

**“From fiction bans to wartime books: The history of libraries and how they’ve shaped us” (April 25, 2022) (<https://europeansting.com/2022/04/25/from-fiction-bans-to-wartime-books-the-history-of-libraries-and-how-theyve-shaped-us/>) notes that “Fiction initially wasn’t seen to be worthy of reading” but is now accepted as a “tool of recreation and entertainment.”**

**Research done in the last few decades shows that fiction provides more than “recreation and entertainment.” Studies show that those who read more fiction have larger vocabularies (e.g. Sullivan and Brown, 2014), know more about a wide variety of topics, including literature, history, technology, and science (e.g. Stanovich and Cunningham, 1993), and have more empathy and understanding of others (e.g. Kidd and Castano, 2013).**

**Those who have not read the research but who have read plenty of fiction have come to same conclusions”**

**"When I think about how I understand my role as citizen, ... the most important stuff I’ve learned I think I’ve learned from novels. It has to do with empathy. It has to do with being comfortable with the notion that the world is complicated and full of grays, but there’s still truth there to be found ..it’s possible to connect with some[one] else even though they’re very different from you." Barack Obama. ([http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/oct/28/president-obama-says-novels-taught-him-citizen-marilynne-robinson?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/oct/28/president-obama-says-novels-taught-him-citizen-marilynne-robinson?CMP=share_btn_tw))**

**“It is quite possible--overwhelmingly probable, one might guess--that we will always learn more about human life and personality from novels than from scientific psychology” Noam Chomsky, 1988 (Language and Problems of Knowledge, MIT, p. 159)**

**Kidd, D. C., Castano, E. (2013). Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind. *Science*, 342, 377–380.**

**Stanovich, K. and Cunningham, A. (1993). Where does knowledge come from? *Journal of Educational Psychology* 85, 2: 211-229.**

**Sullivan, A. & Brown, M. (2014). *Vocabulary from Adolescence to Middle age*. London: Centre for Longitudinal Studies, University of London.**