

1 **An empirical assessment of how readers value text: an adaption of the willingness-to-**  
2 **wait paradigm**

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20

## 21Abstract

22Print experience is critical for becoming a skilled reader and leisure reading is a major source  
23of print experience. Therefore, it is important that we understand what motivates individuals  
24to read in their leisure time. Existing questionnaires measuring reading motivation are trait-  
25based, generally involving self-reported ratings such as, “I enjoy reading.” These do not  
26capture the dynamic, moment-to-moment changes in motivation that could occur (e.g. due to  
27the text, social context). In this study, we used a willingness-to-wait paradigm to quantify the  
28subjective value participants assign to books, based on the principle that people only wait for  
29items that they find rewarding. We asked 40 adult participants to read book synopses and rate  
30how much they enjoyed each synopsis. We then assessed whether participants would wait to  
31learn more information about the book, predicting that adults would only wait when they  
32rated a book as enjoyable. Our findings supported this prediction, and additionally  
33demonstrated that enjoyment ratings were associated with reading comprehension. A  
34traditional reading motivation questionnaire was not a good predictor of waiting decisions or  
35reading comprehension. This novel paradigm allows us to investigate the decisions people  
36make about reading and opens future avenues for investigating the factors affecting their  
37choices.

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## **40An empirical assessment of how readers value text: an adaption of the willingness-to- 41wait paradigm**

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43Reading has a large positive impact on learning and well-being<sup>1,2</sup> and print experience is  
44critical for becoming a skilled reader. Leisure reading is associated with large differences in  
45print exposure. For example, the most avid readers (top percentile) read over 3 million words  
46more than the least frequent readers (bottom percentile)<sup>2</sup>. Indeed, high intrinsic motivation to  
47read has been linked with larger vocabularies and better reading comprehension skills<sup>3,4,5,6,7,8,9</sup>.  
48Consequently, understanding how to motivate someone to read is important to educators and  
49policy makers. Our existing measures tend to focus on children's overall motivation for  
50reading, rather than trying to quantify the dynamic contextual factors that might influence an  
51individual's motivation to read. In the present study, we use a novel experimental method to  
52measure dynamic changes in reading enjoyment, demonstrating how this measure links to  
53reading motivation and comprehension.

54

55Reading motivation is typically assessed through self-report questionnaires<sup>10</sup>. Such  
56questionnaires rely heavily on people's memory of events and are prone to biases. An item on  
57a popular reading test, the Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLs) questionnaire<sup>11</sup>  
58is, "I enjoy reading". The use of such items means that motivation will be confounded with  
59people's reading proficiency (better readers read more<sup>12,13</sup>), as well as their self-concept of  
60their reading proficiency. It is also unclear whether available questionnaires all tap the same  
61construct, i.e., reading motivation. For instance, a review of sixteen available reading  
62motivation questionnaires showed that different scales used vastly different terminology, and  
63the subdivision of items into sub-constructs was not consistent across studies<sup>10,14</sup>. However,  
64and most importantly, these questionnaires only measure enjoyment at the trait level,

65inherently implying that an individual's motivation to read is an invariant construct that  
66remains stable over time. This is very unlikely to be true. For instance, someone is more  
67likely to read a text about a topic they enjoy, and less likely to do so when the text is  
68perceived as dense or boring. They are more likely to read when they have easy access to  
69books, and less likely to read if they must travel long distances to obtain them. These  
70contextual factors could help us understand how we can improve motivation for reading.

71

72To capture dynamic changes in motivation, we first need to understand and define  
73motivation. Berridge and colleagues have suggested that motivation involves at least three  
74separable psychological components, “liking”, “wanting”, and “learning”, which typically  
75cohere. Liking is at the heart of motivation and refers to the hedonic impact of a  
76stimulus<sup>15,16,17</sup>. For example, the sensation of sweetness typically triggers positive facial  
77reactions in human infants, non-human primates and rodents, and is considered likeable<sup>18</sup>.  
78Liking can also be triggered by higher-order cognitive stimuli such as social stimuli<sup>19,20</sup> or  
79music<sup>21,22</sup> or text<sup>23,24,25</sup>. Asking participants to subjectively rate their enjoyment of different  
80stimuli to read could consequently offer a dynamic measure of motivation, as this would  
81index the enjoyment or hedonic impact of different texts. In work conducted by Ripollés and  
82colleagues, behavioural ratings of enjoyment during a word learning task offered a good  
83index of intrinsic reward, showing convergence with activity in reward processing regions of  
84the brain, as well as galvanic skin responses<sup>23,24,25</sup>.

85

86Wanting indexes the process where reward cues become attractive enough to trigger goal-  
87directed actions to obtain the reward in question. To our knowledge, wanting has not been  
88studied in the reading literature. However, it is only when someone “wants” a book that they  
89would decide to buy it, or make the effort to go to the library to borrow it. To assess

90“wanting”, we need to go beyond measuring simple “liking” of a stimulus and assess a  
91participant’s willingness to take on a cost to obtain it<sup>17</sup>. This allows us to understand if stimuli  
92are not just liked, but desirable. In humans, monetary, temporal, or physical effort costs are  
93typically used to assess the desirability or value of a presented stimulus<sup>16,26,27,28</sup>, as rewards are  
94discounted by the costs needed to obtain them. Kang and colleagues observed that when  
95participants were in states of high intrinsic motivation (such as curiosity about an answer to a  
96trivia question), they were more likely to spend one of their limited number of tokens to  
97obtain the answer to the question<sup>29</sup>. Participants are also more likely to wait for information  
98when they are curious<sup>30,31</sup>. These studies demonstrate that people are willing to take on a cost  
99when they find information intrinsically rewarding. Willingness-to-wait designs work with  
100children, as well as participants with poor reading ability<sup>25,32</sup>. Here, we plan to assess if  
101people are willing to take on temporal costs for reading, as this will provide us with an  
102empirical index of wanting.

103

104The aforementioned studies also highlight a close link between states of high intrinsic reward  
105and later learning, as postulated by Berridge<sup>15,16,17</sup>. Kang and colleagues demonstrated that  
106participants were more likely to remember answers to questions they were curious about,  
107even 1-2 weeks post-test. This finding has been consistently replicated<sup>30,31,32</sup>. Extrinsic reward  
108is known to be associated with enhancements in long-term memory, as reward primes  
109memory networks leading to improvements in long-term memory through dopamine release  
110in the hippocampus<sup>18,42</sup>. This work has suggested that intrinsic states of reward could have the  
111same effect. In this vein, Ripolles and colleagues found words assigned high enjoyment  
112ratings were remembered better than those with lower ratings and demonstrated that this was  
113due to a strengthening of reward-memory links at the neural level<sup>23,24</sup>. This link is important,  
114as it suggests a close mechanistic link between motivation and reading, which would occur at

115the state level rather than the trait level. For instance, we might expect that information that is  
116enjoyed would be remembered or comprehended better than information that is less  
117enjoyable.

118

119In the present study, we used a willingness-to-wait design to validate whether participants'  
120enjoyment ratings for a text were a good index of subjective value, and also assess if  
121enjoyment was linked to comprehension of a text. In our task, participants encountered a  
122variety of book synopses, sampled from multiple genres. We assessed if participants found  
123items intrinsically valuable by investigating if they would wait for more information about  
124the book (specifically, the book cover). This design allowed us to assess how enjoyment was  
125associated with participants' decisions to take on temporal costs in an ecologically valid way.  
126We then examined if enjoyment was associated with participant's comprehension of a text,  
127predicting that book extracts that were enjoyable would be more likely to be remembered.  
128We expected that higher enjoyment ratings would be associated with: (1) a greater likelihood  
129of waiting for more information about a book; and (2) higher comprehension scores.

130

## 131Results

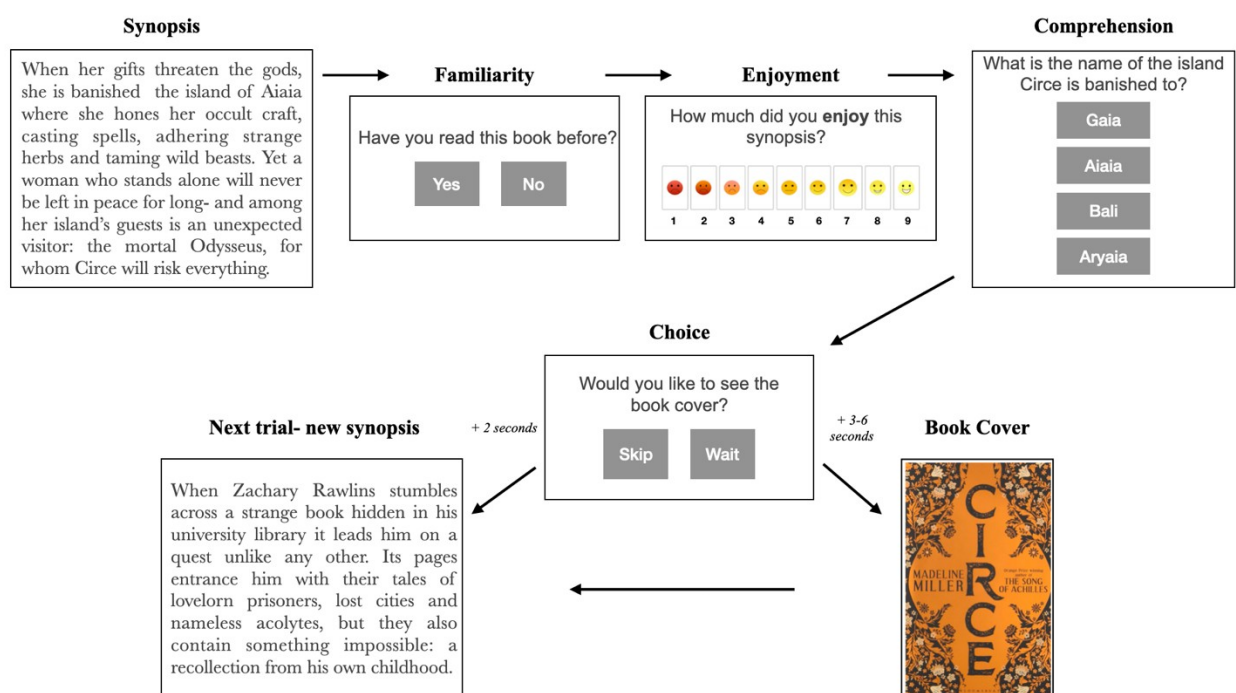
132Over the course of this experiment, 40 native English speakers aged 18-40 encountered forty  
133book synopses to read. Once participants had read a synopsis, they were asked how much  
134they enjoyed it, and had to answer two questions that assessed their comprehension of the  
135synopsis. Finally, they were presented with a choice to see more about the book – they had to  
136wait for an unspecified period of time if they wanted this information. If they waited, we  
137showed participants the book's cover, which gave them much more detail (book title, author,  
138genre) and would allow them to purchase the book at a later date. A wait time of between 3-6  
139seconds was imposed on choosing 'yes', such that seeking this information about the book

140was associated with a temporal cost (see Figure 1 for a schematic of willingness-to-wait  
 141task). The financial compensation associated with taking part in the experiment was fixed, so  
 142we expected that participants would only choose to wait if they wanted to seek further  
 143information about the book – they obtained no financial reward from waiting.

144

145We excluded data from three participants who chose to wait for all the synopses, as we did  
 146not know if this reflected a misunderstanding of task instructions. We consequently retained  
 147data from 37 participants. We constructed linear mixed effects models to address the two key  
 148hypotheses.

149



150

151**Figure 1.** The experimental paradigm. Participants encounter a synopsis. They are asked  
 152whether they previously read the book and then to rate how much they enjoyed reading each  
 153synopsis. Following this, they answered two comprehension questions about the text. Finally,  
 154they were asked whether they would be willing to wait to see the associated book cover a  
 155text. If they choose “skip” they would wait 2 seconds before starting the next trial. If they  
 156choose “wait”, they would wait between 3-6 seconds before seeing the book cover and  
 157beginning the next trial.

158

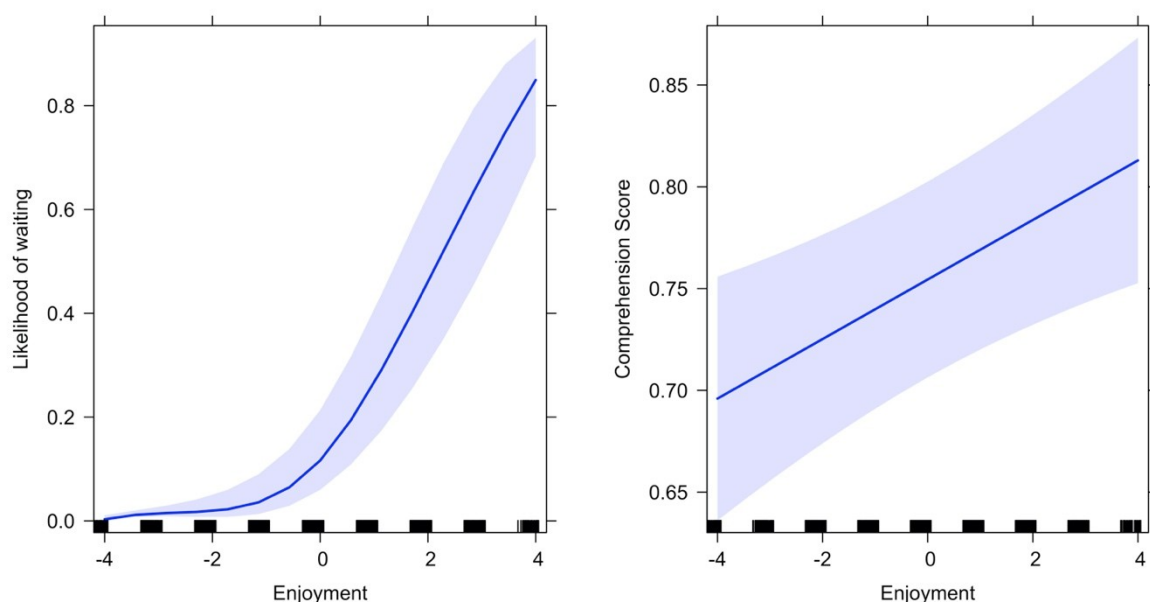
159Hypothesis 1: Higher enjoyment ratings are associated with greater likelihood to wait

160We first assessed correlations between the number of decisions to wait across the experiment  
161and: a) reading motivation scores from the Adult Reading Motivation Questionnaire,  $r=-.09$ ,  
162 $p = .6$ , b) accuracy scores from the sentence verification task;  $r=-0.06$ ,  $p=.72$ , and c) the  
163reading engagement questionnaire;  $r=.015$ ,  $p=.72$ , to assess whether these needed to be  
164accounted for in the main model. As these scores did not significantly correlate with the  
165decision to wait, they were not included in the final model.

166

167A logistic mixed effects model was conducted with decision to wait as the dependent  
168variable, enjoyment was modelled as a fixed and random effect (see Methods for further  
169details about model construction). As predicted, participants were more likely to wait to learn  
170more information about a book if they reported higher enjoyment ratings when reading the  
171corresponding synopsis,  $\beta= 0.94$ ,  $SE= 0.11$ ,  $z= 8.73$ ,  $p<0.001$  (see Figure 2a).

172



173

174Figure 2. Participants were more likely to wait to see the book cover when they reported  
175higher enjoyment, with the solid blue line indicates the influence of enjoyment on the  
176probability of the decision to wait (a). Enjoyment was positively associated with



comprehension accuracy. The solid blue line indicates the influence of enjoyment on the probability of having high accuracy on the comprehension questions (b). The shaded area around the solid line shows the 95% confidence interval. The black boxes on the x-axis indicate the number of observations at each level of the factor of enjoyment.

*Hypothesis 2: Enjoyment ratings are positively associated with comprehension scores.*

As before, we assessed the relationship between our key dependent variable, comprehension, and scores on the Adult Reading Motivation Questionnaire, sentence verification accuracy, and time spent reading, to assess if these needed to be included as factors in our models. Correlations between comprehension and Adult Reading Motivation Questionnaire ( $r = -0.062$ ,  $p = 0.72$ ) and the reading engagement questionnaire ( $r = -0.17$ ,  $p = 0.32$ ) were not significant. As we anticipated, sentence verification scores and comprehension scores were significantly correlated ( $r = 0.36$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ). We therefore included reading proficiency (scores from the sentence verification task) as a fixed factor in our models, to account for individual participant-level differences in reading comprehension.

We then conducted a linear mixed effects model with comprehension scores as the dependent variable, and enjoyment ratings and reading ability as fixed effects (see Methods for further details about model construction). We included random effects of item and participant. Comprehension was positively associated with enjoyment ratings,  $\beta = .015$ ,  $SE = .005$ ,  $t = 3.19$ ,  $p = .001$  (see Figure 2b), but not with reading ability ( $\beta = .003$ ,  $SE = .002$ ,  $t = 1.79$ ,  $p = .08$ ). Comparison of the full model with enjoyment and reading ability as fixed effects to a reduced model where enjoyment was removed found that the full model was a better fit to the data ( $X^2(1) = 10.11$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). This indicated that the association between comprehension scores and enjoyment ratings was significant even when accounting for reading ability.

204

## 205**Discussion**

206Previous studies have investigated reading motivation in children and adults using trait-based  
207measures such as questionnaires<sup>10,11,14</sup>. Our aim was to measure dynamic changes in  
208enjoyment during reading, that is, exploring states of high intrinsic reward. To do so, we used  
209a willingness-to-wait design allowing us to assess enjoyment or the hedonic impact of 40  
210different texts. We also assessed how hedonism was related to “wanting”, i.e., whether people  
211would be willing to take on a temporal cost to receive further information, and whether it was  
212related to learning from the text. We found that higher enjoyment scores were associated with  
213the desire to learn more information about the associated book. We also observed a positive  
214relationship between enjoyment and comprehension, which remained even when controlling  
215for reading ability. This indicates we can measure dynamic changes in enjoyment, and that  
216these dynamic changes appear to be indexed to meaningful aspects of reading. Somewhat  
217surprisingly, we found that a trait-based measure of reading motivation did not have strong  
218links to waiting decisions or comprehension. We discuss each of these issues in further detail  
219below.

220

### 221*Enjoyment predicts the likelihood of waiting for information*

222We hypothesised that there would be a positive association between enjoyment and  
223likelihood of waiting for more information, demonstrating a link between “liking” and  
224“wanting”. This would additionally demonstrate validity of the “liking” ratings, mitigating  
225against potential demand characteristics, as people would be unwilling to take on temporal  
226costs for information, they did not consider valuable. Indeed, we demonstrated that higher  
227enjoyment scores for a synopsis were associated with a greater likelihood to wait for more  
228information about the associated book. This finding therefore fits with the literature

229suggesting that states of high intrinsic motivation for information are associated with a  
230greater likelihood to take on temporal costs<sup>27,28,30</sup>. While other work has demonstrated this  
231phenomenon using construct like trivia questions, this is the first demonstration of this effect  
232using book synopses. Crucially, this demonstrates states of high intrinsic motivation  
233experienced during reading can affect the decisions people make about further reading.

234

235The fact that people were willing to take on temporal costs to learn more about books is  
236important. There was no extrinsic value to seeking the information we provided, for instance,  
237there was no test of book cover knowledge, and no monetary advantage. Participants were  
238fully aware of the trial structure, having completed some practice trials at the start of the  
239experiment. Indeed, as we offered fixed financial compensation, there was a financial  
240disincentive for waiting (as participants would take longer to complete the experiment). Yet,  
241we found that participants were willing to wait when they enjoyed the synopsis. This has  
242important ramifications, suggesting that enjoyment of a text might lie at the heart of engaging  
243in behaviours such as making the trip to a library, paying for a book, or choosing to spend  
244time reading. Enjoyment may therefore be a fruitful target when designing reading  
245interventions.

246

247Additionally, we did not find evidence of a significant correlation between the motivation  
248scores reported on the Adult Reading Motivation Questionnaire and the decision to wait.  
249Previous literature reports that motivation (particularly intrinsic motivation) is a predictor of  
250reading behaviours and engagement<sup>7,34,35,36</sup>. We consequently expected that high scores on the  
251Adult Reading Motivation Questionnaire (reflecting a highly motivated reader) would predict  
252the likelihood of waiting for more information about a book. Yet, individuals who self-  
253identified as highly motivated readers were not more likely to wait to learn more information

254about a book than those with lower motivation scores. We did get a range of scores (33-92)  
255from the Adult Reading Motivation Questionnaire, suggesting that the lack of a correlation  
256was not driven by a lack of variation in our sample. These differences point to the need to  
257whether constructs tapped by these questionnaires fit with real-world decisions, and how  
258state-based measures relate to more common trait-based measures.

259

260*Enjoyment during reading is associated with enhanced comprehension of a text*

261We included comprehension questions after each passage for a number of reasons. First, we  
262wanted to ensure that participants paid attention to the texts, rather than just skimming them.  
263Second, their inclusion also allowed us to test the link between enjoyment and  
264comprehension. Multiple studies have suggested reading motivation is positively linked to  
265achievement<sup>7,38</sup> and comprehension<sup>3,4,5,6,7,8,9</sup>. However, recent cross-sectional genetic studies  
266suggest that reading ability is predictive of reading enjoyment, rather than the other way  
267around<sup>16</sup>. In contrast, longitudinal genetic studies have indicated there is a bidirectional link  
268between reading proficiency and reading enjoyment, especially in older children<sup>38,39</sup>. One  
269issue with these studies is that they use a trait-based approach. They implicitly imply that the  
270links between enjoyment and ability are stable. Yet, there are situations where a good reader  
271might not enjoy reading (or vice versa). Here, we wanted to ask if **states** of enjoyment could  
272predict learning within individuals. Previous studies have demonstrated this effect for trivia  
273questions, wherein states of high curiosity are associated with better long-term  
274learning<sup>23,24,25,30,31,39</sup>. Neuroscience studies point to a close coupling of activity in reward  
275processing regions of the brain and regions associated with learning and memory, such as the  
276hippocampus, during high reward states<sup>25,40</sup>. In our study, we find that enjoyment scores  
277positively predict comprehension accuracy. Notably, this association between enjoyment and  
278comprehension remains when controlling for individual reading proficiency, suggesting that

279this is not driven by people who enjoy texts being better readers. This points to a link  
280between reward processing and learning systems during reading, suggesting boosting  
281enjoyment during reading could lead to better learning. This might be an important finding  
282for education, helping us design targeted intervention strategies focusing on reading  
283enjoyment to promote positive reading behaviours.

284

285However, an important caveat is that it is not possible to establish the causality of this  
286relationship from our study. Better comprehension of the text might produce greater  
287enjoyment, rather than the other way around. This is somewhat unlikely given that we were  
288testing proficient adult readers, but future studies which look to enhance state-based  
289enjoyment could help reveal whether this method is effective in driving better  
290comprehension. Additionally, we designed comprehension questions to be quite specific to  
291each synopsis and they were presented after the synopsis. As such, they are likely to depend  
292on memory, not merely reading comprehension. While our results still point to a role of  
293enjoyment in learning from text, such effects may be memory-based. By presenting the  
294synopsis alongside comprehension questions that require making an inference from the  
295synopsis, we could disentangle memory and comprehension-based effects in future studies.

296

#### 297*State vs trait-based measures of reading motivation*

298We have drawn a dichotomy between state- and trait-based approach to motivation. However,  
299it is likely that the two are related, and that those with greater reading motivation are more  
300likely to spend a greater proportion of time in a state of high intrinsic motivation. Studies  
301focusing on trait-based motivation have helped establish links between individual motivation  
302and reading skill<sup>3,4,8,9,37</sup> and reading behaviours<sup>1,2,41</sup>. In addition to this, we believe  
303characterising states of high motivation for reading can help us understand how we can

304stimulate reading enjoyment. For instance, people's enjoyment of music can be enhanced  
305through social influence<sup>19,20</sup>. Choice is another factor that is purported to influence enjoyment  
306and valuation of experiences<sup>42,43,44</sup>. Could these factors affect reading enjoyment? What is  
307their impact on future learning? It is extremely challenging to establish how these can  
308influence reading enjoyment using trait-based measures. However, state-based measures  
309easily lend themselves to such enquiry and can help us establish how these different factors  
310affect reading enjoyment. Importantly, we can also assess the degree to which factors matter  
311for each individual, through assessing interactions with reading ability. The development of  
312this state-based measure will allow us tailor strategies and interventions to enhance reading  
313enjoyment.

314

### 315*Conclusion*

316For the first time, we empirically assessed dynamic changes of enjoyment during reading. We  
317found that higher levels of enjoyment are linked to greater engagement with the text in  
318question, and improved comprehension of the text. These findings show the importance of  
319reading for pleasure and suggest that targeting enjoyment during reading might boost the  
320decision to read, as well as learning from reading.

321

322

### 323**Methods**

#### 324**Participants**

##### 325*Determination of sample size*

326We a ran power analysis using the SimR package<sup>45</sup> using data from a pilot study (n = 23). The  
327pilot study employed a similar, but not an identical design to the current study. This analysis  
328indicated that using an alpha of .05, a sample size of 20 would yield a power of 0.9. As this

study employed four counterbalanced lists, we recruited 40 participants, assigning 10 participants at random to each list.

### *Participants*

We recruited 40 participants ( $M_{\text{age}} = 31.10$  years,  $SD = 10.18$ , 29 females) using the Prolific platform, [www.prolific.ac](http://www.prolific.ac). Three participants were excluded from our analyses because they made the decision to wait on every trial. All participants were between the ages of 18 to 50 years old. All participants were native English speakers with normal or corrected-to-normal vision and hearing. Participants were excluded if that had any known developmental disorders affecting learning (e.g. dyslexia), or any neurological disorders (e.g., epilepsy).

### **Materials and procedure**

Participants provided informed consent and were invited to complete the experiment online with all tasks presented on Gorilla.sc, an online experiment platform<sup>46</sup>. Access was restricted to participants using tablets and computers, to ensure that the text displayed correctly. Participants were informed that the study would last for 1 hour. Before beginning the experiment, all participants provided consent and completed a demographics form stating their age, gender, any known language disorders, developmental disorders, or any neurological disorders. Participants completed an adult reading motivation questionnaire (ARMQ), a reading engagement questionnaire, a sentence verification task, followed by the willingness-to-wait task. The methods were performed in accordance with relevant and guidelines by Royal Holloway, University of London Ethics Committee [ethical approval code: 2543-2021-02-05-17-21-PJTT001].

### *Adult Reading Motivation Questionnaire*

354The Adult Reading Motivation Questionnaire<sup>47</sup> was administered to obtain a measure of self-  
355reported motivation. This questionnaire provides an overall score for reading motivation, as  
356well as scores for four factors contributing to reading motivation: reading efficacy, reading  
357recognition, reading as a characteristic of self, and reading to do well in other realms. This  
358questionnaire was selected as it is the only reading motivation questionnaire for adults that  
359was easily accessible<sup>12</sup>.

360

#### 361*Reading engagement questionnaire*

362We developed a reading engagement questionnaire to measure how frequently participants  
363read. We asked participants what they had read and how much time they spent reading one  
364day prior to the experiment. They were given four options of 0 to 30 minutes, 30 minutes to 1  
365hour, 1 hour to 2 hours or more than 2 hours. In a pilot study, we established that completing  
366this questionnaire 3 times did not yield substantially different information. During analysis,  
367the four options above were coded as 1, 2, 3, and 4. These levels were then correlated with an  
368individual's likelihood to wait and comprehension scores.

369

#### 370*Sentence Verification Task*

371To determine reading proficiency, we administered a sentence verification task<sup>30</sup>. This task  
372captures both reading comprehension and reading fluency. The task consisted of 80  
373sentences. Each sentence stayed on the screen for three seconds, during which time  
374participants were asked to decide whether the sentence was either true or false. The  
375statements were simple sentences based on real world knowledge, for instance, "Grass is  
376green". For each correct response, the participant was given 1 point, with 80 points being the  
377maximum score. Participants had 90 seconds in total to read and verify all sentences.

378



### 379The willingness-to-wait task

380During the task, participants encountered forty synopses (see below for details on synopsis  
381selection). Participants were allowed a maximum 1 minute to read each synopsis. Participants  
382were also asked about whether they had read the presented book previously. They were then  
383asked how much they enjoyed reading the item on a likert scale from 1 (“hated it”) to 9  
384(“loved it”). To measure arousal, they were asked how tired they were on a scale of 1 (“very  
385tired”) to 9 (“not tired at all”). Subsequently they encountered two comprehension questions  
386for the synopsis (see below for the development of questions), See Figure 1 for task  
387schematic.

388

389Participants were then asked whether “they would like to know more about this book”.  
390During the task participants were provided with two response choices, either “skip” or  
391“wait”. They were instructed to select “Skip” if they were not interested in learning more  
392information. Participants would then wait 2 seconds before moving on to the next trial.  
393Participants were instructed to select “Wait” if they wanted to find out more about the book.  
394Participants were told they would have to wait between 3-6 seconds before further  
395information was revealed. The time delays for each item varied between 1s, 2s, 3s or 4s.  
396Time delays were counterbalanced for each item across participants. For each book, the  
397book-cover showing the author and title was displayed to the participants (see figure 1).  
398Participants were told the entire task was expected to take 1 hour, and they would be paid a  
399fixed amount (£5.10).

400

### 401Synopsis Selection

402Forty novel synopses were selected. Synopses were taken verbatim from a popular online  
403book merchant (amazon.co.uk). Both fiction and non-fiction books were selected. Synopses

404were sampled based on their novelty and genre. First, well-known books or books with a high  
405number of accolades were avoided to maximise the likelihood that they were unfamiliar to  
406participants. Then, we ensured that a variety of genres were represented. Then, these  
407synopses were sampled further by their word count and reading ease. Synopses with a  
408minimum word count of 60 and maximum word count of 200 were included in the final  
409sample. Reading ease for each synopsis was measured using the Flesch Kincaid Grade level  
410scores. A low reading ease score suggested a text was more difficult to read and a high  
411reading ease score being an easier text to read. For instance, a score between 0 and 30  
412suggested the text would be at a graduate reading level. Synopses with a minimum reading  
413ease score of 7.5 and maximum reading ease score of 85 were included.

414

#### 415*Comprehension Questions*

416All participants answered two questions to assess their comprehension of each synopsis. One  
417question was literal; where the participant would be able to answer the question verbatim  
418from the synopsis. The second was non-literal where the participant would have to make an  
419inference from the synopsis to answer<sup>48</sup>. All questions were multiple choice with four options  
420giving a 25% chance of a correct response. Comprehension questions were piloted prior to  
421the experiment (N = 20), and we ensured that no item was answered with more than 40%  
422accuracy when read in isolation (i.e. the corresponding synopsis was not presented), and  
423accuracy was more than 40% for all questions when presented after the synopsis (as done in  
424the experimental task).

425

#### 426**Statistical Analyses**

427All analyses were performed in R<sup>49</sup>, with logistic regression models and mixed effects models  
428created using the lme4 package<sup>50</sup>. Plots were created using the effects package<sup>51</sup>.

429

430 Before beginning the analysis, we removed any items where participants had stated they had  
431 read the book before, to ensure we measured responses from participants when they  
432 encountered novel items. We first ran correlations between the decision to wait/  
433 comprehension and reading motivation scores from the Adult Reading Motivation  
434 Questionnaire, accuracy scores from the sentence verification task and time spent reading to  
435 assess if these needed to be included in the model. Any correlations where  $p < 0.2$  were  
436 included into the models.

437

438 *Hypothesis 1: Higher enjoyment ratings are associated with greater likelihood to wait*

439 A logistic regression model was created with the decision to wait as the dependent variable  
440 and reported enjoyment ratings as a fixed effect. To account for random variance by item  
441 (synopses) and participant we included these as random intercepts. To account for the random  
442 variance in the reported enjoyment ratings we included these as random slopes by item and  
443 participant. Enjoyment ratings were mean centred prior to inclusion in the model.  
444 Correlations between the decision to wait and reading motivation scores from the Adult  
445 Reading Motivation Questionnaire, accuracy scores from the sentence verification task and  
446 time spent reading all returned a  $p > 0.2$  therefore were not included in the final model. The  
447 best fitting model was a maximal fixed effects model which included random slopes of  
448 enjoyment:

449

450  $\text{Wait\_choice} \sim 1 + \text{enjoyment\_centred} + (1 + \text{enjoyment\_centred} \mid \text{ID}) + (1 +$   
451  $\text{enjoyment\_centred} \mid \text{Item})$

452

453 *Hypothesis 2: Enjoyment ratings are positively associated with comprehension scores.*

454A mixed effects model was created with comprehension scores from the willingness-to-wait  
455task being the dependent variable, enjoyment ratings and reading ability scores being the  
456fixed effects. To account for random variance by item and participant we included these as  
457random intercepts in the model. Enjoyment ratings were also centred prior to model fitting.  
458Correlations between the decision to wait and reading motivation scores from the Adult  
459Reading Motivation Questionnaire and time spent reading all returned a  $p>0.2$  therefore were  
460not included in the final model. However, as expected correlations between comprehension  
461scores and accuracy scores from the sentence verification (measure of reading ability)  
462returned a  $p<0.05$  and therefore was included in the final model as a fixed effect. During  
463model fitting, a maximal model with random slopes of enjoyment by participant and by item  
464did not converge. Therefore a simple model with just fixed effects and random intercepts of  
465participant and item was executed:

466

467  $\text{ComprehensionScore} \sim 1 + \text{enjoyment\_centered} + \text{Reading\_ability} + (1 | \text{ID}) + (1 | \text{Title})$

468

#### 469**Data availability**

470The data and analysis code are openly available at the Open Science Framework:

471<https://osf.io/ftexh/>

472

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478

## 479 **Author Contributions**

480 Amrita Bains: conceptualisation, methodology, resources, analysis, writing- original draft.

481 Saloni Krishnan: conceptualisation, methodology, resources, analysis, writing- review and

482 editing, funding acquisition. Jessie Ricketts: conceptualisation, writing- review and editing.

483 Carina Spaulding: conceptualisation, writing- review and editing.

484

## 485 **Competing interests**

486 The authors declare no competing interests.

487

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