# Survey of Reading Practices:

Summaries

This survey is part of a research study of reading practices being conducted by Dr. Patricia Demers (patricia.demers@ualberta.ca) of the Department of English and Film Studies.

1 "Do/have you read contemporary (20th- and 21st-century) literature originating from these regions? If so, circle those that apply" (Africa, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Spain and Latin America, North America, United Kingdom, Other)
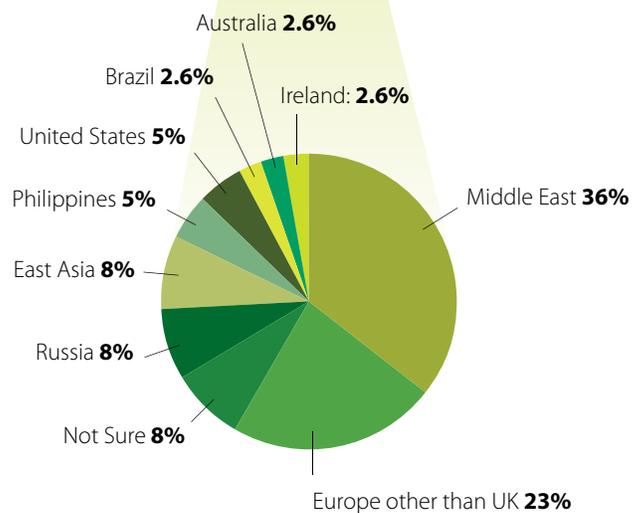
Of the 1200 responses distributed among 420 respondents:

Africa: 8%
China: 6%
France: 8%
Germany: 5%
India: 5%
Japan: 4%
Spain and Latin America: 6%
North America: 31%
United Kingdom: 24%
Other: 3%
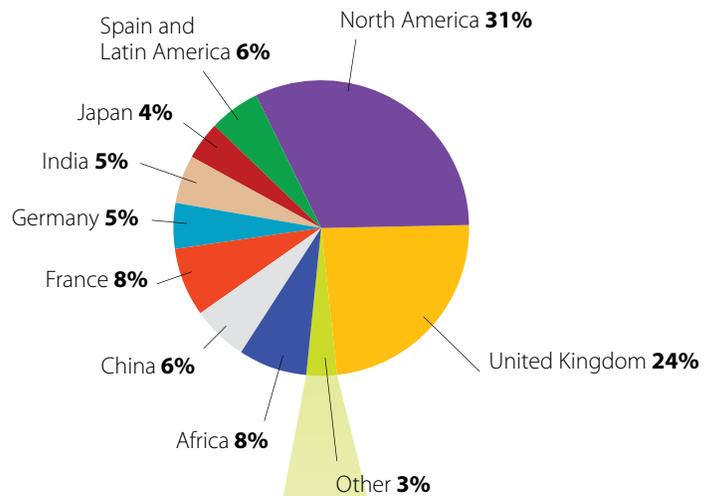
Of the 39 responses in the "Other" category:

Middle East: 36%
Europe other than UK: 23%
Not Sure: 8%
Russia: 8%
East Asia: 8%
Philippines: 5%
United States: 5%
Brazil: 2.6%
Australia: 2.6%
Ireland: 2.6%

Spain and Latin America **6%**
North America **31%**
Japan **4%**
India **5%**
Germany **5%**
France **8%**
China **6%**
Africa **8%**
United Kingdom **24%**
Other **3%**

Australia **2.6%**
Brazil **2.6%**
Ireland: **2.6%**
United States **5%**
Philippines **5%**
East Asia **8%**
Middle East **36%**
Russia **8%**
Not Sure **8%**
Europe other than UK **23%**

2 "Do/have you read contemporary (20th- and 21st-century) Canadian literature (Aboriginal, English, Québecois)?"

Yes **78.3%**

No 21.7%

3 "Do/have you read contemporary Canadian writing (Aboriginal, English, Québecois) by women?"

Yes **77.8%**

No 22.2%
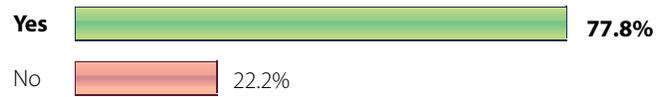
4 "Do/have you read women's contemporary Canadian writing in translation?"

Yes 12.6%

No **87.4%**

5 "If you answered yes to #3 or #4, circle the genres read:"

Of the 292 respondents who answer this question:

Reading contemporary
Canadian writing

Nonfiction **17%**

Fiction **44%**

Drama **11%**

Poetry **28%**
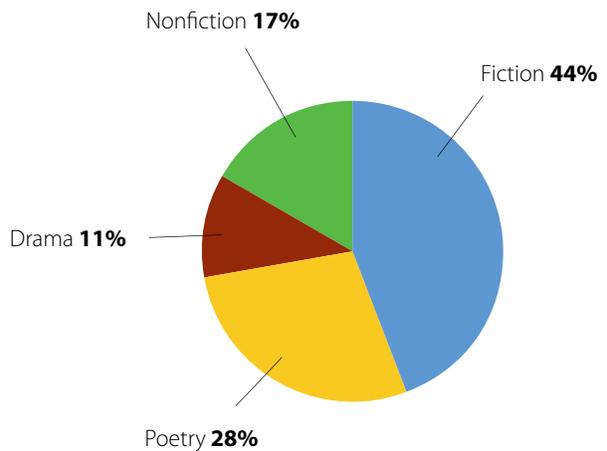
6 "Did you read contemporary Canadian writing by women in high school classes?"

Yes **59.0%**

No 41.0%

7 "Did you read contemporary Canadian writing by women in high school for pleasure?"

Yes 20.1%

No **79.9%**

8 "If you answered yes to #6 or #7, did your exposure to this writing prompt you to pursue Canadian Literature classes at university?"

Yes — 5.9%
No — **94.1%**

9 "Do/have/will you read contemporary Canadian writing by women for course(s) in university?"

Yes — **63.7%**
No — 36.3%
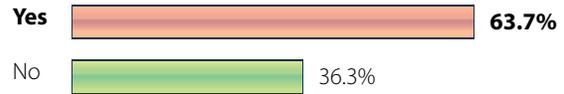
10 "Do/have you read contemporary Canadian writing by women for pleasure in university?"

Yes — 14.5%
No — **85.5%**

11 "If you do not read Canadian literature, please indicate the most relevant reason: (Lack of opportunity, Lack of interest, Lack of language proficiency). If other, please clarify."

Of the 254 respondents who answer this question::

Lack of interest: 57%
Lack of opportunity: 29%
Lack of language proficiency: 5%
Other: 9%

Of the 27 respondents who answered in the "Other" category:

Lack of Time: 48%
Not a Reader: 21%
Lack of Awareness (doesn't realize/pay attention to writer's nationality): 12%
Lack of Exposure: 11%
Lack of Resources: 4%
Does not actively seek Canadian Writing: 4%

Reasons for not reading Canadian literature:

Lack of interest **57%**
Lack of opportunity **29%**
Lack of language proficiency **5%**
Other **9%**

Does not actively seek Canadian Writing **4%**
Lack of Resources **4%**
Lack of Exposure **11%**
Lack of Awareness (doesn't realize/pay attention to writer's nationality) **12%**
Not a reader **21%**
Lack of time **48%**
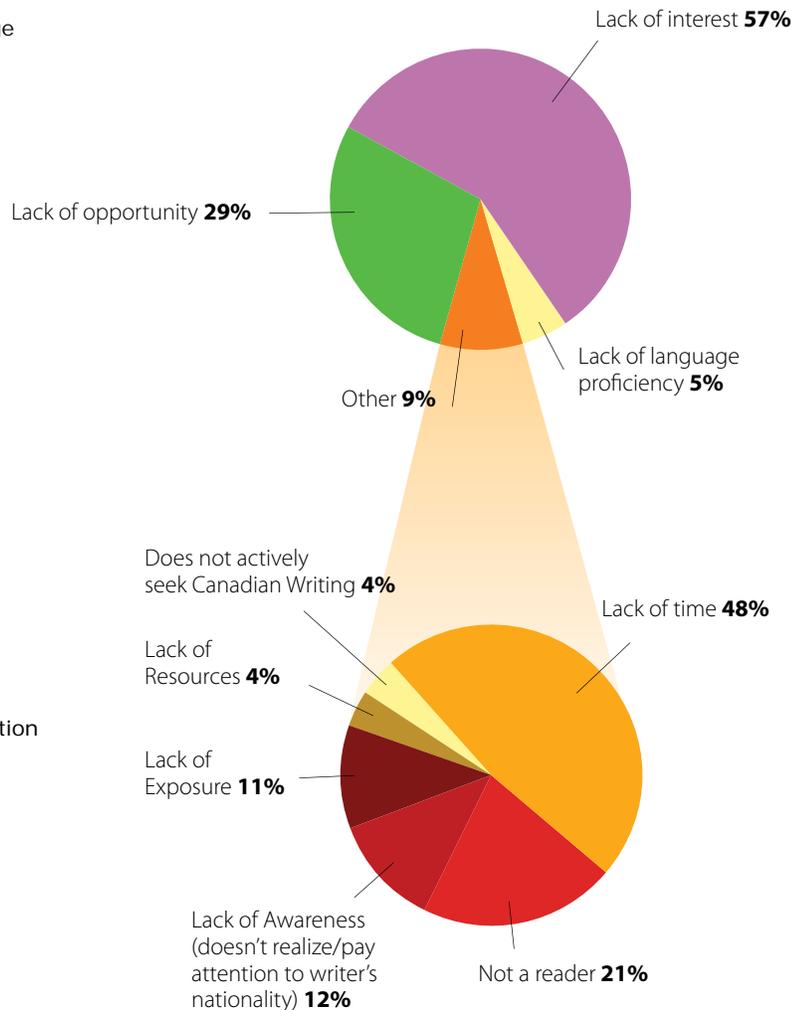
12 To protect the privacy of our respondents, we will not disclose personal information provided in question number 12.

13 "Please add any further comments or suggestions"

Summary:

Of the 116 respondents who included comments on their survey, roughly 15 percent claimed not to care about, remember, or pay attention to, author's location, nationality, and/or gender. Approximately 10 percent of these respondents cited a lack of awareness as to whether the writing they had read was written by Canadian female writers, and/or expressed uncertainty as to what constitutes Canadian writing.

While 9 percent of these respondents cited lack of, or limited exposure to Canadian writing, 4 percent cited a lack of time and/or resources/language proficiency. 5 percent of these respondents expressed interest in literature/writing other than Canadian literature. 2 percent claimed not to be readers.

While roughly 8 percent of these respondents expressed a lack of interest in, or dislike for, Canadian writing in general, approximately 6 percent asserted that student exposure to Canadian writing (by women or otherwise) should be encouraged. Interestingly, 5 percent of these survey respondents referenced Margaret Atwood and/or specific works by Margaret Atwood. Finally, 36 percent of respondents provided suggestions for the survey itself or miscellaneous comments. You can read a representative sampling of these comments below:

Don't care/ remember/ pay attention to, nationality/gender of author: (15%)
"I tend not to consider author nationality at all when choosing books."

Not aware it was Canadian literature/ uncertain of what constitutes Canadian literature: (10%)
"It is hard to identify what is Canadian literature -I have probably read a lot more Canadian literature than I am aware of."

"If I have read Canadian literature, I doubt I was aware of it. I'm not really sure of the backgrounds of the authors/books I read. I read quite often, but just whatever I find enjoyable."

Lack of exposure/limited exposure to the work; lack of "visibility" of Canadian writing: (9%)
"I'm from the [United States] so I haven't had much exposure to Canadian writing and so far in University the focus has been more on English literature. What I have read I have read on my own but lack of exposure makes it hard to find new authors."

"My exposure and interest in Can lit, like that of most people I know, is limited to the famous authors: Mordecai Richler, W.O. Mitchell, Margaret Atwood, etc. Regionally published authors are generally ignored."

Lack of interest in/ dislike of Canadian writing: (8%)
"I'm not necessarily opposed to Canadian Women's Writing. I have liked some of what I have read. However I find it all rather monotonous. After awhile it all seems the same."

"Though I have read Canadian lit many times before I find as a general rule it's somewhat dry and boring compared to many other places."

Feels Canadian literature should be encouraged: (6%)
"I would like to read more Canadian literature but find it difficult to read for pleasure. I would like it if more Canadian literature was included in University general curriculum."

"I believe it is sad that throughout high school young readers are not introduced to more Canadian literature. We learn the classics but not many contemporary works. This needs to be changed."

Suggestions on the survey and other: (36%)
"It's interesting that you would bring up Canadian literature by women. It's true that we don't often read writings by women, forget the fact that they are Canadian."

Don't care/ remember/ pay attention to, nationality/gender of author **15%**

Suggestions on the survey and other **36%**

Not aware it was Canadian literature/ uncertain of what constitutes Canadian literature **10%**

Lack of exposure/limited exposure to the work; lack of "visibility" of Canadian writing **9%**

Feels Canadian literature should be encouraged **6%**

Lack of interest in/ dislike of Canadian writing **8%**