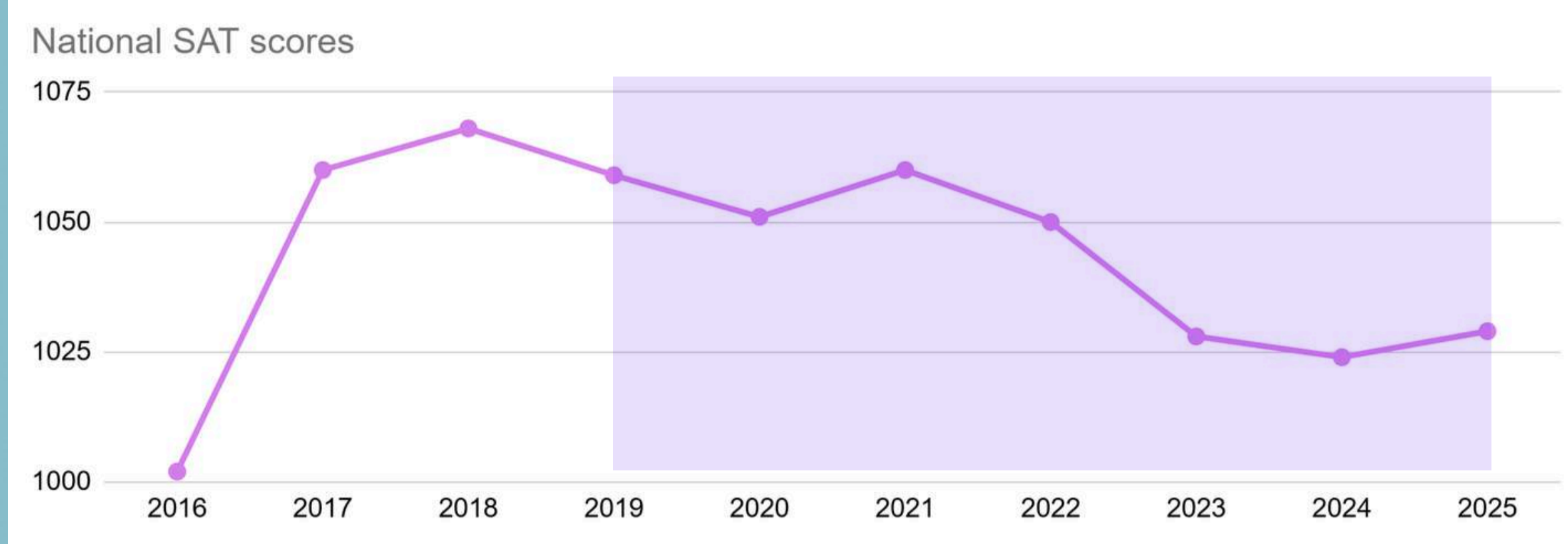


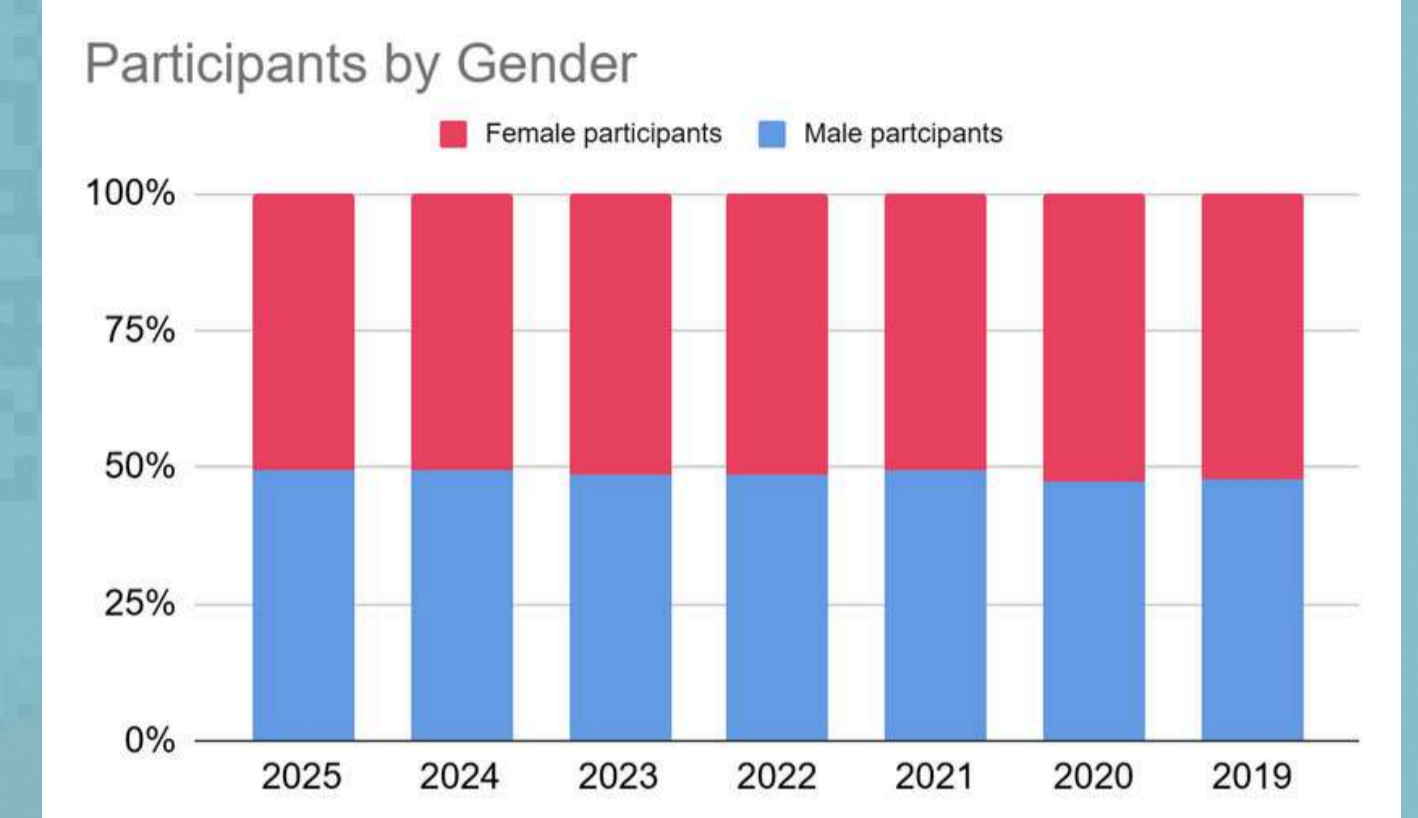
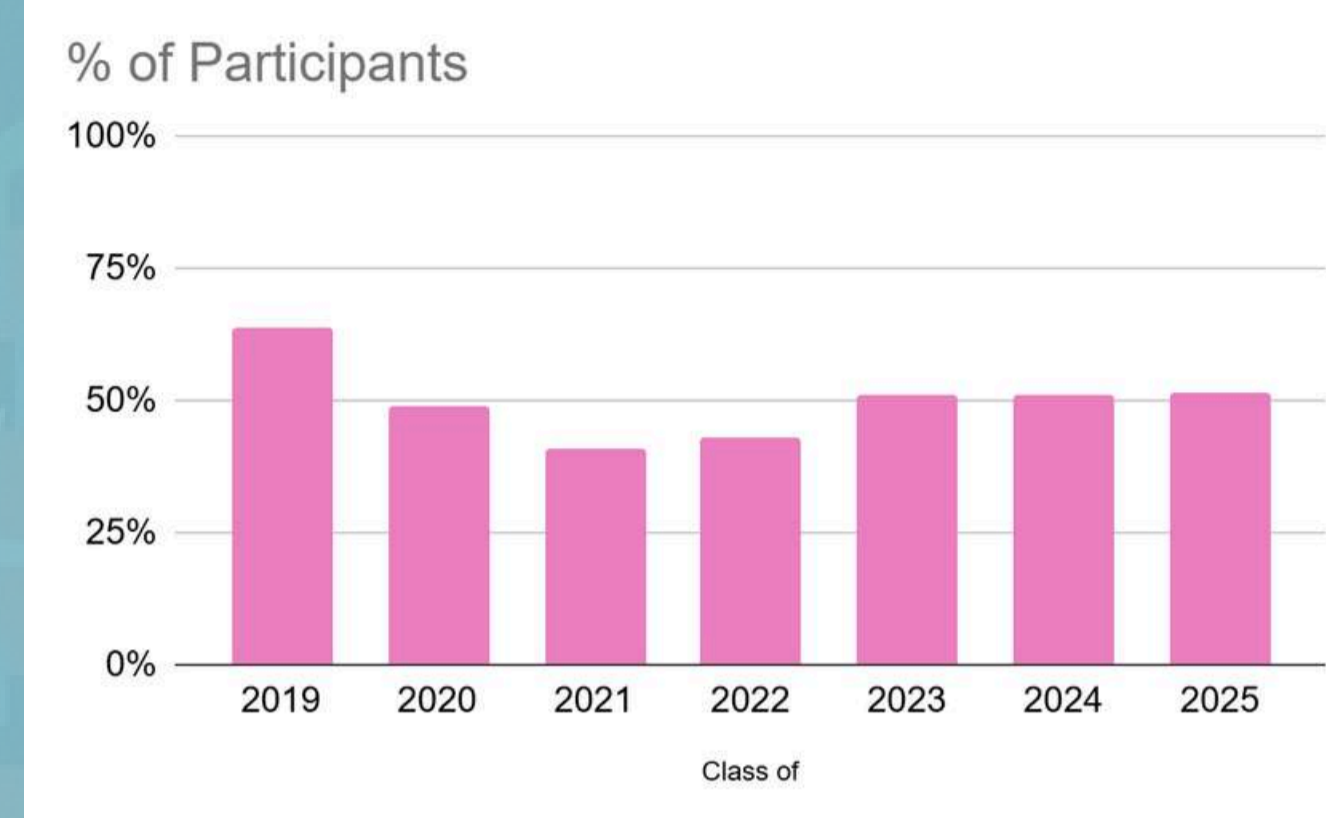
Is Gen-Z “Brainrot” Real?

The California Post ^[1] headlined “Gen Z — the first generation officially dubbed dumber than the last”. As Gen Z myself, I became inspired to test this claim base on trends in SAT scores, and to find potential reasons for this by exploring digital activites.

[1] <https://nypost.com/2026/02/07/us-news/gen-z-the-first-generation-officially-dubbed-dumber-than-the-last/raph text>



This line graph shows the changes in the national SAT score over 10 years. It greatly improved until 2018 where it starts to decrease.



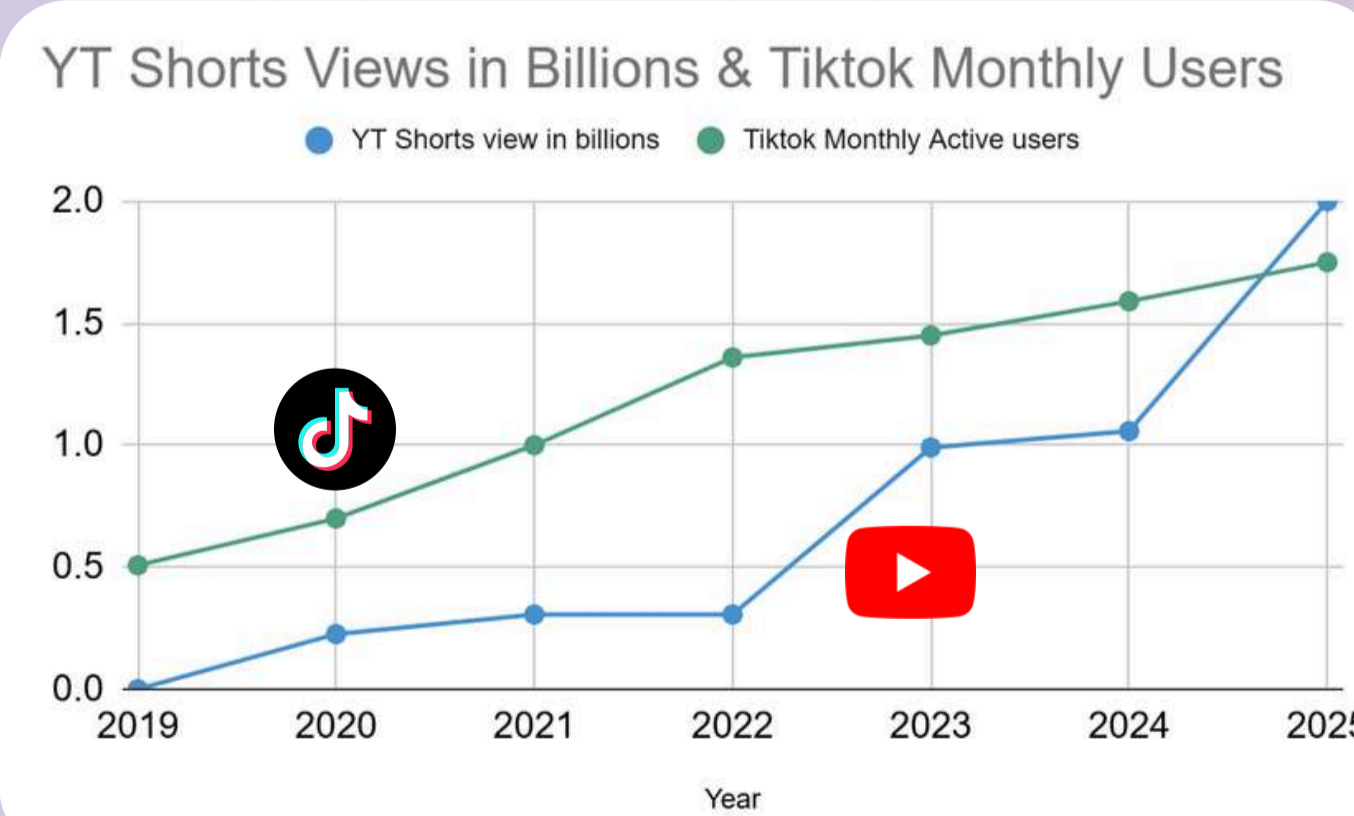
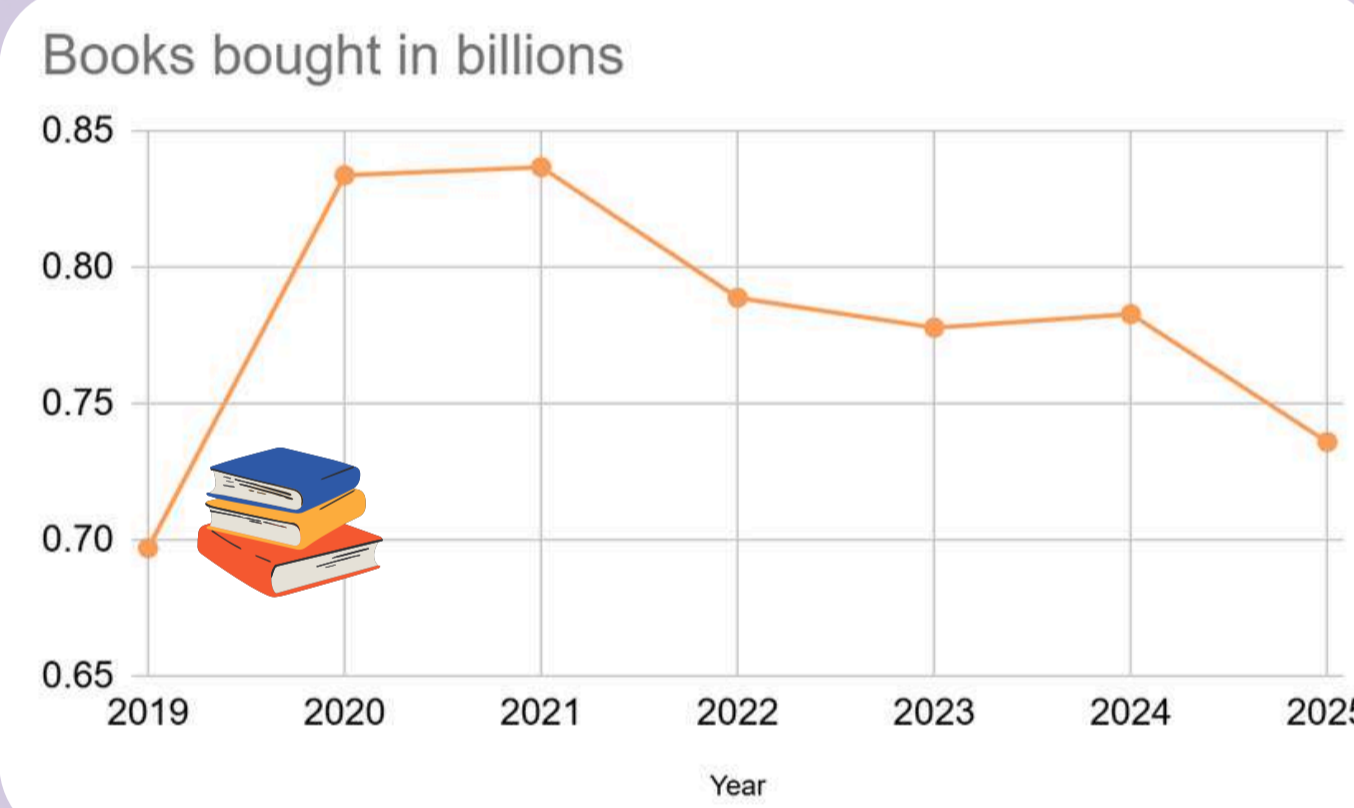
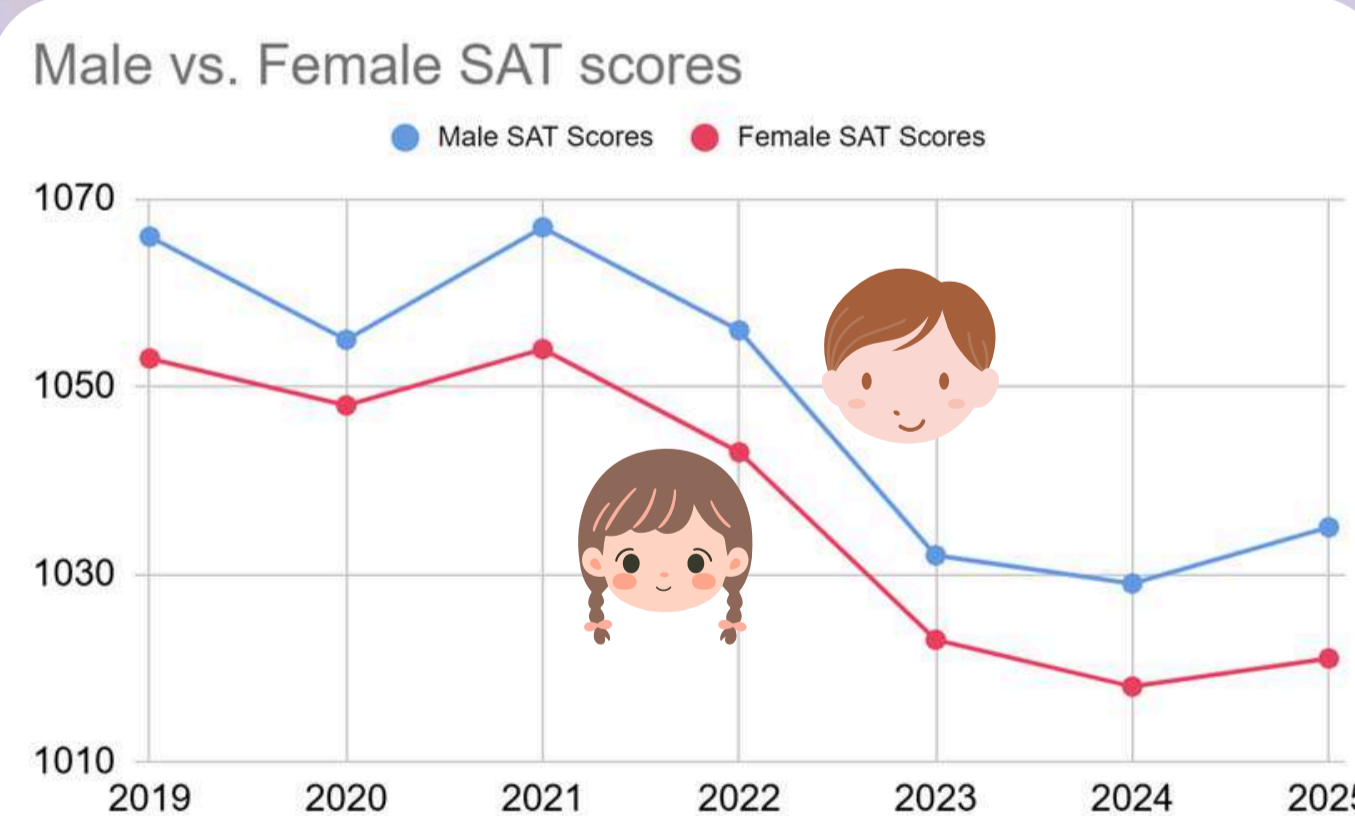
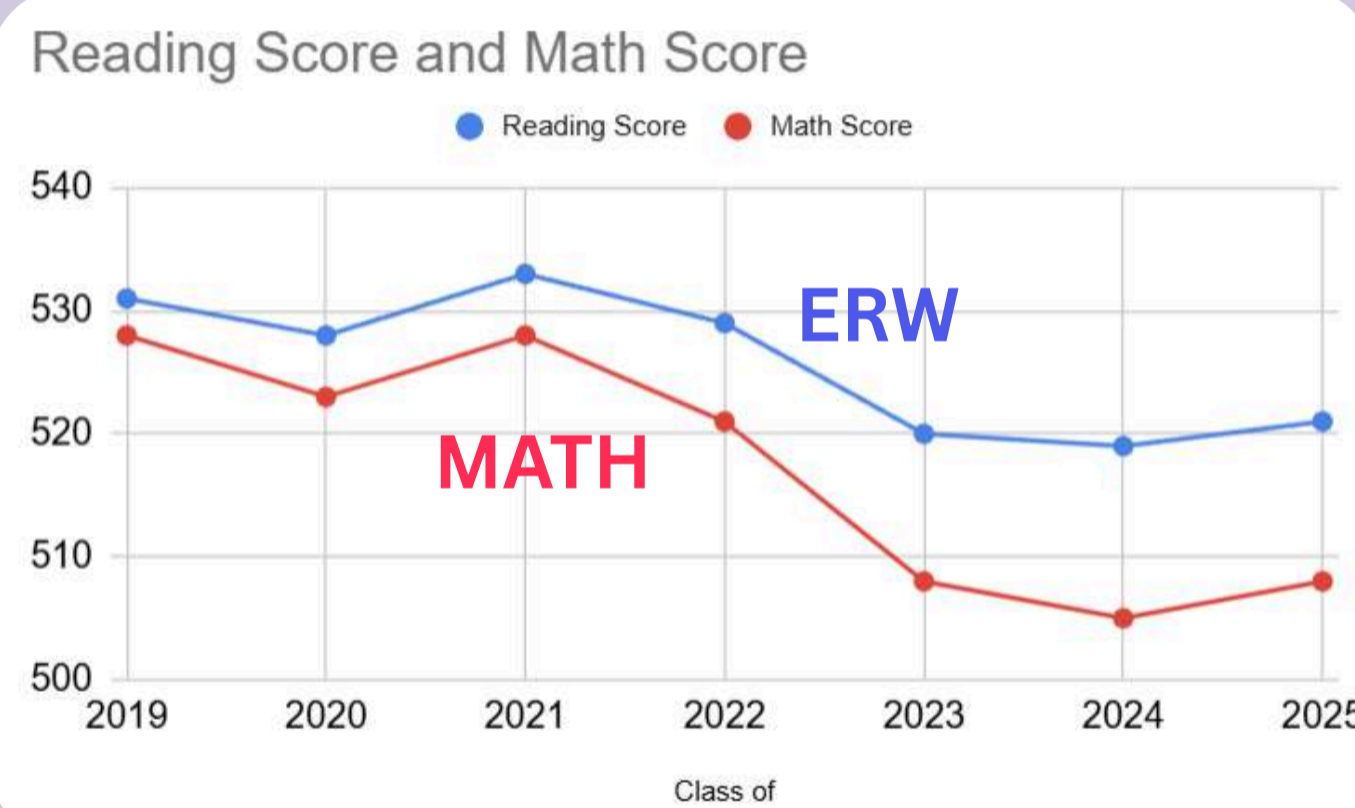
The bar graphs display a consistent participation rate along with the well-balanced gender distribution in SAT.

Further Investigation

- SAT scores were broken down by **gender** and by **subject**.
- **The same decreasing patterns** have been observed since 2019 for both male and female, and in both Math and English sections. **especially in Math.**
- Overall, the decreasing pattern is observed in both aspects.



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Potential Reasons

- Reading activity has been known to be critical in the cognitive development.
- A significant **drop in book sales** is observed since 2021.
- To contrast, a steep and continuous **surge** is seen in **YouTube shorts and Tiktok views.**
- The data by age group are not accessible. It is assumed that considerable users are young.

Conclusion: Through the graphical analysis, we can conclude that Generation Z’s lifestyle — centered around consuming short-form video content, unlike past generations with much lower level of digital distractions and exposure — may correlate with the decline in cognitive performances. This shows the need to minimize the use of digital devices, and begin reading more books to improve our comprehension skills. **Let’s dive into reading!**

Data Sources

- [1] <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org>
- [2] <https://community.bookbrowse.com>
- [3] <https://incred.co/academy/tiktok-users/>
- [4] <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1459687/us-youtube-shorts-us-viewers/>