

People with "Spirit of Innovation": Pippi Longstocking

Background information on the Swedish fictional character who has encouraged millions of children to be creative and innovative

Pippi Longstocking is the strongest, kindest, and most fun girl in the whole world. Swedish author Astrid Lindgren's fictional character is a true girl rebel, and since 1945 she has helped to liberate children all over the globe, encouraging them to be strong, have fun and to believe in themselves.

Pippi claims her full name is Pippilotta Delicatessa Comestibles Windowshade Curlymint Mackrelmint Ephraim's Daughter Longstocking. She has freckles, fiery red hair in braids sticking out sideways from her head and she wears shoes that are too big. Pippi lives in a house called "Villa Villekulla" with her monkey, Mr. Nilsson, and her horse, Little Old Man. Her best friends are the two children living next-door: Tommy and Annika and together the three of them enjoy many adventures.

In Pippi Longstocking's world, children should make the decisions – not the adults. Pippi herself doesn't have to bother about adult rules, as her mother is in heaven and her father, the sea captain, is away at sea. And Pippi manages the situation well, as she doesn't have to go to school, she has unlimited amounts of fizzy drink in a special tree in her garden and she owns a sackful of gold pieces. She is both cheeky and kind and she is always standing up for the weak and oppressed. She can carry a horse one-handed without difficulty and outlift the strongest man in the world, Mighty Adolph. She frequently mocks and dupes mean children and the pompous and condescending adults she encounters, an attitude that has been to much appeal to the young readers.

Pippi was originally named by Astrid Lindgren's then nine-year-old daughter, Karin, who requested a get-well story from her mother one day when she was home sick from school. Today the books about Pippi have encouraged many generations of children all over the world to be independent and creative. The books have been translated into more than 50 languages and sold in over 40 million copies all over the world.

Facts about the author: Astrid Lindgren

Astrid Lindgren (1907-2002) is not only Sweden's best-known author and screenwriter, she is also a cherished national icon, known for her conscience and integrity. Her 91 books with characters such as Pippi Longstocking and Karlsson-on-the-Roof, to name but two, have been translated into 89 languages and are published by more than 100 different publishing houses. She has sold roughly 145 million copies worldwide.