



**Happy New Year!** We hope you had a wonderful break and that 2025 has started well for you and your family. We are delighted to start the new year by sharing a new selection of books. Hopefully some of the texts within these pages will capture the interest of your child – as always, we have tried to cover a range of interests and accessibility so that there is hopefully something for everyone.

Reading is so important for our young people: it provides so many benefits to support them in school, such as aiding vocabulary development, supporting access to the wider curriculum and therefore raising outcomes – but it also has proven benefits for life beyond school, including supporting mental wellbeing.

You may have seen in the news that the National Literacy Trust published their report into [Children and Young People's Reading in 2024](#) in November. It shows, by far, the lowest level of reading enjoyment that they have recorded since they started measuring this in 2005. The decrease in the number of young people enjoying reading is also the steepest decline seen. Just 1 in 3 children aged 8-18 years old said that they enjoyed reading in their free time and only 1 in 5 said that they read daily in their free time. In light of the benefits we know reading provides for young people, this is sad to see.

The books shared here are obviously a selection and are by no means an exhaustive list – but we do hope that some of these may help ignite, or continue to support, your child's enjoyment of reading. If you'd like to encourage and support your child with reading and exploring a variety of texts, you may wish to consider some of the tips below:

- **Share the selection of books in this newsletter** and see if any capture their interest.
- **Visit a book shop or library** and browse the shelves or ask the librarian/shop assistant what they'd recommend, based on your child's interests. Whatever they're interested in, there will be texts out there related to what they enjoy!
- Remember that **reading in any form is positive** – graphic novels and comics etc. They don't have to pick up a novel!
- Listening is also reading! Audiobooks are a great way to support students who may lack confidence in their reading ability or are reluctant to pick up a book.
- **Talk to them about what they're reading** – maybe even read (or listen!) along with them!
- **Carve out time to allow your child the space to engage in reading.** Life is busy and there are so many distractions that can pull us away from doing things like reading – help your child to carve out time to do so, without making it a chore. For example, perhaps you could plan time where they can sit quietly with a book and a hot chocolate or snack of their choice.
- **If they struggle with reading, speak to their school** and make sure they're aware. They'll be able to advise you on how best to support your child, based on their needs.

**Please note that unless otherwise stated, the texts shared within this newsletter are suitable from Year 7 and up, but please do research the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child, as these are just a publisher's guide.**

**We do hope this newsletter helps you and your child start to rekindle, or continue, your enjoyment of reading in 2025!  
Whatever you choose to read, we hope you enjoy entering the world of stories and books.**

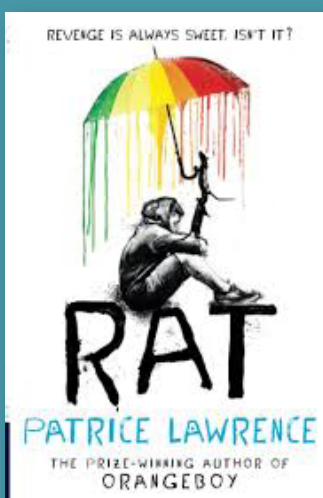
## SHORTER-LENGTH READS

The books below are all shorter-length texts, which could be engaging for anyone, but they are published in a dyslexia-friendly font to help make them accessible to all. If your child doesn't have dyslexia, they can still read these wonderful books!

**Home Ground**

ALAN GIBBONS

Sam's team are edging closer to the bottom of the league this season and team captain Jordan's bad attitude isn't helping anyone. When Sam spots Hasan playing on the refugee team, he can see that Hasan's got talent and invites him along to practice. Hasan and his friend Faisal prove to be exactly what the team need – but Jordan's not going to accept his new teammates so easily. Can Sam get the boys to pull together to win?

**Rat**

PATRICE LAWRENCE

When his mum is sent back to prison, Al knows exactly who's to blame. Mr Brayker, who lives downstairs, has been making trouble for Al's mum ever since they moved in, and Al's determined to get his revenge. Ignoring advice from his gran and sister, Plum, Al takes things into his own hands with a plan that involves the only two creatures he can rely on: his pet rats, Venom and Vulture. But things don't turn out exactly as he'd imagined...

## The List

KEITH GRAY

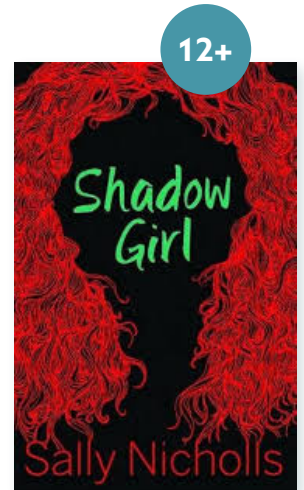
It's the end of the summer and Denny is having to move away with his mum now that she's found a good job, but he's not planning on leaving quietly. He's made a list of scores to settle and wrongs to right before he goes. He asks his best friend, Jake, to help. Jake is absolutely gutted that Denny is leaving and worries what life will be like without him. Of course, he'll do anything to help, no matter how weird or unrealistic the items on Denny's list might be. But the list is more powerful than either of them realise – it can make and break friendships.



## Shadow Girl

SALLY NICHOLLS

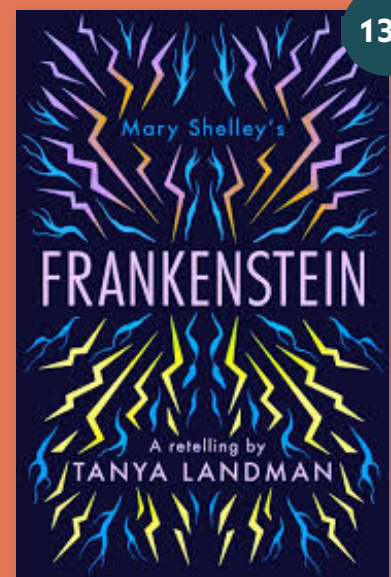
Clare knows she's at least partly to blame for her problems at school, but she's learned that it hurts to make friends when you're a foster kid and you'll just be moved on again. It's a relief to meet Maddy, who knows exactly what it's like to be in the system. But then Maddy disappears. Clare has opened her heart at last, and she can't let it go – will she find her friend?



## Frankenstein: A Retelling

TANYA LANDMAN

A thrilling gothic tale of hubris gone badly wrong. A young man's search for the secret of the spark of life leads him to a horrific experiment in which he creates a gigantic creature from dismembered body parts. Rejected by his creator, the initially gentle creature turns monstrous when his desire to find companionship and love are thwarted. Tanya Landman revisits Mary Shelley's classic Gothic horror story, bringing to life Dr Frankenstein and his monstrous creation in an accessible format that more readers can enjoy.

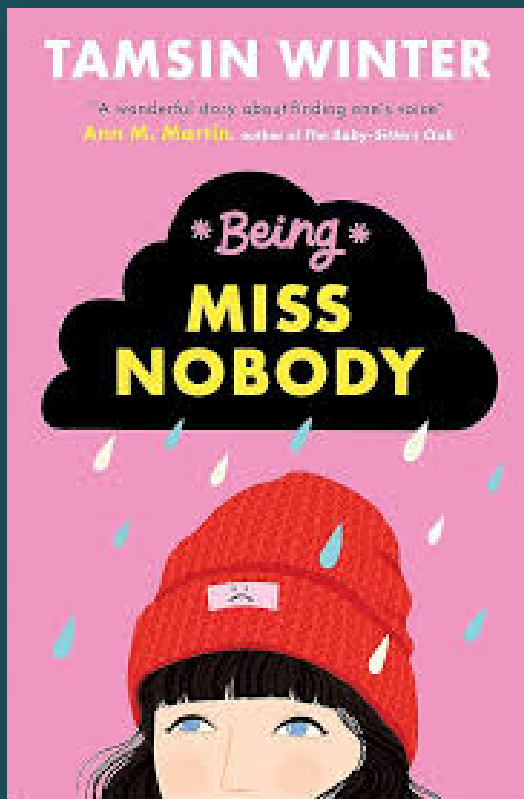


**LONGER-LENGTH READS**

## Being Miss Nobody

TAMSIN WINTER

Rosalind hates her new secondary school. She's the 'weird' girl who doesn't talk – and it's easy to pick on someone who can't fight back. So, Rosalind starts a blog – Miss Nobody; a place to speak up, a place where she has a voice. But there's a problem... Is Miss Nobody becoming a bully herself?

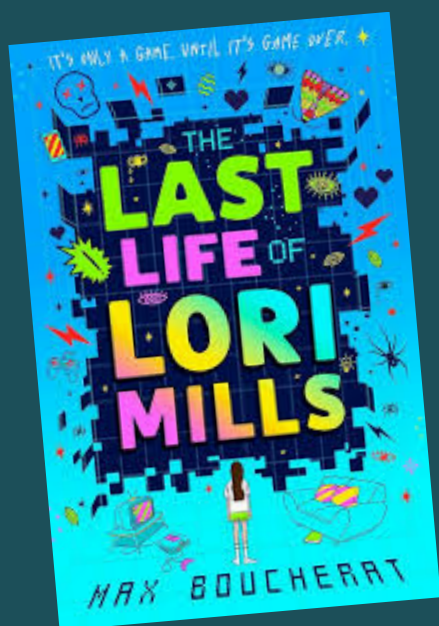


## Code Name Kingfisher

LIZ KESSLER

Holland, 1942. The world is at war and as the Nazi's power grows, Jewish families are in terrible danger. Twelve-year-old Mila and her older sister Hannie are sent to live with a family in another city with new identities and the strict instruction not to tell anyone that they are Jewish. Hannie, determined to fight back, is swept into the Dutch resistance as an undercover agent: Code Name Kingfisher...





## The Last Life of Lori Mills

MAX BOUCHERAT

Eleven-year-old Lori is home alone for the first time in her life and she's immediately done all the things she's TOTALLY NOT allowed to do:

1. Turned the heating up to the max
2. Built a GIANT blanket fort in the living room
3. Switched on Voxminer, aka the greatest game in the history of the universe

But, quickly, Lori realises something is wrong. She can hear strange whispers coming from the screen – and soon, they're in the house with her...

## Alebrijes – Flight to a New Haven

DONNA BARBA HIGUERA

For 400 years, Earth has been a barren wasteland. The few humans that survive scrape together an existence in the cruel city of Pocatel – or go it alone in the wilderness beyond, filled with wandering spirits and wyrms. They don't last long. Thirteen-year-old pickpocket Leandro and his sister Gabi do what they can to forge a life in Pocatel. When Gabi is caught stealing precious fruit from the Pocatelan elite, Leandro takes the fall. But his exile proves more than he ever could have imagined – far from a simple banishment, his consciousness is placed inside an ancient drone and left to fend on its own...



## The Crossover

KWAME ALEXANDER

12+

Twelve-year-old Josh and his twin Jordan have basketball in their blood. They're kings of the court, star players for their school team. Their father used to be a champion player and they each want nothing more than to follow in his footsteps. Both on and off the court, there is conflict and hardship which will test Josh's bond with his brother. The boys find that life doesn't come with a play-book and it's not all about winning...

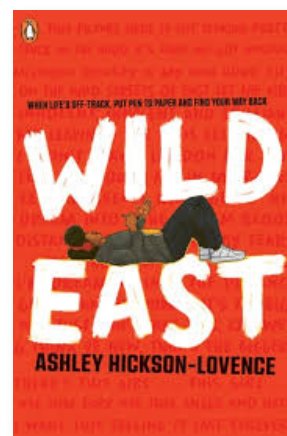


## Wild East

ASHLEY HICKSON-LOVENCE

14+

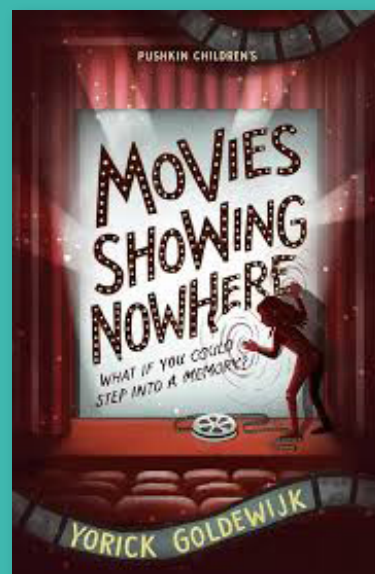
When fourteen-year-old Ronny's life is struck by tragedy, his mum decides it's finally time they move out of London. In his new city, Ronny feels like a complete outsider and struggles to balance keeping his head down with his ambition of becoming a rapper. But when a local poet comes into class, Ronny discovers a world he's never considered before. Rap is like spoken word: bars equal poetry – and maybe the combination of both could be the key to achieving his dreams.

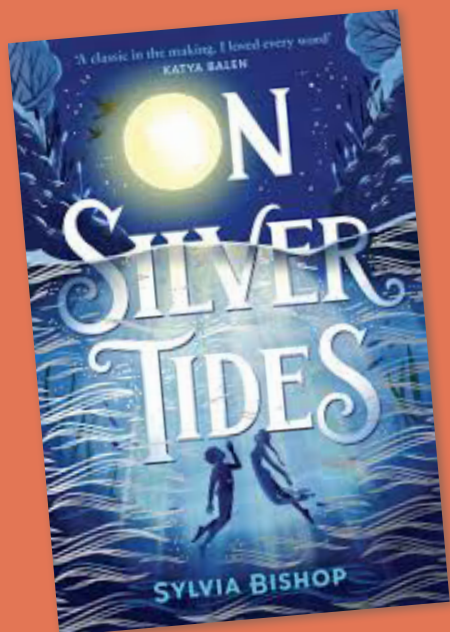


## Movies Showing Nowhere

YORICK GOLDEWIJK

On the day Cate came into the world, her mum left it. Her dad is often distant and silent, so she keeps herself entertained with kung fu films, her pet rabbit and her photography. Then, one afternoon, Cate receives a mysterious invitation to an abandoned cinema and everything changes. Soon, Cate meets the peculiar Mrs Kano and discovers a most unusual kind of movie screen – the kind that lets you step through it into a memory. So begins a wonder-filled adventure through time that will teach Cate the true meaning of love, loss and learning to let go.





## On Silver Tides

12+

SYLVIA BISHOP

Kelda has always protected her little sister Isla from danger on the rivers, and from the suspicions of their community. For Isla cannot breathe underwater – and so her very existence is forbidden by silvermen’s Lore. Now the rivers of England are growing sick: monstrous creatures are awakening and a fierce torrent of blame falls upon Kelda’s family. When betrayal comes, the sisters escape on a desperate journey upstream. Joining forces with a mysterious boy, Kelda discovers the darkest depths of her kind’s secret history. But to save both her sister and the very life of Britain’s waterways, Kelda will have to make a sacrifice – one that will change her life forever.

## Silver

OLIVIA LEVEZ

14+

Silver has been trained since birth for her mission: collect data on the humans to test if Earth is viable for her home ship, Charybdis, to colonise. The only rules are that she must feed back the data she collects to the ship and, at all times, follow the Mantra: To touch is agony. To feel is pain. So, when Silver inhabits the body of a young woman and infiltrates the house she is staying in, she must learn to pass as a human without revealing her true identity. But she isn’t prepared for how the humans will get under her skin. It is not how Charybdis said it would be. Have they been lying all along?



## The Outrage

WILLIAM HUSSEY

14+

Welcome to England, where the Protectorate enforces the Public Good. Here, there are rules for everything – what to eat, what to wear, what to do, what to say, what to read, what to think, who to obey, who to hate, who to love. Your safety is assured, so long as you follow the rules. Gabriel is a natural born rule-breaker – and his biggest crime of all? Being gay. Gabriel knows his sexuality must be kept secret from all but his closest friends, not only to protect himself, but to protect Gabriel’s heart. He’s the son of the chief inspector at Degenerate Investigations – the man who poses the single biggest threat to Gabriel’s life. And the Protectorate are experts at exposing secrets...

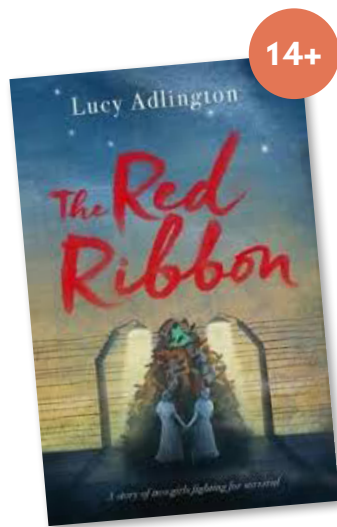


JANUARY 27TH IS HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Your child's school may be commemorating this, so we have shared a few books below, in case this captures your child's interest and they'd like to read more.

**The Daughter of Auschwitz: The Girl Who Lived to Tell Her Story** TOVA FRIEDMAN

Tova Friedman was just five years old when she and her mother were sent to a Nazi labour camp. She turned six in Auschwitz. At twelve she was on her way to America, ready to start a new life and tell her tale of survival. Tova's story is one of incredible courage, resilience, bravery and the enduring power of hope.



**The Red Ribbon**

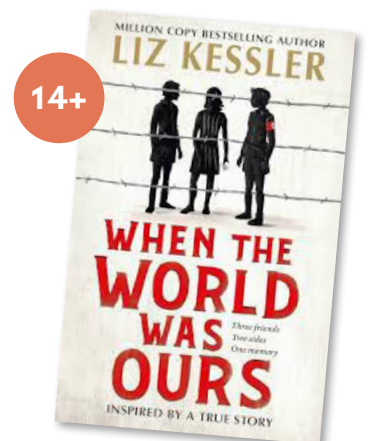
LUCY ADLINGTON

As Ella begins her first day at work, she steps into a world of silks, seams, scissors, pins, hems and trimmings. She is a dressmaker, but this is no ordinary sewing workshop. Hers are no ordinary clients. Ella has joined the seamstresses of Birkenau-Auschwitz. Every dress she makes could mean the difference between life and death. Ella seeks refuge from this reality and haunting memories, in her work. She is faced with painful decisions about how far she is prepared to go to survive. Is her love of clothes and creativity nothing more than collaboration with her captors, or is it a means of staying alive? Will she fight for herself alone or will she trust the importance of an ever-deepening friendship with Rose? One thing weaves through the colours of couture gowns and camp mud – a red ribbon, given to Ella as a symbol of hope.

**When the World Was Ours**

LIZ KESSLER

Elsa, Leo and Max have always been best friends, a special team of three. Then the Nazis come. As a growing darkness descends around them, Leo and Elsa run for their lives, taking two very different paths across Europe. And Max, once their closest friend, now becomes the enemy as he is drawn into the Hitler Youth. Will the friends ever find their way back to each other? Will they want to? *Inspired by a true story, this novel shows how the bonds of love, family and friendship allow glimmers of hope to flourish, even in the most hopeless of times.*





**NON-FICTION RECOMMENDATIONS**

## 100 Things to Know About History

Did you know that mammoths and pharaohs walked the earth at the same time? Or that over 30 types of gladiators fought in Ancient Rome? This fascinating book is filled with 100 historical facts, with bright illustrations – as well as sharing links to specially-selected websites with video clips and more information!



## Politics for Beginners

An informative guide to political systems, elections, voting and government, as well as issues including feminism, human rights, freedom of speech and fake news. All these are explained with clear text and bright illustrations. This book includes tips on how to argue and debate and links to specially-selected websites with more information!





**Survival in Space:  
The Apollo 13 Mission**

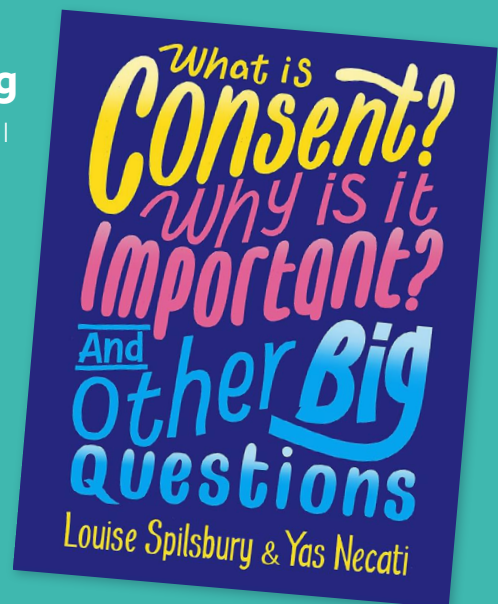
DAVID LONG

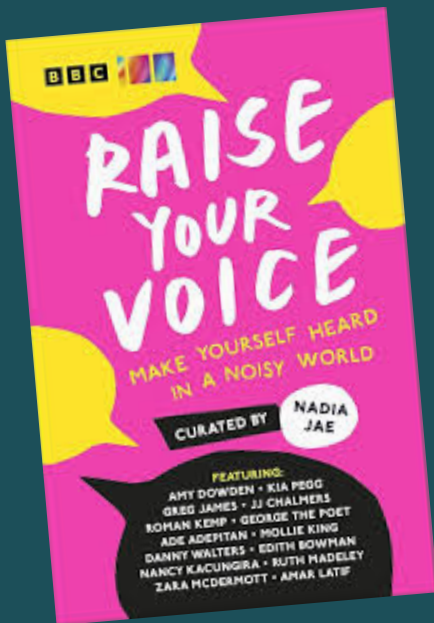
April 11, 1970: Apollo 13 was launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. It should have been the third manned Apollo mission to land on the moon. But, when an explosion on board damaged the spacecraft, it became a perilous and near-impossible fight for survival. Battling to get back to Earth, the crew on board travelled further into space than any humans had done before. In this book you'll see how courage, determination and teamwork succeeded in beating all odds to bring the spacecraft home.

**What is consent?  
Why is it important? and other big  
questions** LOUISE SPILSBURY & YAS NECATI

The concept of consent is easy to oversimplify – yes means yes, and no means no. Sometimes, though, it isn't that black and white. Have you ever said 'yes' to something when, really, you wanted to say 'no'? Or have you ever tried to convince someone to do something they don't want to do?

This book explores how consent works and why it matters. It explains how it plays a part in almost every interaction or relationship we have, and how it affects almost every area of life, from healthcare to the law. It will encourage you to think about what consent means to you and explore the importance of personal boundaries – both knowing your own and respecting other people's.





## Raise Your Voice: Make Yourself Heard in a Noisy World

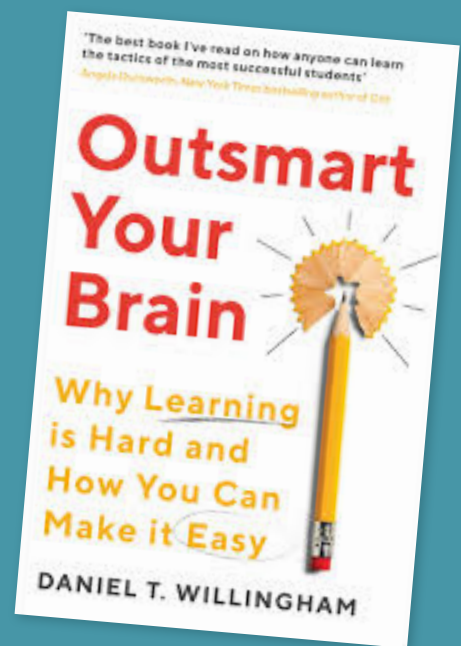
NADIA JAE

Everyone has a story to tell. Unsure of how to cut through the chatter and make your unique self known? Then this may be the book for you, that empowers you to tell your story! Raise Your Voice imparts essential advice on boosting confidence and speaking up, presenting yourself and using all forms of technology in order to tell your personal, fearless story. Including first-hand advice from sports people, musicians and broadcasters, led by BBC radio DJ Nadia Jae, learn how to speak up, organise change and be an ally, as well as overcoming stage fright and more!

## Outsmart Your Brain: Why Learning is Hard and How You Can Make it Easy

DANIEL T. WILLINGHAM

In this guide, Willingham uses fascinating brain science to help you study more efficiently and effectively. Shrug away exam stress and make learning a skill you can master and enjoy! Based on the latest research, this book offers specific strategies for reading, listening and taking tests, covering the practical aspects like optimum note taking, how to read difficult books and good exam technique, coupled with psychological challenges of dealing with anxiety, fighting procrastination and developing good focus.



# PiXL Reading

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