

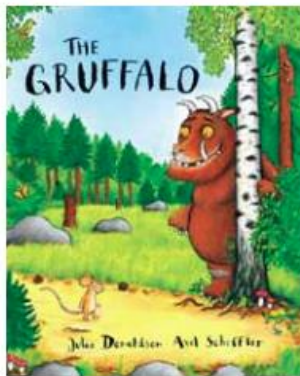
Disley Primary School Reading Spine

We are using Pie Corbett's Reading Spine as a base for our reading spine. We also use some other texts suggested from Fred's Teaching for a more diverse approach to reading. Many of these books will include a broader range of races, cultures, disabilities, etc.

Reception

It is important in Reception to assess children's prior knowledge of stories, vocabulary and nursery rhymes in order to plan for their next steps in terms of reading. If children are particularly behind in this area, refer to the Nursery section and focus on some of these stories for Autumn Term (see separate document for these).

The books for the 4–5 age group build on the Nursery selection. They still mainly use patterned language, but begin to have a stronger emotional connection with the reader. There is also plenty to discuss and to wonder about. Many of them lend themselves to retelling and creating new versions or further adventures featuring the same characters.



The Gruffalo

Julia Donaldson (Macmillan)

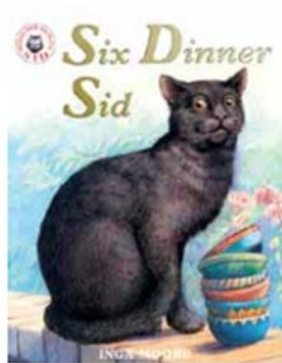
Everyone loves this book! Read and re-read it until the story is in the children's heart forever. Ask: *Why do the animals ask the mouse to come to their houses? Why does the mouse tell the animals about the Gruffalo? How is mouse really clever? Why is the Gruffalo 'bursting with laughter'?* Map the story to see the pattern and retell with plenty of actions. Use puppets/finger puppets to retell the tale. Make a Gruffalo den/corner. Paint an enormous Gruffalo picture.



Handa's Surprise **READ & RESPOND**

Eileen Browne (Walker Books)

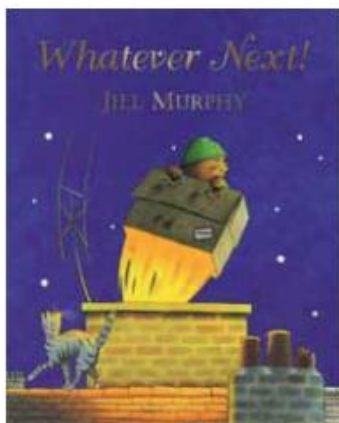
This is another picture book, like *Rosie's Walk*, in which the pictures say more than the words. Make the effort to buy the fruit to show the children. Draw or paint the animals and fruit. Retell the story and act it out, using a wallpaper map. Change the animals and fruit to invent a new version. Discuss what we know about Kenya from the story. (See the *Read & Respond* titles for further ideas.)



Six Dinner Sid

Inga Moore (Hodder)

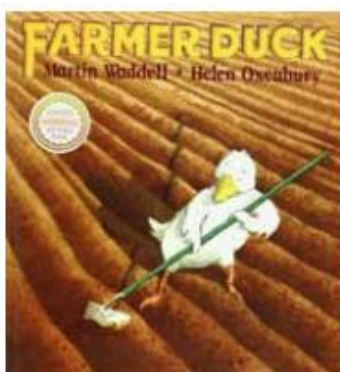
It would be worth talking about pets and the vet before starting the story. Then read and enjoy the beautiful art work. Make the houses out of cardboard boxes and play at the story. Ask: *Why would the cat want six dinners? Why don't the neighbours talk to each other?* Discuss the six different characters and then invent new ones, using alliteration, such as: *As Clive he was curious...* Hold pretend phone calls between the vet and the owners about their cat, and then make up what the owners would say to each other about Sid! Ask: *How are the people in Pythagoras Street different and why was this better?*



Whatever Next! READ & RESPOND

Jill Murphy (Macmillan)

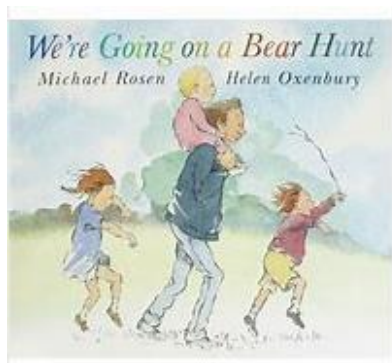
Show the inside title page. Ask: *What sort of character will the bear be?* The story is an obvious invitation to wonder 'how could we make a rocket, where would we travel and who would we meet?' Such play could lead to new versions of the story ('You and your stories. Whatever next?'). Ask: *Did Baby Bear really travel to the moon? Where did the story take place?* (See the Read & Respond title for further ideas.)



Farmer Duck

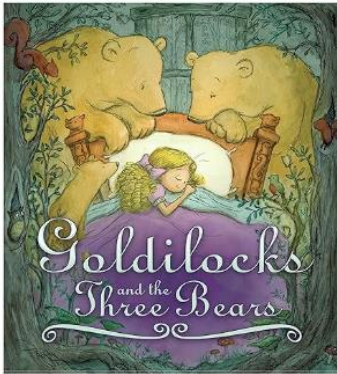
Martin Waddell (Walker Books)

This is basically Animal Farm for five-year-olds. Compare the inside cover spread at the front with the back – and the cover – what do they think is going to happen? Then look at the inner title page for more clues. Act out the animals meeting. Tell the story of what the farmer did next. Ask: *What did the animals say? Did they all set to work?* Set up a farm area for play. Write messages to the farmer!

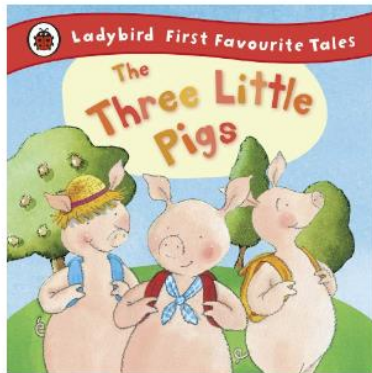


Follow a father and his family as they go out in search of a bear. They wade through the grass, splash through the river, squelch through the mud and even negotiate a snowstorm on their way. But what will await them in the cave on the other side of the dark forest?

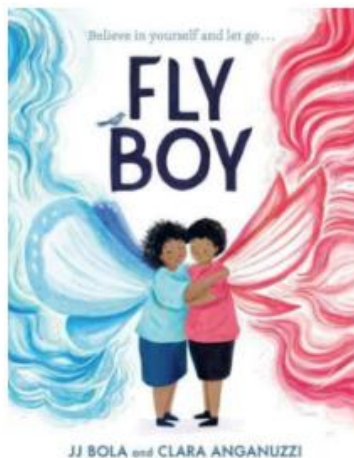
Michael Rosen's repetitive text has a musical charm that lends itself perfectly to reading aloud, whether to a group or to an individual - and children will enjoy joining in with actions and words. Combined with Helen Oxenbury's beautiful illustrations, it makes for a wonderfully entertaining picture book that has become a firm favourite for families.



The Story of the Three Bears (often known today as "Goldilocks and the Three Bears") is a children's story first recorded in narrative form by English author and poet Robert Southey and first published in a volume of his writings in 1837. The same year, writer George Nicol published a version in rhyme based upon Southey's prose tale, with Southey approving the attempt to bring the story more exposure. The story makes extensive use of the literary rule of three, featuring three chairs, three bowls of porridge, three beds, and the three title characters who live in the house. There are also three sequences of the bears discovering in turn that someone has been eating from their porridge, sitting in their chairs, and finally, lying in their beds, at which point is the climax of Goldilocks being discovered. This follows three earlier sequences of Goldilocks trying the bowls of porridge, chairs, and beds successively, each time finding the third "just right".



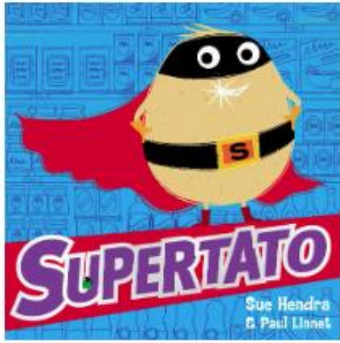
A classic tale that teaches important lessons about perseverance, hard work and problem solving. This story helps build vocabulary, communication skills and reading skills. This has a simple setting and characters which is easy to follow.



Fly Boy by JJ Bola & Clara Anganuzzi

Fly Boy is angry, sad and jealous and finds life hard. But Thomas helps him to see life differently and free his mind from negative thoughts. With absorbing illustrations and lyrical text, this sensitive picture book is ideal for discussion and will help to encourage self-belief, confidence and a positive outlook on life.

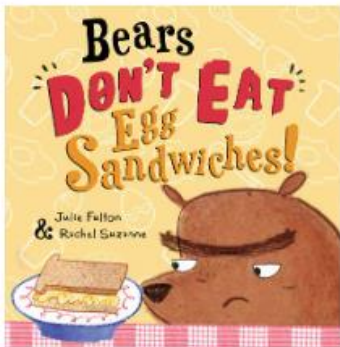
Mental health



Supertato by Sue Hendra

Vegetable superhero Supertato meets his nemesis in a very naughty pea who has escaped from the freezer. Can Supertato restore peace and order or will the pea cause havoc? A hysterically funny story that will appeal (I) to and encourage reluctant readers.

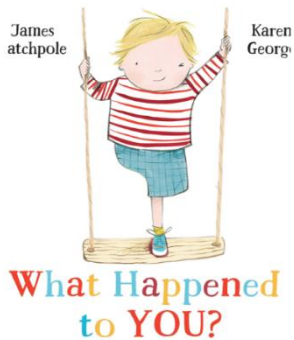
Funny picture book



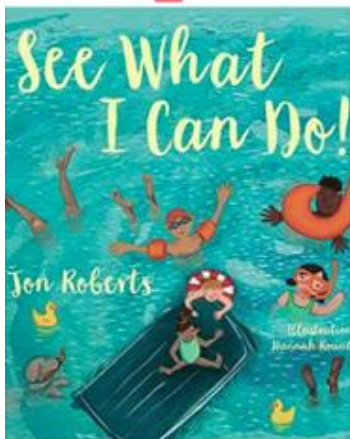
Bears Don't Eat Egg Sandwiches by Julie Fulton

A great book to read to the class at the end of a day in reception. When a bear arrives at Jack's house wanting lunch, Jack offers him an egg sandwich but the bear would prefer Jack for lunch... Can Jack convince the bear to take the sandwich? Children will love the bear's repetitious reply when he's asked if he wants an egg sandwich.

Classic picture book



Disability representation in literature is hugely important and this KS1 resource features a week of fully-planned whole-class reading themed around disability positivity and representation in books. Based on author James Catchpole's real-life childhood experiences, new children's book *What Happened to You?* explores the thorny issue of visible disability and the endless questions that inevitably ensue. The book is aimed at the under-5s and follows the story of swashbuckling Joe who is wrapped up in an imaginary game as a fierce pirate facing sharks and crocs. His game is interrupted by other children at the play park with a barrage of questions: why have you only got one leg? What happened to you?



Where disability is concerned, there is often a risk we lump people together into convenient boxes. In reality, as this book deftly explains, there are numerous different conditions and impairments: some visible, some not. And every child's experience is different.

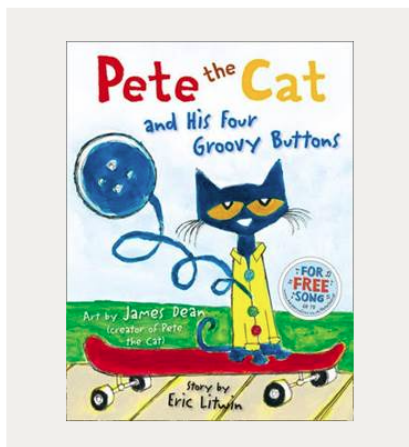
See What I Can Do! introduces a range of characters (based on real-life children from around the world), each sharing an insight and pointing out not only the challenges but also the positive aspects of their lives. The book does all this in a gentle, friendly and very readable way.

Alongside children who are blind or deaf for example, the book also provides an insight into the less well-known, including specific learning differences, asthma, epilepsy and cystic fibrosis. On each spread, characters discuss their own specific knowledge of that particular condition, and comparing their experiences, illustrating just how rarely one size fits all.



Big
By Sav Akyuz
Age 2+

After watching his brother having all the fun, a young boy wishes he was **BIG**. When his dream comes true, the city becomes his playground. But as he keeps getting bigger and bigger, he realises that sometimes it's good to be small! This mostly wordless story is a celebration of growing up that will develop children's visual literacy.



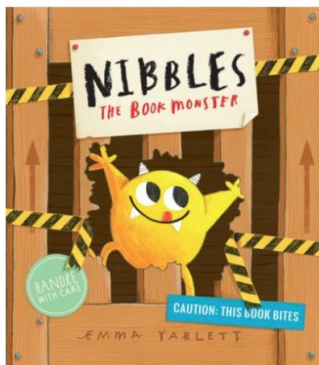
Pete the Cat and his Four Groovy Buttons

Author: Eric Litwin **Illustrator:** James Dean **Publisher:** Harper Collins

With his jaunty ears and curly tail, Pete is one laid-back cat, possessing a unique feline sartorial elegance. His favourite shirt has four big, round, groovy buttons; he loves it so much he's composed a song about it.

But one day, a button pops off... leaving only three. Does Pete cry? Goodness no! As he says, buttons come, and buttons go. He sings his special button song and carries on, skateboarding, eating ice-cream, surfing... and the buttons keep popping off...

This book is fun! It's got counting, singing, rhyming and repetition. Pete's 'don't sweat the small stuff' life philosophy is engaging and the vibrant, almost perspective-less illustrations are strangely beautiful.

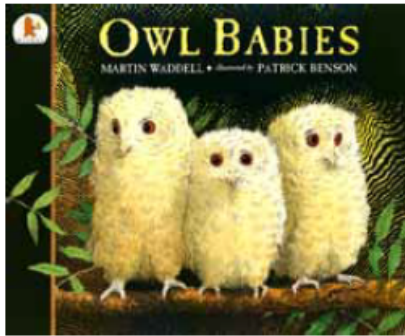


Nibbles: The Book Monster

Author: Emma Yarlett **Publisher:** Little Tiger Press

This is a story about a little monster called... Nibbles. And with that, he's released into the book. Nibbles likes to nibble soap, socks and rubber ducks, but his favourite thing to nibble is books! Nibbles nibbles his way right out of this book and into some other favourite fairy tales. He makes a mess in the three bears' house, rescues grandma from the big, bad wolf, and steals a golden goose before he's dropped back into his own book. But can it contain him this time?

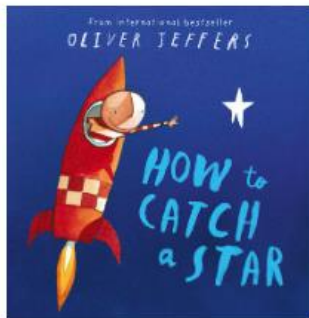
Fantastic production makes this book a really exciting reading experience. Older children will love the havoc Nibbles creates in the fairy tales they know so well, while little readers will adore the cheeky look in his eyes as he tears through the book. The final reveal is another fabulous surprise. Nibbles is sure to be a hit with the whole family.



Owl Babies

Martin Waddell (Walker Books)

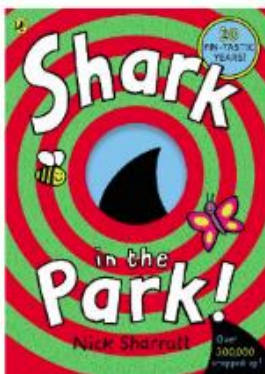
By now children should be familiar with the conventions of books such as cover, author, page-turning, as well as terms such as word, letter, full stops/capital letters, title, story and so on. Draw the distinction between the person who wrote the book and the artist. There is plenty for the children to discuss, especially the graded reactions of the three baby owls. Martin Waddell talks about getting the idea for the book from hearing a lost child in a supermarket crying, 'I want my Mummy'. This is a great book about basic feelings and comfort. Draw, paint or make huge owls. Make owl masks and act the story out as it is being told.



How to Catch a Star by Oliver Jeffers

A boy who loves to stare at the night sky longs to have his very own. So one day he decides to catch one. A highly imaginative story and beautifully illustrated book for reception children that is ideal for first independent reading.

Fantasy picture book



Shark in the Park by Nick Sharratt

A wonderful and catchy rhyming story about Timothy, and what he can spot in the park looking through his new telescope. He thinks he's spotted a shark. Is it a shark? Find out as more is revealed on each page. An ideal book to read with your child or for paired reading at school.

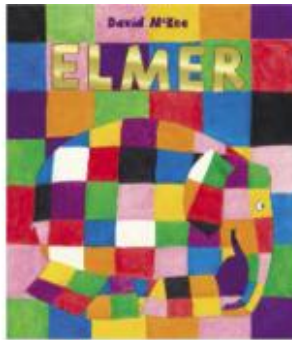
Rhyming picture book



Blue Monster Wants It All by Jeanne Willis

Every child will come across someone who wants everything, especially things they can't have. Blue monster is one of those people. Despite getting everything he wants, he's never happy and wants more and more. But are there some things money can't buy? A clever story that will get children thinking. Ideal for discussion and reading in groups.

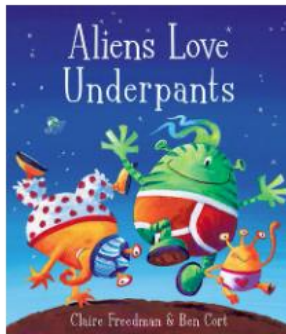
Fable picture book



Elmer by David McKee

A modern classic, this picture book tells the story of Elmer, a colourful patchwork elephant who wonders what it would be like to be grey like every other elephant. Not only is this a good book for reception readers, but it is also a useful text to provoke and inspire discussion and artwork.

Animal picture book



Aliens Love Underpants by Claire Freedman

The perfect picture book for reception reluctant readers. Not only is there a catchy and funny rhyming text that helps with predictive skills, but the crazy plot involving aliens wearing every variety of pants cannot fail to amuse and engage even the most reading-averse child.

Funny picture book

Non-fiction

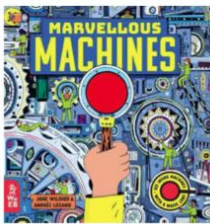


First Big Book of Why

Sally Symes & Stephanie Drimmer & Kate Slater

Non-fiction

The definitive and stunningly illustrated question and answer book from Britannica, with answers to more than 100 questions that kids really want to know. Why do elephants have trunks? Why are clouds different shapes? Why does popcorn pop? Why does my tummy rumble? Why do we flush the toilet? This magnificent book features chapters on Bugs, Pets, Wild Animals, the Body, Food, Machines and Space and also includes some of the mysteries which experts are still trying to solve! By encouraging children to question how the world works, Britannica First Big Book of Why supports STEAM learning and nurtures enquiring minds. With stunning photography and gorgeous original illustrations by Kate Slater, this is the ultimate gift for kids who need to know WHY.

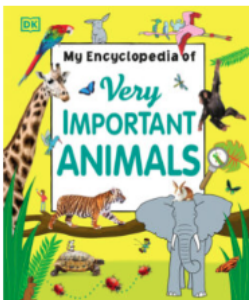


Marvellous Machines

Jane Wilsilver & Andres Lozano

Non-fiction

In this eye-catching book, readers can explore the hidden inner workings of machines and inventions, from mundane objects such as toasters and bicycles to cutting edge technologies such as pill-sized medical robots and super-fast maglev trains. Readers use the see-through magic lens to reveal how things work and the elements hidden within machines - everything from wires and pipes to the magnetic and gravitational forces machines rely on to function. Accompanying text explains how these machines function, how they affect our daily lives, and the physical and chemical phenomena that enable them to work.



My Encyclopedia of Very Important Animals

DK

Non-fiction

A charming children's encyclopedia bursting with facts about the animals of the world! The world is so much bigger than young minds can fathom and there is always more to learn. My Encyclopedia of Very Important Animals is a vibrant encyclopedia for curious 5-9 year olds with a unique approach to the subject of animals that takes curious kids on an enjoyable, educational journey of discovery. Mixing beautiful photography with charming illustrations, it's the perfect visual language for young readers, and is packed with light-hearted fun, and fascinating facts. Featuring everything from legends and folklore, world history, and creatures from the land, sea, and skies, this series is bursting with all sorts of subjects that early readers will love!



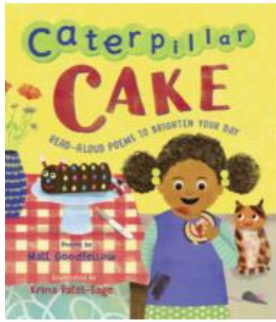
The Body Book

Hannah Alice

Non-fiction

The Body Book aims to help children aged 4-7 to explore some of the incredible things that our bodies do. This is an engaging non-fiction board book containing see-through acetate pages, allowing an x-ray peek into the human anatomy. Each page covers a different function of the human body, from breathing air and pumping blood to moving around and – yes – making waste. With labelled acetate diagrams of the muscular, skeletal, respiratory, circulatory, digestive, excretory and nervous systems, this is a superb first look at human anatomy for young children. The smallest readers will enjoy running their fingers along the acetate diagrams, tracing blood vessels or touching the familiar outlines of the skeleton. Older KS1 children will find plenty of food for thought among the pockets of interesting information that outline the processes of each of the body's major systems...

Poetry

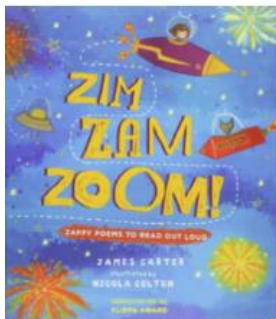


Caterpillar Cake

Matt Goodfellow & Krina Patel-Sage

Poetry

"Caterpillar caterpillar caterpillar cake - it's the only thing that my mum can make!" Would you like to eat a caterpillar cake? Join a rocket race into space? See crazy crocodiles at the zany zoo or play with a furry, purry cat? Wherever these 16 fun-filled poems lead you, they will brighten your day. Splashing at the seaside, storytime at school, playing in the bath or riding home on Daddy's shoulders - this brilliant, read-aloud collection for young children has lots to join in with and lots to explore in the brightly coloured illustrations.



Zim Zam Zoom

James Carter & Nicola Colton

Poetry

A collection of sixteen energetic poems and rhymes to ignite the senses, with topics including fireworks, food, dragons and splashy puddles. Colourful illustrations make the book a delight to look at as well as to listen to being read aloud.

Year 1 / 2

The picture books in Year 1 offer deeper exploration of emotions and wonder. Most of these books lend themselves to setting up a variety of play situations – using toys, costumes and puppets – but the children also need to be involved in careful reading of the books, paying close attention to the detail and entering imagined worlds to experience the stories deeply – then talking it all through. In Year 2, it is important to start to move from sharing picture books into sharing chapter books. These will not only provide a meaty read, but also demand that the children use their imagination. Of course, there are also many Reception and Year 1 children who will sit and enjoy a chapter book and this should form part of their reading experience. Many of the chosen books operate on different levels - from the satisfaction of good stories to the exploration of deeper themes.

The Tiger Who Came to Tea



The Tiger Who Came to Tea

Judith Kerr (HarperCollins)

Role-play the scene where Daddy returns and they tell him the story of what happened when the tiger came to tea. Ask: *What can you spot in the scene in which the family is walking to the café?* (A cat appears that looks like the tiger.) Apparently, the tiger never came again – but retell the story of when a different animal came to tea! Create a collage of an enormous tiger.



Lost and Found

Oliver Jeffers (HarperCollins)

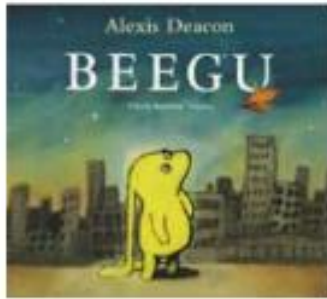
Tell the children some things about penguins... and about a 'lost and found office'. Then, read and enjoy this strange tale. Ask: *What interests you in the tale? Why does the penguin follow the boy?* Role play the scene in which they go to the office. Ask: *What is 'disappointment'?* Tell stories to the penguin – make a boat in the class and provide a cuddly penguin to tell stories to and 'talk about wonderful things'. Ask: *Why is the penguin sad when they reach the South Pole? What was the 'big mistake'?*



Knuffle Bunny

Mo Willems (Hyperion Books)

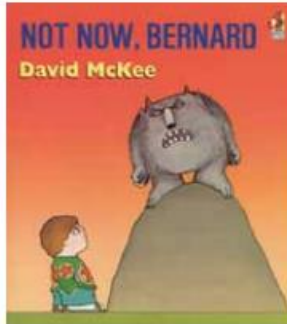
Yet another story about loss, but this time it is the loss of a cuddly bunny and not a mother (*Dogger* has a similar plot). The key to the story involves knowing what an 'errand' and a 'Laundromat' might be! The inside title page provides some interesting background detail worth discussing. Discuss the moment of realisation. Ask: *Why doesn't Dad understand and what advice would you give him? Why is it that Mum understands immediately?* Practise going 'boneless' and showing Trixie's emotions with just your faces! Collect baby, family or made-up class words. Ask: *How do you think the images were created?* (Ink sketches and digital photography.) Try the same technique!



Beegu

Alexis Deacon (Random House)

Read slowly and give time for children's spontaneous comments. Re-read and track the ups and downs of what happens and what Beegu feels and might be thinking. Role play conversations between the characters that Beegu meets and a new character, explaining what happened. Role play conversations between Beegu's parents. Write letters from Beegu to the children and from the children to Beegu. Ask: *What would Beegu want to know or be interested in?* Create small worlds or larger areas into which a Beegu/ET character arrives and tries to make friends.



Not Now Bernard

David McKee (Andersen Press)

Re-read a number of times and then discuss the parents, the child and the monster. Ask: *Who in the story is naughty? Are the parents ignoring the child or is he choosing the wrong moment? Are they too busy? Are they kind parents? What does the monster stand for? When do we feel or behave like monsters?* Let the children take it in turn to role play being Mum and Dad and talk about what has happened in the kitchen!



Pumpkin Soup

Helen Cooper (Corgi)

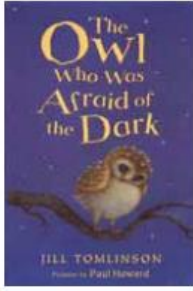
Read and enjoy the images and story. Ask the children: *What causes the argument and who was right?* Discuss how Cat and Squirrel's feelings change. Ask: *When are they happiest and why?* In role as Duck, tell the story of what happened when you left the Pumpkin. Also, with the class set the story to music, perform and dance with costumes and chant or sing with a dramatic chorus.



Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book?

Lauren Child (Orchard Books)

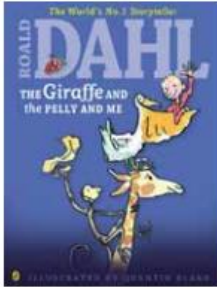
Before reading this book it is essential to know the stories of Goldilocks, Rapunzel, Dick Whittington and Cinderella – so start by retelling these stories or some of the wit will be lost! Having really discussed the book, encourage the children to try falling 'into a book' and becoming a character in a well-known fairy tale, but then alter what happens. Take photos, enlarge and copy these for the children. Then, ask the children to draw characters and objects onto the photos, using Lauren Child's collage technique.



The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark **READ&RESPOND**

Jill Tomlinson (Puffin)

List and discuss fears about the dark saying: *you are only afraid of the dark because you don't know about it*. Role play Plop talking with the different friendly characters. Write a letter to Plop to persuade him that the dark is actually friendly. Use an image of an owl (or the real thing if available) and draw in your 'nature sketch book'. Ask: *How has Plop changed by the end?* Write list poems about the dark. Find out about other nocturnal animals and create constellations. Paint and create owl collages and masks. Revisit *Owl Babies* (Walker Books). (See the *Read & Respond* title for further ideas.)



The Giraffe, the Pelly and Me

Roald Dahl (Puffin)

This is a meaty read. Begin by finding out a bit about giraffes, pelicans and monkeys. Invite the class to write adverts for 'The Ladderless Window Cleaning Company' and invent names for new sweets. Discuss the final song and its meaning. Draw 'The Grubber'. Ask: *What dreams would you have?* Learn, sing (or chant) and perform the various songs with the class. (See the *Read & Respond* title for further ideas.)



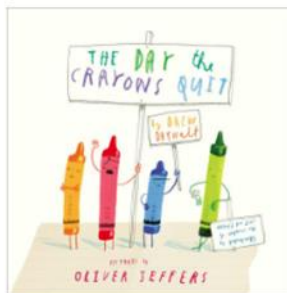
Fantastic Mr Fox **READ&RESPOND**

Roald Dahl (Penguin)

Before reading, it might be worth finding out a little about foxes. Draw the three farmers and collect information/quotes about them from the book. Re-read and savour the great writing in Chapter 3. Invite children to write letters to the farmers from the crowd at the end of chapter 7. Before reading Chapter 9 ask: *What do you think Mr Fox's plan will be?* Pause in Chapter 12 and ask: *Are the other animals right?* Pause in Chapter 14 and ask: *Is stealing right in this case?* Discuss with the children whether farmers should shoot foxes. Then with the class role play the conversation between the farmers at the end. (See the *Read & Respond* title for further ideas.)



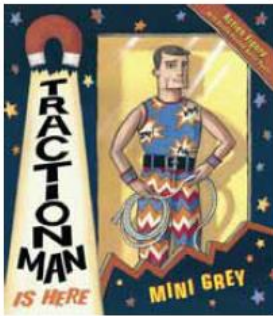
The Lion Inside is the perfect book for any young child who is lacking a little bit of confidence and needs help finding their roar. As little mouse learns, we all have a little bit of mouse and a little bit of lion inside of us. Mouse lives a hard life and is tired of being ignored and sat on by the other jungle animals.



The Day The Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt

When Duncan opens his box of crayons, instead of colours, he sees letters spelling "We Quit!". A very funny story which will appeal to all abilities. The concept and bright illustrations make this an ideal book for year 2 pupils to provoke discussion in class and help model ideas for pupils' writing.

Picture book



Traction Man is Here Picture books

Mini Grey (Random House)

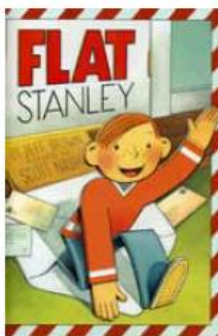
With the class read the pictures carefully, looking for details. Discuss together any difficult words. Re-read a number of times and talk about how the characters feel. Bring into school other kitchen equipment and encourage children to invent further adventures for Traction Man and Scrubbing Brush. Ask: *Are the adventures real? Who made them up?* Design Traction Man adverts or invent a new superhero or heroine.



The Hodgeheg READ&RESPOND

Dick King-Smith (Puffin)

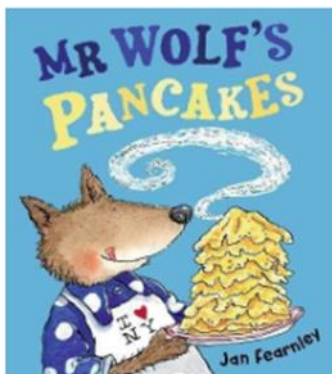
Introduce the book by showing film/images of hedgehogs and discussing the problem they have with roads! Make a list of rules about crossing the road for Max. Ask: *What advice would you give Max about crossing the road?* Write sentences that swap over words and letters. Role play a family discussion about Max's condition in Chapter 4. Hot-seat the hedgehog Max meets in Chapter 5. Tell the story of 'the first crossing' and hot-seat the lollipop lady at the end! Next, try reading Dick King-Smith's *Fox Busters* (Puffin). (See the *Read & Respond* title for further ideas.)



Flat Stanley READ&RESPOND

Jeff Brown (HarperCollins)

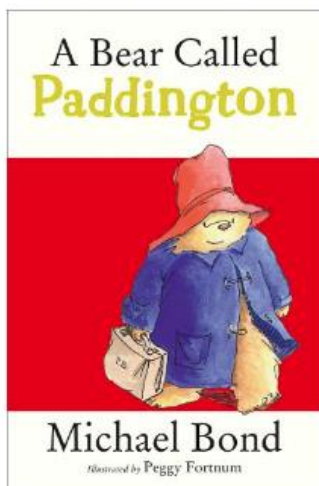
With the class use 'role on the wall' to collect insights into the family and ask: *What are they like and how do we know?* Together explore their feelings and list the advantages of being flat. Encourage the children to write the police report for Chapter 2 and the invite from Thomas. As journalists, invite them to interview Stanley and write a news report for Chapter 4. Discuss the teasing in Chapter 5 and how the boys feel. Finally, can they write another adventure for Stanley? Make available the other 'Flat Stanley' books for independent or guided reading. (See the *Read & Respond* title for further ideas.)



Mr Wolf's Pancakes by Jan Fearnley

Traditional fairy tales, such as Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Little Pigs are reworked in these extremely funny stories about a wolf who has some trouble making pancakes. A good source of ideas for creative writing story starters, this book is a useful text to build a short year 2 literacy around.

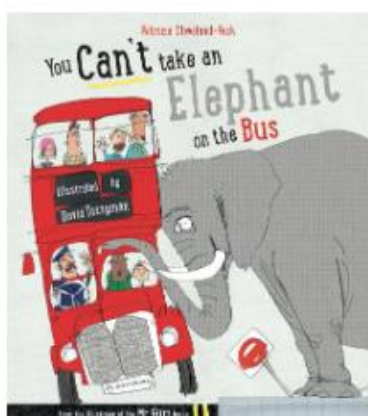
Fairy tale



A Bear Called Paddington by Michael Bond, illustrated by Peggy Fortnum

The classic tale of Paddington, a bear from Darkest Peru, who joins the Brown family with nothing but a hat, a suitcase and a jar of marmalade. This is a good text for 5 and 6-year-old children who are starting to read independently, and the perfect way to introduce younger children to book series and books that can be read in more than one sitting.

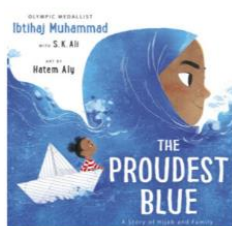
Family



You Can't Take An Elephant On the Bus by Patricia Cleveland-Peck

A hysterically and laugh out loud funny rhyming picture book where a variety of unlikely animals cause complete chaos. An ideal addition to your classroom library of books for year one pupils and also a good book to discuss when reading at home.

Rhyming picture book



The Proudest Blue

Ibtihaj Muhammad & S.K. Ali & Hatem Aly

Picturebook

Asiya's hijab is like the ocean and the sky, no line between them, saying hello with a loud wave. It's Faizah's first day of school, and her older sister Asiya's first day of hijab - made of a beautiful blue fabric. But not everyone sees hijab as beautiful. In the face of hurtful, confusing words, will Faizah find new ways to be strong? This is an uplifting, universal story of new experiences, the unbreakable bond shared by siblings and of being proud of who you are, from Olympic medallist Ibtihaj Muhammad.



My Must-Have Mum

Maudie Smith & Jen Khatun

Picturebook

This colourful picturebook tells us from Jake's perspective about his creative, recycling, wheelchair-using Mum, who sees the potential in everything whether from a skip or an antique shop. She upcycles her finds to make new things for their home and garden as well as to beautify their community. Sometimes, his Mum's constant remaking of things causes Jake to worry, but he is soon reassured by his Mum who will always love him however he changes.

We love the environmental message of this book, showing that so much that is discarded can be used again. This would be an excellent book to encourage thinking about recycling and reusing, or to spark ideas for upcycling projects for students to create themselves. The story also features positive representations of wheelchair users, whose inclusion in the book is not solely or primarily focused on their disability or wheelchair use.

Jake's concerns about change will surely resonate with many children as they grow and change throughout their school years, and this book provides a reassuring message about how change and growth are okay and to be embraced. A large, hardback picturebook, with wonderfully colourful illustrations and large writing, this is ideal as a read-to-the-class book or for younger children to enjoy looking at independently.



Wanda's Words Got Stuck

Lucy Rowland & Paula Bowles

Picturebook

A magic-filled rhyming picture book, perfect for any child who feels anxious about talking. Wanda the witch is so shy she can't talk! No matter how hard she tries, the words won't come out. But when another nervous little witch called Flo joins her class, it seems that Wanda's not the only one who worries about speaking. Then disaster strikes at the magic contest... will Wanda have the courage to shout out the magic words and save her new friend Flo from a dangerous dragon? This heart-warming adventure about finding confidence through friendship is filled with potions, spells and magical animals! Children will fall in love with brave Wanda the witch, especially those who have difficulties with speech, anxiety about talking, or lack confidence in front of others. Lucy is a children's speech and language therapist whose books include Pirate Pete and His Smelly Feet, illustrated by Mark Chambers and Sammy Claws the Christmas Cat, also illustrated by Paula Bowles. Every Nosy Crow paperback picture book comes with a free "Stories Aloud" audio recording. Just scan the QR code and listen along!



Man on the Moon

Simon Bartram

Picturebook

This excellent picture book has enough depth to captivate pupils and is an entertaining storytime choice for Year 1 and 2. It follows the story of Bob, an ordinary man with the extra-ordinary job of keeping the moon clean and entertaining moon tourists. Readers will delight in spotting all of the aliens that Bob misses noticing as he goes about his work as the man on the moon. Highly recommended!

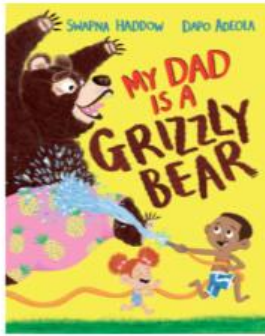


The Friendship Bench

Wendy Meddour & Daniel Egneus

This is a beautiful picturebook that celebrates new beginnings and the power of human connection. Tilly moves to a new home by the sea. She's sad to learn that her precious dog Shadow is not allowed to go into her new school on her first day. Tilly faces the challenge of a new start alone. At playtime, the teacher notices that Tilly is alone and suggests trying the Friendship Bench. A boy already occupies the bench and the pair form a bond as they work together to transform the old, broken bench into something beautiful.

This is a warm and gentle story. Most children can relate to the feeling of having nobody to play with or having to face a new challenge alone. The story gently encourages readers to seek human connection and reminds us all of the difference that reaching out and making friends can make. The story could be used to encourage children to reflect on how to make new or isolated members of the school community welcome. Could you work together this year to create spaces around the school where lonely children could go, where children can build connections through shared activity or where friendships can blossom?



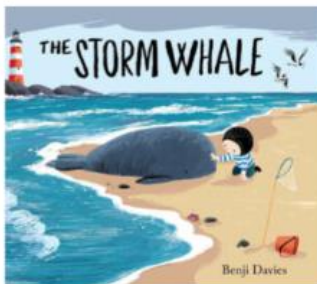
My Dad is a Grizzly Bear

Swapna Haddow & Dapo Adeola

Picturebook

This is a sweet story about one imaginative boy's special bond with his father, whom he imagines as a loveable grizzly bear. It's full of humour, from the exaggerated facial expressions and bear-like attributes captured in Dapo Adeola's vibrant illustrations, to the humorous asides in the text about Dad's wild habits.

This is a playful and heartwarming picture book that perfectly captures the way in which young children observe familiar adults with curiosity, wonder and imagination – but also with pure adoration. Filled with giggles and with the theme of family bonds at its heart, this is a bear-illiant choice for storytime.

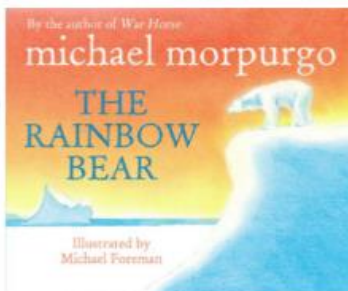


The Storm Whale

Benji Davies

Picturebook

Noi lives by the sea with his fisherman father and life there can feel pretty lonely sometimes. When Noi discovers a little whale washed up on the beach, he takes it home to care for it in his bath tub. But there are two problems; the first is that keeping it a secret from his dad will be tougher than he thinks and the second is that whales really belong in the depths of the sea. This engaging and empathetic picture book is a great choice for KS1.



The Rainbow Bear

Michael Morpurgo & Michael Foreman

Picturebook

This longer picturebook is the story of a polar bear who dreams of exchanging his snowy white coat for new fur that is as colourful as the rainbow he sees in the sky one day. The bear's conspicuous new appearance leads him to be captured and exhibited in a zoo.

This engaging and thought-provoking story by master storyteller Michael Morpurgo is coupled with beautiful illustrations, making it one of our top choices for storytime in Year 2 and the surrounding year groups.



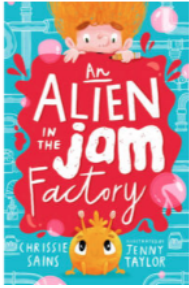
Milo's Monster

Tom Percival

Picturebook

Tom Percival's Big Bright Feelings series is a hit in classrooms up and down the country. Children love the **personification of big feelings** like worry, fear or anger and enjoy seeing how recognising and dealing with big feelings is better than ignoring them or bottling things up. This story is about **dealing with jealousy**, which aptly appears as a green-eyed monster. The monster keeps popping up with Milo when his best friend is playing with a new neighbour.

Children love the appeal of the big bright monster that gives a **visual way of showing an all too familiar emotion**. Young readers also love that the story shows a very relatable scenario and will help them to **navigate the daily ups and downs of friendships**. A super story belonging to a highly recommendable series.

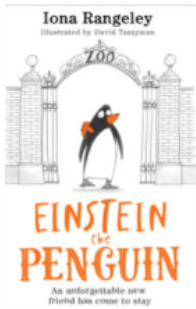


An Alien in the Jam Factory

Chrissie Sains & Jenny Taylor

Chapter book

The first book in a hilarious, jam-packed new adventure series starring Scooter the inventor and his top secret alien sidekick. Scooter McLay's cerebral palsy affects how quickly he can move his body, but his hyper-creative brain is a constant fizz of brilliant ideas. He spends every day inventing top secret recipes and machines for his family's jam factory. There's just one thing missing ... a pet, to share it all with. Or better still, a friend. When a tiny alien named Fizzbee crashes through the factory window, she might just be the answer. Now it's all hands on deck, as they team up to save the factory from dastardly neighbour Daffy Dodgy.



Einstein the Penguin

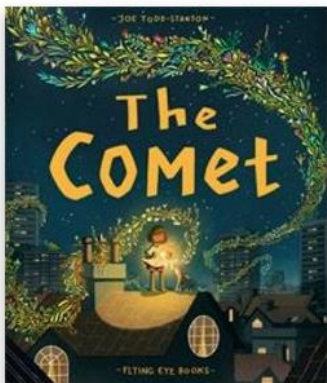
Iona Rangeley & David Tazzyman

Chapter book

When Mrs Stewart invites a small penguin to visit on a spontaneous visit to London Zoo, no one could have imagined that later that day they would find him on their doorstep, rucksack on his back and an adventure about to begin...

Einstein the Penguin is the debut children's novel for Iona Rangeley, aptly brought to life with the help of the award-winning illustrator, David Tazzyman. A lovely mix of whodunnit with a slightly preposterous story of a penguin who comes to live with our two heroes, Imogen (age 9) and Arthur (age 6), causing them to put aside their sibling squabbles and come to his rescue. Rangeley manages to pull at your heartstrings as you come to understand each of the characters' insecurities, bringing together the fear of losing a friend with the loneliness associated with never having had one. The grown-ups are scatty at best and young readers will love it as our heroes come to put one over on them.

Lovely as a class readaloud, children will enjoy the parody of incompetent teachers/zoo-keepers/detectives/parents while also prompting several discussion points about right and wrong. This could be a fun next step for readers who have enjoyed Paddington or Erica's Elephant.

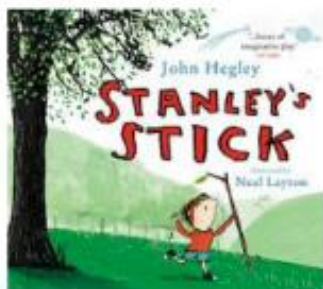


The Comet

Joe Todd-Stanton

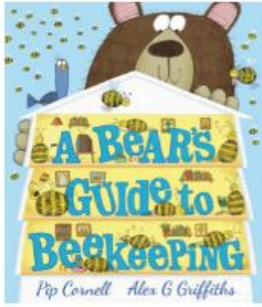
Picturebook

From the award-winning Joe Todd-Stanton, comes an exquisite and heartfelt picture book touching on the bewildering experience of moving house. This beautiful story explores how this can affect a child's sense of belonging, but also how it can open them up to new and wonderful experiences. When Nyla has to leave her home in the countryside to start life again in the city, all she can think about is everything she misses from before. So when a comet comes crashing through the city streets and starts to glow and grow, Nyla can't resist a chance to head somewhere that feels closer to what she had before. But what starts as an escape could be just the thing to make her finally feel at home.



Stanley's Stick by John Hegley, illustrated by Neale Layton

Stanley finds a stick. But it's not just any stick – with his stick, Stanley can do anything and go anywhere. A great book to stimulate your child's imagination, develop written story ideas, oral storytelling and reading out loud performance.



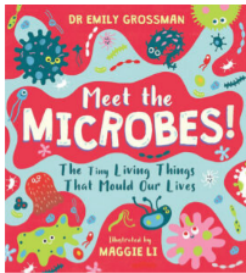
A Bear's Guide to Beekeeping

Pip Cornell & Alex Griffiths

Picturebook

Are you a bear considering keeping your very own bees? Can't get enough of delicious honey? Then this is the book for you! With invaluable tips such as how to make a tiny crown for your queen bee, you can become a master beekeeper in no time! Learn how to care for your new buzzy friends in easy-to-follow steps - but don't forget to absolutely never hug the bees. A spoof beekeeping manual for bears from debut author Pip Cornell and rising star Alex G Griffiths.

Non-fiction



Meet the Microbes

Dr Emily Grossman & Maggie Li

Non-fiction Picturebook

Meet the Microbes is a captivating insight into the tiny creatures that live under our noses and have a massive impact on our lives despite only being visible through a powerful microscope. Through the colourful and lively pages, children will meet a succession of cartoon microbes and learn all about them. They will learn about where they can be found and how they multiply; how they survive in the most extreme of conditions; the jobs that they do and how they might be beneficial to our future.

By the end of the book, they will have reached an understanding that microbes can be both good and bad for our bodies and how we can avoid spreading the less desirable ones. They will be fascinated to find out that mould is formed from microbes and that some of their favourite foods such as yoghurt, fluffy bread and cheese would not exist without them. The language is accessible to younger readers and concepts are explained clearly.

This book would be an excellent accompaniment to science topics or just a great addition to the non-fiction, reading for pleasure offer in the school library.

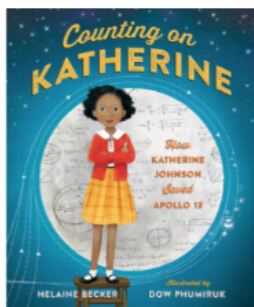


The Big Book of the Blue

Yuval Zommer

Non-fiction

This large-sized informative compendium is the kind of non-fiction that children like to come back to again and again to pore over its pages. Each double-page spread dives into a different sea-themed question, such as 'Are jellyfish made of jelly?' or 'Why do crabs run sideways?'. There is never too much text on each page, but what you find is accessible chunks of information cleverly interspersed into each ocean scene. The illustrations are stunning and come together to make wonderful spreads that serve as a treasure trove of visual delights for young eyes, as text and pictures work together to build an understanding of underwater habitats and the life they hold.

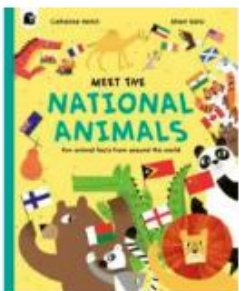


Counting on Katherine

Helaine Becker & Dow Phumiruk

Picturebook

Meet Katherine Johnson, the mathematical genius who helped make the historic Apollo 11 moon landings possible and made sure that Apollo 13 returned home safely when the mission was in critical danger. Counting on Katherine is a beautiful biography, sure to inspire young readers. Winner of the information book category of the UKLA Book Awards 2020. As a child, Katherine loved to count. She counted the steps on the road, the number of dishes and spoons she washed in the kitchen sink, everything! Boundless, curious, and excited by calculations, young Katherine longed to know as much as she could about maths, about the universe . . . Helaine Becker interviewed Katherine and her family for this authorized biography. From Katherine's early beginnings as a gifted student to her heroic accomplishments as a prominent mathematician at NASA, this is the true story of a groundbreaking African-American woman who went above and beyond what was expected of her in the 1960s, saving lives and making enormous contributions to history. Featuring Dow Phumiruk's gorgeous full-colour illustrations throughout.



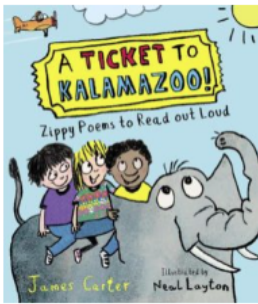
Meet The National Animals

Catherine Veitch & Shiori Saito

Non-fiction

Meet the National Animals is a playful and humorous look at the animals all around the world who represent their country. Why do they represent the particular country and what is so special or symbolic about them? Featuring over 35 amazing animals, from the mystical Scottish Unicorn to China's much-loved Giant Panda and the wonderful, but extinct, Dodo from Mauritius. The witty text brings each animal to life and celebrates their quirks and characteristics. Includes a playful, charming narrative along the bottom of each spread, which sees Brown Bear gradually bringing all the animals together as they travel the world, celebrating each country as they go. Filled with fascinating facts about each animal and country, the text also touches gently on conservation issues related to each animal and their habitat. The illustrations inject warmth and humour into the narrative, making the animals the stars of their respective countries!

Poetry



A Ticket to Kalamazoo!: Zippy Poems To Read Out Loud

James Carter & Neal Layton

Poetry

As the title of this poetry collection says, these are 'zippy poems to read out loud'! Each poem will excite and engage young listeners and these are the sort of poems that children will quickly join in with and learn by heart.

All of the poems are written by James Carter, who has a unique talent for poetry for the young. Each poem is illustrated by Neal Layton and this will provide additional interest when read aloud or when children are browsing the book independently. The poems have clear and wonderful rhyming patterns and this helps to create their 'read aloud -ability'. Some poems feature repeated patterns such as the title poem, 'A Ticket to Kalamazoo' which has a delightful chorus to join in with and 'Elephant beat' has an unforgettable repeated question, 'Fancy a ride on an elephant?'.

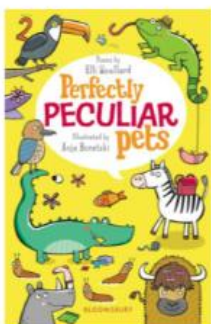
The subjects of the poem range from animals to adventures to new versions of traditional stories: 'Fuss! Fuss! Fuss! or The Goldilocks Rap' is a favourite! Minibeasts have a high profile in a few of the poems and despite their critical place in our eco-system are rarely celebrated in poetry and these poems make a useful contribution. This is a joyous collection of poetry that would be perfect to read aloud in those spare moments across the school day or in a poetry feast at the end of the day!



An Emotional Menagerie

The School of Life

Emotions are like animals: No two are quite the same. Some are quiet; some are fierce; And all are hard to tame. An Emotional Menagerie is an emotional glossary for children. A book of 26 rhyming poems, arranged alphabetically, that bring our feelings to life - Anger, Boredom, Curiosity, Dreaminess, Embarrassment, Fear, Guilt, and more. The poems transform each emotion into a different animal to provide a clear and engaging illustration of its character: how it arises; how it makes us behave and how we can learn to manage its effects. Boasting a rich vocabulary, the poems also give children a wide variety of options for describing their feelings to others. Children experience all sorts of emotions: sometimes going through several very different ones before breakfast. Yet they can struggle to put these feelings into words. An inability to understand and communicate their moods can lead to bad behaviour, deep frustration and a whole host of difficulties further down the line. Like adults, they need help to recognise and verbalise their inner state. The greater their emotional vocabulary, the more likely they are to grow into happy, healthy and fulfilled adults. Filled with wise, therapeutic advice, brought to life through musical language and beautiful illustrations, An Emotional Menagerie is an imaginative and universally appealing way of increasing emotional literacy.



Perfectly Peculiar Pets

Elli Woollard & Anja Boretzki

Poetry

We love this whacky A-Z of weird and wonderful pets. With a different pet poem for each letter of the alphabet (from armadillos to zebras via kookaburras to umbrella birds!), the poems are quirky and energetic, making them perfect to read aloud. Children will enjoy finding the poem that matches their name's initial or just dipping in and out of the rhythmical menagerie of verses.

Year 3 and 4

Children of this age need a great storyline, but should also be experiencing deep and rich books.



The Iron Man **READ&RESPOND**

Ted Hughes (Faber)

Notice and imitate the opening, using rhetorical questions to draw in the reader. With the class role play the family talking about the picnic or Hogarth telling his parents about what he had seen. Invite them to create a diary for Hogarth and news bulletins for both the Iron Man and space-bat-angel-dragon. Discuss which of the two tales is strongest and why? Ask them to draw parallels with other 'taming the monster' stories. (See the *Read & Respond* title for further ideas.)



Cat Tales: Ice Cat

Linda Newberry (Usborne)

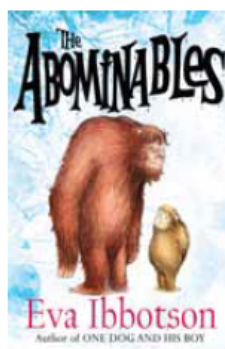
With the class look at the use of imagery on the first few pages and make a list of other similes for snow. Ask: *What else is white? Why does Tom feel funny about Gary's dad in Chapter 1? How can a creature be in the snow? Why does Tom feel bad-tempered with his dad in Chapter 2?* Talk about the lump of ice inside of him. Ask: *In Chapter 3 what is the Ice Cat searching for? In Chapter 4 how can the cat's touch be inside of Tom and why does he destroy the snowman and blame the Ice Cat? In Chapter 5 explain the Ice Green Cat's role in the story and why the icy hardness melts away. Ask: What is it all about?*



The Sheep-pig **READ&RESPOND**

Dick King-Smith (Puffin)

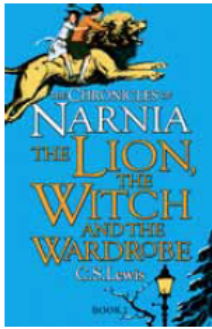
Remind the children that they have previously read a Dick King-Smith novel, *Hodgehog* (Puffin). Not surprisingly, he used to be a farmer. Ask: *Are pigs stupid?* (See Chapter 2.) *Why does Fly look after Babe?* *At the start of Chapter 3 what are the puppies not telling Babe?* Discuss the relationship between Fly and Babe. Ask: *What is it about Babe's character that is so endearing?* Invite the children to write the police report about the sheep rustling incident and the news report about the sheep-dog trials. (See the *Read & Respond* title for further ideas.)



The Abominables

Dick King-Smith (Puffin)

This is a longer read. To set the scene, begin with some introduction to the Abominable Snowman, the Yeti and the mountains of Tibet. Together predict what might happen from the first sentence. After reading Chapter 2 ask them to write stories to read to the yetis. Ask: *How is 'the world outside changing' and why is this an issue?* After reading Chapter 3 can they write a newspaper story about the yetis? After reading Chapter 5 discuss whether the plan is a good one. After reading Chapter 13 encourage the class to write a leaflet to persuade people to help the yetis. As a final task, together rename the story! Also, read *Journey to the River Sea* (Macmillan) and *One Dog and his Boy* (Marion Lloyd Books).



The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

READ & RESPOND

CS Lewis (HarperCollins)

After reading, ask the class to write list poems 'through the magic door/ I saw...'. Re-read and discuss together the reaction of the Professor. Draw the lantern in the snow with the trees and ask them to write a description. In small groups recreate the meal in Mr Tumnus's house and describe it. Discuss together which is the key scene and what it means. Draw a Narnia map and invite children to draw in episodes. Encourage the children to write information reports about some of the magical creatures and design traps for the nasty ones! Together make character charts for each character to compare and contrast. With permission watch the film in lesson. Then use role play to explore conversations between the children about Edmund's behaviour. Explain his actions. Ask: *Why is he forgiven?* (See the *Read & Respond* title for further ideas.)

The Wild Robot

Peter Brown

Chapter book

If you're looking for a heartwarming and thought-provoking storytime read, *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown is the perfect choice. This highly original story combines themes of technology and nature and is a sure-fire hit in the classroom.

The story follows a curious robot called Roz, who finds herself stranded in the wild on an island. Roz must learn to survive and earn the trust of the island's animals. This is a beautiful tale of acceptance, friendship and what it means to care about others. With short chapters and lovely illustrations, *The Wild Robot* is a delightful read for Year 3 and beyond.



Leonora Bolt

Lucy Brandt & Gladys Jose

Chapter book

Leonora Bolt Secret Inventor is an entertaining STEM-themed narrative and a great story choice for Year 3 and above. The book follows a young female scientist named Leonora, who is passionate about creating new and ingenious inventions to solve the problems of those around her. Gladys Jose's illustrations enhance the storytelling experience, as does the good dose of humour woven through the narrative.

Leonora's secret workshop serves as the backdrop for her endeavours, which become critical in her confrontations with her invention-stealing uncle. What follows is an imaginative adventure with quick-thinking Leonora using her STEM skills and natural wit to triumph. Readers who love science and innovation will find this an engaging and entertaining storytime choice.



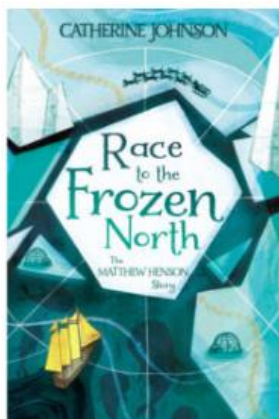
Race to the Frozen North

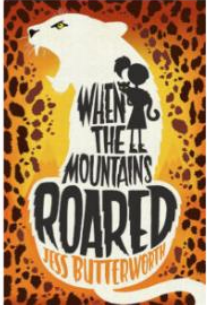
Catherine Johnson & Katie Hickey

Chapter book

The topic of polar exploration is a popular one in primary schools with teachers and pupils easily being able to reel off a list of famous arctic explorers: Shackleton, Scott, Cook, Peary. But how often do you hear the name Matthew Henson among the list, the man who travelled with Captain Peary and claimed to be the first to reach the North Pole?

In *Race to the Frozen North*, best-selling author Catherine Johnson offers a fictionalised retelling of Matthew Henson's story, including how his achievements were unfairly suppressed for decades because of the colour of his skin. Published in Barrington Stoke's 'super-readable' and dyslexia-friendly style, this is an accessible read for children in KS2.





When the Mountains Roared

Jess Butterworth

Chapter book

When the Mountains Roared is the much-enjoyed second novel from Jess Butterworth, and one that has gone down a storm in Key Stage 2 classrooms. The physical book itself is actually really beautiful both inside and out, with its stunning cover by Rob Biddulph and the leopard-print design of its pages.

The story follows Ruby, a twelve-year-old girl who is grieving the recent death of her mother and has become filled with fear since her mother's car accident. Ruby is an animal lover and she enjoys photographing wildlife. At the beginning of the story, Ruby faces the devastating news that her Dad is planning to uproot them from their Australian home and relocate to a remote mountain village in India to run a hotel.

Unimpressed when she arrives in her new home, Ruby does manage to find some things to like about the foreign setting. Jess Butterworth's descriptions of the mountain landscape are beautiful and evocative as nature-lover Ruby takes in the new smells, colours and wildlife of the Himalayan habitat. Although the hotel is quite isolated, Ruby quickly befriends a local shepherd boy called Praveen, who shares Ruby's admiration of the natural world.

Together, Ruby and Praveen set about to protect the few remaining leopards from the threat of poachers. The story is full of danger and adventure as Ruby undertakes a perilous trek through the mountains and comes face to face with some very hostile poachers, putting aside her own fears in order to save the leopards.

This is an atmospheric and enticing animal rescue story that explores an important theme about preservation and it will appeal to readers in Years 4-6

Brand New Boy

David Almond & Marta Altés

Chapter book

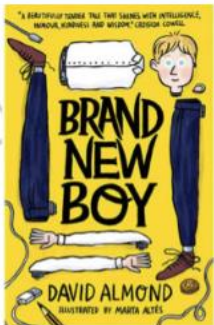
A simple but punch-packing new tale from storytelling master David Almond.

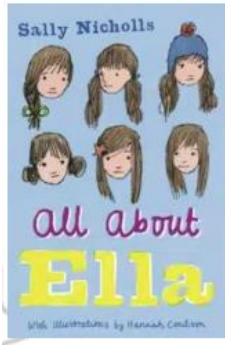
When a brand new boy called George starts at school, Daniel and his best friend Maxie are looking forward to getting a chance to enjoy the company of a new classmate. Daniel agrees to keep an eye on the new boy, although he has to admit there are few unusual things about George. Whether it's the way that Miss Crystal watches his every step and makes ongoing observations in her notebook or the way that George can answer complicated maths questions without having to think about them, yet doesn't seem to have an understanding of some of the very basic chatter between Daniel and his friends, something seems amiss.

Daniel's chance to get to know George better arrives when the adults in school ask Daniel to invite George round for tea. But it comes with a caveat: Miss Crystal must come too, and George must only eat a few drops of olive oil and a small piece of dry bread. Welcoming George with warmth and hospitality, it's as clear to Daniel's Mum as it is to Daniel that there's something unusual about this new boy. Every experience seems new to him, whether it's meeting Kushko the cat or hanging out to chat in Daniel's bedroom. A series of questions without answers begins to unravel – like why George is ushered unwillingly into a black van at the end of the play date, or why the teachers seem to have a weird response to George in class, or why there's a sudden announcement that George will be leaving the school. And what exactly is inside that tall box that is wheeled into assembly the following week?

This is an innovative story that weaves themes of compassion, hope and community as well as what it means to be alive. Martha Altés' illustrations bring out the characters brilliantly and provide extra hints and clues along the way. The dignity and compassion with which Daniel and his friends treat George is beautiful. I also loved the characterisation of Daniel's mum, who is full of love, acceptance and a happy dose of Geordie warmth. Her dedication to protecting Daniel's childhood innocence clearly has an impact that Daniel passes forward in the way he cares for George, recognising the importance of playing out in the wild, enjoying songs and stories together as well as providing a safe space for George to make decisions for himself. The way people have been treated in the family home often naturally affects how they treat strangers, and Daniel is a prime example of this. The dangerous impact of technology on children is touched upon, but so is its potential to enhance human experience when treated sagely, with respect for human experience kept at its heart. Equally, the school system is shown to be able to make children feel like robots or cogs in a machine, but can also be wonderful, life-affirming and experience-bringing, as embodied in the music teacher Mrs Imani, whose positive impact also rubs off on the way the children treat George when they play together.

True to style, David Almond weaves a thought-provoking tale with hints of darkness, plenty of hope and pause for reflection on what it means to be alive.



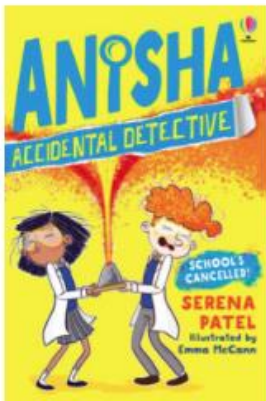


All About Ella

Sally Nicholls & Hannah Coulson

Chapter book

Sam is sick, and Ella is sick of Sam. Life seems to revolve around his hospital appointments, his medication and his need for peace and quiet. No one thinks about what Ella wants or needs, no one cares. They don't even know what day she was born on. In the end, Ella decides she doesn't care if Sam gets sicker, but when it happens, she finds she cares an awful lot....A touching exploration of family love and the challenges of being a younger sibling, from multi-award-winning author Sally Nicholls.



Anisha Accidental Detective: School's Cancelled!

Serena Patel & Emma McCann

Chapter book

Nominated for "Favourite Books of 2020" by: Dan Norton (Y3/4 teacher)

Dan says, "School's Cancelled is a wonderful second book in the Anisha Accidental Detective series. It's a race against time for Anisha to prove that it was not her who caused the foam explosion that flooded the school. The mystery is engaging until the very end and there are twists and turns throughout. The world that has been created is inclusive and vibrant and any event that involves Anisha's family is sure to be fun!"



Me and Mister P: Joe's New World

Maria Farrer & Daniel Rieley

Chapter book

There are times when only a polar bear will do . . . So Mum and Dad have decided we're moving house, but not just down the road, not even in the same town . . . not even in the same COUNTRY! Not only that, but now they expect me to try and fit in and make new friends. Don't they understand that I just want my old friends who love and accept me the way I am - bad jokes and all. It would seem that the only friend I CAN make is this enormous POLAR BEAR who has come to stay. I didn't ask for him, but I ended up with him at the airport instead of my missing suitcase . . . Meet Joe as he tries to adapt to his new life. And meet Mister P, the world's most helpful(ish) polar bear. Packed with gorgeous illustrations throughout, readers will love this fun and heartwarming story.



The Christmasaurus

Tom Fletcher & Shane Devries

Chapter book

The number-one-bestselling, magical first children's novel from Tom Fletcher. This is a story about a boy named William Trundle and a dinosaur named the Christmasaurus . It's about how they meet one Christmas Eve and have a magical adventure . It's about friendship and families, sleigh bells and Santa, singing elves and flying reindeer. It's about discovering your heart's true desire, and learning that the impossible might just be possible . . .



The Land of Roar

Jenny McLachlan & Ben Mantle

Chapter book

This story is full of imagination, adventure and excitement and makes for a perfect read-aloud choice for storytime. Land of Roar is an instantly gripping adventure where childhood games become a reality for two twins. I raced my way through it, wondering what dangers twins Rose and Arthur were going to encounter next, whilst simultaneously wanting to visit Roar myself!

Land of Roar makes for a fantastic portal story where you can't help but be dragged into this magical land of make-believe in a story full of adventure, magic and friendship. I love the idea of childhood games coming to life and the idea appeals well to the imaginations of children aged 8 to 10 – old enough to remember make-believe games from a younger stage but still young enough to allow themselves to be swept away by imagination and magic.

Land of Roar is the kind of fantasy adventure that grips you from the first page to the last and keeps you wanting more...so it's a good thing there's a sequel!

>



Sky

Holly Webb

Chapter book

Staying with her grandparents in the Scottish Highlands, Lara is fascinated by the rare white snowy owl her grandad has spotted flying nearby. And when she follows the beautiful bird into the woods, it leads her on a magical adventure...Transported a century back in time, Lara befriends Amelia, who confides in Lara about her cruel cousin, who she's sure is trying to hurt the baby owls nesting in the woods. When Lara discovers the hatchlings belong to her owl, Sky, she's determined to help. But how can she protect them when she needs to return to her own time? An enchanting and magical time-slip adventure from best-selling animal story author Holly Webb.



Space Band

Tom Fletcher

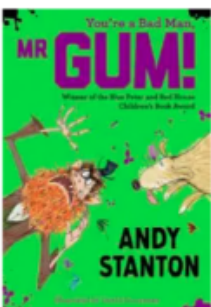
Chapter book

Can the worst band in the world become the best band in the universe? This is the strap line for Tom Fletcher's latest story and is the premise behind Space Band.

Music-loving George wants his band, The Earthlings, to be the best. Along with friends Bash and Neila, George prepares to play in his school's Battle of the Bands, despite their lack of confidence and talent. However, when they are transported across the universe to another planet, they must play to save not just themselves, but also the whole of planet Earth.

This is ultimately a story of friendship, belonging and believing. The Earthlings have to work together to try and win the Intergalactic Battle of the Bands and defeat the dastardly Megavolt. Yet when they form friendships with the bands from other planets, they face a huge dilemma when they realise that defeating other bands also means destroying their home planets.

This is a fun story with plenty to keep the reader entertained. The space information appears to be well-researched and adds lots of factual detail. George's song lyrics are included and, by scanning a QR code or visiting the nominated website, you can link to various music providers and listen to the songs, as recorded by McFly. This adds another dimension to the story and could link in some music appreciation along the way.

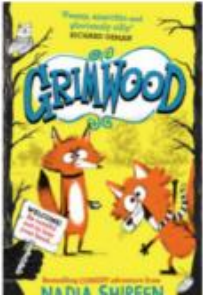


You're a Bad Man, Mr Gum!

Andy Stanton

Chapter book

Shabba me whiskers! It's a bold new look for Mr Gum, the best-selling cult classic, ready for a new generation of nibbleheads. 'It's time for action,' said Mr Gum to nobody in particular. 'Nasty action.' Good evening. Mr Gum is a complete horror who hates children, animals, fun and corn on the cob. This book's all about him. And an angry fairy who lives in his bathtub. And Jake the dog, and a little girl called Polly. And there's heroes and sweets and adventures and EVERYTHING. You're a Bad Man, Mr Gum! is the first book in the internationally best-selling series by Andy Stanton, which has won everything from the Blue Peter Book Award (twice) to the Roald Dahl Funny Prize and the Red House Children's Book Award.



Grimwood

Nadia Shireen

Chapter book

Grimwood is a wacky, anarchic animal story, full of nonsensical mayhem. The story will certainly appeal to KS2 (although possibly not the most sensitive in this age group – as there are incidents of biting off heads, tails or feet!). There's a dark and whacky humour to the story that will delight fans of Dahl or Mr Gum and plenty of discussion points such as the relationship between the fox cubs, the changes in their personalities and the desire to find refuge. The book could work as a class reader and a fun and quirky independent read for ages 7-11.



The Nothing to See Here Hotel

Steven Butler & Steven Lenton

Chapter book

Welcome to The Nothing to See Here Hotel! A hotel for magical creatures, where weird is normal for Frankie Banister and his parents who run the hotel. When a goblin messenger arrives at The Nothing to See Here Hotel, announcing the imminent arrival of the goblin prince Grogbah, Frankie and his family rush into action to get ready for their important guest. But it soon becomes obvious that the Banister family are going to have their work cut out with the demanding prince and his never-ending entourage, especially when it turns out the rude little prince is hiding a secret... The first book in a fabulously funny series by bestselling author Steven Butler, with a host of whacky characters brought to life with illustration from the wonderful Steven Lenton!

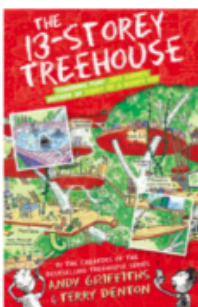


A Monster Ate My Packed Lunch

Pamela Butchart & Thomas Flintham

Chapter book

Hilarious, illustrated school-based antics where everything that happens leads to DRAMA and RUNNING AROUND and even some FAINTING! Izzy and her friends are on a school trip to a big lake. Gary Petrie is excited because the lodges where they're staying have ROBES AND SLIPPERS! The lake is dark and deep and a bit scary. But it's when they open their packed lunches that they know! There's a MONSTER in the lake and it's coming for their CRISPS! Laugh-out-loud fun from Blue Peter Award winners Pamela Butchart and Thomas Flintham.

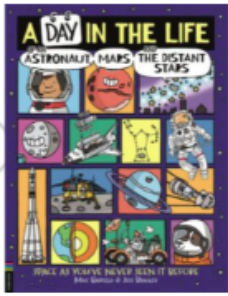


The 13 Storey Treehouse

Andy Griffiths & Terry Denton

Chapter book

The 13-Storey Treehouse is the first book in Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton's wacky treehouse adventures, where the laugh-out-loud story is told through a combination of text and fantastic cartoon-style illustrations. Andy and Terry live in the WORLD'S BEST treehouse! It's got a giant catapult, a secret underground laboratory, a tank of man-eating sharks and a marshmallow machine that follows you around and shoots marshmallows into your mouth whenever you're hungry! Just watch out for the flying cats, or the mermaids, or the sea monsters pretending to be mermaids, or the giant mutant mermaid sea monster. Oh, and, whatever you do, don't get trapped in a burp-gas-filled bubble . . .



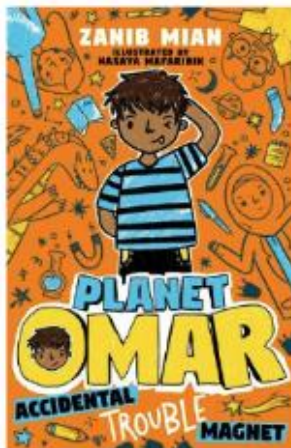
A Day in the Life of an Astronaut, Mars and the Distant Stars

Mike Barfield & Jess Bradley

Non-fiction

This colourful, cartoon-style reference book brings facts to life with humour and fun illustrations. Following on from the enormous success of its award-winning predecessors, this latest book in the 'Day in the Life Of..' series is packed full of information and facts about space, presented in an entertaining comic style that is a joy to read.

Readers will enjoy the variety of scientific information, which felt like a balanced view of different areas including science, technology, astrology and the history of space travel. This would be a great book for children who love a highly visual element to what they read. Readers could dip in and out of the various topics individually, or teachers could choose sections to share as a class when exploring related topics. When added to a classroom library, this series is sure to be in high demand during independent reading time.



Accidental Trouble Magnet by Zanib Mian

Omar is a boy with a vivid imagination, but he also worries about school, bullies and what his parents think of him. With ingenious ideas and creative thinking, he manages to make the best of every situation. According to the publisher's blurb, you will laugh so loud that 'snot will come out of your nose'. Just saying that might be enough to ensure your year 3 children will want to read it.

Diverse | **Fantasy**

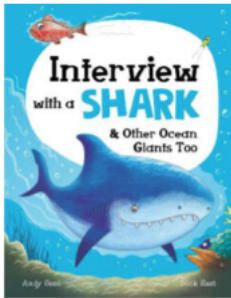


The Accidental Prime Minister by Tom McLaughlin

When schoolboy Joe's video about how he would make the world a better place goes viral, he becomes very popular and very famous and ends up being – Prime Minister! Follow Joe's funny journey in which he makes buses banana-shaped, cats have hats and trains have swimming pools. A great chapter book for more confident 7-year-old readers.

Funny

Non-fiction



Interview with a Shark

Andy Seed & Nick East

Non-fiction

A hilarious books of animal interviews with underwater creatures, from ocean giants like blue whales and orcas to deep-sea dwellers like anglerfish and conger eels. The interviewer quizzes his oceanic guests on life in the deep blue sea – from what they eat and how they swim, to dangers they face and where their names come from. True to style, Andy Seed packs a lot of humour into the interviews and the creatures’ personalities shine through hilariously. The Q&A format breaks the information into bite-size chunks, making it a brilliant choice of book for readers to dip into at their leisure and to find some interesting facts to take away each time they do. With lively colour illustrations by Nick East, this is a highly enjoyable information book that will be sure to make a splash with readers in lower KS2.

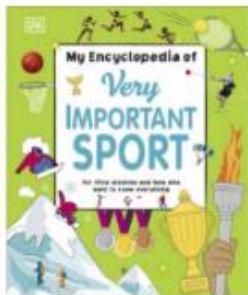


The Street Beneath My Feet

Charlotte Guillian & Yuval Zommer

Non-fiction

A beautiful fold-out book that showcases the wonders of the earth beneath our feet and one with real wow-factor. We recently used it to introduce Class 3's 'Under Our Feet' topic and there were gasps from the children. Sublimely illustrated, its concertina-style pages fold out into a long cross-section of the Earth: in one side and out the other. It contains a wealth of information about geology and science, and opportunities for further questions from curious young minds. Just stunning.

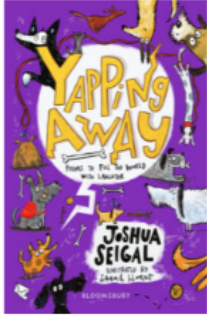


My Encyclopedia of Very Important Sport

DK

A vibrant encyclopedia that combines facts and figures with the inspiring stories of sporting legends and icons. This exciting book for children is packed with fun facts about a range of popular sports such as football, karate, badminton, and skiing, as well as ones you might never have heard of like biathlon or cheese rolling. Whether you're a fan of team sports, winter sports, water sports, extreme sports, and even board games such as chess and go, this reference book has it all! My Encyclopedia of Very Important Sport also celebrates the unique talents, lives, and careers of sporting heroes such as Usain Bolt, Serena Williams, Yuna Kim, Lin Dan, and Donald Bradman, and chronicles the most celebrated stories in sporting history, such as breaking the Four-minute mile, Nadia Comaneci's Perfect 10, and Jesse Owens at the 1936 Olympics. Featuring everything from obscure rules and strange equipment, to moments of triumph and sporting events like The World Cup, Superbowl, Olympics, Paralympics, and more - this is the perfect compendium for budding superstars everywhere.

Poetry



Yapping Away

Joshua Seigal & Sarah Horne

Poetry

Joshua Seigal, winner of the 2020 Laugh Out Loud Book Awards, brings his raucous humour, creativity and wit to another brilliant collection of poems. Ideal for fans of Michael Rosen, this book will delight all young readers and fans of funny books. From hilarious to heartfelt poems - and everything in between - this collection offers something for everyone. Discover the eight steps for having a successful tantrum, and why you should NEVER attend a Teddy Bear's Picnic (you have been warned). Packed full of fun illustrations by Sarah Horne, and covering a range of imaginative topics, Yapping Away is the perfect follow-up to Joshua Seigal's prize-winning collection I Bet I Can Make You Laugh. Ideal for children as young as 3 to read with adults, or for children aged 5-7 to read by themselves.

Up Close

Isabel Thomas & Dawn Cooper

Non-fiction

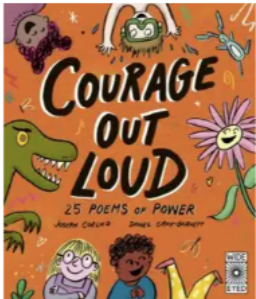
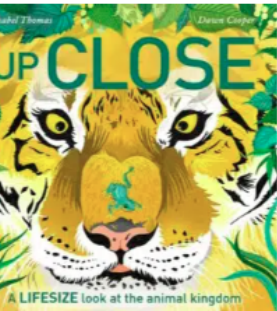
Did you know that the world's biggest tongue belongs to the blue whale? Or that the snub-nosed monkey's nostrils point upwards, and when it rains it makes them sneeze? From paws to claws, tongues, teeth, tails and more, compare the biggest and the smallest animals (and all the others in between) in this illustrated exploration of creatures and their features. Includes stunning 'UP CLOSE' pages, which take a life-size look at a particular feature of two very different animals. See the mighty elephant's trunk (it can grow as long as a bathtub!) and compare it to the sensitive snout of an elephant shrew. Study the bristly tongue of a penguin and see how different it is to the stretchy, long tongue of a salamander. Written by science writer and children's book author Isabel Thomas, with beautiful illustrations by Dawn Cooper, this absorbing book will delight and educate young animal lovers aged 6+.

Courage Out Loud

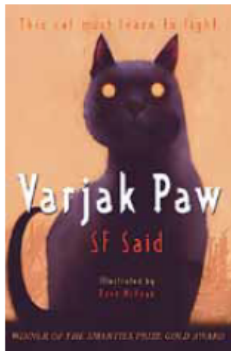
Joseph Coelho & Daniel Gray-Barnett

Poetry

From the fantastic duo behind Poems Aloud and Smile Out Loud comes another compendium of 25 original confidence-building poems to read out loud which will show children that their voice has FANTASTIC power. From multi-award winning poet and Waterstones Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho comes 25 more brilliant, sparkling and truly original poems for children, specially written to help build confidence, develop speaking skills and help foster self-belief. The collection contains mantras to be true to yourself, to help you feel brave, project happiness, conjure a smile, make you laugh or cheer others up. Some are odes, some can be said as personal mantras or just poems that instil confidence and help children realise the power of their voices. Reading these poems aloud will teach children the power of a poem, encouraging them to explore the magic of language and foster a love of verse.



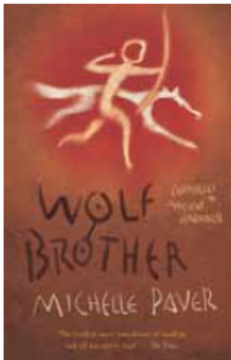
Year 5 and 6



Varjak Paw

SF Said (Random House)

After reading the book, ask children to paint dark city landscapes and skylines. Then together draw role-on-the-wall for Varjak, collecting clues and quotes about his developing character. Ask: *Why is Varjak rejected and yet why does he return?* Explain the difference between Varjak, the Elder Paw and the other cats. Can the children contrast the inside of the house with outside in the city? Together invent a 'Jalal tale' and explain 'the way'. Invite the children to write a night adventure for Varjak – for example, a story in which he nearly gets caught by Sally Bones. Encourage them to write a sequel adventure and then read *The Outlaw Varjak Paw* (Random House).



Wolf Brother

Michelle Paver (Orion)

Before reading draw a map and during the story, mark where events occur. With the class make a list of the words or phrases that Wolf uses instead of human terms and give their definitions, such as *'Tall Tallless, Bright White Eye, thundering Wet'*. Encourage them to try inventing other phrases for everyday things and try writing a scene from the book from Wolf's viewpoint using his language. The story is set 6,000 years ago and imagines what life might have been like. Together describe the main settings – the Raven camp, the ice river, the wide water, the cave and the forest. Draw and discuss as a class the significance of the main events – Torak's father's death, meeting Wolf, fighting Hord, discovering the prophecy and defeating the bear. Compare this book to other 'quests' – typical characters, events and plot patterns.

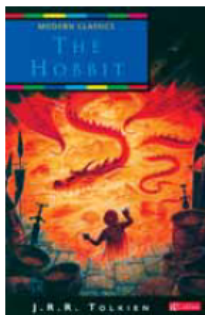


Holes

READ & RESPOND

Louis Sachar (Bloomsbury)

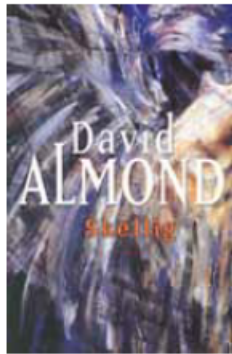
Invite the children to keep a diary for each of the key events – and by contrast, write a letter home from the camp. Together collect information about the main characters and discuss why they behave as they do. Ask: *Why did the author give Stanley a palindromic name?* Draw two timelines to track the present and past events. In role as journalists, encourage children to carry out interviews and write a news item for the start and end of the book. Ask: *Why is the book called 'Holes'?* Talk through all the possibilities. Discuss *'the holes in their lives'*. Then make a comparison with the film (it has a PG certificate, so you might want to check with parents before showing it). (See the *Read & Respond* title for further ideas.)



The Hobbit

JRR Tolkien (HarperCollins)

With the class create maps and a timeline for the adventure. Can they write messages in runic code? Invite them to write letters to Bilbo to persuade him to join the journey. Together create a set of instructions, such as 'How to Trap a Troll'. Role play the Troll scene in lesson. Invite them to write riddles for Bilbo to use against Gollum or the Dragon. Provide time to write Gollum's story, asking: *How did he get inside the mountain and how did he come by the ring?* Together write a poem listing what you would do with a magical ring. After each key part of the story, interview a child in the role of a dwarf and ask them about what has happened or create and film news bulletins. Challenge children to draw or describe Smaug, as well as write an 'end of term report' for Bilbo. Ask: *How has the journey changed him?* Work out the underlying pattern of the Quest story – and the key archetypal characters – then create your own quest in chapters.



Skellig **READ&RESPOND**

David Almond (Hodder)

Together in class discuss Mina's views on education. Ask: *Who or what is Skellig? What is the book about? Invite them to collect key lines to talk about, such as 'truth and dreams are always getting muddled'.* In role as Mina, encourage children to write her diary extracts about what is happening. Perform and talk about 'Tyger' by William Blake. Provide time to write Michael's story for Miss Clarts in Chapter 33. Ask: *Why does Michael want to call the baby 'Persephone'?* Tell the class to read 'Mina – my story' and write a sequel to *Skellig*. (See the *Read & Respond* series for further ideas.)



The Last Bear

Hannah Gold & Levi Pinfold

Chapter book

There are no polar bears left on Bear Island. At least, that's what April's father tells her when his scientific research takes them to this remote Arctic outpost for six months. But one endless summer night, April meets one. He is starving, lonely and a long way from home. Determined to save him, April begins the most important journey of her life...This moving story will win the hearts of children the world over and show them that no one is too young or insignificant to make a difference. *The Last Bear* is a celebration of the love between a child and an animal, a battle cry for our world and an irresistible adventure with a heart as big as a bear's.



The House With Chicken Legs

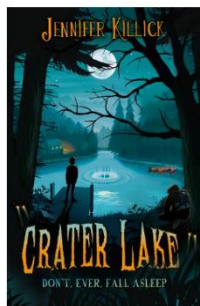
Sophie Anderson & Melissa Castrillon & Elisa Paganelli

Chapter book

This is a wildly imaginative and highly unusual story (in the best of ways) brimming with wonder, magic, folklore and compassion. Marinka is a 12-year-old girl who lives with her grandmother, Baba Yaga. Together they live in a house with chicken legs and move around from place to place, fulfilling their role of 'guardians of the gate' by guiding the spirits of the deceased through the gateway between life and death. Before the spirits pass through the gate, Baba Yaga listens to their stories and celebrates their life with them. Marinka's destiny appears to be already decided; she is to train to become a Yaga like her grandmother and this means that she is never allowed to go to school or make friends with the living. Increasingly Marinka realises that she does not want to live the life of a Yaga and begins to take big risks as she experiences a rising desire to make some real friends and sample a 'normal' existence. What follows is an emotive coming-of-age story that sees Marinka working to resolve the tensions between her own desires and the path she is expected to follow.

Sophie Anderson is a wonderful storyteller and has very skilfully crafted a compelling and believable magical world that is an enchanting amalgamation between traditional and modern. I really enjoyed how, through Marinka's eyes, I found myself able to explore elements of a Slavic folk story in a fresh and relatable way, and how Anderson's emotive narrative invites the reader to meet the characters and events with a large amount of compassion.

This is a magical and captivating narrative that dances its way through darkness and light, joy and grief and life and death and it is highly recommended for Years 5 and 6



Crater Lake by Jennifer Killick

Never, ever fall asleep in this fast-paced and mysterious horror thriller! When Lance sets foot in the Crater Lake activity centre, little does he realise what awaits him and his friends. Will they be able to stop aliens in time before they brainwash all their teachers and classmates? A cracking creepy page-turner for independent readers.

Horror | Adventure



The Lost Whale

Hannah Gold & Levi Pinfold

Chapter book

A highly-recommended story with themes of family bonds, parental mental health and marine conservation. The story centres around a connection between an eleven-year-old boy, Rio, and a beautiful grey whale. The tale highlights the topic of environmental sustainability but also draws a picture of the wonderful connection that can develop between children and animals, placing hope and empowerment in the hands of the young to make a difference in the planet's future.

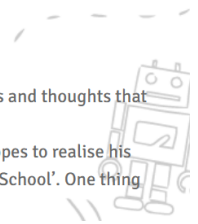


The Boy Who Made Everyone Laugh

Helen Rutter

Chapter book

This debut novel from Helen Rutter is inspired by her own son who has a stammer, and it delves into the worries and thoughts that Billy has about having a stammer and how he thinks the outside world will see him because of it. When eleven-year-old Billy starts Bannerdale secondary school, he wants to fit in and be popular. In fact, he hopes to realise his dream of becoming a comedian and being known throughout the school as 'Billy Plimpton, the Funniest Boy in School'. One thing stands in his way though - he decides he won't talk until he's 'got rid' of his stammer...



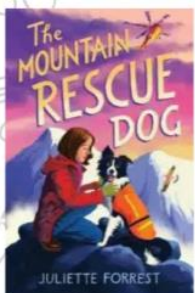
Malamander

Thomas Taylor

Chapter book

A hugely popular sea themed mystery laced with monstrous humour. Welcome to Eerie-on-Sea, a seaside setting with its own legend of the mysterious sea creature called the Malamander. Young friends Herbie and Violet find themselves on a whirlwind of a coastal adventure steeped in imagination and eccentric humour, involving a book dispensary, a mermonkey, a Boathook Man and a flossamporium shop. Can Herbie and Violet put together all the pieces of the puzzle before it is too late?

Malamander mixes scary parts, mysterious parts and whimsically funny parts too, as Thomas Taylor creates an original fantasy mash-up with a nautical twist that will no doubt be enjoyed by readers across KS2 classrooms. I enjoyed the quirky humour and wordplay, the imaginative characters and the galloping pace of the unravelling mystery that is edged with peril throughout.



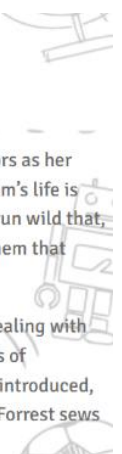
The Mountain Rescue Dog

Juliette Forrest

Chapter book

A gripping mountain-based adventure with strong female role models. Clova has grown up with the mountains and moors as her playground, with her Mum and Dad's love of the outdoors shared passionately since the day she was born. When her Mum's life is lost during a search and rescue mission, Clova loses not just her Mum, but her Dad, her best friend and the freedom to run wild that, to her, is the very essence of life itself. By chance she meets Taffy, an abandoned collie, and a bond develops between them that might just save more than one life, including their own.

This is a story filled with loss and heartbreak, hope and fear, and a delicate web of characters, each experiencing and dealing with loss in their own way. I found myself wanting to pack a rucksack and hiking boots and head straight off to the highlands of Scotland, then became mindful of the dangers that might arise if I did just that. Masterful and sweet, each character is introduced, sometimes fleetingly, only to return at a poignant point later as their paths cross again and the elaborate tapestry that Forrest sews comes together.





The Explorer

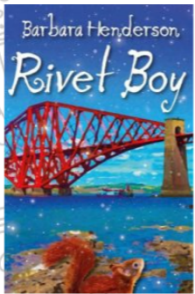
Katherine Rundell

Chapter book

Winner of the Costa Children's Book Award 2017, 'The Explorer' is set in the Amazon and follows the story of Fred, whose plane accidentally crashes into the rainforest canopy.

The Explorer is an exciting and gripping adventure that sees four children learning to survive as they journey through unfamiliar and challenging circumstances. This book transports you to a richly drawn land and you will find yourself right there with the children as they follow a map to a lost city, eating tarantulas and swimming with river dolphins.

Katherine Rundell's The Explorer is a perfect class read for children learning about rainforests, the Amazon, friendships, resilience and much more. Exquisite writing from Katherine Rundell; teachers report that the quality of discussions that ensued in classrooms was inspiring.



Rivet Boy

Barbara Henderson

Chapter book

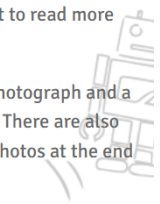
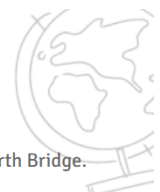
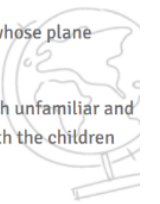
Set in Victorian times, this is the story of the children who worked on the dangerous job of building the famous Forth Bridge.

This is a truly exciting adventure that brings a real historical scenario to life. The thought of being perched up on top of the bridge with no safety measures at all made my blood run cold! Add into that some villainous villains and a child hero and you have a recipe for breath-taking episodes and action-packed escapades, with a seamless blending of fact and fiction.

The book is quite a slim one and very easy to read. The shorter length makes it very attractive to children who want to read more complex material but have less stamina and are put off by lengthy books.

As Tom Palmer, quoted on the cover, says, "I loved it". The cover image behind Palmer's quote turned out to be a photograph and a montage (by Richie Chan and Tsekhmister) - it looks like a painting by an impressionist artist and is very beautiful. There are also small drawings dotted around the text by Sandra McGowan. Based on real people and real events, the additional photos at the end add to the reality of the time and place.

The topic of Victorian child labour is often covered in schools and this story has a new dimension to add to the more commonly covered workplace scenarios of mines and factories. The story will also appeal to budding engineers, with fascinating insights into the construction of one of the UK's most iconic bridges.



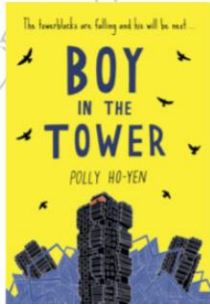
The Shark Caller

Zillah Bethell & Saara Soederlund

Chapter book

It's no secret that we are big fans of Zillah Bethell's books here at BooksForTopics HQ. The Shark Caller is a stunner of a story - rich with the sights and sounds of its Papua New Guinean setting while also reflecting sagely on universal themes of life and death, family, friendship and time. Full of depth, this story is most suitable for mature readers in KS2 who can handle plot twists and deeper, philosophical themes to discuss. It's beautifully written, wise, enticing - haunting at times - but also full of thrills and surprises....



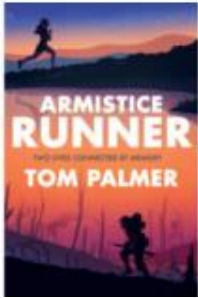


Boy in the Tower

Polly Ho-Yen

Chapter book

When they first arrived, they came quietly and stealthily as if they tip-toed into the world when we were all looking the other way. Ade loves living at the top of a tower block. From his window, he feels like he can see the whole world stretching out beneath him. His mum doesn't really like looking outside - but it's going outside that she hates. She prefers to sleep all day inside their tower, where it's safe. Except it isn't any more. Strange plants have started to take over and tower blocks are falling down around them. Now Ade and his mum are trapped and there's no way out...

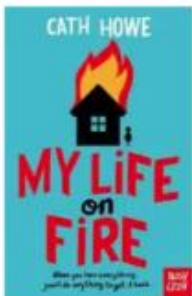


Armistice Runner

Tom Palmer & Tom Clohosey Cole

Chapter book Dyslexia-friendly

Best-selling author Tom Palmer has a track record of bringing together his passions for sport and history in popular stories with a high appeal in primary schools. His gripping story, Armistice Runner, brings into the spotlight messenger runners on the front line of World War I. As with all of Tom's books published by Barrington Stoke, these books are 'super-readable' due to their accessible layout including a dyslexia-friendly font and tinted paper. This is a wonderful story to use in KS2 classrooms to explore the history of the World War 1 Armistice.



My Life on Fire

Cath Howe

Chapter book

A captivating and thought-provoking dual narrative from the author of Ella on the Outside.

As Ren and her family drove home one evening they could see orange flames dancing in the sky and bursting like fireworks and flashing fire engines – this excitement soon turns to terror and misery when they realise it is their home on fire. Their lives change instantly when they have to rebuild their lives and home due to the devastating fire. Ren, her parents and little brother Petie have to move in with their strict Gran, who starts to take care of them more due to her parents being busy sorting out the house, business and money troubles.

Renn feels empty and lost with nothing left and soon finds a way to help herself feel better – by taking small items that are meaningful to her old life or other people. Whilst doing this, she feels better but simultaneously she feels wracked with guilt. Meanwhile, Caspar is chatty, inquisitive and really helpful. When things start to go missing in school, he is on a mission to find the culprit. What will happen when he finds out it is his new friend?

The story is told through two perspectives: Ren and Caspar. They are two completely different characters with very different lives, but in the end become true allies and a real help to each other. The narrative was easy to read and having the two perspectives in two different fonts made it easy to decipher which character was telling their version of events. As the story progresses, the pace quickens and I was desperate to read on to find out what was going to happen to Ren and Caspar. The ending was satisfying and wholesome.

The story focuses on complex moral choices and what to do when your friend is in trouble even though it could cause trouble for yourself. The story would make a great class read for Year 6 with links to PSHE, empathy work or class discussions.

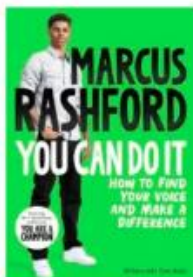


Head Kid

David Baddiel

Chapter book

From the million-copy bestselling author of THE PARENT AGENCY and BIRTHDAY BOY comes a wildly entertaining wish-fulfilment adventure that asks the question: what would happen if the strictest head teacher swapped bodies with the naughtiest kid in school? Strictest head naughtiest boy = chaos. Bracket Wood is about to be visited by the school inspectors. But there's one big problem: Ryan Ward. The maestro of practical jokes, Ryan has played so many tricks that in the end the Head Teacher just walks out. And then the new Head Teacher, Mr Carter, arrives. A man so strict even the teachers are scared of him. So imagine his surprise - and Ryan's - when they swap bodies. Now Ryan is Head Teacher - and his mortal enemy is one of his pupils. It's every naughty kid's dream! But soon Bracket Wood School is in a total mess - and only its worst ever pupil can fix it...



You Can Do It

Marcus Rashford

Non-fiction

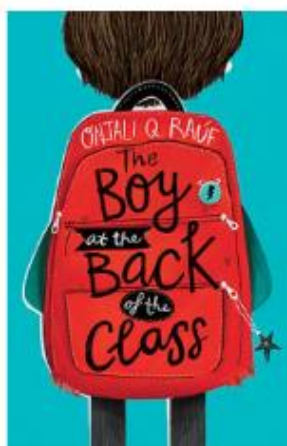
Never underestimate your actions - even the smallest changes can have the biggest impact. That's the power of kindness. From Marcus Rashford MBE and Carl Anka, the bestselling authors of You Are a Champion, comes the eagerly-awaited inspiring and positive follow-up, You Can Do It: How to Find Your Voice and Make a Difference. Marcus uses the power of his voice to shine a light on the injustices that he cares passionately about, and now he wants to help YOU find the power in yours! From surrounding yourself with the right team, to showing kindness to those around you, to celebrating and championing difference, You Can Do It shows you that your voice really does matter and that you can do anything you put your mind to. You don't have to be an International footballer to make a difference - even the smallest changes can have the biggest impact. Packed with more inspiring stories from Marcus's own life, brilliant advice, and top-tips from social justice educator Shannon Weber, this book will show you how to use your voice and make a difference in this world.



The Final Year by Matt Goodfellow and Joe Todd-Stanton

The end of Year 5 through to the end of primary school is told through fragments of life in this unique and powerful verse story. Accessible, powerful, and highly relatable, Year 6 children will empathise with Nate and the challenges he faces at home, his struggles with bullying at school, and deciphering what really matters between the ages of 10 and 11. Highly recommended. Featured as our fiction book of the month for September 2023.

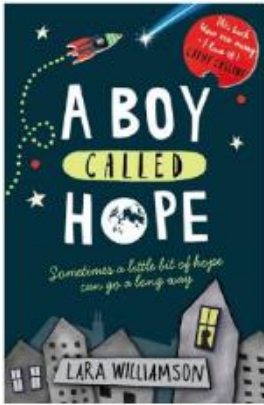
Verse story



The Boy At the Back of the Class by Onjali Rauf

Narrated in the first person by Ahmet, a nine-year-old Syrian refugee, this story follows how he copes with life in London, and how he plans to find the family he left behind. A masterpiece of empathy with situations and storylines that pupils will relate to, this is an excellent book to spark discussion, hot seating, and creative writing in Year 6 literacy and English lessons.

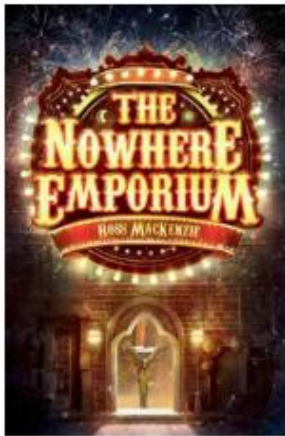
Diverse



A Boy Called Hope by Lara Williamson

Year 6 students will love this highly original and interesting peek into the life of Dan Hope and his dysfunctional family. Touching and thought-provoking, it is an excellent book to read after *Wonder* and a great book to discuss with Year 6 pupils in PSHE. This story is a brilliant study of family relationships and changing friendships.

Family



The Nowhere Emporium by Ross MacKenzie

When a strange shop appears out of nowhere, Daniel finds himself drawn into the mysterious building and its never-ending passages and surprises. He starts working for the owner – Mr Silver – but when Mr Silver vanishes into thin air, Daniel has to face threats and dark forces to save the Emporium. With rich language and sharply written descriptions, this is a great class reader book for Year 6.

Fantasy



Time Travelling With a Hamster by Ross Welford

A moving and memorable story about time travel. When Al reads a letter it sets off a chain of events in which he races to travel back to 1984 to try and save his late father. A highly imaginative and thought-provoking middle-grade chapter book, this is a must-read novel for year sixes.

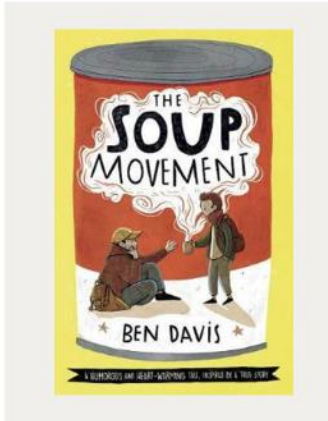
Science fiction



Cogheart by Peter Bunzl

When her father goes missing in mysterious circumstances, Lily's life is in sudden danger. Who took her father, and what do they want? A great page-turner book for ten-year-olds set in a steampunk Victorian world of shadowy clockmakers. With relatable characters and an ever-twisting plot, this is a compelling book for group reading in year 6.

Adventure

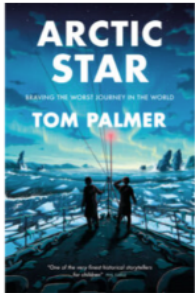


Thirteen-year-old Jordan and Rio meet in hospital where they are both having treatment for cancer. Their friendship really blossoms, and they agree to spend a whole year doing lovely things to people and keep spreading the kindnesses all over the world. They plan to meet exactly a year later to see how much things have changed.

Cut forward to Jordan's life now he's in remission from cancer and out of hospital. His family have moved to a boring suburb, where the air is cleaner. But Jordan is finding it difficult to make friends and fit in, so when his mum gives him some delicious homemade (and 'uncool') soup to take to school, he gives it to a homeless man called Harry. Harry loves it, and so in the spirit of doing kind things for people, Jordan ends up secretly running a soup kitchen for all the homeless people in town.

The story unfolds via hospital blogs back from when Jordan was in hospital and also from Jordan's present-day reality in the suburbs, but flows well and doesn't get too complicated. It's full of warmth and explores some interesting ideas about the power of kindness, and about social justice and taking action for what you feel strongly about. It's also about falling in love.

Very funny and deeply moving, this is a lovely book for children in the early years of secondary school, with lots to chew on, and older teens might want to move onto John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* a bit later on.

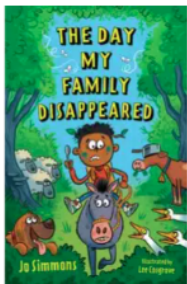


Arctic Star

Tom Palmer

Chapter book Dyslexia-friendly

This well-researched and highly readable novel takes its title from the name of the medal that honours the Arctic Convoys during World War II. The story, with its concluding Author's Note and accompanying online teaching notes available from [Tom Palmer's website](#), provides an exciting and informative classroom resource for the teaching of WWII as a curriculum topic, besides being a book many children will choose for the sheer enjoyment of reading. Winner of the BooksForTopics **Book of the Year Award** for Best Curriculum Support.

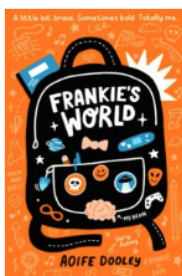


The Day My Family Disappeared

Jo Simmons & Lee Cosgrove

Chapter book

Home Alone meets Adrian Mole in this hilarious madcap adventure from the bestselling author of *I Swapped My Brother on the Internet*. Bob Bunyon is fed up. In a family full of artists and performers, he's the one with no talent, the one bypassed by the creativity gene – and his four siblings just won't let him forget it. Finally sick of being taunted for being so "normal", Bob wishes that his family would all just disappear, but he doesn't really expect his wish to come true! When he wakes the next day to find everyone gone, Bob's initial delight quickly turns to worry. Does he have supernatural powers? Is he the only survivor of a zombie apocalypse or an alien invasion? Gathering all his courage, and employing survival skills learned from TV endurance shows, Bob sets out to find his missing family ...



Frankie's World

Aoife Dooley

Graphic Novel

Frankie knows she's not like anyone else in her class: she's different, but she can't quite figure out why. Is it the new freckle on her nose, or the fact she's small for her age? Or that she has to go to the hospital sometimes? Everyone else seems to think she's weird too, and they make fun of her at school. Frankie's dad left when she was a baby - maybe he was different too? It would explain why she always feels like an alien. So she and her best-friend Sam, embark on a mission to track him down. A graphic novel offering a unique perspective on Autism, told with humour and heart. Brought to life with glorious colour artwork in a distinctive blue and orange palette.

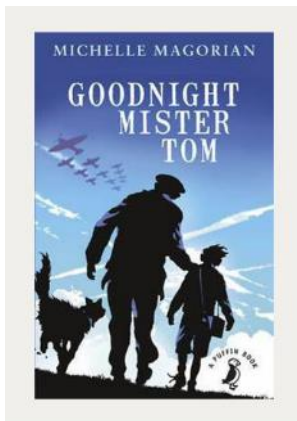


Hector is a bully who doesn't really care about anyone and thinks his cringey parents don't care about him. His teachers don't seem to like him (he certainly hates them), he particularly dislikes teacher's pet Mei Lei, and he devotes his time to being mean to other kids and making them give him sweets.

He's got so little sympathy for a local homeless man Thomas (who is taking up space in the park, including a bench Hector would like to sit on) that he ends up pushing Thomas's trolley containing his only worldly possessions into the park pond without a single thought of how much hurt that would cause.

When a spate of London landmark sculptures are suddenly stolen, including Paddington Bear and the Eros statue in Piccadilly Circus, Hector is convinced the crimes have been carried out by homeless people led by Thomas - but no sooner has he reported Thomas to the police than he realises he's got it horribly wrong. With the help of his enemy Mei Lei, Hector must race against time to make sure justice is done - but that's not the only thing he needs to change.

A brilliantly written and totally engrossing story that will help children understand and think deeply about the real human beings whose lives are impacted by homelessness - and also more generally about the power of kindness, friendship, empathy and how everyone has the potential to change for the better. Onjali Q Rauf (winner of the Blue Peter Book Award and Waterstones book prize for *The Boy at the Back of the Class*) has written a gripping, realistic, and relatable tale with a strong moral at its heart, perfect for children aged seven and up.

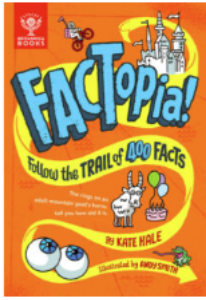


Willie Beech is evacuated to a tiny English village in the country just before the outbreak of World War II. A lonely and deprived child, he finds himself living with the reclusive, gruff old widower, Thomas Oakley. Although the two find it hard to adjust to their life together at first, they gradually develop a strong, mutual bond. Willie begins to enjoy life and make new friends in the village.

However, everything is thrown into confusion when Willie is suddenly recalled to London by his neglectful and abusive mother. After several weeks with no letter from Willie, Tom Oakley becomes concerned for his welfare and sets out to London in search of him.

Michelle Magorian's classic wartime story is a superbly written and deeply moving tale, which shows that even the most unlikely people can become exceptional parents.

Non Fiction

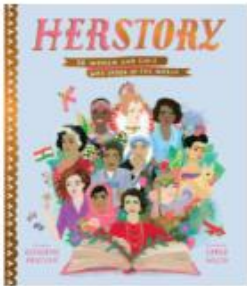


Factopia

Kate Hale & Andy Smith

Non-fiction

Welcome to FACTopia!, a wonderland of crazily connected facts. Choose your own path through this hilarious world of 400 facts, all of which are verified by Encyclopaedia Britannica. Every fact in the book is connected to the next in an ingenious trail of information – making it a kind of ‘choose your own adventure’ of the fact world. From the attention-grabbing orange cover to the final recordbreaking endings, this book is a winner. It has an index, it has sources, it has picture credits, it has information about the author, illustrator and designer, it has a contents listing. But more, much more than these useful additions, it has facts, 400+ of them, presented so that readers can choose their own way through the book on the basis of what intrigues them most...



HerStory: 50 Women and Girls Who Shook the World

Katherine Halligan & Sarah Walsh

Non-fiction

One of The Guardian's Best New Children's Books for Summer 2018. Longlisted for the North Somerset Teachers' Book Award. Instead of just studying history, let's think about HerStory too! In this uplifting and inspiring book, children can learn about 50 intrepid women from around the world and throughout history. Telling the stories of their childhood, the challenges they faced and the changes they made, each gorgeously illustrated spread is a celebration of girl power in its many forms. With a range of pioneering careers - from astronauts to activists, musicians to mathematicians and many more - young readers will be inspired to follow their own dreams and to make the world a better place. Compelling, motivating and brilliantly illustrated in equal measure, this is the perfect introduction to just some of the amazing women who have shaped our world. This is a lush non-fiction collection with beautiful illustrations, photos and interesting facts. HerStory celebrates fearless women from all over the world, and is sure to inspire young girls and women everywhere.



India, Incredible India

Jasbinder Bilan & Nina Chakrabarti

Non-fiction

India, Incredible India written by Jasbinder and brought to life by artist Nina Chakrabarti is a **joyful celebration of India**. For years the BooksForTopics inbox has received requests for recommendations of good books to support curriculum learning about India – and for the first time we really do have a book that hits the spot. Layered between the information is a story of the bond between Nanijee (Grandmother) and Thara (her granddaughter). Each night when Thara sleeps over, Nanijee lets her choose an object from her beautiful carved trunk. Each of the objects has been lovingly collected over many years and when it is taken out, Nanijee tells a story of the object and where it is from over a series of beautiful and informative double-page spreads.



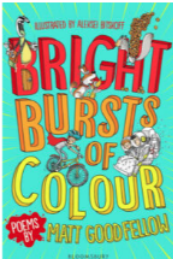
Majestic Mountains: Discover Earth's Mighty Peaks

Mia Cassany & Marcos Navarro

Non-fiction

Which animal lives on top of the Everest? Where can you spot the majestic condor? How does the ibex climb up rocks? Mountains are home to 25% of terrestrial biodiversity and a multitude of fragile ecosystems. What if you could fly and discover those places and the incredible wild animals hidden at high altitude? This large format book transports you to inaccessible places and helps you discover the incredible fauna that live in these mountains, volcanoes, hills or valleys. Throughout the book is a search and find counting game enabling you to spot bats ready to take flight, sloths hanging from branches, wallabies and their babies, and butterflies aplenty.

Poetry

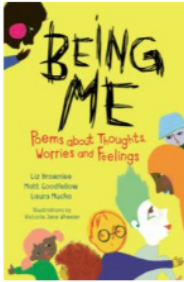


Bright Bursts of Colour

Matt Goodfellow & Aleksei Bitskoff

Poetry

A brilliant, prize-winning collection of poems by Matt Goodfellow which is funny, engaging and touching in turns. What if cats had flavoured fur or if you swallowed the sun? What if you were a special kind of badger or if you found a map to the stars? And what if your home was split during the week: one half at Mum's, the other half at Dad's? Packed with brilliant poems that explore a whole range of themes from the downright silly to the sensitive, this collection will delight, enthuse and resonate with children and adults alike. Winner of the 2020 North Somerset Teachers' Book Award for best children's poetry book.



Being Me

Liz Brownlee, Matt Goodfellow & Laura Mucha & Victoria Jane Wheeler

Poetry

Read about the Land of Blue, where it's OK to feel sad, find ideas for what to do with worries or how to slow down when your head is full of hurry. Give yourself time to chill out, find quiet voices in noisy places and discover kindness in yourself and others. Then maybe your own special thought machine will tell you, 'This is going well. You're doing great. You've got this!' And you have! This important and unique anthology of 45 poems by three leading poets, well known for their empathy and perception, speaks to the heart of what children think and care about, offering understanding, support and encouragement. With an endnote by leading clinical psychologist Karen Goodall.



My Heart is a Poem

Various authors & Various illustrators

Poetry

Many classrooms have poetry book with the classics – which are fabulous – but this collection really celebrates modern, diverse poets and their poetry.

The poems in this book will directly relate to children's experiences of life and the emotions they will have felt. Some poems tackle more challenging emotions that arise from bullying or sadness and one poem tackles an often unspoken emotion – embarrassment. Some of these poems may need to be introduced sensitively, but the language and range of poetry styles make them accessible to explore as well as providing useful springboards for the discussion of feelings.

Some of the poems lend themselves to being spoken out loud and poems such as 'Stomp' and 'It's like this' in the collection almost demand performance. Others are well suited to quiet reflection. The poems are written by a wide and diverse range of poets and this collection makes it a good introduction to some of the great children's poets of today.

At the back of the book, there are photographs and short biographies of each of the poets. What this makes explicit for children is the diversity of poets as well as their achievements. Many of the poems would work well as models for children's own poetry writing, with clear patterns that could be followed. For example, the first poem 'If you could see laughter' asks us to see laughter as a colour and something we can visualise. Each poem is illustrated in a different style and children could easily identify their favourite illustration. This is a great collection for any classroom.