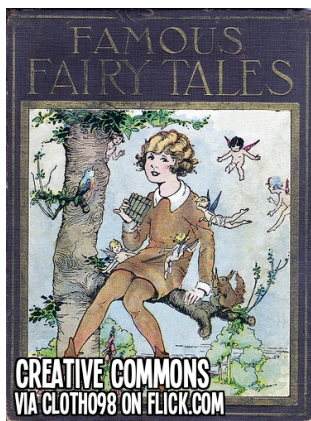


## A third of U.K. kids get no bedtime story

15<sup>th</sup> September, 2013



It seems the age-old tradition of children getting a bedtime story before sleeping is on the wane in Britain. A new study reveals that around a third of parents do not read bedtime stories to their children. The study, from British online retailer Littlewoods.com, also found that up to 50 per cent of children would prefer to watch TV or play

computer games than be read a story. Researchers further discovered that a paltry five per cent of British under-sevens do not even own a book. Parents came up with a myriad of reasons why they did not read to their little ones. Thirteen per cent of parents blamed a lack of time, nine per cent said they are just "too stressed", while others said their children were simply not interested.

Littlewoods has teamed up with British pop star Natasha Hamilton to try and reverse this trend. They have launched a bedtime story writing competition for children under seven. Ms Hamilton, 31, told reporters: "I'm really excited to see all the different story ideas and can't wait to see what the kids come up with. Choosing a winner's not going to be easy." She spoke about her own joy as a mother in reading bedtime stories, saying: "As a mum of three, I know just how enjoyable reading bedtime stories to my kids is." A spokesman from Littlewoods.com said: "We appreciate how important it is for parents and kids to spend quality time together, and bedtime stories are a great way to do just this."

Sources: *The Daily Mail / The Liverpool Echo*

### Writing

*Reading bedtime stories to children is an important duty for parents. Discuss.*

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

*tradition / bedtime stories / computer games / under-sevens / stress / lack of time / trend / competition / choosing a winner / joy from reading / parents / quality time*

### True / False

- Reading bedtime stories to kids is relatively new in Britain. T / F
- The article is based on a study from a major publisher. T / F
- Around 5% of British kids do not own a book. T / F
- Just under 10% of parents said they were too stressed to read to kids. T / F
- A pop star is helping to encourage kids' interest in bedtime stories. T / F
- There is a writing competition for children over the age of seven. T / F
- The pop star has two children. T / F
- A website said bedtime stories mean quality time for parents and kids. T / F

### Synonym Match

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. age-old      | a. collaborated     |
| 2. on the wane  | b. shows            |
| 3. reveals      | c. delight          |
| 4. paltry       | d. put it down to   |
| 5. blamed       | e. direction        |
| 6. teamed up    | f. declining        |
| 7. trend        | g. produce          |
| 8. come up with | h. well-established |
| 9. joy          | i. know             |
| 10. appreciate  | j. insignificant    |

### Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- How important are bedtime stories?
- Is it a problem if kids are not read bedtime stories?
- What can society do to encourage more reading at bedtime?
- From what age should parents start reading to their kids?
- Should kids watch TV instead of having a story read to them, if that's what they prefer?
- Is "being stressed" a good enough reason not to read a bedtime story?
- Why are children not interested in bedtime stories?

## Phrase Match

- |                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. the age-                   | a. wane            |
| 2. on the                     | b. retailer        |
| 3. online                     | c. important it is |
| 4. parents blamed a lack      | d. not interested  |
| 5. their children were simply | e. time together   |
| 6. try and reverse            | f. just this       |
| 7. see what the kids come     | g. old tradition   |
| 8. We appreciate how          | h. up with         |
| 9. spend quality              | i. of time         |
| 10. a great way to do         | j. this trend      |

## Discussion – Student B

- What are the advantages of bedtime stories?
- How much effect will the story-writing competition have?
- Should kids read books or stories on iPads?
- What are the advantages of bedtime stories?
- What do you think of cultures with no tradition of bedtime stories?
- What are the best stories for parents to read to their children?
- To what degree is a bedtime story "quality time"?
- What questions would you like to ask Ms Hamilton?

## Spelling

- age-old oinaritdt
- A new study vrelsa that around a third...
- online eitaerlr
- a lartyp five per cent
- a drayim of reasons
- simply not eetetsnrid
- vserree this trend
- ehalundc a bedtime story writing competition
- just how aeebolyjn
- A makessopn from Littlewoods.com
- We aatpeipecr how important it is
- ilqatyu time

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. f	3. b	4. j	5. d
6. a	7. e	8. g	9. c	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – Harry Potter

You think Harry Potter is best for bedtime. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their stories. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Superhero stories, biographies or fairy tales.

### Role B – Superhero stories

You think Superhero stories are best for bedtime. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their stories. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Harry Potter, biographies or fairy tales.

### Role C – Biographies

You think biographies are best for bedtime. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their stories. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Superhero stories, Harry Potter or fairy tales.

### Role D – Fairy tales

You think fairy tales are best for bedtime. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their stories. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Superhero stories, biographies or Harry Potter.

## Speaking

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best for 7-year-olds at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| • Fairy tales     | • Fables            |
| • Harry Potter    | • About modern life |
| • A holy book     | • Biographies       |
| • Science fiction | • Superhero stories |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	T	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.