

the reading agency

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Six Book Challenge: launching now for 2010

The Reading Agency will be offering a new blog, new materials, training and a prize draw as the adult literacy Six Book Challenge moves into 2010, its third year of life-changing activity.

The Six Book Challenge was launched in 2008 and encourages emergent readers to develop a reading habit through choosing, reading and expressing their views about books. Participants are invited to read six books and keep a reading diary. They are supported by incentives, a certificate and creative reading activity.

The Six Book Challenge is growing. During 2009 nearly 9000 UK adults took part through libraries, colleges, adult and community education, workplaces and prisons – an increase of 25% on 2008. And the Six Book Challenge was a finalist in the CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award 2009. This makes the Challenge, which is targeted at emergent readers (Entry Level 3 – Level 2, text readability 9 – 14), a proven method of engaging existing and potential learners in reading for pleasure as part of their skills development. Case studies of successful Six Book Challenge completers are available both online at www.sixbookchallenge.org.uk and upon request (Please see contact details below for more media information.)

“It’s a hard slog to turn yourself into a fluent reader,” says Miranda McKearney, Director of The Reading Agency. “We’re finding that this deceptively simple scheme can really make a difference, and are thrilled to see how fast it’s growing.”

“I felt as if reading again was opening up doors for me – it has helped me to relax and also to help my children,” says Barry Burton, Six Book Challenge completer from Hillsborough, Sheffield. “The Six Book Challenge has also proved to me that I have got the time to get back into learning – I’ve been doing English and other courses, and I want to go on and do more. If anyone out there is thinking that maybe they haven’t got the time to do the Six Book Challenge, or that they don’t want to make a fool of themselves by trying to get back into reading, I say you just have to go for it. I was apprehensive at first, but it’s been one of the best things I’ve ever done.”

Six Book Challenge 2010 news

- Packs of promotional materials are now available to order. They include reading diaries, certificates, invitations, poster, flyers, bookmarks and emergent reader book recommendations. Incentives available to order include pens, keyrings, fridge magnets and mugs.
- Author Mike Gayle continues in his valuable role as Six Book Challenge patron and will be publishing a Quick Read title in 2011.
- The Reading Agency is offering training on 10 November (London) and 19 November (York) to support organisations running the Six Book Challenge – see <http://www.readingagency.org.uk/new-thinking/training/>

- The new Six Book Challenge blog at www.sixbookchallenge.org.uk will be available online by the end of September, and will invite people running and taking part in the Challenge to share their experiences, ideas and favourite books.
- The main activity for the Six Book Challenge 2010 will run from January to June but organisations can use the scheme at any time in 2010.
- The Reading Agency will be offering prize draws for participants and participating organisations – more details to be announced shortly.

Six Book Challenge in the workplace

250 people in workplaces across Yorkshire and the Humber took part in the Six Book Challenge in its first year. This quadrupled in 2009 across Yorkshire and other regions with the support of unionlearn, the learning arm of the TUC, and of individual unions which have recognised its potential – in particular the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, Communication Workers Union and Fire Brigades Union.

“It’s been a very successful initiative. What’s made it work has been the support of libraries and making it visible in the workplace.” Tracy White, Union Learning Rep, USDAW, who has worked with York Libraries to run the Six Book Challenge with Tesco staff.

Six Book Challenge contact: visit www.sixbookchallenge.org.uk or contact Genevieve Clarke: genevieve.clarke@readingagency.org.uk

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Notes to editors:

- The Reading Agency is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more. It is funded by the Arts Council and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. (www.readingagency.org.uk)
- Six Book Challenge 2008: The Impact on Readers, by Sarah Grylls, Learning for Learning, for The Reading Agency (December 2008) is available to download at <http://www.readingagency.org.uk/adults/reading-for-pleasure-impact/>
- The booklet called [Getting Reading to Work](#), published by The Reading Agency with the TUC, outlines how workplaces in Yorkshire and the Humber have been running the Six Book Challenge. Available to download at: <http://www.sixbookchallenge.org.uk/>