

## Books Make Comeback in Lockdown

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The coronavirus lockdown has revived interest in reading. Sales of e-books have almost doubled, not least because they can be instantly bought online.

According to Seoul's Gangnam district library, 23,387 e-books were rented from its electronic stacks last month, up more than 75 percent from the same period of 2019. Hits include "The Plague" by Albert Camus, which was borrowed 82 times in March.



Offline libraries are closed due to the pandemic, which has given a boost to computerized book-rental kiosks. In Seongbuk district in northern Seoul, around 780 books were rented on average every day since February at 12 kiosks, up from around 360 before the outbreak. The district office decided to cancel rentals if people fail to pick them up within a day.

Yongsan and Gangseo libraries have started drive-through counters, while Seodaemun increased the number of books that one resident can borrow from two e-books.

Cho Geum-joo, the head of a community library in Dogok-dong, Gangnam said, "We have seen membership increase by around 3,000 last month because many students are checking out books as the opening of school has been postponed."