

Recommended reading for Year 5 pupils

Here is a list of fiction books that I hope children in Year 5 will enjoy reading. It is not exhaustive, by all means, and it is certainly not compulsory! It will grow and change as new books are published, and as I get to know new exciting reads for this year group. As children's abilities vary, I hope I have included something for everybody. Comments and suggestions are welcomed!

For ease of consultation the list is split into groups, but be aware that this is sometimes restrictive as some books can cross over genres.

Classics

One assumes that at this age many children will have come across stories such as *Paddington Bear*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Alice in the Wonderland*, *The Jungle Book*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Treasure Island*, *The Box of Delight*, *The Midnight Folk*, *The Railway Children*, *The Secret Garden*, *Swallows and Amazons*, *The Wind in the Willow*, *The Borrowers*, *The Owl Service*, just to mention a few.

If not this could be a starting point.

Historical

Goodnight Mr. Tom, M. Magorian

Carrie's War, N. Bawden

Two stories about children evacuated during the Second World War, of the conflict around them and also of their relationships and experiences in the new surroundings.

The Eagle of the Ninth, R. Sutcliff

Centurion Marcus Flavius Aquila sets on a quest to discover the fate of his father's Ninth Hispana Legion, disappeared in Roman Britain, and to rescue its standard.

The Roman Mysteries Series, C. Lawrence

Four children play detectives in Ancient Rome. Twelve books in the series so far, *The Thieves of Ostia* is the first.

King of Shadows, S. Cooper

A young American actor travels back in time and ends up in Elizabethan London, playing Puck at the Globe alongside William Shakespeare himself.

Stratford Boys, J. Mark

Shakespearean times again, only the teen-age Bard himself is the protagonist in this funny book.

School Stories

Boy, R. Dahl

Childhood memories by this modern classic author.

Matilda, R. Dahl

Brainy child, unloved by parents and bullied by headmistress, discovers her magical powers. Wonderful reading.

The Demon Headmaster, G. Cross

First novel of a series of five, also televised in 1995. Something sinister is happening at Dinah Hunter's new school. What is the plan of the terrifying headmaster?

Flour Babies, A. Fine

A science experiment, involving six-pound-heavy flour "babies", transforms Simon Martin from uninterested pupil to perceptive child. Touching and funny.

How to write really badly, A. Fine

Howard is the new boy, Joe cannot write, but can create wonderful models. They sit next to each other in class and they embark on a "How to" project. A challenging, funny, touching and beautifully written story.

The Angel of Nitshill Road, A. Fine

Celeste, the new girl at Nitshill Road School, shows how to tackle effectively the school bully.

Fantasy

Artemis Fowl, E. Colfer

Artemis, a teenage criminal genius, is threatening the fairy world and its gold. His battle against Captain Holly Short of the LEPrecon unit is a fast paced, fantasy story full of surprises and humour. Other three Artemis' books also available.

Charlotte Sometimes, P. Farmer

A meaningful story set in the '50s about a girl at a boarding school whose life becomes entwined with that of Clare who lived there during the First World War.

The Ghost Writer, J. Jarman

A ghost is trying to send a message using a blackboard in Frankie's classroom. What is he trying to say?

I Was a Rat!, P. Pullman

A young boy in a coachman's uniform affirms to be really a rat? Or does he just like to tell stories? Inspired by the fairytale tradition this is an intriguing story told by a much-praised writer.

The Dark is Rising Series, S. Cooper

Five fine fantasy novels (*Over Sea, Under Stone; The Dark is Rising; Greenwitch; The Grey King and Silver on the Tree*) which draw on elements of British folklore and legend.

Tom's Midnight Garden, P. Pearce

Tom lives wonderful adventures in a garden that can only be found when the clock strikes thirteen...

The Chrestomanci Series, D. Wynne Jones

A collection of four novels and some short stories written between 1977 and 1988, which do not need to be read in a particular sequence and are set in magical worlds.

Cold Tom, S. Prue

Tom escapes his world to find himself in a very threatening and incomprehensible one: ours. Will he be recaptured by his people or will he find help where is the least expected? Award-winning first novel by Sally Prue.

A Series of Unfortunate Events, L. Snicket

Dark stories centred on the misadventures of the three Baudelaire siblings (what a beautifully evocative name!). Twelve books have been published so far.

Animal Stories

The Redwall Series, B. Jacques

Twelve books so far, detailing the many adventures of the animals of Redwall. It can be quite demanding on the memory of the reader, as the characters are so many and the plot quite intricate at times.

Time Stops for no Mouse, M. Hoeye

How a quiet city mouse becomes an hero for love and becomes an hero. Funny and fast paced. The Sands of Time is the sequel.

War Horse, M. Morpurgo

Joey is a horse who survives the First World War, but is likely to be slaughter at the end of it. Unless Albert can find him first... *The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips*, *Toro! Toro!* and *The Butterfly Lion* are other stories by the same author which explore the relationship between animals and humans in the trying times of war.

Charlotte's Web, E. B. White

Life on a farm seen from the point of view of the animals living there.

Any Dick King-Smith's book

Adventure

Kensuke's Kingdom, M. Morpurgo

Fallen off his parents' boat, Michael ends up on an inhabited island...or so he thinks... This is the tale of an incredible friendship and the opportunity to learn about life, love and humankind.

Stormbreaker, A. Horowitz

The first in the series of the Alex Ryder's novels, this one tells the beginning of the career of this young MI5 spy. Fast and full of action.

Emil and the Detectives, E. Kastner

Emil tries to find the thief who robbed him on a train and lives thrilling adventures in Berlin.

The Falcon's Malteser, A. Horowitz

Funny and fast-paced detective story, it is one of the five books featuring the Diamond brothers.

Harry and the Wrinklies, A. Temperley

Harry is sent to live with great-aunts Florrie and Bridget, who reveal to be quite different from his expectations. Harry is soon involved in the adventures of their gang of friends. Fetching plot told in a humorous and fluent style.

Stig of the Dump, C. King

The tale of the unlikely friendship between contemporary boy Barney and caveboy Stig. A beautiful modern classic.

The Salt Pirates of Skegness, C. D'Lacey

A holiday in Skegness turns into a piratical adventure for young Jason. Good pace and humorous style.

Sport

Hurricane Hamish: the Cricket World Cup, *Hurricane Hamish: the Calypso Cricketer*

M. Jefferson; *Bound for Glory*, *Glory in the Cup*, etc, B. Cattell

All stories based revolving around the game of cricket.

Matthew's Goal, One Kick M. Hardcastle; *The Transfer*, T. Blacker; *Football Fever*, T. Bradman; *Football Stories*, J. Riordan
All on football, *The Transfer* is for more mature readers in this age group.

Other good ones...

Pig-Heart Boy, by M. Blackman

Cameron needs a new heart. The only available donor is a pig. What will the thirteen-year-old decide and how will his family and friend cope with his decision. One of the many great books by this eclectic and accomplished writer.

The Legend of Spud Murphy, E. Colfer

Two brothers spend quite some time in the local library during the holiday and try to outwit the terrifying Librarian. Very funny and full of little twists.

Harvey Angell, D. Hendry

Even the plants outside Aunt Agatha's house look miserable, not to mention the inhabitants, until a special new lodger arrives.

Ruby Holler, S. Creech

Two sibling from a dingy orphanage are placed with an elderly couple and learn to trust and love, while living thrilling adventures. A rather long story, but written beautifully by a consistently good writer.

The Ghost Behind the Wall, M. Burgess

This story of ghosts, adventures and friendship, also speaks of the difficulties of those affected by Alzheimer.

Catch Me If You Can, C. MacPhail

A loving grandchild does not want Social Services to know that it's him really caring for his grandfather and not the other way round. When things get difficult there seem to be only one way out... Funny and moving and very perceptive.

Authors to look for...

I list here a number of authors whose names are synonyms of good quality children's fiction and whose books touch many topics and appeal to different age groups.

Malorie Blackman, Gillian Cross, Anne Fine, Geraldine McCaughrean, Michael Morpurgo, Jenny Nimmo.

Series

The *Horrible Histories* books by Terry Deary mix historical notions with humorous presentations and they could be a way to tempt a reluctant reader, without becoming a staple reading, though!

Similar to this are the series *Horrible Geography*, *Horrible Science*, *Murderous Maths*, and the *Top Ten* collection, which includes in each volume ten stories (*Dickens Stories*, *Shakespeare Stories*, *Arthurian Legends*, *Viking Legends*, *Greek legends* and others).

Also the *Diary* series (*Pirate, Castle, etc*) by R. Platt and C. Riddell is a captivating account of historical periods in a journal format.