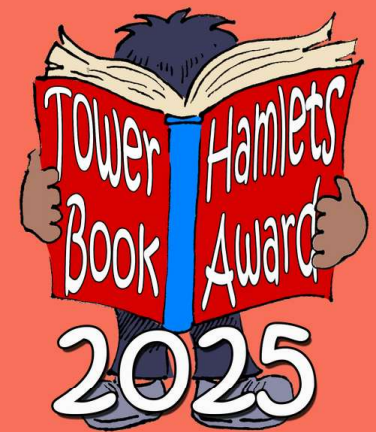




TOWER HAMLETS SCHOOLS LIBRARY SERVICES

BOOK AWARD



Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services



Quality Resources - Quality Education



TOWER HAMLETS



CANARY WHARF
GROUP PLC

What is the book award?

Page 1

Book award timeline

Pages 2

Shortlisted books

Pages 3-5

Authors

Pages 6-8

Book group advice

Pages 9-11

General book group questions & activities

Pages 12-14

Shortlist specific book group questions & activities

Pages 15- 20

Presentation competition

Page 21

Art Competition

Page 22



TABLE OF CONTENTS



WHAT IS THE BOOK AWARD?

The Tower Hamlets Book Award has been running since 2007 and is just one of the exciting events made possible through subscriptions to the Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services. The Book Award is for pupils aged 10 to 13 (Years 5 to 8). Since its inception, the event has grown to become hugely popular with our schools. Pupils are involved in all stages of the award, from suggesting books for the longlist, to voting for the shortlist and, of course, voting for the winner. The award culminates in a grand finale with pupils presenting their favourite books, competitions, and author panels. The Book Award aims to bring children together and enable discussion about books. Our overall aim is to encourage children to share the pleasure of reading.

Voting!

Your vote really does make a difference!
Previous winners have won by just 1 vote!

Every pupil shadowing the award gets their own vote.

Bring your votes to the finale to be counted,

OR

email a tally of votes to
monica.carmichael@towerhamlets.gov.uk
by 4pm, Thurs 27th November.

The winning book will be announced by
2:45pm on 28th November!

Timeline

May: The award longlists (Tower Hamlets 'Must Read' booklist and Teen booklists) are published

July: Book Award shortlist announced

Autumn term: Schools run Book Award reading groups

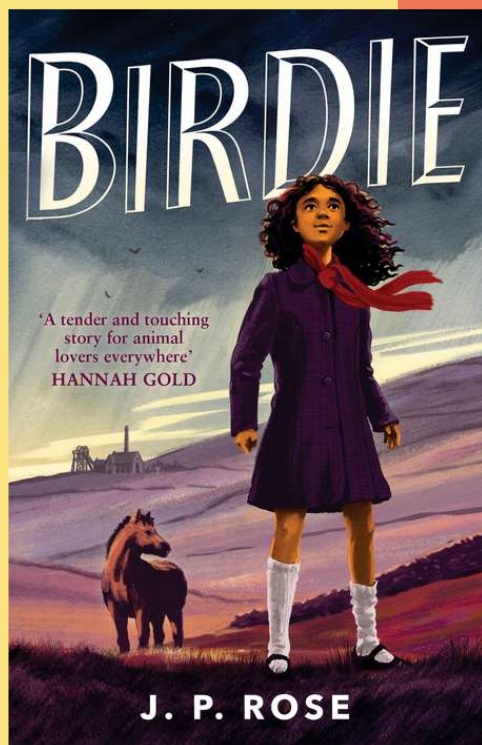
November: Book Award finale

BOOK AWARD TIMELINE

Date	Milestones	Activities and Ideas	✓
September Launch the Tower Hamlets Book Award Pupils read books on shortlist		- Look out for your free set of the shortlisted books (courtesy of Canary Wharf Group) and the THBA posters and bookmarks arriving in school – you can order more copies from the Schools Library Service or from your usual supplier - Download PowerPoint presentation of the shortlist from our website – (http://www.towerhamlets-sls.org.uk/thba25) and set up displays using this, the posters and the book - Set a date to launch the Book Award in school with pupils and staff and plan e.g. an assembly, author visit, special day of activities. Make sure the rest of the staff and senior management know about the book award and involve them too - The THBA shortlist was chosen from the 2025 Schools Library Service Must Read booklist and Teen Booklist (see www.towerhamlets-sls.org.uk). - Set up a Chatterbooks reading group to focus on the six shortlisted books. Contact schoolslibraryservices@towerhamlets.gov.uk or phone on 020 7364 6428 for more information and reading club packs and resources - Read the synopsis of each book. Ask your book group which book they think will win and why. Write down their predictions and keep them until the finale to see if they are correct - Acquire small incentives – pens, bookmarks, stickers – and give them out to pupils for each book on the shortlist they read - Arrange for your reading club to present each book at a series of assemblies in a way that motivates the rest of the year group to read it. Get pupils or staff to read hooks from books to entice other pupils to read them or act out part of the book - Start working on the Book Award art competition (see http://towerhamlets-sls.org.uk/thba25/) - Invite authors to speak or give workshops (the Schools Library Service can help to contact authors). Authors will do Skype or zoom sessions with your class, or look out for podcasts - Send a letter home to parents informing them about book award events and inviting them to read with their child - Recruit a book award promotions / events committee of staff, pupils and parents	
October Preparation for Grand Finale (Friday 28th November)		Decide if you wish to present a book at the finale and let the Schools Library Service know which book as soon as possible! (see page 21 for more info on the presentation competition)	
November Send in your votes Grand Finale – Friday 28th November - meet to vote for winner Celebrate the winner		- Copy enough ballot papers (emailed to you and available on website) for every pupil taking part in the voting - Voting can be at an assembly, in the classroom or in the library. Have a ballot box - Perform your group's presentation at a school assembly - If you are not attending the Finale, ensure your votes reach the Schools Library Service by Thursday 27th November - Announce winner in your school newsletter, on screens, at assembly - Invite the winning or shortlisted authors to visit your school - Plan your next reading event	

SHORTLISTED BOOKS

The selections for the Book Award often come from the Tower Hamlets 'Must Read' and Teen book lists. These are titles selected by our team of librarians that showcase diverse stories and authors and engaging narratives.

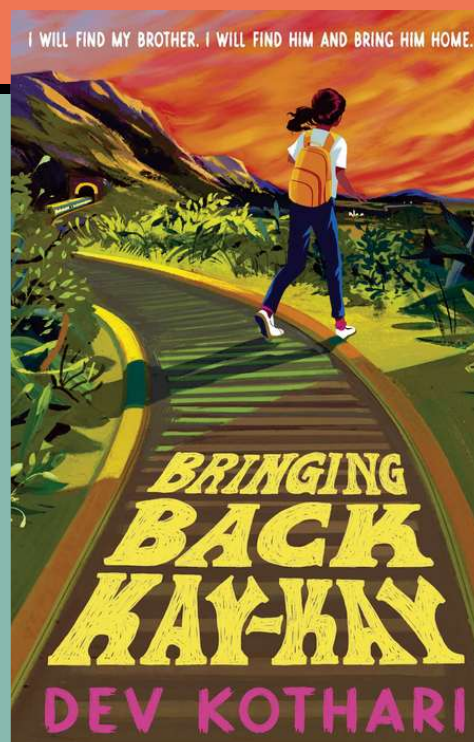


1 **Birdie** - By J.P Rose

Abandoned as a baby, Birdie has happily grown up in Fitz Williams Children's Home until her great aunt calls for her to live with her. Leaving her beloved carer, Mrs. Dudley, and the busy streets of 1950s Leeds behind, Birdie sets off for the sleepy village of Barrington Dale. What she encounters is far from the loving family home she was hoping for though. The village pit is closing, and racism whispers in every shadow. Running from bullies Birdie meets an underground pit pony whose life is even more miserable than hers, can her kindness and determination save them both?

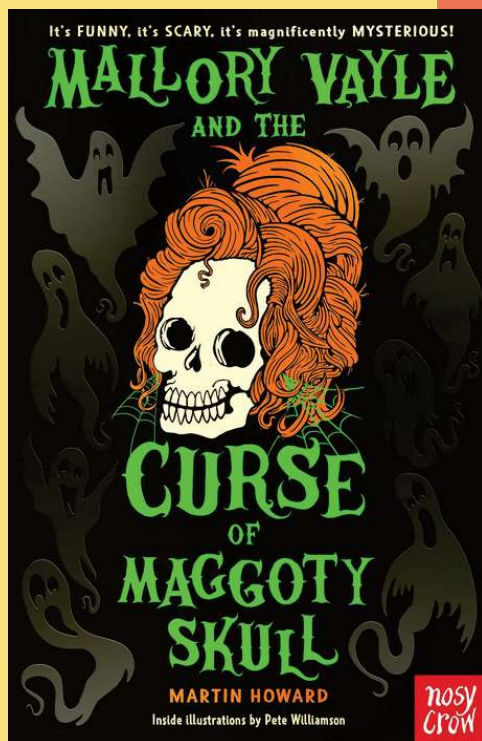
2 **Bringing back Kay-Kay** - By Dev Kothari

When Lena's beloved older brother goes missing at the end of summer camp, the bottom drops out of Lena's world. The police dismiss Kay-Kay's disappearance as that of just another teenage runaway, but Lena knows they are wrong. Tired of not being listened to, powerless to reach her parents through their grief and unable to imagine a future without her brother in it, Lena sets off to find him.



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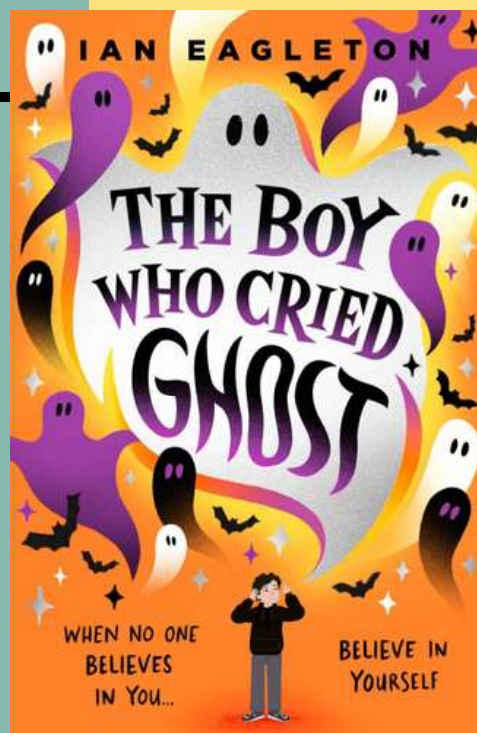
3 **Mallory Vayle and the Curse of Maggoty Skull -** **By Martin Howard**

Mallory Vayle has always been surrounded by dead people, but most of the time she ignores them. So, although her parents' funeral is pretty awful, it could be worse. She won't feel their arms around her ever again, but at least she has their ghosts to chat to and keep her company.

Given her limited choices, Mallory goes to live in scary, haunted Carrion Castle with Aunt Lilith, a fraudulent psychic who sees money-making potential in Mallory's ability to communicate with the dead.

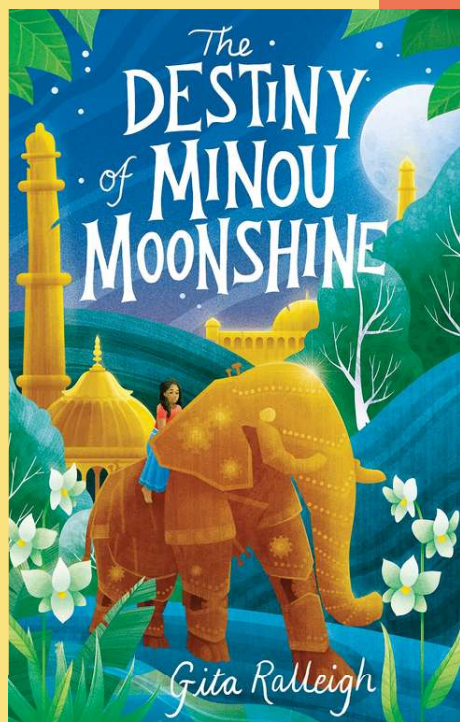
4 **The Boy who cried Ghost -** **By Ian Eagleton**

Richard feels unsafe all the time. Everything scares him, so when he moves house, the thing in the wardrobe is no exception. It just adds itself to a long list of things to be afraid of. Then, when a well-meaning neighbour opens the door, the evil, ghostly, devilish 'something' is set free and Richard's world implodes. Can he convince anyone that the ghost is real or will they just think it's another one of his irrational worries?



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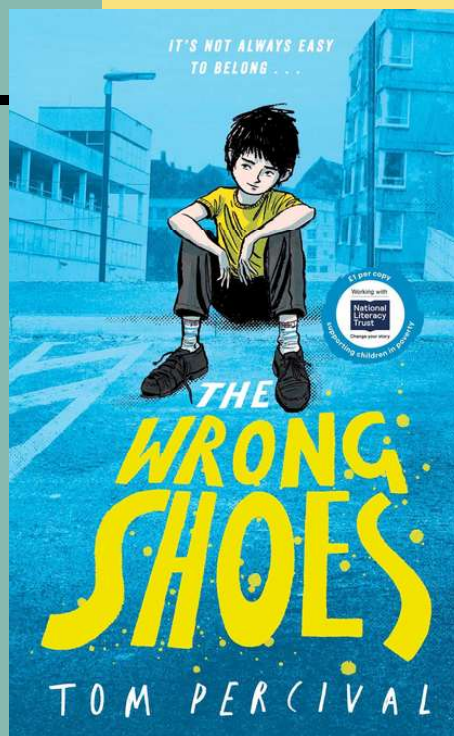
5 **The Destiny of Minou Moonshine - By Gita Ralleigh**

In the Queendom of Moonlally, Minou lives in a floating shack with Dima, the adoptive grandmother who took her in when she was abandoned as a baby.

Moonlally used to be a peaceful place but after the death of the queen, 13 years ago, a wicked general seized power and now rules the land for his own profit while ordinary people live in poverty and fear. An ancient goddess, the Dark Lady, used to protect Moonlally but she seems to have vanished and her sacred black diamond is missing too.

6 **The Wrong Shoes - By Tom Percival**

There is not enough money for food let alone the trendy haircut or the new pair of shoes that might make him look more normal and make the school bullies leave him alone. Will hides the true extent of his worsening situation from teachers, friends and even his mother and her new partner. He certainly does not want his best friend's charity, however well meaning. Their rift seems to push Will towards some bad life choices just as his father disastrously turned to loan sharks.



AUTHORS

Dev Kothari

Dev Kothari grew up in a sleepy hamlet near Mumbai, India, where she read obsessively, wrote furtively and daydreamed endlessly. She won the Commonword Diversity YA novel prize in 2018 and went on to study Writing for Children at Bath Spa University, which is where she first conceived her debut novel, *Bringing Back Kay-Kay*, a contemporary middle-grade mystery set in India. Dev now lives in north London where she turns her daydreams into stories.



Gita Ralleigh

Gita is a writer, poet and doctor who grew up reading fantasy adventures. She was born in London to Indian parents and often went on family holidays to India, where old palaces, ice-capped mountains, monkeys and elephants were part of everyday life. During her long career as a medical doctor, she studied Creative Writing at Birkbeck, University of London, and wrote short stories, two poetry books, winning the Wasafiri prize for fiction in 2013. She lives in London with her two children and teaches creative writing to science and medical undergraduates at Imperial College.



AUTHORS

Ian Eagleton

Ian Eagleton is an education consultant and primary school teacher. He is also the founder of The Reading Realm, a popular educational app for teachers. As a child he adored all the Goosebumps books, especially The Ghost Next Door and The Scarecrow Walks at Midnight. The Boy Who Cried Ghost was inspired partly by Ian's own experience of OCD as well as his brother convincing him that there was a ghost at the bottom of the garden! He would hide behind the trees, make loud wailing noises and throw tennis balls at him!



J.P. Rose



J.P. Rose writes for both adults and children, and has been shortlisted for several awards, including the The Tower Hamlets Book Award 2023, for her debut children's novel The Haunting of Tyrese Walker. In addition to spending her days reading and writing, J. P. surrounds herself with her rescue dogs, cats and her magnificent horses. As a child she fell in love with ponies, was an avid rider and dreamed of having her own horse. Now, as an adult, she's lucky enough to have three magical unicorns of her very own, Apache, Boo and Monarch.

AUTHORS

Martin Howard

Since starting out as a writer in 2005, Martin has written about 100 books for adults and children, fiction and non-fiction, and single-handedly invented the art of Post-it Note Origami. He currently has two books in development with major movies studios and lives in France with his lovely wife, three children and a dog called Licky. A raffle-winning author (a girls' bike at the Holtspur Middle School Fete in 1983), he's never won anything else in his entire life.



Tom Percival

Tom has been drawing since he's been able to hold a pencil, and making up stories for as long as he can remember, in fact, probably longer. He grew up in South Shropshire. After trying a few cities on for size, he decided that deep down he had always been a country boy and he now he lives on in Gloucestershire with his partner, their two children and a dog called Luna. Tom has produced covers for the Skulduggery Pleasant series of books as well as a whole host of others and has written and illustrated A LOT of picture books!



BOOK GROUPS!



Getting a book group together at your school is a great way to share the Book Award books and engage students in reading. Below are some suggestions on how to get a book group started at your school, how to structure book chats and some activities these groups can do. Some of the first things you should consider are:

- Where your book club will take place - Will it be in the library? In a classroom? Make the space comfortable and cosy, so students have a positive association with the club.
- Who will be involved in the book club - Will it be a targeted group of children? a whole class? small reading groups? How many students you have in your club will depend on the resources your school has available.
- How will the club run - Will everyone read the same book or will everyone take turns reading separate books? This will depend on how many copies of each book your school is able to obtain. Both of these options can work, it will just alter how you structure your discussions.

Once these factors have been decided on, you can begin running your club!

BOOK GROUP ADVICE

02.

Keep it short – 30 minutes is plenty of time and 20 minutes is still enough. Any more than 30 minutes and it risks becoming a drag or, worse, a doss and a way to waste time.

An ideal structure would be:

5 mins – small creative activity

5 mins – quick catchup – who had what, what has been finished what is still ongoing etc.

15 mins – 1-3 questions about the books.

5 mins – swapping books, noting who has got what and who is due what next.



04.

Read or skim the books yourself before starting the club. It feels a lot easier to run when you have knowledge of the books yourself, even if it is just a glancing knowledge. Plus, it will expand your book knowledge!



01.

When you have your first meeting put the books in one big tempting pile and introduce each one by reading the blurb. Include any interesting information about the author too from our author notes. You will always get at least one child who is immediately drawn to a book.



03.

Try not to let one or two children dominate discussion. It's hard when they can get very enthusiastic, but it will bore the others quickly. We've included some questions in this pamphlet, and for quieter students some of the easier '3 word' questions might work well to draw them into the discussion. If possible, try and avoid questions that can be answered simply yes or no!



05.

Ideally, run it during the school day. If it's done during playtime none of the children will want to be there and if it's after school, it won't be taken seriously. If the children can be taken out of the class for 20 minutes, it gives it a sense of gravitas and it signals it as something special to the rest of the class too, that this book club (and therefore books) are important.

BOOK GROUP ADVICE

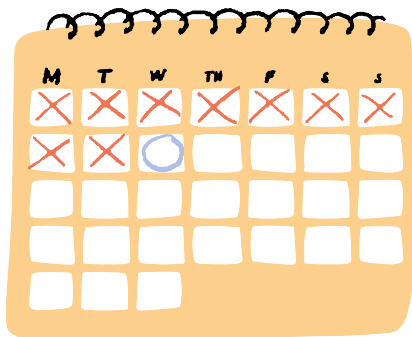
07.

Try and have something special and exclusive – this can just be a set of notebooks that the children can decorate themselves. These can be split into sections for each book and the children can write down their thoughts, draw in, or copy their favourite sections into. These also serve as an excellent way to show the impact of the book group at a later date if necessary.



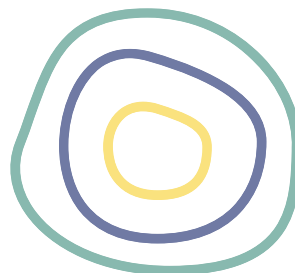
09.

Make sure the children know that there is a timeline for this book club and give them a date to have read all the books by. This may be different to the date of the award if you plan to take part in the performance competition or plan on any joint creative entries to the competition, as you may need to allow time for this.



06.

You're allowed to hate a book! Make it absolutely clear to the children that they are allowed to dislike one of the books as long as they can say why, and they have tried reading it properly.



08.

Start with a silly game if possible – Guess Who using post it notes on foreheads, write down as many animals that have an 'e' in their name in 30 seconds, a game of 'I went to the shops and I bought...'; a quick riddle, that sort of thing. Something to get the children thinking creatively and engaged.



10.

Book to go to the Award as early as possible with your school so it's in the diary and can be planned for.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Starter questions

- What do you think about the cover? (We know we shouldn't judge, but we all do and publishers revamp covers a lot because of changing tastes and different types of reader, like Bloomsbury did with the Harry Potter covers)
- Why do you think this book has this title?
- What do you immediately want to know about the book?
- Where do you think it will be set?
- What type of book do you think it looks like? Introduce the concept of genre – is it adventure, mystery, action, funny, scary etc and why do you think that?

Whilst Reading

- Is this book a thumbs up or thumbs down so far? Where would you put this book on a scale of 1-5? How many stars out of 5? Etc
- How would you describe this book/main character in 3 words?
- Are any of the characters like you or do you want to be like any of them?
- Who is your favourite character and what about them makes them such a great character for you?
- Has anything surprised you about the book?
- What do you think will happen next?
- Which character is least like you?
- Is there any character you secretly love to hate?
- Does this book remind you of any others you've read? Why?
- Is there anywhere in the book you would like to go?
- Has anything in the book also happened to you (obviously be careful with this one)
- Have you learnt any new words, or are there any you're not sure about?
- Who is the most interesting character?

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



When the book is finished

- **Repeat question:** Is this book a thumbs up or thumbs down? Where would you put this book on a scale of 1-5? How many stars out of 5? If it's changed from their previous rating, why is that, what happened?
- Do we all agree?
- Was it easy to read or did you have to force yourself to read it?
- Are you glad you read it?
- If you would change anything, what would you change?
- Is there anything you think should be known about the book before you read it? (Hot Key publishers have trigger warnings on the backs of their YA books, should this book have something similar?)
- What bit did you not like?
- What was your favourite bit?
- If you wanted to convince someone to read this book, what would you say?
- What age range do you think this book is suitable for?
- If you could meet the author is there anything you would ask them?
- Would you want to see this book made into a film or a tv show? Would any bits of it not work on tv (eg. Peeves the Poltergeist is missing from the Harry Potter films but is in all the books)
- Did someone else in your house read this book too? What did they think of it?
- If the author wrote another book what would you want them to write about next?
- Do you think this book was inspired by something that happened to the author?

General Book Group Activities

Utilising hands-on activities is a great way to get your book club engaged in the books. There a variety of activities that can be done with any book group reading material. These could be:

Art:

- Draw a scene from the book
- Draw the main setting of the book
- Adapt part of the story into a comic strip
- Draw a character portrait
- Write a review for the book

Writing:

- Re-write part of the story into verse, or a passage of verse into prose!
- Write an alternate ending
- Write a scene from another character's point of view

Performing:

- Turn part of the book into a play. Have the book group act out part of the book, and perform it at a school assembly or at the Tower Hamlets Book Award Finale. More information on the finale performances can be found on page 21 of the booklet.
- Create a short Tik-Tok-style video relating to one of the selected books from the shortlist. These can be as imaginative, clever or funny as you'd like. Filmed clips may be shown at the finale where possible.

While these activities could be done with any book, the following pages consist of activities and discussion points that are specifically tailored to each of the book award books.

Suggested activities for each book

Birdie

Research activity

- Research the history of pit ponies, Yorkshire, mining, British history
- Debate the closure of the mines. What are the pros & cons of the mines? How would this debate be different in the modern day?
- Research what other jobs do horses do? how do other animals help humans?

Creative activities

- Birdie has a lot in common with the pit pony in the story. What similarities do they share? What animal could represent you? Draw this animal and discuss why you have chosen it.
- Design a futuristic mine that wouldn't use animals. How would it function? What would it mine?

Discussions and book club questions

- What are some reasons for and against mining?
- Why were the town people so hostile towards Birdie?
- Why is the priest so influential in the town?
- Why would they school assume Birdie isn't as smart as the other students? Is this fair?
- When Birdie arrives in Yorkshire, she feels very out of place. Have you ever felt out of place? How did you cope with this situation?



Suggested activities for each book

Bringing back Kay-Kay

Research activities

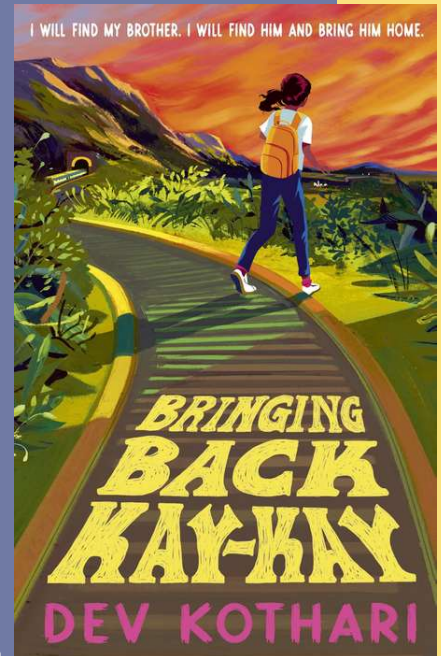
- Research India. Compare and contrast to the UK. What are the cities, environment, climate like?
- Research different types of poetry and how they are used and what their purpose is.

Creative activities

- Rewrite Kay-Kay's poems as a different type of poem (acrostic, haiku, etc.). Try to convey the same core meaning/theme when you are rewriting it.
- Expressing yourself and your feelings is an important part of this story. Create a set of Worry Dolls that can help you express yourself.
- Write a poem about a famous person or a teacher, and see if people can guess who it is about.

Discussions and book club questions

- How would the story be changed if the sibling's roles were reversed?
- What impact does keeping secrets have on Kay-Kay? Have you ever had a similar situation?
- Writing poetry helps Kay-Kay relieve stress and express himself. What are some things you do to help relieve stress?



Suggested activities for each book

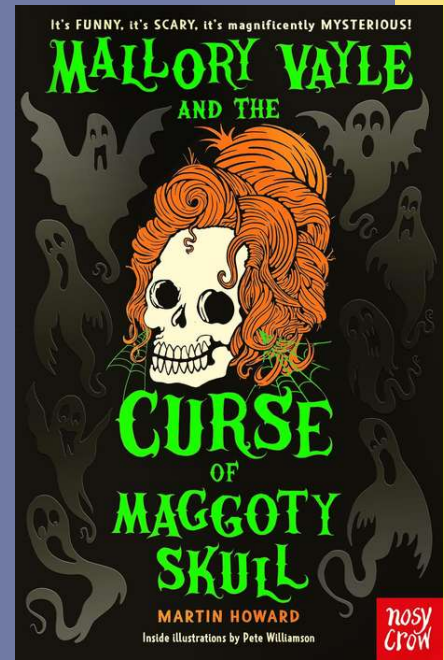
Mallory Vayle and the Curse of Maggoty Skull

Research activities

- Research the history of wigs! Look at some of the different wigs throughout history. What do they represent? Why were they used?
- Research the history of seances and famous fraudsters.

Creative activities

- Design and draw different wigs on skull picture. Use the research you have done into the history of wigs to create interesting, funny and unique designs.
- Draw a scene from the story in the same style as the illustrator, Pete Williamson



Discussions and book club questions

- Mallory loses her parents at the beginning of the novel. How does the author use humour to deal with grief within the story? How does this compare to some other stories that use humour when dealing with difficult situations?
- A skull is traditionally a scary thing. How does the story turn something frightening into something humorous? Could this be done with other traditionally scary things (spiders, ghosts, etc.)?
- Maggoty, collects wigs. Can you think of any other things people collect? What are some of the strangest collections? Do you collect anything?
- This story has the theme of found families. What is a found family? What role do Mallory's parents play in the novel and how does she create a new family by the end of the book?

Suggested activities for each book

The Boy Who Cried Ghost

Research activities

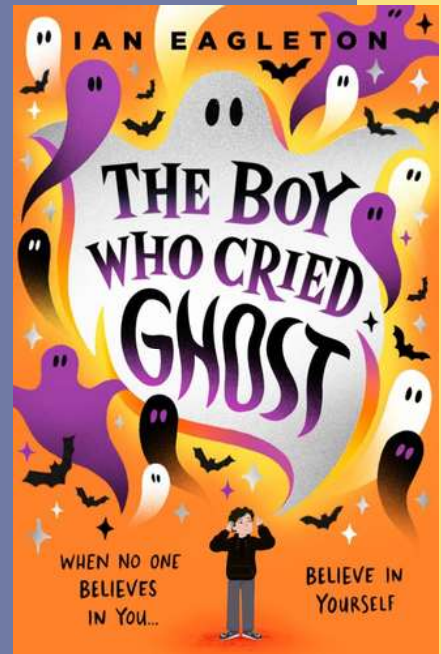
- There are lots of historical stories and folklore about different household ghosts. Research them and discuss how they are similar and different to each other. Are they similar to Richard's ghost?
- Research OCD to gain an understanding of how it impacts people's lives (This is a link to a short video that may help (<https://youtu.be/E9EeAl7-CX>)).

Creative activities

- Recreate a section of the book as a comic.
- Create and draw your own ghost! What would it look like? How would it represent your fears? How would you overcome/defeat it?

Discussions and book club questions

- What do you know about OCD? What are some common misconceptions? How could these misconceptions impact people believing Richard throughout the story?
- How would the book be different if the ghost wasn't real?
- Human feelings/qualities have often been represented by different things throughout history (owls = wisdom, lions = bravery, doves = peace, etc.) Think about why they represent these things and what other examples can you come up with?
- What qualities does this novel have in common with Mallory Vayle and the Curse of Maggoty Skull? Both have horror and comedy elements in them. What other multi genre stories do you know?



Suggested activities for each book

The Destiny of Minou Moonshine

Research activities

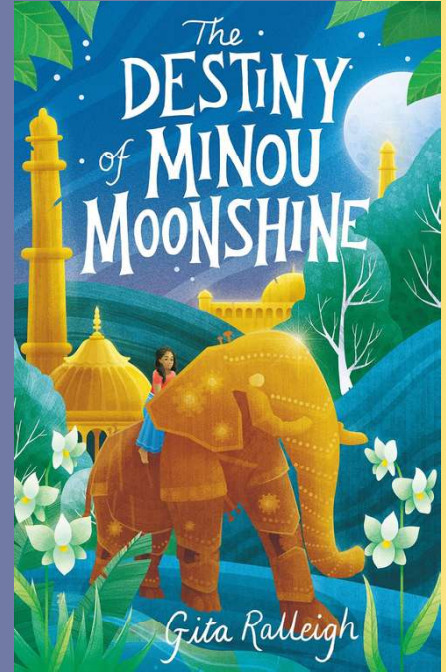
- Research the history of India and the British Empire. Look at the art and culture in India today and in the past [Click here for a useful website](#).
- Research automatons and how they work ([Sultan's Elephant](#))
- Research the different Hindu Gods and Hinduism

Creative activities

- Create your own automaton using split pins, pegs, etc.
- Draw a diagram of an invention from the story or one of your own creation.
- Write a song about a person or event in the same style as Farisht.
- Choose a country you know well/have a connection to and create a historic/futuristic setting for that country. Think about the artwork and culture of that country.

Discussions and book club questions

- Why and how do rebellions, like the Green Orchids, start?
- Why would Mamzelle assume Minou would be happier in her new life as opposed to her old one? Why was the history she learnt at the palace different to what she was previously taught?
- Compare the setting and poems in this story to Bringing back Kay-Kay. How are they different?
- Farisht tells stories through songs and poems. Why is oral storytelling important and how does it keep history alive?

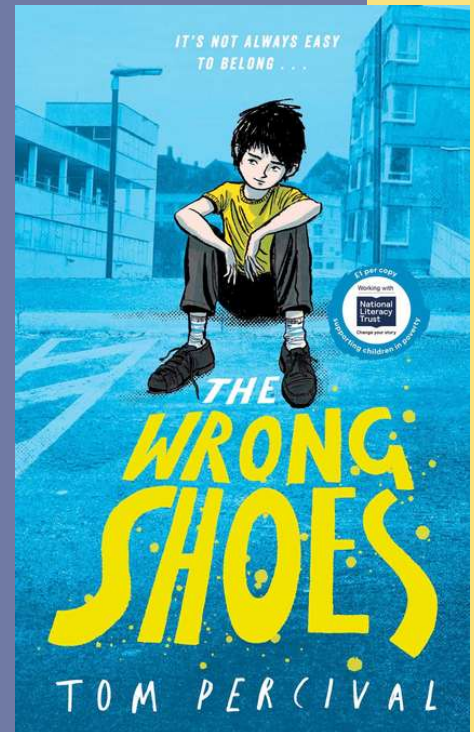


Suggested activities for each book

The Wrong Shoes

Creative activities

- Create a playlist that you can use when you want to decompress, calm down or unwind.
- Will sees an owl throughout the story, what do you think it looked like? Draw a picture of the owl and compare with other types of owls.
- Design a cool pair of trainers.
- Allocate students a “budget” and assign costs to things like mobile phones, clothes, food, going out, etc. and see what they choose to spend money on. Understand the difference between a want and a need. There are no right or wrong answers.



Discussions and book club questions

- Peer pressure is a big part of Will's story. How can peer pressure impact your life? How does Will cope with it? What would you do in his situation?
- How does Will's mum's boyfriend helping him compare with Cameron offering Will his old shoes? Why are they different?
- Will and his dad often use humour to help lift their spirits. How can humour be an effective tool for coping with difficult situations? How does this compare with Mallory Vayle and Maggoty Skull's use of humour?
- Think of the argument Will and Cameron have from both their perspectives. Why do they each think they are in the right?
- What is poverty in the UK? What are the different types of poverty?

PRESENTATION COMPETITION

The presentation competition takes place at the book award ceremony and gives the students the opportunity to showcase their creativity and interpretation of the books. There is space for eight schools to present a book at the finale – these are chosen to ensure there is at least one presentation for each title on the shortlist. Entries will be judged on the group's ability to deliver their presentation in an entertaining, interesting, and exciting way that will appeal to a pupil audience and inspire pupils to read their chosen book. The presentations can be pre-recorded or performed live on the day of the ceremony. The time limit for each presentation is **4 minutes**.

Ideas for presentations:

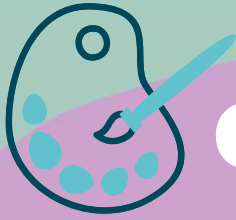
- Perform a key scene from the book.
- Create your own props and costumes
- Interpret the scene in any way you like
- Leave the audience wanting to see/read more!

Past performances have included acting and dramatisation, discussions, alternate scenes/ endings, film trailers, animation and more!



Incorporating video, audio and other digital ideas into the performances:

- Project images as backdrops for the action on stage
- Have music, sound effects or ambient background noise to the performance
- Edit together filmed clips with titles and voiceover to make a film/ TV trailer.



ART COMPETITION

Every year we run an art competition based on the shortlisted books. Pupils are challenged to create an artistic response of their choice to any of the 6 Book Award books.

Previous competition entries have included...

- Drawings/ paintings of scenes from the books
- Poems inspired by the stories
- Alternative endings/ scenes
- Comic strips based on the books
- Character portraits
- Book cover designs
- Bookmark designs
- Models of scenes from the books

Winners will be awarded a prize at the finale where shortlisted work will be on display (guest authors have been known to request competition entries to put on their websites!).



All entries must arrive at the Schools Library Services (19 Ensign Street) by the close of Thursday 20th November for judging.