

The best children's novels of all time – The Telegraph, 6th March 2015

Carrie's War Nina Bawden (1973)

The wartime story of a girl and her brother evacuated to Wales.

Pinocchio Michael Morpurgo (2013)

The naughty puppet's story is retold from his own perspective in imitable fashion by Michael Morpurgo, with lovely drawings by Emma Chichester Clark.

Stig of the Dump Clive King (1963)

The story of Barney and Stig, who lives in the quarry at the bottom of the garden.

The Wolves of Willoughby Chase Joan Aiken (1962)

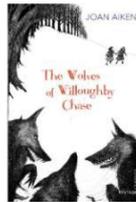
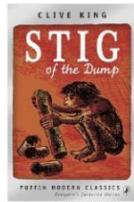
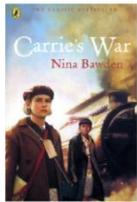
The first in a dizzying series that imagines a counterfactual England in which the Jacobites rule into the 19th century while the nefarious Hanoverians plot on the sidelines.

The Magician's Nephew C S Lewis (1955)

The first in The Chronicles of Narnia series.

Five Children on the Western Front Kate Saunders (2014)

E Nesbit's classic Five Children and It has been brilliantly transplanted by Kate Saunders to the trenches, in a moving homage. The winner of 2015's Costa children's book award.

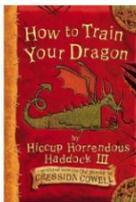
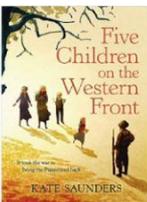


Charlotte's Web E B White (1952)

This American classic concerns a pig who is rescued from butchery by the web-weaving showmanship of a spider called Charlotte.

How to Train Your Dragon Cressida Cowell (2010)

The first in the successful series, which has been adapted for the cinema, is set in a fictional Viking world in which dragons are trained as pets.



South Sea Adventure Willard Price (1952)

The resourceful brothers quest rare animals the world over to take back to zoos, and avoid maiming or death only narrowly on each page.

Goodnight Mr Tom Michelle Magorian (1981)

Willy, an anaemic and neglected evacuee from south London, is stabled with the gruff bachelor Tom Oakley on his farm. Initially, it's rather a shock to them both but under Tom's hesitant care Willy thrives and Tom melts at the waif's gratitude.

Saffy's Angel Hilary McKay (2001)

This first instalment of McKay's marvellous series about the Casson family won the Whitbread Prize in 2001, but remains underrated and underread.

Charmed Life Diana Wynne Jones (1978)

A world of magicians and enchantments but also of castles, top hats and blue serge suits.



Dead Man's Cove Lauren St John (2011)

Akin to Enid Blyton's young sleuths, St John's modern heroine is a fearless adventuress, probing around her uncle's Cornish town for mysteries (which she certainly finds).

Noble Conflict Malorie Blackman (2014)

From the current Children's Laureate, a thought-provoking novel: young Kaspar joins the non-violent Guardians of his city, working to keep the rebels out. But he discovers he has not been told the whole truth.

The Abominables Eva Ibbotson (2014)

Based on a draft found after the author's death in 2010, this loveable story concerns a girl stolen from her Himalayan campsite by a yeti and taken to a secret paradise in a volcanic crater.

Ballet Shoes Noel Streatfeild (1936)

The classic ballet novel; once entranced, a reader can progress to the rest of the Shoes series.



The Little White Horse Elizabeth Goudge (1946)

A fantasy about a young orphan girl Maria Merryweather.

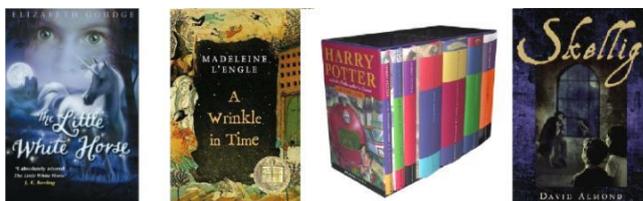
A Wrinkle in Time Madeleine L'Engle (1962)

Another fantasy, the first in the series about Meg Murry and the search for her missing father.

Skellig David Almond (1998)

A boy, his baby sister – and the creature in the garage.

Harry Potter J K Rowling (originally published 1997-2007)

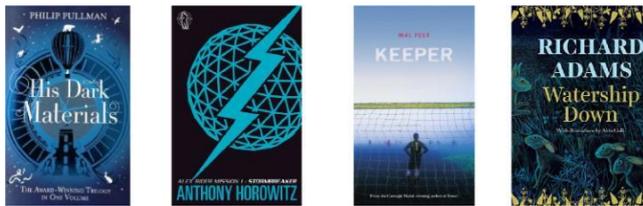


His Dark Materials Philip Pullman (originally published 1995-2000)
An epic trilogy of fantasy novels.

Stormbreaker Anthony Horowitz (2000)
The first of the Alex Rider spy novels: a James Bond Jr with all the gadgets and none of the misogyny.

Keeper Mal Peet (2003)
The ultimate football novel: Mal Peet's extraordinary debut unfolds as an interview between a sports reporter and the world's best goalkeeper.

Watership Down Richard Adams (1972)
After their burrow is gassed (a horrendous scene), the rabbits must quest for safety.

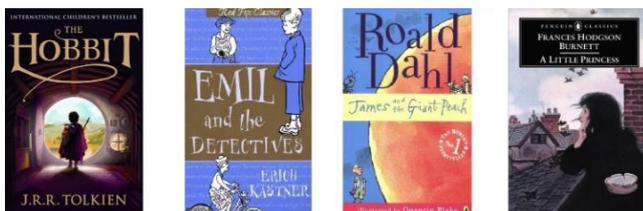


The Hobbit J R R Tolkein (1937)
Slim and perfectly formed, the tale of There and Back Again.

Emil and the Detectives Erich Kästner (1929)
Unusually for a children's book of the time, this charming whodunnit is set in a contemporary, realistic Berlin peopled with fairly rough types.

James and the Giant Peach Roald Dahl (1961)
As sensuous as anything Dahl ever wrote: who could forget James eating his way into the sweet, giant peach, or his perfectly named aunts — Spiker and Sponge?

The Little Princess Frances Hodgson Burnett (1905)
A once-cherished little girl is left orphaned and paupered; her headmistress turns sour and enslaves her as a starving servant at the school.



Just So Stories Rudyard Kipling (1902)
How did camel get his hump? How did the leopard get his spots? Kipling had a genius for arranging words and his sentences remain mesmerizing.

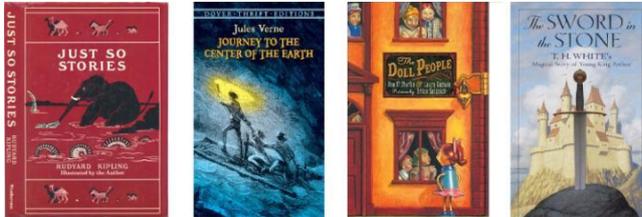
Journey to the Centre of the Earth Jules Verne (1864)
This veteran masterpiece of science fiction remains astonishing. A German professor and his nephew descend through an Icelandic volcano into the bowels of the earth.

The Doll People Ann M Martin and Laura Godwin (2000)
The dolls in a dolls' house might look inanimate, but what do they get up to at night? According to

this novel, they are casing the joint, tracking lost relatives and dodging that cruel fate – PDS (Permanent Doll State).

The Sword in the Stone T H White (1938)

A timelessly silly classic, the first novel in White's mischievous Once and Future King series. Young Arthur (nicknamed Wart) is transformed into all sorts of fish and fowl by his unorthodox tutor Merlin to learn the ways of the world.



The Secret Garden Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)

A magical tale about a troubled and unloved girl called Mary Lennox, who finds a secret garden in her uncle's lonely house.

Heidi Johanna Spyri (1880)

Alpine Heidi is sent to school in Frankfurt am Main, but grows pale and sickly in the city smog. Back in the mountains, she grows strong again on goat's milk and sunshine.

Sophie's Adventures Dick King-Smith (1991)

Three stories by the great chronicler of farmyard animals.

Paddington Races Ahead Michael Bond (2012)



How the Whale Became Ted Hughes (1963)

In the vein of Kipling's Just So Stories. Whereas Kipling omitted any mention of God, Ted Hughes's elegant and amusing creation tales bring the Divine Maker back into the story.

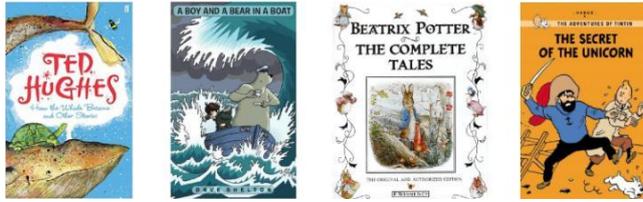
A Boy and a Bear in a Boat Dave Shelton (2012)

A boy and a bear go to sea, as you might expect. Less predictably, the bear eats extravagant sandwiches (of anchovy, banana and custard, crusts cut off) while the sea gets dangerously high: "They keep life interesting, don't they, emergencies?" says the bear.

Beatrix Potter: The Complete Tales Beatrix Potter (published 1902-30)

The Adventures of Tintin: The Secret of the Unicorn Hergé (1943)

Tintin helps Captain Haddock track down his ancestral treasure, hindered by nefarious crooks, tropical sharks and the captain's own weakness for rum.



Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Lewis Carroll (1865)

Alice's dream journey remains the classic fantasy. When the poor Mock Turtle sings his lament, "Beautiful Soup", we are reminded that there is sadness in Wonderland as well as great silliness.

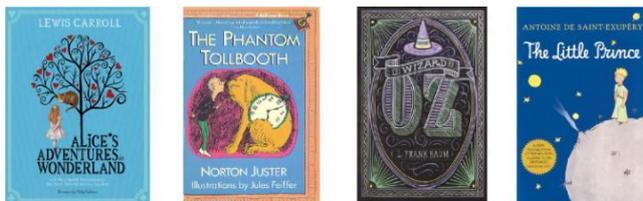
The Phantom Tollbooth Norton Juster (1970)

A bored boy named Milo comes by a magic tollbooth one afternoon. He decides to drive through it in his toy car: chaos, of course, ensues.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz L Frank Baum (1900)

The Little Prince Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943)

An exquisite novella about a bizarre, ethereal boy encountered by an airman while stranded in the desert overnight. The little prince asks him straightaway: "If you please, draw me a sheep."



The Winnie-the-Pooh Collection A A Milne (published originally in 1926)

Pippi Longstocking Astrid Lindgren (1945)

Swallows and Amazons Arthur Ransome (1930)

The first in a series set between the wars at a time when children mucked about in boats and built camps by themselves – or at least we like to think they did.

Five on a Treasure Island Enid Blyton (1951)



Jo of the Chalet School Elinor M Brent-Dyer (1926)

A girl would adore the Chalet School books – and, thrillingly for children who like to stick with a series they know and like, there are nearly 60 of them.

The Railway Children E Nesbit (1906)

No childhood is complete without this novel from 1905.

The Wind in the Willows Kenneth Grahame (1908)

The Story of Doctor Dolittle Hugh Lofting (1920)



The BFG Roald Dahl (1982)

The BFG is arguably Roald Dahl's greatest novel. But we shouldn't forget also his very silly Revolting Rhymes. Both are available with Quentin Blake's illustrations.

Fattypuffs and Thinifers André Maurois (1930)

The French classic (there known as Patapoufs et Filifers) is about a fat brother and a thin brother – and the battle that ensues between two warring nations.

Anne of Green Gables L M Montgomery (1908)

This is the first in the captivating series about the red-headed orphan.

Little Women Louisa May Alcott (1868)

Again, the first book in the series, about the four sisters Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy.



The Greengage Summer Rumer Godden (1958)

Or try The Peacock Spring by the same author. Both are exquisite coming-of-age stories, the first set in France and the second in India, to be read by a girl in her teens.

The Knife of Never Letting Go Patrick Ness (2008)

The first novel in the much-awarded Chaos Walking trilogy, set in a dystopian world wherein all creatures can see and hear each other's thoughts.

How I Live Now Meg Rosoff (2004)

Set in a future England under occupation, Meg Rosoff's brilliant novel predated the current vogue for dystopian teenage fiction but has yet to be bettered.

The Summer Book Tove Jansson (1972)

The Finnish novelist is best known for her series about the Moomins. Older children, however, will enjoy this beguiling novel about a girl and her grandmother, and the summer they spend together on a remote island.

