

Reviews Non-Fiction



See How They Grow

Written by Mary Ling.
Photography Kim Taylor
Dorling Kindersley £2.99
ISBN: 978-1405328463

The barn owl chick pushes himself out of his egg and his growth is charted in photographs until he is a handsome bird of twelve weeks. We see him grow out of his baby fluff (ahh) learn to walk, jump and finally, fly. The text is minimal but the pictures say it all. There is a page of re-usable stickers. In the same series and just as charming are Lamb, Penguin, Pony and Kitten.

Pat Jenkins

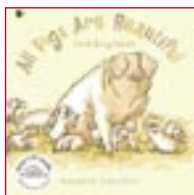


All Pigs Are Beautiful

Written by Dick King-Smith.
Illustrated by Anita Jeram.
Walker £6.99
ISBN: 978-1406311952

"I love pigs; I don't care if they're little pigs or big pigs..." So writes Dick King-Smith, who was especially fond of his own pig, Monty, a large white, with a forceful but friendly character. We learn about the insides of pigs, almost exactly like ours apparently and about the natural cleanliness of pigs, apart from a little mud, of course. Although usually mild tempered, pigs can get cross and bite, so it is safer not to interfere with their babies. Anita Jeram, another pig lover, uses soft colours, pinks, creams and greys in her beautiful illustrations. A CD of the book, also containing pig facts and a piggy song, is included. This is a charming book and thoroughly recommended.

(3+)



Pat Jenkins



One Tiny Turtle

Written by Nicola Davies.
Illustrated by Jane Chapman
Walker £6.99
ISBN: 978-1406311976

We encounter a baby turtle, no bigger than a bottle top, hiding in the shadow of the seaweed. As she grows, her shell hardens, until finally she is a fully grown loggerhead turtle and safe from all her predators. Thirty years later she returns to the beach where she was born to lay her eggs. Her babies emerge from their shells and make their

hazardous way to the sea. The book is beautifully illustrated with blues and greens and soft shades of brown and grey. There is a CD of the book which includes sea turtle facts and a song.

(3+)

Pat Jenkins

When Your Gran Was Little

Written by Jane Bidder
Illustrated by Shelagh McNicholas.
Franklin Watts £5.99
ISBN: 978-0749678128

Grandmothers from different places reminisce about growing up in the 1940s and 1950s. Grandma from Britain remembers ration books, coal fires, washing day, telegrams, watching the Coronation and buying a liberty bodice. Grandma from Africa remembers happy times with her sisters, making dolls from scraps. Grandma from Malaysia remembers playing with a ball made of frangipani flowers. All have happy memories of childhood and enjoy sharing them with their grandchildren. This is a book which could stimulate discussions between generations and help to give young children an idea of the passage of time. It is well illustrated with drawings and photographs.

(5-9)

Pat Jenkins



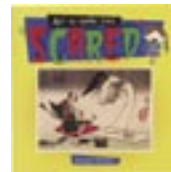
Art to Make You Smile

ISBN: 978-1845075835

Art to Make You Scared

ISBN: 978-1845075842
Written by Elizabeth Newberry
Frances Lincoln £10.99

"Master Crew as Henry VIII" by Joshua Reynolds is my favourite in the "smile" book. The little boy looks so very pleased with himself. Also worth a smile is the embroidered elephant from Japan being scrubbed by scores of attendants. The monster cheeseburger made from stuffed canvas and painted plaster by Claes Oldenburg and the amazing metal chair man by Richard Dial, are odd enough to amuse anyone. The "scared" collection has some pretty awful, but fascinating, images. I hated Tipu's tiger, the mask of Tezcatlipoca and a really horrible Japanese ghost. The sea creature, painted in 1270 and the sharks circling the little boat in "The Gulf Stream" painted by Winslow Homer, are not nice either. It is a pity that the paintings, especially in the "scared" book, are often across the fold, otherwise the books are beautifully presented and I like the



use of so many different techniques. This is an interesting way of presenting art to young children. There are comments on each work on its page and information about the art and artists at the end of the book.

(6+)

Pat Jenkins

The Book Book

Written & illustrated by
Sophie Benini Pietromarchi
Tara £12.99
ISBN: 978-8186211243

This book delights, pleasing both mind and eye. Less confident readers could decide to experiment with bookmaking after dipping into its pages as 'anything goes'. Written and illustrated by a passionate author, exploration of techniques is encouraged. Create personal illustrations by using bizarre techniques which may blend pencil shavings, paper clips, corrective fluid and ink, with more traditional materials. If you find story writing hard then try to "massage your imagination" by using some word lists or associations to "fall in love with words". Characters, plots and story lines could easily appear using these methods. There is no fear of failure, as a book is such an individual and personal thing. Examples of other children's ideas are also shown, to spur you on. No excuses - get passionate, enjoy yourself, use this unusual book as a stimulus to create your own world.

(7-10)

Anne Munro



How to remember almost everything, ever!

Written by Rob Eastaway
Wizard £5.99
ISBN: 978-1840467970

Have problems with memory? Can you recall faces but not names, forget PIN or telephone numbers? How would you remember a sequence of events for a test? If you need help, this book is a lifeline. You can be taught to remember things in different ways; learning mnemonics, word associations, creating picture memories so that facts are retained. These memory techniques must be learnt but they are presented in such a fun way that they are enjoyable challenges. Translating numbers into letters or by visualising a room, you will remember increasingly long sequences. Learning funny rhymes helps you remember a variety of information. Discover how the brain works, make and break codes and other tricks. Your new memory may help you to pass tests and impress everyone.

(8-10)

Anne Munro



RSPB Children's Guide to Bird Watching



Written by David Chandler and Mike Unwin
A&C Black £6.99
ISBN: 978-0713687958

An excellent guide to birds and bird watching for the novice or the slightly more experienced. A child-friendly

book crammed with wonderful photographs and illustrations, having very clear print and a good glossary. From the basics of how to choose a pair of binoculars, to finding out about habitats, and how to record birds you see. An excellent field guide identifying the most common birds seen in the UK and Ireland, this book has it all. There are monthly activities, suggestions for encouraging birds into your garden, tips on how to extend knowledge once you feel more proficient. An excellent book to encourage what could become a worthwhile and life long passion.

(8-12)

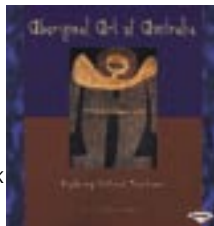
Anne Munro

Aboriginal Art of Australia

Written by Carol Finlay
Lerner £7.99

ISBN: 978-1580133722

Children experimenting with aboriginal art will need to look at the background and this book provides some useful insights. There is an



introduction which gives an idea of what happened to the original inhabitants when the British came to Australia and there is an explanation of The Dreamtime which is essential to the proper understanding of the paintings. The book then looks at three regions: Arnhem Land and the

bark paintings, the Kimberley region and the desert paintings of the centre. There are well chosen photographs, like those of the real animals which also appear in the paintings. They help to reinforce an understanding of how the land and the people are indissoluble. A bibliography completes this introduction for children.
(9+)



Pat Thomson

Frankenstein

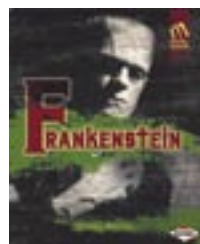
ISBN: 978-1580133777

The Mummy

ISBN: 978-1580133784

Written by Stephen Krensky
Lerner Books Both £6.99

Both titles are part of the *Monster Chronicles* series, featuring gruesome creatures from literature, film and popular culture. The books look at the origins of the monster, and the way that the character's emphasis changes as new technologies take the stories over for themselves. For instance, *Frankenstein* has a chapter on Mary Shelley and her novel, then goes on to discuss its almost immediate transition into plays, then film. There is even a section on GM foods. The text is very approachable: not necessarily simplified, but very compelling with just enough ghoulishness to tempt you to read on! The pages are well-designed using both photographs and illustration to draw the readers to the text, and chapters are of a satisfying length. There is a comprehensive



bibliography and website list at the back, catering for different reading abilities, and suggested films that are suitable for the age-range of the readers. These two books have proved very popular with Year Six "reluctant" readers to the point where there is now a waiting list amongst the remainder of the class. A must for any monster enthusiast!
(9-13)

S. Thomson

The Arab-Israeli Conflict

Written by Cath Senker

Watts *Timelines* £12.99 ISBN: 978-0749671877

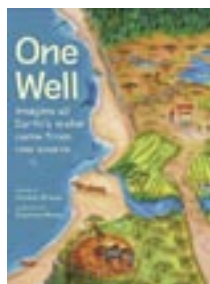
This series explores conflicts by looking at how we have arrived at the present point. It is done by selecting significant dates and explaining what happened and by providing the associated timeline.



The first date in this book is August 29th 1897, the date of the first Zionist Congress. Its timeline is 1881-1914 which means it covers the pogroms in Russia, the first wave of emigration, the Congress and the second wave in 1914. This pattern is followed through to the last date which is July 12th 2006, the beginning of the Israeli-Lebanon war. Its timeline begins with the Hamas win on January 26th until the August 14th UN ceasefire. For each date there is an explanatory text, fact boxes, pertinent quotes and an internal cross referencing system. Readers will be able to trace how early the conflict began and be able to examine the role of the USA, Britain and the Soviet Union. The whole leaves no doubts about the complexities but provides a compressed collection of facts for a topic where facts are valuable.

(13+)

Pat Thomson



One Well

Written by Rochelle Strauss

Illustrated by Rosemary Woods

A & C Black £12.99 ISBN: 978-0713687613

We are asked to imagine that all the water in the world comes from one well, which, in a way it does. We learn why water is so important to all life, where it is and how it is recycled. The water in the earth's well is threatened by the growing population of the world and by increased

demands from the developed nations. The amount of water on earth doesn't change. There is no more now than there was in the age of the dinosaurs; it is the distribution that is unequal. The statistics are shocking: North Americans use 55 buckets per person a day. The richer European countries use 27 buckets per person a day and Ethiopians use 1 bucket per person a day. We read that 1.8 million children die every year from diseases caused by water made unclean by pollution, which is mostly preventable. Children are told how they can help to conserve water and protect our "one well" and there are notes for adults with suggestions for discussion topics and conservation ideas. There is much of interest and importance in this well-illustrated and forceful book and I recommend it for family reading.

(5+)

Pat Jenkins



You Can Save the Planet

Written by Rich Hough

A&C Black £8.99 ISBN: 978-0713686883

An eye catching book dealing with important environmental issues. It packs a punch with its excellent research, colourful photographs succinct and relevant text. If we alter our lifestyles we can improve not only our environment but the life of our planet. Look at one day of your life in detail. The green 'thumbs up' symbol highlights positive

aspects of your life, whilst the orange 'every day counts' conveys warnings. Keep an 'ethical' diary, control those home appliances, recycle and reuse and always try to buy local. This book motivates whilst giving you all the facts. Go on, change your life and save the planet. Recommended for home and school use.
(8-12)

Anne Munro

