Quick Reads
The Vital Link Guide

The 10 Keys to Success
John Bird
Introduction

The launch of a fourth set of Quick Reads titles on World Book Day in March 2008 provides another great opportunity to introduce less confident adult readers to the world of books. This is particularly important during the 2008 National Year of Reading which has adult literacy learners as a priority audience.

The response to the books published since the launch of the Quick Reads initiative in March 2006 has been enormously positive. Thousands of people have discovered an enjoyment of reading for the first time. Tutors and other professionals have recorded an increase in learners’ confidence, motivation and acquisition of literacy skills.

The Vital Link encourages practitioners to integrate reading for pleasure into their work with adult literacy learners through partnership with the public library service. Support from the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills has enabled us to provide tools to link the Quick Reads into regular teaching practice and into more informal contact with adults who are improving their literacy skills.

As part of this work, The Vital Link has created resources to support use of the Quick Reads. These provide a ‘way in’ to using the books in a range of settings through ideas for discussion and extension activities. We have included suggestions for other reading materials, printed and online, and curriculum references for the main learning points.

The resources for the Quick Reads published in 2008 are available to download as individual PDF or Word files from www.vitallink.org.uk.

Similar materials for Quick Reads titles published in 2006 and 2007 are also available from www.vitallink.org.uk. Starting with Quick Reads, a 24-page guide supporting the Quick Reads titles published in 2007, is also available as a hard copy free from DIUS. Call 0845 6022260 [ref code SFLQR].

An innovative set of web-based activities for readers linked to the Quick Reads titles published in 2007 can be found at www.quickreadsideas.org.uk. A CD containing resources from 2006 and 2007 (excluding the web quests) for those without internet access is also available from DIUS. Call 0845 6022260 [ref code SFLORCD].

Our thanks go to writers Roger Adams and Gill Moore. The Vital Link is run by The Reading Agency in partnership with the National Literacy Trust.

We welcome all feedback on these ideas and on how you are using the Quick Reads. Please contact genevieve.clarke@readingagency.org.uk
The Book

The 10 Keys to Success provides clear and sensible guidance that can be followed by anybody who wants to achieve personal goals, however small and whatever their starting point. He is scornful of books which claim that you can do anything just by positive thinking and emphasises the need for self-reliance and a realistic understanding of what is possible. Each ‘key’ is illustrated with numerous short examples, usually taken from his own experience, and the most important points are helpfully summarised at the end of each chapter.

The Author

John Bird had a troubled early life, which included a number of spells in jail. At the age of 45 he created The Big Issue, which he says is now ‘probably the biggest social business in the world’. It is best known for its magazine, sold by homeless vendors on the streets.
Book Talk

How can readers best make practical use of the advice contained in the book? Do they have to start at the beginning and use the ‘keys’ in this order or do the headings and bullet points enable them to ‘dip in’ and just take what they want from it?

The title is an example of the way John Bird uses everyday metaphors to make his points easy to understand. What other examples can readers find? (eg p2, ‘the engine won’t go if you don’t put the right fuel into it’; p50, breaking a door with a sledgehammer)?

John Bird tells several stories taken from his own life or observations (eg p10, moorhens on the pond near his house; p23, one of his first employees; p58, Edison and the light bulb). How does he use them to get over the points he wants to make?

What examples can readers provide from their own experience or knowledge that could be used to illustrate the effectiveness of some of John Bird’s precepts?

There are places in the book where John Bird gives his view about aspects of life in modern Britain that he thinks are wrong (eg p42, the Health Service; p46, the need to have everything instantly; p53, intolerance of failure). What examples can readers find and how far do they agree with the views expressed? There would be an opportunity here for a more formal debate on one of these topics.

Individually, readers could decide which ‘key[s]’ they consider to be most important. In small groups, they could then compare results and attempt, through discussion and persuasion, to compile a shorter list in priority order.

With a mixed group, the search for examples could be limited to particular sections of the book for some readers. The bullet points at the end of each chapter provide an accessible focus for consideration of the book as a whole.
Taking it Further

The book’s title indicates that John Bird considers these to be the keys to success. Do readers agree with this? John Bird’s advice could be compared with that contained in self-help books or websites, for example the following site that gives 10 steps to achieving success: www.icbs.com/Kb/inspiration/kb_the-top-10-secrets-toachieving-any-goals.htm Compare also the advice contained in his previous Quick Reads title *How to Change your Life in 7 Steps*. Readers could discuss John Bird’s precepts for success and add their own. They could then, as a group activity, compile a collection of short anecdotes to illustrate them.

Readers could consider whether any of John Bird’s keys to success are illustrated in other Quick Reads titles. For example, in *The Hardest Test* Scott Quinnell writes about setting himself a goal and overcoming obstacles and Colin Jackson refers to key qualities for becoming a winner in *Life’s New Hurdles*. The stories contained in *RaW Voices* should also provide fertile material for discussion.

John Bird gives Jane Tomlinson as an example of someone who ‘found a direction in life because her own life changed radically’. She succeeded by doing something ‘for the right reasons’ (p28). Readers can find out more information about her activities at: www.bbc.co.uk/leeds/features/jane_tomlinson/jane.shtml

Other examples of successful people mentioned by John Bird are Anita Roddick, J. K. Rowling and Thomas Edison. Short essays about all of these can be found on: www.myhero.com/myhero/home.asp, which also contains short essays on a wide range of other ‘heroes’. These could provide a model for readers’ own writing (eg about Jane Tomlinson).
The curriculum references below are for Entry 3 or Level 1, but the suggested activities are quite open-ended to allow for the range of abilities found in many settings. Supported reading and discussion should enable readers with lower levels of literacy to be included.

**Learning Objectives**

- Understand an explanatory text  
  Rt/E3.1; Rt/L1.1
- Recognise how language and other textual features are used  
  Rt/L1.3
- Use organisational features to locate information  
  Rt/E3.5; Rt/L1.4
- Follow and contribute to discussion  
  Sld/E3.1,2; Sld/L1.1.
- Write a short anecdote, using paragraphs  
  Wt/E3.2,3; Wt/L1.2,3
What Shall We Read Next?

Readers can find out more about John Bird and The Big Issue, some of the other people he mentions in the book and case studies of vendors, by visiting http://www.bigissue.com/magazinesite/index.html

Other Quick Reads with a similar theme
*How to Change Your Life in 7 Steps* by John Bird
*Screw It, Let’s Do It* by Richard Branson
*The Hardest Test*, by Scott Quinnell
*RaW Voices: True Stories of Hardship and Hope* edited by Vanessa Feltz
*Life’s New Hurdles* by Colin Jackson

See the following pages for additional sources of support for working with emergent readers and a complete list of Quick Reads titles.
Further Information

See www.quickreads.org.uk for more about Quick Reads 2008 and the supporting campaign run by NIACE.

You can find a wider range of books suitable for Entry3/Level 1 readers at www.firstchoicebooks.org.uk

Copies of the Quick Reads titles first published, re-issued or reprinted in 2008 can be purchased at all main bookshops and supermarket chains. Bulk quantities can be ordered from the following suppliers:

- Avanti – orders@avantibooks.com 01438 747000 www.avantibooks.com
- Bertrams/THE – books@bertrams.com 0871 303 6600 www.bertramsthe.com
- Browns Books for Students – schools.services@brownsbfs.co.uk 01482 384660 www.bfs.co.uk
- Gardners – custcare@gardners.com 01323 521777 www.gardners.com

Audio versions of the Quick Reads are available from W F Howes Ltd as part of their Clipper Emergent Reader programme – sales@wfhowes.co.uk 01664 423000 www.wfhowes.co.uk/cerp/

Large print versions of several of the Quick Reads titles are available from BBC Audiobooks Ltd – library.sales@bbc.com 01225 335336 www.bbcaudiobooks.com/libraries

Audio extracts from the Quick Reads can be found on the BBC RaW website at www.bbc.co.uk/raw along with a range of resources to support the BBC RaW campaign.

The Quick Reads project in Wales is a joint venture between the Welsh Arts Council and The Basic Skills Agency. Further details can be found at www.quickreads.net

Publishers producing titles specifically for emergent readers include:

- New Island Open Door series www.newisland.ie
- Sandstone Press Vista series and accompanying education packs www.sandstonepress.com
- Barrington Stoke www.barringtonstoke.co.uk (teenagers and young adults)
- Ransom Publishing www.ransom.co.uk (teenagers and young adults)

Gatehouse Media Limited publishes and distributes books and resources for use in adult basic education, including Gatehouse Books written by and for adult beginner readers www.gatehousebooks.org.uk

New Leaf Publishing publishes titles by and for adults who are new to reading and have low levels of literacy www.newleafpublishing.org.uk
## Full List of Quick Reads Titles, Including Availability

### New titles published March 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor Who: Revenge of the Judoon</td>
<td>Terrance Dicks</td>
<td>978 1 846 07372 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>East End Tales</td>
<td>Gilda O’Neill</td>
<td>978 0 141 03494 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Girl on the Platform</td>
<td>Josephine Cox</td>
<td>978 0 00 727008 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Happy Families</td>
<td>Adele Parks</td>
<td>978 0 141 03491 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Hardest Test</td>
<td>Scott Quinnell</td>
<td>978 1 90612596 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humble Pie</td>
<td>Gordon Ramsay</td>
<td>978 0 0727096 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life’s New Hurdles</td>
<td>Colin Jackson</td>
<td>978 1 90612593 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Good Turn</td>
<td>Chris Ryan</td>
<td>978 0 099 52234 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw Voices: True Stories of Hardship and Hope</td>
<td>Vanessa Feltz [ed]</td>
<td>978 1 846 07446 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The 10 Keys to Success</td>
<td>John Bird</td>
<td>978 0 091 92360 0</td>
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### Quick Reads backlist

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aim High</td>
<td>Tanni Grey Thompson</td>
<td>1905170890</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bring it Back Home</td>
<td>Niall Griffiths</td>
<td>1905170912</td>
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<td>978 1 905 17091 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chickenfeed</td>
<td>Minette Walters</td>
<td>978 0 330 44031 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleanskin</td>
<td>Val McDermid</td>
<td>978 0 007 21672 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danny Wallace and the Centre of the Universe</td>
<td>Danny Wallace</td>
<td>978 0 091 90894 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Day To Remember</td>
<td>Fiona Phillips</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>978 1 905 17090 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor Who: I Am a Dalek</td>
<td>Gareth Roberts</td>
<td>978 0 563 486480</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctor Who: Made of Steel</td>
<td>Terrance Dicks</td>
<td>978 1 846 07204 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t Make Me Laugh</td>
<td>Patrick Augustus</td>
<td>978 1 902 934464</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Dream Come True</td>
<td>Maureen Lee</td>
<td>978 0 7528 8239 0</td>
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<td>The Grey Man</td>
<td>Andy McNab</td>
<td>978 0 552 15433 8</td>
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<td>Hell Island</td>
<td>Matthew Reilly</td>
<td>978 0 330 442329</td>
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<tr>
<td>How to Change Your Life in 7 Steps</td>
<td>Adele Geras</td>
<td>978 0 752 88224 6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mike Phillips</td>
<td>978 0 007 216710</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading My Arse!</td>
<td>Ricky Tomlinson</td>
<td>978 0 7515 3953 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Rubber Woman</td>
<td>Lindsay Ashford</td>
<td>1905170882</td>
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<td>978 1 905 17088 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Star Sullivan</td>
<td>Maeve Binchy</td>
<td>978 0 75287 954 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Sun Book of Short Stories</td>
<td>Kerry Katona</td>
<td>978 0 091 91754 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survive the Worst and Aim for the Best</td>
<td>John Simpson</td>
<td>978 0 330 44999 1</td>
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**Other Titles (only available in libraries)**

*Blackwater*  
Conn Iggulden  
978 0 007 22166 0

*The Book Boy*  
Joanna Trollope  
978 0 747 58211 3

*Burning Ambition*  
Allen Carr  
978 0 141 03030 2

*The Corpse’s Tale*  
Katherine John  
1905170319

*Desert Claw*  
Damien Lewis  
0099493535

*The Dying Wish*  
Courtia Newland  
0349119635

*I Love Football*  
Hunter Davies  
0755314700

*The Poison in the Blood*  
Tom Holland  
0349119643

*Screw it, Let’s Do It*  
Richard Branson  
0753510995

*Secrets*  
Lynne Barrett-Lee  
1905170300

*Someone Like Me*  
Tom Holt  
1841494461

*The Team*  
Mick Dennis with the Premier League  
0552153729

*The Thief*  
Ruth Rendell  
0091796865

*Winner Takes All*  
John Francome  
0755329481

*Woman Walks into a Bar*  
Rowan Coleman  
0099492288