

Passage 8

Twist In The Tale

A. Less than three years ago, doom merchants were predicting that the growth in video games and the rise of the Internet would sound the death knell for children's literature. But contrary to popular myth, children are reading more books than ever. A recent survey by Books Marketing found that children up to the age of 11 read on average for four hours a week, particularly girls. Moreover, the children's book market, which traditionally was seen as a poor cousin to the more lucrative and successful adult market, has come into its own. 'Children's books are going through an incredibly fertile period,' says Wendy Cooling, a children's literature consultant. 'There's a real buzz around them. Book clubs are happening, sales are good, and people are much more willing to listen to children's authors.' The main growth area has been the market for eight to fourteen-year-olds, and there is little doubt that the boom has been fuelled by the bespectacled apprentice, Harry Potter. 'Harry made it OK to be seen on a bus reading a book,' says Cooling. 'People still tell me, "Children don't read nowadays",' says David Almond, the award-winning author of children's books such as Skellig. The truth is that they are skilled, creative readers. When I do classroom visits, they ask me very sophisticated questions about use of language, story structure, chapters and dialogue.'

B. 'A few years ago, publishers lost confidence and wanted to make books more like television, the medium that frightened them most,' says children's book critic Julia Eccleshare. 'But books aren't TV, and you will find that children always say that the good thing about books is that you can see them in your head. Children are demanding readers,' she says. 'If they don't get it in two pages, they'll drop it.' 'Some feted adult writers would kill for the sales,' says Almond, who sold 42,392 copies of Skellig in 1999 alone. 1. / 5. Author Jacqueline Wilson says that children spread news of her books like a bushfire. 'My average reader is a girl of ten,' she explains. 'They're sociable and acquisitive. They collect, they have parties – where books are a good present. If they like something, they have to pass it on.'

Questions 1-5

Look at the following list of people A-E and the list of statements (Questions 1-5).

Match each statement with one of the people listed.

Write the appropriate letters A-E in boxes 1-5 on your answer sheet.

1. Children take pleasure in giving books to each other.
2. Reading in public is an activity that children have not always felt comfortable about doing.
3. Some well-known writers of adult literature regret that they earn less than popular children's writers.
4. Children are quick to decide whether they like or dislike a book.
5. Children will read many books by an author that they like.

- A** Wendy Cooling
B David Almond
C Julia Eccleshare
D Jacqueline Wilson
E Anne Fine