

*Susan Boyle: an unlikely superstar?*

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Less than a few weeks ago Susan Boyle was **a virtual unknown**. However, since auditioning for Britain's Got Talent, a televised talent competition, she has **experienced a stratospheric rise to fame**. A YouTube video of her audition has been watched by more than 26 million people, making it one of the most watched videos on the internet in recent times. It is **undeniable** that technology such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter has helped **to spread the word about** Susan's performance.

So just what is it about Susan that the people find so fascinating? Arguably, it is the fact she is such **a class act**. However, many have suggested that her biggest appeal lies in her **unassuming persona**.

Susan's persona and appearance have been somewhat controversial and the initial reaction to her audition has made many people question whether they **are guilty of judging a book by its cover**. With her **plain Jane**, middle-aged looks and her **no-nonsense approach to life**, Susan is perhaps the most unlikely star to be discovered of late.

Commenting on her rise to fame, Max Clifford, a renowned **PR guru**, said that the massive public interest in her is partly due to people having to challenge their own assumptions and **prejudices**.

So what's next for Susan? For the moment, she is preparing for her next appearance on Britain's Got Talent and she is the **odds-on favourite** to win.

Looking forward, with talk of record contracts and celebrity duets, it is very likely that we'll soon be seeing a Susan Boyle album in the charts!

## Glossary

<b>a virtual unknown</b> – not at all famous	<b>experienced a stratospheric rise to fame</b> – became widely known very quickly
<b>undeniable</b> – true	<b>to spread the word about</b> – to make many people aware of/know about
<b>a class act</b> – here, a performer who has a very good singing voice and a tasteful manner	<b>unassuming persona</b> – a quiet character, or person who shows no desire for attention or admiration
<b>are guilty of judging a book by its cover</b> – make assumption, or form opinions based only on how someone or something looks	<b>plain Jane</b> – ordinary, average, not very attractive or interesting female (a set informal saying)
<b>no-nonsense approach to</b> – being realistic, practical and/or serious about	<b>PR guru</b> – somebody who is respected for their knowledge of a particular subject (here, public relations, or PR) and often asked for advice
<b>prejudices</b> – showing dislike for something or someone for no good reason	<b>odds-on favourite</b> – here, most likely

### Read and listen to the story online:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/newsaboutbritain/2009/05/090519\\_nab\\_susan\\_boyle.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/newsaboutbritain/2009/05/090519_nab_susan_boyle.shtml)

## 1. Reading Quiz

Are these sentences true or false? Or is the answer not given in the text? Circle the correct answer.

1. Susan Boyle is a long-established British superstar. **True / False / Not given**
2. Susan Boyle is a contestant on a TV talent show. **True / False / Not given**
3. A video of Susan Boyle has been watched by millions of people on the internet. **True / False / Not given**
4. Susan Boyle is a glamorous young woman. **True / False / Not given**
5. Susan Boyle is a favourite to win the TV show Britain's Got Talent. **True / False / Not given**

## 2. Expressions

a) Look at the expressions below. Try to match the idiom to its definition.

(i)        judging a book by its cover	(a)    being exceptional at what you do
(ii)       as pleased as Punch	(b)    not being very attractive
(iii)      a plain Jane	(c)    being very happy
(iv)      a class act	(d)    making assumptions based on how something or someone looks

b) Now complete the sentences below by using one of the expressions above:

1. Susan is very proud of her success on the show; in fact she is \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. Susan is a truly talented singer; in fact she is \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Susan has been described as \_\_\_\_\_ . However, this is one of her most appealing qualities.
4. During Susan's audition, people had to admit they were somewhat guilty of \_\_\_\_\_ .

### 3. Wordsearch

Try to find the words associated with today's article in the puzzle below.

There are ten words to find. Words can be written horizontally (g), vertically (i) or diagonally (m)

a	p	p	l	a	u	s	e	a	c	s	f
u	u	s	a	y	t	f	e	t	l	f	f
d	a	d	f	f	d	u	e	t	a	w	s
i	e	n	i	v	a	f	f	e	s	q	i
t	e	r	t	e	y	r	z	x	s	z	n
i	c	c	c	c	n	c	c	d	a	r	g
o	e	e	e	c	e	c	c	r	c	d	e
n	z	r	e	t	a	l	e	n	t	z	r
z	z	e	c	e	l	e	b	r	i	t	y
e	e	f	a	m	e	e	z	x	e	e	z
v	z	r	x	h	k	t	x	t	j	t	e
p	e	r	f	o	r	m	a	n	c	e	r

applause	audience	audition	talent	celebrity
performance	fame	class act	duet	singer

# Answers

## 1. Reading Quiz

- Susan Boyle is a long-established British superstar. **False**
- Susan Boyle is a contestant on a TV talent show. **True**
- A video of Susan Boyle has been watched by millions of people on the internet. **True**
- Susan Boyle is a glamorous young woman. **False**
- Susan Boyle is a favourite to win the TV show Britain's Got Talent. **True**

## 2. Expressions

- a)
- judging a book by its cover  
*(d) making assumptions based on how something or someone looks*
  - as pleased as Punch  
*(c) being very happy*
  - a plain Jane  
*(b) not being very attractive*
  - a class act  
*(a) being exceptional at what you do*
- b)
- Susan is very proud of her success on the show; in fact she is as pleased as Punch.
  - Susan is a truly talented singer; in fact she is a class act.
  - Susan has been described as a plain Jane. However, this is one of her most appealing qualities.
  - During Susan's audition, people had to admit they were somewhat guilty of judging a book by its cover.

## 3. Wordsearch

a	p	p	l	a	u	s	e		c		
u	u								l		
d		d			d	u	e	t	a		s
i			i						s		i
t				e					s		n
i					n				a		g
o						c			c		e
n				t	a	l	e	n	t		r
			c	e	l	e	b	r	i	t	y
		f	a	m	e						
p	e	r	f	o	r	m	a	n	c	e	