

# PiXL Reading

## SECONDARY NEWSLETTER



### We hope you and your child had an enjoyable summer break!

As we start the new academic year, we're excited to share a fantastic selection of books that touch on a wide variety of topics, ranging from friendship and identity to mental health and resilience – and much more as well!

Reading plays a powerful role in your child's development – not just in English lessons, but across all areas of their education and personal growth. Beyond improving reading comprehension, regular reading can also support:

- Vocabulary development
- Understanding of grammar
- Spelling accuracy
- Writing confidence and creativity
- Attitudes to reading and writing
- Broader knowledge and understanding of the world and other people
- Achievement in subjects across the curriculum, including maths and science
- Emotional awareness and empathy
- Mental wellbeing
- A deeper sense of self and identity

To help you and your child select books they might enjoy reading this half term and over the October break, we have collated a range for you to explore in this newsletter. Whether they are starting school for the first time, nervous to return, or are embarking upon their GCSE examinations, we hope they find something useful to support them at this time.

**Please note that unless otherwise stated, these texts are marketed by publishers as suitable from Year 7 and up, but please do research or read the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child.**



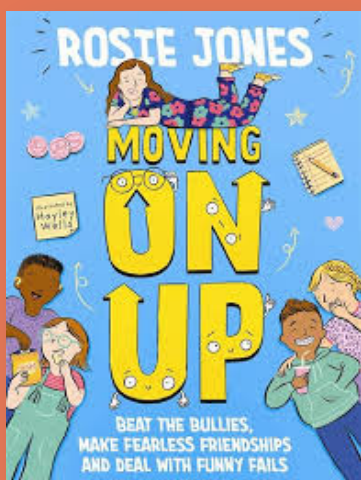
However, these recommendations are just a starting point – there are countless books and text types to discover! If your child is curious about a particular subject, you could find a book on the topic or encourage them to explore it further with non-fiction resources like online articles. In addition to exploring the books mentioned in this newsletter, you can also encourage reading in other ways too. For example:

- Find out what your child is interested in and look at books around these topics – for example, they could read fiction texts inspired by World War 2.
- Encourage them to research into an area they're interested in through non-fiction texts such as online articles.
- If your child struggles with reading and this poses an obstacle to their enjoyment, explore the blurbs of books and select a couple to try on audiobook. You can often borrow these for free from your local library too.
- Let them choose! Choice is key to helping young people to develop a love of reading.
- Support your child with reading for purpose. You could read recipes, newspaper articles, blog posts and other forms of texts.
- Finally, if you notice your child is struggling with reading, please do speak to someone at their school so they can consider what support may be best to help your child.

**Whatever books you and your child choose to explore this half term, we hope you enjoy them!**

## GETTING THE YEAR OFF TO A GOOD START

There are many books available to young people which focus on resilience, mental health and tips for studying. If your child is nervous about the return to school, or they're looking to approach this year differently, the texts below may help get them started in their exploration!



### Moving On Up

ROSIE JONES

No one knows quite as much about friendship fails, dealing with bullies and being totally embarrassed, then Rosie Jones. You name a completely awkward situation, and she's been there, got the t-shirt and probably done it all again. Rosie knows just how hard growing up can be, but she also knows that you can overcome the difficult and embarrassing moments with the help of good friends and a good sense of humour. So, sit back, grab a packet of crisps and crunch your way through this super handy guide to navigating all the tricky growing up stuff (and styling out of all the totally cringe moments life throws your way).

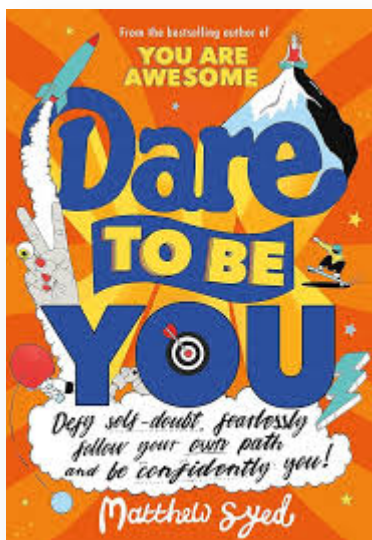
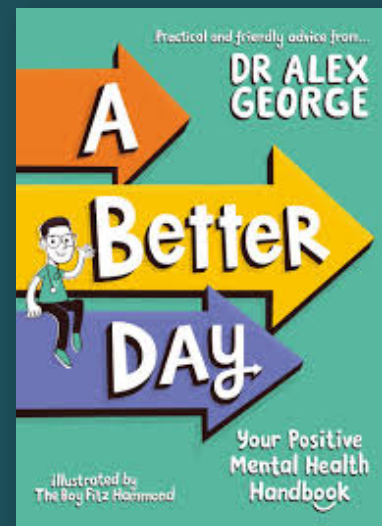
## A Better Day

DR ALEX GEORGE

What if we could think of mental health in a positive way? Sweep away the rain clouds. Talk about what's on our minds. And care for our mental health in the same way we look after our bodies. In this empowering and hopeful handbook, Youth Mental Health Ambassador Dr Alex George is here to show children how.

*A Better Day* is a positive, accessible and practical toolkit guiding young readers in how they can care for their mental health with confidence. From peer pressure and exam stress to online trolls and anxiety, life is full of ups and downs. But there are ways we can stay on top of our mental health - including overcoming stigma, talking about our feelings, developing resilience and switching our mindset. This book provides all the scaffolding and practical techniques, so readers can look towards their future with optimism and positivity. Because no matter what, there is always hope for a better day.

***There is also an accompanying Journal which you could purchase as well, if you think this would be useful for your child.***



## Dare to Be You

MATTHEW SYED

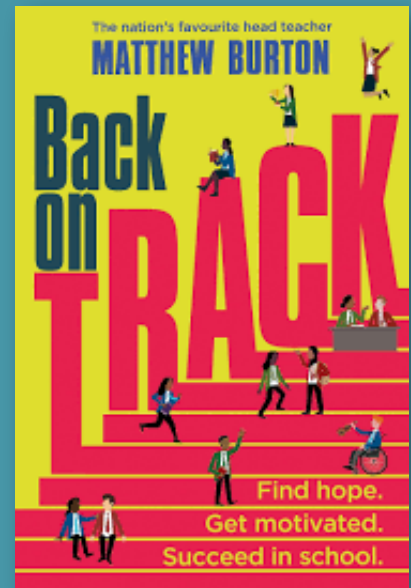
What would you dare to try if you stopped worrying about fitting in? Drawing examples from sport, science and even business, *Dare to Be You* empowers young readers to follow their own path, love what makes them different and question the world around them.

***There is also an accompanying Dare to Be You Journal which you could purchase as well, if you think this would be useful for your child.***

## Back on Track

MATTHEW BURTON

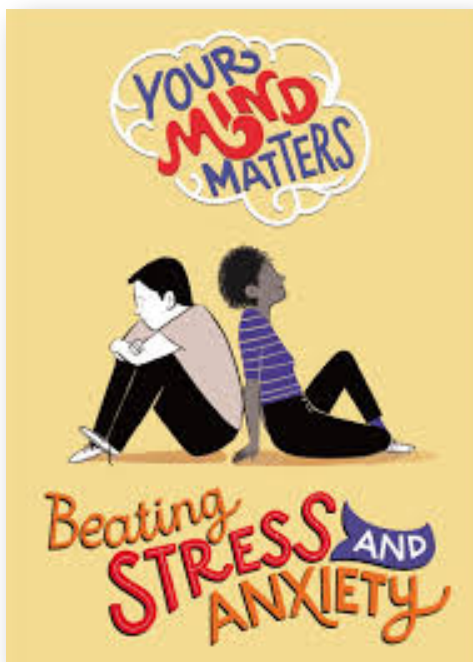
From ways to manage the tough times and solve even the biggest problems or anxieties, to skills for beating school stress and tapping into your potential, this is the one-stop guide for students who are in need of a bit of hope, some soothing words of advice and a good old pep talk to get them going in school again. Whether facing assessments, a big change or having to make up for lost time, this book is crammed with advice so that though things at school might seem hard, readers will soon be back on track and raring to go.



## Your Mind Matters: Beating Stress and Anxiety

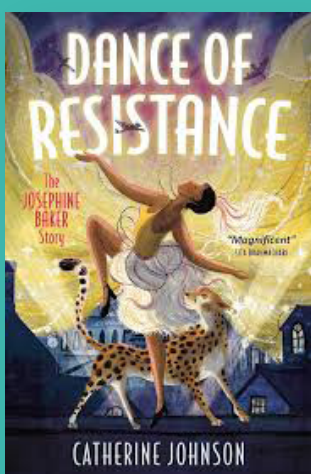
HONOR HEAD

Everyone experiences stress and anxiety at times in their lives, but sometimes the feelings build up and can affect our physical and mental health. This book will help you to recognise the signs of feeling stressed and anxious and what you can do to feel better.



**SHORTER-LENGTH READS:**

In this section, we have collated a selection of shorter-length texts which may capture your child's interest. As well as being short, they are also published in a dyslexia-friendly font to help make them accessible to all. If your child doesn't have dyslexia, they can of course still read these wonderful books!

**Dance of Resistance**

CATHERINE JOHNSON

Dancer, singer, actress, movie star, civil-rights activist – Josephine Baker was a phenomenon! Overcoming the poverty and abuse of her childhood in a segregated America, Josephine grew up to become one of the biggest stars of the early 20th century, particularly adored in her adopted country of France. She used her connections to help the Resistance in their fight against the Nazis during the Second World War and later became involved with Martin Luther King Jr and the civil rights movement in the US. Controversial and outspoken, she is an iconic historical figure and this book brings her story vividly to life for a young audience.

**The Elixir**

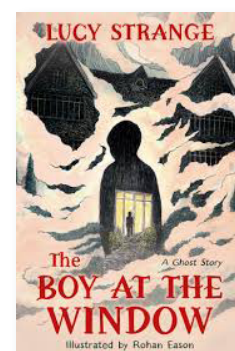
LINDSAY GALVIN

Ann Storer has inherited her grandmother's mysterious gift of healing, which she shares through the special tinctures she dispenses in her family's apothecary shop. When she combines her talents with the genius of a young Isaac Newton, recently arrived to board above the shop, the two create an incredible elixir with seemingly unlimited powers. But 17th-century England is a dangerous place to display any special abilities, and Ann must hide all evidence when witchfinder Abel Geach arrives in town.

**The Boy at the Window**

LUCY STRANGE

Folk say the fog plays tricks — that it shapes itself into little hands and frightened faces that press at people's doors and windows, desperate to come inside. But Hugo is convinced the ghost he has seen at the window is no trick of the fog. The boy's hollow eyes are haunting him. What would happen if Hugo were to open the door and let him in? *Brace yourself for a chilling ghost story!*





## Dracula – A retelling

TANYA LANDMAN

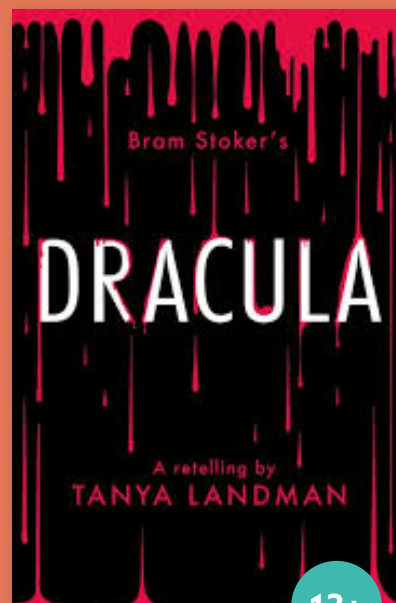
Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is a masterpiece of horror fiction in which he creates a nightmarish world of vampires, evil-doing and insanity. In this book, Carnegie Medal winner Tanya Landman delivers a terrifyingly enthralling and truly accessible retelling of this legendary gothic novel.

A ship steered by a dead man...

A huge black dog springing from its deck...

A girl, sleepwalking towards disaster...

When rising young solicitor Jonathan Harker helps the mysterious and sinister Count Dracula purchase property in London, he unleashes an evil that threatens to destroy the whole of humanity.



13+



## The Fall

ANTHONY MCGOWAN

Mog might be seen as a 'loser', but he's not as much of a 'loser' as Duffy, poster child for victims everywhere. So, he's not best pleased when Duffy tries to get in with his best mate. Mog decides to take action, but when he lands Duffy in the beck, a rancid stream behind the school, he has no idea how far the ripples will spread...

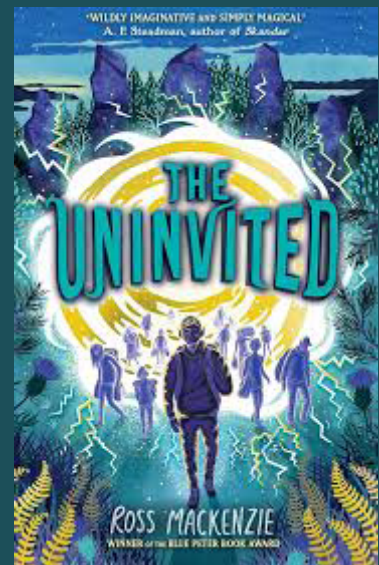
13+

## LONGER READS:

**The Uninvited**

ROSS MACKENZIE

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, crime and poverty. But Samm has a unique gift that lines his pockets – he can find lost things. When he is thrust into the centre of a plot to escape Glass Forest and return home, he must use his gifts to unearth two treasures lost in the everyday: a relic that will end the war back in Faerae; and the only person with the power to reopen the door between worlds – the Locksmith. The task will take Samm to dark places filled with danger, from a grimly enchanted circus of nightmares to a museum housing a murderous exhibit, and he will have to use all his skills to stay alive...

**The Girl with Gills**

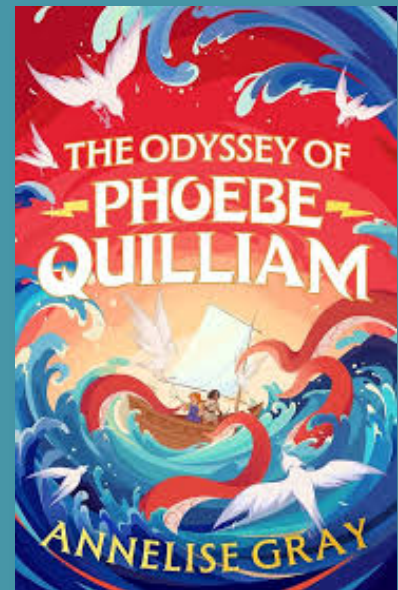
BECCA ROGERS

In a time and place which might be now, people with gills, outcast larkers, live in secret communities. They have houseboats along the river. Concealing their gills from land lubbers, they scour the mudbanks, trade their finds and live off their wits. Thirteen-year-old Effra has been supporting her brother, Fleet, alone since their beloved grandfather died six months ago. When merciless Rivermun, a larker gone bad, threatens Fleet, Effra's quest begins. Rivermun asks for the impossible - he wants to overpower Mother River, to possess the river serpent's pearl and for age-old debts to be settled...

## The Odyssey of Phoebe Quilliam

ANNELISE GRAY

Phoebe dreams of becoming an artist like her grandmother, Cass, a brilliant storyteller who has passed on her love of Greek myths to Phoebe. But Cass is disappearing before Phoebe's eyes, lost to a cruel illness that is destroying her memory. When Phoebe ruins Cass's seascape, inspired by childhood holidays on the Greek island of Ithaca, she is swept away to a fantasy world that resembles her favourite myth of all - The Odyssey. There, Phoebe is caught up in a boy's mission to find his long-lost father - a shipbuilder to King Odysseus, last seen going off to fight in the Trojan War - and faces an epic quest of her own: to seek the shape-shifting monster whose ravenous and growing power may hold the key to Phoebe fighting her own demons...



## Spirit Warriors

ASHLEY THORPE

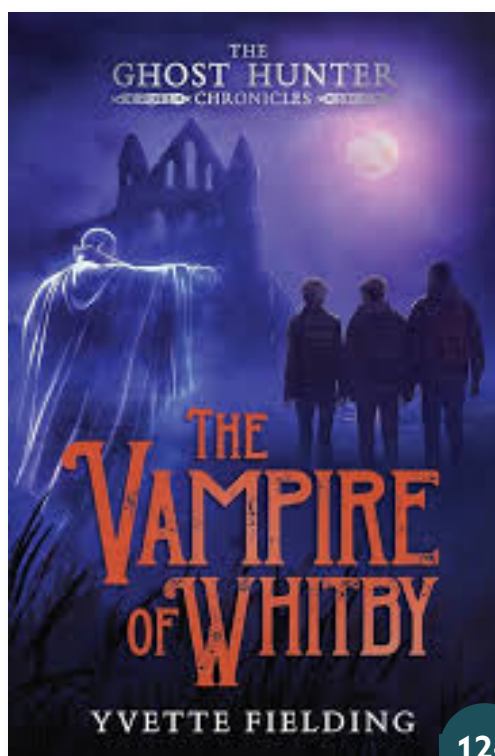
When her island home is overrun by evil spirits, Evie is saved only by the powerful gemstone her parents entrusted to her. Her best friend Arthur is not so lucky - caught in the magical crossfire, he finds himself in the body of a cat. On a mission to return him to his body and defeat the ghouls, Evie and Arthur team up with Cai, a trainee shaman, who helps them discover the truth. The terrifying Blackheart Man is plotting to steal the island's four magical gemstones and use their power to destroy the barrier between the worlds of the living and the dead...



**When the Sky Falls – a graphic novel**PHIL EARLE (PRE-ORDER FOR RELEASE ON 9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER!)

*A stunning graphic-novel edition of the multi-award-winning story about the incredible friendship between a young boy and a silverback gorilla during the Second World War, inspired by a true story.*

1941. War is raging. And Joseph has been sent to live in the city, where bombers rule the skies. There, he will live with Mrs F, a gruff woman with no fondness for children. Her only loves are the rundown zoo she owns and its mighty silverback gorilla, Adonis. As the weeks pass, Joseph and Adonis become friends, but what will happen when the bombers set him rampaging free?

**The Vampire of Whitby** YVETTE FIELDING(PRE-ORDER FOR RELEASE ON 12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER!)

When a young archaeologist disappears during a dig at Whitby Abbey, a terrifying and sinister chain of events begins. As an eerie fog settles over the town and more disappearances are reported, young ghost hunters Eve, Clovis and Tom find themselves involved in a terrifying case. Could it be that the ghost of Vlad the Impaler has come to the seaside town? And can they stop the rise of his demonic vampire army?

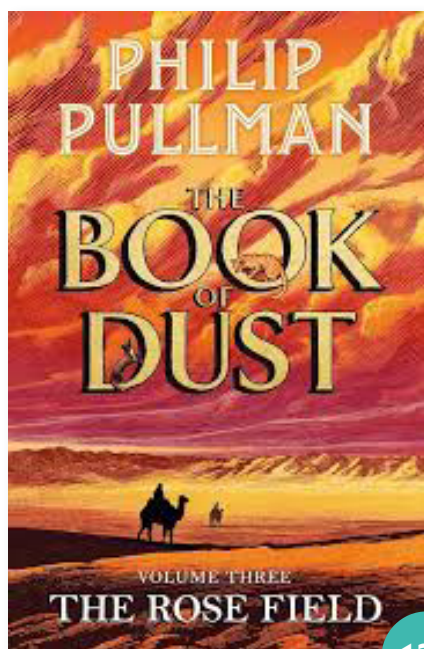
**Songs for Ghosts**

CLARA KUMAGAI

When Japanese-American teenager, Adam, discovers a diary in his attic, he is enthralled by its account of a young Japanese woman's life. A hundred years separate them yet she, like Adam, is caught between cultures, relationships and heartbreak. She also writes of the ghosts that have begun to seek her out, which Adam dismisses as fantasy - until he too, begins to be haunted. It leads him to Nagasaki, trying to solve the mystery of the diary, and his own identity. And the ghosts gather...



12+



13+

**The Rose Field:  
The Book of Dust Volume 3**

PHILIP PULLMAN

*The long-awaited and highly-anticipated conclusion to Pullman's bestselling The Book of Dust series!*

When readers left Lyra in *The Secret Commonwealth*, she was alone in the ruins of a deserted city. Pantalaimon had run from her in search of her imagination, which he believed she had lost. Lyra travelled across the world from her Oxford home in search of her daemon. And Malcolm, loyal Malcolm, journeyed far from home, towards the Silk Roads in search of Lyra...

In this book, their quests finally converge in the most dangerous, breathtaking and world-changing ways...

**Black Star**

KWAME ALEXANDER

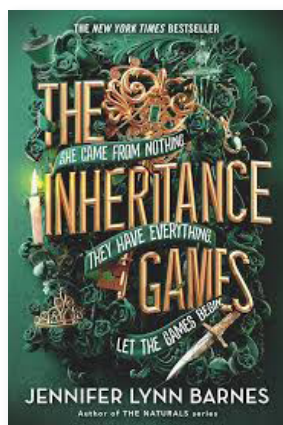
12-year-old Charley is set on becoming the first female pitcher to play professional baseball, even if that's a lofty dream for a Black girl in the American South in the 1920s. Even so, her grandfather Kofi's stories about courageous ancestors and epic journeys make it impossible not to dream big. She knows he has much more to tell, but according to her parents, she isn't old enough to know about certain things, like what happened to Booker Preston that one night in Great Bridge, and why she can never play on the brand-new baseball field on the other side of town. When Charley challenges a bully to a game at the church picnic, she knows she can win, even with her ragtag team. Then a dispute on the field leads to Charley making a fateful decision, one that will bring consequences she never could have imagined...

**The Inheritance Games**

JENNIFER LYNN BARNES

14+

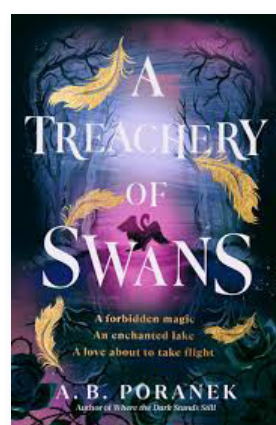
Avery has a plan: keep her head down, work hard for a better future. Then, an eccentric billionaire dies, leaving her almost his entire fortune. And no one, least of all Avery, knows why. Now she must move into the mansion she's inherited. It's filled with secrets and codes, and the old man's surviving relatives – a family hell-bent on discovering why Avery got 'their' money. Soon, she is caught in a deadly game that everyone in this strange family is playing. But just how far will they go to keep their fortune?

**A Treachery of Swans**

A.B. PORANEK

14+

Magic has long been outlawed in Aureal. Odile has always known she'd be the one to restore it. Raised by a sorcerer, Odile has spent years preparing for the heist of a lifetime. It's perfectly simple: impersonate a princess, infiltrate the palace, steal the enchanted crown and restore magic to the kingdom. But, when the King is unexpectedly murdered, she's forced to recruit the help of Marie, the real princess. The two begin to unravel a web of lies and deceit that leaves Odile uncertain of whom to trust...

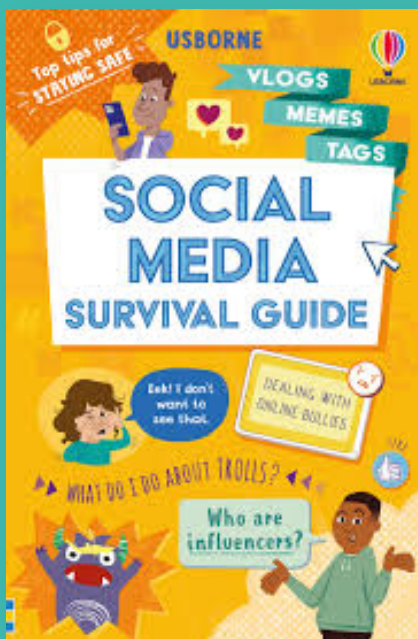
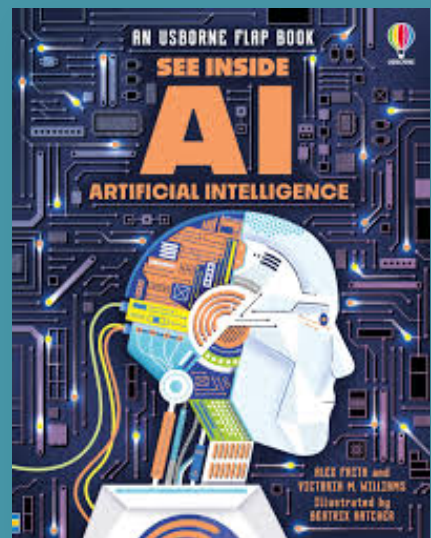


## NON-FICTION:

### See Inside AI

ALEX FRITH, VICTORIA WILLIAMS

Plug into the often mind-blowing world of artificial intelligence! How can a machine write a story? Are computers now more clever than people? Could a robot do your shopping? Discover all the things that AI can already do, Packed full of flaps to lift, this interactive book will explore the opportunities and risks that AI could bring.



### Social Media Survival Guide

HOLLIE BATHIE

Packed with entertaining illustrations alongside practical information, the Social Media Survival Guide answers questions about all aspects of social media – the good AND the bad – making it a must-have tool for young people (and parents) to help navigate the online world safely and confidently and learn the best approaches to taking care of themselves.



## 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!



## 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.

