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## JACQUELINE WILSON IS THE MOST BORROWED AUTHOR OF THE LAST DECADE

**Ten years of PLR data reveals romantic novels, Harry Potter and Bill Bryson are also public library favourites**

Prolific children's writer Jacqueline Wilson has emerged as the champion author of the past decade in UK public libraries. According to figures on library lending released by Public Lending Right (PLR) today, her titles were loaned over 16 million times between 1999 and 2009, more than those of any other writer.

In 2008/9 however, US writer James Patterson remained the UK's most borrowed author for the third year running after toppling Jacqueline Wilson from the number one spot in 2007. His titles were lent over 1.5 million times between July 2008 and June 2009. His book *Sail* was also the most borrowed title overall for the year.

Over the last decade however, Patterson is only the fifth most borrowed author, lagging behind Wilson, and romantic novelists, Danielle Steel, Catherine Cookson and Josephine Cox. Danielle Steel is the only writer to appear in the most borrowed author Top 10 every year since 1999; in fact Steel also appears in every Top 10 since PLR records began in 1988/9.

Romantic fiction has proved popular throughout the decade: Catherine Cookson's *The Thursday Friend*, *The Blind Years* and *The Lady on My Left* are the three most borrowed adult fiction titles of the past ten years. Each was borrowed almost 300,000 times.

In the overall most borrowed titles list however, children's books reign supreme. Champion lender Jacqueline Wilson's *The Story of Tracy Beaker* was the most borrowed title of the decade. JK Rowling's Harry Potter titles were also winners with *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*; *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* and *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* close behind in second, third and fourth places respectively. Catherine Cookson's *The Thursday Friend* was the fifth most borrowed title of the decade.

A review of non-fiction borrowing over the past ten years reveals that Bill Bryson is the only author whose books have made the Top 10 every year since 1999/00. The decade's non-fiction charts also reflect such national preoccupations as the Royal Family, celebrity life stories, misery memoirs, losing weight, and of course, learning to drive!

Children's, young adult and educational books now represent 35% of all books borrowed nationally, and the latest PLR data reflects this, with no less than seven children's writers in the Top 10 for 2008/09. Daisy Meadows, the team name behind the Rainbow Magic series is the second most borrowed author in the UK after James Patterson, with Jacqueline Wilson in third place, and Francesca Simon, creator of Horrid Henry, in fourth. Mick Inkpen (6<sup>th</sup>); Julia Donaldson (7<sup>th</sup>); Lauren Child (8<sup>th</sup>) and Lucy Cousins (10<sup>th</sup>) join Meadows, Wilson and Simon on the list.

Together with James Patterson's *Sail*, crime and thriller writers dominate the 2008/09 Top 10 Titles list, with books by Linwood Barclay, Lee Child, Patricia Cornwell, Harlan Coben and John Grisham.

This year the most borrowed Children's Fiction title was *Horrid Henry and the Football Fiend* by Francesca Simon. Six other Horrid Henry titles also appear in the children's Top 10.

2008/09 finds Delia Smith's *How to Cheat at Cooking* at Number One in the Non-Fiction Top 10, with Bill Bryson's *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* in ninth place.

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### Editors' Notes

1. PLR was established by an Act of Parliament in 1979. It gives authors the legal right to receive remuneration from government for the public's use of their work through the public library system.
2. PLR is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Funding for 2009/10 stands at £7.58 million, increasing to £7.68 million in 2010-11.
3. The UK writing economy: a typical writer has seen their income drop by £3,000 pa since 2000; a typical writer earns 33% less than the national average wage; the top 10% of writers earn 50% of total income (cf other equally skilled professions where the bottom 50% earn almost 40% of total income); nearly 80% of authors need a second job to survive; in 2004 the publishing industry exports contributed £1.5 billion to the economy; the creative industries currently contribute 8% of GDP. (\*Sources: ALCS *What Are Words Worth?* & the DCMS commissioned report *Staying Ahead: the Economic Performance of the UK's Creative Industries* and Society of Authors research, 2000)
4. In February 2010 - relating to book loans during the period July 2008-June 2009 - PLR is distributing £6.76 million to 23,241 authors at a rate per loan of 6.29 pence.
5. 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 250 authors reached the maximum payment threshold. In a recent survey of PLR's top earners, 80% specified that their annual PLR payment is core to their income.
6. Since its inception in 1979, PLR has distributed just under £120 million to authors.
7. Authors living in other European Union countries also qualify for payment from the UK scheme. In return, British authors get PLR payments from France, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain. Payments are distributed by the Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS). Additionally this year, payments will be made to UK authors under the new Irish PLR scheme. The Irish system has been developed by the UK PLR office working in partnership with the Library Council in Dublin which manages the Irish PLR system.
8. Proposals to extend PLR to public library loans of audio-books and (some categories of) e-books are included in the Digital Economy Bill currently before Parliament.

