



We hope that you and your family had a lovely break over half term. In this half term's newsletter, we have collated a range of books that cover a range of reading ages and topics of interest which your child may like to read. We are delighted to have a couple of new authors joining us this half term to share their book recommendations with you too! Phil Earle and Darren Simpson are joined this half term by Kalynn Bayron and Holly Race – we really hope you enjoy watching their videos by scanning the QR codes on their recommendations pages. We hope that amongst the wide selection of books shared in this newsletter, you and your child may find some to enjoy! **Please note that unless otherwise stated, the texts are suitable from Year 7 and up, but please do research/read the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child.**

In addition to exploring the books mentioned in this newsletter, you may like to know about some of the key events coming up this half term which your school may be highlighting – or which you may like to discuss with your child at home and read around too.

WORLD BOOK DAY
2ND MARCH

WORLD STORYTELLING DAY
20TH MARCH

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S
DAY** 8TH MARCH

WORLD POETRY DAY
21ST MARCH

BRITISH SCIENCE WEEK
10TH - 19TH MARCH

WORLD THEATRE DAY
27TH MARCH

There are so many books and other types of texts that your child may enjoy reading – they may like researching some of the topics, such as International Women's Day, or exploring some inspiring female figures such as Michelle Obama. Alternatively, they may like to dip into a poetry anthology – or explore some short plays, like Philip Ridley's Sparkleshark! Whatever you and your child choose to read, we hope you enjoy it!

SHORTER-LENGTH accessible novels with dyslexia-friendly font and engaging stories



The Royal Rebel BALI RAI

Born in 1876, Princess Sophia Duleep Singh was the daughter of the last Sikh ruler of the Punjab, and goddaughter of Queen Victoria. After her father lost control of his empire and was exiled to England, Sophia had a privileged but troubled upbringing that left her unsure about where she belonged – in India or England. Sensitive to injustice, she became a suffragette and fought hard to win the vote for women. This is the extraordinary story of her life.

Keeper ALAN GIBBONS

New boy Shane Logan has a temper, but he's also a talented goalie. When Peter and his friends invite Shane to join their football team, he delivers a star performance in the first match. But Shane's not the only one who makes an impression. Hanging over him like a shadow is his dad, Mick, who yells orders and insults from the side lines. What is Mick's problem? Any why does Shane seem afraid of him? The more Peter gets to know Shane, the more he worries that something is wrong...



The Disconnect

KEREN DAVID

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Could you disconnect from your phone for six weeks? An eccentric entrepreneur has challenged Esther's year group to do just that, and the winners will walk away with £1,000. For Esther, whose dad, sister and baby nephew live thousands of miles away in New York, the prize might be her only chance to afford flights for a visit... But can she really stay disconnected for long enough to win?





The Terror of Hilltop House

DAN SMITH

When Pete, Krish and Nancy read a story in the local paper about weird gunk being found in a field where sheep have gone missing next to Hilltop House, they're sure there's a mystery to be investigated. The new research farm at Hilltop is working on the creation of new bio-fuels, but when a storm knocks out the power in the local area and something escapes from the farm, it's clear that the research has gone horribly wrong ... Can the brave trio save the village in their most terrifying adventure yet?

Frankenstein Re-telling

TANYA LANDMAN

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

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PHIL EARLE RECOMMENDS...

SHORTER LENGTH NOVELS

We are delighted that award-winning author Phil Earle is a PiXL Reading Ambassador this academic year and is sharing his book recommendations and tips for reading. Despite finding reading difficult when he was younger, Phil has gone on to write many incredible books; his most recent novels are *When the Sky Falls* and *While the Storm Rages* and these have been extremely popular. This half term, Phil shares his experience with finding reading difficult and some of his recommendations that are shorter in length and therefore easier for some young readers to access confidently. To watch his video, and hear his recommendations, scan the QR code below:

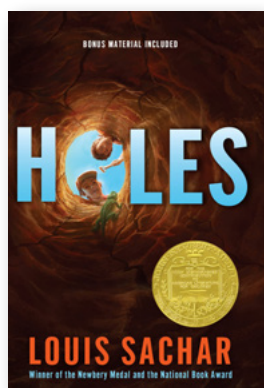


IF YOU LIKE:

Fantasy



Drama, comedy, crime, mystery

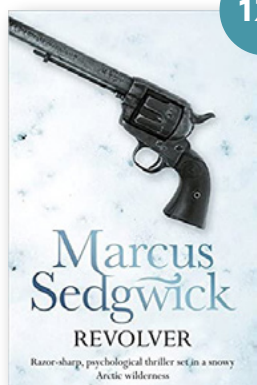


Horror



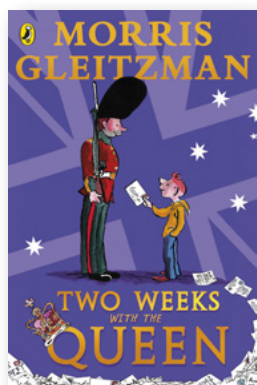
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Full of tension



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The power of brotherhood



The natural world, loss and grief



LONGER-LENGTH READS

Witchstorm

TIM TILLEY

Join a hunt for lost witch treasure, in an enchanting adventure story of storms, spells, and the magic of the natural world. Will believes in witches and the stories he's grown up with – of mythical storm-lions, disappearing villages, and secret songs. Most of all, he believes the tales of magical treasure hidden in the Fens centuries ago. Treasure that he has to find, to solve the mystery of his Ma's disappearance...

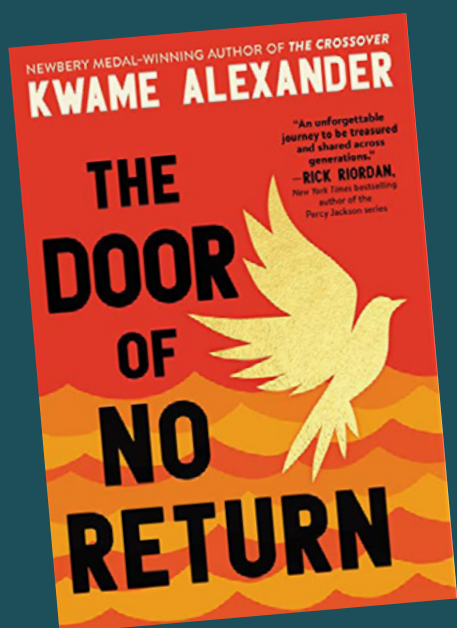


The Spectaculars

JODIE GARNISH

The Greatest Showman meets *The Night Circus* for children, *The Spectaculars* is the enchanting new middle-grade adventure series that combines magic, theatre and danger with a large pinch of starstuff...

When three figures arrive at Harper's window in a flying canoe, informing her that she is due to start her apprenticeship, Harper discovers she is a Spectacular – a magical performer, gifted special powers from the stars. Harper is thrilled to be part of the Spectaculars' travelling theatre and boarding school, until everything is plunged into great danger...



The Door of No Return

KWAME ALEXANDER **Pre-order for 2nd March**

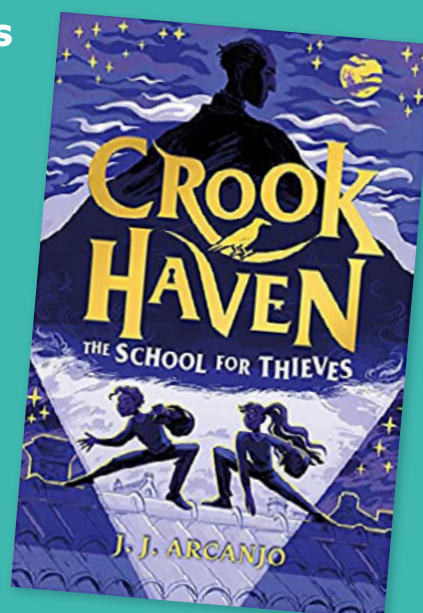
Eleven-year-old Kofi Offin has dreams of water, of its urgent whisper that beckons with promises and secrets. He has heard the call on the banks of Upper Kwanta, where he lives. He loves these things above all else: his family, the fireside tales of his father's father, a girl named Ama, and, of course, swimming. But when the unthinkable – a sudden death – occurs during a festival between rival villages, Kofi ends up in a fight for his life. What happens next will send him on a harrowing journey across land and sea, and away from everything he loves. Yet Kofi's dreams may be the key to his freedom...

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Crookhaven: The School for Thieves

J.J. ARCANJO **Pre-order for 2nd March**

13-year-old Gabriel is a brilliant pickpocket, a skill which he uses to keep his often empty belly not quite so empty. And then one day, he's caught. But instead of being arrested, he is invited by the mysterious Caspian Crook to attend Crookhaven – a school for thieves. At Crookhaven, students are trained in lock-picking, forgery and 'crim-nastics', all with the intention of doing good out in the world, by conning the bad and giving back to the innocent. But... can you ever *really* trust a thief?



All Four Quarters of the Moon SHIRLEY MARR

The night of the Mid-Autumn festival, making mooncakes with Ah-Ma, was the last time Peijing remembers her life being the same. Now facing a new home, a new school and a new language, everything is different. Peijing thinks everything is going to turn out okay, as long as they all have each other. But cracks are starting to appear in the family...

**The Girl, The Ghost and The Last Name** REECE CARTER

Corpse never asked to be a kid ghost. She doesn't remember anything from her life – all she knows is her home on the rock-that-doesn't-exist, her friend Simon the spider, and the vile Witches whose magic she steals. So, when she discovers that there's a powerful treasure which could give her all the answers to what she's lost – her memories, her family, her name – Corpse sets off to find it...

**The Marvellers** DHONIELLE CLYATON

Eleven-year-old Ella Durand is the first Conjuror to attend the Arcanum Training Institute, a magic school in the clouds for Marvellers from around the world. Ella discovers that being the first isn't easy but she finds friendship in fellow misfits Brigit, a girl who hates magic, and Jason, a boy with a fondness for magical creatures, and support from her Elixirs teacher, Masterji Thakur. Then, the notorious Ace of Anarchy escapes prison, supposedly with a Conjuror's aid, and Ella finds herself as the prime suspect. Worse, Masterji Thakur mysteriously disappears while away on a research trip. With the help of her friends and her own growing powers, Ella must find a way to clear her family's name and track down her mentor before it's too late.



The Upper World

FEMI FADUGBA

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Esso is running out of time and into trouble. When he discovers he has the ability to see glimpses of the future, he becomes haunted by a vision of a bullet fired in an alleyway with devastating consequences. A generation later, fifteen-year-old Rhia is desperately searching for answers – and a catastrophic moment from the past holds the key to understanding the parents she never got to meet.

Whether on the roads of South London or in the mysterious Upper World, Esso and Rhia's fates must collide. And when they do, a race against the clock will become a race against time itself...



Stand Up

NIKESH SHUKLA

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Madhu is 17 and has the weight of the world on her shoulders: her dad is putting pressure on her to apply to university, she misses her estranged sister but contact is strictly forbidden, and she's pulling in every single shift possible at a pizza place to help support her family. What she really wants, though, is to be a world-famous stand-up comedian... Just as she's about to turn her back on this dream, a YouTube clip of Madhu goes viral and she is suddenly catapulted into the bright lights of stardom. It's not long before she catches the attention of a fellow Asian comedy legend who offers her the chance of a lifetime...

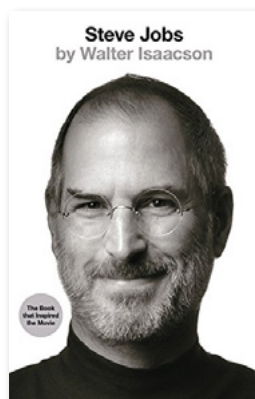
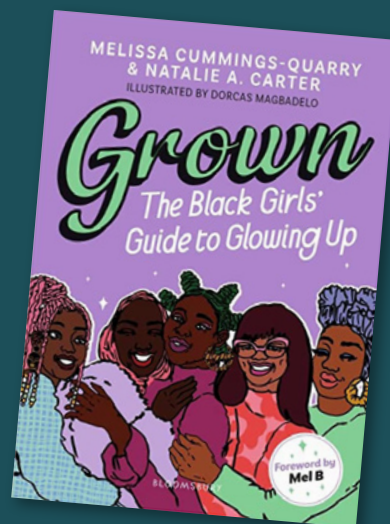
NON-FICTION RECOMMENDATIONS

There is such a wide variety of non-fiction texts available to you and your child – based around so many topics. Whatever your child is interested in, whether it be topics they've touched on in school, particular issues or current affairs, and indeed their interests in terms of hobbies and sports, encourage them to read around these through non-fiction! We've included a very small sample of some books below, but if nothing catches your eye here, do look up books about things that interest your child, or ask a teacher/librarian for advice!

Grown: The Black Girls' Guide to Glowing Up

MELISSA CUMMINGS-QUARRY & NATALIE A. CARTER

Being a teenager and trying to understand who you are and what you stand for is hard. Period. But if you're a Black girl and don't always see yourself represented in the books you read, the films you watch, the adverts you see or the history you're taught, it can be even tougher. *Grown: The Black Girls' Guide to Glowing Up* was written with one thing in mind: you. From understanding identity to the politics of hair to maintaining squad goals to dealing with microaggressions to consent to figuring out what career you might want, *Grown* has got your back. Natalie A. Carter and Melissa Cummings-Quarry, founders of Black Girls' Book Club, share stories – the wins and the Ls – and offer honest, practical advice that will show you how to own your choices. To live your truth without fear. To be grown on your own terms without limits or apologies.

**Steve Jobs: A Biography** WALTER ISAACSON

The death of Steve Jobs shocked the world. In this book, Walter Isaacson presents the only biography written with the collaboration of Jobs, the definitive portrait of one of the undisputed icons of our time: the chronicle of the hectic life and abrasive personality of the genius whose creativity, energy and desire for perfectionism revolutionised six industries. Aware that the best way to create value in the 21st century is to connect creativity with technology, Jobs founded a company in which impressive leaps of the imagination go hand in hand with astonishing achievements in technology. This biography is full of teachings about innovation, character, leadership and values.

Books from the Extinct Series

BEN GARROD



TV scientist Ben Garrod presents the biggest extinction events ever, told from the point of view of evolution's superstars, the most incredible animals ever to swim, stalk, slither or walk our planet. His unique exploration of the most destructive, yet most creative, force in nature makes top-level

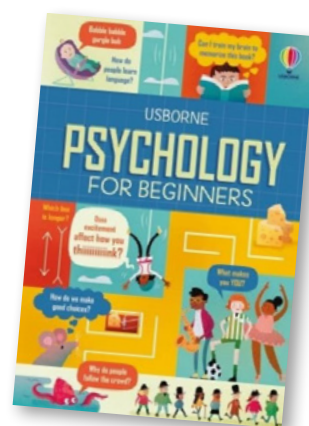
science fun. His two newest books in the series are *Tyrannosaurus Rex* and *Lisowicia*, but there are several others to explore too! Watch Ben talk about the series, and his reasons for writing it, here.



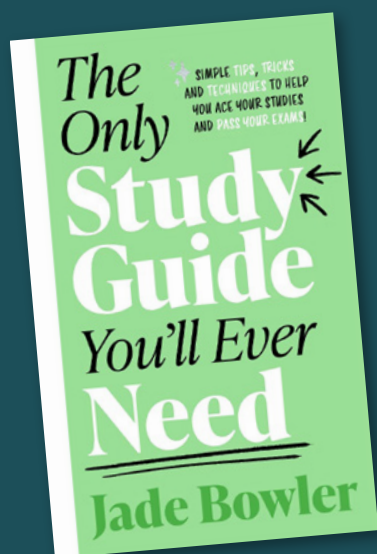
Psychology for Beginners

VARIOUS AUTHORS

Fully-illustrated and filled with real-world examples, this book explains the basics of psychology, from how people think, feel and behave to how scientists can study and be sure about what is actually going on in other people's brains.



The Only Study Guide You'll Ever Need JADE BOWLER



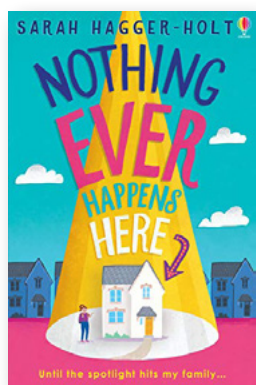
We've all been there: a new school year starts and there's 8 months till your exams – that's plenty of time, right? Then there's 6 months, 3 months, 1 month and oh, now there's 2 weeks left and you haven't started studying... What happens next is a panic-induced mayhem of highlighting everything in the textbook (without even questioning if it's actually helpful). But I'm here to help you change this!

In *The Only Study Guide You'll Ever Need*, I'll cover a range of different topics including:

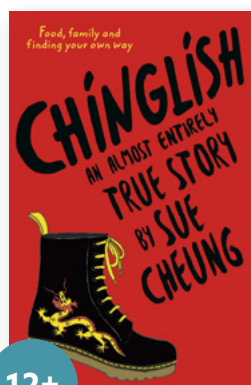
- How to get started and pick up that pen
- Learning techniques that *actually work* (hello, science of memory!)
- The dos and don'ts of timetabling
- And combatting fear of failure, perfectionism, exam stress and so much more!

DARREN SIMPSON RECOMMENDS...

Darren Simpson is a fantastic author, and his three books were shared on various newsletters last academic year: *Scavengers*, *The Memory Thieves* and *Furthermoor*. We are so pleased that Darren is a PiXL Reading Ambassador this academic year. He is passionate about sharing book recommendations with students and parents, but also to hear what they think about books he's shared or ones they'd like him to explore, so feel free to use the hashtag #PiXLReading on Twitter to share your thoughts! To watch his video containing several recommendations for students across the Key Stage 3-4 range, scan the QR code below.



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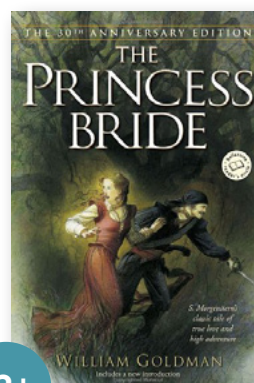


KALYNN BAYRON RECOMMENDS...



Kalynn is a wonderful author who has written fantastic books such as *Cinderella is Dead*, *This Wicked Fate* and *This Poison Heart*.

She is passionate about reading and loves sharing recommendations so we are delighted she's joined us to share some of her recent reads! To find out more about this half term's recommendations from Kalynn, scan the QR code below to hear her talk about them.



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