

The Guinness World Records



Your students can do a lot in English both in and out of the classroom, at all levels. This month's 'Did you know?' looks at the fascinating world of the 'Guinness World Records' and the Can dos that people from all over the world have achieved. Read more to find out: Does the 'Guinness World Records' book have anything to do with Guinness beer? How did the idea start? Who holds the most records?

How did it all start?

On 4th May 1951, the managing director of Guinness Brewery in Dublin, Sir Hugh Beaver, was hunting in County Wexford in Ireland, when he got into a discussion about which was the faster game bird – the golden plover or the grouse. The hunters could not come to an agreement and so Sir Hugh decided to try and find out from a reference book. When he couldn't find any information anywhere, he decided that a little book with information on the fastest, biggest and smallest facts would be a good marketing giveaway for his brewery. In 1954, 1000 copies were printed and handed out free. The following year, a bound copy went on sale and was an immediate bestseller. After that, a revision was carried out every year and the book hit the shelves in time for the Christmas rush. It has been a bestseller ever since.

Today the Jim Pattison Group owns the rights to the *Guinness World Records*. It is published in over 100 countries and 25 languages. It was known as the *Guinness Book of World Records* until 2000.

Read more about the **history of Guinness World Records** by clicking on:

http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinness_World_Records

Some interesting records

- Largest Irish dance. As you might expect, this record took place in a place called Dublin, but Dublin, Ohio, USA! 10,036 participants danced away to jigs and reels at the Dublin Irish Festival on 4th August 2007.

- Largest gathering of Santa Claus. On September 9th 2007, 12,965 people dressed up as Santa or his helpers to raise £ 100,000 for charity in Derry City, Northern Ireland.
- Most people belly dancing simultaneously. This record was also set for charity, but not, as you might suppose, in an Arabian country where belly dancing is quite common. 535 people danced in Malvern, UK on 8th November 2008 for the national Children in Need charity weekend.

Look for **more fascinating records** by clicking on

<http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/>

and having a special look at the rubric *Find a record*.

Some records to do with language and learning

- The book with the longest title is an Italian book with 290 words, published in 2007.
- Michele Santelia, also an Italian, has the unusual talent of being able to type backwards. He has so far had 68 of his backwards-typed books published.
- A marathon lecture on personality development concepts lasted 120 hours between 24th and 29th March 2007 at the FAPCCI Hall, Hyderabad, India. That's a new take on intensive courses!
- The longest reading aloud marathon. The current holders are a group of six Uruguayans, who took it in turns to read out loud for a total of 224 hours between 13th and 22nd September 2007

Try our quiz

To find out more about the world of *Guinness World Records* try our quiz by clicking on:

<http://xportal.klett-sprachen.de/club/0006>

If you enjoyed our quiz, you can look at **some more** by clicking on:

http://www.funtrivia.com/quizzes/general/world_records.html

Why not try some class records with your students?

How about setting some records in class and making your own class *Guinness Book of Records*? Split your class into groups of four or five and try some of these ideas for competitive activities:

- Which group can collect the most words referring to a special topic (e.g. Christmas, holidays, the United States of America, football, the British Royal Family)?
- Which group can write the longest poem with the most rhyming words?
- Which group can build the longest word chain, where a word starts with the last letter of the previous word (e.g. red – doctor – really – yellow)?

Find out **more about possible records for the *Guinness World Records*** by clicking on:

http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/member/is_it_a_record.aspx