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Elements in Publishing and Book Culture

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READING BESTSELLERS

*Recommendation Culture and the Multimodal
Reader*

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Reading Bestsellers

Recommendation Culture and the Multimodal Reader

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ABSTRACT: Readers are essential agents in the production of bestsellers but bestsellers are not essential to readers' leisure pursuits. The starting point in this Element is readers' opinions about and their uses of bestselling fiction in English. Readers' relationships with bestsellers bring into view their practices of book selection and their navigation of book recommendation culture. Based on three years of original research (2019–21), including a quantitative survey with readers, interviews with social media influencers, and qualitative work with international Gen Z readers in a private Instagram chat space, the authors highlight three core actions contemporary multimodal readers make – choosing, connecting, and responding – in a transmedia era when on- and offline media practices coexist. The contemporary multimodal reader, or the MMR³, they argue, illustrates the pervasiveness of recommendation culture, reliance on trusted others, and an ethic of responsiveness.

KEYWORDS: readers, bestsellers, recommendation culture, influencers, multimodal reading

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