

Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland 2017 Participation Report



“The Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge has been a good way for me and my child to do something together and to keep her practicing her reading over the summer. It’s also encouraged my younger child who is 3 still to take part as well. Books and reading are very important and it’s good that the libraries in partnership with Tesco Bank are encouraging young people to do this through the challenge. I also feel more part of my community by going to the library with my children.”

Overview

The Reading Agency, along with the UK public library network, has developed and delivered the Summer Reading Challenge since 1999. It is the UK’s biggest annual reading promotion for children aged four to eleven (with increasing participation of pre-school children). Since 2011, Tesco Bank has sponsored the Challenge in Scotland where it runs as the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland.

The Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland draws children into their local libraries and inspires them to read for pleasure by combining free access to books with fun social activities and a creative online element. Throughout the Challenge, library staff and teenage and adult volunteers support children, helping them to discover new authors and explore a wide range of different types of books.

“The Summer Reading Challenge is about reading for the pleasure of reading. Discovering a world inside a book. A fictional world that makes sense to you – a writer who understands you, this is one of the true comforts of reading. Sometimes you will discover a story which better helps you understand this world, and that too is a great thing. Maybe the book you read will take you to a place you have never even imagined, or maybe it will take you back to a place which feels very much like home. Stories are important because they nourish us and broaden our thinking. Librarians and all those involved in the huge success of the 2017 Summer Reading Challenge know how important this is and seek to change lives one book at a time.”

Lauren Child, Waterstones Children’s Laureate

Through programmes such as the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland, The Reading Agency wants to inspire more people to read more, encourage them to share their enjoyment of reading and celebrate the difference that reading makes to all our lives. These programmes, delivered in partnership

with libraries, are designed to take people on their personal reading journey and for many young readers the Challenge can be their first step on that journey.

Why the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland is important

- Reading for pleasure is the best way to support children to develop into confident readers
- The Challenge provides libraries with a platform to engage with an increasingly diverse educational landscape
- The Challenge is accessible for children with a range of special education needs and disability, and provides equality of opportunity for all young people
- The Challenge is cost effective and enables local authorities to benefit from economies of scale whilst being flexible to meet local priorities (the core materials costs libraries less than £1 per child.)
- Tesco Bank's sponsorship gives each participating Scottish authority access to free materials for up to 300 children, along with funding for a promotional event.

2017 Participation

Introduction

In 2017, **97%** of UK local authorities took part in the Summer Reading Challenge. All participating authorities submitted data for inclusion in this report. The submissions include participation statistics and feedback from local authority run libraries, mobile libraries and volunteer-led libraries. The additional feedback provided helps The Reading Agency and libraries shape the Summer Reading Challenge of the future.

Total Participation

In total **761,758** children participated in the Summer Reading Challenge in England, Wales and Scotland, of these:

- **734,552** children between ages 4-11 years inclusive took part in the Challenge at their local library (44% were boys¹).
- **27,206** children under 4 took part using specially produced Summer Reading Challenge pre-school materials.

Internationally, the Summer Reading Challenge reached a further 18,400 children who participated through the British Council and the armed forces.

UK Library Participation

Of the **734,552** children aged 4-11 who participated in the main Challenge:

- **415,732** children (57%) completed the Challenge by reading at least six books (43% were boys).
- **86,709** children joined the library as new members during the Challenge this summer.
- In addition, **7,763** Reading Hack young volunteers aged 12 to 24 enthusiastically supported the Summer Reading Challenge and other activities within their libraries.

¹ Only 1 in 4 boys read outside the class every day – The National Literacy Trust Report 2012

- The families² that took part in the Challenge reported that it had strong positive impacts in the following areas:
 - 87% felt the Challenge helped their child enjoy reading
 - 78% believed that it encouraged children to read more over the summer
 - 75% felt that taking part increased library usage
 - 73% reported that it increased conversation about books
- We estimate that there were more than **16.5 million** children's loans over the summer based on the data supplied by 90% of participating libraries about their borrowing figures.
- **192,358** users visited the website. They added **181,941** titles to the Book Sorter and also submitted **89,632** book reviews.
- **766** children used the Summer Reading Challenge to achieve Arts Award Discover³ across **24** authorities in England (this figure may increase as children finish their Arts Award in the autumn term).

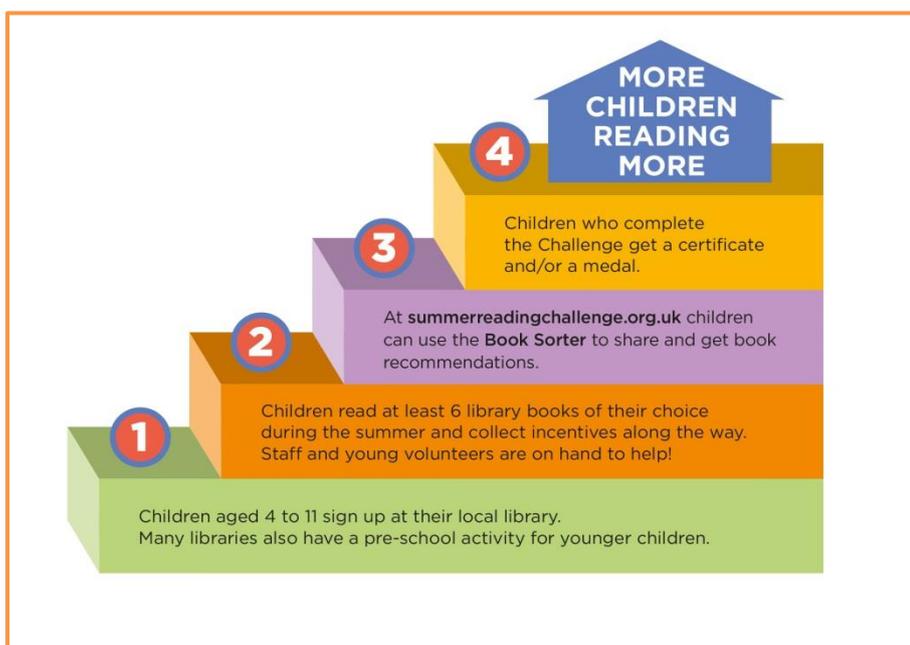
Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland Participation

- **36,332** children in Scotland participated in the Challenge at their local library. Of these children, 42% were boys.
- **20,328** children (56%) completed the Challenge by reading at least six books.
- A further **1,131** under 4-year-olds took part in the Challenge, using the specially produced pre-school materials.
- **2,063** children joined the library as new members during the Challenge this summer.
- **139** young people aged 12 to 24 supported the Challenge through volunteering.
- We estimate that there were **799,935** children's library issues in Scotland over the summer based on the data supplied by 24 out of the 29 participating authorities about their borrowing figures.

How the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland works

² [Summer Reading Challenge Family Survey 2017](#)

³ www.artsaward.org.uk/srcdiscover



Each year, the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge adopts a theme which is popular with children and families. This year's theme was **Animal Agents**, based on a detective agency staffed by all kinds of clever animals – furry, scaly and slippery. **Tony Ross**, the UK's best-selling children's illustrator (including creator of the Little Princess books, illustrator of the Horrid Henry series by Francesca Simon, and books by David Walliams and Claire Balding), created this year's exclusive artwork.

For more information, please visit our website readingagency.org.uk/children or our year-round children's website summerreadingchallenge.org.uk

The Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland and local authority corporate policy

Reading for pleasure

Ambition and Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland⁴ 2015-2020 has six key strategic aims at its heart. Reading, Literacy and Learning is a key strategic aim and the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland is a key part of the programme which supports this.

The Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland, delivered by libraries, is the UK's leading reading for pleasure programme for primary aged children. The Challenge harnesses the power of reading for pleasure to improve children's life chances. Reading for pleasure is a more important determinant of children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status⁵ and the only out-of-school activity demonstrably linked to securing managerial or professional jobs⁶. The Challenge also motivates children to read more independently and often, and inspires boys to read outside the classroom (only 1 in 4 boys read outside class every day⁷).

⁴ [National Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland](#)

⁵ OECD 2002; Oxford University 2011

⁶ University of Oxford, 2011

⁷ The National Literacy Trust Report 2012

"I enjoyed the summer reading challenge because it challenges you to read different books. I also enjoyed collecting all the stickers and solving the mysteries." Child, Perth and Kinross

"I think it had a great effect on my son for his reading, he enjoyed coming to the library more and was excited to receive different things each time." Parent, Dundee

"I enjoyed reading with my boys over the summer as a family and getting us all together. I have even started reading myself again." Parent, Renfrewshire

"Well-planned approaches to reading for enjoyment are resulting in increased confidence in reading and greater motivation including more reading at home." 3-18 Literacy and English Review (Education Scotland, 2015)

School readiness and an equal start for every child

1,131 under 4s were able to take part in this year's Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland using the specially produced pre-school materials. Parents and carers who regularly share books with their young children are helping their child's speech and language development, which in turn sets their children up for the best start in their school lives⁸.

As well as ensuring school readiness, the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland is also encouraging children who are already in school to continue reading over the long summer break. UKLA research⁹ showed that taking part in the Challenge helps prevent the summer dip in literacy skills, which is particularly damaging for disadvantaged children.

The challenge also supports all four capacities within Curriculum for Excellence:

- **Successful learners** - Libraries inspire children to read for pleasure and give them the tools for independent learning and creative thinking.
- **Confident individuals** - Reading inspires children's own ambitions and helps build their emotional intelligence and communication skills.
- **Effective contributors** - Taking part in reading and library activities encourages children to interact and contribute positively and creatively.
- **Responsible citizens** - Using libraries are great ways for children to participate in community and cultural life.

"I really enjoy doing the Summer Reading Challenge with my children. My daughter reads constantly and needs a good supply of books. My younger son needs more encouragement and for him doing it as a challenge with a medal and ceremony at the end and free entrance to local activities is a real motivator. This was our third year and we will be back next year!" Parent, Stirling

"Literacy is fundamental to all areas of learning, as it unlocks access to the wider curriculum. Being literate increases opportunities for the individual in all aspects of life, lays the foundations for lifelong learning and work, and contributes strongly to the development of all four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence." Principles and Practice paper (Curriculum for Excellence, Scotland)

Getting the message about the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland into schools in the run up to the summer holidays is vital in encouraging children to participate.

⁸ *Social Inequalities in Cognitive Scores at age 16: The Role of Reading*, Alice Sullivan and Matt Brown, 2013

⁹ *Summer Reading Challenge Impact Research Report*, UKLA, 2009

In 2017, library staff visited **544** schools to promote the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland. The Reading Agency also worked with libraries to develop a downloadable schools pack for library authorities to share with their local schools. The schools pack was designed to help teachers promote the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland as a summer holiday activity to their pupils. The pack also proved to be an especially useful resource for libraries when staff capacity was reduced and when there was less time for school visits.

As well as making these resources available to libraries, they were also available for teachers to access directly – via The Reading Agency’s website and also on the TES website.

“We want to develop a strong reading culture in Scotland where reading is a valued activity from the earliest age. Sharing books in a family environment and the love of reading it creates enriches the family experience immeasurably, is likely to be passed from generation to generation and has a major beneficial impact on individual outcomes.” Literacy Action Plan (Scottish Government, 2010)

Health, well-being and confidence

The Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland brings families together through reading, as well as offering a rich variety of free creative events. These free events give children and families the opportunity to connect with others in a community setting and counteract potential social isolation. The Challenge helps children to build their confidence in social interactions and strengthen family bonds. This year, through the Challenge, libraries gave **28,873** children and their families the opportunity to attend **1,501** high-quality events. The Challenge’s combination of fun, freedom, and creativity impacts significantly on children’s reading levels, range, motivation, confidence and overall educational attainment. Talking about books and reading with children exercises their speech and language skills, helps them to understand what they’ve read and builds their confidence in presenting their likes and dislikes. Increasingly, the Challenge is being used by libraries and schools to target children most in need of support with reading.

“I really liked it because you can feel proud of yourself and others can feel proud of me too.” Child, Dundee

“I love it. We go to the library together, it’s a family thing.” Parent, Dumfries and Galloway

“Fantastic idea. Gave the kids a goal and got my older one reading much more challenging books and he really has ‘the bug’ now!” Parent, Perth and Kinross

“Free access to the life enriching creative activity of reading will contribute to health and wellbeing, improve levels of literacy, inspire reading across all interests and age groups, and draw communities together to bring reading alive.” Scottish Reading Strategy for Public Libraries

Meeting all children’s needs

The Summer Reading Challenge is inclusive of all children and families, and all stages of reading development, allowing children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) to take part.

The Challenge is all about choice and puts the child in control. There are no levels, so children can choose whatever they want to borrow from their library – joke books, graphic novels, poetry, non-fiction – and audio books count too. At the heart of the Challenge is children choosing and sharing any books – in any format – that they like.

For children who struggle with print or who are visually impaired, libraries suggest alternatives. Also, the free RNIB Library Service (which covers Braille, Giant Print and Talking Books) is often used to borrow books for the Summer Reading Challenge and throughout the year, and most libraries can help with this.

Library services are increasingly aware of the needs of children with autism and some libraries run dedicated Autism Friendly sessions.

Community Engagement through Volunteers



7,763 volunteers aged 12 to 24 across 153 UK authorities supported the Summer Reading Challenge and other activities within their libraries, with the double benefits of acting as positive role models for children and building their own confidence, love of reading, and pre-employment skills. 139 young people aged 12 to 24 took part across Scotland.

Volunteering has been shown to positively impact the health and well-being of young people by raising their self-esteem and encouraging a sense of achievement and responsibility¹⁰. Young volunteers engaged in supporting librarians to deliver the Challenge are empowered to gain new skills and contribute to their local communities.

Of the 548 Reading Hack young volunteers who completed the participation survey over the summer:

- 90% said their confidence had increased
- 89% felt their skills had increased
- 72% said they feel they want to read more as a result of taking part
- 84% said they felt more a part of their community
- 85% said they felt they helped increase children's confidence in reading.

“Volunteering has definitely benefited me. It's given me more confidence to talk to people I don't know. I wouldn't necessarily have done that before I started volunteering two years ago. I plan to carry on volunteering; it's the best thing I have ever done. I plan to use this experience on my CV to help me with my future career; I'm going to college next year and I want to work with children, so having this experience will be amazing.” Aimee, Reading Hack Volunteer

Community Engagement through Partnership Working

The Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge gives libraries the opportunity to work and partner with other organisations within their local area. Many of the collaborations we hear about involve libraries working with groups to target some of the most vulnerable children and families, and this is where the Challenge and libraries have the potential to make the biggest difference.

In 2017, Scottish library authorities said they had specifically targeted the following groups: children with English as an additional language; looked after children; home educated children; and children with learning or physical disabilities. More targeted initiatives involved making the Challenge accessible in small island communities or taking the Challenge into the areas of most deprivation within the authority. We hope to see this work continue into 2018.

Scottish launch and PR activity

There have been numerous fantastic Challenge celebrations in libraries throughout Scotland this year, with a particularly special event taking place at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, where pupils from Gilmerton Primary School were presented with their Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge Scotland

¹⁰ Department of Health (2011). 'Social action for health and well-being: building co-operative communities Department of Health strategic vision for volunteering'

certificates by best-selling children's illustrator, and the creator of this year's Animal Agents characters Tony Ross, as shown in the photo below:



This year the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge was represented at the First Minister's Reading Challenge event, where information was given out to attendees to help build a link between the two programmes and up participation. The Summer Reading Challenge follows on naturally from the inaugural First Minister's Reading Challenge which ends just before the summer holidays commence. Through these two initiatives children are encouraged to read all year long, with the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge and libraries helping to prevent the summer reading dip in the ling break from school.

To further raise awareness of the programme and gain support from MPs, the Summer Reading Challenge Scotland was also represented at Portcullis House this year, where MPs were given information on the Challenge and how they could support in their constituencies. They were also invited to choose books to present to a library or school of their choice.

Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge 2018

We are excited to announce that next year we will be working with Beano in their 80th anniversary year. This iconic publication, recently refreshed for a new generation of fans, will bring its unique brand of humour to the Challenge to help us celebrate reading, creativity, friendship and fun!

As part of the Challenge, children will explore a map of Beanotown to find the mysterious buried treasure and become ultimate mischief makers! Dennis, Gnasher and friends will help them solve clues and collect stickers, having lots of fun and adventures along the way; fittingly, the Challenge will be called *Mischief Makers*.