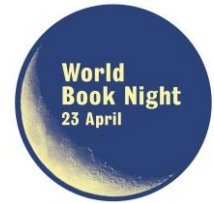


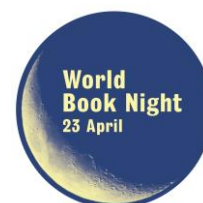
World Book Night: Impact Evaluation Report

Liberty Venn, Free Thought Research Ltd.
April 2016



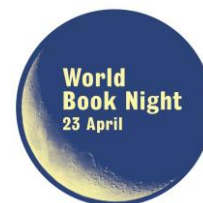
“I was thrilled to be chosen. Due to chronic illness I’ve experienced times of extreme low when I haven’t wanted to interact with the outside world. Reading has brought about such a positive change in my life during such times.”¹

¹ Female recipient, 45-64 (*My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece*)



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Foreword

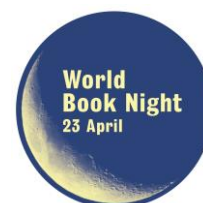
At The Reading Agency, our mission is to inspire more people to read more, to encourage them to share their enjoyment of reading with others and to celebrate the difference that reading makes to all our lives.

So you can see why World Book Night is so important to us. Its goal is to do all three of these things – to get people who might not have read a book for a long time or indeed at all, to open one up; plunge into the amazing world it creates and then be inspired to carry on reading. We, and all our author, library and publisher partners, want World Book Night to be the moment many people look back to; the night when they started on their reading journey – the night when, for them, everything changed.

It is why we were so grateful to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for funding this independent evaluation of the programme. This report shows the demonstrable difference being given a book on World Book Night by passionate volunteers is making to both the givers and to the recipients. It shows that it changes how readers, particularly lapsed or infrequent readers, view themselves and their relationship with reading. The gift really does inspire people to read more and to view themselves as being part of a reading community.

We couldn't be more delighted with the results, which come just ahead of our 2016 World Book Night celebration; we think they really do demonstrate our belief that everything changes when we read.

Sue Wilkinson
Chief Executive Officer at The Reading Agency
April 2016



Introduction

World Book Night is an annual celebration of reading and books that takes place on 23 April. Passionate volunteers give out thousands of books in their communities to share their love of reading with people who don't read regularly or own books. World Book Night is run by The Reading Agency, a national charity that inspires more people to read more, encourages them to share their enjoyment of reading and celebrates the difference that reading makes to all our lives.

This is the final report from a large-scale evaluation of World Book Night 2015, conducted throughout that year and during the first months of 2016. It highlights the findings of the research, focusing on both the short and long-term impact of World Book Night. It reports on data gathered from book recipients via an online survey publicised in the books that they received, interviews conducted with recipients and data from volunteers who responded to an online survey. The report also explores the findings of focus groups conducted nationally with lapsed and low frequency readers who received a book on World Book Night, and it also charts the experiences of a small group of these recipients over the 12 months following receipt of their book.

Methodological overview

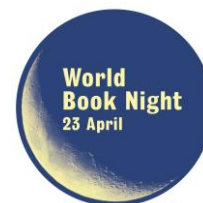
An independent research agency, Free Thought Research² conducted the evaluation, which comprised:

- **Online individual and institutional volunteer survey (4,080 respondents)**
- **Recipient survey (717 respondents)**
- **100 x 10-minute recipient telephone interviews**
- **8 x 90-minute focus groups conducted nationwide**
- **6 x in-depth case studies**

Research sought to establish the impact of free books distributed during World Book Night, exploring whether recipients:

- Read the World Book Night book and what they thought of it
- Changed their reading habits as a result of receiving and reading the book
- Changed their view of themselves as readers and of reading for pleasure
- Enjoyed taking part in World Book Night

² www.freethoughtresearch.co.uk



It also sought to explore with volunteers their experience of taking part in World Book Night, including its personal and professional impact, their continued relationship with reading and their subsequent engagement with the event.

Specifically, this research investigated the impact of World Book Night amongst infrequent or lapsed readers.³ These are individuals that do not have a reading habit and that read for pleasure **less frequently than once a month or not at all**.

The methodology supported an understanding of both the short term and long-term impacts of World Book Night on recipients. In the context of this report, short-term impact takes place from gifting to six months after the event. Long-term impact relates to behavioural or attitudinal change that extends beyond the first six months.

Report structure

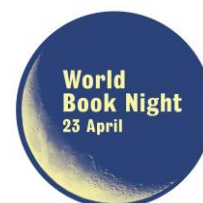
This report details the short and long-term impacts of World Book Night on recipients, noting in particular the impact on infrequent or lapsed readers:

1. Findings from surveys and telephone interviews conducted within the first three months after the event illustrate the short-term impact of World Book Night on recipients
2. Focus group outputs and case studies conducted October 2015 – March 2016 illustrate the long-term impact of the event on recipients

The experience of World Book Night volunteers is also explored, investigating any personal impacts as well as their ongoing engagement with the ethos of the event:

3. Survey data and focus group outputs support an understanding of the experience of first time and repeat volunteers.

³ Recipients were asked to state their reading frequency (Every day, Once or twice a week, Once or twice a month, Less than once a month, Never) in both the online survey and during phone interviews. 33% representation of those that read less than once a month or never was achieved in the sample). The term 'infrequent readers' in this report encompasses those that read less than once a month or not at all.



Executive Summary

The evaluation found that World Book Night captures the imagination of book recipients and effects real behavioural change around reading. Just weeks after World Book Night, 80% reported that they had enjoyed or were enjoying their book. This finding was even stronger for low-frequency readers: **85% of respondents who read less than once a month or never read had enjoyed or were enjoying reading their book.** In the longer term, those that respond to the challenge to read their book begin to view themselves as readers; this change in identity is motivating and prompts many to adopt new reading habits.

The titles offered resonate strongly with recipients and help them discover the practical, social and emotional benefits of reading. These benefits, in turn, become motivating factors to continue to read. The interaction between the volunteer and the recipient also plays an important role in prompting a positive response to the books distributed on World Book Night, and taking part in World Book Night benefits volunteers as well: encouraging others to read for pleasure prompts a sense of pride and achievement and impacts on volunteers' own reading habits.

Recipients

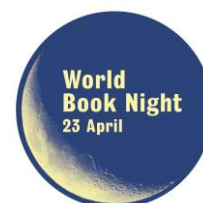
The research found that while almost all (98%) of respondents were pleased to receive their books, this initial positive glow develops into wider behavioural change around reading. The survey responses strongly show that delight translates into action:

- **80%** of surveyed recipients who read less than once a month or never read stated that they **had read more** since World Book Night
- **47%** of those who read less than once a month or never read said that they had **bought more books** since World Book Night
- **32%** of those who read less than once a month or never read felt that they **had borrowed books from the library** more since World Book Night

"To receive something when no one wants anything back is a lovely feeling... I'm definitely going to give it a go."⁴

In the interviews, many respondents reflected on World Book Night having prompted a re-engagement with reading for pleasure and the discovery of new, relevant texts. It does more than simply encourage recipients to read the book they are given; in many cases it caused them to re-evaluate their relationship with books. Respondents not only read more, they also shared their enjoyment of reading with others, indicating a deepening relationship with reading. **85%** of respondents that read less than

⁴ Female recipient, 25-44, North West (*Chickenfeed*)



once a month or that never read had **talked to others about books more** since taking part in World Book Night, and **10% had joined a reading group** since taking part in World Book Night.

When interviewed six months after World Book Night, recipients spoke about the personal, emotional and social benefits arising from reading the book, which had become the factors that prompted them to complete the book and in many cases to continue reading. These included reading for entertainment (practical), for escapism and immersion in other worlds (emotional) and for a sense of belonging (social).

In summary, the gift of a book prompted a positive emotional commitment on the part of many recipients to undertake a reading challenge and to alter their existing behaviours. Their engagement with the event, the experience of receiving a free book and the book itself helped to overcome their customary perceived barriers to reading and create a new view of themselves as readers.

“I’ve discovered that I can read books and that reading is okay... honestly, it hit me that I’ve got to finish this book.”⁵

Volunteers

The volunteers who gave out World Book Night books took seriously the opportunity to influence infrequent readers: 90% of volunteers who responded to the survey reported giving all, most or some of their books to people that don’t regularly read for pleasure. Volunteers enjoyed being part of World Book Night, with 96% of respondents rating their overall experience as Excellent or Good. Volunteers recalled satisfaction at witnessing first-hand the impact of their books:

“It’s an amazing thing to do and people’s reactions are great - they are so taken aback by being given a gift. One man actually said to me that he doesn’t read books but that he would read this one for me. I saw him a few weeks later and he said ‘that book’s great, I really enjoyed it’. I just grinned!”⁶

The positive experience of taking part in World Book Night and the opportunity to engage others in reading for pleasure contributed to greater personal engagement with books amongst volunteers themselves, **86%** of whom stated that they had **talked more about books** since taking part in World Book Night, and **58%** felt that they had **read more** themselves. Furthermore, taking part impacted on volunteers’ book buying and borrowing:

- **83%** of individual volunteers said they **planned to return to the library or bookshop** from which they collected their books to buy or borrow books in the future
- **54%** of volunteers reported that they had **bought more books for themselves** since taking part
- **35%** of volunteers had **used the library more** since taking part

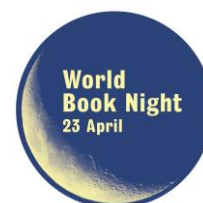
⁵ Male recipient, 25-44, Prison (South East)

⁶ Female individual volunteer (*Escape from Camp 14*)

Part One: Short-term impact on book recipients



Figure 1 Breadth and scale of distribution



This section of the report explores the short-term impact of receiving a World Book Night book. Short-term impact is defined as behavioural or attitudinal impact occurring up to six months after receipt of a World Book Night book. It encompasses both the immediate impact on an individual's reading behaviours and also any wider or deeper impact on his or her engagement with books and reading during this period.

1. Receiving the book

All recipients interviewed recall the moment they received their World Book Night book and the conversation or additional events accompanying this. Recollections of being given the book are often highly personal and reflective, collectively demonstrating the importance of face-to-face, individual distribution on recipients' engagement with the initiative and book received.

Survey responses show very high levels of interest amongst all audiences in the book received, regardless of reading frequency. **98% of recipients strongly agreed or agreed that they were pleased to receive their book**, and just weeks after World Book Night 80% strongly agreed or agreed that they had enjoyed or were enjoying their book.

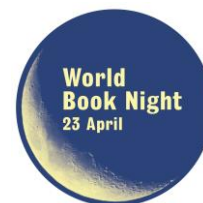
The greatest evidence of the impact of World Book Night can be seen in the responses of very low-frequency readers. **85% of respondents who read less than once a month or never read agreed that they had enjoyed or were enjoying reading their book when surveyed in the weeks after the event.** One male respondent recalled the motivating conversation he had with the volunteer distributing books in his local café, his initial reticence and the impact of discovering a book he enjoyed:

"I ... told Lee who gave me the book I didn't read. He told me to give it a go. I couldn't put it down and read it in two days"⁷



Figure 2 Volunteers in a hospital setting, London

⁷ Male recipient, 45-64 (*The Moaning of Life*)



The unexpected, no-strings nature of the gift of a book has real impact on recipients' interest and inclination to participate.

Receipt of their free book is associated with surprise and delight by almost everyone, including amongst infrequent or lapsed readers, though the specific reasons for their delight vary:

- Pleasure at the unusual receipt of 'something for nothing'
- Pleasure at the perceived purchase value of a new book
- Pleasure at being introduced to new authors
- Pleasure at being singled out for gifting
- Shared experiences (e.g. interactions with colleagues)
- Anticipation of a new (recommended) read
- Sheer aesthetic enjoyment of a new book
- Delight at being part of something bigger

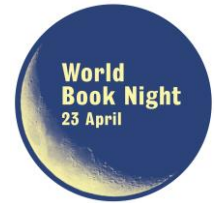
Receiving the book can give recipients a new perspective on themselves and their reading abilities gratifies many previously infrequent readers:

"I was surprised to be given a free book and grateful. It made me feel quite intelligent, that someone thought of me as a 'reader'."⁸

Response to a book can depend on the gifting context, prior awareness of World Book Night and personal interest in reading. Most recipients scan the front and back covers of their book and make a judgement regarding its perceived appeal. One male recipient of *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* recalled how the low-key illustration on its front cover and summary on the reverse appealed to his imagination and encouraged him to try the book.

The World Book Night editions in 2015 contained a 'book journey' panel, which encouraged readers to track the book's progress from person to person, if they wished to share it. This caught the immediate attention of recipients, with many immediately writing their name in their book and committing to pass it on when read. Over 70% of those interviewed had passed their book to a friend or colleague or planned to do so, with one respondent evoking the sense of anticipation she felt about sharing her book, even before she had read it herself:

⁸ Female recipient, 25-44, Midlands (*Spring Tide*)



“I put my name in the little box, popped it in my handbag and read it within 48 hours.”⁹

The unexpected gift of something of high perceived worth and the sense of participation in a wider initiative motivated all book recipients to engage with their book. For infrequent readers or those who never read, the perceived relevance of the storyline and the accessibility of the text are also important. Many infrequent or lapsed readers captured the essence of why their particular book succeeded in motivating them to read, where they haven’t done for a while:

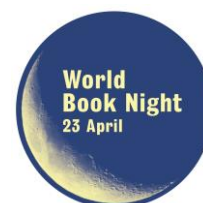
“I work in a school but literacy's not my thing. I like a story that's going to grab me where I don't have to think too much. I've got quite a confession to make - I actually cried at the end of the book.”¹⁰



Figure 3 Some of the words used by recipients to express their reactions on receiving a World Book Night book

⁹Female recipient, 25-44, North East (*Agatha Raisin and the Quiche of Death*)

¹⁰Female recipient, 45-64, North East (*Custard Tarts and Broken Hearts*)



2. Reading the book

World Book Night, its surrounding events and the gift of a free book from one person to another successfully translate delight on receipt of a free book into desire to read the book:

“To receive something when no one wants anything back is a lovely feeling... I’m definitely going to give it a go.”¹¹



Figure 4 Badges created by St Austell College, Cornwall

Two months after World Book Night, 78% of all recipients had finished or planned to finish their book, whilst a further 20% planned to read it. This figure was even higher amongst those who read less frequently: **81% of those that read less than once a month or never read had finished their book or were reading it at that point and planned to finish it.**

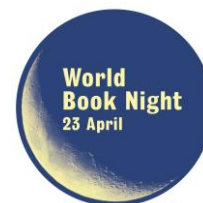
Some of the key insights arising from conversation about the books reveal the various reasons for the appeal of the titles offered:

Shorter titles have broad appeal

Specific books (notably *Agatha Raisin and the Quiche of Death*, as well as the Quick Reads titles *Dead Man Talking*, *Street Cat Bob* and *Chickenfeed*) motivated infrequent, slow or less confident readers for whom a longer book is off-putting. These texts allowed recipients to engage in conversation about their received book and to recommend them with confidence to someone like them. These books were equally popular with more frequent readers. One woman reflected on the enjoyment she has gained from *Essential Poems from the Staying Alive Trilogy* due to the accessibility of the poems:

“I have mental health issues and find it hard to concentrate so being given a book was to me a very personal thing, especially one of poetry. I am finding it a challenge but manageable, I am very grateful for the book.”¹²

¹¹ Female recipient, 25-44, North West (*Chickenfeed*)



Accessible language and topics appeal to many infrequent readers

A number of respondents commented on the positive impact that the use of language, grammar and / or the first person had on their enjoyment of a book. *Street Cat Bob* and *The Moaning of Life* employ accessible language and a conversational style that some found reassuring and straightforward.

“I tend to read magazine articles as they’re easy. I could pick out grammar mistakes, which was helpful. It wasn't perfect - it was contemporary. It was small and more accessible.”¹³

Both infrequent and frequent readers willing to test new genres

Existing readers are largely comfortable with being encouraged to try new genres and often grateful for being introduced to something new. Many recipients who had not previously read science fiction reflected positively on *The Martian*, whilst *Essential Poems from the Staying Alive Trilogy* successfully introduced others to the pleasures of poetry, permitting recipients to dip in and out, to explore topics to which they could relate and to read these aloud to friends.

Human interest stories allow readers to reflect on their own lives and enrich their reading experience.

Insight into the personal experiences of others appeals to many

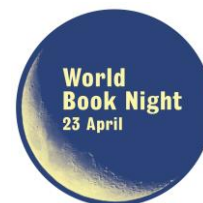
Compelling storylines with true-to-life (or real-life) scenarios and characters such as those in *Honour* and *Escape from Camp 14* provided food for thought whilst first-person narratives such as that in *The Martian* support intimacy and accessibility. Many respondents reported a real desire to learn the outcome of *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* and the motivation behind Queenie’s letter. One respondent recalled really wanting to find out the ending of *My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece*, something she had never experienced before with reading:

“I don't read as much as I should do but *My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece* I read from start to finish which I've never done before with a book!”¹⁴

¹² Female recipient, 45-64 (*Essential Poems from the Staying Alive Trilogy*)

¹³ Female recipient, 45-64, South West (*Street Cat Bob*)

¹⁴ Female recipient, 25-44, North West (*My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece*)



3. Behavioural change

Survey responses provide strong evidence about the impact of World Book Night on the short-term reading behaviours of book recipients. The following data was collated from responses to a self-selecting recipient survey completed up to eight weeks after World Book Night:

- **72%** of infrequent or lapsed readers surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that their **reading habits had changed** since receiving their book
- **80%** of surveyed recipients who read less than once a month or never read strongly agreed or agreed that they **had read more** since World Book Night
- **47%** of those who read less than once a month or never read strongly agreed or agreed that they had **bought more books** since World Book Night
- **32%** of those who read less than once a month or never read strongly agreed or agreed that they **had borrowed books from the library** more since World Book Night

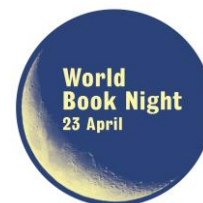
When interviewed many respondents reflected on World Book Night having prompted a personal re-engagement with books and reading for pleasure, and the discovery of new, relevant texts.

Conversation with recipients demonstrates the varying ways in which they are actively influenced to immediate behavioural and attitudinal change by receipt of a World Book Night book:

- Introduced to new genres and authors
- Emotionally committed to a reading challenge
- Motivated to pass on their book
- Motivated to participate in conversation about books and reading
- Motivated to tell others about World Book Night
- Increased self-confidence in their reading ability
- Renewed identification of themselves as a reader
- Greater awareness of the breadth of reading material available

World Book Night prompts recipients to do more than simply read the book received: in many cases it caused them to re-evaluate their relationship with books. In this way its impact on individual reading behaviours is far larger than the sum of its parts. A mature student explained how her book reminded her of the enjoyment of reading for pleasure, recently subsumed by the requirements of her course:

“Such a wonderful surprise to be approached on a gorgeous sunny evening in the park and handed a brand new book! I couldn't help but start reading it straight away. I work full time and study part time so all of my reading hours normally go towards my course, it was wonderful to be reminded of the



delights of a fictional book again and has made me make a point of making more time for them in the future. Thank you World Book Night!”¹⁵

Respondents reported researching additional books by the same author and asking their library to order these, where their book had introduced them to a new genre or author. One female recipient of *After the Fall* recalled what motivated her to seek out other books by Charity Norman:

“It was different...it was gripping. I have read *Harry Potter*, which is gripping in a different sort of way. This one I read in two days - you really wanted to know what was happening next.”¹⁶

Survey data revealed considerable inclination amongst infrequent readers to share their opinions on books with their peers, demonstrating a deepening relationship with reading:

- **85%** of respondents that read less than once a month or that never read strongly agreed or agreed that they have **talked to others about books more** since taking part in World Book Night
- **10%** of those that read less than once a month or that never read **had joined a reading group** since taking part in World Book Night

Respondents reflected on the opportunity that World Book Night offers to interact in new ways with communities. Many such interactions were immediate, as summed up by one female respondent when recalling receipt of a book along with friends in a pub:

“It was just our group of friends. It was poetry - we picked poems out and read them to each other. The poetry book made it something to focus on - made it fun.”¹⁷

Conversation about books took place both on receipt and after completion, as recipients discussed with their friends and family their enjoyment of a book or of reading in general:

“It was just the impetus I needed to get reading again, as I have put 'reading for pleasure' on the back burner for far too long. It will be great to share my thoughts of the book with friends and then pass it on. I particularly liked the idea of the book's journey.”¹⁸

Anecdotally, respondents referenced first-time visits to their local library, having researched suitable books online and beginning to associate books with relaxation for the first time.

¹⁵ Female recipient, 25-44, South East (*Queen's Gambit*)

¹⁶ Female recipient, 25-44, South East (*After the Fall*)

¹⁷ Female recipient, 45-64, North West (*Essential Poems from the Staying Alive Trilogy*)

¹⁸ Female recipient, 45-64 (*Custard Tarts and Broken Hearts*)

SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS ON INFREQUENT OR LAPSED READERS

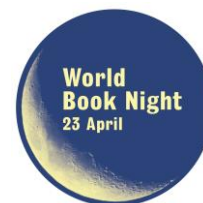
Three months after receipt of their **World Book Night book**, the event had a clear impact on those that read less than once a month or never



Figure 5 Impact of receiving a book on recipient reading behaviours

This wider engagement with books manifested itself in the following ways:

| Changed attitudes | Proactively sourcing books | Sharing experiences |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Thought about self as a reader | Picked up another book | Joined a reading group / an online book group |
| Bought new glasses | Looked out for the author | Talked about books with friends and family |
| Read at different times of the day | Used the charity shop | Joined an author's Facebook page |
| Reappraised the value of reading | Browsed the book-swap shelf at work | |



Part Two: Long-term impacts on book recipients

Research into the impact of World Book Night on recipients continued into 2016 and in the run up to the event, seeking to establish the long-term behavioural and attitudinal changes amongst infrequent readers between six and twelve months afterwards. Focus groups conducted in Autumn 2015 explored engagement amongst recipients more than six months after the event, whilst the case studies included in the following section highlight the lasting impact on some recipients almost twelve months afterwards.

1. The benefits of reading for pleasure

Recipients of all frequencies cited a number of personal, social and emotional benefits arising from reading for pleasure.

Awareness of the *benefits* of reading sustains changes in attitude, overcomes barriers and supports new habits.

Recipients were asked in telephone interviews shortly after World Book Night what had motivated them to *start* their book. Many voiced a sense of commitment and obligation to the person that gave it to them. However when recipients were asked what motivated them to continue reading either their World Book Night book or another title six months after the event, they reflected on more nuanced reasons such as enjoyment, a sense of belonging to a reading community or identification with the author's themes. The personal, emotional and social benefits arising from reading the book had become the factors that prompted them to complete the book and in many cases to continue reading.

- **Practical** reasons for reading are often based around behavioural needs; e.g. for distraction, entertainment or to relax. Infrequent readers targeted by World Book Night often voiced these practical reasons as being the catalyst that turned good intention around reading their World Book Night book into action. For some, the practical barriers to reading had to also be removed before they read their book (lack of time, availability of other entertainment options or other priorities)
- **Emotional** engagement in a book appears to be the catalyst that prompts infrequent readers to finish that book, to seek out similar books or to have conversation with others about their experiences and it was the emotional benefits of reading including escapism, immersion in other lives / worlds and personal entertainment that were most commonly referred to by respondents. The emotional impact of a book appears to have long-term resonance with readers of all types, and

appears strongly influential in motivating continued engagement both with an existing book and with further titles.

- The **social** benefits of reading a book include social currency (reading the book of a film about to open) and social belonging (reading a book everyone else is reading or reading for a book group) and both can influence an individual’s continuing journey as a reader. Some recipients read the World Book Night book given to them in order to fulfill social obligations in the workplace, but were influenced to continue to read by the positive experience of sharing his / her perspectives on it with colleagues.



Figure 6 Credit Maria Dell, Glyn Derw

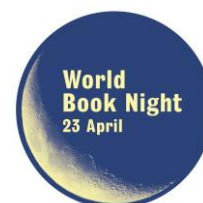
“It’s the need to know what’s going to happen next. I’ve been known to read a book in two days when I want to know what’s going to happen.”¹⁹

Practical benefits

For some World Book Night recipients the unexpected practical benefits of reading for pleasure prompted a long-term change in reading behaviours. These included reading to get to sleep (relaxation), for company or to pass the time (entertainment) and to switch off (distraction). In these instances reading is reflected on as a means to an end and for some the content of the book matters little. It is the *process of reading* that for these frequent readers fulfills a number of valuable roles in their lives.

One female respondent shared with her daughter the ways in which reading can be an effective means of distraction. When this was successful in the short-term she hoped that this practical application would stimulate a reading habit:

¹⁹ Male recipient, 25-44, Nottingham



“I concentrate on it if I’m down and depressed. My daughter was down about her boyfriend. At the beginning of the holiday she was sad and moping and I got her into a book... it really cheered her up. I hope she’ll make the association long-term.”²⁰

A number of infrequent readers reflected that their original motivation for reading their World Book Night book was to ‘pass the time’ in the absence of anything else to do (e.g. on public transport) but that this developed into emotional engagement with the text and a desire to read more. These respondents identified that their initial, *practical* motivations for reading a book gave rise to positive emotional associations with reading which then prompted them to develop a long-term reading habit:

“Honestly before I read Agatha Christie I never read. We were closed at lunchtime and I was waiting for something to do. I thought it [reading] was something I wasn’t into. But I found it funny and since then, I’ve read all of the books in the series...”²¹

This was also seen amongst prisoners asked to reflect on their reading experiences. One male prisoner reflected on how reading as a means to an end prompted the development of a long-term passion for reading:



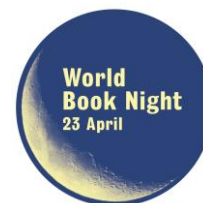
Figure 7 Distribution by Swansea Library

“I started it because of boredom. You only have two channels on TV. You run out of interest reading comic books. I picked up my first book and then another and another. It’s for entertainment now, no longer because of my boredom.”²²

²⁰ Female recipient, 45-64, Edinburgh

²¹ Male recipient, 25-44, Swansea

²² Male recipient, 25-44, Prison (South East)



Case study 1: Motivated by the gift of a carefully selected book

Derek P., Watford (*Skellig*)

For Derek P., the point of reading for pleasure was that it had to be pleasurable. In his opinion this demanded considerable time be allowed, which required no other distractions or demands. He read books rarely, preferring less time-consuming reading material such as magazine articles.

Derek acknowledges the role that World Book Night plays in his life. Since receiving his book he has been motivated to find time to read it, recognizing that lack of opportunity was less of a barrier than he had thought.

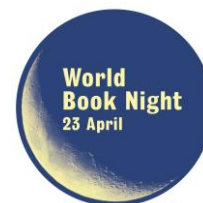
“That extra little push makes me sit down to read a book. Although I say time is the biggest barrier to reading I think is laziness. The effort of choosing a book or going to a library is a barrier. When you know you’ve got a book in your hands and there’s no rush to get it back it’s one less thing to think about.”

When he is asked to reflect on his younger self, Derek remembers reading regularly as part of his daily commute to work. He recalls the pleasure, satisfaction and physical relaxation to be gained from reading a book and reflects on the power of World Book Night to remind people of what they may have lost when they stopped reading. Despite a couple of false starts he himself has gone on to read two more titles since receiving his book, even finding himself part of a conversation about a series of books enjoyed by members of his family.

“World Book Night helped me to find the time to sit down and read and really enjoy reading. Reading isn’t something I do a great deal of. For a few days I was spending an hour each morning – it was a conspicuous change in my behaviour.”

Emotional benefits

Many of those for whom reading was not previously embedded in their day-to-day lives spoke of becoming immersed in their World Book Night book. These infrequent readers were often astonished at the extent to which they had become emotionally engaged with the characters or settings within their book and crucially, how the act of reading could subject them to emotions that they might have previously attributed to the act of watching a film or television. The experience of often quite strong emotion or of reading about the lives of others in a way that touched them personally had a positive impact on many recipients and predisposed them to continue reading.



Many recipients became emotionally involved in their book and recall this experience six months later.

A number of infrequent readers voiced strongly the pleasure and escapism they had derived from their World Book Night book. For some reading had become integral to their lives since World Book Night, offering intense pleasure that contrasted with much of their own experiences. Those who had not developed a reading habit did not often aspire to read more often, however they had experienced something positive from reading their book and were open to the idea of reading again at some point.

Respondents who had previously rejected books but have embraced a reading habit since World Book Night reflected on the emotional benefits reading brought them, that had been previously lacking:

“This is the second World Book Night book I have received and was thrilled to be chosen (by a nurse at my transplant clinic). Reading has brought about such a positive change in my life during such times. It really has kept me grounded. I now look forward to picking up my book daily and swap my read books with like minded friends”²³

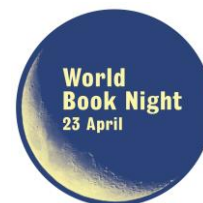
Attendees at World Book Night’s Homeless Book Club²⁴ reflected on the ability of a good book to take them out of their lives and participate in the emotions of another character. All saw inherent value in the World Book Night model and the opportunities it gives recipients to engage emotionally and often on a very personal level with stories and characters. For some of the members of the group their World Book Night books had afforded opportunity for reflection on familiar issues (*Street Cat Bob*)

A number of the individuals attending the Homeless Book Club placed importance on being able to own the book they received. With few belongings their World Book Night book became an important possession. One man had his own shelf in his hostel on which he kept his only three books, whilst another reflected on the enduring value of books (as opposed to clothes or other products in daily use).

Some recipients who had previously been infrequent readers before World Book Night acknowledged the unique emotional role that reading now plays in their lives, helping to embed it as an integral part of

²³ Female recipient, 45-64, London (*Chickenfeed*)

²⁴ The Reading Agency supports a reading group in East London run by Crisis, the national charity for the homeless. Sets of World Book Night books are made available to the organisers of the Homeless Book Club to be shared in a group setting and given to participants. Rose Goddard, World Book Night project manager, wrote an account of her visit to the World Book Night Homeless Book Club which can be found at: <https://readingagency.org.uk/news/blog/my-visit-to-the-homeless-book-club.html>



their daily routine long-term. A number of male respondents currently in prison spoke of books that brought them alive in an environment where part of them felt 'shut down' whilst other prisoners spoke of books satisfying 'an emotional curiosity at the end of a physically tiring day'. One male prisoner spoke of the importance of reading for pleasure while in prison:

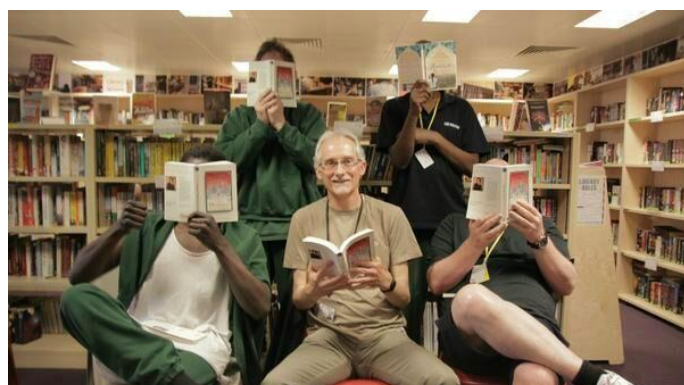


Figure 8 HMP Thameside Prison Reading Group

“It’s my first time here, there are a lot of emotions. [Reading is] to forget and for escapism for up to three hours at a time.”²⁵

For some recipients the topic of the World Book Night book they received or the way it expresses human experience presents tangible personal value. Though this singular experience itself doesn't cause long-term behavioural change, many infrequent readers expressed surprise at the extent to which books could offer insight into their own condition and were motivated to find further relevant texts.

One man talked about how the subject matter of the book he received, *Street Cat Bob*, actually helped him engage with specific family problems:

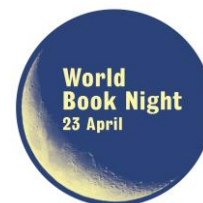
“They help homeless kids. They’re a big part of the community. I've got problems with my son at the moment - there were things in the book that helped us.”

In all of these cases respondents acknowledged that the emotional benefits of reading had prompted long-term behavioural change around books and reading for pleasure. Each had been enriched and supported in different ways by the experience of reading their World Book Night book and spontaneously talked about seeking out further titles and developing a reading habit.

Social benefits

A number of those that attended the focus groups reflected on how their choice of reading material can be influenced by shared interests with friends (e.g. local history, a popular series of books or a book

²⁵ Male recipient, 25-44, Prison (South East)



group), whilst previously lapsed readers who had read their World Book Night book reflected on the additional social interactions it had prompted:

“I’m a new arrival in a city. Sharing books amongst the mums created a foundation of shared interests.”²⁶

Whether sharing the book itself or thoughts on the book with colleagues at work, with a partner or friends, these ordinarily reluctant readers commented spontaneously on the pleasure these interactions gave them. For some, these conversations had prompted further book recommendations that had been followed up on or in one case, a shared interest between husband and wife.

Conversation about books cements a common interest and sparks curiosity in specific titles.

“It’s made me talk about books more. We started a book group about the same time. It’s like a shared experience.”²⁷

For some members of the World Book Night Homeless Book Club, conversations around shared reading experiences provided an opportunity to use their considerable literacy skills and knowledge during discussions. This supported social cohesion and self-esteem and in turn motivated participants to return to the next group and continue to read.

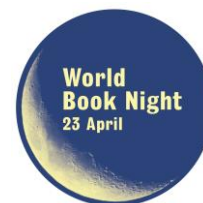
In a prison setting, one librarian spoke of the positive impact of involving inmates in discussion of the text on their self-awareness and sense of inclusion. These positive impacts were in his view likely to lead to greater openness to read long-term and to be willing to talk about books with others:

“Our group is really grateful to World Book Night: prisoners often (unsurprisingly) feel left out and World Book Night is about including them in the conversation. This is important to them, and they want the organisers to know that this year they particularly enjoyed the book they chose (*After the Fall*). It led to a thoughtful discussion about drugs and family members, starting new lives, and parenting.”²⁸

²⁶ Female recipient, 45-64, South West (*Prime Suspect*)

²⁷ Female recipient, 25-44, Swansea (*Assassin’s Apprentice*)

²⁸ Female institutional volunteer (*After the Fall*)



Case study 2: Inspired by World Book Night to set up a community reading group

Amanda C, Widnes (*The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*)

The positive experience of receiving a World Book Night book at her son's school prompted Amanda C. to reflect on the social and emotional value of reading for pleasure, to read more herself and to volunteer to distribute books in 2016.

"It was being targeted to receive a book that had the greatest impression on me and I took on board the whole concept."

Prior to receiving her book Amanda read only one or two titles a year. Reading offered diversion but she approached it with an intensity unsuited to her everyday life and picked books without forethought from the local library.

In contrast the book she was presented with had a cover and style of writing that intrigued her and contained the story of a man at a similar life stage to her own. She made time to read, found pleasure in reading for its own sake and enjoyed sharing the story with colleagues as it progressed. In twelve months she progressed from reading one to two books per year to at least one book a month.

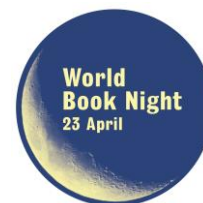
"Funnily enough a couple of my friends received the same book as me. Reading at the same pace we had a conversation about what we thought was happening."

The impact on Amanda of receiving a free World Book Night book extends beyond the benefits to herself. As part of a local charitable focus she has since established a fortnightly reading group to address social isolation and facilitate access to books and is deeply proud of her selection as a 2016 World Book Night volunteer.

"The warmth of receiving a book spreads and the sense that everyone is included is overwhelming."

2. Addressing previous barriers to reading

The gift of a book prompted a positive emotional commitment on the part of many recipients to undertake a reading challenge and to alter their existing behaviours. Their engagement with the event, the experience of receiving a free book and the book itself helped to overcome their customary perceived barriers to reading and create a new view of themselves as readers.



Infrequent readers found themselves ring-fencing opportunities to read within their day-to-day lives.

A number of lapsed readers still consider themselves to be readers but lacking the time to read as often as they would like. Many had put their World Book Night book to one side on receipt to be read on holiday or at another appointed time. Six months after the event most had gone on to read their book, with many commenting on the renewed interest it had given them in a genre, author or topic and a desire to keep reading. Receipt of a free book had presented this group with a reading 'appointment' which had the positive impact of reminding them of the benefits they derived from books. Many in this group reappraised their former reservations about available time to read and found time to read in their day-to-day lives.

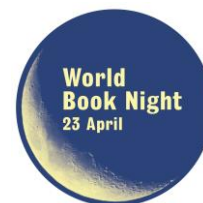
Those in prison targeted by World Book Night were also able to reappraise their relationship with reading, in their case due to the availability of significantly greater time to themselves. Forced confinement and lack of other entertainment options prompted many non-readers to use the prison library and as a result of World Book Night to begin a reading habit that brought valuable emotional benefits and long-term behavioural change.

Encouraging infrequent readers to consider their next book supports the formation of a reading habit

Participation in World Book Night demonstrated to many infrequent readers the benefits of reading for pleasure. However, lack of books at home, difficulty accessing new titles at a local library or lack of inspiration regarding what to buy next prevented some recipients from capitalizing on their discovery. Those recipients that received their book in the workplace or other setting where conversation about books ensued, were more likely to continue reading than many of those that received their books in isolation or had no further contact with the volunteer.

Infrequent readers targeted by World Book Night appeared open to new reading experiences. In contrast with regular readers who appeared to have more rigidly enforced reading behaviours, this audience was notably open to trialing new genres and to changing their reading practice.

This in turn appears to present an opportunity to transform the reading habits of reluctant readers and implies that World Book Night has greater impact on the behaviours of infrequent readers than of



regular readers. Whilst some infrequent readers may have been inclined to stop reading after completing their World Book Night book, many were motivated to consider what they would read next. Conversation with peers, the individual that gave them their book or with family championed them as an emerging reader, providing impetus for further shared experience and a positive inclination towards the emotional benefits of reading. These individuals didn't view receipt of their book as a singular event but as the start of a new relationship with books.

Case study 3: From reading rejector to advocate

Luke J, Swansea (*Agatha Christie and the Quiche of Death*)

Luke has volunteered for over a year at his local public library as part of a campaign to save it from closure. Friends rallied together in 2014 to form a community group to take over the service, support library users and ensure the widest possible access.

However Luke himself wasn't originally a reader. A full-time job on top of his volunteering role left him with little free time and little patience for what he perceived to be 'boring stories of other people's lives'. He recognised the value that reading could bring but had had limited positive experience himself and no motivation in a busy lifestyle to explore further.

"I've read three books in a year and wouldn't normally read at all."

Lack of alternative entertainment one lunchtime break prompted Luke to browse through one of the World Book Night books given out by the library. He glanced through the first pages and was surprised to find it entertaining, surprising and gripping. Luke went on to complete that book within a fortnight and to read a further two books in the series within the next six months. Originally a rejector of any form of reading he became an advocate of its pleasure and made time for reading within his day.

"It was weird talking about books. I'd not previously had that experience and it was great – like talking about a television series. It made me want to go on to the next book and see what it's like."

One year on, Luke remains open to reading. A colleague with a passion for books steers him towards books he might like and though he may not read these he will always consider them. He has now volunteered as the organiser of the library's World Book Night 2016 event and looks forward to drawing on his experiences as a previous non-reader over the past 12 months with other reluctant readers.

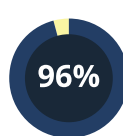
"Colleague enthusiasm and conversation prompted me to read another book."

Part Three: The volunteer experience

THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

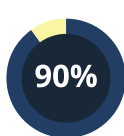
Participation as a volunteer in **World Book Night 2015** presented many benefits for almost all book givers

IMMEDIATE



Satisfaction

score their experience as a volunteer as **'Excellent' or 'Good'**



Commitment

gave all, most or some of their books to people that don't regularly read for pleasure



Passion

"I'm tempted to choose a book that relates to their experience but I've tried more recently to give them more joy in reading"



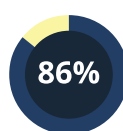
Audience Understanding

"It's made me reflect at work about my unconscious stereotypical thoughts"

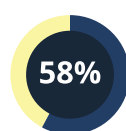


LONG-TERM

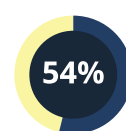
Deeper Relationship with Books and Reading



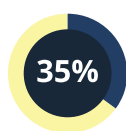
have talked more about books



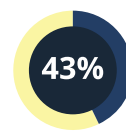
they have read more themselves



have bought more books for themselves



have used the library more



have bought more books for others

Commitment to the Ethos of World Book Night



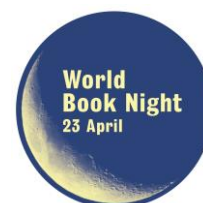
"One man actually said to me that he doesn't read books but that he would read this one for me"

Personal and Professional Growth



"It's made me more passionate about the field I work in and the skills I need to gain to do it to my best possible ability"

Figure 9 The volunteer experience



The thousands of volunteers who give out books to people targeted by World Book Night are the embodiment of the ethos of the event; their enjoyment and motivation are directly related to effective targeting of infrequent readers and messaging. As in previous years the 2015 volunteers were highly responsive when asked to share their perspectives on the event: through them, we are able to gain the fullest appreciation of the personal and localized nature of distribution.

“I was watching the faces of people as they were given books and it was clear to me that some of them wouldn’t have dreamt of going to a bookshop, but now they’ve got a book.... They’re certainly not going to read a book they *don’t* have.”²⁹

There are two ways to volunteer to give out World Book Night editions. Individual volunteers apply to receive a set of 18 copies (in 2015) of a book chosen from the World Book Night list to people in their community who don’t regularly read. Institutional volunteers can apply to receive more than one set of books so that, for example, an entire class in school or college or a large group of prisoners can all be given books. In 2015 2,700 institutions from prisons, libraries, colleges, schools and homeless shelters each gave multiple sets of titles to hard-to-reach recipients. The breadth of distribution across these institutions is detailed in Figure 1. 118,600 books, over 47% of the total number distributed, were given out through these targeted routes in this year.

1. The experience of gifting

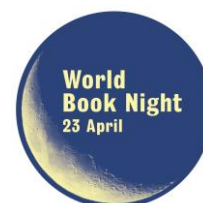
High satisfaction levels

There is implicit enjoyment in giving a gift without strings and witnessing the pleasure on recipients’ faces that this provokes. This is evident amongst both those people giving to known members of their community and amongst those giving to individuals with whom they have little prior connection.

The majority of volunteers took very seriously the opportunity to influence infrequent, lapsed or resistant readers and report the considerable efforts they went to reach this audience. **90% of volunteers reported giving all, most or some of their books to people that don’t regularly read for pleasure.** A number of survey respondents noted that the briefing information from the Reading Agency to support volunteers emphasised the need to target infrequent readers and supported them in this regard.

Volunteer survey respondents rated their overall experience of being a World Book Night volunteer. 96% of both first-time and repeat volunteers rated their experience as Excellent or Good, **though**

²⁹ Male recipient, 25-44, Nottingham



satisfaction was highest for repeat individual volunteers amongst whom 98% rated their experience as Excellent or Good.

The World Book Night books are perceived to be inspirational, motivating to infrequent readers and of personal interest to volunteers, by virtue of having been selected by the World Book Night editorial panel.

- **90%** of volunteers strongly agreed or agreed that the selected books **would help people to enjoy reading**
- **88%** of volunteers thought the books on the list would help **encourage people to read more often**

Satisfaction is linked to a volunteer's experiences in approaching their audience, his or her confidence in whether outcomes were achieved and experiences in ordering and collecting books. Satisfaction increases amongst individual volunteers after their first year of participation, probably due to increased personal confidence. One repeat volunteer reflected on how she has developed her own personal giving style through experience and increased confidence:

"I also did my own summary of why I was involved in the project and I always try to add some good, and often funny, quotes about the pleasure of reading."³⁰

Discussion with volunteers revealed the pride each felt in the efforts she or he had gone to in order to ensure appropriate and relevant distribution. Respondents recounted the challenges they faced and how these had been addressed. Those who had experienced difficulties in distributing their books (either due to lack of opportunity or resistance) were particularly proud at having achieved their intentions. They also reflected on the benefits to themselves of taking part, including increased self-confidence and greater empathy with their target audience.

All respondents demonstrated significant continuing commitment to the aims and ideals of World Book Night. Most demonstrated an understanding of the Reading Agency's desire to target infrequent or lapsed readers and acknowledged where this had been more difficult to achieve (for example librarians giving away to their wider community).

³⁰ Female individual volunteer (*Agatha Raisin and the Quiche of Death*)

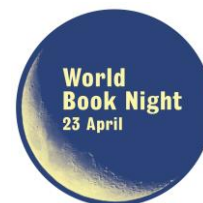


Figure 10 East Kent College, Broadstairs. Credit Brajercikova & Caudell

“I feel it’s worked a lot better in the last couple of years. Obviously you still get people [being given World Book Night books] who read books but there’s no doubt we were talking to a lot of people who don’t read and who have stopped reading.”³¹

Social glow

Volunteers are variously driven to participate in World Book Night by a number of motives: the perceived value of a book as a gift to those in their community, the perceived emotional or social benefits of reading, a desire to help people find shared interests or to improve the welfare of others. One pair of volunteers reflected on the positive response from the disadvantaged families they targeted, both to the books they had distributed and to the positive social impact these had had:

“We did Street Cat [*Street Cat Bob*], which was a nice easy win. We said it was a gift and had children’s books too. Quite a lot of families were ‘when can you come back?’ We encouraged families reading together.”³²

Witnessing first-hand a change in attitude or interest reinforces volunteers’ motivations for participation and helps evidence their direct impact.

Volunteers recalled satisfaction at witnessing first-hand the impact of their books and on hearing anecdotally how their books had been shared and enjoyed. Volunteers referenced a considerable range

³¹ Male repeat volunteer distributing to the community served by his library

³² Joint female first-time volunteers distributing to disadvantaged families via the charity they work for

of practical, social and emotional benefits when asked to consider the long-term value of their actions on their recipients, demonstrating an understanding of the diversity of reader context and experience.



Figure 11 Hand in Hand Care

“A lot of them have an attention deficit and prefer to while away the days on their mobile phones. They all sat in the classroom and listened intently to me introducing myself and giving a quick outline of the story.

When I asked if anyone would like a book, they ALL said yes please! That was a thrilling moment!”³³

Volunteers demonstrated awareness of the need to encourage no-pressure trial of their book, particularly amongst the most resistant readers. They took pride in targeting and influencing infrequent readers but did not wholly define personal success as changing an individual’s reading behaviours. Validation of their actions was gained through the recipient’s immediate response to the book and subsequent feedback from that individual and the wider community:

“It was hard so what I was trying to do with my audience was say; even if you read just one chapter’... don’t feel this is an added pressure. You’re not going to be tested on it. Read a bit and pass it on if you have the time.”³⁴

One volunteer who had *not* had any feedback from the audience was pragmatic about this, keen not to demand anything from her recipients:

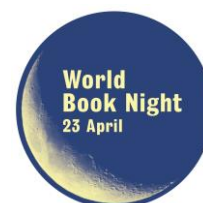
“I didn’t really get any feedback. It would be nice but I don’t want to bother people. It [would then] become about you.”³⁵

Respondents reflected on the value that volunteering for World Book Night has brought them, including increased self-confidence for the woman who approached strangers on Waterloo Bridge and increased empathy with colleagues.

³³ Female individual volunteer (*Custard Tarts and Broken Hearts*)

³⁴ Female repeat volunteer distributing via an occupational health clinic

³⁵ Female first time volunteer distributing to colleagues



“It’s made me reflect at work about my unconscious stereotypical thoughts... this person won’t like this book... but they do. Thinking now why did I give a book to that person but not the next person?”³⁶

2. Personal impact

Greater engagement with reading

Volunteers reflected on their enhanced understanding of the role that reading can play in transforming lives, as well as on their own reading behaviours.

The positive experience of participation and the opportunity to engage others in reading for pleasure contributed to greater personal engagement with books amongst volunteers:

- **86%** of all volunteers strongly agreed or agreed that they had **talked more about books** since taking part in World Book Night
- **58%** of volunteers strongly agreed or agreed that they had **read more** since taking part in World Book Night

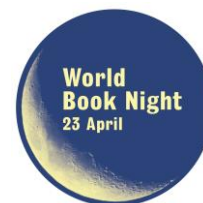
Four sets of data implied positive impact on book buying and book borrowing behaviours:

- **54%** of volunteers strongly agreed or agreed that they had **bought more books for themselves** since taking part
- **35%** of volunteers had **used the library more** since taking part
- **43%** of volunteers had **bought more books for others** since taking part
- **83%** of individual volunteers said they **planned to return to the library or bookshop** from which they collected their books to buy or borrow books in the future

Enhanced commitment to World Book Night

Volunteers reflected on their ongoing commitment to the ethos of World Book Night and to the event itself. They were asked to consider whether participation had influenced their own attitudes towards reading for pleasure and the extent to which they would be interested in exploring how else they could promote reading within their communities. Survey responses and interviews all revealed ongoing passion for reading and for encouraging others to read. They revealed real ownership of the concept of World Book Night and the belief that receipt of one book can be transformational.

³⁶ Female first time volunteer distributing in the workplace



"It's been such a big important thing in my life. I work with people having a terrible time. I can't share that it [reading] has also helped me personally but I can help by handing out books."³⁷

Volunteers were unanimous in their desire to continue supporting the work of the Reading Agency as World Book Night givers or as ambassadors for the event.

"My books were given out to homeless people. Sometimes I'm tempted to choose a book that relates to their experience but I've tried more recently to give them more joy in reading. I chose *The Martian*."³⁸

Some respondents demonstrated commitment to their distribution plans and used their initiative when considering how to persuade the most reluctant readers to try their book.

Others revealed unanimous interest in being an ongoing ambassador for World Book Night, including supporting other volunteers in 2016. However volunteers in the focus group were less interested when asked whether they might extend the impact of the initiative by setting up book groups in their area or other similar activity. Those distributing in the workplace perceived this to be inappropriate, whilst those distributing to strangers could not envisage how to achieve it.

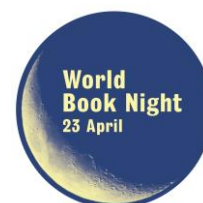
There was resistance to the notion that volunteering for World Book Night might prompt an interest in volunteering generally. Respondents in the focus group setting did not perceive themselves as volunteers, in part because this term implies a long-term ongoing commitment, while they saw their participation in World Book Night as a once-yearly activity. Instead they viewed the opportunity to support the work of the Reading Agency as a privilege and feel grateful to be selected for the annual event.

Better understanding of their target audience

Volunteers articulated their commitment to ensuring the welfare of their target audiences whilst supporting the aims of World Book Night. Most had given real thought to their targeting and messaging, keen that their offer of a free book would be received in the correct spirit and viewed positively. They voiced concern that they did not want to expose or make assumptions about those who may have lower literacy, that are disadvantaged or that speak English as an additional language.

³⁷ Female repeat volunteer distributing through an Occupational Health Centre

³⁸ Female repeat volunteer distributing to the homeless



A number of volunteers noted the need to match the book(s) received carefully with their target audience. Two had altered their distribution plans on receipt of an unexpected title, though not all had the opportunity to read the book prior to distribution.

“For me distributing *Honour* was a bit difficult. Knowing that families go through that... for them to pick it up and for to me say that’s the same situation you’ve just gone through.”³⁹

The opportunity to give books to specific audiences was particularly rewarding for many distributing through the workplace and sometimes gave these volunteers new insights into these groups.

3. Opportunities for improvement

Volunteers made recommendations for improved targeting, distribution and messaging in 2016 including consideration of the overarching mechanics of World Book Night and their specific role.

Leverage the experience of repeat volunteers

- Invite experienced volunteers to act as mentors to first-time volunteers in their region
- Use volunteer case studies and anecdotal volunteer experience within briefing emails

Pre-promotion to specific audiences

- Where feasible (e.g. to a contained audience in a prison setting or in the workplace) offer poster templates to event organisers to help pre-promote World Book Night. Increased awareness and understanding of the event will help counter resistance and encourage subsequent book sharing.

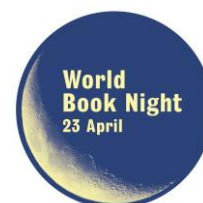
Encourage volunteer familiarity with their book(s)

- Encourage recipients to read their book or a review of their book prior to distribution to aid in promoting and endorsing to others

Provide branded promotional material

- Consider providing standalone printed assets (e.g. branded bookmark or flier) for volunteers to distribute to recipients alongside their books to support awareness and engagement.

³⁹ Male repeat volunteer distributing to primarily Muslim community in East London



Conclusion

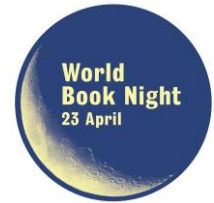
The Reading Agency has sought to investigate through this study the short and long-term impact of World Book Night across the UK. Extensive quantitative and qualitative research explored the emotional and behavioural impact on infrequent readers of receiving a free book and sought to understand the wider impact of participation on volunteers.

The findings are robust and enable us to conclude that participants across the UK experience a **breadth of immediate benefits**. The results demonstrate that for infrequent or lapsed readers, receipt of a book changes both how they view themselves and their relationship with reading.

Most notably, World Book Night delivers against its core ambition to influence a non-reader or infrequent reader to read a book. Responses differ and are influenced by an individual's previous relationship with reading, but for all, the unexpected receipt of a free book within the context of a nationwide event has a highly positive impact on their inclination to read for pleasure and **their propensity to convert good intent into action around reading more**.

Furthermore, the positive exchange between volunteer and recipient motivates and amplifies the reading experience and **often helps plant a seed for further engagement**. Previously lapsed or non-readers identify personally with books, often for the first time. They begin to view themselves as part of a reading community, share their experiences with others and become advocates in their own right. Their peer groups and family members often share in this journey and the social and emotional benefits of shared interests help to consolidate this new reading habit.

Though a nationwide event, World Book Night's greatest asset is the highly individual and local nature of its book distribution. Recipients and volunteers benefit from the personal and social interaction opportunities that World Book Night presents, with **all able to engage on their own terms and in their own environments**. 10,000 volunteers facilitate thousands of conversations around books, promoting the accessibility and inclusivity of reading for pleasure and inviting all to participate. In quite a unique manner, **World Book Night acquaints infrequent or lapsed readers with the concept of reading for pleasure and helps those passionate about books to share their enjoyment with others**.



“I sat down and read it... and found that it gripped me. I sat and read for an hour or more a day in the first five days.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰Male recipient, 45-64, South East (*The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*)