



We hope that you and your child have had a lovely summer break. As the new academic year begins, we are so pleased to be able to start it off with a selection of books which touch on a wide range of topics. Reading benefits many areas of education and life. In addition to the obvious benefits on reading comprehension and attainment, it also impacts upon:

- Vocabulary
- Understanding of grammar
- Spelling skill
- Writing attainment
- Attitudes to reading and writing
- Knowledge and understanding of the world and other people
- Achievement in other subjects, including maths
- Empathy and understanding of emotions
- Mental wellbeing
- Development of our sense of 'self' and identity

As part of PiXL's new Let's Talk programme, we'll be exploring the topics of mental health and resilience this half term with our schools. If this is something you'd like to explore through reading with your child, there are a few book recommendations on page 2 which may help get you started. Whether they are starting school for the first time, nervous to return, or are embarking upon their GCSE examinations, we hope they find something useful to support them at this time. To help you and your child select books they may enjoy, we have collated a range for you to consider here. This is obviously not an exhaustive list – there are so many books and other text types they could explore. Whatever they are curious about, or take interest in, consider looking at books around the topic, or encouraging them to research into the area further through non-fiction texts such as online articles.

Please note that unless otherwise stated, these texts are marketed by publishers as suitable from Year 7 and up, but please do research or read the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child.

- Find out what your child is curious about, or takes an interest in, and look at books around these topics.
- Encourage them to research into an area further through non-fiction texts such as online articles.

Whatever books you and your child choose to explore, we hope you enjoy them!

- If your child struggles with reading and this poses an obstacle to their enjoyment, explore the blurbs of books and select a couple to try on audiobook. You can often borrow these for free from your local library too.
- Support your child with reading for purpose. You could read recipes, newspaper articles, blog posts and other forms of texts.

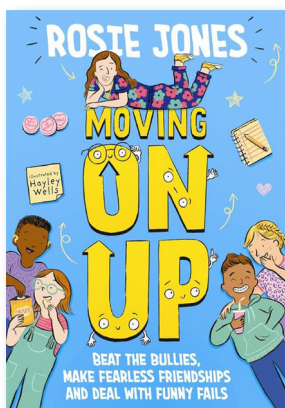
GETTING THE YEAR OFF TO A GOOD START

There are many books available to young people about resilience, mental health and tips for studying. If your child is nervous about the return to school, or they're looking to approach this year differently, this selection may help get them started in their exploration!

Moving On Up,

BY ROSIE JONES

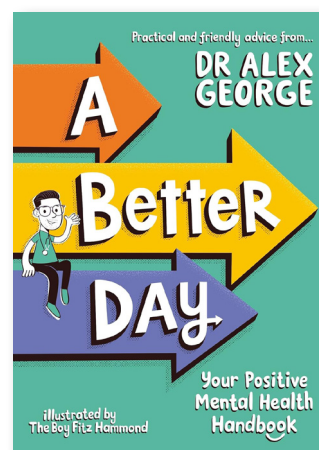
No one knows quite as much about friendship fails, dealing with bullies and being totally embarrassed, then Rosie Jones. You name a completely awkward situation, and she's been there, got the t-shirt and probably done it all again. Rosie knows just how hard growing up can be, but she also knows that you can overcome the difficult and embarrassing moments with the help of good friends and a good sense of humour. So, sit back, grab a packet of crisps and crunch your way through this super handy guide to navigating all the tricky growing up stuff (and styling out of all the totally cringe moments life throws your way).



A Better Day,

BY DR. ALEX GEORGE

What if we could think of mental health in a positive way? Sweep away the rain clouds. Talk about what's on our minds. And care for our mental health in the same way we look after our bodies. In this empowering and hopeful handbook, Youth Mental Health Ambassador Dr Alex George is here to show children how.



A Better Day is a positive, accessible and practical toolkit guiding young readers in how they can care for their mental health with confidence. From peer pressure and exam stress to online trolls and anxiety, life is full of ups and downs. But there are ways we can stay on top of our mental health – including overcoming stigma, talking about our feelings, developing resilience and switching our mindset.

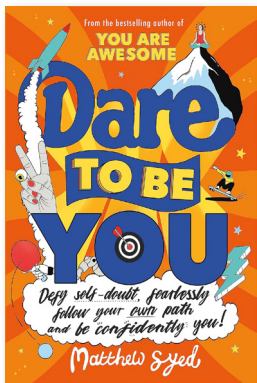
This book provides all the scaffolding and practical techniques, so readers can look towards their future with optimism and positivity. Because no matter what, there is always hope for a better day.

There is also an accompanying Journal which you could purchase as well, if you think this would be useful for your child.

Dare to Be You,

BY MATTHEW SYED

What would you dare to try if you stopped worrying about fitting in? Drawing examples from sport, science and even business, Dare to Be You empowers young readers to follow their own path, love what makes them different and question the world around them.

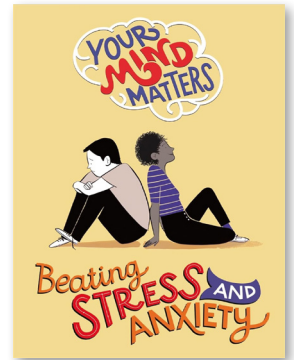


There is also an accompanying Dare to Be You Journal which you could purchase as well, if you think this would be useful for your child.

Your Mind Matters: Beating Stress and Anxiety,

BY HONOR HEAD

Everyone experiences stress and anxiety at times in their lives, but sometimes the feelings build up and can affect our physical and mental health. This book will help you to recognise the signs of feeling stressed and anxious and what you can do to feel better.



Back on Track,

BY MATTHEW BURTON

From ways to manage the tough times and solve even the biggest problems or anxieties, to skills for beating school stress and tapping into your potential, this is the one-stop guide for students who are in need of a bit of hope, some soothing words of advice and a good old pep talk to get them going in school again. Whether facing assessments, a big change or having to make up for lost time, this book is crammed with advice so that even though things at school might seem hard, readers will soon be back on track and raring to go.



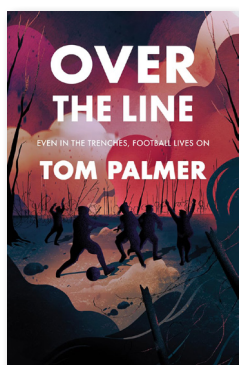
SHORTER-LENGTH READS:

Continuing with the theme of resilience, we have collated a selection of shorter-length texts which may capture your child's interest. As well as being short, they are also published in a dyslexia-friendly font to help make them accessible to all. If your child doesn't have dyslexia, they can of course still read these wonderful books!

Over the Line,

BY TOM PALMER

It's the proudest moment of Jack's life: his debut as a professional footballer. Now he has a chance to achieve his dream of playing for his country. But it's 1914 and the world is at war. Talk of sportsmen's cowardice leads to the formation of a Footballers' Battalion and Jack has little choice but to join up. The promise of a Cup in Flanders offers a glimmer of hope, but Jack and his teammates will have to survive a waking nightmare if they are ever to play again.



Birdsong,

BY KATYA BALEN

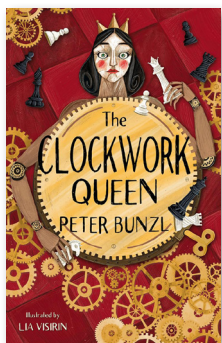
After a devastating car crash, Annie is unable to play her flute and retreats from the music she's always loved. She exists in a world of angry silence – furious with her mum and furious she can't seem to play her beloved flute anymore. Then she meets Noah, who shows her the blackbird's nest hidden in the scrubland near their flats. As their friendship grows, the blackbird's glorious song reignites Annie's passion for music. But when tragedy strikes again, will her fragile progress be put at risk?



The Clockwork Queen,

BY PETER BUNZL

Chess prodigy, Sophie Peshka inherited her love of the game from her grandmaster father. But now that he has been imprisoned in the dungeons of the Winter Palace



in St Petersburg by powerful Empress Catherine the Great, Sophie must use all her strategic skill and cunning to help him escape. Part of Sophie's plan involves an incredible chess-playing automaton called the Clockwork Queen, but will the Queen be able to outwit the Empress in a game where the stakes are a matter of life and death?

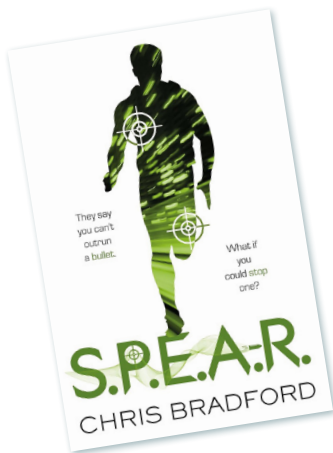




Worry Angels,

BY SITA BRAHMACHARI

Amy May knows about webs of worries – so many people she meets are caught in them, from her own artist dad to newly arrived refugee Rima and her family. By being brave enough to open up her worry box, Amy May helps all those around her find a way forward.



SPEAR,

BY CHRIS BRADFORD

When Troy is caught up in a terrorist attack that takes the lives of his parents, he discovers an amazing power – bullets can't harm him. With this secret uncovered he's soon recruited into an underground organisation where he meets Scarlet, a girl with her own remarkable talent, and the two put their powers to use...



STITCHED UP,

BY STEVE COLE

When twelve-year-old Hanh is offered a job as a shop assistant in Hanoi, she sees it as a chance to earn money to send back to her family living in poverty in rural Vietnam. But on her arrival in the city, she soon learns that the job offer was a lie and finds herself working in virtual slavery in an illegal garment factory.

Life in this sweatshop is a daily hell of long hours, little rest, poor food and regular violence. Hanh is desperate to escape, but when an opportunity arises will she be able to find the courage to take a dangerous chance?

LONGER READS:

There are a variety of fiction texts that you can explore - different genres, writing styles and topics. We have shared a selection for you below, but do feel free to explore other books that you're interested in by speaking to your librarian or local bookshop.

The Beanstalk Murder,

BY P. G. BELL

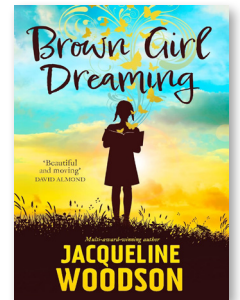
Trainee meadow witch Anwen is having a bad day - which gets much worse when a dead giant falls from the sky and destroys her village. But when she examines the body, she discovers something interesting. This giant was murdered, which means a killer is on the loose! Tasked with sending a message to the giant kingdom via beanstalk, Anwen and her nemesis, trainee sorceress Cerys, accidentally find themselves whipped up into the sky and deposited in the giants' royal palace - where the king is missing. Using their perfect spy-size and witchy skills, the girls must track down his killer. But how can you investigate a murder mystery when you risk being stepped on by your suspects?



Brown Girl Dreaming,

BY JACQUELINE WOODSON

This is the unforgettable story of Jacqueline Woodson's childhood, sharing what it was like to grow up as an African-American in the wake of the Civil Rights movement, and discovering the first sparks of an incredible, lifelong gift for writing. It's packed with wonderful reflections on family and on place, in a way that will appeal to all readers. Emotionally charged and touching, each line tells the tale of one girl's search to find her voice, her identity and her place in the world.



The Boy to Beat the Gods,

BY ASHLEY THORPE

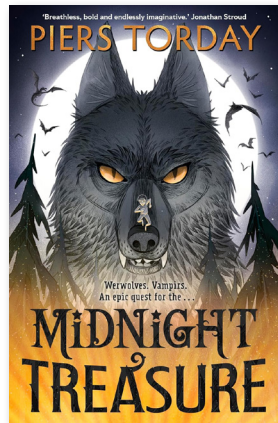
Kayode dreams of eating the forbidden fruit of the Orishas, so he can gain the power of the gods and stop them terrorising his people. So, when a fruit mysteriously appears in his path after the Orishas snatch his sister, he leaps on it. Surging with new and difficult-to-control powers, he joins forces with a shapeshifting trickster god and a vengeful princess to save his sister and put an end to the mighty Orishas. But each has more fearful powers than the last - and Kayode's stolen half-god strength won't last for ever...



Midnight Treasure,

BY PIERS TORDAY

Tibor is a werewolf, adopted by his guardian, a powerful vampir. He and his friend Roza are on the deadliest of quests, and one that will test their very immortality. And they're not the only ones hunting for the Midnight Treasure. Battling with bears, wrestling with vampirs and racing against the clock, Tibor and Roza must decide who to trust. And whether they will dare reveal the secrets...of the Midnight Treasure.



Transcendent,

BY PATRICK GALLAGHER

Jacob and Kira live in the heart of Mbale, Uganda, with their conservationist mother and navigate life as unsuspecting geniuses; Kira with hopes to explore outside the hot terrains of Uganda, and conspiracy theorist Jacob, whose fear often holds him back from the answers he so desperately wants to uncover. But when they discover that someone has been watching their every move in the hopes to enlist them in a top-secret agency called Transcendent, their lives are turned upside down...

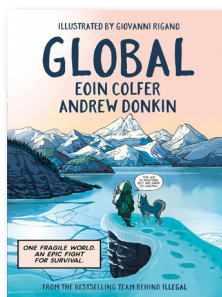


Global,

BY EOIN COLFER AND ANDREW DONKIN

A graphic novel adventure about hope in the face of climate change.

Yuki lives in an increasingly deserted Inuit township in Nova Scotia. One day, she sets out into the wilderness of the Arctic tundra, planning to photograph a rare grolar bear (a terrifying grizzly-polar crossbreed created by climate change) – if she can prove it's a grolar, she can protect it from being shot. With only her faithful dog for company, and adrift on a fragment of melting glacier, she finds herself being stalked across the changing wilderness by a starving grolar bear, with only her wits and her harpoon to keep her alive...

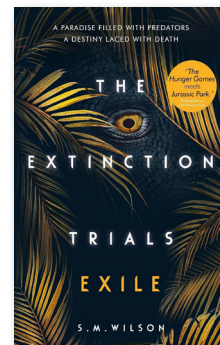


The Extinction Trials,

BY S. M. WILSON (12+)

Betrayal. Sacrifice. Survival. Welcome to The Extinction Trials...

In Stormchaser and Lincoln's ruined world, the only way to survive is to risk everything. To face a contest more dangerous than anyone can imagine. And they will do anything to win. But in a land full of monsters – human and reptilian – they can't afford to trust anyone. Perhaps not even each other...



The Infinity Files,

BY S. M. WILSON (12+)

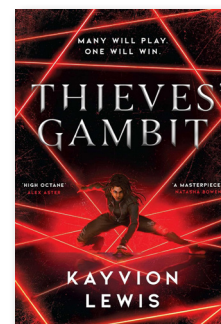
Ash Yang dreamed of being a starfighter pilot. But when she crashes out of her final test – literally – she somehow lands the most powerful job in the universe. As Guardian of the Infinity Files, she must secretly planet-hop through the galaxies, stealing or returning treasures that have the power to stop wars...or start them. But when her home planet is the one at war, can she use her new skills to save it?



Thieves' Gambit,

BY KAYVION LEWIS (14+)

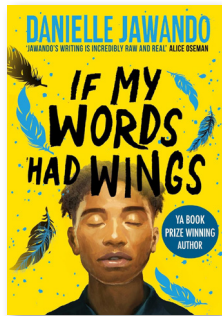
Seventeen-year-old Rosalyn Quest was raised by a legendary family of thieves with one rule: trust no one. When her mother is kidnapped, her only chance to save her is to win the Thieves' Gambit – a deadly competition for the world's best thieves, where the victor is granted one wish. To win, she must outwit all her backstabbing competitors, including her childhood archnemesis. But can she take victory from the handsome, charming boy who makes a play for her heart and might be hiding the most dangerous secret of all?



If My Words Had Wings,

BY DANIELLE JAWANDO (14+)

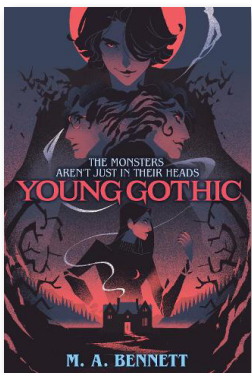
When 15-year-old Tyrell Forrester gets caught up in a high-profile armed robbery, he's sentenced to eighteen months in a young offenders' prison. Now he's getting out, and he's determined to turn his life around. Despite his release, systemic discrimination makes it difficult for Ty to truly be free. Inspired by a visiting poet while inside, Ty discovers a whole new world through spoken word and is finally finding his voice. But will society ever see him as anything other than a criminal?



Young Gothic,

BY M. A. BENNETT (14+)

You've heard of Frankenstein's monster, you've heard of Dracula, but have you heard of the Villa Diodati? Eve, Griffin, Hal and Ren embark on a summer

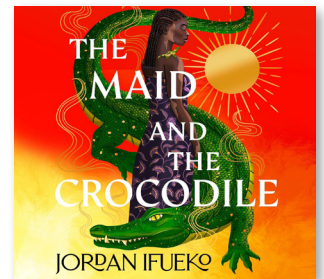


they'll never forget at the birthplace of all things Gothic. The summer is beset by mysterious happenings, as the monsters they create begin to clamber out of their minds. Events rise to a horrible climax when, on a dark and stormy night, one of the villa's guests is found dead and each of our foursome becomes a suspect in a gruesome murder. It was supposed to be the trip of a lifetime. But when the stuff of nightmares becomes their reality, will they make it out alive?

The Maid and the Crocodile,

BY JORDAN IFUEKO (14+)

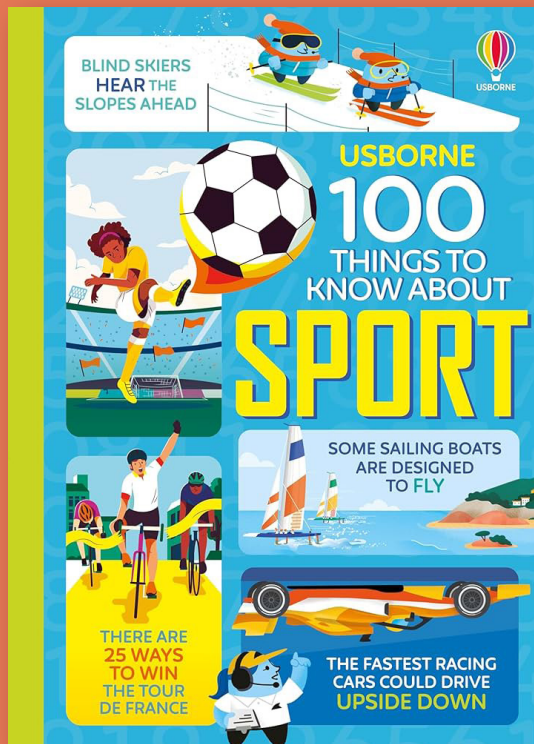
In the magic-soaked capital city of Oluwan, Small Sade needs a job – preferably as a maid, with employers who don't mind her unique appearance and unlucky foot. But before she can be hired, she accidentally binds herself to a powerful being known only as the Crocodile, a god rumoured to devour pretty girls. Small Sade entrances the Crocodile with her secret: she is a Curse Eater, gifted with the ability to alter people's fates by cleaning their houses. The handsome god warns that their fates are bound, but Small Sade evades him, launching herself into a new career as the Curse Eater of a swanky inn. She is determined to impress the wealthy inhabitants and earn her place in Oluwan City, assuming her secret-filled past – and the revolutionary ambitions of the Crocodile – don't catch up with her...



NON-FICTION:

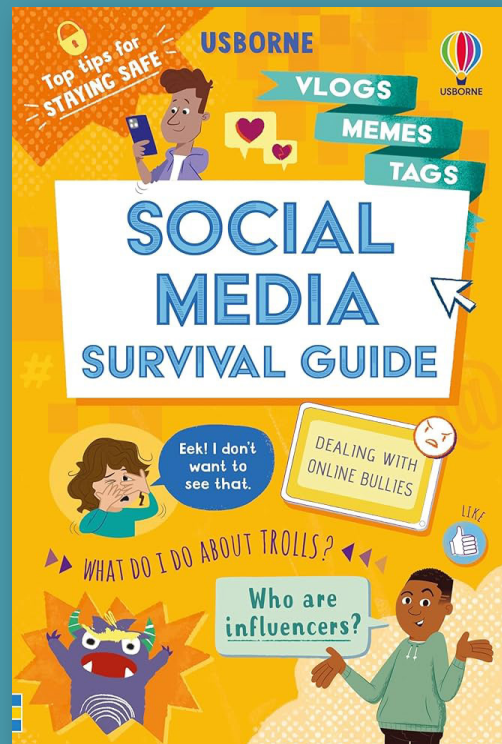
100 Things to Know About Sport

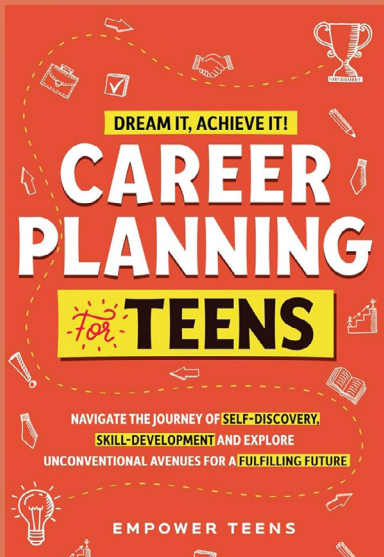
How do blind athletes tell between silver and gold medals? How did a Finnish architect accidentally invent skateboarding? Why do footballers wear logos on their kit? From equipment and engineering to amazing sporting achievements, find 100 quirky and surprising sport-themed facts in this book.



Social Media Survival Guide, BY HOLLIE BATHIE

Packed with entertaining illustrations alongside practical information, the Social Media Survival Guide answers questions about all aspects of social media – the good AND the bad – making it a must-have tool for young people (and parents) to help navigate the online world safely and confidently and learn the best approaches to taking care of themselves.

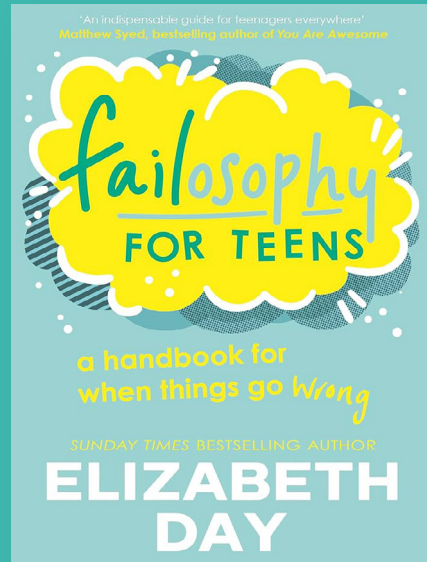




Dream It, Achieve It: Career Planning for Teens

Are you a teenager that doesn't really know what you want to do in the future? Are you dreading the future rather than feeling excited when you think about it? Do you want to get on the path to success as early as now?

If yes, then Dream It, Achieve It is the perfect guide for you! Discover your passions, talents and interests. No big words or confusing stuff here - just simple, easy-to-follow steps that will help you figure out what you really want to do.



Failosophy for Teens: A handbook for when things go wrong, BY ELIZABETH DAY

This is an inspiring and empowering guide to those moments when life doesn't go to plan. Using personal experience and stories shared by guests on her award-winning podcast, How to Fail, Elizabeth's book is full of creative and inspiring advice on how to:

- talk openly about failure
- turn failure into success
- build resilience for when life sends you curveballs
- reframe negative thoughts about yourself

...and much more!