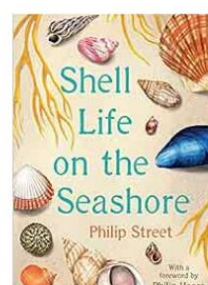
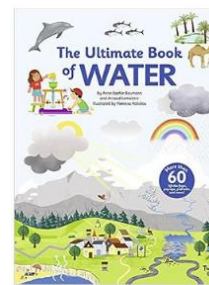
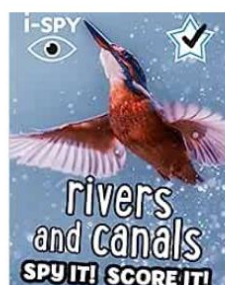
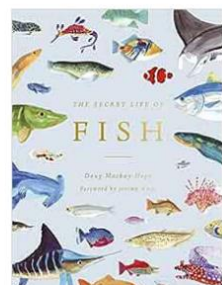
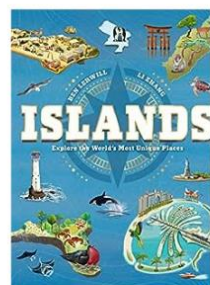
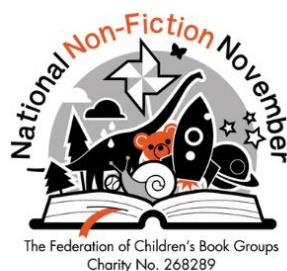
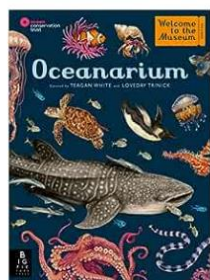
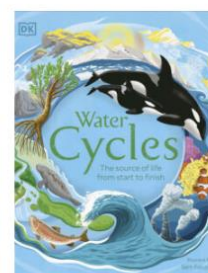
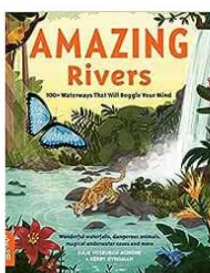


Ideas for National Non-Fiction November 2023



National Non-Fiction November is the Federation of Children's Book Group's annual celebration of all things factual.

It offers the perfect opportunity to investigate the amazing variety of information books on offer to children and young people.

The theme for NNFN 2023 is 'Wonderful Water'. As the Earth's most precious resource, water is essential to life and well-being as well as being something which is a key feature of many leisure activities.

This booklet contains some ideas and activities to support anyone who would like to organise sessions to celebrate National Non-fiction November, helping children to discover the wonderful world of information texts.



Games and activities to explore non-fiction texts



Scavenger Hunt:

Give each team/ individual a checklist of different types of non-fiction to find on the shelves of the library/ classroom/ bookshop being used for the session. Alternatively, participants could have a selection of non-fiction books and hunt for different text features, e.g. headings, labelled diagrams.



Play Musical Chairs:

Set the space up as if for musical chairs and place a non-fiction title in a bag under each seat with some sticky notes. When the music stops, everyone must pick up the bag from under their chair. They then have 2 minutes (or an appropriate amount of time) to browse the book. Ask them to record a comment about the book on a sticky note and stick the note on the inside of the cover. Play a set number of rounds and then gather up the comments and share feedback about the books.



Play Pass the Parcel:

Wrap a non-fiction title as for a game of pass the parcel, but add a picture of the cover of another non-fiction book between each layer. As the parcel is unwrapped, the covers can be shared and discussed. The winner gets to keep the book in the parcel.



Book Tasting:

Gather a wide selection of non-fiction books on a table and ask everyone to quickly select one. Set a timer for 2 minutes (or an appropriate length of time) and allow each child to browse their book. Count down the last 10 seconds to build tension and when the bell rings, get everyone to swap for another book. Play for an appropriate length of time and then ask each participant to choose the book which appealed to them most. Allow time for everyone to explain their choice.



Guess Who with book covers:

Use copies of non-fiction book covers, set up the space so that each team can lay out their covers without the other team being able to see them. Each team must pick one cover to be the title the other team have to guess and teams then take it in turn to eliminate books by asking yes/no questions, e.g. Does it have an animal on the cover? Is it written by a woman?



Pelmanism with book covers:

Make two (reduced sized) copies of each of a selection of non-fiction book covers and use them to play Pelmanism (pairs). Mix the cards and lay them face down on the playing surface so that they do not overlap. Taking turns, each player should turn over two cards of their choice from any of the selection. If they match, they have 'won' these cards and keep them. If they do not match, these are returned, face down, to their original places. The next player takes a turn and play continues until all the pairs have been matched. The winner is the player with the most pairs. Plenty of discussion about the books is sure to arise!



Match Up:

Chose a selection of non-fiction books and make copies of the covers. Write a short description about the content of each book. (This could be done by children prior to playing). Place the descriptions and the book covers face down and play as Pelmanism (above), but matching the description to the cover. The game can provoke lots of discussion about different genres and can be adapted to the age/ ability of the players.



Matchboxes:

Collect a number of large matchboxes or similar (some craft shops sell blank craft matchboxes). Into each box put a selection of small items, models, pictures and words which relate to a specific subject or person, e.g. honeycomb, honey, pollen etc for bees or fossils, an ichthyosaur skeleton, a rock hammer for Mary Anning. Each child chooses a matchbox and takes out the contents, showing the rest of the group. Everyone has to guess the topic the matchbox is suggesting. If in a library, they can then locate the section where books on this topic are located and explore what's there or if not, relevant books could be on hand to be looked at and discussed. This activity can generate plenty of discussion!



Lucky Dip:

To prepare for this activity, fill a large container with shredded paper. Put a number of non-fiction books into paper bags and tape this up to protect them. Place these amongst the shredded paper in the tub. Ask each child to take a turn finding a book in the dip and then ask them all to open their finds. This can lead to a discussion about whether these would have been books they might have chosen, whether, having picked them, they are now interested in giving them a go or whether they think the book they have chosen would be the perfect choice for someone else in the group.

Teaming Up with Local Venues

Is there a local venue that you could team up with for National Non-Fiction November? It might be related to the 'Wonderful Water' theme- or not! This might be a partnership which works for National Share-A-Story Month as well!

Museums:



A museum visit might be the perfect starting point for investigating a topic or personal interest. With the theme of 'Wonderful Water' in mind, topics might include transport, leisure activities, cooking, personal hygiene..! Children might be inspired to write a visitors' guide to their chosen subject. There is even a Museum of Water <https://museumofwater.co.uk/>, but I haven't visited this so can't comment!

Stately homes:



Giving a fascinating glimpse into past lives and times, there are so many ways to link Stately Homes to information texts. Many offer trails for children to follow, locating objects of interest. The 'Wonderful Water' theme might lead to investigating a garden water feature or the development of plumbing.

Food:



Local cafes, bakeries or restaurants might be interested in teaming up! You might find they are happy to lead a cooking session, work on a book of recipes or a tasting session. Supermarkets might also be happy to arrange a special visit.

Local Parks:



Creating maps and plans can be great fun and a local park might be the perfect place to map out. You might be able to arrange a talk from a council gardener or park worker.

Libraries:



Always a perfect venue for a visit, librarians are sure to be happy to arrange a visit to explore the library and learn how it works! There are so many topics which could be explored and investigated! A librarian might arrange a Wonderful Water Quiz for you!

Bookshops:



Another perfect location to visit, there are sure to be many ways in which your local bookshop would love to welcome you as part of the National Non-Fiction November celebrations.

Newspaper offices:



Do you have a local newspaper office- or village magazine? You might be able to visit the premises and see how a paper is made and perhaps write something about your group for publication! There is a BBC Bitesize article about writing newspaper reports here:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/z2yycdm/articles/z739whv>

Art Galleries:



Most art galleries - local or national- will contain works of art on a watery theme which could be explored as part of National Non-Fiction November. Perhaps children could write their own museum article about a picture, photograph, sculpture or location which they has interested them on a visit.

A Watery Place:



In keeping with this year's theme, a visit to a watery location might be just the thing! November might not be the best time for looking at rock pools or going pond dipping, but these activities could be planned for another time in the year, perhaps using books to research things to look for during this month's celebrations!

Making Your Own Book

Shape Books:



Books made in a shape which relates to the content are always popular and can be made with- and for- any age group. For example, if you wish to follow the theme of 'Wonderful Water', books might take the shape of fish, a boat, a penguin or a turtle. The body of the book might take a simple shape which is made more interesting by added elements, e.g. a frog might have added half moon eyes at the top and a pair a folded paper springy legs underneath!

Accordion Books:



An accordion book is one which can be constructed without stitching. Composed of a continuous folded sheet of paper, they can also stand up so you can view all the pages at once. They can be made in a shape or in a more traditional book shape! Made in a range of sizes, work from different children could be stuck on the pages to create a communal book.

Flap Books:



Flap books add an element of surprise as flaps are lifted to reveal the 'mystery' beneath! A book on the beach might include a seagull with a wing flap that lifts, a crab with an opening shell or a starfish that lifts.

Pull-tab Books:



Pull-tabs add a special element to books, but need some careful planning to work successfully. A blow of water from a whale might pull up to show it growing or a crab might pull out of its shell.

Books with wheels:



A wheel can be added to the cover of a story or to different illustrations throughout a book to add movement and interest. One could be added to make it look as if an octopus's legs are moving, a bird is flying across the sky or a fish is blowing bubbles! A wheel behind a picture could also show movement- for example of the water in the water cycle.

Pop-Up Books:



Care needs to be taken with the folding, but pop-ups are always a fun addition to a book! A simple cut fold might make the gulping mouth of a fish or a v-shaped or box-shaped lifter might help create a 3-D river scene.

Non-fiction Writing Tips!

Martin Brown

Don't forget the drawing. It can still be fun and it can still be funny – but let the facts be seen! And if drawing a galloping horse or an Eifel Tower seems tricky, don't worry. Look at pictures of whatever it is you want to draw. Trust your eyes! Everything you need to know is right there.

Stories don't need to be made up. Non-fiction has stories too. In fact, fact books have the most OMG you-couldn't-make-it-up of all. So why not write about your fact as a tall, but very true, tale.



The fun of the thing is in the fact of the thing. Wombats doing square poos is a fun fact. But finding out why can be even more fun.

Every subject has a story. For example, every single animal on the planet gets through life – eating, breeding, escaping, chasing – in its own wonderful way. Each one a story. And it's the same for every evil emperor, deadly dinosaur or awesome avalanche.



Best selling author and illustrator, Martin Brown is well known for the incredibly successful 'Horrible Histories' series which is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2023. Martin is also the author and illustrator of the two 'Lesser Spotted Animals' books, which highlight some of the world's more unfamiliar creatures. You can find out more on his website: <https://martinbrownillustrator.co.uk/>

Isabel Thomas

Make each sentence work hard. Take your first draft and chop out half of the words. It's the best trick for improving your writing.

Be playful and surprise your readers. Instead of listing facts about space, why not write a recipe book for astronauts or instructions for building a rocket?

Make comparisons. Help readers understand something new by comparing it to things they have seen, touched, smelled or tasted. Did you know that fried crickets taste like popcorn?

There's no such thing as boring. Become a detective and dig out the most interesting things about a topic. Even dust can be fascinating. (If you don't believe me, Google micrometeorites).

Write about things you like. From Minecraft to extreme sports, no topic is off limits. If you enjoy something, your readers will too!



Isabel Thomas is a science writer and author of more than 250 books for young audiences. They include the picture books *Moth: An Evolution Story* and *Fox: A Circle of Life Story*, winners of the AAAS Subaru Prize in 2020 and 2023. Isabel's titles for older readers include *Exploring the Elements*, a New York Times Book of 2020. Isabel also writes outreach resources and magazine features. She has a background in science and journalism, and recently completed postgraduate research in education, driven by a desire to see greater equality in aspiration and access to STEM and arts education and careers. Find out more at www.isabelthomas.co.uk and say hello [@isabelwriting](https://twitter.com/isabelwriting) [@isabelthomasbooks](https://www.instagram.com/isabelthomasbooks)

Watery Ideas!

Why not try some activities which spark discussions and could lead to exploring books to discover and inspire? There are plenty of things you can do that, with a little preparation, will lead to an exciting book group session. Some of these are a little messy- but well worth it!

Icebergs:



Engage younger children with an iceberg animal rescue.

To prepare: Pour some water with a few drops of blue food colouring added to it into a freezable tub. Add some small plastic marine animals to this and then put the tub into the freezer until the water has frozen solid.

With the group: Turn the 'iceberg' out onto a tray which will catch some of the water as it melts. Explain to the group that you need to rescue the animals and discuss what they might do to achieve this. You might like to try using a sponge to squeeze some warm water onto the iceberg. You might gently chip at the ice with forks. You might scatter some salt over the surface. Whatever you try, ask the children to closely observe what is happening (things sights and sounds) and discuss their ideas to explain this.

To explain: Have a selection of books on hand which explain why ice melts. You can support children by demonstrating how contents/ index pages help them locate information more efficiently.

Big Bubbles:



Who doesn't love playing with bubbles?!

To prepare: You will need a paddling pool about half full of water, some washing up liquid and some large plastic hula hoops!

With the group: Mix the water with a good amount of washing up liquid. Getting the mix right might take a bit of experimenting- but this all adds to the discussion and fun! Carefully dip a hula hoop into the mixture and then **slowly** lift the hoop out to make a bubble. How big a bubble can you make?

To explain: A bubble is air wrapped in soap film which is made from soap and water (or another liquid). The outside and inside surfaces of a bubble consist of soap molecules and a thin layer of water lies between the two layers of soap molecules. Once again, you can direct the children to books which will help them to understand this.



Layered Liquids

Explore density!

To prepare: You will need a transparent container, water, food colouring, cooking oil, washing up liquid, golden syrup, some small objects for floating - and some paper towels!

With the group: Add a couple of drops of food colouring to some water and half fill your container. **Slowly** pour some syrup into the container and carefully observe what happens, gathering the children's ideas. Next, **slowly** add some of the oil. Discuss what happens. You could try adding some objects- a cork, a grape, a drawing pin- and seeing what happens. You could also try adding a few drops of washing up liquid and watching what happens. At the end (having removed the objects!), mix everything up and observe.

To explain: Encourage the group to find a definition for the word 'density' and discuss what this means. You can add more layers by using, liquid soap, milk or honey.



Lava Lamp

Moving magic!

To prepare: You will need a clean plastic bottle (try to use one with smooth sides), water, vegetable oil (or you could use Baby Oil instead), fizzing tablets such as Alka Seltzer and food colouring. You might want to use a torch. This can get messy so paper towels etc on standby!

With the group: Fill the bottle about quarter full with water. Pour the vegetable oil slowly on top of the water until the bottle is almost full- a funnel can help with this. Wait a couple of minutes for the oil and water to separate. Now, add a few drops of your favourite food colouring. Break the fizzy tablet in half and drop part of it into the bottle. Watch what happens. You can turn off the lights, drop in the other half of the tablet and shine a torch through the lava lamp while it is all bubbling. When it stops bubbling, try sprinkling some salt into your lava lamp. What happens?

To explain: The oil floats on top of the water because it is less dense than water. Food colouring has the same density as water so it sinks through the oil, mixing with the water. As the tablet dissolves, it makes carbon dioxide- a gas. Gas is lighter than water so it floats to the top. The air bubbles bring some coloured water with them to the top. When the air comes out of the coloured water, the water gets heavy again and sinks. It does this over and over again until the tablet is completely dissolved.

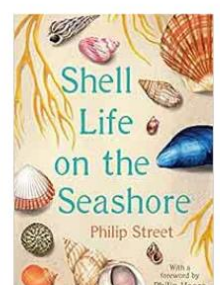
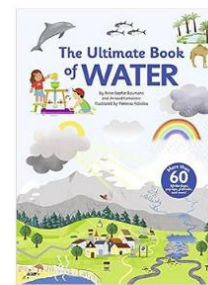
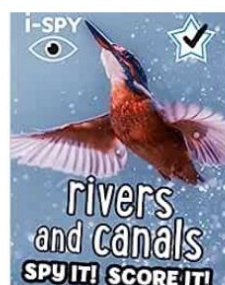
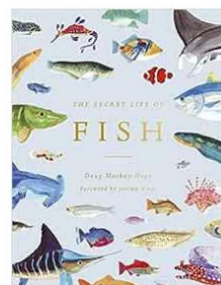
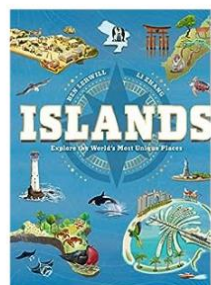
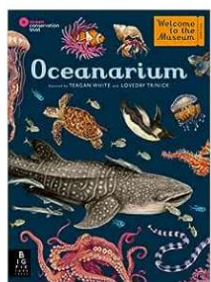
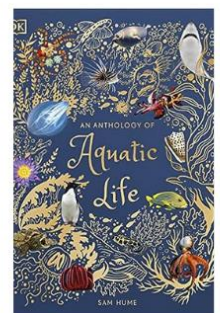
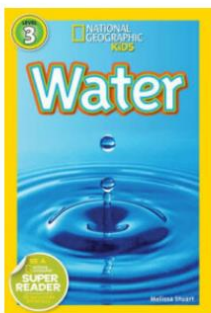
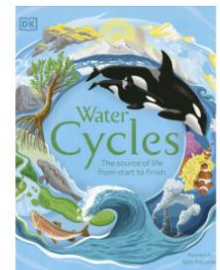
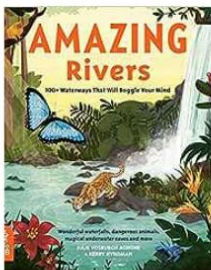
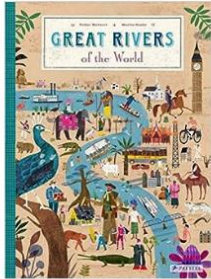
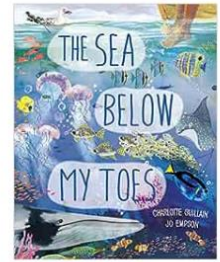
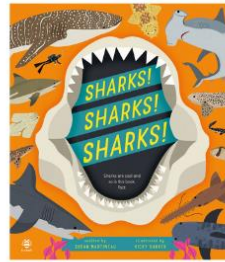
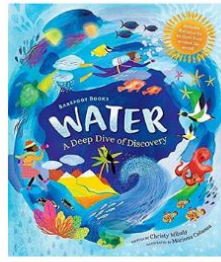


Bath Bombs

Relaxing fun!

To prepare: You will need some cup cake moulds (silicone ones work best), food colouring, 150g of cream of tartar, 300g of bicarbonate of soda, two teaspoons of olive oil, water in a spray bottle, some essential oil (like lavender) a large bowl and some spoons.

With the group: Measure out the olive oil and pour into the bowl. Add the bicarbonate of soda, cream of tartar and a couple of drops of essential oil (pay attention to the maker's instructions). Add about 15 drops of food colouring and begin to stir so that everything is well mixed. The mixture will be quite powdery at this stage. Now add a few sprays of water which will sizzle as the cream of tartar dissolves and begins reacting with the bicarbonate of soda. Push the spoon into the mixture- if it leaves behind a shape without crumbling, it is ready to be transferred to the moulds. Add a little more water and mixing if needed. Fill the moulds evenly and press down firmly to pack the mixture into the moulds. Leave to dry for at least two days before removing from the moulds by peeling them away gently. They are now ready to be used!



Many thanks to Isabel Thomas and Martin Brown for their writing tips.

This booklet is based on one created by Zoe Toft during her time as NNFN Co-ordinator.

