

## Reading list for able readers in key stage 1

### Introduction

The books in this list have won or been shortlisted or longlisted for various book awards in 2021, 2022 and 2023. In addition, there are some new books which have been reviewed and given a five-star rating by Books for Keeps or Waterstones. The books are aimed at 5- to 7-year-olds.

There are so many wonderful books available for children that inevitably there will be some books/themes which you may think should have been included and vice versa. This list will be kept under review and we welcome any suggestions to enrich and encourage reading.

To share your suggestions for this list, or for able readers in other key stages, please email [communications@nace.co.uk](mailto:communications@nace.co.uk)

### Fiction books

- **The Midnight Fair – Mariachiara di Giorgio**  
Far from the city lies a fairground. When night falls, and the fair is empty, something unexpected happens. It is time for the woodland creatures to have some fun... This is a wordless picture book.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway 2022 Shortlist*
- **The Wanderer – Peter Van den Ende**  
A little boat sets out to sea and begins its voyage toward home. To get there it must travel across many strange, beautiful oceanscapes, full of fantastic creatures and deadly monsters. This is a wordless picture book.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway 2022 Shortlist*
- **Too Much Stuff – Emily Gravett**  
Meg and Ash are a pair of magpies who are building their nest for their perfect eggs. Although they begin their nest construction using the usual mud, sticks and grass, Meg and Ash are soon convinced that their nest doesn't have enough stuff and begin to add an ever-growing pile, from cuckoo clocks to a pram.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway 2022 Shortlist*
- **Milo Imagines the World – Christian Robinson**  
A busy train journey provides ample opportunity for Milo to see the hustle and the bustle of the world around him and to richly imagine the lives of the people he meets.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway 2022 Shortlist*
- **Shu Lin's Grandpa – Yu Rong**  
Everything feels new and unsettling for Shu Lin when she joins a new class in a new school. Her new classmates feel unsure about her clothes and food, but when her grandpa comes to visit the class and shows his Chinese paintings, things begin to change.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway 2022 Shortlist*
- **I Talk Like a River – Jordan Scott and Sydney Smith**  
After a day of being unable to speak when asked, a boy and his father go to the river for some quiet time. Dad says it is just a bad speech day, but the boy can't stop thinking about all the eyes watching his lips twisting and twirling. When his father points to the river bubbling and whirling, the boy finds a way to think about how he speaks. Even the river stutters just like him.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway 2022 Shortlist*

- **Starbird – Sharon King-Chai**  
 Starbird's songs weave the richest dreams and delight all who hear him but when the Moon King traps him in a cage as a gift for his daughter, the colour and life in his voice begin to drip away.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway Shadowers' Choice Award 2021*
- **It's a No-Money Day – Kate Milner**  
 Mum works really hard but today there is no money left and no food in the cupboards. Forced to visit the local foodbank, Mum feels ashamed that they have to rely on the kindness of others but her young daughter can still see all the good in her day.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway 2021 Shortlist*
- **How The Stars Came To Be – Poonam Mistry**  
 The fisherman's daughter loved to dance in the sunlight and bathe in the glow of the moon. When the moon would disappear for a few nights each month, she would worry about how her father would find his way home from the sea in the deep darkness.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway 2021 Shortlist*
- **I Go Quiet – David Ouimet**  
 This is the story of an introverted girl struggling to find her place in a noisy world. Through the power of books, creativity and imagination, she begins to see the possibilities for herself beyond the present.  
*Yoto Kate Greenaway 2021 Shortlist*
- **Rigatoni the Pasta Cat – Michael Rosen and Tony Ross**  
 Rigatoni the cat loves pasta. He even has a special pasta miaow. But when his owners go away, neighbour George is left in charge and feeds Rigatoni ordinary cat food. It won't do and Rigatoni sets out on a hunt for pasta...  
*Love Reading4Kids recommended book of the month 2022*
- **My Beautiful Voice – Joseph Coelho and Alison Colpoys**  
 A lyrical picture book about a shy child unlocking the power of their own voice through poetry with the help of an extra-special teacher.  
*Winner 2022 Independent Book Awards*
- **Our Tower – Joseph Coelho and Richard Johnson**  
 The story of three children who discover a secret world inside a tree where they meet an ancient entity wielding a power capable of changing everything.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **John Agard's Windrush Child – John Agard and Sophie Bass**  
 An evocative story of a child's journey to England on board Empire Windrush.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **There's a Ghost in this House – Oliver Jeffers**  
 A young girl lives in a haunted house but has never seen a ghost. Are they white with holes for eyes? Are they hard to see? She would love to know.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **Stop the Clock! – Pippa Goodhart and Maria Christania**  
 Life is so busy! On his way to school, Joe is missing all the exciting things happening around him – he is in such a rush. Given a task to draw what he saw on his way to school, Joe decides to stop time to appreciate all the little details that make life meaningful.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*

- **The Station Cat – Stephen Hogtun**  
 A lonely little kitten wanders into a dull, grey station, full of dull, grey people. Her colourful fur and bright green eyes bring warmth and life to this weary place and soon people begin to notice the kitten. As she learns about the different travellers and their struggles from loss and loneliness, the kitten wants to help to fill their world with hope and colour.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **The Boy with Flowers in His Hair – Jarvis**  
 David is the boy with flowers in his hair. He is sweet and gentle – just like his petals. But when David's flowers begin to fall, his best friend never leaves his side. A story about being there for someone when they are at their most vulnerable.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **Anthony and the Gargoyle – Jo Ellen**  
 Anthony wakes one morning to find his favourite rock has cracked open – and it is hollow. He discovers a strange-looking hatchling inside and the two become friends. A wordless book about friendship and letting go.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **The Fog Catcher's Daughter – Marianne McShane**  
 Elly and her father live in Ireland within the enchanted isle of Lisnashee. The fairy folk who live there cause mischief and harm to any who trespass. Elly's father the Fog Catcher rows out to collect magic from the fog around the island. His sole protection is a charm tucked in his pocket – but Elly finds the charm in a hedgerow after he departs.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **Once Upon a Time – James Mayhew**  
 This book features six stories from many lands, all of which inspired great music – featuring trolls, a prince disguised as a bumblebee, a magic broom and a fearless hero. The author's recommended music can be downloaded.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **Moose's Book Bus – Inga Moore**  
 Moose is the most fantastic storyteller. Every night after dinner, he sits with his family and tells an enchanting story. But, one evening, Moose can't think of a single tale he hasn't told before...  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **The Queen in the Cave – Julia Sarda**  
 One night, Franca has a dream about a marvellous queen. Eager to know more about this mystical figure, Franca shares her dream with her two younger sisters. Together, they set out on an enchanting adventure to discover the kingdom of the queen in the cave.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **Saving the Butterfly: A Story About Refugees – Helen Cooper**  
 A powerful story about a little brother and a big sister finding a new home and new hope after being rescued from a boat lost in the dark sea.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **Phyllis and Grace – Nigel Gray**  
 A moving story of how a little girl befriends her elderly neighbour who has dementia.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*

- **The Lights that Dance in the Night – Yuval Zommer**  
The author imagines the Northern Lights' fleeting journey from space to Earth and how they weave a special magic for the animals and people living in the frozen lands below.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **I Want the Moon – Fran Preston-Gannon**  
We meet a little boy whose parents struggle to find a way to please him so he stops crying. One night in desperation, the boy's parents offer to buy him anything he wants but what he wants is the moon! The story is about greed and selfishness and the power of working together to solve big problems.  
*Books for Keeps 2022 5\* rating*
- **Midnight Magic Witch Trap – Michelle Harrison and Elissa Elwick**  
Written in verse for newly independent readers. Trixie and her kitten Midnight have great fun playing games but they can take things to a higher level thanks to Midnight's magic.  
*Books for Keeps 2022 5\* rating.*
- **When Creature Met Creature – John Agard and Satoshi Kitamura**  
Picture book which celebrates communication, the power of language and how love can even sometimes supersede it.  
*Books for Keeps 5\* rating*
- **The Zebra's Great Escape – Katherine Rundell and Sara Ogilvie**  
A young girl called Mink and a young zebra called Gabriel come together in a classic adventure celebrating and fighting for the freedom to be your true self to overthrow oppression and wickedness.  
*Books for Keeps 2022 5\* rating*
- **Einstein the Penguin – Iona Rangeley and David Tazzyman**  
When the Stewarts spend a sunny, frosty December day at London Zoo, they are enchanted by one small penguin. Mrs Stewart insists the penguin must come and stay whenever he likes.  
*The Times recommended books 2022*

### Non-fiction books

- **The Greatest Show on Earth – Mini Grey**  
Narrated by a friendly troop of insects, this non-fiction book takes a whistle-stop tour from the birth of Earth, to the age of bacteria, the era of dinosaurs...  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **A World Full of Journeys and Migration – Martin Howard and Christopher Corr**  
Why do people migrate? Who were the first travellers in history? And where will we travel to next? Over fifty stories of human migration that changed our world.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **Narwhal: The Arctic Unicorn – Justin Anderson and Jo Weaver**  
Very informative book about narwhals with beautiful illustrations.  
*Yoto Carnegie 2023 Longlist*
- **A Fact for Every Day of the Year – National Geographic**  
This illustrated book is aimed at children aged 5+ who enjoy unusual facts. For example: the platypus looks like a cross between a duck, an otter and a beaver. The first scientists to see platypuses thought someone was playing a prank on them! A platypus is a mammal that lays eggs and a baby platypus is called a puggle.  
*Recommended new books 2022 – Waterstones / Books for Keeps*

- **Every Word Tells a Story – Tom Read Wilson and Ian Morris**  
Through entertaining rhymes and fascinating facts, the etymology of more than hundred words are explored. Aimed at children aged 6+.  
*Recommended new books 2022 – Waterstones / Books for Keeps*
- **Do You Love Exploring? – Matt Robertson**  
Raft down rapids to see raccoons, ski across ice to spot emperor penguins and dive underwater to explore the coral reef. Fact-filled text with fun and vibrant illustrations.  
*Award-winning author (e.g. Do You Love Bugs?)*
- **A Word a Day: 365 Words for Curious Minds – Julia Murray (Collins Kids)**  
Intriguing words – what they mean, how to say them and where they came from.  
e.g. wheeple – if a bird wheeples, it makes a long shrill cry. Aimed at children aged 6+.  
*Recommended new books 2022 - Waterstones / Books for Keeps*
- **Super Silly Museums – Nick Sharratt**  
The author invites you to stroll around eight magnificently silly museums. You will not believe your eyes at Confuseum, while all the animals are asleep at the Snoozeum.  
*Books for Keeps 2022 5\* rating*

## Useful websites

- [www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk](http://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk) and [www.lovereadings4schools.co.uk](http://www.lovereadings4schools.co.uk) – useful reading lists
- [www.booksforkeeps.co.uk](http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk) – produces an excellent free monthly magazine with lots of information about new books
- [www.booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk) – useful book lists – updated annually
- [www.schoolreadinglist.co.uk](http://www.schoolreadinglist.co.uk) – useful book lists
- [www.carnegiegreenaway.org](http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org) – activities to support the books nominated for the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway awards – includes guidance for teachers
- [www.ukla.org](http://www.ukla.org) – useful links to other book sites and awards
- [www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk) – lots of information, including research
- [www.readingzone.com](http://www.readingzone.com) – supports teachers and librarians with book recommendations
- [www.sla.org.uk](http://www.sla.org.uk) – information and support for school librarians

For information: the Costa Children's and Blue Peter Book Awards were discontinued in 2022.

## Note on diversity

For guidance on the importance of diversity in reading and how schools can support this, take a look at this [blog post](#) from Alison Tarrant, Chief Executive of the School Library Association (SLA).

## What would you add?

**To share your suggestions for this list, or for able readers in other key stages, please email [communications@nace.co.uk](mailto:communications@nace.co.uk)**

Compiled by NACE Trustee Sue Mordecai for use by NACE member schools, autumn 2022.