



This is not a word for word transcript.

- Chris:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English, I'm Chris and with me today is Jen.
- Jen:** Hi there.
- Chris:** Now Jen, are you reading any books at the moment?
- Jen:** Yes, I'm currently reading a book called *Room* by Emma Donoghue. It's about a woman who has been kidnapped and is being held hostage in a tiny room and she's there for years. It's quite a **riveting** read.
- Chris:** Yes, I love reading a good book. I often like to read a book on the way to work in the mornings. You might even say that I'm a bit of a **bookworm**. So today's topic is all about books, and in particular, one of the world's most **prestigious** literature and arts awards, the Pulitzer Prizes. Have you heard of them?
- Jen:** Yes, the American awards - perhaps its most famous award is for **fiction**. I'm quite an **avid reader** of fiction myself – to do something **avidly** is to do it enthusiastically.
- Chris:** Well, to start off, how about a quick question for you and our avid listeners? How many judges are there for the Pulitzer Prizes? Is it:
- (a) 9
 - (b) 22 or
 - (c) 102
- Jen:** Hmm, I'll go for B, 22.
- Chris:** I'll reveal the answer at the end of today's programme. Now, you said you were an avid reader of fiction. Have you read any Pulitzer Prize-winning books?
- Jen:** Yes, I was curious to read 'The Road' by Cormac McCarthy after it won the Pulitzer Prize a few years ago. It's a really frightening and intense book about the end of the world, but I am glad I read it.
- Chris:** The fact that it won a prize was a **good recommendation** for you to read the book then?

- Jen:** Yes, it definitely helped. If a book is prize, or award-winning, then it's usually worth a read.
- Chris:** That was a few years ago, but do you know who won this year's Pulitzer Prize for fiction?
- Jen:** I'm afraid I have no idea. Was it Barbara Cartland?
- Chris:** Sadly no. In fact nobody won this year's prize for fiction. The judges from Columbia University in New York thought that none of the **shortlisted** books were **worthy** of the prize.
- Jen:** So they didn't give it to anyone?
- Chris:** That's right. Let's take a listen to a clip from BBC correspondent Vincent Dowd's report. See if you can hear the phrase the reporter uses to describe how the authors might feel about not winning.

BBC correspondent Vincent Dowd:

This year, the judges at Colombia University New York have decided no book is worthy of the prize. This last happened in 1977, but there's been a big change since then. Since 1980 the Pulitzers have revealed their short lists, so we now know the judges didn't ultimately think much of Train Dreams, by Dennis Johnson, Swamplandia by Karen Russell, or The Pale King by David Foster-Wallis. Mr Wallis is no longer alive, but it's a bit embarrassing for Johnson and Russell. The judges haven't explained why they didn't make the award, which would have meant a cheque for \$10,000, and a lot of sales.

- Jen:** He said it was a bit embarrassing for them, which means they might've felt annoyed or uncomfortable that their book wasn't worthy of winning the prize.
- Chris:** But I think making the shortlist of the Pulitzer Prize is still a great acknowledgement of their abilities as authors.
- Jen:** The report also highlighted that the winner would have received a cheque for 10,000 dollars.
- Chris:** And a lot of book sales too. As we mentioned, winning the prize can really help to recommend a book to new readers.
- Jen:** Who did win an award this year?
- Chris:** I'm glad you asked, as I've got another clip from Vincent Dowd's BBC report. What does the report say about the two winners that it mentions?

BBC correspondent Vincent Dowd:

A sign of the times is that two online news organisations took journalism awards, each for the first time – Politico and the Huffington Post. The citation for the Huffington Post reveals journalism, which would once have been in a major newspaper, for a 'riveting exploration for the physical and emotional challenges facing American soldiers severely wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan during a decade of war.'

- Jen:** So it's the first time these news organisations have won Pulitzer Prizes for journalism?
- Chris:** Yes, and they are online news organisation.
- Jen:** So it's a **sign of the times** that more and more people are using the internet to read and create news journalism.
- Chris:** Absolutely. I read most of the news online these days. Sometimes even on my phone. For example, BBC News is incredibly useful when you want to stay up-to-date.
- Jen:** The Huffington Post is also interesting as their website includes many bloggers who contribute their own opinions alongside the professionally-written stories.
- Chris:** And they've now won a Pulitzer Prize for some of their work. The report mentioned that this was for journalism usually seen in major newspapers.
- Jen:** The fact that the award praises web journalism reflects the interesting development in our reading habits, from paper to online.
- Chris:** It's a really interesting development. OK, Jen, at the start of the programme I asked you a question about the Pulitzer Prize. How many judges are there for the Pulitzer prizes? The choices were:
- (a) 9
 - (b) 22
 - (c) 102
- Jen:** And I said B, 22, quite a few of them.
- Chris:** And I'm afraid you're wrong. The answer is C, 102. The Pulitzer Prizes comprise twenty-one different categories including journalism, music and poetry, as well as the fiction award.
- Jen:** I see.
- Chris:** OK, we've come to the end of today's programme, Jen. Would you mind reminding us of some of the words we heard today?
- Jen:** Of course, they are:
riveting
a bookworm
prestigious
fiction
an avid reader
a good recommendation
award-winning
shortlisted
worthy
a sign of the times

Chris: That's all we have time for today but do join us again for more 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. Bye for now!

Jen: Bye!

Vocabulary and definitions

riveting	gripping, captivating
a bookworm	someone who is devoted to reading books
prestigious	celebrated
fiction	made-up stories
an avid reader	a person who reads books enthusiastically
a good recommendation	an endorsement, good advice
award-winning	receiving a prize
shortlisted	selected for competition
worthy	acceptable, appropriate
a sign of the times	an indication of the period

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