

PiXL Reading

SECONDARY NEWSLETTER



As the end of the academic year approaches, you and your child will no doubt be planning what to do over the summer break. Amongst the ideas you have already, we hope reading may play a part as well. The benefits of reading are vast – from supporting students’ empathy and understanding of emotions, the world and others, to achievement across the curriculum – including maths and science.

To help you and your child select some books to read this summer, we have collated a selection here which you may like to explore together. We hope there will be something for everyone, but this is by no means an exhaustive list – this is the golden age of children’s literature and there are so many options out there! Whatever your child is curious about, or takes interest in, look at books around the topic, or encourage them to research into the area further through non-fiction texts such as online articles. They may also like to explore different genres – whether it be fantasy, adventure, sci-fi or young adult thrillers. As part of PiXL’s Let’s Talk programme this half term, we’ll be exploring the power each of us has to change the world and also choices: the choices open to us and how we can make the best ones. Many of the books in these pages link to these areas and we hope your child may be inspired to make positive changes to the world and to consider the choices available to them in life.

Please note that unless otherwise stated, the texts shared in this newsletter are suitable from Year 7 and up, but please do research the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child, as these are just the publisher’s guide.

If your child is struggling to read, please do speak to your school about this before the summer, and explore ways you could support them at home. For example, by reading with them, to them, and encouraging them to find a book which suits their interests as well as their reading level. We hope that this selection may spark some ideas for this. However, it’s also worth bearing in mind that some students prefer to ‘read’ through audio books and that this is still a valid form of them hearing the written word in a fluent and expressive way.



There are so many books and types of texts that your child may enjoy exploring. Whatever you explore with your child this summer, we wish you a fantastic summer break and very much hope that you enjoy adventuring through a range of stories too.

SHORTER-LENGTH READS

The books below are all shorter-length texts, which could be engaging for anyone, but they are published in a dyslexia-friendly font to help make them accessible to all. If your child doesn't have dyslexia, they can still read these books!

**The Disconnect**

KEREN DAVID

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 Den

KEITH GRAY

Marshall feels the need to escape because things are so tough at home. Rory is just happy it's the first day of the summer holidays. While out on their bikes, they stumble across a long-forgotten underground bunker at the edge of the woods. This is the den and going down inside will stretch their friendship to its limits. There will be rivalry and betrayal, but can wrecked relationships be saved before the summer has even begun?

**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.





The Deadsoul Project: The Night House Files

DAN SMITH

Kyle and Lauren Dempsey believe their soldier stepdad is dead, killed in action in Northern Ireland. Then he turns up at their flat in the Alpine Heights tower block and one day later, a mysterious virus seems to be running rampant through the building and many residents are dead. Nobody has ever discovered what really happened – until now ...

Needle

PATRICE LAWRENCE

13+

Charlene is a demon knitter. It's the only thing she enjoys and the only thing she believes she's really good at. So, when her foster mum's son destroys her latest creation, Charlene loses it and stabs him in the hand with her knitting needle. It damages a nerve and she gets sucked into the criminal justice system for assault. Charlene's not sorry and she's never apologised to anyone in her life. But people keep telling her that if she says sorry, they'll go easier on her. Can she bring herself to say it and not mean it when her freedom is at stake?

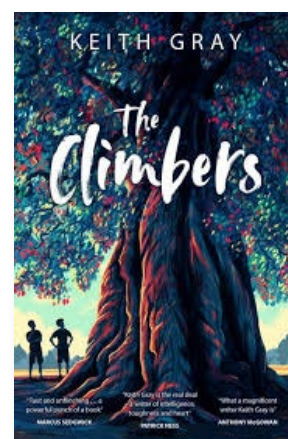


The Climbers

KEITH GRAY

13+

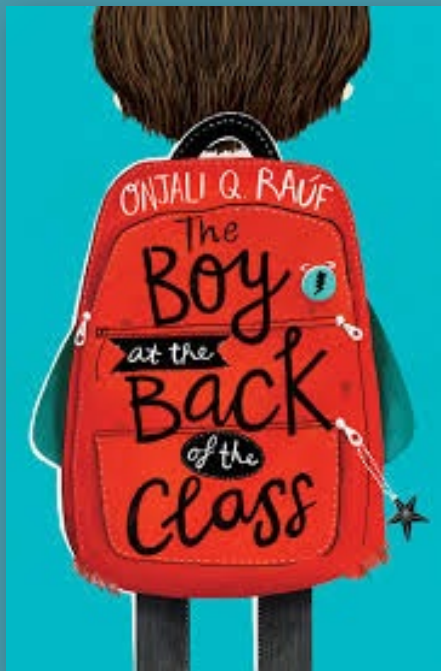
Sully is the best climber in the village. He can scale Twisted Sisters' tangled branches and clamber up Double Trunker with ease. But when new kid Nottingham shows up and astonishes everyone with his climbing skills, Sully's status is under threat and there's only one way to prove who's best: they must race to climb the last unnamed tree. Whoever makes it to the top will become a legend. But something spiteful and ugly has reared its head in Sully... Is it worth losing everything just to reach the top?



LONGER-LENGTH READS

The Boy at the Back of the Class ONJALI Q. RAÚF

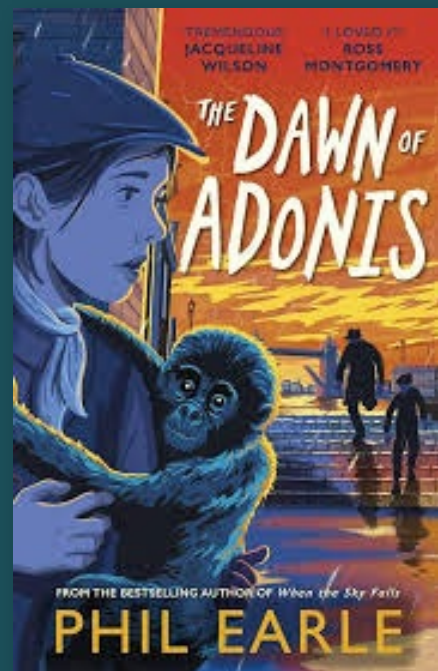
On a perfectly ordinary school day, something extraordinary happens: a boy with pale skin, lion eyes and a tattered red rucksack walks in. Unable to speak English and seated at the back of the class, Ahmet 'the refugee kid' becomes the perfect target for bullies and rumours alike. But Ahmet has also captured the attention and empathy of a fellow classmate, who will do anything to help him find his family. Even if that involves a plan - or five, and the Queen herself!

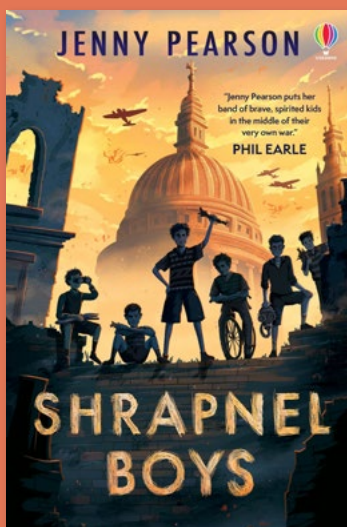


The Dawn of Adonis

PHIL EARLE

It is 1911 and London's docks thrum with underhand deals, none so great as the arrival of a valuable, rare and exotic animal, smuggled from the depths of the Congolese rainforest. The baby gorilla stands to make one man very rich. Heaven help anyone who dares stand in the way, not least the brave and innocent twelve-year-old Nettie Beecroft, who finds herself embroiled in a dangerous rescue attempt. Whom can Nettie trust? And can she save the life of this very special creature?





Shrapnel Boys

JENNY PEARSON

When war comes to London in 1939, Ronnie Smith is scared and excited: scared of the bombs that fall at night, but excited to race his friends to collect the best bits of shrapnel every morning. But for Ronnie, the battles aren't just in the sky and on the streets. They're at school and at home too. His little brother is up to no good with a secret job and dangerous new friends, and Ronnie's worried he's getting himself into big trouble. Ronnie's desperate to help his little brother. But he isn't expecting to uncover secrets that could change the fate of the whole war...

Ice Apprentices

JACOB NORTH

Tundra is the last settlement in a world of ice. Oswin Fields is its only stray, rescued from the Endless Expanse. So, when he's summoned to the school for ice apprentices, he sets out to prove his worth. But all isn't as it seems in this enchanted place. When the beasts begin to strike, Oswin has to risk everything he holds dear. Can he look deep within himself to find the strength to prove that he belongs?

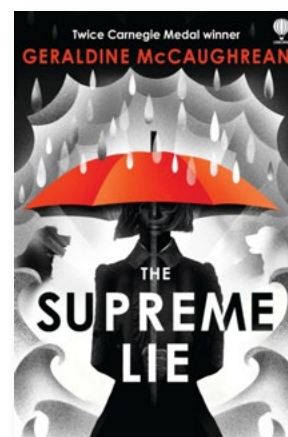


The Supreme Lie

GERALDINE McCAUGHREAN

12+

15-year-old Gloria is maid to Afaia's tyrannical Head of State, Madame Suprema. When the country is hit by unprecedented flooding, Madame Suprema runs away, fearing she will be blamed for the crisis. To cover up this cowardly act, Gloria is made to step into Madame Suprema's shoes and is thrust into a world of corrupt and desperate politicians. As Gloria becomes aware of the forces toying with her every move, she must make decisions that could save, or end, thousands of lives - including her own...

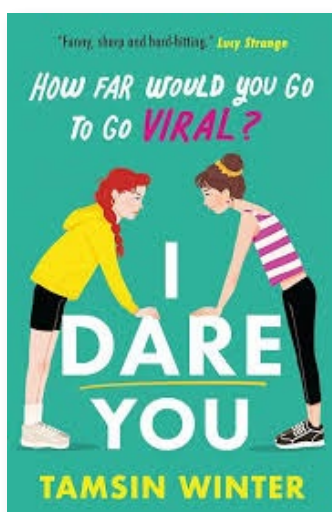


I Dare You

TAMSIN WINTER

12+

Willow and Alma are best friends. All they want is fame and fortune and Willow is determined that the best way to get it is to go viral. So, they start filming dares. As their challenges get more extreme, their fan base grows. Duct-taping themselves to a wall? No-brainer. Eating super-hot chillis? Of course! Waxing an eyebrow off? Super funny! And if they get in a bit of trouble, it's worth it. But if they really want to prove themselves, they have to go all-out. So, they come up with the perfect idea: an idea that causes more than just a bit of trouble. An idea that might destroy not just their ambitions but their entire friendship...

**Hideous Beauty**

WILLIAM HUSSEY

14+

Dylan is forced to come out after his secret relationship with Ellis is exposed on social media, but to his surprise, everyone is really supportive - or appears to be. But Dylan's and El's happiness is short-lived, and following a tragic accident, Dylan begins to realise how little he knows about the boy he loves or those closest to him.

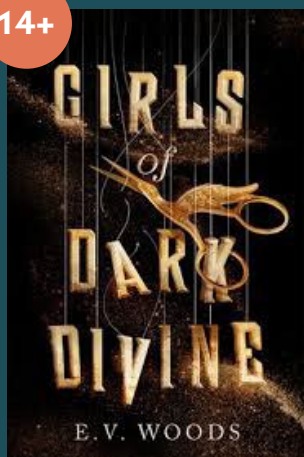
**The Uninvited** ROSS MACKENZIE

PRE-ORDER FOR RELEASE 31ST JULY 2025

13-year-old Samm Wolfback lives in Glass Forest, a sprawling Faerae refugee camp in England. Life in Glass Forest is hard, poisoned by disease and crime and poverty. But Samm has a unique gift that lines his pockets - he can find lost things. When Samm is thrust into the centre of a plot to escape and return home, he must use his gifts to unearth two treasures lost in the everyday. The task will take Samm to dark places filled with danger and he will have to use all his skills to stay alive...



14+



Girls of Dark Divine E. V. WOODS

PRE-ORDER FOR RELEASE ON 14TH AUGUST 2025

A puppet master wielding a dark curse.

A boy made of shadows.

And a girl who must sever the strings and set her sisters free...

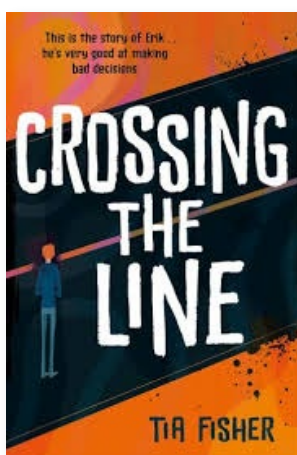
Emberlyn is a Marionette - one of a troupe of hauntingly beautiful girls who have been cursed to perform until they turn to dust. When another one of her sisters falls, Emberlyn decides she must fight back against their Puppet Master and free them from this violent dance...

Crossing the Line

TIA FISHER

14+

Erik's life has been falling apart ever since his dad died. Homework and being good at school stop feeling important when you're the new man of the house. When Erik's bad behaviour attracts the wrong crowd, he's sucked into a terrifying new world of drug dealing, trap houses and violence. Making money feels good but Erik soon learns that a small favour can become a huge debt. And when his sisters' lives are threatened, Erik will have to cross one more line to save them.



Uglies

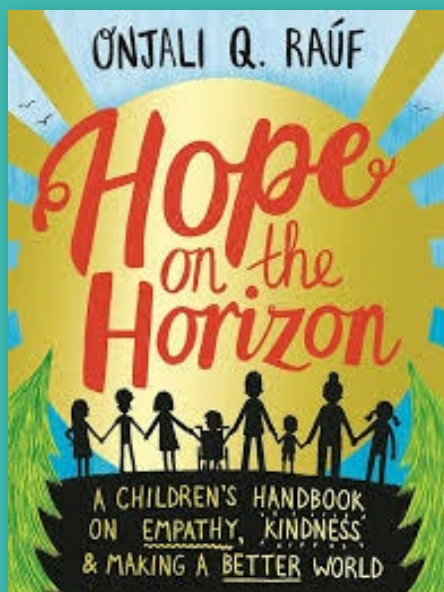
SCOTT WESTERFELD

14+

In Tally Youngblood's world, looks matter. At sixteen, everyone undergoes a transformation from "Ugly" to "Pretty" and is catapulted into a high-tech paradise where the only thing that matters is having a great time and you never have to worry or think for yourself. Tally can't wait. But then, with just weeks to go to Tally's birthday, her friend Shay runs away and the ugly truth about the world of the Pretties starts to reveal itself. What if the beauty of the Pretties utopia really is just skin deep?



NON-FICTION RECOMMENDATIONS



Hope on the Horizon

ONJALI Q. RAÚF

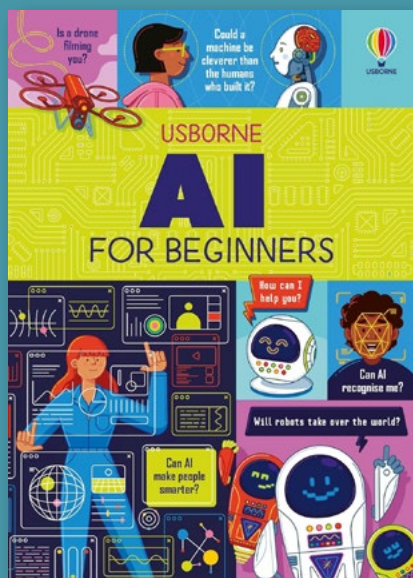
Discover everything there is to know about kindness, empathy, friendship and fighting for the things that matter. In this book, Onjali Raúf seeks to motivate budding young activists, showing them that no one is too small to make a difference. With a bit of compassion, a big dollop of hope and even the smallest act of kindness, magical things can happen. Hope is on the horizon!

Be the Change – Be Kind

MARCUS SEDGWICK

Every one of us experiences the world differently - we have different worries and problems, and we all have unique hopes and dreams - but there's one thing that can unite us and make the world a better place, and that's kindness! Kindness can create positive change in all our lives. Whether it's being a friend to someone who seems lonely, or simply smiling or giving somebody a thumbs up. When we support each other, we can be our best selves. *Be the Change: Be Kind* is your handbook on how to use your own voice to empower yourself and others to spread kindness.





AI for Beginners

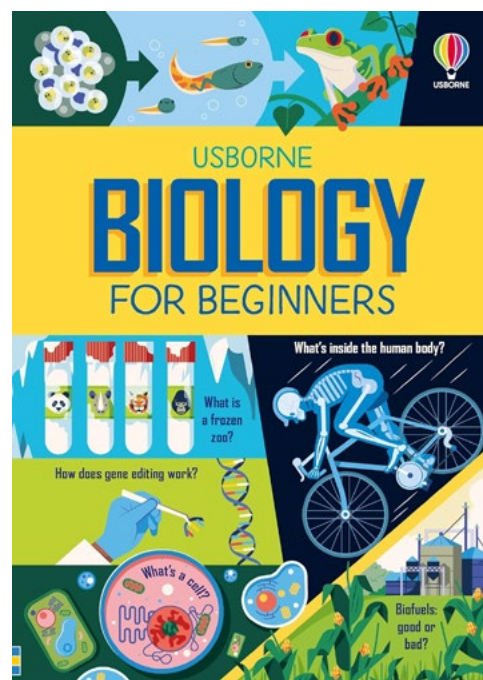
PUBLISHING IN JULY

Artificial Intelligence is all about humans asking computers and other machines to think and even behave like humans, and to take on jobs that people find too difficult or too boring. But how do you actually define the term? What exactly can machines with AI already do and what might they be able to do in the future? This book answers these questions – where answers exist – and raises debating points at every turn. Should we be asking machines to do creative tasks? Is there a chance that machines might take over the world, either by accident or on purpose?

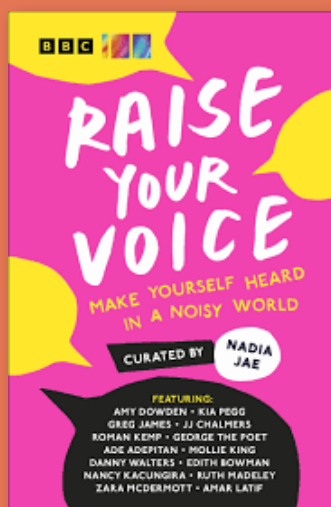
Biology for Beginners

PUBLISHING IN JUNE

This book explores the fascinating world of biology - the study of all life, from tiny bacteria to plants, animals and entire ecosystems. Discover how living things behave and interact, and the amazing ways they adapt to the world around them. Take a closer look at cells - the building blocks of life itself - and the vital role they play. Through a mix of diagrams, infographics, comic strips and clear, engaging text, this book shows readers what the study of biology is about, how much it covers, and why YOU might want to study it further yourself. It also investigates some of the big issues that biologists are grappling with today, from preventing the spread of ever-evolving diseases to saving animals and plants from extinction.



FOR OLDER READERS



Raise Your Voice: Making Yourself Heard in a Noisy World NADIA JAE

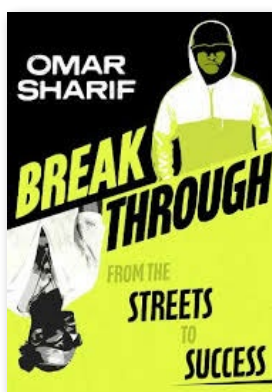
13+

Everyone has a story to tell and this book seeks to empower you to tell your story: it imparts essential advice on boosting confidence and speaking up, presenting yourself and using all forms of technology (writing, broadcasting and even podcasting) in order to tell your personal, fearless story. Including first-hand advice from sports people, musicians and broadcasters, led by BBC radio DJ Nadia Jae, learn how to speak up to authority figures, organise for change, be an ally, overcome stage fright, build an audience online, and more. Discover creative tools and inspiring celebrity quotes that will help you to feel empowered and own your stage.

Breakthrough

OMAR SHARIF

Omar Sharif grew up in London surrounded by gangs with fierce loyalties. Carrying a knife offered him protection, belonging, family. But after three of his friends were murdered, Omar sought to change his life. He now inspires teens and young people with his story, helping them grow self-belief, resist peer pressure and reach their potential. In this book, Omar shares his powerful and moving true story, showing how gang life creates a bubble that makes young people believe it is their only choice; that they're not good enough. But a shift in that thinking saved his life. Sharing his 6 ingredients for success, Omar provides encouragement around how to make great decisions, navigate challenges and achieve success.

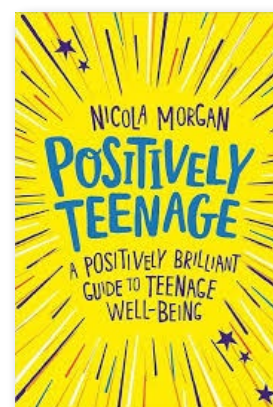


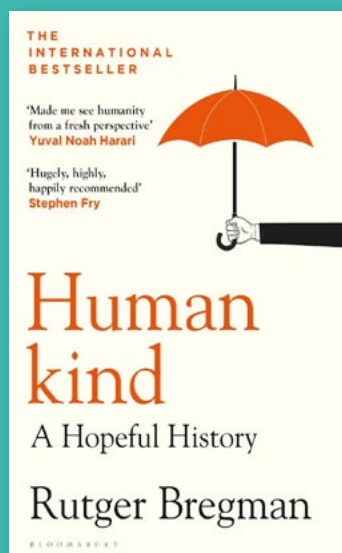
14+

Positively Teenage

NICOLA MORGAN

The media so often portray adolescence negatively but this book shows you how to approach these years far more positively so that you can really flourish and be in control. You'll find simple strategies to develop a positive attitude, growth mindset, self-understanding, determination and resilience and you'll see how those strengths will help you cope with any challenges, enjoy life and achieve your potential.





Humankind: A Hopeful History

RUTGER BREGMAN

It's a belief that unites the left and right, psychologists and philosophers, writers and historians: human beings, we're taught, are by nature selfish and governed by self-interest. *Humankind* makes a new argument: that it is realistic, as well as revolutionary, to assume that people are good. In this book, Bregman takes some of the world's most famous studies and events and reframes them, providing a new perspective on the last 200,000 years of human history. From the real-life Lord of the Flies to the Blitz, a Siberian fox farm to an infamous New York murder, Stanley Milgram's Yale shock machine to the Stanford prison experiment, Bregman shows how believing in human kindness and altruism can be a new way to think - and act as the foundation for achieving true change in our society.

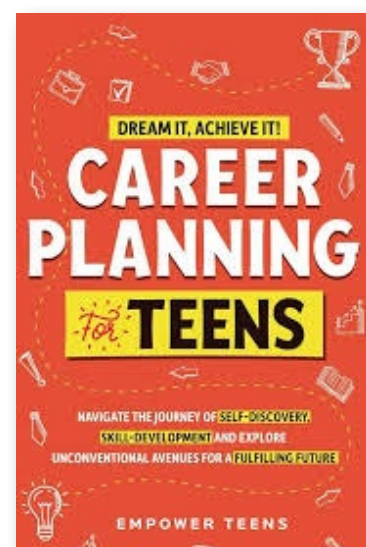
Dream it, Achieve it: Career Planning for Teens

EMPOWER TEENS

Inside this book, you'll journey to 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. With this book, you will:

- Get in touch with your passions: Figure out which of your skills you can turn into a professional career. You'll be able to figure out your aspirations and have a solid foundation to work with.
- Think about possible paths and narrow them down: Successfully plan out your career and explore options that suit your interests. And after that, narrow down your options so you can figure out exactly where to start.
- Achieve your career goals in no time: Learn how to set actionable goals that'll form the perfect stepping stones to reach your dream job. You'll never feel like you aren't making any progress.
- Discover step-by-step plans to achieve your goals: After planning out your career, all that's left is to put it into motion with these early and post high school plans to help you turn your dreams into a reality!

Dream big and make it happen!



If you're looking for activity books over the summer, you may like to explore the 'STEM Scribble Books' and the 'Write Your Own' series from Usborne.

'Scribble Books'

USBORNE

Usborne's 'Scribble books' are full of activities to explore, discover, solve and create. You can buy a pack of four: Science, Engineering, Technology and Maths – through which you can create an earthquake detector, solve puzzles, crack codes and much more!



'Write Your Own Books'

USBORNE

Usborne's 'Write Your Own' books provide young people with a range of ideas and inspiration to get their creative juices going! The collection contains books such as 'Write and Draw Your Own Comics', as well as books on scripts, poems, sci-fi and fantasy stories, magazines and more!

