

# Malaysians urged to read more books in English

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Reading should be inculcated as a habit and culture among Malaysians.

Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Hou Kok Chung said that although a National Library study in 2010 showed that Malaysians read one book a month or 12 a year, there was a lot of room for improvement.

"In 1996, Malaysians read an average of two books a year," said Dr Hou, adding that reading is a good way of improving one's proficiency in a language.

He urged everyone to make reading a habit, especially books in English.

"The English language is acknowledged as a factor that can enhance the employability of an individual.

"Therefore, it is quite discomfoting to learn that an estimated 60% of public university applicants this year

 **BookFest**  
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possess a score of Band 3 and below in their Malaysian University English Test (MUET)," said Dr Hou in his speech when opening BookFest@Malaysia2012 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday.

Popular Holdings Limited chairman CN Chou said the "Like Reading" theme for BookFestMalaysia 2012 was aimed at young readers.

Currently in its seventh year, the nine-day BookFest@Malaysia 2012,

which starts today will see more than 600 exhibitors offering over a million books tagged at low prices throughout 125,000 square feet of exhibition space.

BookFest Malaysia 2012 is on till Aug 26 (10am-10pm) at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. Admission is with purchase of the BookFest catalogue, at RM2.50 per entry or RM10 for multiple entries over the nine days. Catalogues are available at all Popular and Harris outlets nationwide and at the BookFest entrance.

Entrance is free for students aged 18 and below and for senior citizens aged 60 and above.

For more information, visit [bookfestmalaysia.com](http://bookfestmalaysia.com).

Star Publications (M) Bhd is a media partner of Bookfest@Malaysia 2012.



**Reading is good:** Dr Hou looking at a book while Chou (left) looks on at the BookFest in Kuala Lumpur.