Why does Reading for Pleasure matter?

“Reading...feeds pupils’ imagination and opens up a treasure house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.”

_The National Curriculum_ (2013)

“Schools that take the business of reading for pleasure seriously, where teachers read, talk with enthusiasm and recommend books, and where provision for reading is planned carefully, are more likely to succeed with their pupils’ reading.”

_Excellence in English_, Ofsted (2011)

“Reading is much more than the decoding of black marks upon a page: it is a quest for meaning and one which requires the reader to be an active participant.”


“Stories make you think and dream; books make you want to ask questions.”

Michael Morpurgo, _I Believe in Unicorns_ (2005)

Because the National Curriculum says so...

The National Curriculum explicitly encourages reading for pleasure. It states that schools should do everything they can to promote wider reading, provide library facilities and set ambitious expectations for reading at home. The National Curriculum for English aims to ensure that all pupils develop the habit of reading, both for pleasure and information.

“All pupils must be encouraged to read widely across both fiction and non-fiction to develop their knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live, to establish an appreciation and love of reading, and to gain knowledge across the curriculum. Reading widely and often increases pupils’ vocabulary because they encounter words they would rarely hear or use in everyday speech. Reading also feeds pupils’ imagination and opens up a treasure-house of wonder and joy for curious young minds.”

_The National Curriculum_. DfE, (2013)

Because research supports the importance of reading for pleasure...

The Department for Education in _Research Evidence on Reading for Pleasure_ (2012) records the growing evidence of the importance of reading for pleasure for both educational purposes as well as personal development. For instance, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) considers reading enjoyment as more important for children’s success than their family’s wealth or social status. Clark and Hawkins (2011) demonstrate a link between library use and reading for pleasure, and Clark and Poulton (2011) consider that choice and access to books of their own improves children’s attainment. The Ofsted reports _Excellence in English_ and _Moving English On_ reiterate this, and in 2013 the Institute of Education found that, between the ages of 10 and 16, children who read for pleasure make more progress in mathematics, vocabulary and spelling than those who rarely read.

Why should I read children’s books?

“There’s no such thing as a reluctant reader, there are only readers for whom the right book has not yet been found.”

Paul Jennings

How can teachers recommend the right book to the right child at the right time without a detailed knowledge of and enthusiasm for children’s books? Aidan Chambers (1973, 1991, 1993) has
repeatedly stressed the importance of a knowledgeable adult in encouraging children to read, and Cremin et al. (2009) found that children’s self-confidence and pleasure in reading increased when their teachers’ enriched their own knowledge of children’s literature. Thus teachers play a key role, and their knowledge of children’s books and understanding of the value of reading for pleasure should not be underestimated. Indeed, it stands to reason that everyone working to encourage children to read (for pleasure or information) should themselves be an enthusiastic reader of literature. To this end, Cremin et al. (2009) stress that teachers need time and space to develop their reading repertoires. On a more practical level, being informed about the world of children’s literature could potentially place you ahead of the pack in a job interview.

How do I become better informed about children’s literature?

As well as all of the wonderful titles already in print, thousands of new children’s books are published each year, so educating yourself about children’s literature can seem a daunting task! Our advice is to begin to build your knowledge early on; focus on one aspect and grow your knowledge from there. Book prizes are a great place to start. Dozens are awarded each year around the world, but the UK alone has a huge range and variety: there are prizes for funny books, teenage fiction, baby books, translated books and picture books (to name but a few), all awarded by booksellers, subject associations, schools, publishers, public libraries or newspapers.

Which prizes do you recommend I follow?

At BGU we highlight, promote and purchase the winners of all major children’s book prizes, but we pay particular attention to the United Kingdom Literacy Association (UKLA) Children’s Book Award, the CILIP Carnegie Book Award and the CILIP Kate Greenaway Book Award (all of which are awarded annually).

The UKLA Children’s Book Award is the only national book award judged by teachers. It was founded in 2008 to encourage teachers to increase their professional and personal knowledge of high quality children’s books, to enhance literacy teaching, and to promote reading for pleasure in the classroom. There are three age categories: 3-6, 7-11 and 12-16+. The winners are normally announced each July at the annual UKLA conference.

Both the CILIP Carnegie Medal and the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal are judged by librarians. Established in 1935, the Carnegie Medal is awarded annually for an outstanding book for children and young people, whilst the Kate Greenaway Medal, first awarded in 1955, recognises outstanding illustration in books for children and young people. The winners are announced each June.

Each year a group of BGU students shadows the UKLA Children’s Book Award.

The 2019 Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Children’s Book Awards

The finalists of the 2019 Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Book Awards and the UKLA Book Awards are listed below (a much more manageable number than the thousands published each year!). They not only highlight the range and diversity of children’s literature available but also provide a solid foundation upon which to start to build your knowledge.

CILIP Carnegie Medal finalists 2019

**WINNER:** *The Poet X* written by Elizabeth Acevedo  
*Rebound* written by Kwame Alexander  
*The House with Chicken Legs* written by Sophie Anderson  
*Bone Talk* written by Candy Gourlay  
*A Skinful of Shadows* written by Frances Hardinge  
*Things a Bright Girl Can Do* written by Sally Nicholls  
*Long Way Down* written by Jason Reynolds  
*The Land of Neverendings* written by Kate Saunders
CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal finalists 2019

**WINNER:** *The Lost Words* illustrated by Jackie Morris and written by Robert Macfarlane  
*The Day War Came* illustrated by Rebecca Cobb and written by Nicola Davies  
*Ocean Meets Sky* illustrated and written by Eric and Terry Fan  
*Beyond the Fence* illustrated and written by Maria Gulemetova  
*The Wolf, the Duck and the Mouse* illustrated by Jon Klassen and written by Mac Barnett  
*Julian is a Mermaid* illustrated and written by Jessica Love  
*You’re Safe With Me* illustrated by Poonam Mistry and written by Chitra Soundar  
*Suffragette: The Battle for Equality* illustrated and written by David

The 2019 UKLA Book Awards

Finalists ages 3-6 (2019)

**WINNER:** *I am Bat* written and illustrated by Morag Hood  
*After the Fall* written and illustrated by Dan Santat  
*The last Wolf* written and illustrated by Mini Grey  
*Bob’s Blue Period* written and illustrated by Marion Deuchars  
*Stardust* written by Jeanne Willis and illustrated by Briony May Smith  
*The Big Book of the Blue* written and illustrated by Yuval Zommer

Finalists ages 7-11 (2019)

**WINNER:** *The Explorer* written by Katherine Rundel and illustrated by Hannah Horn  
*Running on Empty* written by S.E. Durrant and illustrated by Rob Biddulph  
*Sky Dancer* written by Gill Lewis  
*The Wild Robot* written and illustrated by Peter Brown  
*The Murderer’s Ape* written and illustrated by Jakob Wegelius  
*Kick* written by Mitch Johnson

Finalists ages 12-16 (2019)

**WINNER:** *Long Way Down* written by Jason Reynolds and illustrated by Chris Priestley  
*Moonrise* written by Sarah Crossan  
*The Poet X* written by Elizabeth Acevedo  
*Piglettes* written and translated by Clementine Beauvais  
*After the Fire* written by Will Hill  
*Mary’s Monster* written and illustrated by Lita Judge

Where can I find out more about children’s literature?

Visit the Library’s Teaching Resources Collection (TRC). There you can borrow all the book award finalists and much, much, more! Our children’s resources include picture books, fiction and non-fiction books, big books (fiction and non-fiction), dual language books, feature films, audiobooks, resource packs, artefact boxes, novelty books, puppets, Storysacks® and journals.

We have an extensive collection of classic and contemporary children’s literature. Major authors and illustrators are represented, demonstrating the development of children’s literature historically. As well as British literature there is a good selection of American fiction, world fiction and books translated into English. Poetry books and fairy tales also feature. Check out our Children’s Literature LibGuide for lots more information: http://libguides.bishopg.ac.uk/childrensliterature

What questions should I be asking myself?

It is worth considering the following:

- How would you motivate children to read?
- Do you have a favourite children’s author?
- What do you know about children’s literature?
What resources can help me to develop my knowledge?

**Magazines:**
- Books for Keeps: [www.booksforkeeps.co.uk](http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk)
- Carousel: [www.carouselguide.co.uk](http://www.carouselguide.co.uk)
- Hullabaloo!: [www.bishopg.ac.uk/hullabaloo](http://www.bishopg.ac.uk/hullabaloo)

The above publications review contemporary fiction and contain interviews and information about authors and illustrators, themed booklists, and critical articles about children’s literature. **Books for Keeps** is free and online. **Carousel** is a printed magazine published 3 times per year. **Hullabaloo!** is published here at BGU Library to promote our children’s literature collection: all issues are online.

Which websites are best for reading for pleasure?

These sites aim to inspire young people to read more. They are useful for establishing which authors and illustrators are currently in the limelight and identifying current concerns and reading initiatives.

- Guardian Children’s Book Site: [www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site](http://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site)
- Lovereading4kids: [www.lovereading4kids.co.uk](http://www.lovereading4kids.co.uk)
- Mrs Mad’s Book-a-Rama: [www.mrsmad.com](http://www.mrsmad.com)
- NUT Reading for Pleasure: [www.teachers.org.uk/reading-for-pleasure](http://www.teachers.org.uk/reading-for-pleasure)
- The Reading Agency: [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)
- Reading for Pleasure: [www.readingforpleasure.org.uk](http://www.readingforpleasure.org.uk)
- The Reading Zone: [www.readingzone.com/home.php](http://www.readingzone.com/home.php)
- Words for Life: [www.wordsforlife.org.uk](http://www.wordsforlife.org.uk)

Are there other organisations I should be aware of?

- Booktrust: [www.booktrusted.com](http://www.booktrusted.com)
- The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education: [www.clpe.co.uk](http://www.clpe.co.uk)
- The Children’s Book Circle: [www.childrensbookcircle.org.uk](http://www.childrensbookcircle.org.uk)
- The Federation of Children’s Book Groups: [www.fcbg.org.uk](http://www.fcbg.org.uk)
- International Board on Books for Young People: [www.ibby.org](http://www.ibby.org)
- National Association for the Teaching of English: [www.nate.org.uk](http://www.nate.org.uk)
- National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature: [www.ncrcl.ac.uk](http://www.ncrcl.ac.uk)
- National Literacy Association: [www.nlaguide.co.uk/home](http://www.nlaguide.co.uk/home)
- Quick Reads: [www.quickreads.org.uk](http://www.quickreads.org.uk)
- School Library Association: [www.sla.org.uk](http://www.sla.org.uk)
- Scottish Book Trust: [www.scottishbooktrust.com](http://www.scottishbooktrust.com)
- United Kingdom Literacy Association: [www.ukla.org](http://www.ukla.org)
- Youth Libraries Group: [www.cilip.org.uk](http://www.cilip.org.uk)

What next after the Carnegie, Greenaway and UKLA finalists?

Try looking at other prize lists: below you will find a list of the most popular children’s book prizes. Each year we purchase several of the winning books for the Teaching Resources Collection (TRC), and since 2008 have published an annual list of prizewinning books, which is available from the TRC and online at [http://libguides.bishopg.ac.uk/c.php?g=164363&p=3009084](http://libguides.bishopg.ac.uk/c.php?g=164363&p=3009084).

- The Blue Peter Children’s Book Awards
- Branford Boase Award
- Caldecott Medal
- Cambridgeshire Children’s Picture Book Award
- Children’s Book Award
- CILIP Carnegie Medal
- CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal
- CLIPPA Poetry Award
- Costa Book Award
- Doncaster Book Award
- Dundee Picture Book Award
- English 4-11 Book Awards
- Guardian Children’s Fiction Award
- Hampshire Picture Book Award
- Independent Booksellers Book Prize
Which authors should I look out for?

A good place to start is with the Children’s Laureates. The role of Children’s laureate is awarded every two years to an eminent writer or illustrator of children’s books to celebrate outstanding achievement in their field. The current Children’s Laureate is Cressida Cowell (2019-2021). She was preceded by:

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<td>2009-2011</td>
<td>Anthony Browne</td>
<td>1999-2001</td>
<td>Quentin Blake</td>
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All of these authors and/or illustrators write for children of all ages and their books are outstanding both for the quality of the writing and the illustrations. You can borrow their books from the Teaching Resources Collection. To find out more go to the Children’s Laureates website at www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-laureate

Look no further than Daniel Pennac’s book *The Rights of the Reader*. First published in France in 1992, Pennac was responding to the reluctance of French children to read for pleasure, and argued that the constricting nature of the French education system was to blame. Pennac’s brilliant solution, designed to reawaken the love of reading in all children, was presented in the style of a Bill of Rights.

**The Rights of the Reader**

1. The right not to read.
2. The right to skip.
3. The right not to finish a book.
4. The right to read it again.
5. The right to read anything
6. The right to mistake a book for real life.
7. The right to read anywhere.
8. The right to dip in.
9. The right to read out loud.
10. The right to be quiet

Bibliography and further reading


