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Illustration ©Sandhya Prabhat

# BookTrust's Great Books Guide 2025–26

For reading for pleasure

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## How to make the most of your Great Books Guide

1. Flip through the guide for a selection of books for students aged 4-11+
2. Read the short synopsis and our expert review of the book. We have included the genre, themes and number of pages for each book.
3. Make your own shortlist by marking up your guide!  Tick the box, circle the image or **highlight** the title – which books do you think your students will love?
4. Source your books from your preferred supplier
5. Refer back to the guide whenever you need to refresh your book offerings!
6. Scan this QR code to enter to win all 100 of these books for your school





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# About BookTrust

As the UK's largest children's reading charity, we want every child to read regularly and by choice. We reach millions of children and families every year, inspiring them with books and resources to get them started on their reading journey, offering focused support to children and families with low incomes and vulnerable family backgrounds.

You can support us and our mission by getting involved today – fundraise, donate or share our tools and resources. By purchasing any book featured within this guide from Browns Books, you will be supporting us in our mission to get every child reading.



Illustration ©Sandhya Prabhat

## How reading benefits children's wellbeing

The benefits of reading are extensive and varied and can be a powerful tool for children's wellbeing.

Children can experience these benefits both internally and externally:



### Internal

- Self-regulation
- Self-awareness
- Perspective and insight

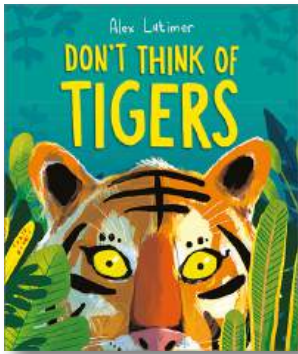


### External

- Empathy and social skills
- Fostering relationships
- Navigating social contexts

To find out more visit our website [booktrust.org.uk/benefits-of-reading](https://booktrust.org.uk/benefits-of-reading)

# Age 4–5



Picture book  
32 pages

## **Don't Think of Tigers**

Alex Latimer  
Andersen Press

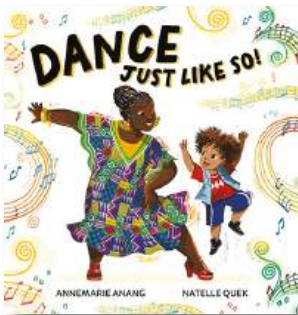
### **Comedy**

Art  
Animals  
Creativity

The illustrator offers to draw anything the reader wants... just not a tiger, as he's not very good at those. Unfortunately, if you are told not to think about tigers, they immediately pop into your mind!

Soon every page has one – there's an eight-legged tiger, a box-shaped one and even one with a mermaid's tail.

Silly, funny and interactive, with the valuable message that to do something well, you'll probably have to do it badly a few times first.



Picture book  
32 pages

## **Dance Just Like So!**

Annemarie Anang, illustrated by Natelle Quek

Five Quills

### **Fiction**

Community  
Dance  
Family

Poor Gran hurts her knee teaching Kwesi and the neighbours her trophy-winning dance, the Shooby-Doo Mambo. But it's no fun dancing without Gran. Then Kwesi has a great idea and choreographs some special moves to put Gran at the centre of the action once more.

As well as celebrating the joy of dance, the story also explores the touching, intergenerational relationship between grandparent and child (who live together with no parents depicted or mentioned). Vibrant and vivacious.



Picture book  
32 pages

## **The Footballing Fairy**

Elli Woollard, illustrated by Irina Avgustinovich

Magic Cat Publishing

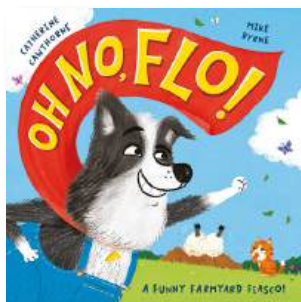
### **Comedy**

Football  
Resilience  
Teamwork

Femi the fairy adores playing football. However, when she boots a pumpkin into a bowl of soup at a party, the Fairyland King tells her to practise more appropriate fairy activities, rather than shooting and kicking.

Full of self-doubt, Femi wonders if she should hang up her football boots, but an elf gives her the encouragement she needs to believe in herself.

Cleverly interwoven with strands from familiar fairy tales, plus a rhyming text to give the story pace and rhythm.



Picture book  
32 pages

### **Oh No, Flo!**

Catherine Cawthorne,  
illustrated by  
Mike Byrne

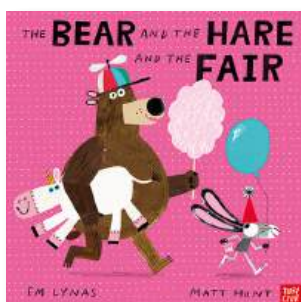
Templar Books

#### **Comedy**

Animals  
Farm

When Farmer is sick one day, Flo the sheepdog helps by doing the jobs. Soon Flo is confidently collecting the geese and feeding the eggs. Then she brushes carrots and sows sheep. Oh no, Flo! She's in a bit of a muddle...

This delightful picture book has silly mix-ups that should have children roaring the refrain: 'Oh no, Flo!' The bright, friendly illustrations are full of character and have lots of details to spot. A funny farmyard fiasco.



Picture book  
32 pages

### **The Bear and the Hare and the Fair**

Em Lynas,  
illustrated by  
Matt Hunt

Nosy Crow

#### **Comedy**

Animals  
Funny  
Rhyme

Bear is asleep in his comfy chair, in his cavernous lair, when Hare decides that they're going to the fair. So, Hare and Bear go to the fair. But will Bear actually enjoy any of the rides?

In this bright, rhyming book, all the language used is fun to read and listen to, with lots of exclamation-type words, sound repetition and fun rhyming verbs.

A lovely book about friendship, trying something new and going out of your comfort zone.



Picture book  
32 pages

### **I'm Going to Make a Friend**

Darren Chetty,  
illustrated by  
Sandhya Prabhat

Little Tiger

#### **Fiction**

Friendship  
Moving home  
Resilience

A child moves to a new neighbourhood and starts making a new friend out of bits and bobs from around the home. As the home-made friend takes shape, another child joins in. As they build and play, might they both realise that they have made a new friend after all?

The children's body language is illustrated superbly, and this subtext gives children an opportunity to talk about how the characters might be feeling and relate it to their own experiences.



Picture book  
32 pages

### **Taking the Long Way Home**

Jake Hope,  
illustrated by  
Brian Fitzgerald  
Scallywag Press

**Comedy**  
Family  
Imagination  
Nature

Today, Uncle Jerome is picking up Zahra and her brother from school and he suggests they take 'the long way home'. Uncle Jerome gets the siblings to use their five senses to conjure up a world of imagination. When birds become swooping pterodactyls and ripples in the water become snappy crocodiles, this ordinary walk home from school turns into a super-sized adventure.

Fun and energetic, starring a mixed-race family and two positive male role models in the dad and uncle.



Picture book  
36 pages

### **The Shy Book**

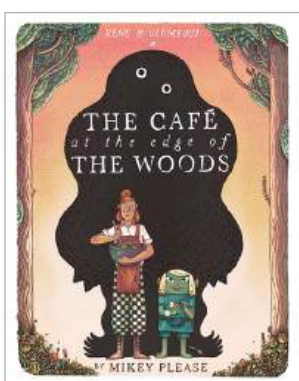
Howard  
Pearlstein,  
illustrated by  
James Munro

Graffeg  
**Comedy**  
Confidence  
Feelings

This book doesn't feel confident when meeting new people. But it has a plan to make friends. It can ask readers questions about themselves. Slowly, it becomes more comfortable until it finally feels... happy!

Readers will enjoy responding to 'the book', searching for it on each page and laughing at its silly disguises.

Not only is this book funny, interactive and creative, but it also teaches children social skills. Ideal to use to talk about themes of self-confidence or friendship.



Picture book  
48 pages

### **The Café at the Edge of the Woods**

Mikey Please  
HarperCollins  
Children's Books

**Comedy**  
Food  
Mythical  
creatures  
Rhyme

Rene has her own café, and her first customer is an ogre, who wants bats, slugs and maggots. So, by dressing up her fine cuisine as ghoulish snails and mice, the café quickly becomes a thriving spot for all the mythical inhabitants of the woods.

This is an innovative, rhyming picture book with appealing features like yucky food, magical creatures and slapstick humour. The unique illustrations have intricate details, a muted colour palette and characterful expressions. Fun, with plenty to spot.



Picture book  
40 pages

### **The Tour at School**

Katie Clapham,  
illustrated by  
Nadia Shireen  
Walker Books

**Comedy**  
Friendship  
School

Follow a boy as he gets a whirlwind tour of his new school from a very confident pupil. With so much important information to share, the guide doesn't realise that the new kid is feeling overwhelmed. She eventually reflects that he just needs a friend.

A sweet, funny and thoughtful picture book. The depiction of school life is brilliant, with noise, games and chaotic fun, all illustrated beautifully. Perfect for children who are moving school or transitioning to a new year.



Picture book  
32 pages

### **The Girl at the Front of the Class**

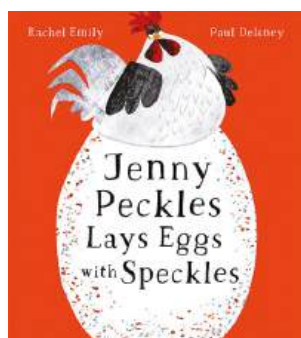
Onjali Q. Rauf,  
illustrated by  
Pippa Curnick

Hodder Children's  
Books

**Fiction**  
Friendship  
Migration  
School

Adam's new classmate seems so sad and never joins in. He discovers she is sad because she had to leave her home, her family and everything she owned in another country. So Adam makes a new story just for her, in which they are friends.

It's a beautiful story of kindness, and includes five practical ideas on welcoming refugee children. War and violence are not directly mentioned, but the book could spark questions on why children might need to flee.



Picture book  
32 pages

### **Jenny Peckles Lays Eggs with Speckles**

Rachel Emily,  
illustrated by  
Paul Delaney

Farshore

**Comedy**  
Animals  
Farm  
Rhyme

Down on Old Worrall's Farm, a group of imaginatively named hens are laying eggs with a difference: spotted eggs, eggs with red splodges, glowing eggs, eggs with speckles and even sparkly eggs.

When it transpires that Sally McSquawk doesn't actually lay eggs that talk, the narrator becomes suspicious. Have all the chickens been pretending about their various egg-citing creations, just to make a convenient rhyme?

A lovely, inventive book, with delightfully silly rhyming that rolls off the tongue.



Picture book  
32 pages

**Hank Goes  
Honk**

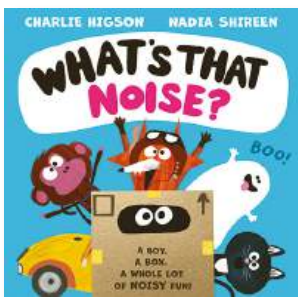
Maudie Powell-Tuck, illustrated by Duncan Beedie

Little Tiger

**Comedy**  
Animals  
Behaviour

Hank the goose always – HONK! – interrupts sentences – HONK! – and pecks things. HONK! So he tries to change. But then he sees a huge, very poppable balloon...

This is a hilarious picture book that will have children joining in with the honking. The themes of being considerate to others, and of trying again if you mess up, are dealt with in a humorous yet encouraging way. The fantastic illustrations add a lot of humour, especially in the animals' expressions. Great fun.



Picture book  
32 pages

**What's That  
Noise?**

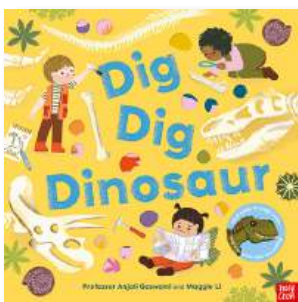
Charlie Higson, illustrated by Nadia Shireen

Simon & Schuster Children's Books

**Comedy**  
Animals  
Imagination

Bob finds a box. He has noisy fun in his box: stamping like a T. rex, brumming his car and eating crunchy cereal. And every time a passer-by stops... Bob goes completely silent until they move on. Bob puts more and more outrageously fun and LOUD things into his box – even a yodelling monkey!

This wonderfully silly picture book celebrates the joys of imagination, language and noise! It is wonderful to read aloud with its rhythmic text and building absurdity.



Picture book  
36 pages

**Dig, Dig,  
Dinosaur**

Professor Anjali Goswami, illustrated by Maggie Li

Nosy Crow

**Non-fiction**  
Dinosaurs  
Interactive

Three children set off on an expedition. They pack a trowel, hammer, notebook, pencil, map, and off they go! When they start digging, the children find some amazing fossils: a Velociraptor, a Triceratops, a Tyrannosaurus and even a HUGE Diplodocus!

Included are basic facts about each dinosaur and illustrations of what they looked like. This fun picture book is a great introduction to dinosaurs, fossils and archaeology, featuring peep-through holes and a lovely, large fold-out section at the end.



Picture book  
48 pages

### **We are Definitely Human**

X. Fang  
Pushkin  
Children's Books

**Comedy**  
Aliens  
Community

A very obviously alien family crashes into the house of Mr and Mrs Li. They insist they are human – from 'Europe'.

Luckily, the Lis are kind humans, so they immediately help, and so do their friends. They accept odd answers to what the aliens do for a job and they all club together to help the aliens fix their spaceship.

A funny and profound picture book on helping and acceptance. It will spark fun opportunities to talk about kindness.



Picture book  
32 pages

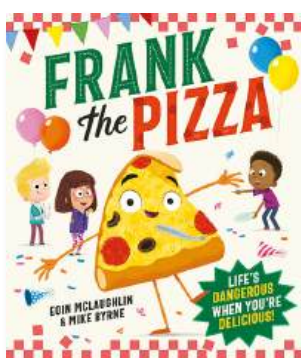
### **The Biggest Dog in the Book**

Ben Lerwill,  
illustrated by  
Mark Chambers

DK  
**Comedy**  
Animals  
Size

Meet Agnes the Chihuahua. She's not the biggest dog in the book. Neither is Magnus the dachshund or Popcorn the beagle. Nor is Speedy Sam – he's a tortoise in the wrong book! So who is the biggest dog in the book?

This funny picture book is bouncy and sweet. The text repeats as we meet bigger and bigger dogs, which is fun to anticipate, and makes it very enjoyable to read aloud, while the gorgeous illustrations are energetic and bright.



Picture book  
32 pages

### **Frank the Pizza**

Eoin McLaughlin,  
illustrated by  
Mike Byrne

HarperCollins  
Children's Books

**Comedy**  
Food  
Friendship

When Frank's invited to Billy Greedlepot's party, his dad makes him wear olives and anchovies. 'Yuck!' say all the children. No one will play with him except Frances the cupcake. Together, they add delicious toppings to themselves. But then the hungry children notice them...

This hilariously silly picture book has fabulous, bright illustrations with brilliantly expressive pizzas and cupcakes. The story could lead to conversations about making friends and fitting in, but most of all, it's a lot of fun.



Picture book  
32 pages

**Liliana  
the Strong**

Quentin Blake,  
illustrated by  
Emma Chichester  
Clark

Two Hoots

**Comedy**  
Kindness  
Resilience

Liliana has a bad cold and is feeling weak. To cheer her up, her mother reminds her of the many strong feats she's performed: carrying a piano upstairs, stopping a runaway steamroller – even throwing a beached whale back out to sea!

Liliana's use of her super strength to help people, plus the gorgeous illustrations, combine to make this an utterly charming picture book. A brilliant collaboration between two award-winning, much-loved creators.



Picture book  
40 pages

**Don't Trust  
Fish!**

Neil Sharpson,  
illustrated by  
Dan Santat

Andersen Press

**Comedy**  
Animals  
Empathy

Can we trust fish? They don't follow rules. Some live in fresh water, some in salt water. And we definitely don't know for sure that fish don't have giant battle aquariums with laser beams that they will one day use to take over the world.

An absolute hoot on every page. And, as it's written by a crab, this may inspire interesting conversations about who we should trust and why, and why we shouldn't jump to conclusions or make generalisations.



Picture book  
32 pages

**My Rice is Best!**

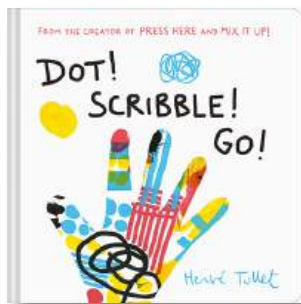
Selina Brown,  
illustrated by  
Maxwell A. Oginni

Puffin

**Comedy**  
Culture  
Food  
School

When Shane takes his mum's special rice and peas for his lunch at school, he is surprised that his friend Yinka has also brought rice: jollof rice. Then, when Shane's other classmates show off their rice lunches, everyone claims theirs is the 'best rice'. Clearly, they're wrong. Aren't they?

This bright and sweet book celebrating food from different cultures, and the uniting element of rice, is a lovely way to look at difference between cultures and what unites us.



Board book  
56 pages

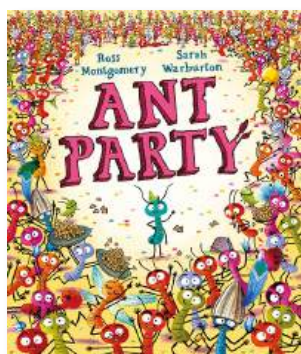
### Dot! Scribble! Go!

Hervé Tullet  
Chronicle Books

**Interactive**  
Art  
Creativity

The child dips their magic drawing finger into the colour palette on each page and follows the instructions. When they turn the page, they see their 'painting'. The child is then encouraged to be creative in imagining what it could be. Is it a flower? A car? A bird? It can be whatever the artist decides! Finally, the child is urged to create their own pictures for real.

Another ingenious interactive book from the creator of the brilliant *Press Here*.



Picture book  
40 pages

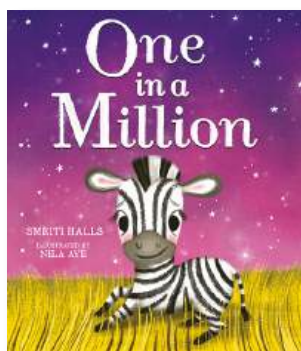
### Ant Party

Ross Montgomery,  
illustrated by  
Sarah Warburton  
Walker Books

**Comedy**  
Animals  
Friendship  
Teamwork

Andy the ant plans a small party for his birthday. But soon the entire ant colony is there. Andy is furious! Then when an unwelcome guest arrives, the ants work as a team to save the day. And once the colony is safe, the real party can begin!

This excell-ant picture book is a riot of colour, friendship and anty fun. A brilliant book for children who are interested in insects or to use as an introduction to creepy-crawlies.



Picture book  
32 pages

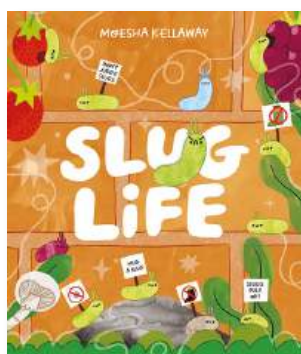
### One in a Million

Smriti Halls,  
illustrated by  
Nila Aye  
HarperCollins  
Children's Books

**Fiction**  
Animals  
Family  
Numbers

Debra the zebra has learned how to count! But when she tries to count her own stripes, she gets stuck after ten. So, she and her mother count together. But as there are so many zebras, how will her mother find her again?

A heartwarming story about parental love and the joy of numbers! The adorable illustrations beautifully depict both the stunning savannah setting and Debra's enthusiasm. The text is in rhyme, which makes it a pleasure to read aloud.



Picture book  
32 pages

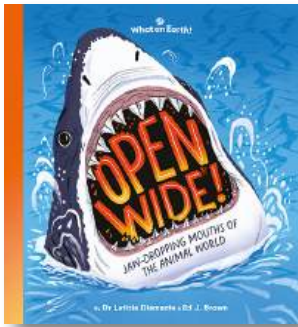
### Slug Life

Moesha Kellaway  
Rocket Bird  
Books

**Narrative  
non-fiction**  
Animals  
Science

Stevie is sick of being a slug and tired of being called a pest by humans. So Stevie joins a slug self-esteem course to learn why slugs are special.

Combining the charm and characters of a narrative picture book with the facts and diagrams of a non-fiction title, this celebrates slugs in a brilliantly fun way. There are underground trails that weave throughout the book, interesting facts and infographics, details to spot in the illustrations, and even a comic-style section.



Large format, colour illustrations

64 pages

## **Open Wide! Jaw-Dropping Mouths of the Animal World**

Dr Letizia Diamante, illustrated by Ed J. Brown

What on Earth! Books

### **Non-fiction**

Animals  
Illustrated  
Science

All animals have different types of mouths, allowing them to access food. A lion's sharp teeth can tear up meat, and a bird's strong beak can crunch up seed pods. Some animals also use their mouths for climbing, storing food or scaring away enemies.

Presented in 14 chapters detailing everything from tusks to tongues and spit to beaks, this is a fascinating guide to all things toothy. The illustrations are bright and full of interest, ensuring a vibrant reading experience.



Chapter book

128 pages

## **Gordón the Meanest Goose on Earth**

Alex Latimer

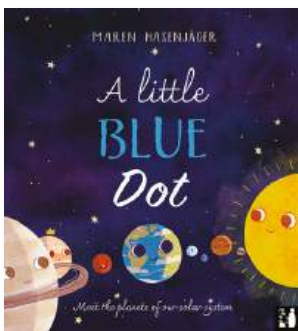
Oxford University Press

### **Comedy**

Feelings  
Friendship  
Illustrated

There are plenty of mean geese. Five meet monthly at the Meanest Goose Society. But Gordon is the meanest goose of all. He presses the cross-the-road button repeatedly and never crosses. He even directs zoo visitors to the open tiger cage! But when Anthony the Piglet gives him a beautiful flower, Gordon is unsettled. Why is he feeling like this?

The brilliant colour illustrations add to the humour, yet the message of being nice is delivered with thoughtfulness. Hilarious.



Picture book

32 pages

## **A Little Blue Dot: Meet the Planets of our Solar System**

Maren Hasenjäger, translated by Leah Francis

Mama Makes Books

### **Non-fiction**

Science  
Space

Earth feels boring compared to the other planets. There's Jupiter with his giant storms, Venus who shines brightly and Saturn with his icy rings. But the other planets all speak up about how amazing Earth really is. They admire her blue oceans and green forests and, most significantly, the life that thrives on her surface.

This beautifully designed non-fiction picture book has friendly, personified planets, muted colours and a clear layout; and the information is well-pitched to its target age range.



Dyslexia-friendly  
chapter book  
96 pages

### **The Guinea-Pig Party**

Holly Webb,  
illustrated by  
Rosie Butcher

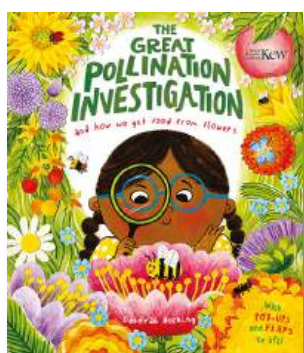
Barrington Stoke

#### **Fiction**

Friendship  
Illustrated  
Responsibility

When Katy finds a cute guinea pig snuffling in her garden, she's delighted. Katy decides to keep her and makes her a secret home. But when a new girl at school reveals that she's lost a guinea pig, Katy has a tough decision to make.

A gentle story, told in short chapters with very sweet colour illustrations, this will strongly appeal to new readers. The text is designed with lots of space around it, to support beginner and dyslexic readers.



Picture book  
32 pages

### **The Great Pollination Investigation and How We Get Food from Flowers**

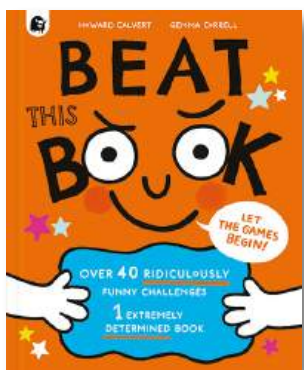
Deborah Hocking

Templar Books

#### **Non-fiction**

Ecology  
Interactive  
Science

Why are flowers so bright and beautiful? Why do insects buzz around them? What's the link between flowers and the food we eat? Join the investigation by lifting flaps to learn more about flowers, plants and pollinators. Created in partnership with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, this informative non-fiction picture book is packed with facts, including diagrams using proper scientific vocabulary. Each page, pop-up and flap is stunningly illustrated, and there's a tomato seed experiment to carry out.



Picture book  
48 pages

### **Beat This Book**

Howard Calvert,  
illustrated by  
Gemma Correll

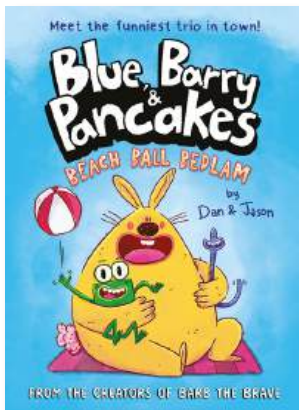
Happy Yak

#### **Interactive**

Activities  
Funny  
Imagination

Book sets the reader more and more challenges, some very silly. Can you find the smallest dog on the page? Can you make a shape with your body? Can you say a word loudly or slowly or in a high-pitched voice? Will you beat Book in all these challenges?

This is an extremely entertaining read. All of the questions Book poses ensure the reader is actively participating in the experience – they have to think, to choose, to create. Great fun.



Graphic novel  
96 pages

**Blue, Barry & Pancakes: Beach Ball Bedlam**

Dan Abdo,  
illustrated by  
Jason Patterson

Rock the Boat

**Comedy**  
Adventure  
Animals  
Friendship

Best friends Blue, Barry, and Pancakes are playing at the beach when a whale leaps out of the sea and swallows Blue's beach ball. What ensues is a hilarious, wacky adventure involving tuba-playing sailors, a flying pig and even an alien pool party.

This colourful graphic novel about having fun with good friends is ideal for new readers. Hilarious and vibrant illustrations throughout provide an amusing visual narrative to accompany the minimal text and speech bubbles.



Graphic novel  
112 pages

**One Smart Cookie**

Mika Song

Pushkin  
Children's Books

**Comedy**  
Animals  
Mischievous

Squirrels Norma, Belly and Little Bee have discovered a fortune cookie factory. But how can they get an endless supply of delicious cookies? It's time for a plan!

A funny graphic novel for newly confident readers. The colour illustrations are bursting with energy, yet the layout of the pages feels uncluttered, with lots of white space. The story is told in short speech bubbles (in sentence case, not capitals), making the reading experience feel accessible to many readers.



Dyslexia-friendly  
chapter book  
104 pages

**The Moonlight Mystery Agency: The Birthday Cake Thief**

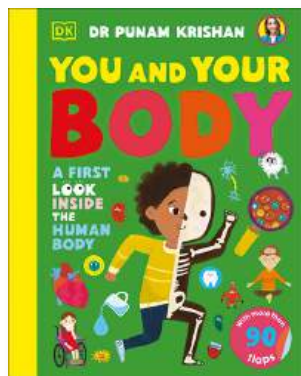
Vashti Hardy,  
illustrated by  
Agnes Sacconi

Barrington Stoke

**Mystery**  
Adventure  
Illustrated  
Magic

When a magical talking cat invites Hana to join the Moonlight Mystery Agency, she says yes! Soon, she and Ace are flying to the land of Moonlight to solve the mystery of Spark the bionic unicorn's missing birthday cake.

This sweet story has lots of space around the text and cute colour illustrations. It features visual puzzles on the inner covers and a dad as the only parent mentioned or seen. A charming chapter book for dyslexic and beginner readers.



Large format,  
board book  
18 pages

### **You and Your Body**

Dr Punam Krishan,  
illustrated by  
Verónica Cháves  
Morales

DK

#### **Non-fiction**

Illustrated  
Interactive  
Science

Your heart is constantly pumping blood. Your lungs are always breathing. And your brain controls it all! There are over 90 flaps to open in this informative, large-format hardback. The enticing colour illustrations include cute children and clearly labelled diagrams of body parts, like lungs, bones and muscles. All of the bite-size facts are pitched nicely at beginner readers in terms of content and word level.

A useful first look at how bodies work, written by a GP.



Chapter book  
158 pages

### **Ava Spark: Hello, I'm Here!**

Alex Field,  
illustrated by  
Joanna Bartel

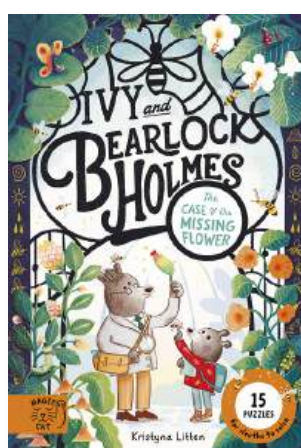
New Frontier  
Publishing

#### **Fiction**

Disability  
Illustrated  
School

When a new girl joins the school, Ava is asked to look after her. Ava and her friends come up with a plan to help her feel welcome. But will their strict teacher Mrs Hare agree it's a good idea?

The protagonist of this charming chapter book just happens to be in a wheelchair and speaks using a communication aid. The story doesn't linger on this, having a wider theme of communication, like welcoming new friends and supporting existing friends.



Chapter book  
80 pages

### **Ivy and Bearlock Holmes: The Case of the Missing Flower**

Kristyna Litten

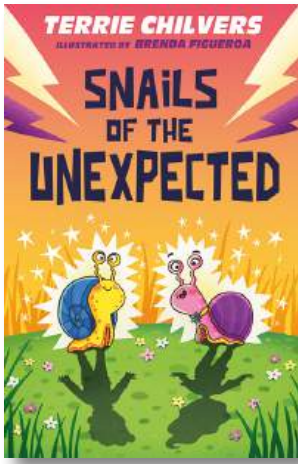
Magic Cat  
Publishing

#### **Mystery**

Illustrated  
Interactive  
Puzzles

Young detective Ivy and her grandpa, the great Bearlock Holmes, must solve the case when the famous Agave flower goes missing from the botanic gardens. But Ivy needs help! In this interactive adventure, readers are invited to channel their inner detective to solve 15 puzzles as the case unfolds.

This gentle story is really engaging with detailed illustrations throughout, fun animal characters, scientific information about bees and pollination, and well-designed interactive puzzles. A perfect choice for aspiring detectives!



### **Snails of the Unexpected**

Terrie Chilvers,  
illustrated by  
Brenda Figueroa

Firefly Press

#### **Comedy**

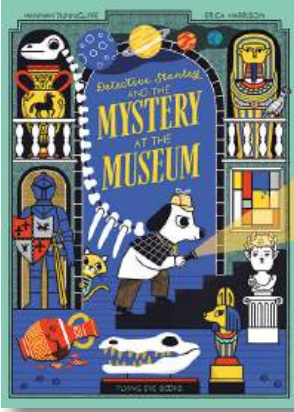
Adventure  
Illustrated  
Magic

Snail friends Fergus and Shelby are horrified that their garden is to be bulldozed to make way for a fancy new slug salad bar. Determined to save their home, they use their new-found mega-morphing skills! The snails transform into various objects (for instance, a vat of custard!) and uncover a dastardly gastropod plot to eradicate the human race using poisoned lemon drizzle cake.

With wacky characters, a bonkers plot and amusing black-and-white illustrations, this laugh-out-loud chapter book is extremely entertaining.

Chapter book  
160 pages





Graphic novel  
64 pages

**Detective Stanley and the Mystery at the Museum**

Hannah Tunnicliffe,  
illustrated by  
Erica Harrison

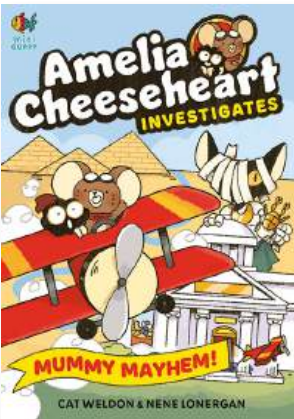
Flying Eye

**Mystery**

Art  
Crime  
Funny

Stanley the detecting dog has just retired, but then the Narlybone Museum has a suspected break-in. Stanley is joined by a hilarious cast of animal characters as he tries to uncover the truth, which is hiding in plain sight...

This is an exquisitely funny, unique graphic novel. The vibrant illustrations have a minimal style which still manages to pack in plenty of humorous background details. It should be noted there is a sequence where Stanley is sent to a prison.



Graphic novel  
128 pages

**Amelia Cheeseheart Investigates: Mummy Mayhem**

Cat Weldon,  
illustrated by  
Nene Lonergan

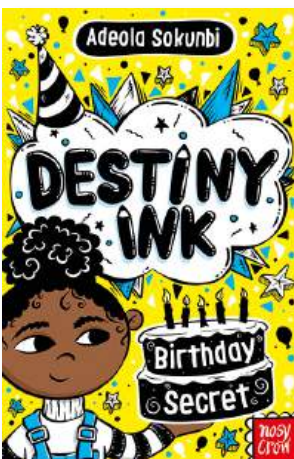
Guppy Books

**Mystery**

Adventure  
Ancient Egypt  
Funny

Amelia Cheeseheart the mouse lives in a museum with her friend Webster the spider. One day, the Ice Age cave mice are upset because a sabre-toothed tiger tooth is missing. Then the Viking mice lose a beloved treasure, too. Something is afoot! And it's up to Amelia and Webster to investigate.

The comic book style of this story is incredibly appealing. The story is mostly told in short speech bubbles, with colour illustrations and many moments of peril. Action-packed fun!



Chapter book  
160 pages

**Destiny Ink: Birthday Secret**

Adeola Sokunbi

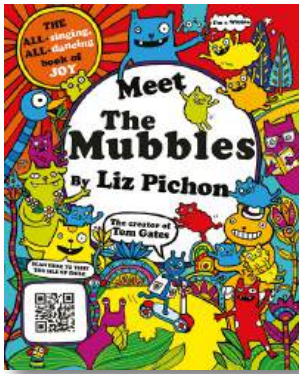
Nosy Crow

**Fiction**

Feelings  
Illustrated  
Magic

Destiny is excited about her cousin Lola's birthday party. But when Lola is playing with her other friends, Destiny feels left out. She draws a teddy bear – and then meets a talking teddy! Perhaps they can be friends instead?

This is a warm and gently magical story. Young readers may relate to Destiny's feelings of jealousy, and the birthday party setting is also very familiar. The short chapters and large, clear font, along with the energetic illustrations, should appeal to new readers.



Graphic novel  
128 pages

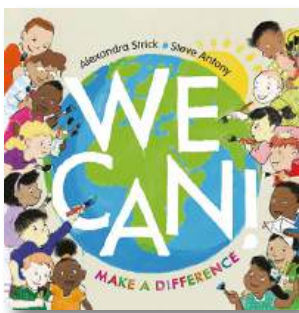
**Meet the Mubbles**

Liz Pichon  
Macmillan  
Children's Books

**Comedy**  
Adventure  
Fantasy  
Funny

The Mubbles live a blissful life of songs, laughter, flowers and fruit. But when a mysterious machine with a button appears from behind the Uncertain Curtain, their normal routines are disrupted. Can they resist the urge to press it? What will happen if they do?

Expect LOLs and wacky characters in this graphic novel. With its short text and bright illustration – plus singalongs, games and a YouTube channel accessed via a QR code – it's super engaging and accessible.



Picture book  
40 pages

**We Can! - Make a Difference**

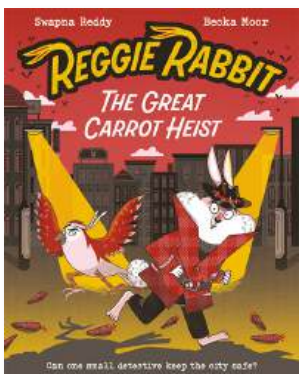
Alexandra Strick,  
illustrated by  
Steve Antony

Otter-Barry  
Books

**Fiction**  
Disability  
Environment  
Social issues

What kind of world do children want to live in? Can we come together to make a kinder, better, greener world? The idea behind this picture book is yes, We Can! It's a very hopeful book and was created with real children, including disabled children, to ensure they felt represented.

It's a story of 15 children planning an amazing We Can festival, and it's full of brilliant suggestions and plans on how to make the world better. Inclusive and inspiring.



Chapter book  
128 pages

**Reggie Rabbit: The Great Carrot Heist**

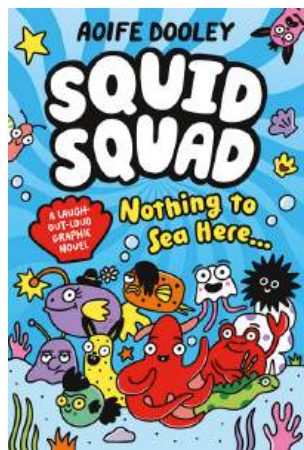
Swapna Reddy,  
illustrated by  
Becca Moor

Oxford University  
Press

**Mystery**  
Adventure  
Funny  
Illustrated

Reggie Rabbit is obsessed with becoming a detective like his hero, Detective Fox. So when cargoes of carrots go missing from the city docks, Reggie and his new friend Pipsquark the bird investigate. The only people who now have carrots for sale are the Masque family of raccoons. Can Reggie and Pipsquark solve the mystery?

This enjoyable whodunnit heist story is full of fun characters and uses a mixture of illustrated chapters and cartoon-style pages to keep the reader's interest.



Graphic novel  
224 pages

**Squid Squad:  
Nothing to  
Sea Here...**

Aoife Dooley  
Scholastic

**Comedy**  
Animals  
Funny  
Sea

Join the Squid Squad on their hilarious adventures in their deep-sea hometown. Solve the case of the mysterious burping whale, find a secret world hidden in a toilet and, most importantly, keep Zing away from chocolate cake!

This graphic novel has tons of wacky humour and vibrant artwork. With four short stories to enjoy, real facts about sea creatures to learn and a very accessible format and text level, this is a brilliant choice for newly independent readers!



Chapter book  
176 pages

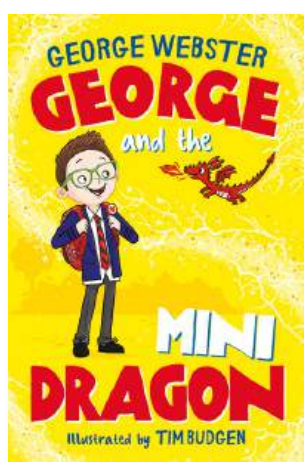
**Wild Magic:  
Legend of the  
Black Lion**

Abiola Bello,  
illustrated by  
Emma McCann  
Simon & Schuster  
Children's Books

**Adventure**  
Illustrated  
Magic  
Siblings

Twins Misha and Ziggy have secret superpowers! Misha can talk to animals and Ziggy can shapeshift into them. When their dad, a wildlife TV presenter, takes them to Ethiopia, they're so excited. Maybe they'll see a black lion! But when they discover poachers are after the lion, suddenly the twins' powers put them in great danger...

This fun adventure also has extra facts about black lions and about Ethiopia, plus a great role model in the hardworking, caring single dad.



Chapter book  
160 pages

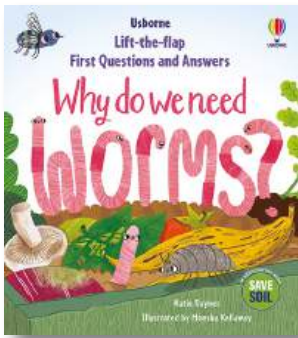
**George and the  
Mini Dragon**

George Webster  
with Helen  
Harvey, illustrated  
by Tim Budgen  
Scholastic

**Fiction**  
Disability  
Funny  
Illustrated

On George's birthday, he wishes for his very own pet. Then he finds a mini dragon behind the shed! Cheeky Lava sneaks into his school bag the next day, causing chaos in the classroom. Can George and his friends keep Lava a secret and win the school talent show?

This gentle story has short chapters and energetic black-and-white illustrations. George has Down's syndrome and this is shown as simply part of his life, like having a little sister.



Large format,  
board book  
12 pages

**Lift-the-flap  
First Questions  
and Answers:  
Why Do We  
Need Worms?**

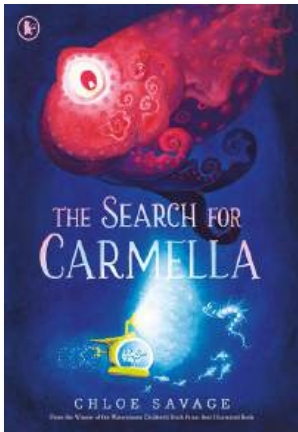
Katie Daynes,  
illustrated by  
Moesha Kellaway

Usborne

**Non-fiction**  
Ecology  
Illustrated  
Science

This informative board book is full of fascinating details about worms and their key role in natural ecosystems. Their tunnels bring air and water into the soil; their munching, pooing and wiggling help to mix the soil; AND their poo is full of nutrients!

Featuring cardboard flaps and cute illustrations, this is a fun and interactive book, too. There's quite a lot of information here, but each flap has a small and digestible amount of text.



Picture book  
40 pages

**The Search  
for Carmella**

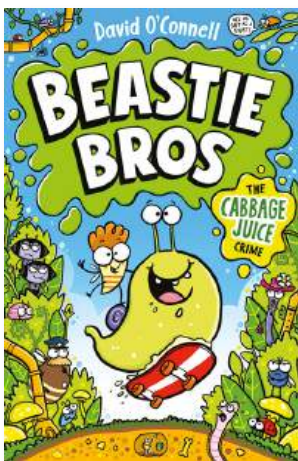
Chloe Savage  
Walker Books

**Narrative  
non-fiction**  
Animals  
Exploration  
Science

Dr Rose is a marine biologist and explorer gripped by legends of a huge and mysterious beast that lives in the deepest part of the ocean: Carmella.

Taking a submersible craft, Dr Rose and her pilot sink down into the darkness. They find various strange, glowing creatures in the depths, but will they find the legendary Carmella?

This beautiful picture book about the search for a mysterious oceanic leviathan combines a fascination with science and a magical illustrative style.



Chapter book  
160 pages

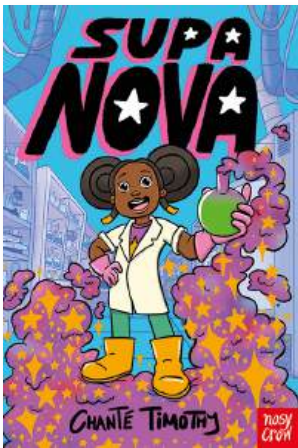
**Beastie Bros:  
The Cabbage  
Juice Crime**

David O'Connell  
Scholastic

**Comedy**  
Adventure  
Fantasy  
Illustrated

Dribble is a snail inventor and his adopted brother Dash is a firefly whose bottom lights up when he's happy. The pair love adventure, especially if there's a mystery to solve. Dribble's latest invention is the Roboslug, which can chomp acres of cabbage to produce delicious juice. When Roboslug is stolen, the brothers investigate, with hilarious results.

Generously illustrated with entertaining black-and-white artwork, this daft crime caper features a bonkers plot and a cast of larger-than-life buggy characters.



Graphic novel  
160 pages

## **Supa Nova**

Chanté Timothy  
Nosy Crow

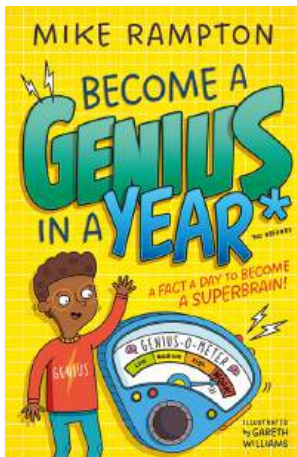
### **Sci-fi**

Adventure  
Environment  
Funny

Brilliant young scientist Nova invents a plastic-eating organism named Chomp to solve the problem of plastic waste. However, Chomp causes havoc as it consumes all the plastic in its path. Can Nova stop Chomp before it's too late?

This lively, science-fiction graphic novel is full of humour, wacky inventions and glossy, vibrant artwork.

There's information about the science behind the story at the end, along with step-by-step guides to drawing some of the characters. Super fun.



Novel format,  
black- and-white  
illustrations  
256 pages

## **Become a Genius in a Year**

Mike Rampton,  
illustrated by  
Gareth Williams

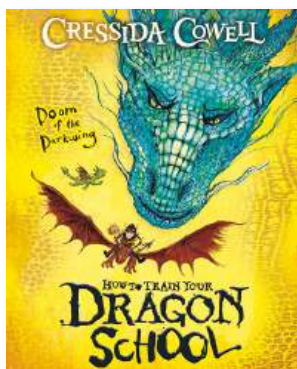
HarperCollins  
Children's Books

### **Non-fiction**

Facts  
Funny  
Illustrated

Supercharge your brain with an incredible fact for every day of the year. Find out the truth about the Bermuda Triangle, discover the mind-boggling use of robotic zombie spiders and unearth the startling fact that white sandy beaches are made of parrotfish poop!

This non-fiction book is really engaging with its short, snappy facts and daily format. The facts are accessible and combine humour and interest, while the funny illustrations break up the text with witty characters and infographics.



Chapter book  
256 pages

## **How to Train Your Dragon School: Doom of the Darkwing**

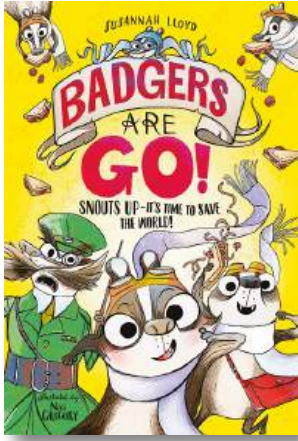
Cressida Cowell  
Hodder Children's  
Books

### **Fantasy**

Adventure  
Funny  
Illustrated

Hiccup, Toothless and Fishlegs are at a new school run by the massive Gobber the Belch. Suddenly, a desperate battle bugle sound is heard. The Bog-Burglar tribe need the help of the Hooligans! But no one will listen to Hiccup. Can he, Fishlegs and their small, unhelpful dragons save the day again?

Full of humour and amazing illustrations, this story is set before the main *How to Train Your Dragon* series and can also be read alongside it. Action-packed fun!



Chapter book  
256 pages

**Badgers are Go!**

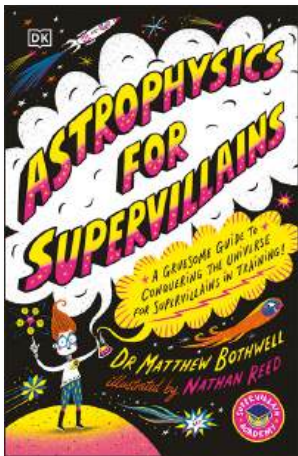
Susannah Lloyd,  
illustrated by Nici  
Gregory

David Fickling  
Books

**Comedy**  
Adventure  
Animals  
Illustrated

Lulu Whifferton-Rear is a young badger with a Top Secret mission. Badgers have infiltrated the human world as mechanical Badger-Operated Persons, or BOPs. Lulu's mission involves the British Prime Minister BOP persuading world leaders to sign a global declaration of peace. However, a dastardly double agent wants to sabotage the peace deal. Can Lulu save the day?

Bursting with imaginative gadgets, exciting covert operations and entertaining characters, this hilarious chapter book features lively black-and-white illustrations, which add to the fun.



Novel format,  
black-and-white  
illustrations  
176 pages

**Astrophysics  
for Supervillains**

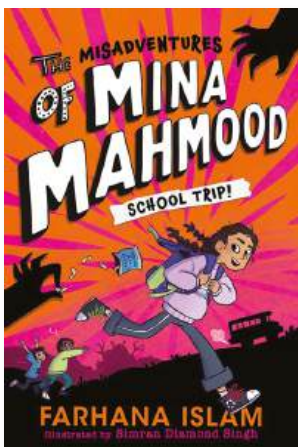
Dr Matthew  
Bothwell,  
illustrated by  
Nathan Lane

DK

**Non-fiction**  
Funny  
Illustrated  
Science

What happens if you throw someone into a black hole? (They become spaghettified!) Which are the most deadly planets in the solar system? And, perhaps most useful of all, how can the Earth be destroyed?

There's plenty of science here, but it's all very understandable and presented in a vibrant black-and-white format with tons of variety, fun facts, big fonts and shouty headlines. The tone is jokey and there are lots of cartoonish illustrations throughout. Great fun.



Chapter book  
192 pages

**The  
Misadventures  
of Mina  
Mahmood:  
School Trip!**

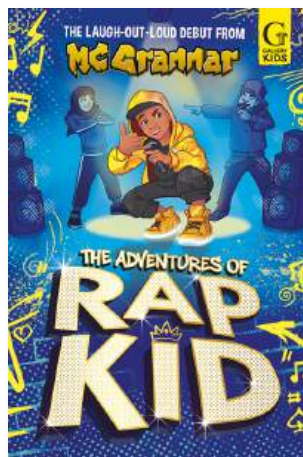
Farhana Islam,  
illustrated by  
Simran Diamond  
Singh

Farshore

**Comedy**  
Adventure  
Illustrated  
Mystery

Best friends Mina, Reema and Mobeen are excited about their school residential trip to the ultimate adventure camp. They can't wait to try out the awesome activities and they've even planned a midnight feast. They hear rumours about Bertie Blackteeth, a ghostly figure who roams the woods in search of her next victim. Then the friends get lost on the quad bikes in Bertie's territory...

Funny and slightly spooky, this hilarious chapter book is enhanced by dynamic black-and-white illustrations.



### The Adventures of Rap Kid

MC Grammar  
Gallery Kids

**Comedy**  
Creativity  
Illustrated  
School

Z never speaks at school because he automatically rhymes. But he knows he can be the G.O.A.T. of rapping, and with the Royal Rap Rumble searching for the next rap legend, he has a chance to show everybody his barz. And with new friend SFX doing amazing beatboxing, how can they lose?

This is packed with asides, lists and jokes. Also included is a guide on how to write your own rap and a glossary of rap terms. Great fun!

Novel  
272 pages



### Hero Wanted!

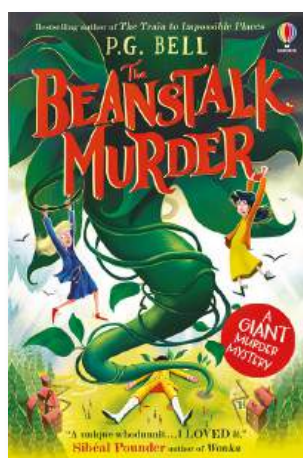
Mark Powers,  
illustrated by  
Coralie Muce  
Bloomsbury  
Children's Books

**Comedy**  
Adventure  
Coming-of-age  
Illustrated

Grace Parker is amazed to discover that she is needed in a world called Brokenshire, which is at war. On her travels with a legendary sword and a talking horse, she meets a guard-shark named Alice, a sensitive spider named Kevin, bomber geese, venom goblins, a vegan T. rex – and more!

This very silly, irresistible fantasy adventure is packed with implausible characters and plot twists, but also has a subtle message about the futility of war and discovering empathy.

Novel  
256 pages



### The Beanstalk Murder

P.G. Bell  
Usborne

**Mystery**  
Adventure  
Fantasy  
Funny

When a dead giant falls from the sky and squishes their village, two trainee witches, Anwen and Cerys, find themselves whisked up a beanstalk to the Sky Kingdom to hunt for the killer. But it's no easy task when your suspects can squash you with just a footstep.

This quirky murder mystery is clever, funny and full of false leads and red herrings. Perfect for would-be detectives – especially if they like a touch of magic with their mystery.

Novel  
304 pages



**Scarlet:  
Defender of  
the Universe**

James Davis,  
illustrated by  
Dotty Sutton

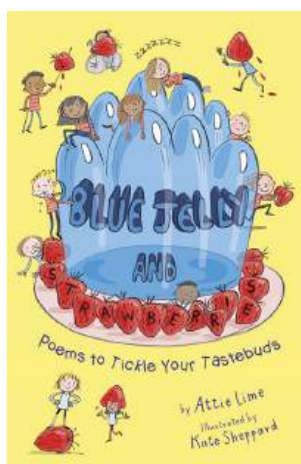
HarperCollins  
Children's Books

**Sci-fi**  
Adventure  
Funny  
Illustrated

When a floating boy appears outside Scarlet's bedroom window to tell her she's got the job of defender of the universe, she's terrified. She only applied as a joke. But soon she's travelling across mind-boggling distances using a big red 'schploink' button to defend us from a host of hideous alien predators, like the Gunks, who want to steal the Earth's core to keep their hot chocolate warm.

Bonkers but ingenious – a laugh-out-loud funny science-fiction adventure.

Novel  
240 pages



**Blue Jelly and  
Strawberries:  
Poems to Tickle  
Your Tastebuds**

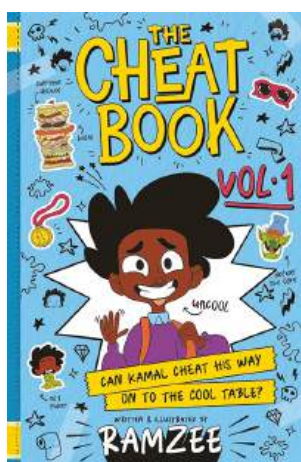
Attie Lime,  
illustrated by  
Kate Sheppard

Otter-Barry  
Books

**Poetry**  
Funny  
Illustrated  
Rhyme

Have you ever found a doughnut tree? Have you grown magic beans? Would you stroke a mercat? This collection of poems is full of quirky scenarios, imaginative leaps and funny wordplay. There is a lot to make children smile. Many of the poems rhyme, though not all, while several different poetic forms are used – acrostics, shape poems, a nonsense poem, and so on. These would be lovely to read aloud to a class. Great fun.

Anthology  
96 pages



**The Cheat Book**  
RAMZEE

Hodder Children's  
Books

**Comedy**  
Illustrated  
School  
Refugees

When Kamal finds a mysterious book in the library that promises him popularity, he follows its advice. Soon he's obsessing over his 'Popstock rating'. Perhaps he'll even sit on the cool gang's table! But is it worth abandoning his friends over?

This debut story from cartoonist RAMZEE is packed with brilliant illustrations and is full of humour. Kamal's everyday struggles of trying to avoid the bullies, trying to be cool and finding his sisters very annoying are all very relatable.

Novel  
240 pages



Chapter book  
160 pages

**Guardians of  
the New Moon:  
Ming and  
Miaow's Great  
Race**

Eric Huang,  
illustrated by  
Phùng Nguyễn  
Quang

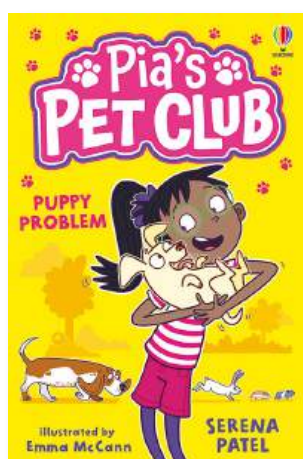
Little Tiger

**Mythology**

Chinese  
mythology  
Friendship  
Illustrated

The Jade Emperor orders a great race between all the animals on Earth. The 12 fastest shall be immortalised in the Chinese zodiac. Miaow the cat teams up with Ming, an elemental fox who can transform into a girl. Together they battle to stay in the race as they journey across a magical landscape.

The story uses short chapters, plenty of action and humour. It is illustrated throughout, depicting mythical creatures and otherworldly settings from ancient Chinese folklore.



Chapter book  
224 pages

**Pia's Pet Club:  
Puppy Problem**

Serena Patel,  
illustrated by  
Emma McCann

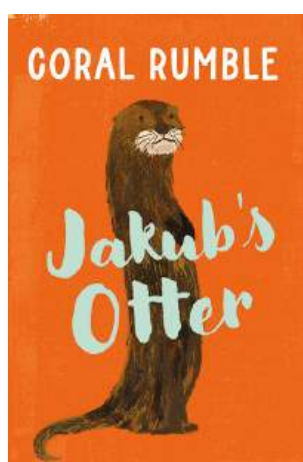
Usborne

**Comedy**

Animals  
Community  
Illustrated

More than anything, Pia wants a pet. To prove her animal-owner sense of responsibility, she tries to train her friend's puppy, but it's proving tricky. So the resourceful Pia forms a Pet Club of children from her dad's new apartment complex to come up with inventive ways to train the unruly pup, making great friends along the way.

The doggy antics, funny asides, characterful illustrations and pet facts make this a joy to read. Superb!



Chapter book  
144 pages

**Jakub's Otter**

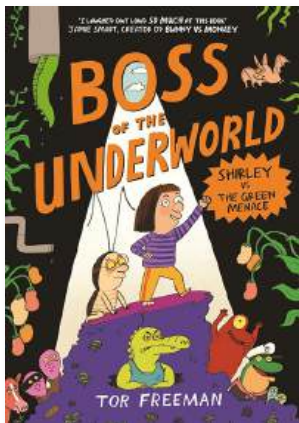
Coral Rumble  
Troika

**Fiction**

Empathy  
Immigration  
Young carer

Ten-year-old Jakub is a carer for his mum. One summer, he goes on holiday to Italy with family friends, but worries about his mum. When the local woodsman shows him an injured otter who needs feeding, Jakub finds a new purpose.

This is a gentle, compelling read suffused with empathy and kindness. Jakub is a recent immigrant to the UK from Poland, which adds depth to his experiences of trying to get by – at school and at home. Heartwarming.



Graphic novel  
160 pages

**Boss of the Underworld: Shirley vs the Green Menace**

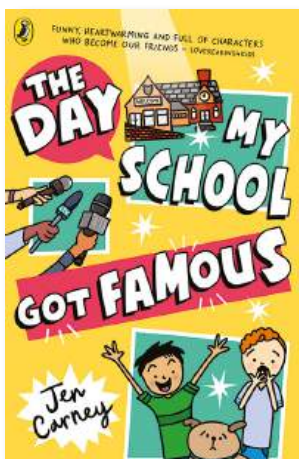
Tor Freeman

Hodder Children's Books

**Adventure**  
Fantasy  
Funny

Shirley falls down a manhole into a weird underworld. She is heralded as the 'chosen one' by the creatures who live down there, including George, a child-sized cockroach. It is written that Shirley will vanquish the boss of the underworld: The Green Menace. So reluctant hero Shirley goes on a perilous, surprising and very funny quest...

This colourful, hilarious graphic novel is extremely entertaining. The comic-strip-style illustrations add a lot of humour to a bonkers story.



Novel  
240 pages

**The Day My School Got Famous**

Jen Carney

Puffin

**Comedy**  
Illustrated  
School  
Siblings

Ferris's new foster brother, Nile, is a tornado of chaos. When an unexploded Second World War bomb is discovered under their school, it's all Nile can talk about. But Ferris is worried about his beloved younger foster sister. Can the foster brothers work together?

Funny and moving, with characters underrepresented in children's fiction – children whose family fosters, and those who go into kinship care. Full of comic strips and cartoons, and with an easy-to-read font, this is extremely appealing.



Large format,  
colour illustrations  
80 pages

**Respect the Insect**

Jules Howard,  
illustrated by  
Gosia Herba

Wide Eyed  
Editions

**Non-fiction**  
Animals  
Illustrated  
Science

Insects do a lot of helpful things for us, such as regulating ecosystems, inspiring innovation in science and, of course, gobbling up a LOT of poo. We must help insects – planting flowers and using an insect ID app are among the suggestions in this bright and appealing book.

There's lots here about insects' relevance to our daily lives, and an environmental focus. The text level enables readers to understand the complex processes by which insects contribute to our natural world.



Graphic novel  
208 pages

**Toby and the Pixies: Worst King Ever!**

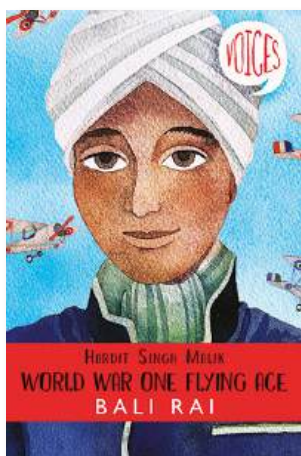
James Turner,  
illustrated by  
Andreas Schuster

David Fickling  
Books

**Fantasy**  
Adventure  
Funny  
School

Toby discovers an enchanted kingdom in his garden and is immediately crowned King of the Pixies. Toby's self-appointed loyal pixie advisers 'help' him perform his new royal duties and follow him everywhere, even to school, meaning Toby has to invent increasingly elaborate stories to explain their riotous antics.

With quirky characters and a zany plot brought to life through vibrantly coloured cartoon strips, this action-packed graphic novel is utterly bonkers and hugely entertaining.



Novel  
192 pages

**Hardit Singh Malik: World War One Flying Ace**

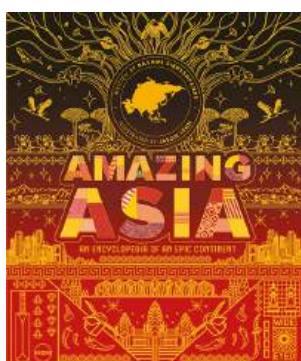
Bali Rai

Scholastic

**Biography**  
Historical  
Immigration  
War

Hardit Singh Malik grows up in Punjab, India, and moves to England to go to school. When war breaks out in 1914, Hardit wants to sign up. But, as an Indian, he isn't permitted to enlist in the armed forces. Instead, he joins the French Red Cross as an ambulance driver, and then, finally, the British Royal Flying Corps.

This wonderful non-fiction title is a gripping adventure from history. Hardit's story is one of bravery, perseverance and strength of character.



Large format,  
colour illustrations  
112 pages

**Amazing Asia**

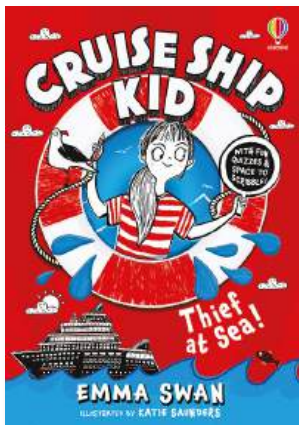
Rashmi  
Sirdeshpande,  
illustrated by  
Jason Lyon

Wide Eyed  
Editions

**Non-fiction**  
Around the world  
Illustrated  
Sociology

This beautifully designed book celebrates the world's largest and most populated continent: Asia. It details a wide array of cultural, historical, natural, and geographical subject matter, with dedicated sections exploring each of the main territorial regions.

There are infographics, maps, statistics and punchy captions to add interest and depth. It also boasts incredible illustrations and a striking visual design. This book contains so much to engage and inform, and is a fantastic choice for lovers of detailed facts and information.



Novel  
384 pages

**Cruise Ship Kid:  
Thief at Sea!**

Emma Swan,  
illustrated by  
Katie Saunders

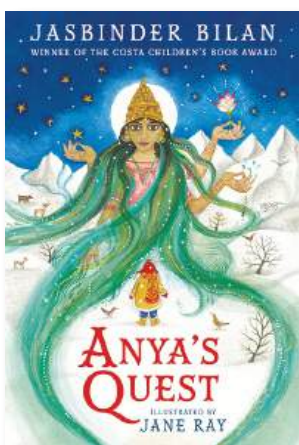
Usborne

**Mystery**

Funny  
Illustrated  
Interactive

Silver lives on a cruise ship. Onboard, she has four restaurants, nine shops and three swimming pools – but no friends. When Yana arrives onboard, Silver hopes they'll become friends. So when Yana's relatives' expensive watches go missing, it's Silver's chance to prove she's best friend material. Only, investigating passengers leads her into a lot of trouble...

This is an engaging and funny read, where Silver often talks directly to the reader. The many brilliant illustrations mean it's a pacy read.



Novel  
144 pages

**Anya's Quest**

Jasbinder Bilan,  
illustrated by  
Jane Ray

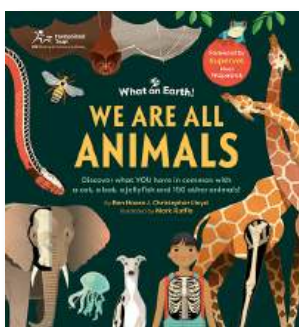
Walker Books

**Mythology**

Empathy  
Hinduism  
Illustrated

When Anya and Mahi sing a half-forgotten song together, its words summon the mighty goddess Ganga. The goddess takes the pair on an epic journey through time and space in a chariot drawn by the river dragon Makara, to reconnect with their spirit animals and to heal the natural world.

This beautiful tale, inspired by Hindu mythology, has dazzling illustrations. Exploring issues of pollution, habitat loss and climate change, it joyfully celebrates children, nature and the lasting power of stories.



Large format,  
colour illustrations  
48 pages

**We are All  
Animals**

Ben Hoare and  
Christopher  
Lloyd, illustrated  
by Mark Ruffle

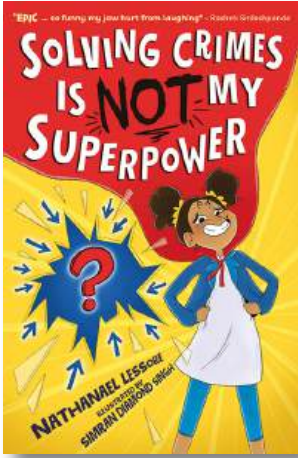
What on Earth!  
Books

**Non-fiction**

Animals  
Ecology  
Illustrated

Humans and animals have more in common than we have separating us. For example, we all need oxygen, food and water to survive; we all need sleep, we all get sick and we all communicate. Just like humans mostly use speech, baby crocodiles call to their parents from inside their eggs when they're about to hatch.

While the vocabulary in this fascinating non-fiction title is sophisticated, the design is clear and colourful, with a combination of photography and illustration.



### **Solving Crimes is NOT my Superpower**

Nathanael  
Lessor,  
illustrated by  
Simran Diamond  
Singh

Little Tiger

#### **Mystery**

Funny  
Illustrated  
Superheroes

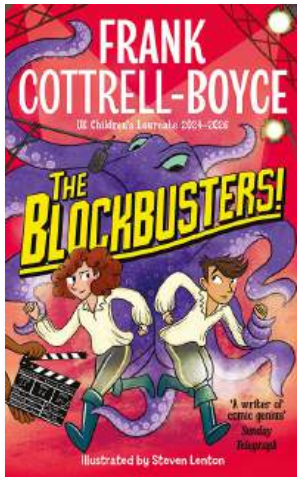
Everyone in Sara's town has a superpower, except for her. So when the school's football trophy is stolen, Sara has to catch the thief using only her powers of deduction. She and her friends Javier and Georgie investigate – and uncover some town secrets on the way. (And watch a mayor farting colours...) But will Sara ever discover her hidden superpower?

Funny and warm with brilliant dialogue, this is easy to read and full of energetic pictures and doodles.

Chapter book

192 pages





Novel  
256 pages

## **The Blockbusters!**

Frank Cottrell-Boyce, illustrated by Steven Lenton

Macmillan Children's Books

### **Adventure**

Family  
Funny  
Illustrated

When Rafa's school 'nurture group' sneak onto a film set as extras, they realise that Rafa looks like the child star BB. So when her body double doesn't turn up, he steps in. Later, Rafa discovers that he's accidentally swapped phones with BB. He and his friends embark on an extraordinary quest to swap the phones back.

Frank Cottrell-Boyce (Waterstones Children's Laureate, 2024–2026) is a genius at blending an imaginative, funny plot with heartfelt themes of hardship, family bonds and friendship.



Novel  
240 pages

## **After**

Pádraig Kenny

Walker Books

### **Sci-fi**

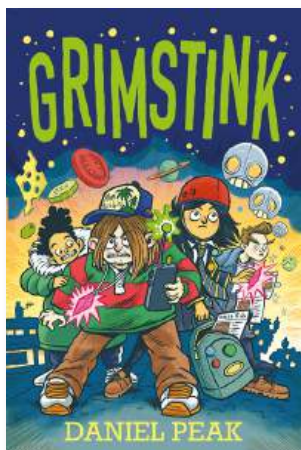
Dystopian  
Fathers  
Technology

Jen and Father are searching for a new home in a destroyed world. Years before, there was a technological disaster, killing all humans who were linked up to the Hive via microchip. Very few humans survived. And Jen and Father have a secret: Father is a human-appearing AI, whom others fear.

Despite the dystopian setting, the story's focus is on human bonds, especially the unusual relationship between Jen and the protective Father.

Thrilling and thought-provoking, this contains much to discuss.





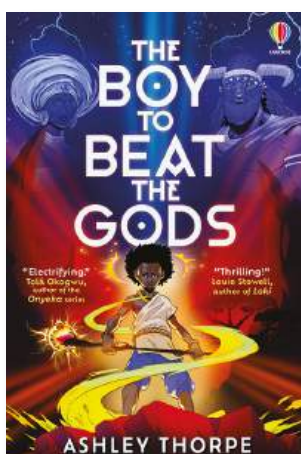
Novel  
256 pages

**Grimstink**  
Daniel Peak  
Firefly Press

**Sci-fi**  
Adventure  
Aliens  
Funny

Grimstink has arrived on Earth to destroy it, while in exchange Layla's been zapped to his home planet. Enlisting Layla's younger brother Reece to help, Grimstink must engineer a gateway between the planets. He just has to navigate Earth life, which is actually quite tricky. Meanwhile, Layla must avoid the deathbots' lasers and stop the destruction of the galaxy. Will she ever get home? And will Grimstink actually destroy the Earth – and his new friend?

A hilarious alien adventure.



Novel  
272 pages

**The Boy to Beat the Gods**  
Ashley Thorpe  
Usborne

**Adventure**  
Coming-of-age  
Fantasy  
Mythology

The Orishas are ruthless gods. Kayode dreams of using the forbidden fruit of the baobab tree – the source of the Orishas' power – to free his people. On the day his sister is snatched by the gods, a single fruit mysteriously appears – and he takes his chance. Kayode joins forces with a vengeful princess and a shapeshifting trickster god to put an end to the terror.

An action-packed fantasy adventure inspired by aspects of Caribbean and African culture and spirituality.



Novel  
352 pages

**Ella Jones vs the Sun Stealer**  
Lucy Edwards  
with Katie Birchall,  
illustrated by  
Caroline Garcia

Scholastic  
**Adventure**  
Action  
Disability  
Mythology

When a vengeful pagan god suddenly plunges all humans into darkness, it's up to 12-year-old blind Ella to save the world. Ella and her guide dog Maisie must trek across London, with Ella's sister and best friend Finn, piecing together the way to defeat the powerful Lugh. But there are many dangers waiting for them in the dark...

Written by a blind author, the combination of high-stakes adventure and compelling detail makes for a gripping read.



### **Clem Fatale Has Been Betrayed**

Eve Wersocki Morris, illustrated by Honie Beam

Little Tiger

#### **Mystery**

Crime  
Funny  
Illustrated

London, 1951. A jewel heist by the notorious Spider Gang is interrupted, and gang boss Jimmy Fatale goes missing. 12-year-old Clem is determined to find her dad. So, with the help of her new kidnap victim and wannabe sidekick Gilbert, Clem races through the criminal underworld, desperate to uncover the baddies who have her dad. Who can Clem trust?

This unusual crime mystery is great fun, with cracking dialogue and humour. Plus, Clem and her gang are goodies at heart.

Novel  
240 pages



### **The Boy with Big Decisions**

Helen Rutter

Scholastic

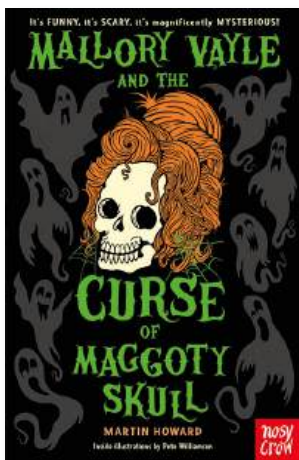
#### **Choose your own story**

Coming-of-age  
Interactive  
School

Fred Timple's parents control every aspect of his life. Waiting at the bus stop on his first day at a new school, Fred is suddenly faced with a choice. Two buses arrive at once: one is going to the school his parents have chosen, the other to his choice. Dare he go to the school he wants?

With multiple permutations and eight possible endings, readers are invited to select Fred's path. An interactive book about choice, honesty and control.

Novel  
360 pages



### **Mallory Vayle and the Curse of Maggoty Skull**

Martin Howard, illustrated by Pete Williamson

Nosy Crow

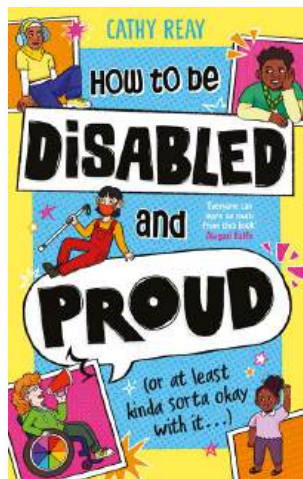
#### **Spooky**

Adventure  
Funny  
Illustrated

Orphaned Mallory Vayle goes to live in scary Carrion Castle with her Aunt Lilith. Immediately, Mallory's ghost-parents are ghost-napped by an evil spirit and she discovers a skull named Maggoty who has been locked in a dungeon for 500 years. And so a pact is made. Maggoty will help Mallory get her parents back in exchange for assistance in lifting the curse on him.

With atmospheric black-and-white illustrations and hilarious dialogue, this is a scream of a comic horror story.

Novel  
304 pages



Novel format,  
black-and-white  
illustrations  
272 pages

### How to be Disabled and Proud

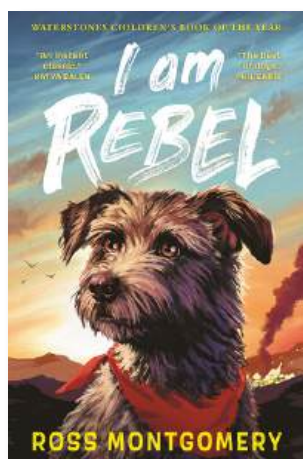
Cathy Reay,  
illustrated by  
Jaleel Hudson

Puffin

**Non-fiction**  
Disability  
Illustrated  
Personal and  
social issues

Written by a disabled journalist, and covering everyday topics including school, bullying, puberty, friendship, and doctors and hospitals, this is an empowering and practical guide to growing up – and simply existing – as a disabled person.

As well as explaining phrases and identities throughout, there is a glossary, plus lists of some awesome books and helpful organisations and resources. A warm and inclusive read for everyone.



Novel  
304 pages

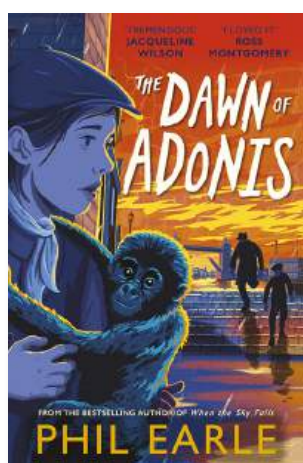
### I am Rebel

Ross Montgomery  
Walker Books

**Adventure**  
Friendship  
Pets  
War

Rebel is a good dog. He wakes up with 'his boy' Tom, spends the day on the farm with Tom and curls up on Tom's bed at night. But when 12-year-old Tom joins the rebel army, Rebel must track his friend across mountain and village, in time to save him from the king's army...

This adventure is both heartwarming and heartbreaking, but no dogs are harmed. It's written in Rebel's voice, in short chapters that are full of action. Fantastic!



Novel  
240 pages

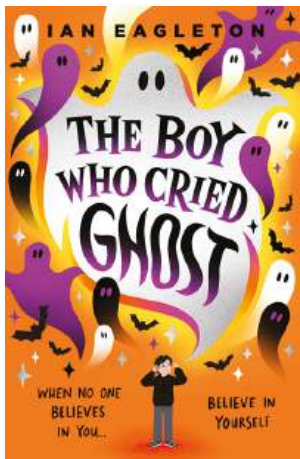
### The Dawn of Adonis

Phil Earle  
Andersen Press

**Adventure**  
Action  
Animals  
Historical

In 1911 a band of thieves led by the horrible Goliath Deeds steal a great ape in a cage. The ape tragically dies while giving birth. But step in Nettie, daughter of a vet, and Goliath's nephew Toff. Can they get the baby ape away from the clutches of the evil and cunning Goliath?

A thrilling, perilous adventure through the streets and underbelly of London. This is the prequel to *When the Sky Falls*, but it can be read separately.



### **The Boy Who Cried Ghost**

Ian Eagleton

Scholastic

#### **Spooky**

Coming-of-age

Ghosts

Neurodiversity

There's a 'thing' in the wardrobe at Richard's new house. But as long as Richard keeps checking that the lock, the rope and the duct tape are secure, he can cope with the fear. Then, a well-meaning neighbour sets the evil, ghostly, devilish 'something' free. Can Richard convince anyone that the ghost is real?

This insightful, haunting, coming-of-age story is a celebration of friendship, diversity and inclusion that gives readers a glimpse into the mind of someone living with OCD.

Novel

336 pages



### **The Haunting of Fortune Farm**

Sophie Kirtley

Bloomsbury

Children's Books

#### **Spooky**

Ghosts

Grief

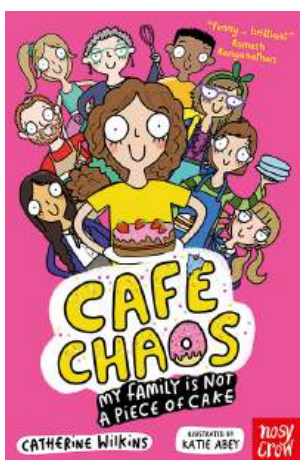
Mystery

Edie and her brother are staying with their grandmother at a remote farmhouse in the Irish mountains. When Edie learns that Viking treasure was found in the region, she's thrust into a menacing world of restless spirits, where she encounters a fearsome Viking warrior who will stop at nothing to find his lost sword.

Packed full of mystery, ghosts and family secrets, this chilling story also sensitively explores feelings of grief and guilt. Guaranteed to send shivers down your spine...

Novel

336 pages



### **Café Chaos**

Catherine Wilkins,

illustrated by  
Katie Abey

Nosy Crow

#### **Fiction**

Family

Funny

Illustrated

Hope's family café needs money. Plus, her aunt has moved into her room with her, and her popularity in Year 7 is threatened by Skylla, the bully from primary school. Will dressing up as a giant ice cream really save the café and her popularity?

This relatable story comes with a large serving of humour. There are themes of not taking on wider family stress, and about dealing with bullies. Plus, there's an inspirational supportive friendship. Warm, real and funny.

Novel

272 pages



Verse novel  
272 pages

### **Fia and the Last Snow Deer**

Eilish Fisher,  
illustrated by  
Dermot Flynn

Puffin

#### **Adventure**

Folklore  
Illustrated  
Poetry

In prehistoric Ireland, 13-year-old Fia and her snow deer Solas struggle against a seemingly eternal winter. Only the mythical Deer Mother can put an end to the ceaseless cold. Fia sets out with her cousin Mish on a quest to bring warmth and hope back to the world. Along the way, they find a lone wolf guide and battle against the sinister temptations of shadow spirits.

Written in verse, with gorgeous black-and-white illustrations, this gripping story moves at pace.



Large format,  
colour illustrations  
92 pages

### **Rise and Fall: Great Empires that Shaped the World**

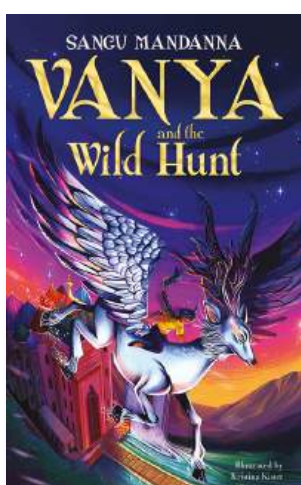
Peter Allen  
Cicada Books

#### **Non-fiction**

Around the world  
Illustrated  
Sociology

Featuring empires such as the Minoan, Persian, Mongol and Mali, as well as the Kingdom of Benin and the Japanese Kamakura Shogunate, this marvellous non-fiction resource showcases each fascinating culture, looking at how it rose to power, and what its significance was.

Each empire is detailed over a number of pages, showing readers its architecture, culture, art, religion and what daily life looked like for people. This is a bright and appealing illustrated book which covers some complex ideas.



Novel  
288 pages

### **Vanya and the Wild Hunt**

Sangu Mandanna,  
illustrated by  
Kristina Kister

Macmillan  
Children's Books

#### **Fantasy**

Indian mythology  
Magic  
Neurodiversity

11-year-old Vanya finds school challenging because of her ADHD, and her best friends are books. When a monstrous creature known as an Old One attacks her family, Vanya is catapulted into a world of magic and monsters. She joins the enchanted school of Auramere to battle against the forces of the Old Ones and uncovers a dark family secret...

This pacy fantasy adventure has excellent representation of ADHD and autism, and draws on global mythology and Vanya's Indian heritage.



Graphic novel  
256 pages

**Anzu and the Realm of Darkness**

Mai K. Nguyen  
Piccadilly Press

**Adventure**  
Family  
Fantasy  
Japanese mythology

When a dog steals Anzu's grandmother's amulet, Anzu finds herself lost in Yomi, the Shinto underworld realm. This land is ruled by the beautiful but cruel Queen Izanami and is filled with magical beings from Japanese folklore. Anzu must team up with the dog, a gatekeeper, to destroy Izanami and free the souls of children she has imprisoned.

This stunningly original graphic novel is packed full of action. The story also covers themes of identity and representation skilfully.



Novel  
288 pages

**Time Keys:  
Hunt for the Golden Scarab**

M.G. Leonard,  
illustrated  
by Manuel  
Šumberac  
Macmillan  
Children's Books

**Adventure**  
Ancient Egypt  
Illustrated  
Time-travel

One evening, unwelcome visitors turn up and Mum suddenly opens a door to the past through which she and Sim escape. As Sim, Mum and some loyal friends strive to find the lost tomb of Nefertiti before the sinister Council of Keys does, and to solve the mystery of the golden scarab, Sim realises that they are in very real, potentially deadly danger...

This gripping, thrill-packed, time-slip adventure whisks readers away to Egypt, both ancient and modern.



Novel  
288 pages

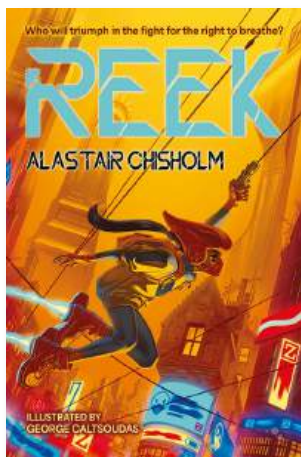
**Relic Hamilton:  
Genie Hunter**

Joseph Coelho,  
illustrated by  
Hyun Song We  
Walker Books

**Adventure**  
Illustrated  
Fantasy  
Magic

12-year-old history-obsessed Relic Hamilton lives with his grandad above Anansi Antiques. When he unwittingly releases a genie from an old oil lamp, he's thrust into the heart of a secret, underground society of genie hunters who protect the world from malicious genies that feed on the hope of humanity.

An unputdownable adventure that rattles along at great pace, with snappy dialogue, poetry, inventive characters, fantasy elements, magic, time travel, pirates, technology, gadgets, humour and lots of exhilarating action.



Dyslexia-friendly  
novel  
152 pages

### Reek

Alastair  
Chisholm,  
illustrated  
by George  
Caltsoudas  
Barrington Stoke

### Sci-fi

Dystopian  
Illustrated  
Technology

Everything changed after the Reek: a yellow-brown cloud that poisoned the world's air. Luckily, internet billionaire Axel Brodie can purify the air in vast factories, selling it to people so that they can breathe. Sparrow works as a courier to earn money for air. When there's an accident at her inventor friend's caravan, the police accuse Sparrow. Can she evade them before her oxygen runs out?

A gripping dystopian thriller with an accessible, dyslexia-friendly format and thought-provoking themes.



Novel  
256 pages

### Birdie

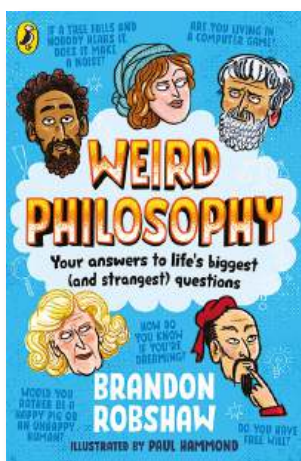
J.P. Rose  
Andersen Press

### Adventure

Bullying  
Historical  
Identity

It's 1950. Mixed-race Birdie has lived in a children's home until she arrives in a pit village, where she's obviously not what her great aunt was expecting. The local children ask Birdie if her colour washes off. Even her teacher assumes she's stupid. So Birdie finds acceptance with the village's last pit pony... a friendship that will have life-changing consequences for the whole community.

A compelling adventure, incorporating social history and life-threatening drama, with themes of racism and friendship.



Novel format,  
black-and-white  
illustrations  
240 pages

### Weird Philosophy

Brandon  
Robshaw,  
illustrated by  
Paul Hammond  
Puffin

### Non-fiction

Discussion  
Illustrated  
Philosophy

If a tree falls in the woods and nobody hears it, does it make a sound?  
Are you living in a computer game?  
Would you rather be a happy pig or an unhappy human?

Readers are introduced to significant philosophers and their key thoughts – these concepts are then explained in contextualised, illustrated examples. Readers are also challenged with seemingly simple yet brilliantly complex questions.

This is an excellent introduction to the world of philosophy, with funny illustrations to add levity.



### **Land of the Last Wildcat**

Lui Sit, illustrated by David Dean

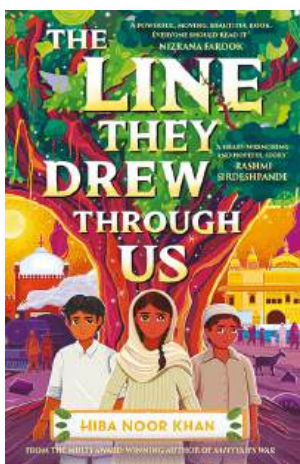
Macmillan Children's Books

**Adventure**  
Ecology  
Illustrated  
Magic

Puffin Lau is a 10-year-old girl obsessed by the Kuri, the legendary wild cat of Linger Island. Her scientist mum is usually away on research, so Puffin lives with Grandad Moe and her best friend Lance. One day Puffin finds a living Kuri in the Linger museum. Her mum's boss wants to experiment on the Kuri to extract its healing power. Can Puffin and Lance rescue it?

An exciting magical mystery adventure with an ecological message.

Novel  
272 pages



### **The Line They Drew Through Us**

Hiba Noor Khan

Andersen Press

**Historical fiction**  
Colonialism  
Identity  
Religion

Born into different religions, 12-year-olds Jahan, Ravi and Lakshmi are best friends. They meet in a village where Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs live together peacefully. But the British, who are leaving India, intend to divide the country according to religion. As protests and violence increase in the cities, can the friends' peace and friendship survive a cruel and unwelcome partition?

An accessible historical novel with a humanitarian perspective on the Partition of India in 1947.

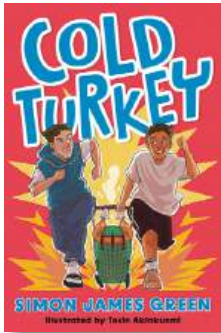
Novel  
304 pages



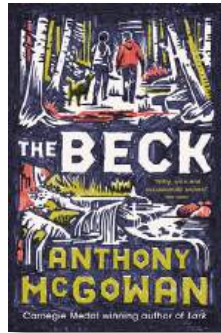
Illustration ©Aysha Awwad

## What's next?

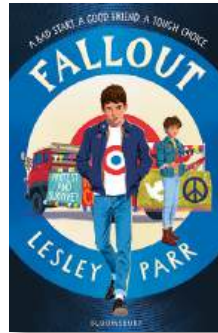
Looking for even more books that advanced readers will love?  
Here are some suggestions!



**Cold Turkey**  
Simon James Green,  
illustrated by Tosin  
Akinkunmi



**The Beck**  
Anthony McGowan



**Fallout**  
Lesley Parr



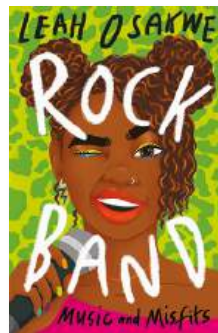
**What Happens  
Online**  
Nathaniel Lessore



**Serial Chillers:  
The Witch in  
the Woods**  
Jennifer Killick



**Raz Beri**  
Matt Stephens



**Rock Band**  
Leah Osakwe



**The First Year**  
Matt Goodfellow,  
illustrated by  
Joe Todd-Stanton



**Gloom**  
Jack Mackay



**Last Dragon  
on Mars**  
Scott Reintgen



**People Like Stars**  
Patrice Lawrence



**Wildful**  
Kengo Kurimoto

# Free virtual author workshops for your class!

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## Authors for 2025/26 academic year:



Alex Wharton



Abiola Bello



Maisie Chan



Chanté Timothy



Iqbal Hussain



Eric Huang

“ [...] being able to see yourself in a book...allows you to have a wider image of you as a person. ”  
- Student



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