

# Quick Reads

Great stories, great writers, great entertainment

## A Toolkit for Employers



Quick Reads in the workplace

What are the benefits?

Who can help?

Key dates for your diary

Shining examples

Handouts & useful links



## About Quick Reads

Quick Reads have encouraged millions of people across the country to pick up a book in their spare time.

Since 2006, over 60 Quick Reads have been written by bestselling authors and celebrities. The range of titles and their small format make them appealing to anyone - including people who feel reading isn't for them.

**In a survey of workplaces in 2010, Quick Reads were shown to have had a remarkable impact:**

- In 52% of workplaces, the use of Quick Reads had improved morale;
- 56% said that staff show more willingness to read;
- 49% said that staff are more likely to engage in learning at work;
- 41% have also seen an improvement in employees' communication skills;
- 82% said staff have felt encouraged to read in their free time; and
- 68% have seen positive changes in staff attitudes and behaviour.

The survey suggests that Quick Reads can have a powerful impact on the confidence, attitudes and communication skills of less enthusiastic readers - whilst supporting the morale and well being of all staff.

Quick Reads can also help less confident readers to tackle a wider variety of texts at work, such as:

- reports and technical documents;
- customer details and information;
- health and safety information;
- instructions, emails, forms, plans and diagrams; and
- timetables, maps, charts and other graphical information.

**This guide provides useful tips and suggestions to help you make the most of Quick Reads in the workplace and your employer pack.**

## Using Quick Reads

The Quick Reads employer pack comes with a pre-assembled stand, outreach material and 60 Quick Reads books, ideal for creating a buzz about reading in the workplace. (See page 9 for more information.)

Clearly displaying the books can encourage people to pick one up during their breaks.

However for some adults, reading for enjoyment is unfamiliar and an 'intermediary' can help introduce the idea. Workplace learning reps or a nominated member of staff can play a key role in engaging their colleagues with Quick Reads, both informally in conversation and through some of the ideas in this toolkit.

### Ideas to try:

- **Draw attention to the books.** Display Quick Reads posters to get people's attention and highlight the books in any relevant internal communications.
- **Set up a 'mini' library.** Display the employer pack and allow staff to borrow the books. You could also encourage staff to bring in books from home for a book swap.
- **Start a workplace reading group.** Reading groups are an easy way to encourage reading for pleasure and Quick Reads are a particularly good starting point for this activity because of their manageable size and accessibility.
- **Download free Quick Reads resources.** Including:
  - A fact sheet for employers (see handout on page 9)
  - An information sheet for readers
  - Online chapter samples with audio
  - Author interviews
  - Reading and writing packs featuring questions and further reading for each title
- **Purchase eBooks.** Quick Reads are now available as eBooks, which are a great way to make reading interactive in your workplace or learning centre. They can be purchased direct from a range of online retailers.

Visit [www.quickreads.org.uk/buying-your-quick-reads](http://www.quickreads.org.uk/buying-your-quick-reads) for more information.

- **Find out about attitudes to reading.** Use the checklist below to stimulate a discussion. Give it out to a small group or put it up and ask people to tick statements they agree with when they feel like it. Everyone has different reading habits and discussing when, where and how people read can be a useful way of getting someone to pick up a book.

<b>Attitudes to Reading Checklist (agree/disagree)</b>	
I love reading	<input type="checkbox"/>
I read a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have favourite authors	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like reading fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like reading non-fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>
I only read on holiday	<input type="checkbox"/>
I read occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have read some Quick Reads	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to read for pleasure but I don't know what to pick	<input type="checkbox"/>
I read things I have to but not for pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't have time to read	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find a lot of texts difficult to read	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find jargon and/or long words off-putting	<input type="checkbox"/>
I fall asleep if I read	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't like reading fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>
I hate reading	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other .....	(write in)

- **Use Quick Reads for the Six Book Challenge.** This annual scheme run by The Reading Agency invites less confident readers to read six books and record their reading in a diary. Staff are supported with incentives and rewarded with a certificate when they complete the Challenge.

- **Inspire others to get involved.** Introduce a book review board in a communal area and invite staff to say what they thought about each title, and recommend them to others (using the template on page 8).
- **Hold a readathon or competition for World Book Day.** You could try an ‘extreme reading competition’ encouraging staff to read in crazy places and take a photo of it.
- **Explore different ideas.** Ask colleagues for their thoughts on activities they would enjoy.

## **Key dates for your diary:**

### ● **World Book Day - Thursday 3 March 2011**

Ten new Quick Reads books are launched on World Book Day, which encourages adults and children across the country to discover the joy of reading. Run activities to encourage reading on this day, such as those described in the previous section.

### ● **Adult Learners’ Week - 14–20 May 2011**

From learning Pilates to gaining a PhD, Adult Learners’ Week celebrates learning and learners in all their diversity, inspiring thousands of people each year to try something new. It promotes the benefits of all kinds of learning, whether it is for fun or leading to a qualification.

Each year, national media highlights activity taking place as part of Adult Learners’ Week and running events can be an easy way to get people interested in learning or training opportunities.

### ● **Learning at Work Day - Friday 19 May 2011**

Learning at Work Day takes place on the Friday during **Adult Learners’ Week**. It can be used to promote the wider benefits of being an active learner both inside and outside the workplace.

## Shining examples

### National Offender Management Service (NOMS)

The Quick Reads reading area at the NOMS national staff college in Warwickshire has been very popular with staff and learners attending training courses. Each year since 2009 new titles have been added. This has led to other reading activities such as 'The Great Book Exchange' which was held this year during Adult Learners' Week, with over 250 books changing hands. Book exchanges have also taken place in a number of prisons as part of Adult Learners Week and staff Well-Being Days.

Every prison in the public estate now has a sample pack of 14 books to promote reading to staff, and a number of prisons have gone on to buy their own employer packs. The most popular books borrowed are by Ian Rankin, John Boyne, Rolf Harris, Peter James and Alison Weir.

Informal feedback from staff includes:

*"They're quick to read."*

*"Good selection of titles."*

*"They can be read over a couple of lunch-times."*

*"They are written by well-known writers."*

*"As the books are thin they seem less scary than standard books."*

*"I took Dragon's Den home and my husband who I have been married to for 33 years, picked it up and read it. I had never seen him read a whole book before, he then asked me if I could get him the Ricky Tomlinson one next!"*

Kay Vaughan

## Transport for London

Transport for London has really taken to promoting Quick Reads to its vast workforce that work in offices, train depots and stations all over London. Literacy tutor, Christine Brathwaite uses the books regularly in literacy classes with employees and now ULRs have taken them out to different sectors of the workforce as part of the Six Book Challenge. It's not been easy. Train drivers are an independent bunch and getting them to join in has sometimes been a challenge' in itself. But RMT Union Learning Representatives Nick Smith and Lynda Aitken have been determined to make it work. They wanted to make sure that they reached out to colleagues who perhaps wouldn't have come into the Learning Zone, so there are books in the drivers' rest centre at Wembley Park and other places where staff will come across them in the course of their daily routine. This has helped staff who wanted to get back into reading or just liked the idea of being part of a wider workplace initiative.

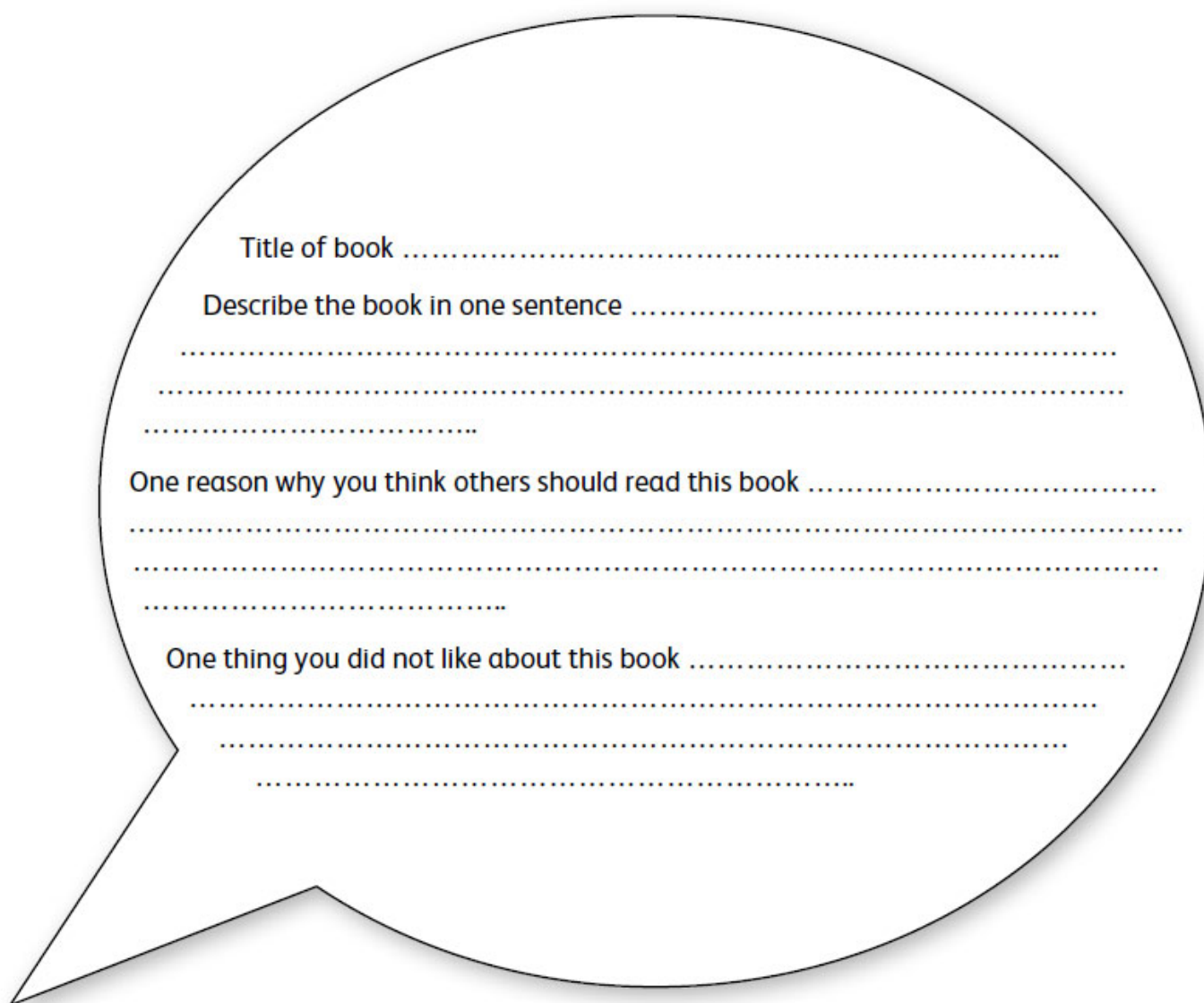
Performance improvement assessor Bob Cann says he now regularly reads at least two books a month and finds it very enjoyable. He's finished an e-learning grammar course and thanks to that and Quick Reads says he has more confidence in things like report writing and expressing things better.

*“The Six Book Challenge has really inspired RMT members to read. Filling out the log book is really satisfying and work colleagues enjoy being able to chat about the latest books they are reading in the mess room. One member said that it was the first time he'd ever read a book from cover to cover.”*

Teresa Williams, project manager, RMT Learning

## Quick Reads Book Review

If you have read a book recently that you would like to tell other people about, fill in a book review and inspire other staff to read it too.



Title of book .....

Describe the book in one sentence .....

.....

.....

.....

One reason why you think others should read this book .....

.....

.....

.....

One thing you did not like about this book .....

.....

.....

.....

Or send in a review to [www.quickreads.org.uk/reviews](http://www.quickreads.org.uk/reviews)

# Quick Reads

Great stories, great writers, great entertainment

## Quick Reads improve attitude and morale. That's what we call a great story.

Employers using Quick Reads report very positive results: improved skills, higher morale, better attendance and more confidence.

In a survey of workplace representatives covering over 21,000 people using Quick Reads:

- 82% reported staff felt encouraged to read in their free time
- Over 60% found staff now read for pleasure (and read different books)
- In 52% of workplaces, Quick Reads improved employee morale
- 68% noted positive changes in staff attitude and behaviour
- 70% said that Quick Reads have encouraged staff to try other kinds of learning

“ It gives the staff a break (even if short) from the stress of the high pressure work, and helps them to relax and raise morale. ”

### It's simple to get involved.

By displaying the books and posters in canteens, staff rooms and at events, staff will see the great titles and want to find out more.

For just £110 you get everything you need

- 60 Quick Reads books
- A high impact display stand
- A guide to using Quick Reads in the workplace
- A2, A3 and banner posters
- Quick Reads 'empty belly' posters so you can add information
- Bookmarks
- Pens to give away



Find out more and order your employer pack at [www.quickreads.org.uk](http://www.quickreads.org.uk)



## Useful links

World Book Day [www.worldbookday.com](http://www.worldbookday.com)

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE): [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

Adult Learners' Week: [www.alw.org.uk](http://www.alw.org.uk)

The Six Book Challenge: [www.sixbookchallenge.org.uk](http://www.sixbookchallenge.org.uk)

Learning at Work Day: [www.learningatworkday.com](http://www.learningatworkday.com)

BBC Learning English is useful for learners for whom English is a second language:  
[www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish)

BBC Skillswise is an online learning resource [www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise)

The Reading Agency offers a range of resources to support reading:  
[www.readingagency.org.uk/quickreads](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/quickreads)

The National Year of Reading website takes forward this year-long celebration of reading, in all its forms: [www.readingforlife.org.uk](http://www.readingforlife.org.uk)

The Reading for Pleasure website includes free training materials:  
[www.readingforpleasure.org.uk](http://www.readingforpleasure.org.uk)

**Visit Quick Reads online for updates and  
free resources:**

**[www.quickreads.org.uk](http://www.quickreads.org.uk)**