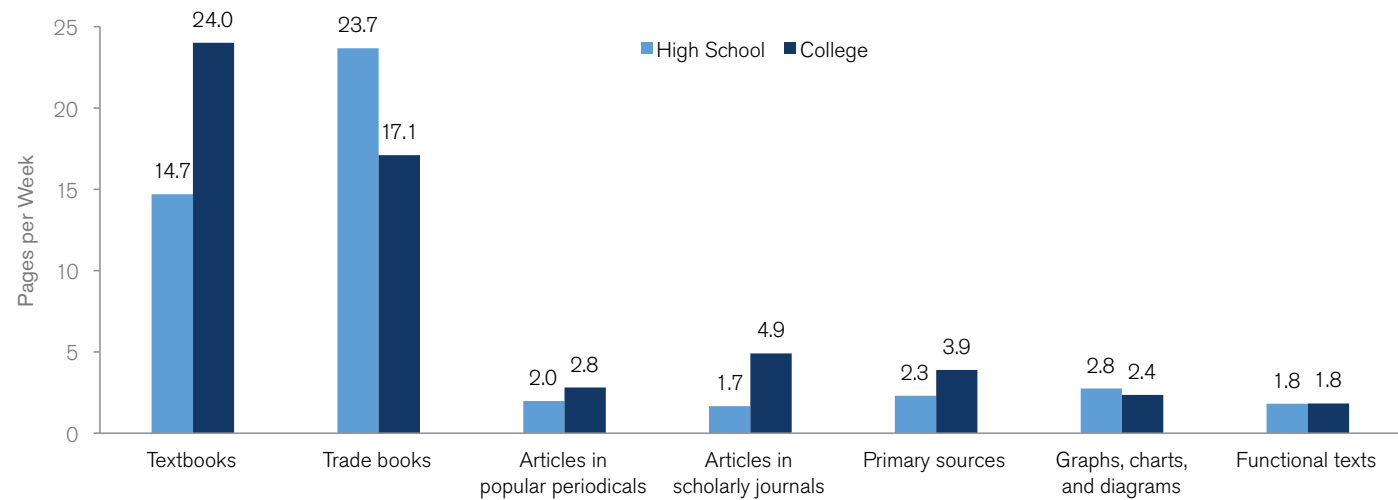


## ACT National Curriculum Survey®: High School and College Educators' Estimates of the Amount of Reading Assigned in Their Courses

High School and College Educators' Responses to the Question "In a Typical Week, How Many Pages Do You Ask Students in Your Course to Read of Each of These Types of Materials?"



Note: Average results from all subject areas were summed and statistically adjusted to account for the relative representation of various types of courses within each subject area.

To get an idea of how reading loads compare between high school and college, we asked high school teachers and instructors of credit-bearing college courses in all subject areas covered by the 2012 ACT National Curriculum Survey (not just English language arts) to estimate the number of pages of reading they assign in a typical week in each of seven text categories.<sup>1</sup> The results are shown in the figure above.

In terms of the change in the demands of assigned reading between high school and college, the picture that emerges is of a substantial increase in textbook reading and a nearly comparable decrease

in trade book reading. In addition, the amount of required reading of scholarly articles and primary sources also increases notably in college. But most other reading quantities stayed relatively the same, and taken together, the data indicate that only about eight additional pages of reading per week are typically required in these first-year credit-bearing college courses compared to the typical reading load in the corresponding high school courses (roughly 57 pages weekly in college versus about 49 in high school). ■

<sup>1</sup> ACT, Inc., *ACT National Curriculum Survey 2012: English Language Arts* (Iowa City, IA: Author, 2013). <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/NCS-EnglishLangArts.pdf>.

Across subject areas, the amount of assigned reading tends to increase and become more demanding from high school to college—but perhaps not as much as is generally assumed.

Every three to five years, the ACT National Curriculum Survey asks educators about what they teach (or don't teach) in their courses and how important they feel various topics in their discipline are for students to know to be successful in future coursework. The survey also asks educators for their opinions on educational topics of current interest, such as the college readiness of their students or the implementation of improved standards like the ACT College and Career Readiness Standards or the Common Core State Standards.

This brief highlights a finding from the 2012 *English Language Arts* survey.