

Books to read

A list of recommendations...

Books To Read

2010 edition

Compiled by

John Vaughan

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Books to Read

Introduction


This list is compiled based on my years as a teacher, encouraging my students into reading. The books or authors I have listed are ones which I have either had a lot of success with over the years as a teacher, or have been read by my students and recommended to me. The titles are targeted at the Year 7-8 age group, but can definitely be enjoyed by older (and sometimes younger) readers as well!

I have entered them into the list because they have already proved themselves successful, and also because they are a "good read", but please remember this is just ONE person's preferences and opinions, as are all book reviews. Everyone's taste in reading is different, so I recommend you try a wide range of titles & authors.

Some parents may disagree with my choices based on content, subject matter or suitability for level. *That's okay with me!*

 **If you are in doubt about a book, read it yourself before offering it to your child!**

I have read all these titles myself (and yes, I enjoyed them - they wouldn't be in this list, otherwise!) Please note that I will not read a book to a class without reading it myself first, just to check content. Having said that, there are some books in the list I would **not** read to classes because of the content, but I believe **are** suitable for home reading.

 **You may wish to read the books aloud together with your child, or they are just as successful read quietly.**

Some books work better when read quietly. They simply don't work read aloud to a class!

Getting them hooked

You may notice a large number of 'series' or 'serials' in the list. Younger readers will often enjoy or "lock onto" a series of books. Let it happen! Series can often create a more interest in reading.

Remember - the aim is to get the children reading. Don't worry if they don't vary their "diet" a lot. Once you see your child reading, gently prod them into trying a different book occasionally. See, the point is : **They are reading!**

Get involved with your child's reading. Ask your child to tell you what is happening in the story. Read it with them. Have a shared reading time in the evening. Ask if you can borrow the book to read at the same time (such as, while they are asleep).

Let your children see you reading too. By showing your child that you value reading, it will encourage them.

Books and Movies

Do encourage your children to read a book which they have seen, or preferably before they see it, as a movie. Try to get the original book, not the book from the movie...

Avoid 'abridged' versions of books. Encourage your child to read the author's original works.

My teaching experience is that the children find the book much more enjoyable, with greater scope for imagination.

As one of my students put it, *"With a book, you can make up your own pictures in your head. With a movie, you have to use someone else's pictures."*

Ages

As stated above, the main intended audience for this book list is Year 7 & 8 in the New Zealand educational system (ages 10 - 13). This is not set in concrete. There are books in this list that younger readers will enjoy, and lots for older readers - including adults.

To adult readers, I say - try some of these titles. Our children are getting the privilege of some great writing! Don't miss out through thinking you are too old for 'kids' books!

READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ!

Sources

All the books listed are available through good bookstores, second-hand stores or online (at much cheaper prices) as well through libraries, both school and public.

Talk to **your child's teacher** about suitable reading levels and suggested titles, and the **librarians** at the public libraries. They will have a good knowledge of what is "in" amongst the kids today as well.

Talk to your friends' children and their parents also, to find out what people are reading.

One online site well worth looking at is ABE Books (<http://www.abebooks.com/>) an online, world-wide second-hand book store, with a wide variety of sources, good prices and reliable service (to date!).

Note to parents

Horror and scare books are popular among intermediate aged children. **I recommend parents check out the titles your children are reading.**

A good scare when I was a child came from a genuine ghost story. These days, horror is treated as something very ordinary. As a parent myself, it concerns me when children think someone being dismembered or killed brutally is 'fun'.

Please read titles in this genre first - before your children, as I find some of these works rather tasteless, even disturbing - but do remember, **this is just one reader's opinion!**

And lastly...

There are lots of good authors and great titles out there that are not mentioned in this book list, and not all books by a particular author are listed in the majority of cases. It doesn't mean I don't think they are any good, it just means I haven't read them - **yet!** So...

Please, let me know if you come across a good book!

I'm always looking to add to my list!

John Vaughan

New Year's Resolution: Try a NEW author...

Key:

- ✓ One of my favourites!
- ✱ Younger readers should enjoy these.
- ➡ Probably more suitable for older / stronger readers, or readers with more mature tastes.
- * New Zealand Author
- 👉 Please Note
- Series

Please note: These are just my opinions (like all reviews).

You or your children's opinions may differ!

Good reading!

SECTION 1 - New Zealand Authors:

- * **Ian Mune** •✓ The Mad Dog Gang Meets Rotten Fred and Ratsguts
- * **Erin Skiffington** • The Day After Forever
- * **Eliane Whitehouse** • Young Exile
- * **Tessa Duder** •➤ ➤ Alex (Serial)
 - 1: Alex 3: Alessandra - Alex in Rome
 - 2: Alex in Winter 4: Songs for Alex
 - The Tiggy Thompson Show
 - Hotmail
 - JellyBean
- * **Sheryl Jordan** •➤ The Adventures of Denzil, Apprentice Wizard
 - 1: The Wednesday Wizard 3: Denzil's Great Bear Burglary
 - 2: Denzil's Dilemma 4: The Silver Dragon
 - ✓ The Juniper Game
 - Rocco
 - Secret Sacrament
- * **Alan Bunn** • Eyes In The Shadows
- * **Marie Manderson** • The Keeper Of Secrets
- * **Brian Falkner** • Super Freak
- * **Gaelyn Gordon** •➤ 1: Stone Light 2: Mind Fire 3: Riverstone
 - ✓ TripSwitch
 - ✓ Prudence M Mugeridge, Damp Rat
 - Alfred Brown
 - 1: Several Things are Alive & Well and Living in Alfred Brown's Head
 - 2: Take Me To Your Leaders
 - The Other Worlds of Andrew Griffin
- * **David Hill** ✓
Excellent New Zealand author - high interest for intermediate aged students. Loads of fun, great reading. Recommended to parents too!
 - See Ya Simon ✓
 - The Winning Touch.
 - Just Looking, Thanks
 - Impact
 - Give It Hoops
 - Impact
 - The Sleeper Wakes
 - Journey to Tangiwai
 - Fat, Four-eyed and Useless
 - Take it Easy ✓
 - Seconds Best ✓
 - Afterwards
 - Treasure Deep
 - Coming Back ✓
 - Right Where It Hurts
 - The High Wind Blows
 - No Safe Harbour
 - The River Runs
 - Cold Comfort
 - Curtain Up
 - Time Out
 - Boots'n'All
 - The Name of The Game
 - Where All Things End
 - Bodies and Soul
 - Running Hot
- * **Joy Cowley** •➤ Shadrach ✓
 - 1: Bow Down Shadrach 2: Gladly Here I Come 3: Shadrach Girl
 - The Silent One
 - Many other titles
- * **Ged Maybury** • The TriggerStone
- * **Janice Marriott** • 1: Letters to Lesley 2: Brain Drain

READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ!

* Des Hunt ✓

Excellent New Zealand author - high interest for intermediate aged students. Loads of fun, great reading. Recommended to parents too!

- Frog Whistle Mine
- ✓ The Moa Cave
- Whale Pot Bay
- The Tooth
- Shadows In The Ice
- Cry Of The Taniwha
- Where Cuckoos Call
- A Friend In Paradise

* Margaret Mahy

- Most titles
- ✓ The Haunting
- The Changeover
- Under-runners
- The Margaret Mahy Storybooks (Series)

* Fleur Beale

- ►► Fifteen and Screaming (*NB Contains sexual themes*)
- ✓ I Am Not Esther
- Ambushed
- ➤ Lacey
1: Lucky For Some 2: Lacey & The Drama Queens

* Shirley Corlett

- The Stolen
- Through Thick and Thin

* Tania Kelly Roxborough

- ►► Compulsion (*NB Contains adult themes*)

* Paula Brock

- ►► Dare Truth Or Promise (*NB Contains sexual themes*)

* Ken Catran

- The Onager
- Something Wicked This Way Comes
- ➤ Deepwater series
1: Deepwater Black 2: Deepwater Landing 3: Deepwater Angels

* Elsie Locke

- The Runaway Settlers
- The Boy with Snowgrass Hair (with Ken Dawson)
- A Canoe in the Mist

* Maurice Gee

- ➤ The World of O (Serial) ✓
1: The Halfmen of O 2: The Priests of Ferris 3: Motherstone
- Under the Mountain
- The FireRaiser
- The Champion
- ... plus other titles

* Pauline Cartwright

- What! No TV?

* Gavin Bishop

- Many titles *
- Mrs McGinty's Bizarre Plant

* Lynley Dodd

- All titles *
- Hairy McLeary series
- The Minister's Cat
- ABC
- Dragon in a Wagon
- The Blue Balloon *

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- * **Vince Ford**
 - ➤ 1: 2Much4U 2: SoMuch2Do 3: Possums2U
 - It's A Try
 - The Dare Club
 - a handful of blue
 - BoyznBikes

- * **VM Jones**
 - ➤ The Karazan Quartet
 - 1: The Serpents of Arakesh 3: Prince of the Wind
 - 2: Beyond The Shroud 4: Quest for the Sun
 - ➤ Pip (series)
 - 1: Juggling With Mandarins ✓ 2: Shooting The Moon
 - Buddy

- * **Bernard Beckett**
 - ➤ Genesis

- * **Brian Falkner**
 - Brainjack
 - The Tomorrow Code

SECTION 2 - Overseas Authors:

- Roald Dahl** Any titles
 •✓ Danny The Champion Of The World
 •✓ Boy
- Judy Blume** Many of her titles are suitable.
 •➤ Fudge
 1: Tales of a fourth Grade Nothing 3: Fudge-a-mania
 2: SuperFudge 4: Double Fudge
 • Just As Long As We're Together
 • Blubber
 • Tiger Eyes
- Beverley Cleary** Many of her titles are cool.
 •➤ Ralph the Mouse ✓
 1: The Mouse and The Motorcycle
 2: Runaway Ralph 3: Ralph S Mouse
 • Otis Spofford
- Babbette Cole**
 • Dr Dog ✱
 • Drop Dead ✱
 • Two Of Everything ✱
 • Ramona (Series)
- Alyssa Brugman**
 • Walking naked
- Ted Hughes**
 • The Iron Man
- Ian Serrailier** •✓ The Silver Sword
- E B White**
 • Charlottes Web
 • Stuart Little
- Nils-Olos Franzen**
 • Agaton Sax (Series)
- Donald Sobol**
 • Encyclopedia Brown (Series)
- John Christopher**
 •➤ ➡ The Tripod Trilogy (Serial)
 1: The White Mountains 2: The City of Gold and Lead
 3: The Pool of Fire
 • The Lotus Caves
- Robert C O'Brien**
 •➤ Mrs Frisby ✓
 Series started by Robert O'Brien, & continued by his daughter Lesley Conly
 1: Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH'
- Lesley Conly**
 2: Racso and the Rats of NIMH
 3: RT, Margaret and the Rats of NIMH
- Karen Cushman**
 • Catherine Called Birdie
- Paula Danziger**
 • Various titles
- Tamora Pierce**
 •➤ Wild Magic
 1: Wild Magic 2: Wolf Speaker
 3: The Emperor Mage 4: Realms of The Gods

READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ!

Ivan Southall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Various titles• Ash Road
Geoffrey Trease	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Historical stories
Paul Berna	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Hundred Million Francs
Jack London	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call Of The Wild• White Fang
Norman Hunter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professor Branestawm (Series)
Willard Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any titles
Richard Carpenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Catweazle
R Meade Faulkner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•✓ Moonfleet
Leon Garfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most titles - I recommend Smith
Enid Blyton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Famous Five (Series)
Sid Fleischman	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• McBroom (Series)
Steve Jackson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fighting Fantasy (Series)
Various Authors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Twist-a-Plot (Series)
Ruth Chew	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Worst Witch
Martin Radford	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where's Wally? (Series) (puzzle books - little text)
Anno	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art based books (Series) (no text)• Anno's Medieval World
Thomas Rockwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•✓ How to Eat Fried Worms• How to Fight a Girl
John Rowe Townsend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gumbles Yard
Judith Kerr	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•➤ Out of the Hitler Time1: When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit2: Bombs On Aunt Dainty (a.k.a. 'The Other Way Round')3: A Small Person Far Away
Anne Holm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am David
Alan Garner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Weirdstone of Brisingamen
Mary Norton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bedknob and Broomstick
Meindert DeJong	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many Titles• May appeal to younger readers if read aloud• Shadrach
Margaret Sefton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sleepers on the Hill

READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ!

- Paul Jennings** • Almost any title (short stories)
• Unreal
- Nicholas Fisk** Many titles
•✓ The Worm Charmers • AntiGrav
• Grinny • A Rag, A Bone, A Hank of Hair
• Wheelie in the stars • Space Hostages
• BackLash • Time Trap
- Jerry Spinelli** • Maniac Magee
• PickleMania
- Jan Needle** • Bogeymen
- Jane Yolen** • The Dragon's Boy
- Marlene Fanta Shyer** • Welcome Home Jellybean
- Helen Cresswell** • Ellie and the Hagwitch
- Jenni Fleetwood** • The Intergalactic Omniglot
- Robert Swindells** • Room 13
• My Girl
- Andre Norton** • Crosstime Agent (1)
• The Crossroads of Time(2)
- Paddy Mounter** • Attila the Hen
- Morris Lurie** • The 27th Annual African Hippopotamus Race
- Dick Cate** •➤ 1: Ghost Dog 2: Twister 3: Foxcover
- Terry Pratchett** • •➤ Truckers Series
1: Truckers 2: Diggers 3: Wings
• The Discworld Novels
• The Colour of Magic
• The Light Fantastic
- Rebecca Lisle** • Shrubbery Skulduggery
- Jacqueline Wilson** • GlubbSlyme
- Avi** • Romeo and Juliet together (and alive!) at last!
• The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle
- Madeleine L'Engle** • A Wrinkle In Time
- Anne Fine** •✓ Goggle Eyes
• Flour Babies
...and most other titles
- Kit Pearson** • A Handful of Time
- Willo Davis Roberts** • Sugar Isn't Everything

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- Margaret Buffie ✓** *Canadian author - excellent but hard to get hold of!*
- The Haunting of Frances Rain (a.k.a. 'Who Is Frances Rain?')
 - The Dark Garden
 - The Warnings
 - > The Watcher's Quest (series)
1: The Watcher 2: The Seeker 3: The Finder
 - Out Of Focus
- James Follett**
- ➡ EarthSearch
 - ➡ EarthSearch II
- Colin Thiele**
- The Fire in the Stone
- Morris Gleitzman**
- > 1: Blabber Mouth 2: Sticky Beak
 - Worry Wart
- Emily Rodda**
- Pigs Might Fly
 - Finders keepers
- William Taylor**
- I Hate My Brother Maxwell Potter
- Bruce Brooks**
- The Moves Make The Man
- Barbara Park**
- Dear God, Help! Love, Earl
- Phyllis Reynolds Naylor**
- The Agony of Alice
- Chris Powling & Scoular Anderson**
- Harry's Party
- Michael Rosen**
- ✓ Quick! Let's Get Out Of Here!
- Sharon Creech**
- ✓ Love That Dog
- Joan Aiken**
- ✓ Midnight Is A Place
- Nina Bawden**
- The Finding
- Chris d'Lacy**
- > 1: The Fire Within 4: The Fire Eternal
2: Icefire 5: Dark Fire
3: Fire Star
- Gillian Rubinstein**
- Foxspell
 - > SkyMaze series
1: Space Demons 2: Skymaze 3: Shinkei
- William Nicholson**
- > The Wind On Fire series
1: The Wind Singer 2: The Wind On Fire Part3: Firesong
- ➡ JRR Tolkien**
- The Hobbit ✓
 - > The Lord of the Rings ✓
1: The Fellowship of the Ring
2: The Two Towers
3: The Return of the King
- Lynne Reid**
- The Indian in the Cupboard
 - The Return of the Indian

READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ!

- Michael Bond**
- Paddington Bear Series ✱
 - e.g. A Bear Called Paddington
- Alan Bunn**
- Eyes in the Shadows
- Jonathan Stroud**
- The Bartimaeus Trilogy
 - Part 1: The Amulet of Samarkand
 - Part 2: The Golem's Eye
 - Part 3: Ptolemy's Gate
 - Buried Fire
 - The Leap
- J K Rowling**
- The Harry Potter (serial): Harry Potter and...
 - 1: ... The Philosopher's Stone
 - 2: ...The Chamber Of Secrets
 - 3: ...The Prisoner of Azkaban
 - 4: ...The Goblet of Fire
 - 5: ...The Order of the Phoenix
 - 6: ...The Half-Blood Prince
 - 7: ...The Deathly Hallows
- Kate DiCamillo**
- The Tale of Despereaux
- Eoin Colfer**
- Artemis Fowl (series)
 - 1: Artemis Fowl
 - 2: Artemis Fowl and The Arctic Incident
 - 3: Artemis Fowl and The Opal Deception
 - 4: Artemis Fowl and The Eternity Code
 - 5: Artemis Fowl and The Lost Colony
 - 6: Artemis Fowl and The Time Paradox
 - ✓ Airman
- Mary Hoffman**
- Stravaganza (series)
 - 1: City of Masks
 - 2: City of Stars
 - 3: City of Flowers
- V.A. Richardson**
- The House of Windjammer
- P.B. Kerr**
- Children of the Lamp – The Akhenaten Adventure
- Kenneth Opel**
- The **Silverwing** Series
 - 1: Silverwing
 - 2: Sunwing
 - 3: Firewing
- Ed. Jack Dann & Gardner Dozois**
- Dark Alchemy
- Nicola Morgan**
- ✓ ➤ The Highwaymen (series)
 - 1: The Highwayman's Footsteps
 - 2: The Highwayman's Curse
- Frederic S Durbin**
- ✓ ➤ Dragonfly
- Jason Hightman**
- The Saint Of Dragons
- Zizou Corder**
- Lee Raven, Boy Thief
- Isabel Hoving**
- The Dream Merchant
- N.M. Browne**
- Basilisk
- Derek Landy**
- ✓ ➤ Skulduggery Pleasant (series)
 - 1: Skulduggery Pleasant
 - 2: Playing With Fire
 - 3: The Faceless Ones
- James A Owen**
- The Chronicles Of The Imaginarium Gepgraphica

READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ! READ!

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1: Here There Be Dragons 2: The Search For The Red Dragon

- James Patterson**
- > ✓ Maximum Ride
 - 1: The Angel Experiment
 - 2: School's Out - Forever
 - 3: Saving the World
 - 4: The Final Warning
 - 5: Max
- Christopher Paolini**
- > ✓ ➡ The Inheritance Cycle
 - 1: Eragon
 - 2: Eldest
 - 3: Brisingr
 - 4:
- Anthony Horowitz**
- > ✓ The Power of Five (Gatekeepers)
 - 1: Raven's Gate
 - 2: Evil Star
 - 3: Nightrise
 - 4: Necropolis
 - > Alex Rider
 - 1: Stormbreaker
 - 2: Point Blanc
 - 3: Skeleton Key
 - 4: Eagle Strike
 - 5: Scorpia
 - 6: Ark Angel
 - 7: Snakehead
- Stephanie Meyer**
- > ➡ The **Twilight** Series *** **Middle teen age group recommended**
 - 1: Twilight
 - 2: New Moon
 - 3: Eclipse
 - 4: Breaking Dawn
- Neil Gaiman**
- The Graveyard Book
- Louis Sachar**
- Holes
- Robert Muchamore**
- CHERUB (Series)
- Suzanne Collins**
- > ➡ ✓ The Hunger Games (series)
 - The Hunger Games (Book 1) ✓
 - Catching Fire (Book 2) ✓
 - *To be published 2010* (Book 3)
- Ruth Park**
- Callie
- Alastair Graham**
- ✓ Full Moon Soup (Graphics only, no text)
 - Full Moon Afloat (Graphics only, no text)

Miscellaneous Notes

Older Authors

The following authors would probably be termed "old fashioned" by our children. Certainly they are not as popular as they were in our day or our parents'! Do not, however, discount or disregard the story telling power of these authors, although it may be much harder to persuade your children to try them!

- RM Ballantyne** • The Coral Island
- Robert Louis Stevenson** • Various titles
• Treasure Island • > Kidnapped • > Catriona
- Richmal Crompton** • William stories
- Arthur Conan Doyle** • Sherlock Holmes
- Charles Dickens** • A Christmas Carol (and other titles)
- PG Wodehouse** • Hot Water
• Jeeves stories
• Blandings Castle stories

(And seriously, get your older child to read "Winnie The Pooh" by **AA Milne**! There's a lot of humour for older readers in there too!)

*** There's now a "Winnie The Pooh" sequel by David Benedictus, "Return To The Hundred Acre Wood".

Book notes

Sitting on the bookshelf

This section contains titles that are sitting on my bookshelf waiting for me to get some time to read them...

- * **Joy Cowley** • Star Bright and the Dream Eater

Recommended but not yet read

This section contains other books which have been recommended to me but which, for one reason or another, have not been included in the list above. Often it is just a case of not yet having had time to read them, or it may be hard to get hold of a copy.

- Alyssa Brugman** • Finding Grace
- * **Fleur Beale** • The Taming of Joe Banks
• Grogan
- Diana Wynn Jones** • Part 1: The Dark Lord of Derkholm
• Part 2: Year Of The Griffin

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