



CHILDREN'S WRITERS RIDE HIGH IN PLR'S MOST BORROWED AUTHORS LIST

Five children's writers are among the Top 10 Most Borrowed Authors in UK libraries, according to the latest annual data released today by Public Lending Right (PLR) on the eve of National Libraries Day.

They are Daisy Meadows, the brand behind the "Rainbow Magic" series (2nd); Jacqueline Wilson (4th); Francesca Simon, author of the "Horrid Henry" series (5th); Children's Laureate, Julia Donaldson (7th); and Mick Inkpen (9th).

Dame Jacqueline Wilson is also the UK's most borrowed author of the last ten years with over 16.5 million loans over the past decade. She comments: "The PLR data clearly shows that many children still love borrowing books. That's why we need our excellent libraries, so that all children can have free access to a huge variety of books."

The crucial role libraries play in encouraging children to read is also confirmed by the latest figures from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) which show that children's borrowing from UK libraries has risen for the past seven years. 96.8 million children's books were borrowed during 2010/11, up from 89.9 million in 2005/6. Children's books now represent 35.9% of all books borrowed, up from 33.9% last year.

With over 2 million loans, prolific American writer James Patterson is the UK's Most Borrowed Author for the fifth year running, the PLR data also shows. He is one of five writers to clock up over a million loans in UK libraries between July 2010 and June 2011.

The other adult writers to make the Top 10 Most Borrowed Authors list are novelists Nora Roberts (3rd), Danielle Steel (6th); MC Beaton (8th) and Clive Cussler (10th).

The UK's Most Borrowed Book was "The Lost Symbol" by Dan Brown. The UK adult borrowing public appears hooked on gritty crime novels and thrillers, with all of the Top 10 Most Borrowed Books belonging to those genres. US writers dominate, with Lee Child and Ian Rankin the only British authors represented.

What PLR Means To Writers

Over the three decades since Public Lending Right was established in law in 1979, annual PLR payments have become increasingly vital for writers. As the price of books has dropped on the high street, the average writer has seen both advances and royalties dwindle. By 2007 the average writer's earnings had dropped to less than 25% of the national average wage with the top 10% of writers earning more than 50% of the total income available to writers.

PLR is a source of income that writers do not share with publishers or agents; it does not discriminate according to sales figures or celebrity status. Its principles have not changed for over 30 years, and the income it provides for writers is as important as ever. In a survey of PLR's top earners, 80% specified that their annual PLR payment is core to their income.

In February 2012, PLR will make payments totalling £6.5 million to 23,718 authors. This year's rate per loan is 6.05 pence, down from last year's figure of 6.25 pence.

Sarah Edworthy recently became the 50,000th author to register for PLR for "Hostage: A Year at Gunpoint with Somali Gangsters", the book she co-wrote with Paul and Rachel Chandler.

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Editors' Notes

1. PLR was established by Act of Parliament in 1979. It gives authors the legal right to receive payment from government each time their books are loaned through the public library system.
2. PLR is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This year PLR is distributing £6.5 million to 23,718 authors at a rate per loan of 6.05 pence. Since its inception in 1979, PLR has distributed over £132 million to authors.
3. In October 2010 the government announced that the PLR office is to be abolished as part of the wider Public Bodies Review. Responsibility for the PLR Scheme will be transferred to another existing public body. A decision on this is expected later in the year following public consultation. PLR as the author's right to payment for book loans continues and future government funding has been announced. Funding will decrease by 15% over the four year period from £7.2 million in 2011/12 to £6.96 million in 2014/15.
4. Authors are eligible for payment if their PLR earnings reach a minimum of £1. There is a maximum payment threshold of £6,600 for the top-lending authors. This year, 211 authors will receive the maximum payment.
5. Authors living in other European Union countries qualify for UK PLR payments for loans of their books from public libraries here. British authors also receive payment from the PLR scheme in Ireland (paid directly); and from other European PLR systems including France, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain and Estonia (payments distributed by the Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society).
6. PLR's sophisticated data analysis system (LEWIS) offers public libraries a vital tool to support effective and efficient business decisions. The analysis gives them a comprehensive picture of national reading trends, changes in our national and regional reading habits and a fascinating insight into our preferences, pastimes and obsessions.
7. National Libraries Day (4 February 2012) is a nation-wide celebration of libraries, librarians and library staff in all sectors – public libraries, school and university libraries, prison, national, law, business and commercial libraries. For more information see <http://www.nationallibrariesday.org.uk/>
8. Dame Jacqueline Wilson's latest book is "The Worst Thing About My Sister", published by Doubleday.

