

## **Appreciating and obeying: School literature curriculum and gender socialisation**

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### Abstract

I present the results from a survey of 700 high school students from 12 Russian cities on gender differences in perception of literature classes. The declared goals of the school curriculum are to develop students' appreciation of the Russian culture and make Russian classical literature an important value as the basis of the culture. Indeed, the values are formed, particularly for girls. However, the values are disconnected from the reading practices: a significant share of curriculum books is never read. This disconnect is largely caused by objective reasons: curriculum books are 150-200 years old and became archaic, unclear, and inaccessible for the teenagers. An unarticulated goal of the literature education, particularly in high school, is to discipline the students and shape their attitude to life as based on duty rather than hedonism. This strategy turns out to be efficient for girls, who are receptive to the message, but not so much with boys, who are less conformist. For girls, the inability to read the assigned works leads to the feeling of guilt for not passing the high bar of the great literature. This guilt is mostly due to the within-gender communication: between female teacher and students. Finally, the modern school does not make students---male or female---love reading.