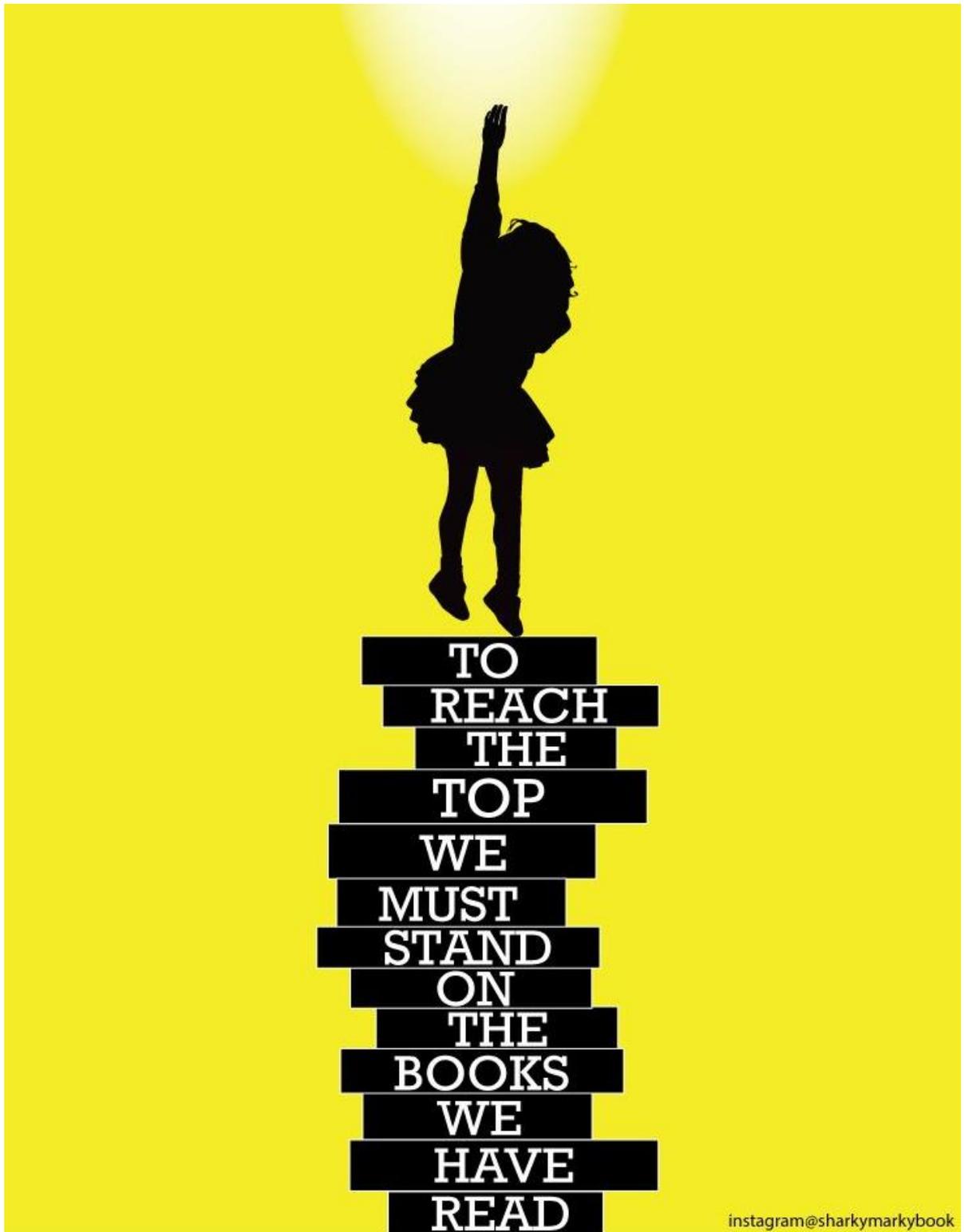


60 Great books for reluctant readers

Compiled by Kate Oliver from The English And Media Centre



Books for pupils whose reading age is significantly below their actual age

Many of these titles are published by Barrington Stoke, the experts on engaging less able and dyslexic readers. Their books are often written by the best children's authors and use a dyslexia friendly font and paper colour.

The Vampire of Croglin (Reloaded) **By Terry Deary**

Interest Age 11+ Reading Age 8+. The villagers live in fear of noises in the night. The new tenants at the Grange have been attacked. What is the truth behind the legend of the vampire? Both comic and sinister.

The Ghost Box **By Catherine Fisher**

Interest Age 11+ Reading Age 8+. A tale of suspense with a girl, her step-brother, a ghost and an old gnarled oak tree, with a surprising twist at the end.

Diary of an (Un) Teenager **By Pete Johnson**

Interest Age 11+ Reading Age 8+. Hilarious, award-winning bestseller with a sequel: *Return of the (Un) Teenager*.

Seriously Silly Stories – series **By Laurence Anholt and Arthur Robins**

Twisted takes on favourite fairy tales. Aimed at primary school age but funny enough for year 7 or even 8 to enjoy. Including:

- Rumply Crumply Stinky Pin
- Eco-wolf and the Three Pigs
- Ghostyshocks and the Three Scares

Desirable **By Frank Cottrell Boyce**

When misfit George's grandfather gives him an old bottle of aftershave for his birthday, George finds his status at school suddenly altered. Laugh-out-loud comedy from a Carnegie Medalist writer.

FYI: Fiction with Stacks of Facts Series **Various authors**

Reading age 8+. Interest age 11+. Great series for less able readers who think they only like non-fiction, from Barrington Stoke. Gripping narratives with plenty of illustrations, interspersed with interesting facts. Including:

- The Doomsday Virus by Steve Barlow and Steve Skidmore
- The Last Viking by Terry Deary
- The Greatest by Alan Gibbons

Timepiece series

By Anne Perry

Reading age 8+. Interest age: 11+. From Barrington Stoke comes this series aimed particularly at girls. Rosie is the feisty protagonist who travels back in time. The first three books are:

- Tudor Rose
- Rose of No Man's Land
- Blood Red Rose

Deadline

By John Townsend

Barney uncovers a terrorist plot, but nobody will believe him. Can he stop the killers in time? A former teacher, John Townsend has written several very popular titles for Barrington Stoke.

Ninja: First Mission (Ninja Trilogy)

By Chris Bradford

Taka's desperate to prove that he has what it takes to become a ninja. He has failed the Grandmaster's test twice already. But when the clan's scrolls are stolen by an enemy samurai he has a chance to prove himself. Chris Bradford is the author of the popular Young Samuri series, devoured by many a KS2 pupil and now has books for older teens – the Bodyguard series (see below) so this trilogy might also help less able readers feel part of the crowd.

Books for average ability pupils who don't have the reading habit

The Saga of Darren Shan – series

By Darren Shan

Darren Shan is an ordinary schoolboy plunged into the vampire world. Atmospheric, funny, realistic, moving and terrifying, these books are easy to read but well-written. Many a reluctant reader has got hooked on Shan, although it can sometimes be a struggle to get them to read books by anyone else as he is a prolific author. Other extremely popular series by Shan include the Demonata series and the Saga of Larten Crepsley. The first book of the Darren Shan saga is Cirque du Freak.

The Cherub Series **By Robert Muchamore**

Action packed stories about a group of orphaned teenage spies. The first three are:

- The Recruit
- Class A
- Maximum Security

The Bindi Babes Series **By Narinder Dharmi**

Three feisty, fun-loving Anglo-Asian sisters rule the roost over their dad since their mum died. Particularly good for girls who say they don't like reading, from the author of Bend It Like Beckham (another goodie). The first three books are:

- Bindi Babes
- Bollywood Babes
- Bhangra Babes

Socks Are Not Enough **By Mark Lowery**

Mike Swarbrick's life couldn't get any worse. His pervy best friend gets him embroiled in a scandal involving the girls' changing rooms, his idiot of an older brother is snogging the girl of his dreams and he's just come home early from school to discover his parents are secret nudists . . . but they're ready to go public!

The Alex Rider Series **By Anthony Horowitz**

There are 9 novels in the series with series a number of spinoff short-story collections; a film; and a video game. The series has introduced any number of reluctant boys to the joys of reading. The first three books are:

- Stormbreaker
- Point Blanc
- Skeleton Key

Love Ya Babe **By Chris Higgins**

Chris Higgins is a popular and prolific author with the knack of tapping into what it means to be a tween girl. The covers may lead you to expect a saccharin tale, but the stories are often poignant and moving with complex female characters. Other popular titles from Higgins include It's a 50:50 Thing and Would You Rather?

The Young Bond Series

By Charlie Higson

Before the name became a legend. Before the boy became a man. Meet Bond. James Bond. The first three in the series are:

- Silverfin
- Blood Fever
- Double or Die

The Giver Quartet By Lois Lowry

Great sci-fi classics for those not yet old enough for *The Hunger Games*. The four books are:

- The Giver
- Gathering Blue
- Messenger
- Son

The Graveyard Book By Neil Gaiman

After the grisly murder of his entire family, a toddler wanders into a graveyard where the ghosts and other supernatural residents agree to raise him as one of their own.

Refugee Boy By Benjamin Zephaniah

Haunting, tragic and distressing in what it reveals about man's inhumanity to man, *Refugee Boy* is also an affirming story of one boy's amazing courage and several other individuals' goodness and integrity.

Set In Stone By Linda Newbery

Winner of the Costa Children's Book Award 2006. Set at the end of the 19th century, Linda Newbery has cleverly carved out an incredible mystery that's full of clever twists and entwined with drama.

Skin Deep By Malaika Rose Stanley

When 13-year-old Brummie babe, Destiny enters the Bright Sparks beauty contest behind her (ex-model) mum's back, she is determined to prove she has talent and brains – and that she is not just a pretty face. This book hooks the reader with a girl-friendly storyline, but deals with some tough issues along the way. Good to see girls

from different racial groups as the main characters, without race being the main issue.

A.N.T.I.D.O.T.E

Thief

By Malorie Blackman

It's just your average Friday night. Then the police show up. Your mum's been caught on CCTV, breaking into a giant chemical company. They say she's working undercover for A.N.T.I.D.O.T.E, a group against animal testing – but how is that possible? She's not a spy – is she? Now she's on the run – and only you can uncover the truth. And you've got to crack a code to do it.

Pretty much anything by this author is a winner for reluctant readers. *Thief* is another tense thriller, and one which might appeal particularly to girls.

The Garbage King

By Elizabeth Laird

When Mamo's mother dies, he is abandoned in the shanties of Addis Ababa. Stolen by a child-trafficker and sold to a farmer, he is cruelly treated. Escaping back to the city, he meets another, very different runaway. Dani is rich, educated – and fleeing his tyrannical father. Together they join a gang of homeless street boys who survive only by mutual bonds of trust and total dependence on each other. Inspired by a true story.

Grass

By Cathy Macphail

Winner of the Scottish Book Award 2010 (Older Readers category). Tension mounts and there is no escape in this gripping thriller about gang violence.