



## Enfance & Cultures

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# **The Cultural Consumption and Practices of Young People in Catalonia. A first approximation by way of the Survey of the Cultural Consumption and Practices of Children 2007-2008**

## **0. Introduction**

The official statistical surveys of the Cultural Consumption and Practices of the population of Catalonia have traditionally been confined to the population aged 15 and over. This cut-off by age means there is virtually no reliable information about the cultural consumption and practices of children and adolescents.

The Catalan Parliament, in its Resolution 289/VII (published in the official parliamentary bulletin on 28 November, 2005), urged the Government to conduct a survey study of the consumption and cultural practices of 6 to 14 year-olds. This parliamentary mandate is set out in the Catalan Statistical Plan Act 2006-2009 and reflected in the annual statistics gathering programmes for the years 2006, 2007 and 2008, which included the conducting of the Survey of the Cultural Consumption and Practices of Children by the Ministry of Culture and the Media, the Ministry of Education and the Statistical Institute of Catalonia.

Knowledge about the cultural consumption and practices of children and adolescents allows us not only to analyse their cultural behaviour but also, on the one hand, to study the correlation of some of the cultural practices of this sector of the population with the cultural behaviour of their parents and guardians and, on the other hand, to compare the different ways in which adults and young people perceive cultural consumption by the young.

It was also considered relevant to gather additional information about the young people surveyed, and this data — on the households in which they lived, their school environment and their social habits — was used as the basis for a prospective outline of future trends in cultural consumption in Catalan society in relation to the evolution of other factors.

Of special note among international referents is the survey of the cultural practices of children in France carried out in 2003 by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication's Département des études, de la prospective et des statistiques (*Enquête sur les loisirs culturels des 6-14 ans*). This statistical study had three main objectives: to form a picture of the cultural habits of children under 15; to improve understanding of the conditions affecting the discovery and abandonment of cultural practices by children and adolescents, and to evaluate the relative importance in shaping these practices of influences such as the children's family, their socialization, their school and the communications media. The survey was carried out using a methodology of data collection specifically adapted to this age segment of the population, with the collaboration of schools the children attended. This same data collection procedure, duly adjusted to the particular characteristics of the education system in Catalonia, was used in the Catalan survey.

At the same time, recent research has highlighted the importance of new technologies in young people's lives. What we find here is a new scenario, known as 'bedroom culture', in which children and adolescents not only have their own mobile phone but also a computer, an Internet connection and videogames, enabling them to engage with the world from their own bedroom, sharing information and experiences with many others. However, 'the world inside the bedroom'

may lead to situations of closing off and isolation, in which the young person's social ties to those around them are weakened: this implies consequences not only for future cultural consumption (both individual and collective), but also in other areas beyond the strictly cultural sphere. This aspect was also taken into account in the Survey of the Cultural Consumption and Practices of Children, both in the definition of contents and in the subsequent analysis.

## **1. Methodology**

The Survey of the Cultural Consumption and Practices of Children 2007-2008 (henceforth SCCPC) is a version of the Survey of Cultural Consumption and Practices of the Population aged 15 and over (already established), duly adapted to the population of 6 to 14 year-olds, and is the first of its kind to be conducted.

A series of changes were made to the previously drafted survey for adults, both in the contents (which were expanded to include issues relating to the child's education and family background) and in the methodology used to collect the information.

### **1.1. Objectives of the survey**

The main objective of the SCCPC is to obtain statistical information on the consumption and practice of cultural activities among the population aged 6 to 14 years. Of note among the complementary objectives are understanding the position of Primary and Junior Secondary students in relation to leisure and lifestyles, the characteristics of their cultural practices and their dependence on a particular practice, and the context in which these practices take place and their degree of intergenerational transmission.

The cultural activities addressed are, in synthesis, the consumption of audio-visual materials, reading, making art, the use of cultural facilities, games, school, family relations, sociability among young people, and pocket money.

Other indirect objectives of the survey would include analysing the conditions that predispose people to certain cultural practices — taking into account the relative influence of family, school, the media, etc — and comparing the perceptions of parents and children with regard to a given cultural behaviour.

### **1.2. Scope of the research**

#### **1.2.1. Population**

The target population of this survey is young people between the ages of 6 and 14 resident in Catalonia, together with their parents or guardians. In view of the characteristics of the study population, it was decided to approach it through the schools, in that this did not entail any significant bias between the universe (the population studied) and the framework of the sample (the school-age population). The school-age population was taken as being the population enrolled in public authority, publicly subsidized and private Primary and/or Junior Secondary schools in Catalonia.

The lower limit of the population surveyed is children under 6 years, which is the age at which compulsory schooling begins (Primary education). The upper limit of 14 years is the boundary age for inclusion in the survey of cultural consumption and cultural practices in adults. This age segment corresponds to the courses from first to sixth grade of Primary and the first, second and third years of Secondary education (ESO or Statutory Secondary Education), and therefore represents the school-age population born between 1 January 1993 and 31 December 2002.

#### **1.2.2. Geographical scope**

The geographical scope is the entire territory of Catalonia.

### 1.2.3. Timeframe

The timeframe of the SCCPC is elastic, depending on the type of cultural practice being considered. The first timeframe applied is the period between the start of the 2007-2008 school year and the time of the survey. This is the timeframe of reference for most of the cultural practices in question, such as the reading of books, the use of computers or listening to music, among others. The 2007-2008 school year is also the timeframe of the questions aimed at the children's school and class.

In the case of the less frequent cultural practices, the time reference used is wider, to take account of the child's life as a whole: the child is asked if he or she has 'ever' taken part in a particular activity. These less common practices include, for example, visits to museums and monuments or to the theatre.

In addition, the working day prior to the day of the interview and the weekend prior to the interview are used as time references in the open questions about the children's activities.

In the case of the cultural activities of parents or guardians, the time reference is the last 12 months, as it is in the survey of cultural consumption and cultural practices in adults.

The work of gathering the data was conducted between October 2007, when the interviews in the schools commenced, and September 2008, when the survey of the children's parents or guardians was completed.

### 1.3. Design of the sample

As mentioned above, the target population is the school-age population resident in Catalonia, from the first grade of Primary to the third year of Secondary education in public authority, publicly subsidized and private schools, together with their parents or guardians, together constituting the ultimate unit of analysis. However, as it was decided to gather information in the schools with a view to greater efficiency in the fieldwork phase, the sample units are groups or classes of students within a school.

The sample of the school-age population was constructed by means of a first selection of schools in and a second selection of classes, based on an initial stratification according to the type of institution (public or private) and the category of school (Primary, combined Primary and Secondary, or Secondary).

As a result, the type of sampling adopted in this sample design corresponds to a cluster sampling with previous two-stage stratification, in which the clusters in the first stage are the schools and the second-stage clusters are the classes or groups, always selected randomly. Finally, the selected groups or classes were surveyed: in other words, all of the students in each selected group were interviewed.

In calculating the size of the sample it is important to take into account the number of students enrolled in each school, the number of classes or groups in each school, the number of students in each class and the location of the school in the territory; by doing so it is possible to ensure an error of less than 5% in all strata. This reference information for the 2005-2006 school year was used in the design phase of the survey.

**FIGURE 1. Survey of the Cultural Consumption and Practices of Children 2007-2008**  
**Sample of students enrolled for 2005-2006 school year**

	Sample				Error (Rate)
	Sample of schools	Sample of groups	Sample	Sample of parents	Confidence 95,5%
<b>Type of school</b>					
Primary schools	23	69	1476	1,476	2.60%
Primary and Secondary schools	10	40	1035	1,035	3.10%
Secondary schools	18	18	489	489	4.50%
	<b>51</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>1.80%</b>



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The sample comprised a total of 127 groups in 51 schools. The survey method was based on a self-administered questionnaire, sent out by post or email to the schools by the Ministry of Education.

We can distinguish two distinct categories within the population of children interviewed, with specific differences in the information-gathering process in each case:

1. School-age population in the initial and middle stages of Primary education (age 6 to 9 years)
2. Students in upper Primary and Junior Secondary education (age 10 to 14 years)

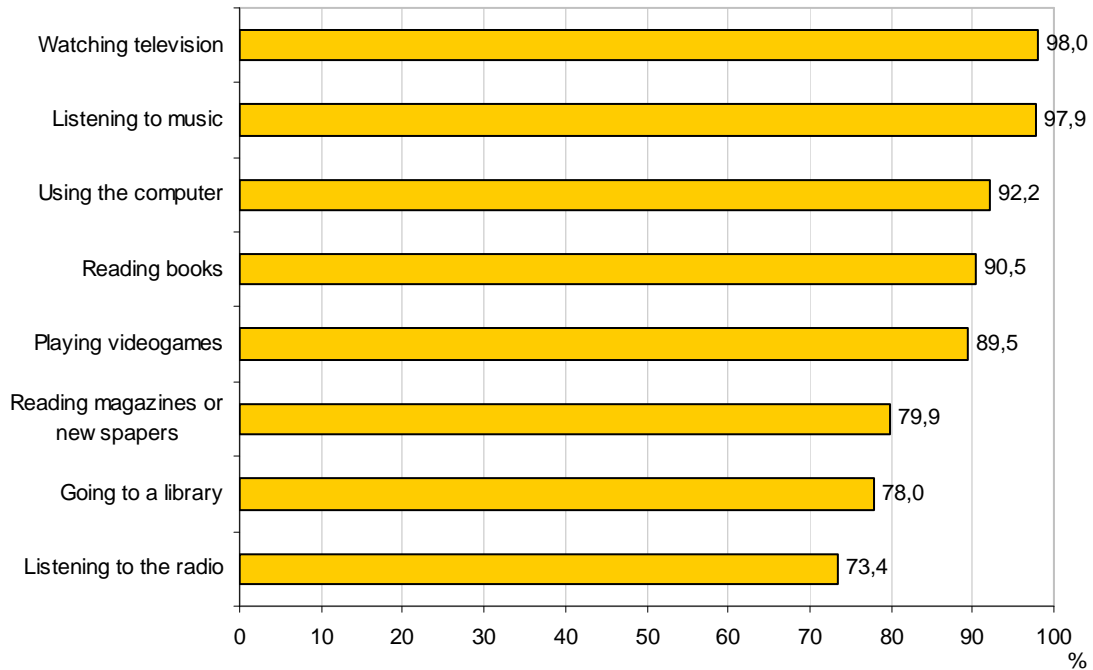
The work of gathering information from the older children, in the upper stage of Primary and in Junior Secondary education, was carried out during the month of June 2008. The theoretical sample was of 1,453 children and the information-gathering method consisted of a self-administered one-hour written questionnaire, with the support of a pollster/interviewer in the classroom and the class teacher.

In the case of the younger children, or the initial stage of Primary school, it was considered that their limited literacy and comprehension skills could make it difficult for them to complete a self-administered questionnaire in an hour, and it was established that their parents or guardians should fill in the responses on behalf of these children.

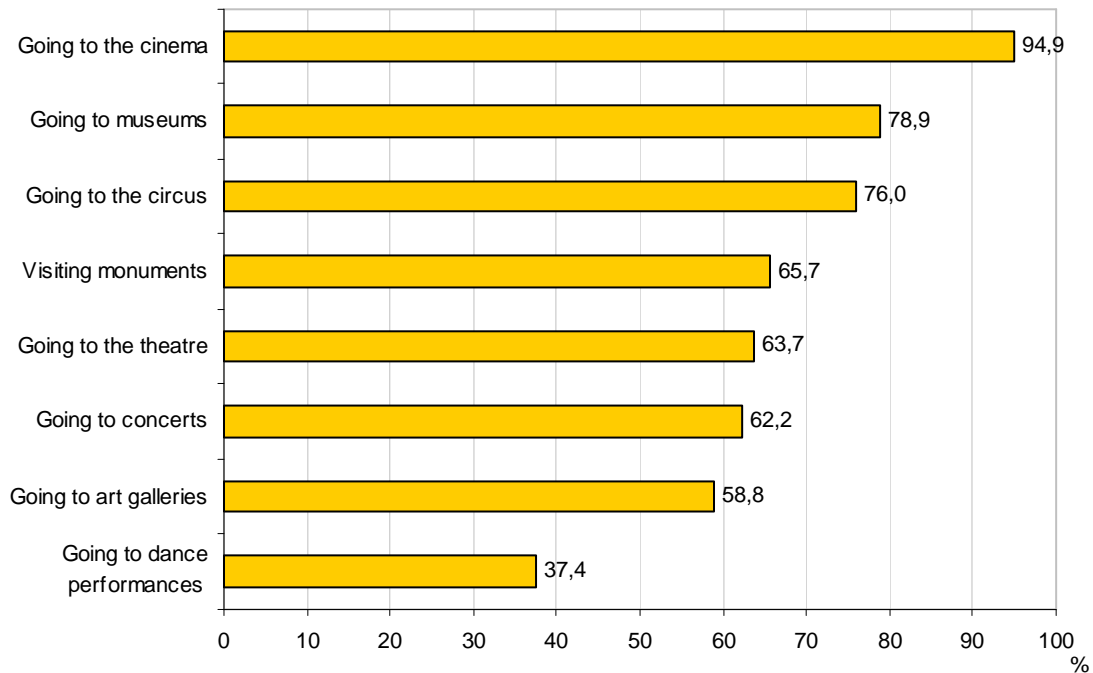
The gathering of information from the parents or guardians of all of the children in the survey, from both Primary and Secondary schools, was carried out from July to September 2008. The theoretical sample was 2,827 parents or guardians. The methods of information gathering used were Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) and face-to-face interview with a written questionnaire if the interviewee did not have a telephone.

## 2. Main Results

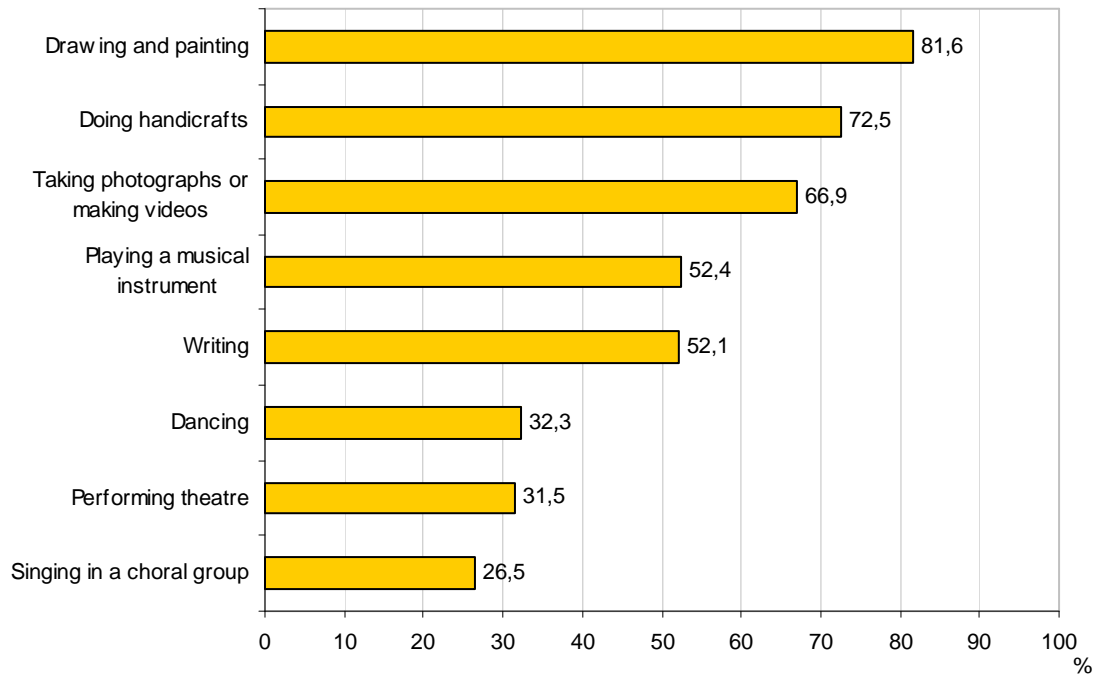
- a) The most widely pursued cultural activities among children aged 6 to 14 are watching television, listening to music, using the computer, reading books and playing videogames. However, there is a difference in the intensity with which these activities are practised: while watching television, listening to music and use the computer are very habitual practices, playing videogames, going to a library or listening to the radio are less frequent.



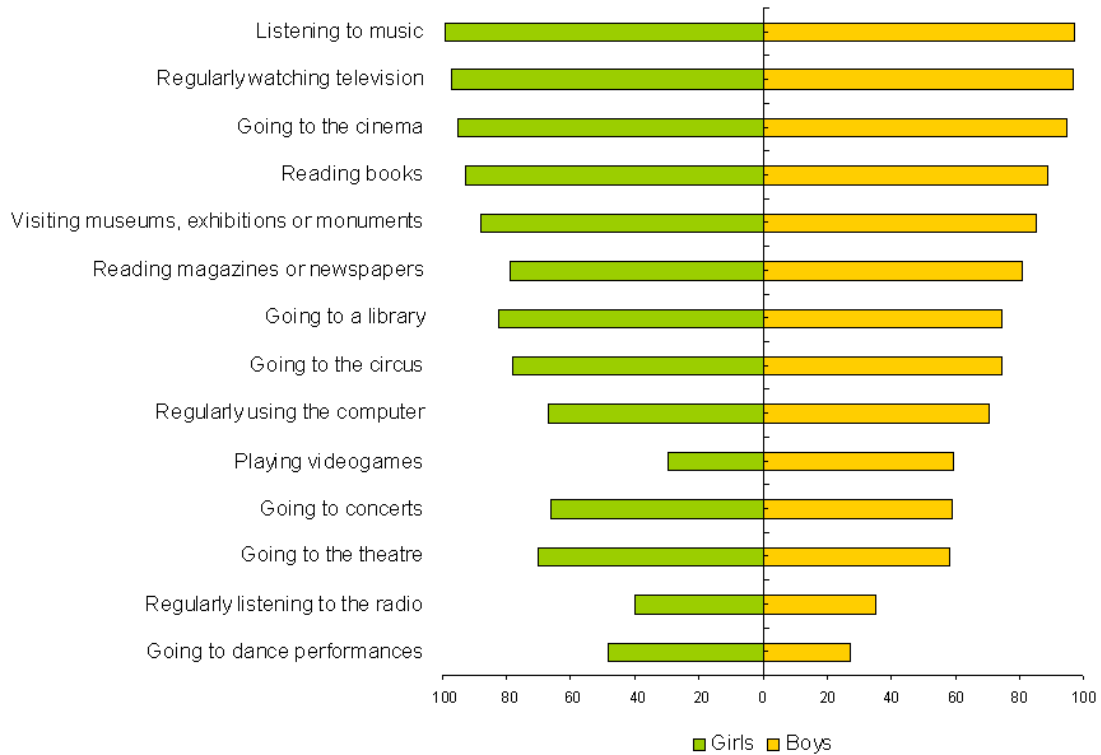
- b) The great majority of children aged 6 to 14 have been to the cinema at some time, and over three quarters have visited a museum or been to the circus. In contrast, dance performances have a much a lower level of penetration.



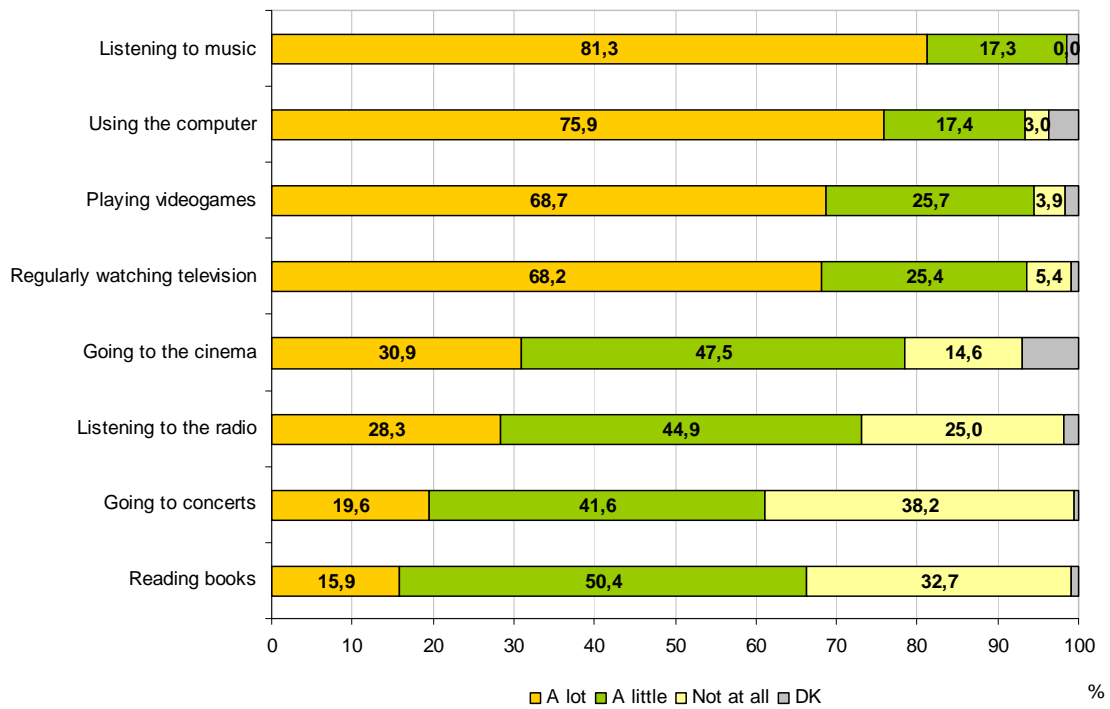
- c) Other cultural activities widely practised by the 6 to 14 age segment are drawing and painting, handicrafts, taking photographs and making videos. By contrast, membership of a choral singing or drama group or dancing are still minority practices.



- d) The most marked differences in cultural behaviour between boys and girls are in the areas of videogames and dance. In the case of videogames, the boys' participation rate exceeds the girls' by almost 30 percentage points, whereas in the case of dance the girls' rate is 21 points higher than the boys'.

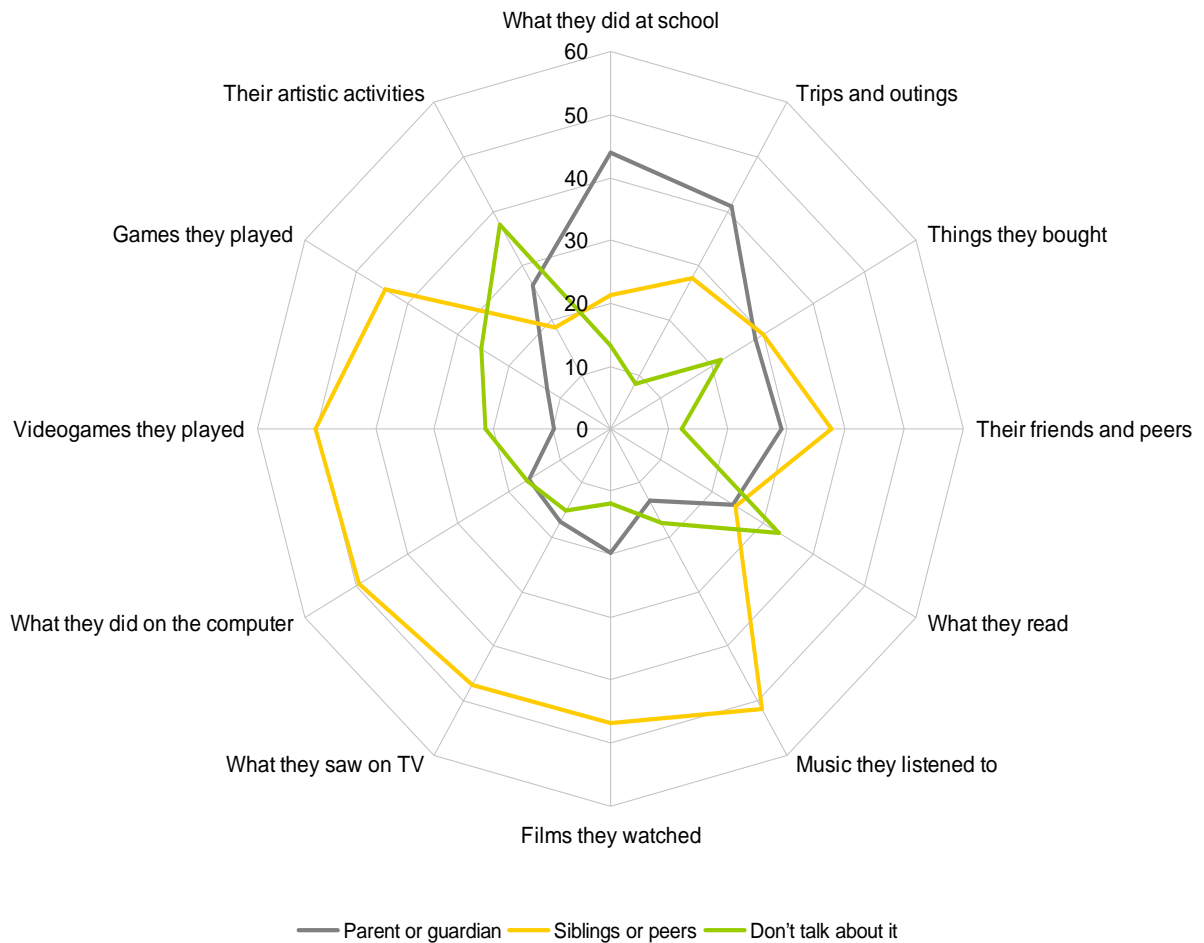


- e) Listening to music and using the computer are the two activities that children aged 10 to 14 say they miss most if they are unable to practice them, followed by playing videogames and watching television. In contrast, reading books is the activity they miss least.

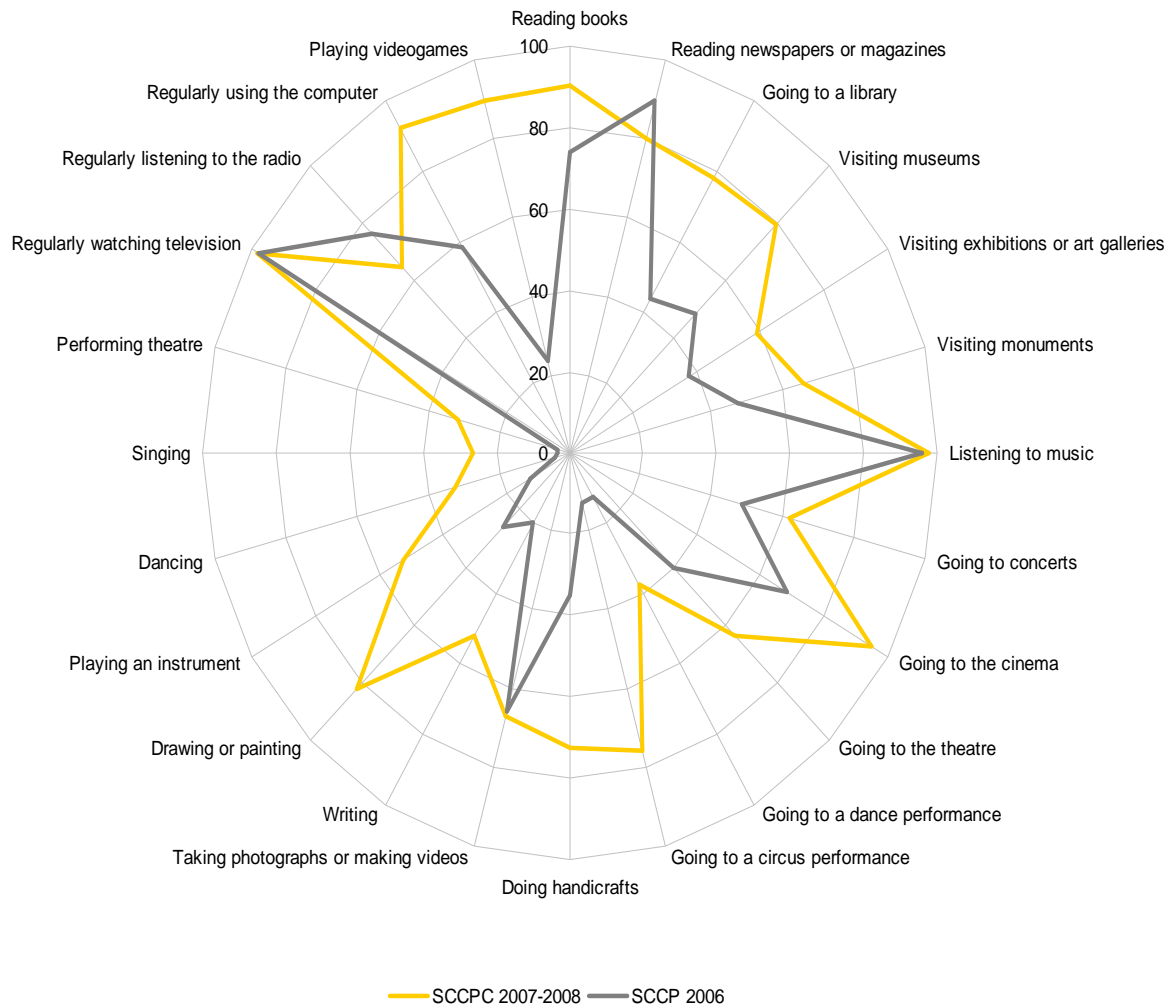




- f) The people with whom children aged 10 to 14 talk most about their activities are their peers and siblings, although parents or guardians are the primary interlocutors when the subjects are school and pleasure trips. At the same time, it is worth noting that a large proportion of the children surveyed declared that they never talk with others about their artistic activities or what they read.



- g) Despite the differences in methodology, the results of the Survey of the Cultural Consumption and Practices of Children (SCCPC) and the Survey of Cultural Consumption and Practices 2006 (SCCP 2006) are comparable, the children's survey being an adapted version of the survey of cultural consumption and cultural practices in the adult population.





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