

About the UKLA Book Awards 2019 Longlists

Find out more about these fantastic books.

3-6

Baby Goes to Market

by Atinuke

Strapped on mum's back, Baby thoroughly enjoys the trip round the market, particularly as the stallholders are so generous with the delicious treats. No wonder Baby seems to be getting heavier. There is a lovely balance of security and adventure in this charming book. Children will love being one step ahead of the adult in the story and will appreciate the carefully clued vocabulary and repeated structure.

The Wolf, the Duck and the Mouse

by Mac Barnett, ill. John Klassen

The Duck and the Mouse may have been swallowed by the wolf but they live a comfortable, safe life in his belly until a hunter comes along and their home, the wolf, has to be saved. This is a funny, bizarre, charming book which tells a very original story in a unique way. Barnett's beautifully balanced text matches perfectly with Klassen's pictures.

Do Not Lick This Book

by Idan Ben-Barak and Julian Frost

This is a delight: microbes explained for very young children in a way that makes the subject fascinating and enormous fun. Using micrographs of everyday items, children are encouraged to take microbes on an adventure and then return them to the safety of the book. The science is accurate but accessible and the presentation is fun. And if you really want to lick the book, just turn to the back cover.

The Squirrels Who Squabbled

by Rachel Bright and Jim Field

Cyril has spent a very happy summer larking about in the forest and has nothing stored for winter. Bruce already has a mountain of food to see him through the cold months. When both squirrels spot one remaining luscious fir cone, each is determined to have it. Written and illustrated with a wit which enlivens this moral tale,

The Squirrels Who Squabbled

will be both popular and valuable.

Luna Loves Library Day

by Joseph Coelho and Fiona Lumbers

Luna loves her mum dropping her off at the library where her dad is always waiting for her. Together they spend a very happy time choosing books before Luna returns home with her favourites and some very happy memories. Nothing is laboured in this lovely story about parents making the best of a situation to ensure their child's happiness. With its realistic people and relevant situation, while still pouring out joy, this is gorgeous.

This Zoo Is Not for You

by Ross Collins

The zoo has a vacancy and the animals are holding interviews. Nobody thinks much of the platypus: he's a bit weird and boring in their opinion. Having sent him away, they realise their mistake when they find an invitation from him. The exploration of friendship with those unlike ourselves is going to appeal in many classrooms, particularly as both text and illustration are accomplished and vivid.

Bob's Blue Period

by Marion Deuchars

Bob and his friend Bat love to paint together but, when Bat goes away, Bob is so unhappy that he can only paint in blue. His friends eventually convince him that there is still beauty and colour in the world. Then Bat returns. Hooray! This is a very clever book which can be read and appreciated in several ways depending on the maturity and experiences of the readers. There are also some very clever surprises.

The Old Man

by Sarah V. and Claude K. Dubois, trans. Daniel Hahn

Most of the children in our schools will have seen homeless people but it isn't a subject we find easy to discuss. This gentle book enables us to see the suffering of the homeless man and the profound impact of kind words and acts. The story is told through spare, simple text which doesn't hold back and beautiful muted pictures in which the shape in the doorway gradually becomes a real person with a chance of warmth and safety.

The Last Wolf

by Mini Grey

When Little Red decides she wants to catch a wolf, mum packs her a lunchbox and sends her off into the woods. After all, there's no danger: the forest has mostly been cut down and no-one has seen a wolf for a hundred years. When Little Red comes across a door and is invited in for tea she learns that life is very tough indeed for the forest animals. With great respect for her young readers, Mini Grey presents the story without suggesting a simple solution.

I Am Bat

by Morag Hood

Bat loves cherries and warns all unseen potential thieves that they must not take them. When some cherries are stolen, Bat is bereft until friends provide a different fruit. Bat is a wonderful character in whom children will find some recognisable characteristics: but not their own, of course. What could be better than to see that others can be fickle, obsessive and foolish yet still lovable?

I Am Bat

gives more on each rereading.

Here We Are

by Oliver Jeffers

Jeffers describes

Here We Are

as his way of making sense of the world for his young son. It is certainly the warmth of the relationship between the writer and the reader which makes this book stand head and shoulders above most introductions to physical and political geography. The explanations are simple and very humane, with a warmth and wit which will make this a very special book to share. It offers plenty of chuckles and enough big ideas to satisfy everyone.

We Travel So Far

by Laura Knowles and Chris Madden

This beautiful non-fiction book looks at species which travel long distances for different reasons. Each species is given a double page spread in which well-researched information is presented in lilting first-person phrases which makes the content very immediate. The illustrations wrap around the text, enhancing its beauty. The final pages, which look at people and the reasons why we travel, are very moving.

The New Neighbours

by Sarah McIntyre

The young bunnies are delighted by the news that rats have moved into their block of flats. However, as they tell the other residents about the new neighbours, they hear more and more terrible things about the things rats do. The rats must be made to leave straight away. Then the youngest bunny has the courage to knock on the door and find out what the new neighbours are really like. A very timely allegory, charmingly told.

After the Fall

by Dan Santat

There are some things that all the King's Men couldn't mend for Humpty Dumpty. He is now terrified of heights, yet he misses the view from the top of the wall so much. Perhaps sending a paper plane flying over the wall might help? But the paper plane gets stuck and Humpty must decide whether he is brave enough to climb the wall to rescue it. This is a breathtakingly accomplished fusion of words and illustrations with plenty of humour and a huge impact.

Stardust

by Jeanne Willis and Briony May Smith

The narrator looks back to her childhood when her elder sister was a star at everything she did. The younger sister longs to sparkle too. Then her grandfather explains about the origins of the universe and that everyone is made of stardust. This fascinating fusion of sibling rivalry and astrophysics will have many resonances with the young and will fascinate a broad range of readers. The pictures offer a warm and loving depiction of the family.

The Drum

by Ken Wilson-Max and Catell Ronca

This glorious celebration of rhythm brings together children from many cultures to enjoy the powerful rhythms of drumming as they dance together. The text cleverly determines the way the book is read, while the short phrases and occasional rhyme support the reader. The pleasures and importance of music become a celebration of life itself. This deceptively simple book has

something important to say to all children.

The Big Book of the Blue

by Yuval Zommer

The diversity and complexity of life in the ocean is celebrated in this lovely book. Information is arranged thematically in ways that introduce a range of themes and include issues of human intervention and pollution. Children are also invited to play a spot-the-sardine game to encourage close consideration of each beautiful page. Informative, loving and never over-technical, this is a fabulous book for inquisitive young minds.

7-11

The House with Chicken Legs

by Sophie Anderson

Marinka would love to live in a house which stays in one place, so she could have friends and live a normal life. But, as her grandmother's role is to guide spirits on their way away from life, Marinka's attempt to befriend a girl who comes to their house brings tragedy. Woven through the Baba Yaga story, this book explores thought-provoking themes through a fast-paced narrative and great characters: especially the house itself.

The Wild Robot

by Peter Brown

A robot breaks out of a packing case on a wild remote island. Roz, the robot, believes that she has no emotions but, as her existence becomes entwined with the lives of the island's animals, she begins to appreciate her life and the lives of others. However, she is a very valuable product and the island is endangered. This is a humane and thought-provoking story, which is both accessible and challenging.

Overheard in a Tower Block

by Joseph Coelho

In a series of interlinking poems, Joseph Coelho explores his childhood as a city child living in a tower block, and then takes the reader forward into his adult life to develop the themes further from a different perspective. The poignancy of the events is heightened by the very accomplished and varied poetic forms which are perfectly matched to the theme. Each individual poem is enlightening; together they are dazzling.

The Chinese Emperor's New Clothes by Ying Chang Compestine, ill. David Roberts

The young Chinese Emperor suspects that his ministers are defrauding him so, with some clever tailors, he tricks them into believing that old sacks are the most splendid magical robes. This beautifully-illustrated book tells its story vividly through words and pictures. The language is spare, vivid and sufficiently challenging to engage but never daunt young readers.

Running on Empty

by S.E Durrant

AJ doesn't think he's really a carer for his parents, both of whom have learning difficulties. The most important thing in his life is running and, living very close to the London Olympic Stadium, he dreams of emulating Usain Bolt. When his grandad dies, AJ has to take more responsibilities and make some very difficult decisions. This entirely believable story of friendship grips readers from the first page right through to the inspiring conclusion.

The Children of Castle Rock

by Natasha Farrant

Alice loves her house, her eccentric father and her sensible aunt, but everything changes. She is sent to a boarding school in Scotland where she convinces two new friends to come with her on a dangerous and exciting quest. Not only a belting good adventure story,

The Children of Castle Rock

also has a unique authorial voice that will fully engage young readers. The descriptions are stunning, the characters compelling.

All the Things that Could Go Wrong

by Stewart Foster

Alex finds leaving the house very difficult because OCD makes so many demands on him. A gang of children in his class just see him as a 'Wimp' and 'Weirdo' and make his life a misery. Alex is longing for the release of the school holidays, but then his mum decides that a holiday project with the worst of the bullies would be a great idea. As Alex and Danny work together, they gradually come to understand each other.

Boy 87

by Ele Fountain

Shif is an ordinary boy who loves his family and playing chess. However, he and his best friend are caught by military police and sent to a desert prison. They are helped to escape so that the life

stories of the dying inmates may be told. This is a daunting, truthful book which will tell the oldest readers in the age group much about the world; not least, that kindness may be encountered in terrible places.

Kick

by Mitch Johnson

Budi plays football every minute he can spare from his job in the football boot factory. He knows that one day he'll be a great professional player. However, being very poor in Jakarta means everything is dangerous and soon Budi's dreams are swallowed by the terror of his real life. This enlightening, frightening and uplifting book is written with a flair and sincerity that will draw readers close to the themes.

Sky Dancer by Gill Lewis

Sky Dancer

is much more than a very engaging animal story as, through consideration of the plight of hen harriers on moorlands, Gill Lewis offers insights into the issues of a precarious environment for both the animals and the humans which live on the land. The characters are completely believable and their decisions always have repercussions for others. Vivid, fast-paced and surprising,

Sky Dancer

will be very popular with young readers.

The Muslims

by Zanib Mian

Omar's parents are both scientists; his mum loves coffee; his dad hates beetroot. His little brother is really annoying; his big sister has a severe fondant fancy habit. Zanib Mian depicts a very ordinary, loving family whose faith is central to their lives. Omar is bullied because he is seen as being different but a mistake on the London Underground brings bully and victim together. A warm, inspiring and informative book with an original voice.

Ghost Boys

by Jewell Parker Rhodes

Jerome is a good boy: he makes sure he keeps clear of all the trouble in his neighbourhood. This doesn't stop him getting shot in the back by a policeman. This happens on the first page and for the rest of the book, Jerome sees the responses to his death and meets and learns the stories of other young black boys whose killers have escaped justice. This very powerful book is written with a passion that this is a story which must be told.

The Explorer

by Katherine Rundell

A small plane crashes in the Amazon jungle and four very different children have to survive and find their way to people who can help them. When they see signs that someone has been there before them, they follow the clues and find something unexpected and wonderful. The unforgiving beauty of the Amazon is meticulously depicted in a way which augments the story. Readers will love the passion of the writing and the respect for childhood.

Riding a Donkey Backward

retold by Sean Taylor and Khayall Theatre, ill. Shirin Adl

The tales of Mulla Nasraddin are a delight. In this retelling, readers are invited to give the normal rules of logic a gentle twist to see the world from Nasraddin's joyful perspective. Each of these very short stories is a little jewel offering immediate pleasure as well as the gentle invitation to see the world in a slightly different way. Perfect for children who children who need speedy rewards in their reading, and a joy for all readers.

The Trials of Morrigan Crow

by Jessica Townsend

Morrigan isn't looking forward to her eleventh birthday as she knows that's when she is cursed to die! However, as the clock strikes twelve, she is whisked away to a new life in a strange wonderful city where everything is possible for the talented. The trouble is, Morrigan doesn't have a talent.

The Trials of Morrigan Crow

is funny yet serious: a fantasy that at heart is very close and true to the lives of young readers.

The Murderer's Ape

by Jakob Wegelius, trans. Peter Graves

This is a huge, roaring adventure story covering several years and a couple of continents. Sally Jones is the mate on a cargo ship. When her colleague, the Chief, is wrongly accused of murder, Sally Jones is determined to find the truth and gain her friend's freedom. However, this isn't easy if you happen to be a gorilla.

The Murderer's Ape

is written with huge panache. The story constantly offers thrills as characters and settings take the reader to splendid places.

Three Cheers for Women

by Marcia Williams

It is great to find a non-fiction book written with such gusto and understanding of the interests of children. The main strip cartoon form explains the significance of each of the women subjects in a memorable way while the cheerful characters that frolic round the margins give delicious extra snippets of information without trivialising or mocking the subjects. This book has a place in every classroom.

12-16+

The Poet X

by Elizabeth Acevedo

This poignant verse novel is told in the voice of Xiomara, a young girl trapped in a family controlled by a fierce, church-going mother afraid of her daughter's growing sexuality. Xiomara is rescued by her brother, who gives her a notebook to write down her thinking, and her teacher who encourages her to join a slam poetry club. It's through this club that Xiomara gradually finds her own voice.

The Colour of the Sun

by David Almond

This is the story of just one day in the life of Davie, but of so much more besides. As the day unfolds we capture Davie's memories, as sharp as the present, as the day in which he moves. The writing is lyrical, with a magical sense of place, and a very real understanding of the role that memories play in everyday life.

Piglettes

by Clémentine Beauvais, trans. Clémentine Beauvais

In a yearly social media on-line poll, Mireille, Astrid and Hakima are voted the ugliest girls in the school. Mireille, a habitual 'winner', decides enough is enough. She befriends Astrid and Hakima and together they plan a surreal road trip to Paris to meet the president at the July 14th celebrations.

Piglettes

is a quirky, laugh-out-loud funny book about resilience, courage and wonderful French food.

Moonrise

by Sarah Crossan

At the age of 7, Joe's much-loved older brother disappeared from his life. Joe is to find that this brother is imprisoned and on death row. We follow Joe 10 years later as he (just about) scrapes a

living in Texas as he waits for execution day. Tense, harrowing and utterly believable, the story – told in verse – is about finding inner strength, and acceptance.

Norse Myths tales of Odin, Thor and Loki

by Kevin Crossley-Holland, ill. Jeffrey Alan Love

Wonderful illustrations, imaginative page design, beautiful writing – these re-tellings of familiar and less-familiar Norse myths by the brilliant Kevin Crossley-Holland make this a book to treasure. These stories deserve to be read, mulled, shared and to be read aloud!

A Skinful of Shadows

by Frances Hardinge

Twelve-year-old Makepeace lives in seventeenth-century Protestant England, and also in a vividly crafted, invented, imagined world of ghosts. Although she has learned to defend herself from these ghosts, one night a dreadful event causes her to drop her guard. This is a deeply satisfying story about resilience and courage against seemingly impossible odds.

After the Fire

by Will Hill

Moonbeam has grown up in a religious community controlled by Father John and his chilling team. Told in short chapters 'BEFORE' and 'AFTER', the reader follows Moonbeam's fiercely tense journey out of the darkness of her controlled life. This Carnegie-shortlisted novel is a gripping, page-turning, well-crafted read.

Mary's Monster

by Lita Judge

With free verse poems and engaging illustrations, Lita Judge weaves the reader into the story of the author of Frankenstein, Mary Shelley. It tells of her unloved childhood, her meeting with Byron, and the appallingly difficult, troubled relationship with Shelley. An unusual, engaging read.

Rook

by Anthony McGowan

In the same series as

Brock

and

Pike

, this sensitively, simply written, engrossing short book describes Kenny and Nicky's heartache as they rescue a rook that had been left for dead. A powerful story whose beautifully drawn central characters are white working-class boys – characters not found often enough at the heart of YA fiction.

Things a Bright Girl Can Do

by Sally Nicholls

This is the story of three young girls at the beginning of WW1. All three are from different worlds: Evelyn is privileged and baulking at the suffocating restrictions of her life; Nell the eldest daughter of a large family living in poverty; and May, living with her socialist, Quaker mother in genteel poverty. Things become more complicated in all three lives as they become involved in the growing suffragette movement. An engaging read, about principles, class and gender.

Mike

by Andrew Norriss

Floyd is a young teenager, coached by his tennis-obsessed parents to be the next Wimbledon champion. He's certainly talented, but is this the life he himself really wishes to lead? He begins to hear the voice of 'Mike' and to imagine different possible ways of living, ways in which he feels truly at ease. A thought-provoking and page-turning read.

White Rabbit, Red Wolf

by Tom Pollock

Pete is a 17-year-old maths prodigy who suffers severe panic attacks. He and his sister Beth – who is his rock – live with their highly regarded scientist mother. When Pete and Beth are invited to a ceremony to see their mother receive a prestigious award, something terrible happens and Pete enters a nightmare world, as he tries to find a pattern to unlock the key to his life. A fast-paced dystopian thriller.

La Belle Sauvage

by Philip Pullman

This is part 1 of a planned trilogy, 'The Book of Dust', a long-awaited companion-piece to Pullman's seminal 'His Dark Materials' trilogy. As Lyra is only a baby at this point in the story, the hero of this volume is inn-keeper's son Malcolm, an intelligent, honest 11-year-old. He is forced to negotiate terrifying, wildly inventive worlds, in order to keep Lyra safe. An enthralling, richly imagined and utterly believable world.

Long Way Down

by Jason Reynolds, ill. Chris Priestley

Written in free verse, this is the story of a 14-year-old boy whose brother has just been shot. The boy takes his brother's revolver and makes his way down the lift shaft to seek vengeance. On every floor he is to experience ghosts of family members who tell their stories. Will he 'Follow the rules'? Haunting and utterly compelling.

Thornhill

by Pam Smy

In sparse writing and stunning black and white illustrations, this novel gradually reveals the tale of two unloved, unhappy young girls, living their lives one in the past, one in the present but both connected to Thornhill. Full of tension, it's a ghostly, disturbing, powerful read.

We See Everything

by William Sutcliffe

Lex and Alan are teenagers living in a dystopian, burnt-out shell of London. Lex is the son of a high-profile target, Alan a gamer, just promoted to the air force as a skilled drone pilot. They will not meet, but their lives will collide with horrendous consequences for them both. Written in the first person, in two utterly believable voices, this novel is compelling, tense and horribly real.