

# The Potter phenomenon

The sixth title in the Harry Potter series has broken sales records around the world.

1 Have you read / will you read any of the books in the Harry Potter series? Compare your answer with a partner.

2 Complete the table with the following figures: 400,000 / 2 million / 6.9 million / 10.8 million. Check your answers in paragraph one of the article.

'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince': sales figures (July 2005)	
First print run	
UK sales (first 24 hours: <i>Bloomsbury</i> )	
US sales (first 24 hours: <i>Scholastic</i> )	
UK Internet advance orders ( <i>Amazon</i> )	

## Wizard marketing

Eleven copies per second – that's the rate with which UK store *WH Smith* were selling copies of the sixth edition of the Harry Potter series after its launch at midnight on Saturday 16 July. In Britain, *Bloomsbury* announced that over 2 million copies had been sold within the first 24 hours, while US based *Scholastic* announced a figure of 6.9 million sold over the same span. The initial printing of 10.8 million copies is the largest in publishing history. Online retailer *Amazon* received more than 400,000 advance orders in the UK alone. In the face of online competition, supermarkets and book shops were involved in a price war, with one shop offering a discount of a third on the recommended retail price.

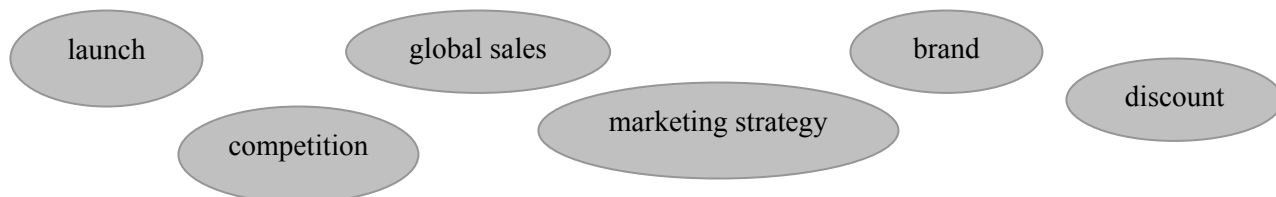
The book was released simultaneously around the globe, going on sale in 15 countries – including Brazil and the Philippines. The excitement of a midnight launch is part of the marketing strategy, with many bookshops holding late

night parties. The author JK Rowling was at Edinburgh Castle where she read to young Potter fans. The plot is kept secret – the opposite strategy of marketing a film with trailers and advance reviews. Seeing a further marketing opportunity, publishers issued two hardback versions of the book, one for adults and another for children.

Global sales of the first five books in the seven-part series have now exceeded 270 million. The Potter books are sold in around 200 countries and have been translated into 62 languages. Many people credit Rowling with awakening an interest in reading in a new generation. However, some think that in a few years time, there will be no more 'brand' and that after the last book in the series, interest in Potter-themed products will disappear. Whatever happens, its author currently owns a fortune estimated at around \$1 billion, and is said to be the wealthiest woman in Britain.

3 Read the whole article. What are your own views on the marketing methods used in the Potter phenomenon? Do you think it will last?

4 Use the following words and expressions from the article to create sentences about your own product(s).



5 You work for a marketing consultancy. Your client has asked you to think of ways to launch a new product (e.g. book / film / music album). You have a budget of \$1 million! Brainstorm your ideas and report back to the class.