

**We're Going on a Bear Hunt (1989)**  
Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury (illustrator)  
Walker

This retelling of an American folk song is perfect for reading aloud to young children who will enjoy joining in with the telling allowing them to take the first steps towards reading alone. The delightful watercolour illustrations add to the reader's enjoyment allowing children to share in the emotions experienced by the young family in the story.

**The Mousehole Cat (1990)**  
Antonia Barber and Nicola Bayley (illustrator)  
Walker

The stunning illustrations of this picture book bedtime story tell of bravery, sacrifice and companionship. Told through the eyes of Mowzer the cat, this charming story of taming the Great Storm-Cat which threatens the Cornish fishing community with the prospect of no food at Christmas time, is atmospheric and enchanting.

**Amazing Grace (1991)**  
Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch (illustrator)  
Frances Lincoln

Grace loves stories, has a vivid imagination and loves dressing up as shown by the bright and colourful illustrations. She is determined to get a part in the school production of *Peter Pan*. Her Nana tells her she can be anything she wants and she delights in proving her right.

**The Story of Tracy Beaker (1991)**  
Jacqueline Wilson

Ten year old Tracy Beaker lives in a children's home, but would love a real home with a real family one day. Told in her own words, this is a funny and moving depiction of life in care, with a sparky, resilient heroine who appeals greatly to young readers.

**Handa's Surprise (1994)**  
Eileen Browne  
Walker

The special delight of this book is the way the reader knows more about what is happening than Handa. As she travels to see her friend, various sneaky animals steal the fruit balanced in the basket on her head. When Handa gets to her destination everyone is surprised to find the basket has been filled again by an angry goat.

**Horrid Henry (1994)**  
Francesca Simon and Tony Ross (illustrator)  
Orion

In this first volume of the adventures of a popular naughty boy, we find out what happens when Horrid Henry tries to be perfect for one day, learns to dance, argues with his arch enemy Moody Margaret and goes on holiday. Very funny stories with lots of child appeal.



The Federation of Children's Book Groups  
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**Northern Lights (1995)**  
Phillip Pullman  
Scholastic

The first of the acclaimed *His Dark Materials* trilogy, which found itself back in the spotlight in 2017 as a result of the publication of *The Book of Dust*, the first in a new series set in the same fictional world. In *Northern Lights* we meet Pullman's feisty heroine Lyra, encounter daemons for the first time and begin to explore the meaning of Dust. A multi-layered, thought-provoking fantasy.

**Harry Potter series (1997)**  
J.K. Rowling  
Bloomsbury

Discovering that he is a wizard is just the beginning for Harry Potter. Learning his craft and finding true friends at Hogwarts School, he must also battle against Voldemort to save everything he holds dear. Fantasy, magic and adventure combine in a series which has entranced the world.

## 1998 – 2007

In 1998 the National Year of Reading celebrated reading for all ages including children. Sir Quentin Blake was appointed as the first Children's Laureate in 1999, a role now awarded every two years to an eminent writer or illustrator of children's books.

The National Theatre production of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* in 2003, was one of a series of outstanding adaptations of children's books for the stage, which has also included *Coram Boy* by Jamilla Gavin (2005) and *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo (2007). The BBC's Big Read began the search for the nation's favourite novel in 2003, with four children's books appearing in the top ten: *His Dark Materials* (3), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (5), *Winnie the Pooh* (7) and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (9). A new National Centre for Children's Books called Seven Stories opened in Newcastle Upon Tyne in 2005.



**Skellig (1998)**  
David Almond  
Scholastic

Skellig tells the tale of when Michael, recently moved to a new house and coping with his baby sister's illness, finds a strange creature in the shed. Part angel, part animal, Skellig needs Michael's help to survive, but in return changes Michael's world forever. Magical, compelling, and haunting.

**The Gruffalo (1999)**  
Julia Donaldson and Alex Scheffler (illustrator)  
Macmillan

There's nothing as satisfying as a story about a diminutive creature who outwits their potential predators as they make a journey through the woods. The twist is that Mouse's tall story about the eponymous Gruffalo turns out to be true! The rhyming text and colourful illustrations work together beautifully. Ideal for reading aloud, with plenty of opportunities for audience participation.

**Kensuke's Kingdom (1999)**  
Michael Morpurgo and Michael Foreman (illustrator)  
Egmont

When Michael is shipwrecked alone on a Pacific island he struggles to survive until he realises that someone is watching after him. After a close call with a poisonous jelly fish, the mysterious Kensuke lets Michael into his life until Michael can return home. A poignant desert island story about loyalty and friendship.

**Alex Rider series (2000)**  
Anthony Horowitz  
Walker

Alex Rider is the world's only teen spy, battling against the deadly 'Scorpia' crime organisation. His missions take him all over the world in a series of fascinating page-turning adventures for teenagers, through which he develops his own values in an increasingly complex world.

**I Will Not Ever, Never Eat A Tomato (2000)**  
Lauren Child  
Orchard Books

Lola is a very fussy eater and refuses everything from carrots to mushrooms, eggs and tomatoes. It takes her brother Charlie's inventive explanations that peas are actually green drops from Greenland to persuade her to try to eat them. Lauren Child's distinctive collage illustrations add humour to this family tale.

**Artemis Fowl Series (2001)**  
Eoin Colfer  
Puffin

This brilliant series of sci-fi fantasy novels brings magic to a whole new level. These are fairies, but not as we know them! Artemis Fowl is the 12yr old criminal mastermind determined to kidnap a fairy to get a ransom in gold. These exciting fast-paced and amusing action and adventure stories are hugely entertaining.

**Journey to the River Sea (2001)**  
Eva Ibbotson  
Macmillan

In 1910 orphaned Maia and her mysterious governess travel to the Amazon to live with unloving relatives. Maia is bright, passionate, resourceful and delights in the new friends and exotic jungle world she discovers. But there is a mystery surrounding her governess and the secretive boy Finn too and many adventures to follow before Maia finds her true home and family.

**Noughts & Crosses (2001)**  
Malorie Blackman  
Corgi

Set in a dystopian fictional world, where Crosses (black people like Sephy) enjoy the wealth and power in society and Noughts (white people like Callum) are second class citizens, this series for young adults is both a love story and an exploration of our role in the fight for justice in an unfair world.

**Lost and Found (2005)**  
Oliver Jeffers  
Harper Collins

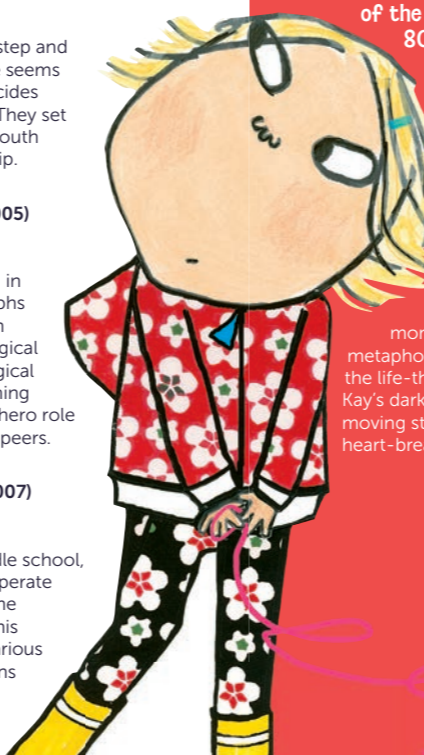
A boy finds a penguin on his doorstep and thinks that it must be lost. No-one seems to be missing a penguin, so he decides to try and return it home himself. They set out together on a journey to the South Pole, in a beautiful tale of friendship.

**Percy Jackson series (2005)**  
Rick Riordan  
Puffin

A series popular with young teens, in which the eponymous hero triumphs as the demigod son of Poseidon in Riordan's invented Greek mythological battles. Camp Half-Blood is a magical blend of school and demigod training camp where Percy grows into his hero role alongside an imaginative range of peers.

**Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2007)**  
Jeff Kinney  
Puffin

Greg Heffley is about to start middle school, with all the issues that entails. Desperate to prove his new-found maturity, he decides to record his thoughts in his journal, which proves to be an hilarious account of the trials and tribulations of family, friends and school life.



**Ottoline and the Yellow Cat (2007)**  
Chris Riddell  
Macmillan

The first of a series of books starring 'home-alone' Ottoline and her long haired friend Mr Munroe, who have a penchant for solving mysteries. This time it concerns a string of daring burglaries. With a perfect combination of text and illustration, full of Riddell's characteristic humour, this is bound to appeal to even the most reluctant reader.

## 2008 – 2017

The establishment of the Little Rebels Book Award in 2013 and the Amnesty CILIP Honour Awards in 2016, has helped to ensure that books that promote social justice and equality, and raise awareness of human rights are being highlighted. The first Young Adult Literature Convention (YALC) took place in 2014, providing a platform to discuss and celebrate YA publishing. In 2015 The 100 Favourite Children's Books were revealed in a Channel 4 programme. Compiled by the Sunday Times Children's Books Editor Nicolette Jones, the list was based on twenty years of book reviewing, and topped by *Winnie the Pooh*. This decade has been a time for anniversaries including the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kate Greenaway Award and the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Carnegie Award. It is hard to believe that 2017 was also the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first *Harry Potter* book.

**A Monster Calls (2011)**  
Patrick Ness, based on an idea from Siobhan Dowd, and Jim Kay (illustrator)  
Walker

A modern classic in which the monster created from a yew tree is the metaphor for 13 year old Conor's grief over the life-threatening illness of his mum. Jim Kay's dark, inky illustrations complement this moving story perfectly, as Conor learns the heart-breaking complexities of life and love.



**Sky Hawk (2011)**  
Gill Lewis  
Oxford University Press

When an osprey nests on Callum's farm, he knows that it must remain a secret. But someone else is also aware of the bird's presence and together they make a pact to keep it safe from harm. A heart-warming, absorbing and moving story of friendship and conservation across the world.

**The Day the Crayons Quit (2013)**  
Drew Daywalt and Oliver Jeffers (illustrator)  
HarperCollins Children's Books

Duncan just wants to do some colouring, but when he opens his box of crayons, he has a surprise. They have all quit! In a series of humorous letters they outline their problems and encourage Duncan, and all children, to be more creative and inventive in their use of colour.

**Demon Dentist (2013)**  
David Walliams  
Harper Collins

Strange things are happening in the dead of night. The tooth fairy appears to be leaving disgusting things such as dead slugs and live spiders under children's pillows. Evil is at work; can anyone stop it...? Funny and scary – do you dare make your appointment with the Demon Dentist?

**Rooftoppers (2013)**  
Katherine Rundell  
Faber and Faber

Orphan Sophie lives with her wonderful guardian Charles but is certain that her Mother is still alive. Her quest takes them on a trail amongst the rooftops of Paris where Sophie makes unexpected friends and allies. A delightful adventure celebrating love, friendship and courage.

**My Headteacher is a Vampire Rat (2015)**  
Pamela Butchart and Thomas Flintham (illustrator)  
Nosy Crow

The new head teacher at Izzy's school must be a vampire! After all, he wears a cape, hates garlic and turns bright red in sunlight. Izzy and her friends set out to uncover the truth as their imaginations get the better of them in this very funny story.

**One (2015)**  
Sarah Crossan  
Bloomsbury

The winner of numerous awards, and told in free verse, this moving and memorable novel tells the story of conjoined twins and the choices they must make as they attend secondary school for the first time after a spell of home schooling. Packed with emotion, authenticity and beautiful language, it questions the nature of sisterhood, individuality and love.

Please note that we have made every effort to check the original date of publication for each title, but in a few cases there may be discrepancies. In the case of series, we have just given the date for the first title in the series. All of the above titles are currently in print.



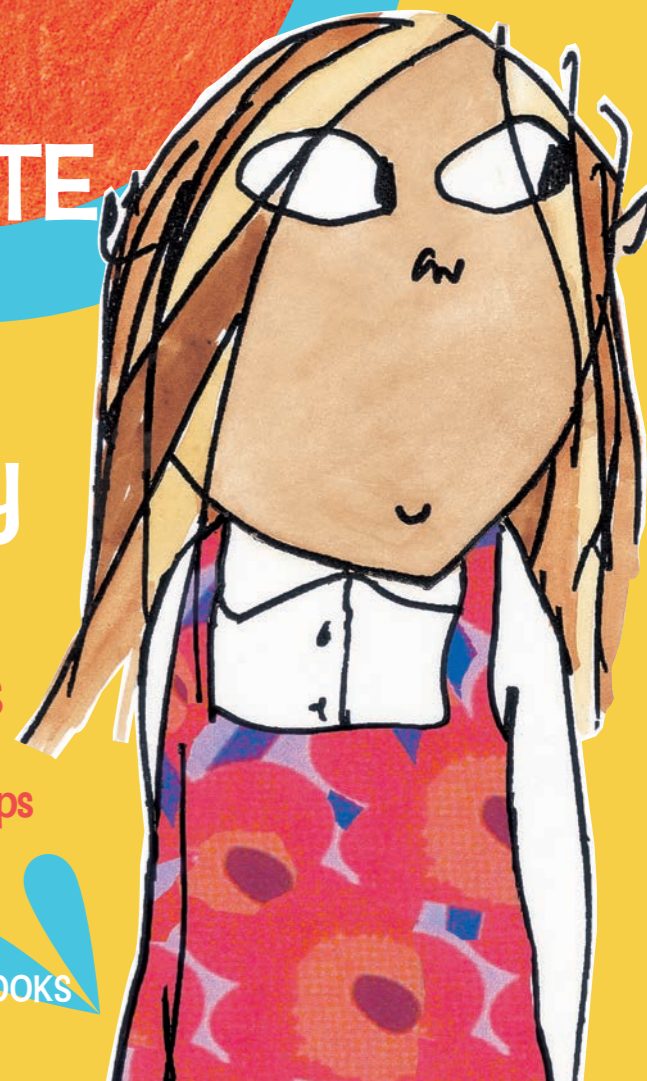
The Federation of  
Children's Book Groups

Registered Charity No. 268289

# FIFTY FAVOURITE BOOKS From The Last Fifty Years

Chosen by MEMBERS  
of the Federation of  
Children's Book Groups

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# FIFTY FAVOURITE BOOKS From The Last Fifty Years



As the Federation of Children's Book Groups is passionate about books and reading, and getting children and books together, it seemed fitting that as part of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, we should compile a list of some of our favourite books from the last fifty years. We would like to thank all the Children's Book Groups who nominated their favourites to form the basis of this list. Not surprisingly many more than 50 titles were submitted, which meant that we could not include every title suggested. In our final selection we have tried to ensure an even spread of books for young children, young readers and older readers to reflect the Children's Book Award categories. We have also included a book by each of the Children's Laureates to date. But unfortunately we did not have enough space to include books for older teenagers, poetry or non-fiction titles. While some of the books listed here have been award winners, the books are primarily ones that for many of our members have stood the test of time and remain firm favourites amongst adults and children alike.



## 1968 – 1977

**The Books for Your Children journal (1965 – 1995) was founded by teacher and television producer Anne Wood and aimed at parents, teachers and librarians. It was during this time that Anne set up the Federation of Children's Book Groups. The Other Award (1975–1985) was introduced in 1975 to honour books of a high literary standard which were also politically correct or unbiased. Winners during this decade included *Helpers* by Shirley Hughes (1976), *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tyler* by Gene Kemp (1977) and *East End at Your Feet* by Farrukh Dhondy (1997).**

### Paddington Goes to Town (1968)

Michael Bond  
Harper Collins

This is the eighth collection of stories about the little bear from darkest Peru who first appeared on a platform at Paddington Station in 1958. As always, each chapter is a standalone story – which makes the books ideal for reading aloud. Paddington's endearingly funny misunderstandings and mishaps continue to delight each new generation of readers.

### Rosie's Walk (1968)

Pat Hutchins  
Red Fox Picture Books

This classic picture book follows Rosie the hen as she goes for a walk around the farmyard. The text is simple and succinct whilst the delightful and humorous illustrations, in a limited palette of yellows and reds, tell far more about her innocent but perilous journey. There is so much for the reader to look out for.

### The Tiger Who Came to Tea (1968)

Judith Kerr  
Harper Collins

Sophie and her mother are enjoying tea in their kitchen, when they have a surprise visitor – a tiger who swiftly eats everything in the house. This picture book classic feels homely and familiar but also adds a dash of 'what if?'. The simple but evocative text makes this a treat to read out loud. Not just for teatime.

### Elmer (1969)

David McKee  
Anderson Press

Elmer the elephant stands out from all his grey friends in a bright patchwork of colours. But he doesn't like to be different and tries his best to fit in with such success that they don't recognise him and miss their bright and funny friend. Elmer discovers that being different can be rather special. A colourful and classic humorous tale.

### The Very Hungry Caterpillar (1969)

Eric Carle  
Puffin

This classic story of a caterpillar's life from egg to butterfly is beautifully illustrated throughout with Eric Carle's colourful signature collages. Perfect for sharing with young children who will delight in identifying the many items of food and following the caterpillar's journey through the holes in the pages whilst learning their numbers to ten alongside the days of the week.

### Mr Gumpy's Outing (1970)

John Burningham  
Red Fox

This story of Mr Gumpy's attempt to take his boat out for an outing has rightly won many awards. As various characters join the boat one by one the story leads to its inevitable conclusion, much to the delight of young readers. John Burningham's distinctive illustrations capture the summer's day perfectly.

### Carrie's War (1973)

Nina Bawden  
Puffin

A heart warming WW11 story of a small Welsh town where Carrie and Nick are evacuated to live with strict Mr Evans and his timid sister, Lou. Their friend Albert is billeted with Hepzibah and strange Mister Johnny. When Carrie tries to reconcile Mr Evans with his estranged sister she fears she has ruined everything. Thankfully life has a way of turning out well.

### The Worst Witch (1974)

Jill Murphy  
Puffin

This is ideal for girls who love school stories and magic and they will soon identify with Mildred Hubble as she tries to fit in at her new school. Things have a habit of going wrong whenever Mildred and her friends are involved. Will she ever get it right? A funny and entertaining series with magic and mayhem thrown in.

### Dogger (1977)

Shirley Hughes  
Red Fox

This is an endearing story of all too familiar family life as Dave loses his beloved toy Dogger and is bereft. His family do their best to find him but when Dogger turns up on a stall at the school fair it takes quick thinking to get him back. A classic to be enjoyed by all.

### The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch (1977)

Ronda and David Armitage  
Puffin

Mr Grinling spends his days looking after the lighthouse and looks forward to his lunch specially prepared by his wife and sent swinging in a basket above the sea from their cottage. Unfortunately the seagulls enjoy it too and the Grinlings have to come up with some ingenious ideas to thwart them and save the sandwiches.

## 1978 – 1987

**The FCBG Children's Book Award was inaugurated in 1980 and the first winner, *Mr Magnolia* by Quentin Blake, announced in 1981. The children's book magazine *Books for Keeps* was also launched in 1980 and reviews in the first issue included the *Happy Families* series by Janet and Allan Ahlberg (1980), *Charmed Life* by Diana Wynne Jones (1977) and *Song for a Dark Queen* by Rosemary Sutcliffe (1978). 1983 saw the establishment of *Letterbox Library*, a specialist book supplier which highlights books for children that challenge stereotypes and celebrate equality and diversity.**

### Each Peach Pear Plum (1978)

Allan and Janet Ahlberg  
Puffin

A fun book to share. The repetitive, rhyming text invites children to take part in a game of I Spy, spotting the various nursery rhyme characters hiding in the wonderful illustrations. The pictures reveal more and more details with each reading. This will be a much loved addition to the family bookshelf.

### The Stone Book Quartet (1979)

Alan Garner and Michael Foreman (illustrator)  
Harper Collins

Originally published as a series of four short novels from 1976–78, this omnibus edition appeared in 1979. Written by consummate wordsmith Alan Garner, author of *Elidor* (1965) and *The Owl Service* (1967), these interconnected stories about country life detail a day in the life of four generations based on the author's own family. Michael Foreman's illustrations perfectly match the text.

### Mister Magnolia (1980)

Quentin Blake  
Red Fox

Quentin Blake's wonderfully zany and colourful illustrations and rhyming text describe the adventures of Mr Magnolia who sadly only has one boot. Frogs and newts, parakeets and owls and even a dinosaur join him in the hunt. A rollicking family favourite.

### Not Now Bernard (1980)

David McKee  
Anderson Press

This short, simple story deals with a young boy who tries to get the attention of his mum and dad, and yet every attempt is ignored. Bernard is so fed up, that he goes into the garden, gets eaten by a monster, and his mum and dad still don't notice! In fact, the monster ends up tucked up nicely in Bernard's bed.



### The Twits (1980)

Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake (illustrator)  
Puffin

Mr and Mrs Twit are the most horrible people you could ever think of and they enjoy playing nasty tricks on each other. But when they take out their mean-spirited nature on the birds and the monkeys, the animals take revenge. A delightfully subversive tale with spaghetti worms and strong super-glue.

### Goodnight Mr Tom (1981)

Michelle Magorian  
Puffin

In WW11 young Willie Beech is evacuated from London and is billeted with reclusive Tom Oakley. The neglected young boy gradually finds comfort, friendship and adventure in the countryside. Just as Willie is finding his feet, he is summoned back to London. Will he ever see Mr Tom again? A wonderful, exciting and moving story.

### The Demon Headmaster (1982)

Gillian Cross  
Oxford University Press

In the first book of the series, foster children Dinah, Lloyd and Harvey join forces with another group of renegade students to thwart the Headmaster's evil plans – except that he always seems to be one step ahead of them! This dangerously hypnotic villain returned in 2017 in a brand new adventure called *The Demon Headmaster: Total Control!*

### Gorilla (1983)

Anthony Browne  
Walker

Anthony Browne's adept use of colour and composition conveys Hannah's loneliness and desperation to spend quality time with her Dad. In the night, the toy gorilla she has received for her birthday magically transforms into a real gorilla, and Hannah embarks on a dream of an adventure, full of Browne's trademark wit and worldly wisdom.

### Katie Morag Delivers the Mail (1984)

Mairi Hedderwick  
Red Fox

Katie Morag lives on the Isle of Struay, with her parents, little brother and new baby sister. Life on the island offers all kinds of gentle adventures, from helping to deliver the post to taking part in the grand concert. Delightful, acutely observed, illustrated stories of family and community life.

### Journey to Jo'Burg (1985)

Beverley Naidoo  
Longman

Set in apartheid South Africa, this novella still resonates today. Easy to read, but definitely not an easy read, it tells the story of a family separated from their mother by her need to work. When their baby sister falls ill, Naledi and her brother set out on a long and dangerous journey to bring her home. An inspirational story of resilience and courage.

### The Jolly Postman (1986)

Allan and Janet Ahlberg  
Puffin

This wonderfully witty, interactive picture book won the Children's Book Award in 1987. Told in jaunty rhyme accompanied by exquisite watercolour illustrations, the book contains a collection of letters, leaflets and cards from a variety of fairy-tale characters, which can all be taken out of the integral envelopes to read. A veritable masterpiece of storytelling!

### Winnie the Witch (1987)

Valerie Thomas and Korky Paul (illustrator)  
Oxford University Press

Winnie the Witch lives in a black house with black furnishings and Wilbur, her black cat, which can cause problems. Her attempts to solve the difficulty by casting spells on Wilbur are not terribly successful until she comes up with the perfect solution. The first in a much loved series.



## 1988 – 1997

In 1992 BookTrust ran the pilot project for Bookstart which became the first national book-gifting programme and which is still providing free books for babies and toddlers today. Following in the footsteps of *Books for Your Children*, a new children's book magazine called *Carousel*, was launched in 1995, which many of FCBG's Children's Book Groups now receive as part of their membership. World Book Day was celebrated for the first time in 1996.

### Bill's New Frock (1989)

Anne Fine  
Egmont

This classic tale is perfect for reading aloud or independently. Children will laugh as Bill discovers how different his life is when he wakes up as a girl. Using humour to ask important questions about gender stereotypes and challenge preconceptions is the perfect way to help children think about this important issue.