

# Summer Reading Challenge: Right Between the Pages of a Book!

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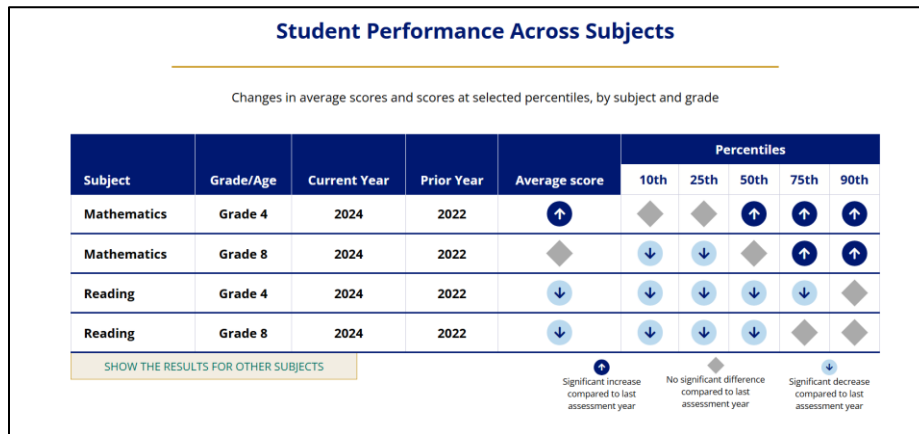
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It was a staggering moment for the American public, especially those in the education field, when the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) released the *Student Performance Across Subjects* report (Figure 1 below).

**Figure 1.**

*Student Performance Across Subjects*

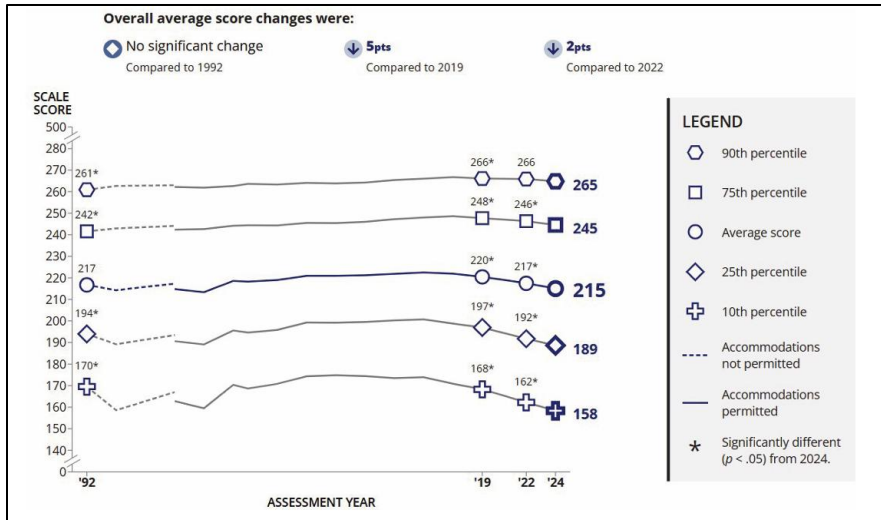


Source: The Nation's Report Card (2025).

The report further indicates that in 2024, the average reading score for American students in grade 4 was 2 points lower than in 2022 and 5 points lower than in 2019, as shown in Figure 2. Comparing those data to the first reading assessment in 1992, the 2024 data did not show any significant difference; in other words, no meaningful progress has been made in the last thirty-two years.

**Figure 2.**

*Reading grade 4 national score trends*



Source: The Nation’s Report Card (2025).

*How can American students get there?* Differences in the criteria of “proficient” score between states and the national standard set by the NAEP (Schwartz, 2025). Furthermore, citing Carr, the commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics, which administers NAE, Schwartz stated that the low-grade fourth graders might struggle to determine the main idea of an informational text.

*What can the American government do to help improve?* The federal and state governments may have introduced several initiatives to address the problem; however, in my opinion, the most feasible option is the one recently proposed by the Second Lady, Usha Vance, known as the *Summer Reading Challenge*, with the great tagline “Adventure, imagination, and discovery await—right between the pages of a book!” (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.**

*The letterhead of the Second Lady of the United States*



Source: The WHITE HOUSE (2025).

The program originates from several sources, encouraging children from kindergarten through eighth grade in the United States to read twelve books during their summer vacation to boost

literacy rates and children's reading skills (Fox, 2025). However, the one thing that I underlined from the Second Lady's interview was the *secret ingredients* she shared from her own experience growing up: her parents modeled the way by filling the house with books and reading themselves.

*Will the program succeed?* It is too early to judge. Nevertheless, this is just the beginning—the first attempt. Therefore, the American people can expect more to come.

Imagine yourself as the advisor for the Second Lady. *What advice will you give to Usha Vance for the after-summer vacation program?*

## References

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