study 2021*.

Gender identity

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
Woman	54%	54%	51%	48%	52%
Man	44%	44%	47%	51%	48%
Non-binary	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%

Age

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
18-29	23%	23%	28%	32%	17%
30-44	27%	27%	30%	33%	23%
45-54	18%	18%	17%	17%	19%
55-64	16%	16%	13%	13%	21%
65+	16%	16%	12%	5%	20%

Location

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
City or urban area	50%	50%	52%	56%	47%
Suburban area	30%	30%	29%	26%	30%
Small town or rural area	20%	20%	19%	19%	23%

Education

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
College or university	56%	51%	51%	52%	53%
Graduate or professional	17%	16%	17%	18%	14%
High school or GED	27%	24%	24%	22%	32%
Apprenticeship	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%
Trade school	6%	5%	5%	4%	7%
Prefer not to say	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%

Providing care

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
Yes, a parent/elder	11%	9%	10%	11%	8%
Yes, a child/youth adult	28%	25%	25%	27%	22%
Yes, someone/a relationship not listed	7%	6%	6%	7%	6%
Yes, a pet/animal	29%	25%	26%	26%	31%
No	40%	35%	33%	30%	46%

Non-dominant identity

	All borrowers	Print borrowers	Ebook borrowers	Audiobook borrowers	All Canadians
BIPOC	6%	5%	6%	7%	6%
Disabled	10%	9%	9%	8%	11%
LGBTQIA+	8%	7%	7%	8%	6%
Working class/low-income earner	22%	19%	20%	21%	23%
Immigrant	18%	17%	20%	22%	13%
Religious minority	9%	8%	8%	9%	6%
Prefer not to say	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%
No	40%	35%	21%	26%	44%