



Short, sharp shots of entertainment

Quick Reads

www.quickreads.org.uk

Quick Reads is a major adult literacy initiative. Now its fifth successful year, the campaign is a wide-ranging partnership between best-selling authors, leading publishers, book retailers, librarians, educationalists and more. It is supported by government – Prime Minister Tony Blair launched the initiative in 2006 and Prime Minister Gordon Brown subsequently hosted a tea party for adult learners to promote the launch of new Quick Reads titles. Fifty two titles have been published to date and a further ten Quick Reads will be published on the next World Book Day, Thursday 4 March 2010.

The books, written by bestselling authors and household names, provide a short, fast paced read and are perfect for people looking for an introduction to reading or regular readers who want a bite-sized book.

The Quick Reads books cover a whole range of genres - women's fiction, crime and thriller, action adventure, humour, self-help and sport. They are designed to appeal to a range of readers, young and old, male and female. All are designed to get people hooked on books, to open up worlds from which they had previously been excluded.

Quick Reads reach out to adults with reading difficulties – as many as 17.8 million over-18s have poor literacy levels in the UK – and those who have lost the reading habit or feel they do not have the time to pick up the book.

Priced at just £1.99, the books are available in all good bookshops nationwide and in over 800 workplaces, over 1000 doctors' surgeries, adult education centres, prisons, hospitals, care homes and community centres.

Over 1.25 million Quick Reads books have been distributed but we know that is a drop in the ocean compared to their actual reach as so many of the books are in libraries, workplaces, etc where they are each read by several people.

The Quick Reads effect

One third of the British population has never picked up a book and the impact of reading difficulties on peoples' lives is considerable. Self-esteem, confidence and employment are all affected. Quick Reads has had a significant impact on many lives and is helping to transform this pattern, providing thousands of people with access to the joys and opportunities that reading can bring.

In March 2009 Quick Reads commissioned a survey of over 35,000 adults who have had contact with Quick Reads and found that they not only became more competent readers but they reported remarkable changes in confidence and self-esteem; improved job prospects and better home, family and working lives.

The survey found that:

- 100% of adults using Quick Reads felt the progress they had made had had positive impact on their lives and that improving their reading had made them feel better about themselves
- Quick Reads had a huge effect on confidence levels and 88% of learners felt more confident at home, 80% felt more confident at work, 90% felt more confident with friends and 81% felt improving their reading had helped their family lives
- A remarkable 59% of adults using Quick Reads felt their job prospects had improved, 34% started a course as a result of reading a Quick Reads book and 19% got a better job since using the books

As one adult learner in Hull commented "I hadn't picked up a book to read since I was at school 35 years ago. Getting back into reading is the best thing I have ever done, I now run my own book club. I have more confidence in myself, reading a whole book and understanding what you have read is out of this world. You can't explain the feeling you get when you finally finish a story."

Quick Reads authors

Authors who have written a Quick Read include: Lindsay Ashford, Patrick Augustus, Lynne Barrett-Lee, Maeve Binchy, John Bird, John Boyne, Richard Branson, Allen Carr, Rowan Coleman, Catrin Collier, Josephine Cox, Hunter Davies, Mick Dennis, Terrance Dicks, The Dragons from Dragons' Den, Vanessa Feltz, John Francome, Adèle Geras, Dame Tanni Grey Thompson, Niall Griffiths, Sherrie Hewson, Tom Holt, Tom Holland, Conn Iggulden, Colin Jackson, Lola Jaye, Katherine John, Kerry Katona, Maureen Lee, Damien Lewis; Andy McNab, Val McDermid, Jane Moore, Kate Mosse, Michael Morpurgo, Courttia Newland, Gilda O'Neill, Adele Parks, Mike Phillips, Fiona Phillips, Gervase Phinn, Scott Quinnell, Gordon Ramsay, Ian Rankin, Jacqueline Rayner, Matthew Reilly, Ruth Rendell, Gareth Roberts, Chris Ryan, John Simpson, Patience Thomson, Ricky Tomlinson, Joanna Trollope, Danny Wallace and Minette Walters.

Adult literacy facts and figures

- One in six people in the UK struggle with literacy (DfES 2003 Skills for Life survey)
- Over half of adults (56%) in the UK have literacy skills below the level of a good GCSE. (NAO, Skills for Life: Progress in Improving Adult Literacy and Numeracy, 2008)

Who supports Quick Reads?

The Quick Reads campaign, which is part of World Book Day, has widespread private and public-sector support and from across the publishing and bookselling industries. Quick Reads is working with the BIS (Department for Business, Innovations and Skills), Arts Council England, NIACE (National Institute for Continuing Adult Education), BBC and TUC's unionlearn and the support has built an incredible momentum over the last five years.

Other partners and supporters include National Book Tokens, The Reading Agency, National Literacy Trust, The Vital Link, The Welsh Books Council, the Basic Skills Agency,

DELNI (Department for Education and Learning, Northern Ireland), EGSA (Educational Guidance Service for Adults), LSDA (Learning and Skills Development Agency) Communities Scotland and NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency).

Retailers, from bookshops to supermarkets, have given Quick Reads their full support and we aim to create a permanent annual home in-store for Quick Reads.

Further information

The Quick Reads website, www.quickreads.org.uk, is a resource for Quick Reads readers, employers using the books and educationalists interested in finding out more about the project.

For all press enquires please contact Lucy Chavasse or Jill Cotton at Colman Getty on 020 7631 2666 or firstname@colmangetty.co.uk

The new Quick Reads titles for 2010



