

UKLA Book Award 2021

Longlist 3-6+

Under the Great Plum Tree written by Sufiya Ahmed, illustrated by Reza Dalvand. (Tiny Owl)

Based on an ancient Indian traditional tale, this story draws on themes of kindness, trust and bravery. It is lavishly illustrated, with detailed patterns, rich colours and engaging, stylised animals, all reflecting the visual treasures of the Indian sub-continent.

I Am Brown written by Ashok Banker, illustrated by Sandhya Prabhat. (Lantana Publishing)

With a cast of small children, this inspirational book is a joyful exploration of the diversity of people with brown skin, in terms of ambition, heritage and belief. The text is simple, but the illustrations are vibrant, detailed and fascinating. All children, whatever their skin colour, will enjoy it.

Sofia Valdez, Future Prez written by Andrea Beaty, illustrated by David Roberts. (Abrams Books for Young Readers)

Sofia Valdez is fearless. She is a go-getter, who wants to improve her neighbourhood – the problem is, she is only in the second grade. Inspired by the people who believe in her, she tackles City Hall and gets her park built, with the help of the whole community. The story is driven forward by rhyming text, which is a joy to read aloud, and engaging and humorous illustrations.

The Worrysaurus written by Rachel Bright, illustrated by Chris Chatterton. (Orchard Books)

Little Worrysaurus sets off for a picnic in the sunshine, but he hasn't gone far before he is beset by worries. This book, with a simple rhyming text, deals sensitively and gently with issues of worries which can become overwhelming. This story has a happy ending, though. Comforted with thoughts of his mummy, and a tin full of his special objects, he is able to get his sunny day back on track.

Look Up! Written by Nathan Bryon, illustrated by Dapo Adeola. (Puffin)

The heroine of this story is Rocket, a junior astronaut. She is so determined to share her knowledge about space, she manages to get her friends and neighbours, and even her brother Jamal, to the park to see a meteor shower. The book is peppered with her enthusiasm, with facts about space, delivered through illustrations which place her in a very believable family and neighbourhood. The enthusiasm is infectious – by the end of the story, even grumpy Jamal has to put his phone away and look up.

Mr Gumpy's Rhino written and illustrated by John Burningham. (Jonathan Cape)

This is a very welcome return for Mr. Gumpy. On his travels to Africa, he rescues an abandoned baby rhino, and with help from friends he meets in the desert, and on a boat journey, he is able to take him home to that oh so familiar house and garden. Mr. Gumpy makes sure that Charlie the rhino earns his keep, mowing the grass for the council and even, in a final, glorious adventure, helping on the school trip.

Hello Friend written and illustrated by Rebecca Cobb. (Macmillan)

How do small children learn to make friends? This story shows one very enthusiastic girl who is determined to befriend a rather startled and timid boy. While the text tells the story from the girl's point of view, the illustrations very clearly depict the boy's thoughts and feelings. By the end of the story, they are firm friends, ready to help someone less confident.

No Longer Alone written by Joseph Coelho, illustrated by Robyn Wilson- Owen. (Egmont)

This is a story about loss and grief, seen through the eyes of a little girl who is expressing herself through stillness and silence. The lyrical text and the sensitive and evocative illustrations, reveal the story of the girl's sadness slowly, with small hints and clues, without overwhelming the reader. The story has a very satisfying and optimistic ending, with the main character able to express herself just fine.

Fair Shares written by Pippa Goodhart, illustrated by Anna Doherty. (Tiny Owl)

What does it really mean to share things out fairly? The bear and the hare in the story are desperate to reach the juicy pears in the tree, but they need a passing beetle to help them work out how to do it fairly. There is a lot of humour here, but an opportunity for a lot of thought and discussion too.

Rabbit & Bear- A Bite in the Night written by Julian Gough, illustrated by Jim Field. (Hodder)

Rabbit and Bear are back, but the harmony of their wood is disturbed by a beaver with a very strong work ethic. As the trees crash down and the water rises, the underground creatures and the birds become homeless. Bear isn't quite sure which side to choose, but his dilemma is resolved with some woodland cooperation. The story is charmingly illustrated with a warm autumn palette and by the end of the story, even the beaver is flashing his enormous teeth in a smile.

Where Happiness Begins written and illustrated by Eva Eland. (Andersen Press)

How do you recognise Happiness? In soft pastel illustrations, this book gently suggests how a child might find it and treasure it. It gives reassurance to the child who might be feeling sad that there will be happiness ahead.

Brenda is a Sheep written and illustrated by Morag Hood. (Two Hoots)

Brenda, of course, isn't really a sheep at all. She's a very hungry and cunning wolf, who finds herself unwittingly outdone by a flock of sheep who want to treat her as a friend. Children will discover both the meaning of "a wolf in sheep's clothing" and the effect of counting sheep, through this wickedly funny story.

The Last Tiger written and illustrated by Petr Horáček. (Otter- Barry Books)

Through vibrant and dramatic illustrations, the story tells a sad tale of the last tiger, captured and stared at until his power fades. There is a hopeful ending, but plenty here for children to discuss and worry about.

The Fate of Fausto written and illustrated by Oliver Jeffers. (HarperCollins)

This fable shows children that, however rich and powerful Fausto might be, however hard he stamps his foot, there are some things which won't bend to his will. The spare illustrations and the use of space, reinforce Fausto's lack of understanding.

My Hair written by Hannah Lee, illustrated by Allen Fatimaraham. (Faber & Faber)

In this effervescent story about black hair styles, the main character is deciding which style to choose for her birthday. We get the chance to look at the very wide range of styles worn by her family and friends, until she settles on a glorious Afro. Children will delight in the illustrations, recognising themselves and their friends in the pages.

My Friend Earth written by Patricia MacLachlan, illustrated by Francesca Sanna. (Chronicle Books)

As Mother Earth wakes from her winter sleep, we see her welcome the signs of spring. Through rich illustrations, enhanced by cut-outs, and the lyrical text, the reader is carried across the seasons and the globe until it is time for Mother Earth's time to sleep again.

The Misadventures of Frederick written by Ben Manley, illustrated by Emma Chichester Clark. (Two Hoots)

Poor, pampered Frederick is definitely accident prone. His friend Emily tries very hard to tempt him outside, but remembering past disasters, and discouraged by his mother, he stays indoors writing Emily beautifully crafted letters making his excuses. The exchange of letters, via paper aeroplanes, very cleverly points up the differences between the two children – Frederick's polite and flowery, Emily's short and direct. The reader is left in no doubt about who is having the most fun, and is rewarded with a delicious joke at the end.

Tibble and Grandpa written by Wendy Meddour, illustrated by Daniel Egneus. (Oxford)

Poor Tibble can't understand why his Grandpa won't play with him. He doesn't give up though, embarking on a relentless campaign to get Grandpa to chat to him by compiling ever more ambitious lists – the top three sandwiches, top three jellyfish – until Grandpa and Tibble embark on their top three trips. Very gently, we begin to understand why Grandpa is so uncharacteristically sad. The book has a very satisfying and reassuring ending.

Umbrella written and illustrated by Elena Arevalo Melville. (Scallywag Press)

A magic umbrella discovered in the park, can bring joy to everyone. Well, not quite. A cunning fox, watching from his bench, would like to use the umbrella to make his fortune, but things don't work out quite how he had planned. The story is illustrated with a very simple and restrained colour palette, until a very joyful and colourful ending.

I'm Not (Very) Afraid of the Dark written by Anna Milbourne, illustrated by Daniel Riley. (Usborne)

The young boy at the heart of this story tries very hard to banish and control his fear of the dark in the bedtime bustle, but once the lights are out, his fears come rushing back. The clever cut outs in the pages are used to transform his cheery bedroom to a place of hidden terrors. A camping trip outside helps him to understand the beauty of the night sky, again beautifully illustrated through a double page spread of stars. Is he still afraid of the dark? Just a little bit....

It's a No Money Day written and illustrated by Kate Milner. (Barrington Stoke)

This story explores, with great sensitivity, what happens to a single working mother and her child when the money runs out. Told from the child's point of view, the illustrations tell us what the text leaves out - that Mum is hungry and worried, and that she experiences deep distress when receiving help from the food bank. It's by no means a miserable book though – this little family can find a great deal of fun at the library and the charity shop, or even dreaming of the things they might be able to afford "one day".

Sulwe written by Lupita Nyong'o, illustrated by Vashti Harrison. (Puffin)

Sulwe – a name meaning "star" – longs to have skin as light as her family and friends. She tries a variety of methods to change herself on the outside, even rubbing off her skin colour with an eraser. At the centre of this story is a lavishly illustrated fable of night and day, who discover that neither can exist without the other. It is through this magical tale that Sulwe is prepared to believe that she is a bright star, beautiful inside and out.

Hey Water written and illustrated by Antoinette Portis. (Scallywag Press)

This joyful book is addressed directly to water, in every one of its forms. The illustrations work harmoniously with the expressive text, to take the young reader on a journey of discovery through all the forms of water they might recognise and encounter – and some they might not. As a bonus, the information is presented again at the end, in information book format, with a quiz and some activities to try out.

One Fox: A Counting Thriller written and illustrated by Kate Read. (Two Hoots)

In the end papers at the beginning of this counting book, a very sly fox gives the reader the side eye. Nothing unusual here, you might think – a hungry, determined fox and some plump hens, with plenty of peril thrown in from a dark night and those very sharp teeth. Don't be fooled. The vibrant illustrations and delightful text lead us towards a very different and satisfying ending.

How About a Night Out? Written by Sam Williams, illustrated by Matt Hunt. (Boxer Books)

What happens to those gentle lap cats when it gets dark in the city? Through a rhythmic, rhyming text, we follow one such cat on his night time activities, until the dawn sends him back home for a nap. The illustrations are bright and bold, set against velvety, dark backgrounds and we watch the cat, along with his friends, enjoy a night time of surprising adventure.

Longlist 7-10+

The Girl Who Speaks Bear written by Sophie Anderson. (Usborne)

When she was two years old, Yanka was found in a bear cave by Mamochka. Nobody knew how or why she was in the cave, but she had memories of being cared for by a she-bear. Needing answers, Yanka sets out on a quest to find out who she is. The narrative is interspersed with references to Russian folk tales, including *The House with Chicken Legs* by the same author.

Too Small Tola written by Atinuke, illustrated Onyinye Iwu. (Walker Books)

Tola is so aware that she is smaller than her older siblings but, what she lacks in height, she makes up for in determination and perseverance. This book contains three stories about children who live with their Grandmummy in a 'run down block of flats in Lagos'. By the third story, Tola has grown in confidence and readers realise what a bright and capable person she is.

The Space We're In written by Katya Balen, illustrated by Laura Carlin. (Bloomsbury)

Frank's little brother, Max, is autistic. His needs dominate family life, which can be very frustrating for everyone. However, Max is greatly loved, and Frank plays his part in helping him. Despite many difficulties, there are moments of joy, especially when Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* enables Max to be a star. Not always a comforting read, but one which has powerful threads of trust and courage running through it.

A Pocketful of Stars written by Aisha Busby. (Egmont)

After a particularly fierce argument with her mother, 13-year-old Safiya feels a dreadful mix of anxiety and guilt; but before she can apologise, Mum has a stroke. Sitting by the hospital bedside each day, Saff falls into a series of 'dreams' that require her gaming skills. She comes to believe that

succeeding at the quests in her dreams will help her mother to recover. A cleverly constructed novel, thought provoking and extremely engaging.

The Somerset Tsunami written by Emma Carroll. (Faber & Faber)

It is 1616. There is a new king on the throne of England who believes in Satanic power and witches, in general, finding clever women threatening. It is an unpredictable time when girls can be arrested purely for being independent-minded. And then there is what is still called an 'act of God' – a natural disaster, in this case, a tsunami! Surely that must be the devil's work. Follow the fortune, of a girl named Fortune, through events set during this dangerous time in British history

Saving Winslow written by Sharon Creech. (Guppy Books)

A new book by Sharon Creech is always to be welcomed. Set in a small community where everyone knows each other's business, only Louie believes his rejected and poorly baby donkey will survive. The title may remind readers of other 'animal rescue' stories (e.g. *Charlotte's Web*, *Daggie Dogfoot*) but, although a donkey *is* saved, that is not the only 'healing' that occurs. An uplifting tale with a triumphant ending.

Talking to the Moon written by S.E Durrant. (Nosy Crow)

Things have been a bit jumbled at home, what with toddler twins and damp in her bedroom, so Iris has moved in with her grandma, Mimi. Mimi's home is packed with family memories in photographs and in objects around the rooms. Discovering the past and anticipating the future becomes central to Iris's thoughts as she, and her new friend, Mason, seek answers to some family mysteries and to why Mimi is behaving strangely. Funny, thoughtful and moving, this book is a delight to read.

The Girl Who Stole an Elephant written by Nizrana Farook. (Nosy Crow)

A tyrant king rules the land where Chaya lives. To help her poor neighbours, she has taken jewels from the palace. She evades capture but her friend, Neel, is arrested. So starts an adventure that involves escaping from a dark prison; risking life and limb by walking through a jungle full of wild beasts; and confronting trigger-happy bandits. An exciting story which is absorbing and fastmoving from beginning to end.

Eight Princesses and a Magic Mirror written by Natasha Farrant, illustrated by Lydia Corry. (Zephyr)

Eight stories about princesses all woven together with the help of an enchantress and a magic mirror. These stories may not be what is expected; despite being full of magic and having fairy tale characters, they are grounded in reality. In different ways the princesses seek to change their worlds by learning to be true to themselves. Wise women, mothers and witches support them; helping them to see that all they need to succeed is 'brains and courage'. This book is beautifully written, with each story a gem in its own way. An enchanting book to read aloud to a class whilst independent readers will revel in the delightful illustrations.

Check Mates written by Stewart Foster. (Simon & Schuster)

Felix and his granddad both behave unconventionally at times and need to understand each other better. Their relationship develops as Granddad teaches Felix to play chess. In fact, chess helps them both work through difficulties in their lives and Felix learns more than a new game. With lots of humour, but also an underlying mystery to be unravelled, this is a riveting read with realism at its heart.

The Highland Falcon Thief written by M.G Leonard and Sam Sedgeman, illustrated by Elisa Paganelli. (Macmillan)

Harrison doesn't really want to be travelling on a train with his uncle, but his keen observation and sketches of people keep him occupied. They also enable him, with assistance from a new friend, to help solve a mysterious jewel robbery. A fast-paced adventure which gradually leads Harrison to appreciate his uncle's enthusiasm for steam trains.

Eagle Warrior written by Gill Lewis. (Barrington Stoke)

Golden eagles are rare in the UK, even in the mountainous areas of Scotland. They are also under threat from owners of grouse moors who make money from shooting parties. But there are people determined to protect these magnificent birds and one of them is Bobbie. She loves being on the mountain side watching an eagle soar above her. But can she save it from the gamekeeper's gun?

The Time of Green Magic written by Hilary McKay. (Macmillan)

It is not easy for Abi to accept that she must share her dad with two unfamiliar step- brothers in a different, rather spooky new home. The recently blended family have moved into a bigger place, which is: covered in ivy; next to a graveyard; and where the children experience mysterious events. Is the house magic? Or are Abi and her brothers imagining the disconcerting incidents? The family overcome feelings of awkwardness with each other as the 'green magic' brings them closer together.

The Extremely Inconvenient Adventures of Bronte Mettlestone written by Jaclyn Moriarty, illustrations by Karl James Mountford. (Guppy Books)

Part fantasy, part mystery, part magic – it is difficult to define the tale of 10-year-old Bronte Mettlestone. Hearing of her parent's demise, she finds that her mum and dad left detailed instructions in their will for her to visit her many aunts. Thus, readers set out on rollicking adventures full of danger, magic and delight. This page-turning text would be a joy to read aloud so whole class could get caught up in the fun.

Lori and Max written by Catherine O'Flynn. (Firefly Press)

Lori, the narrator of this story, is training herself to become a detective. A new girl arrives at school and the only empty chair is next to Lori. However, Maxine is not easy to get on with so it takes time for them to become friends. Max disappears after being accused of stealing; the perfect opportunity for Lori to employ her skills of detection. Part school story, part adventure, this story never becomes fanciful in the face of realistic situations. A great book to read aloud and for independent reading in any junior classroom.

The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates written by Jenny Pearson, illustrated by Rob Biddulph. (Usborne)

'One more step along the road I go'. After the final assembly at the end of Yr6, three boys decide to go on a quest to find an absent dad. Freddie has good reason to feel the need to find his dad but, with very little money and even less common sense, it will take a miracle for him to find him. But the friends persevere and, on the way, have hilarious adventures, meet interesting characters and dodge the attention of the Gaffer, boss of a gang of criminals. The end is both chaotically funny and poignant.

The Star Outside My Window written by Onjali Q Rauf. (Orion)

Aniyah is captivated by astrology; there is one incredibly special star that she particularly loves. Readers first meet Aniyah, and her little brother, Noah, in a foster home. Gradually, why they are fostered, and the reason for the favourite star, begin to make sense. A sensitive tale on a complex subject but narrated with the humour and logic of a ten-year-old. With a raw edge to it, this book ends on a warm-hearted, optimistic note.

Patina written by Jason Reynolds illustrated by Selom Sunu. (Knights of)

Patty is a serious athlete. Training is about winning; losing a race is out of the question. She has the talent to win, but her life off the track is complicated by the impact of family tragedies. Her coach selects her for the relay but is she really a team player? A book for anybody interested in sport, featuring genuine family situations and an outstanding character in Patina herself.

The Cloudhorse Chronicles - Guardians of Magic written and illustrated by Chris Riddell. (Macmillan)

Guardians of Magic is the first book in a new series, The Cloud Horse Chronicles, written and illustrated by Chris Riddell. Everything about this book – cover, endpaper, page design - makes it look and feel like a precious object. With its magical, fantasy adventures, range of characters (human and otherwise) and superb Riddell artwork throughout, the series is bound to become essential reading for young readers.

The Good Thieves written by Katherine Rundell illustrated by Matt Saunders. (Bloomsbury)

New York in the 1920s – gangsters, speak-easies and corrupt business deals will not stand in the way of a determined girl out to restore her grandfather's home. With assistance from a band of circus performers and a pickpocket, Vita plans, and carries out, a daring robbery. Excitement on every page makes this a great book to share with junior classes.

Clean Getaway written by Nic Stone. (Knights Of)

Eleven-year-old, William 'Scoob' Lamar, has been kidnapped by his Grandma and driven away in a camper van. He can tell there is more to this unexpected trip than a holiday as the journey takes them on a route that G'ma and G'pop had travelled decades before. He learns about segregation, the Green Book and the difficulties facing his white G'ma and African American G'pop. He also learns about his family – especially Grandma.

Owen and the Soldier written by Lisa Thompson, illustrated by Mark Lowery. (Barrington Stoke)

Owen finds it hard to talk to anyone, even to a sympathetic teacher at school. Life at home is not easy; just two of them, and mum so sad. Discovering a crumbly stone soldier sitting on a bench in the park gives Owen a focus for his thoughts. A beautifully written story allows readers to piece together the truth behind Owen's behaviour and to appreciate how he brings an upsetting episode in his life to a hopeful conclusion.

Longlist 11-14+

Clap When You Land written by Elizabeth Acevedo. (Hot Key Books)

A powerful and moving narrative verse novel of complex family relationships, betrayal, heartbreak and forgiveness.

Black Flamingo written by Dean Atta, illustrated by Anishka Khullar. (Hodder)

An emotionally charged atmospheric verse novel by Dean Atta. It is the story of Michael, half Jamaican, half Cypriot, trying to make sense of the world, of his sexuality and who he is.

The M Word written by Brian Conaghan. (Bloomsbury)

A searing emotional and authentic depiction of grief and healing in an insightful portrayal of a young woman struggling with the death of her closest friend and her mother's mental health.

Furious Thing written by Jenny Downham. (David Fickling Books)

Giving a powerful voice to every ignored, unheard, emotionally abused child and woman this story resonates with truth and appropriate anger

The Last Paper Crane written by Kerry Drewery, illustrated by Natsko Seki. (Hot Key Books)

This is the horrific and unforgettable story about the day the nuclear bomb devastated Hiroshima in 1945, told to Mizuki by her grandfather, who has lived with haunting memories and guilt all his life.

Sofa Surfer written by Malcolm Duffy. (Zephyr)

Malcolm Duffy introduces us to Tyler, who has been forced to move away from friends and his London home, and it is his meeting with a sofa surfing girl which allows him to truly understand what being homeless really means.

On Midnight Beach written by Marie Louise Fitzpatrick. (Faber & Faber)

An ancient Irish legend is reset in the twentieth century a gripping story of magical goings-on, local village rivalries and first love.

Invisible in a Bright Light written by Sally Gardner (Zephyr)

Set against an authentic and colourful theatre backdrop, Sally Gardner's cleverly written, curious fantasy/mystery/ thriller provides a most satisfying page-turner for her readers.

Bearmouth written by Liz Hyder. (Pushkin)

Vividly original, darkly foreboding and written in a constructed dialect, this is an unforgettable story of hope versus repression

And the Stars Were Burning Brightly written by Danielle Jawando. (Simon & Schuster)

Sensitively portrays the fallout from a teenage sibling's suicide, bravely and unflinchingly examining the causes and consequences of bullying and lack of mental health support.

A House Without Walls written by Elizabeth Laird. (Macmillan)

Topical, engaging and written with warmth and compassion, A House Without Walls is the story of a young girl fleeing her comfortable life in Syria with her family to escape persecution and danger.

Run Rebel written by Manjeet Mann. (Penguin)

Stunning debut verse novel unafraid to tackle big issues of domestic violence and coercion

Burn written by Patrick Ness. (Walker Books)

A thrilling dystopian fantasy of revenge, redemption, racism, homophobia, the end of the world and dragons such as you have never dreamt of.

Gloves Off written by Louisa Reid. Guppy Books

A page-turning verse novel charting one girl's struggle for self-worth, literally fighting for the strength to tackle bullying, body dysmorphia and a tangled mother-daughter relationship

Look Both Ways written by Jason Reynolds. (Knights Of)

10 individual stories weave a slice of very real young lives with their own challenges and triumphs depicted in a very real community. Not written in verse but unmistakably written by a poet

Snowflake AZ written by Marcus Sedgwick. (Zephyr)

A timely and thought-provoking novel about health, resilience and the way that modern life may be poisoning the planet and ultimately about family and love

The Boxer written by Nikesh Shukla. (Hodder)

Nikesh Shukla's thought-provoking second novel is told during the course of 10 rounds of a boxing match, against a background of racial tension. It features Sunny, newly arrived in the city and struggling to settle. Joining a boxing club offers him far more than he anticipates.

The List of Things That Will Not Change written by Rebecca Stead. (Andersen Press)

A tender subtle look at life after divorce, new families blending, growing up and dangerous secrets. All with the characteristic honesty and empathy for which this author is renowned

Hello Now written by Jenny Valentine. (HarperCollins)

Jenny Valentine's Hello Now is a deeply affecting story about Jude and Novo, which explores the nature of true love and of grief. The writing is exquisite, and the emotion is intense.

The Enigma Game written by Elizabeth Wein. (Bloomsbury)

A thrilling read, with a cast of engaging characters, intricate plotting and a well-researched and authentic backdrop of the second world war.

Information Books 3-14+

The Undefeated written by Kwame Alexander, illustrated by Kadir Nelson. (Andersen Press)

An incredibly powerful text to introduce the topic of Black History to any age group. With words that resonate and sing and images that sear themselves into your mind this book leaves an indelible impression. Empowering and overwhelmingly positive in its inspiring message.

Balloon to the Moon written by Gill Arbuthnott, illustrated by Chris Nielsen. (Big Picture Press)

Stemming from a personal passion of the author this takes us from the first controlled flight by balloon to Neil Armstrong and what could yet be to come. Stylishly retro illustrations only add to the appeal of a fascinating text that explains the technologies, innovations and the human stories behind humanity's desire to overcome their earthbound existence

Africa, Amazing Africa written by Atinuke, illustrated by Mouni Feddag. (Walker Books)

A country by country exploration of the natural wonders, fascinating facts and human stories of an amazing continent. Concentrating not just on an impressive history but showing what modern Africa

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is really like. Debunking stereotypes and misinformation, this is an essential addition to classroom collections.

Gut Garden written and illustrated by Katie Brosnan. (Cicada Books)

A fascinating glimpse of the microbiome inside us all, explaining the function and newly discovered importance of our digestive systems. With quirky and highly individualistic illustrations this text manages to be scientifically accurate, entertaining to all readers and aesthetically pleasing.

Nose Knows written by Emanuelle Figueras, illustrated by Claire De Gastold. (What on Earth Publishing)

Innovative format and design illuminate the way the world appears through the sensory organs of a variety of animals and explaining the interactions and behaviours that they exhibit. An inviting production that informs and stimulates curiosity as well as being thoroughly entertaining

We Are Artists written by Kari Herbert. (Thames & Hudson)

Celebrating the lives of 15 women artists from around the world, this is a valuable counterpoint to the dominance of the great white male stereotype. Engaging biographies and full colour reproductions of their work make this an inspiring collection.

River Stories written by Timothy Knapman illustrated by Asling Lindsay and Irene Montano. (Egmont)

Visually stunning fold out pages illuminate the stories of five of the world's great rivers. The reader is carried from source to sea revelling in the natural wonders, landscape, history and legends of the waterway and explaining the impact on the civilisations which developed alongside it.

A Planet Full of Plastic written and illustrated by Neal Layton. (Wren & Rook)

The highly attractive cartoon and collage style make this an attractive and accessible text for younger readers. Perfectly pitched for this age group it explains very clearly the problem of plastic but it also has simple tips and guidance on how young people can help which will undoubtedly inspire and inform.

The Apartment written by Alexandra Litvina, illustrated by Anna Desnitskaya. Translated by Antonina Bouis. (Abrams Books for Young Readers)

A uniquely revealing and absorbing approach to history, bringing to life a turbulent century in Russia through the imaginary inhabitants of a single Moscow apartment. Making meticulous use of contemporary records and artifacts that are displayed in incredibly detailed and fascinating illustrations, this is a book that really helps the reader engage with Russian history

Humanimal written by Christopher Lloyd, illustrated by Mark Ruffle. (What on Earth Publishing)

A book to shatter your preconceptions of human superiority- using examples from across the world and throughout the animal kingdom, the author shows us the incredible similarities in behaviour and ability. This is a book tailor made to generate discussion and questioning in young minds.

Prisoners of Geography written by Tim Marshall, illustrated by Grace Easton and Jessica Smith. (Simon & Schuster)

An illustrated version of an adult best-seller, this shows the reader the impact that geography has upon history and, in so doing, adds insight and understanding to complex issue of politics, war and

conflict, including those that are still current and impacting upon us today. The maps are attractively produced and add another level of clarity to the lucid expositions.

Who is in the Egg? Written and illustrated by Alexandra Milton. (Boxer Books)

A book that superbly demonstrates that the very youngest reader can be engaged with learning. The illustrations are simply beautiful and readily convey the differences in scale and the surprisingly varied creatures that emerge. The surprise reveal will never fail to delight, and it will be read again and again

Corpse Talk: Ground-breaking Rebels written and illustrated by Adam Murphy and Lisa Murphy. (David Fickling Books)

From an award-winning series of graphic novel format information books, focusing in this case on some of the most important rebels of history. The series postulates the ghosts of the past being interviewed chat-show style! Genuinely informative but told with wit and stylish illustrations, this is most definitely a book that will be picked up for entertainment and leisure but is a great example of learning by stealth.

Planet SOS written and illustrated by Marie G Rhodes. (What on Earth Publishing)

Using a quirky and entertaining concept to discuss some of the dangers facing the world – imagining the environmental threats as literal monsters, each given a Top-Trumps style scorecard for danger impact and how to defeat it. With links to monsters of myth and legend – the Plaken for example combines the fabled Kraken with the dangers of plastic pollution- this is informative on many layers. An imaginative approach to an important topic that is really engaging

Rise Up! The Art of Protest written by Joanne Rippon. (Palazzo Editions)

Celebrating the human right of peaceful protest and vividly demonstrating how image and text can communicate with immense power. An inspirational illustrated history of protest that is bound to prompt discussion and debate.

The Missing written by Michael Rosen. (Walker Books)

Highly personal account of the Holocaust from the perspective of the author's family and so much more resonant as a result. Sharing precious photographs and letters that he has tracked down over the years and showing the impact the story he discovered had on his own poetry, this is powerful and moving.

Hidden Planet written and illustrated by Ben Rothery. (Ladybird)

This is a personal curation of birds and animals, some endangered and some not, but all reflecting the beautiful diversity of life on our planet. The large format gives space for the stunningly detailed, hand drawn illustrations to take centre stage and they have real wow factor. Alongside a highly readable, intriguing and informative text, this is a book which will be in constant demand for a wide range of ages

Exquisite: The Life and Poetry of Gwendoline Brooks written by Suzanne Slade, illustrated by Cozbi Cabrera. (Abrams Books for Young Readers)

A beautifully illustrated picturebook biography of the first black writer to win the Pulitzer Prize but one who is shamefully largely unknown in the UK. Telling the story of her passion to write poetry

from a very early age and her reactions to racism and poverty in the Great Depression this will be inspirational for young writers

Language of the Universe written by Colin Stuart, illustrated by Ximo Abadía. (Big Picture Press)

Subtitled A Visual Exploration of Mathematics this is a beautifully designed object which immediately draws the reader in and really facilitates the clear explanations of some quite complex mathematical concepts.

Along the Tapajós written and illustrated by Fernando Vilela, translated by Daniel Hahn. (Amazon Crossing Kids)

A beautifully vibrant and intimate portrait of river life in the Amazon Rainforest which allows the reader to truly inhabit unfamiliar lives and very different settings to their own, but to see the universal humanity which connects us all.

Children Who Changed the World written and illustrated by Marcia Williams. (Walker Books)

Published in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child this tells, in inimitable Marcia Williams style, the true stories of child activists who have stood up for their rights around the world. The cartoon style illustrations have proved again and again to really interest and engage the reader and these important stories will be truly inspirational

Big Ideas for Young Thinkers written by Jamia Wilson, illustrated by Andrea Pippins. (Wide Eyed Editions)

A superb introduction to some of the great philosophical questions that have challenged thinkers through the ages. Children are encouraged to develop their own understanding and debating skills, including how to manage disagreements, while being inspired by examples of thinkers from ancient Greece to modern times.

Big Book of Blooms written and illustrated by Yuval Zommer. (Thames & Hudson)

Another of the award-winning Big Book of series by the author which combines his beautifully individualistic illustrative style with short lyrical chunks of text full of fascinating facts to stimulate and absorb young readers in a seamless mix of art and information.