

PiXL Reading

SECONDARY NEWSLETTER



We hope you and your family had a lovely Easter break. As we return for the final term of the academic year, we hope that this newsletter will provide you and your child with a selection of books to choose from. The selection covers a wide range of interests, topics and reading accessibility.

If your child is preparing for exams, whether internal or GCSE examinations, they will no doubt be spending time revising and preparing for these. Part of this revision will involve reading – but immersing ourselves in the world of a book is also a way to reduce stress and improve mental wellbeing.

If your child is struggling to read, please do speak to your school about this, and consider 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 pronounced in a fluent and expressive way.

As usual, we are delighted to be joined by a team of PiXL Reading Ambassadors – award-winning authors Phil Earle, Holly Race, Kalynn Bayron and Darren Simpson. We really hope you enjoy watching their videos by scanning the QR codes on their recommendations pages.

Please note that unless otherwise stated, the texts 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 a publisher's guide.

We hope that amongst all these recommendations, you find something for you and we wish you the very best of luck for this half term.

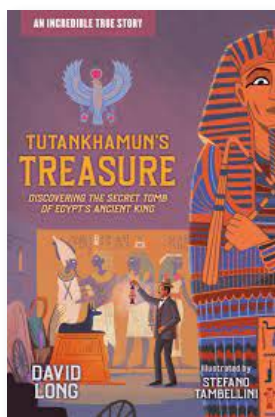


SHORTER-LENGTH accessible novels with dyslexia-friendly font and engaging stories

Tutankhamun's Treasure

DAVID LONG

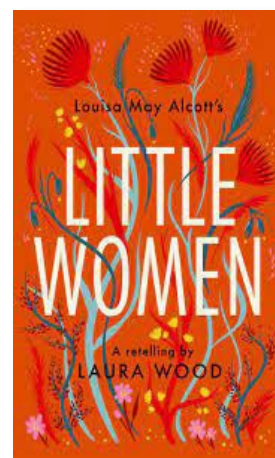
On 4 November 1922, a young Egyptian boy working on Howard Carter's archaeological dig in the Valley of the Kings stumbled across a strange piece of rock. On closer inspection it turned out to be a stone step that would lead Carter to a long-lost tomb – and to treasures beyond his wildest dreams. The tomb belonged to boy pharaoh Tutankhamun and was packed full of priceless artefacts. It had been largely untouched for over 3,000 years and remains one of the most important archaeological discoveries of all time. But did the opening of the tomb trigger a deadly curse?



Little Women – a retelling

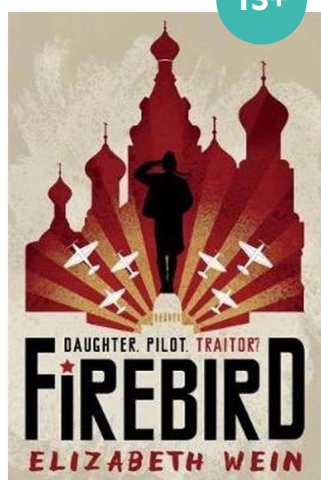
LAURA WOOD

The charming story of the brave and resilient March sisters has been adored by generations of readers who have identified with the struggles of kind and pretty Meg; gentle, delicate Beth; precocious, artistic Amy; and of course, wild, tomboyish Jo, determined to forge her own path and become a writer. Follow the girls as they come of age during the American Civil War, and fall in love with the story all over again in this retelling.



Firebird ELIZABETH WEIN

Nastia is no traitor. She is a daring pilot, the daughter of revolutionaries and now, as the Second World War descends on Russia, she must fight to save the glorious Motherland. But all is not as it seems, and when the battles begin, secrets are revealed and everything that she once knew is challenged...



The Mystery of Me

KAREN MCCOMBIE

Ketty doesn't remember anything about the accident, or much from before. The doctors say her memories will come back but, in the meantime, school is a frightening and confusing place. Otis seems to be her only friend – he's kind and caring, funny too. And he may hold the key to remembering the old Ketty ... But will Ketty recognise or even like the girl she used to be?

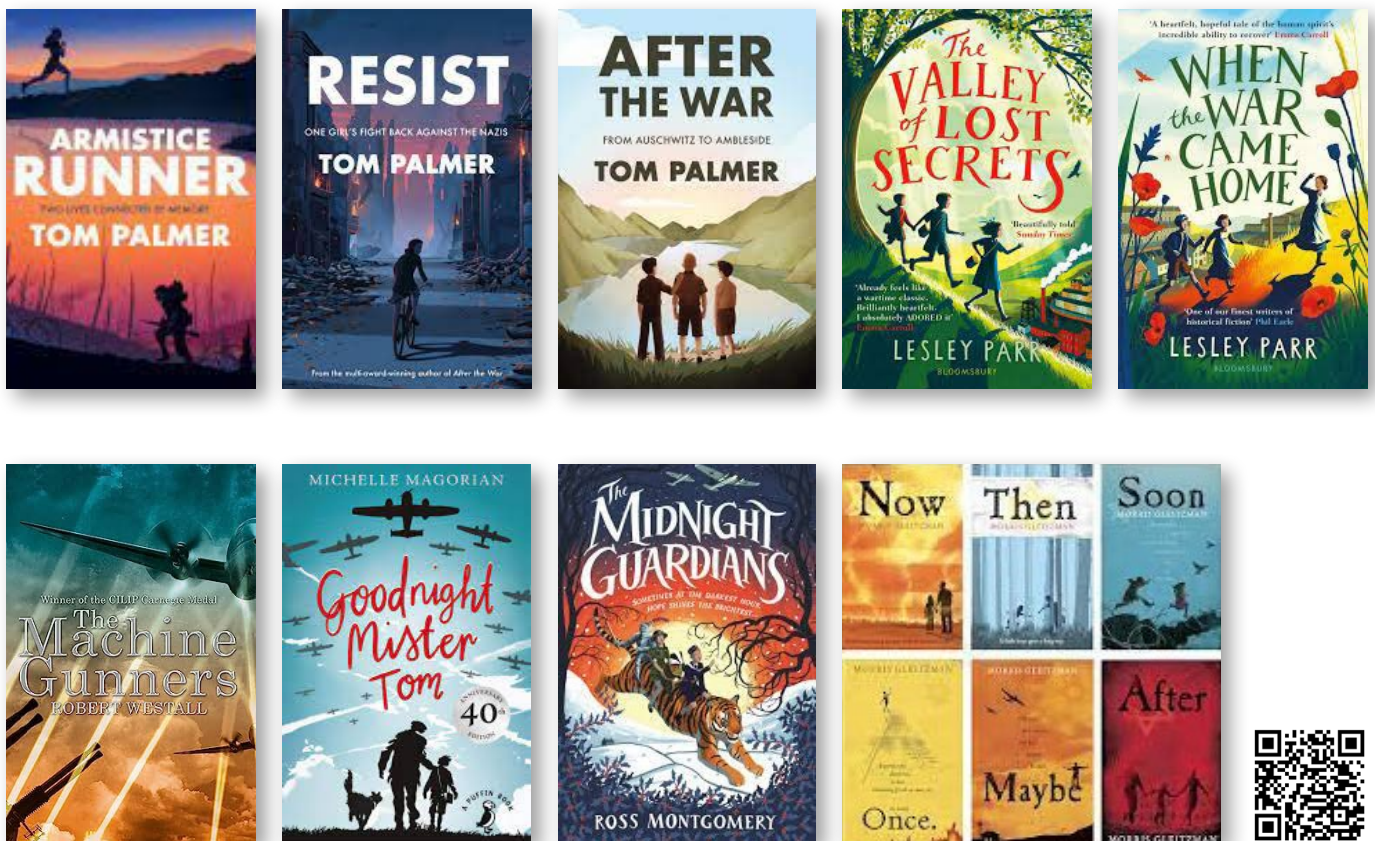


PHIL EARLE RECOMMENDS...

WAR THEMED 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. His next book, *Until the Road Ends*, is due to be published in June!

After exploring war in his own novels, he has become interested in war-time stories and has focused on this area this half term. To watch his video, and hear his recommendations, scan the QR code below:



LONGER-LENGTH READS

The Tiger Who Sleeps Under My Chair

HANNAH FOLEY

1884. Emma Linden dreams of following in the footsteps of the famous fossil-hunter, Mary Anning, on the Jurassic Coast. But Emma's world begins to spiral when her brother James becomes obsessed with a glassy-eyed tiger at the museum.

More than a hundred years later, her descendant Rosie Linden goes missing, her mind full of prowling tigers. With her new friend Jude, Rosie uncovers family secrets buried like layer upon layer of rock. Together they must sift the past to find the truth and heal the present.



Lily Grim and the City of Undone ANDY RUFFELL

Pre-order for release on May 11th

Lily Grim's life is a mystery. She has lived with her guardian Gabriel, in their rundown second-hand shop in the City of Undone, for as long as she can remember. For years, the city-dwellers have lived in uneasy discord with The Others – a community of wanderers forced to shelter within the city walls, after they were driven from their nomadic camps in the wilderness. But Undone is a dark and dangerous place to live, especially if you're an Other: feared for their special gifts, they are persecuted by the cruel Master of the City, and taken to the Ring – a prison from which few ever return...

The Stories Grandma Forgot

NADINE AISHA JASSAT

Pre-order for release on May 25th

Twelve-year-old Nyla's dad died when she was four, or that's what she's been told. So when Grandma Farida insists she saw him in the local supermarket, Nyla wonders if Grandma is simply "time travelling" again – the phrase she uses when Grandma forgets. But when Grandma asks Nyla to find her dad and bring him home, Nyla decides to find him. As Nyla sets out on a journey through her family's past to try and find the truth, she hopes that uncovering important stories will help her understand who she is, and where she fits in the world...



Book of Stolen Dreams

DAVID FARR

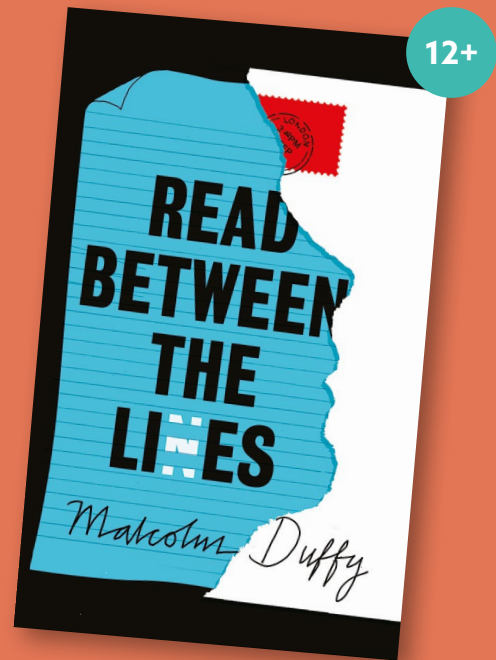
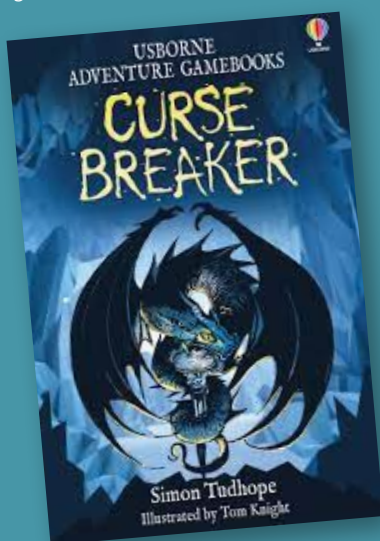


When Rachel and Robert are passed a stolen book by their librarian father, they have to go on the run and protect it at all costs. With their father captured and everyone hunting for the Book, they must uncover its secrets and track down the final, missing page. But the cruel and calculating Charles Malstain is on their trail. When the children discover the astonishing, magical truth about the Book, they resolve to do everything in their power to stop it falling into his hands. For if it does, he could rule forever...

Curse Breaker

SIMON TUDHOPE

This magically illustrated gamebook plunges you into a story with a difference – one where the hero is YOU. But as you stare out at the stars from your prison cell window, you're not feeling very heroic. You, a city guard, thrown in jail because someone whispered a word in your ear. Just a single word... Then your cell door creaks open, and you're let loose on an epic adventure where every choice is yours, and your survival depends upon the decisions you make. Who to fight? Who to trust? In a world that's unravelling before your eyes, the mystery goes deeper than you could possibly have dreamt. Bringing together a thrilling story, beautifully illustrated picture puzzles and an exciting combat system, this is an adventure that will have you gripped from beginning to end.



Read Between the Lines

MALCOLM DUFFY

Lily Grim's life is a mystery. She has lived with her guardian Gabriel, in their rundown second-hand shop in the City of Undone, for as long as she can remember. For years, the city-dwellers have lived in uneasy discord with The Others – a community of wanderers forced to shelter within the city walls, after they were driven from their nomadic camps in the wilderness. But Undone is a dark and dangerous place to live, especially if you're an Other: feared for their special gifts, they are persecuted by the cruel Master of the City, and taken to the Ring – a prison from which few ever return...

You Think You Know

AYAAN MOHAMUD

14+

People like me are devils before we are angels. Hanan has always been good and quiet. She accepts her role as her school's perfect Muslim poster girl. She ignores the racist bullies. A closed mouth is gold – it helps you get home in one piece. Then her friend is murdered and every Muslim is to blame. The world is angry at us again. How can she stay silent while her family is ripped apart? It's time for Hanan to stop being the quiet, good girl. It's time for her to stand up and shout.



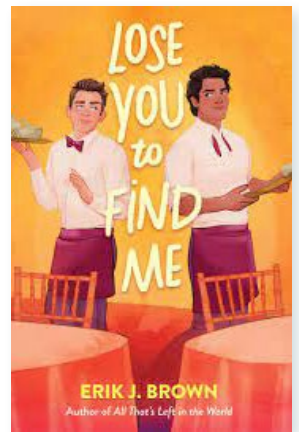
Lose You to Find Me

ERIK J. BROWN

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Pre-order for release May 2nd

Tommy Dees is in the weeds – restaurant speak for beyond overwhelmed. He's been working at Sunset Estates Retirement Community to get the experience he needs to attend one of the best culinary schools in the world. And he also needs a letter of recommendation from his sadistic manager. In exchange for the letter, Tommy has to meet three conditions – including train new-hire Gabriel.



Silver in the Bone ALEXANDRA BRACKEN

Tamsin Lark is a Hollower – breaking into the ancient crypts of dark sorceresses in search of the treasures inside. Now, rumours are swirling about a powerful ring from Arthurian legend, a ring that could free her brother Cabell from a curse. But they aren't the only ones who covet it... As word spreads, greedy Hollowers start circling, and many would kill to have the ring for themselves. Tamsin is forced into an alliance with her rival Emrys, the last person she wants to rely on. Together, they dive headfirst into a vipers' nest of dark magic, and expose a deadly secret with the power to awaken ghosts of the past and shatter her last hope of saving her brother...

Watch Alexandra talk about her book here:



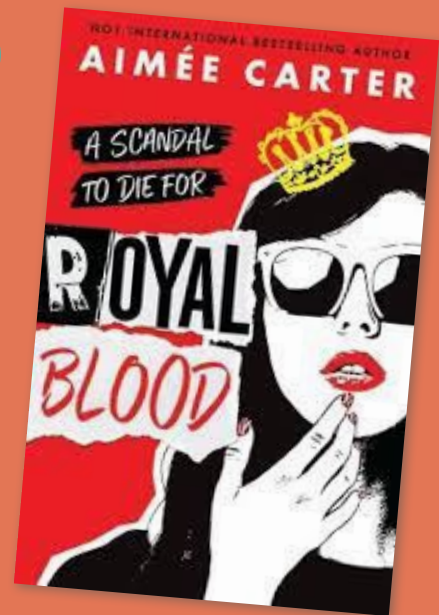
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Royal Blood

AIMEE CARTER

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Kicked out of her American boarding school, Evan is sent to live with her estranged father, the King of England. Her existence as his illegitimate daughter is top secret – until someone leaks it to the press. Suddenly she's the focus of a thousand lurid headlines, plus the hatred of her stepmother the Queen and half-sister Princess Maisie. Then the royal scandal intensifies... After Evan is seen disappearing with a journalist's son at a party, he is found dead and she becomes the primary suspect in a murder investigation. Did "the Killer Princess" really do it? It seems that only the Queen's gorgeous nephew Kit will help Evan clear her name. But can she really trust anyone at the palace?



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Catfish Rolling

 CLARA KUMAGAI

There's a catfish under the islands of Japan and when it rolls the land rises and falls. Sora hates the catfish whose rolling caused an earthquake so powerful it cracked time itself. It destroyed her home and took her mother. Now Sora and her scientist father live close to the zones – the wild and abandoned places where time runs faster or slower than normal. Sora is sensitive to the shifts, and her father recruits her help in exploring these liminal spaces. But it's dangerous there – and as she strays further inside in search of her mother, she finds that time distorts, memories fracture and shadows, a glimmer of things not entirely human, linger. After Sora's father goes missing, she has no choice but to venture into uncharted spaces within the time zones to find him, her mother and perhaps even the catfish itself...

NON-FICTION RECOMMENDATIONS

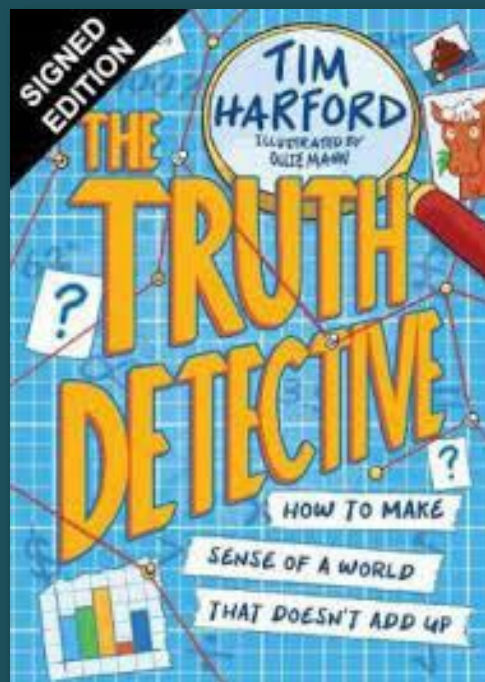
There is such a wide variety of non-fiction texts available to you and your child, based around so many topics. Whatever your child is interested in – whether it be topics they've touched on in school, particular issues or current affairs, and indeed their interests in terms of hobbies and sports – encourage them to read around these through non-fiction!

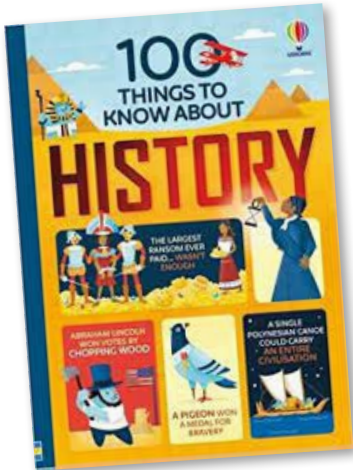
We've included a very small sample of some books below, but if nothing catches your eye here, do look up books about things that interest your child, or ask a teacher/librarian for advice!

The Truth Detective TIM HARFORD

The world is often full of bamboozling headlines and numbers that don't add up. But don't panic. Within these pages you will transform into a Truth Detective, hunting down the truth about the world around you. You will meet heroic truth detectives, such as Florence Nightingale who started a revolution with a pie chart. You will encounter dastardly villains who have tried to trip us up with dodgy data and misinformation. And you will learn how being smart and savvy with numbers will help you be smart and savvy about everything else in life too.

So grab your detective cap, pick up your magnifying glass and start seeing the world like never before.





100 Things to Know About History

Did you know that mammoths and pharaohs walked the earth at the same time? Or that over 30 types of gladiators fought in ancient Rome? This fascinating book is filled with 100 historical facts, bright, infographic-style illustrations, a glossary and index. There are also links to specially selected websites with video clips and more information.

Staying Safe Online LOUIE STOWELL

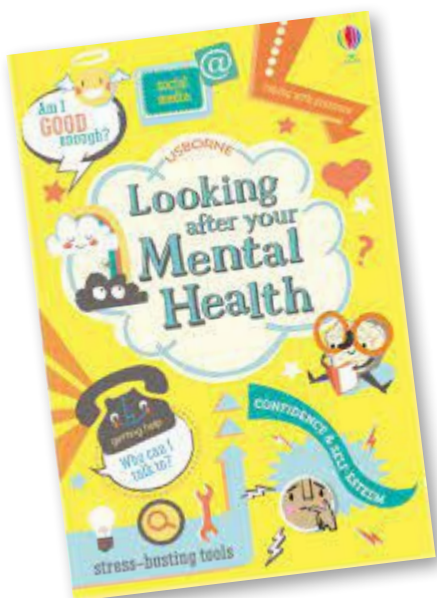
The internet is full of amazing possibilities but, just like the real world, there are a lot of potential dangers and difficulties too. You need to know what to watch out for and how to protect yourself. Whether you're worried about oversharing on social media or coming across dangerous people, this guide gives you tips and tools to take control and stay safe online.



Looking After Your Mental Health

ALICE JAMES AND LOUIE STOWELL

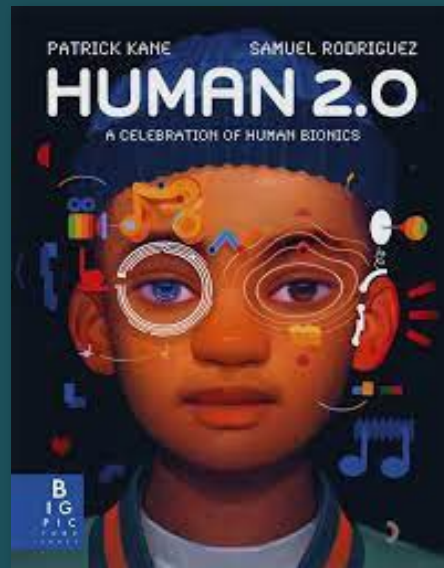
We talk about our physical health - but not so much about how we're feeling. With lots of practical advice, this lively, accessible guide explains why we have emotions, and what can influence them. Covering everything from friendships, social media and bullying to divorce, depression and eating disorders, this is an essential book for young people.



Human 2.0: A Celebration of Human Bionics

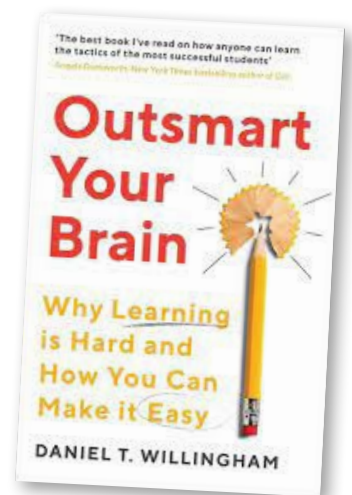
PATRICK KANE

Pioneering technological breakthroughs have truly changed lives. For some people, particularly those with disabilities, recent advances have crossed the realms of the purely imaginable and reached a place of possibility. People with paraplegia can walk again, those who are hearing impaired can listen to even the faintest sounds, and some people with missing limbs can create beautiful works of art. This phenomenal book is a celebration of all that has been achieved so far, and a look at what might be possible in the near future. Is it inevitable that technology will surpass biology?



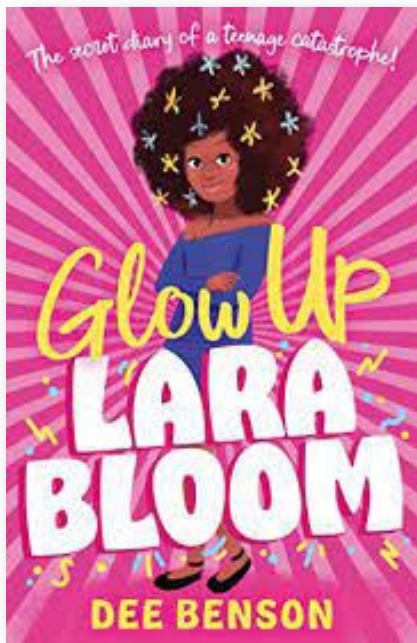
Outsmart Your Brain: Why Learning is Hard and How You Can Make it Easy DANIEL T. WILLINGHAM

In this revolutionary guide to learning, Professor Dan Willingham uses fascinating brain science to help you study more efficiently and effectively, shrug away exam stress and make learning a skill you can master and enjoy. This book offers specific strategies for reading, listening and taking tests, covering the practical aspects like optimum note taking, how to read difficult books and good exam technique, coupled with the psychological challenges of dealing with anxiety, fighting procrastination and developing good focus .

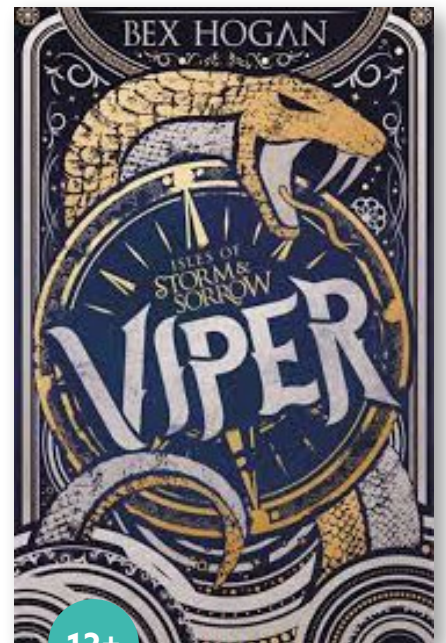


HOLLY RACE RECOMMENDS...

Holly Race is the fantastic author of a trilogy which starts with *Midnight's Twins* – a book which was featured on our newsletters last year. We are delighted that Holly is working with us as a PiXL Reading Ambassador – she is so passionate about reading and her recommendations will hopefully open doors to stories and topics you may not have considered exploring before. She has recommended some great books for you this half term! Please do scan the QR code below to watch her video:



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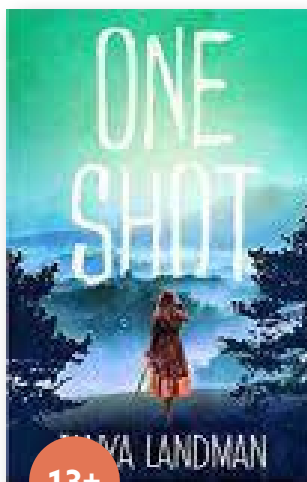


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DARREN SIMPSON RECOMMENDS...

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:



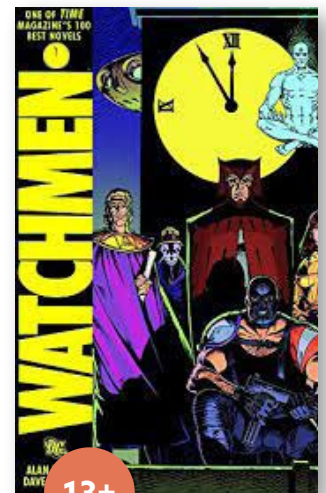
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