

# Reasons to Read

## Trends and Traps in Common Reading Programs

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Report: [www.nas.org/articles/beach\\_books\\_2013\\_2014](http://www.nas.org/articles/beach_books_2013_2014)

Book Recommendations: [www.nas.org/resources/recommended\\_books](http://www.nas.org/resources/recommended_books)

### I. Trends in college common reading

- A. Goals of common reading programs (why colleges have them)
- B. Mechanics of common reading programs (how they are set up)
- C. Books assigned as common reading
  - 1. Top books
  - 2. Publication dates
  - 3. Turnover
  - 4. Genres
  - 5. Subject categories

### II. Systemic problems in higher ed facing common reading programs

- A. Loss of a core curriculum
- B. "Silos" by department and office
- C. Admissions

### III. Traps common reading organizers fall into

- A. Limiting choices to "accessible" books
- B. Limiting choices to books with living authors
- C. Choosing a book because it fits with a progressive point of view
- D. Having large committees choose the book
- E. Picking a recent non-fiction book that turns out to have gotten the facts wrong

### IV. Recommendations and best practices

- A. Book recommendations
- B. Recommendations in choosing the book
- C. Recommendations for administering the program