Reading Newsletter

Autumn 2024

Welcome to our Reading Ambassadors

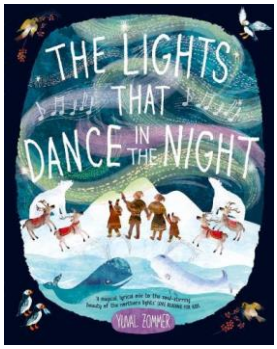
This term has seen the brand new position of reading ambassador open up to keen readers in Year 6. After a gruelling interview process in which candidates were asked about how they would spend a reading budget and how they would inspire reading at Strand, they have been busy promoting a love of books across the school.

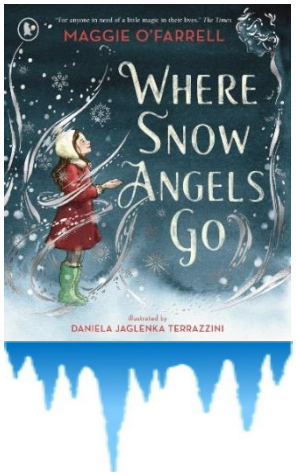
As well as looking after the reading area and helping keep the library tidy, they recently created this Christmas tree of books from a parcel donated to the school by the Read for Good charity and will be distributing them across the school next year.

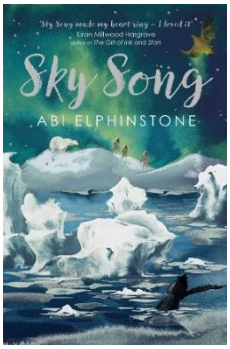
Their final job of 2024 was to help write this newsletter; check out the interviews with Strand readers below and don't forget to enter the book cover quiz they have designed.

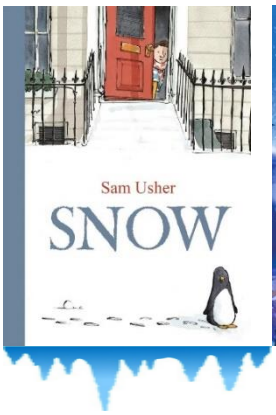
Well done to Amia, Anais, Bella, Carla, Eva, Grace, Karter, Kennesaw, Marlowe, Marni, Meriam, Nia, Oscar and Warisha.

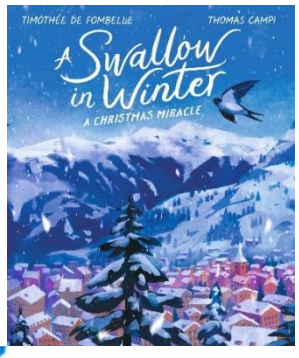
A Winter Wonderland of Books

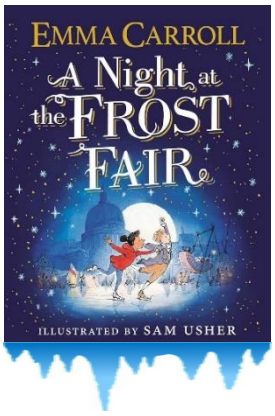


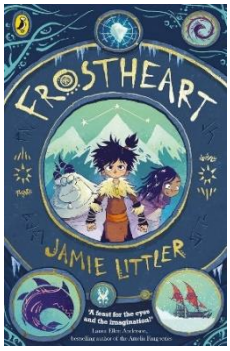






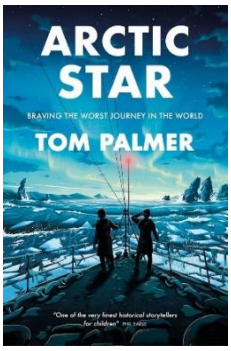


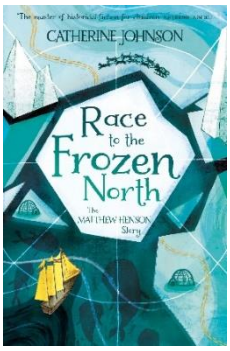


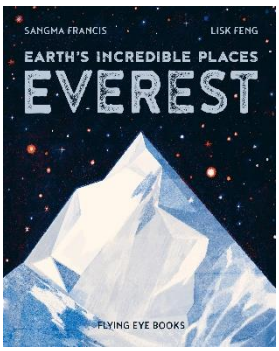


❄Picture

❄Fantasy

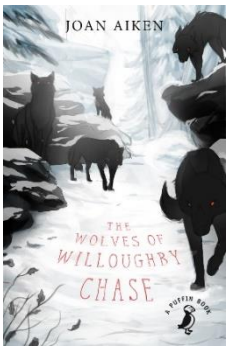


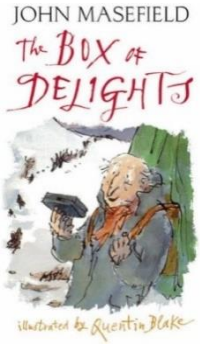




❄Factual

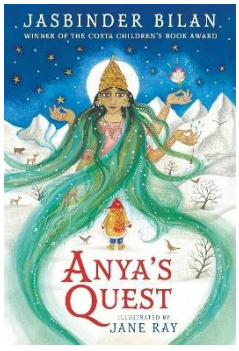
❄Classic

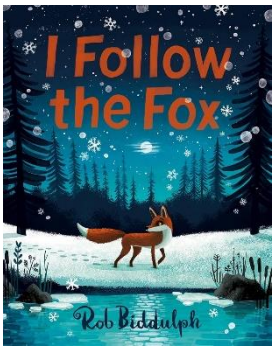


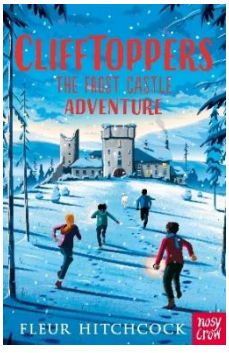


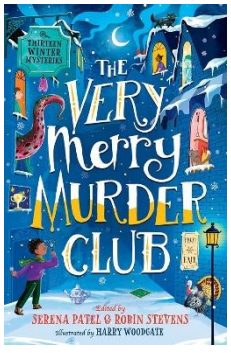
❄Adventure

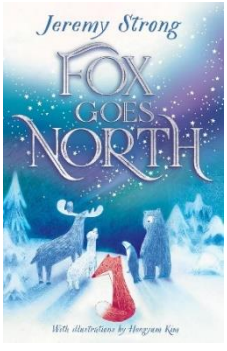
❄Animal

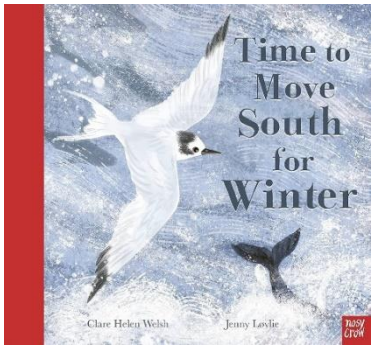












Author of the Term

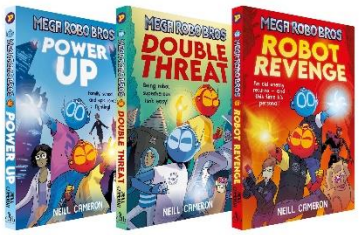
Neill Cameron

Neill Cameron is an award-winning author and cartoonist. He is the creator of several comic books, including the Mega Robo Bros series and How to Make Awesome Comics. He is also the author/illustrator of Freddy vs School and Freddy and the New Kid – hilarious, fully illustrated middle-grade novels. Neill's comics appear regularly in The Phoenix, the weekly story comic.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE CHILDHOOD BOOK AND WHY?

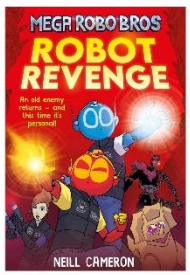
This is a really hard question but I think I'd have to say J.R.R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. My Dad read it to me and my brother as our bedtime story when we were little and it was brilliant because, apart from being an amazing story filled with incredible characters and fantastical worlds and action, it went on for AGES.

WHICH OF YOUR OWN BOOKS IS YOUR FAVOURITE AND WHY?



My favourite book is usually whatever I'm working on next! So I'd have to say the next volume of Mega Robo Bros, which I'm working on at the moment, and I'm really, REALLY excited about.

WHY DO YOU CHOOSE TO READ?



Reading is just the best. Like, genuinely the best idea human beings ever came up with. A way to share the ideas from the inside of one person's head to another. A way to experience whole worlds of imagination and experience you never would have had access to otherwise. It expands our lives and makes them infinitely richer. All in all, I am a bit of a fan.

An Interview with Mr Thorne by Bella and Amia

Would you describe yourself as a bookworm?
When I did my reading club at Strand I called it the Bookworms Club. I don't read as much as I used to and listen to audio books more than reading print books at the moment. I have read 14 books this year so about one a month but before I became a dad I read a lot more.

Has there been any book that has been an inspiration to your life?
I like writing books so I often read books which make me inspired to write myself and there're loads of those. I like Ross Montgomery, David Almond, Piers Torday but there isn't one specific book. I like reading and writing horror stories and I don't think that are enough horror books for children so it tends to be scary books for adults which I get inspiration from.

Who was your favourite character as a child?
I read lots of Roald Dahl books as a kid and my favourite characters would be Sophie from the BFG, Matilda and Danny the Champion of the World.

Which character do you most dislike and why?
That's a great question. I most dislike Mrs Coulter from the His Dark Materials books. She is a loathsome woman.

Which 5 books would be in your Christmas stocking?
My dream Christmas stocking would include books I actually already own. I'd start with a Paddington Bear book because I love him and How Winston Delivered Christmas which I am currently reading to my little one. I'd probably like a book about cricket because I love cricket and maybe a book about movies. My final choice would be a recent children's novel that I haven't heard of that somebody could choose for me.

If you wrote a book, what would it be about?
That's easy because I have written a book. It hasn't been published yet and I need to write another draft but some teachers in the school have actually read it. It's called Danger Night and it is about a group of children who are on a sleepover. They watch a scary movie that they shouldn't and it's cursed so all the monsters come alive and they have to survive the night.

An Interview with Miss Hill by Anais and Nia

How often do you read on a scale from 1 to 10?
(1 is not at all and 10 is all the time)
Though I would love to say 10, if I'm honest I'm probably about a 7. Although there are definitely times when I am a 10, there are also times when I hate to admit it, but I'm a 3.

What are your favourite books?
Little Women, Now We Are Six and Frankenstein

What about your favourite series?
Hmm, a tricky question! As a child I would have definitely said either The Hunger Games or Harry Potter.

Describe your favourite scene in a book
I'm very lucky that I get to share one of my favourite books with the children I teach in Year 5, so I think I'll choose a scene from that. In Frankenstein, right at the end of the story, the monster asks the doctor why he had created him only to leave him and for him to end up all alone. Dr Frankenstein replies that he isn't the only one who is lonely and that they had both suffered because of these others. I thought it was really interesting that the author chose to give the characters such a close bond and show their similarities, even though they didn't always feel it and often went as far as hating each other.

If you could be like any character from a book, which would you be?
Jo March from Little Women. She is adventurous, determined and headstrong and fights for what she thinks is right. She isn't perfect, she can be stubborn and she doesn't always put her point across in the right way, but ultimately she always has good intentions.

Did books inspire you to be a teacher?
Yes. I had an English teacher in secondary school who really inspired me and my love of reading. She often recommended books that she thought I would like and spent time discussing them with me. I am always honest with my classes that my love for reading has fluctuated throughout my life and when I went to university to train to be a teacher I fell out of love with reading as I felt overwhelmed by everything I had to do. However, much like anything else, reading is all about enjoyment and luckily I was able to find books that drew me back in.

An Interview with Mrs Jones by Warisha, Anais and Nia

What is your favourite book and why?
Choosing just one book is difficult because my favourite changes depending on how I am feeling but I would recommend anything by Alastair Chisholm (the most recent one I've read is I Am Wolf). I love sci-fi and his books are always fantastic adventures that tell us something about our own world too. If I were in the mood for something magical instead then it would be a tough choice between two different series: Nevermoor and Malamander.

Who is your favourite book character?
Again, it's hard to choose only one but I'll go for Storm from Quiet Storm by Kimberley Whittam. Despite being shy, she has the strength to be confident in herself and chase her dreams.

How much time do you spend reading every day?
I don't always have time during the week but I usually spend at least an hour at the weekend and during the holidays I often read a whole book in a day.

How old were you when you first started to love books?
I was probably about 8. My dad used to take me to the library every Monday evening and I would come home with 4 books each week. I also had a small bookcase at home mostly filled with Famous Five and I read all of them (in order) over and over again.

What book do you recommend for younger readers?
I think there are some brilliant graphic novels that work for any age and would suggest something like Peanut, Butter and Crackers. It is funny and cute and reminds me of the Garfield books I used to read when I was younger.

What is the longest book you've read?
If you're talking about children's books, The Murderer's Ape is 624 pages but such a fantastic read that it flies by so don't let the length put you off!

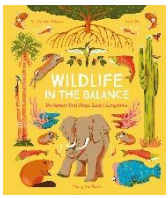
What are you reading now?
I am halfway through a book called Wolfstongue which is the first of a trilogy. It is about a boy called Silas who finds it hard to speak and so struggles at school. One day, he helps a talking wolf with an injured paw and that is the start of an adventure in an alternate world where foxes have enslaved other creatures and control an underground city. I'm really enjoying it so far.

Spark! School Book Awards

These children have been hard at work reading factual books to help Mrs Jones who is on the shortlisting panel for the non-fiction category. Check out some of their reviews below.

Year 5 Elaine, Hamza, Isla, Kolka, Reina, Rushai, Safiya, Salem and Viyona

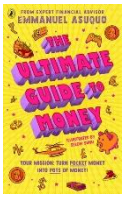
Year 6 Arthur, Bella, Georgios, Inigo, Iustin, Kaysen, Majid, Marni, Meriam, Muscab, Sophia, Theresa and Zubeyr



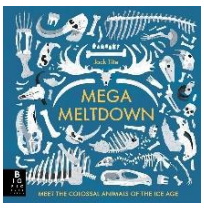
Wildlife in the Balance – the Species That's Shape Earth's Ecosystems

With its beautiful illustrations by Terri Po, and interesting facts from Dr Sharon Wismer, this book is sure to please any non-fiction lovers. It is a fabulous book about, you guessed it...ecosystems! From salmon in the Pacific Northwest to beavers in the Elbe River to the green-backed firecrown in the Valdivian temperate forest, this book takes a deep dive into keystone species around the world. There are lots of non-fiction books nowadays, so why specifically this one? Something that stands out is the illustrations. Their cartoony look makes it feel fun but, with the simple explanations, they help to visualise what this world, and this book, has to offer. Which, I might add, is incredible things. Overall, this book is just what I hoped it would be when I first had a brief flick through it, which is why I 100% recommend it to absolutely anyone, non-fiction or fiction loving. **Marni**

The Ultimate Guide to Money



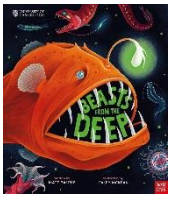
This book is amazing. The author makes you feel like he is talking to you and he is very entertaining. He doesn't stay on one topic too long so it never gets boring and it has illustrations on every page that are cartoony and fun. Overall it's a really lovely book. **Isla**



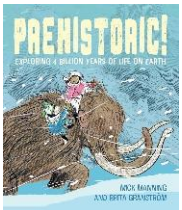
Mega Meltdown

This is book is factual and interesting - it is about animals and the ice age. My favourite page features the extinct Smilodon which used to live in the Americas. Although we don't know if it had stripy fur, we often call it a sabre-toothed tiger. **Muscab**

Beasts from the Deep

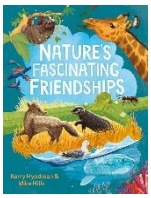


I personally think that it is a great book telling people fascinating things about nature, specifically about things that are deep in the seas and oceans. I discovered that there are different zones in the ocean and they have different types of animals. My favourite fact is that sperm whales eat giant squids. We know this happens because we have found undigested squid beaks in their stomachs and sucker shaped scars on their skin! **Georgios**

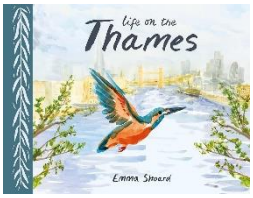


Prehistoric!

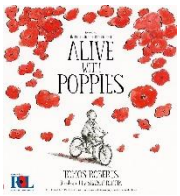
I liked this book because it took you through Earth's history and told you about the different ancestors of humans and other animals. It even told you how life was on Earth before there were any living beings. It has nice colourful pictures which really puts into your brain what life would have been like over the last four billions years. **Safiya**



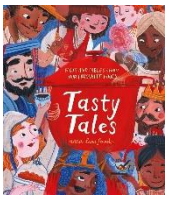
Nature's Fascinating Friendships
This is an amazing book telling you hundreds of facts about animals and raising awareness about how they interact. It is easy to read and there are some questions for you to answer as you go along. The pictures are amazing and look really cool. **Kolka**

Life on the Thames


I really like the pictures because they are watercolours. It is very cool because it tells you about people who live alongside the river. It also tells you about all the types of animals including snakes and voles (which are like rats but have small eyes and long sensitive whiskers). My favourite page is about otters. They are from the same family as stoats, weasels and badgers but they prefer to live in water rather than in the forest and they are very playful. I think it would be a really good book for Year 4 (because they go on a trip to the Thames) and older. **Bella**

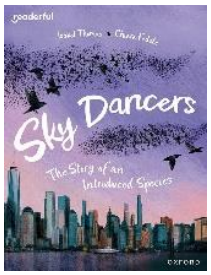


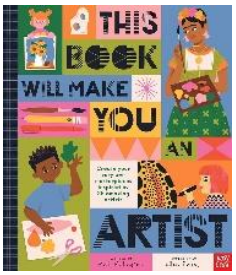
Alive with Poppies
It's a book which is almost a thank you to people who fought in wars. I liked the fact that even though it is about something sad it is still a happy book. It is more of a poem than a story and it has lovely black and white illustrations with only the poppies being red. **Arthur**

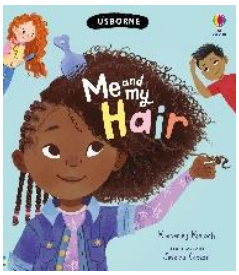
Tasty Tales


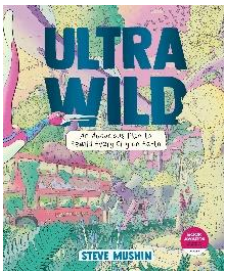
This book makes you travel the world with recipes that you just simply adore; some you would probably not know and some which are familiar. They have very cute and cartoony pictures to make people understand very easily. Recommend for ages 6 and above. **Viyona**

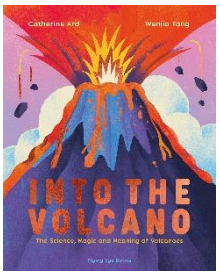
The huge selection has been whittled down to this longlist of 12.

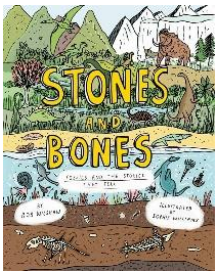


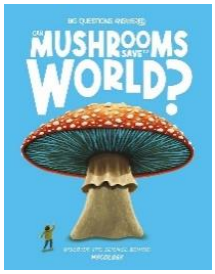


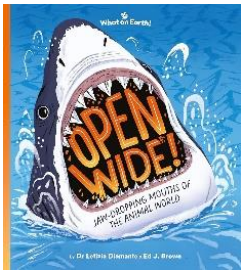


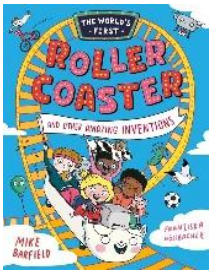


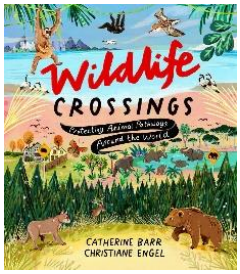


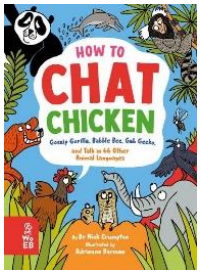


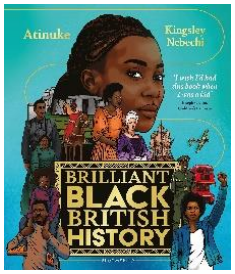












Click on the images to find out more. Which one do you think you would choose?
We will find out which ones made it onto the shortlist in January.

Prize Quiz

Can you identify these books from their covers?
There are two ways to enter:

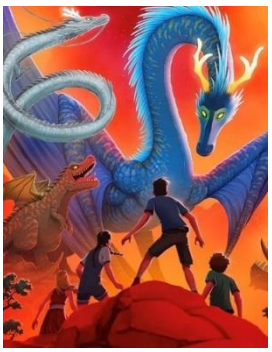
- Use the assignment on Google Classroom
- Bring in your list and hand to your teacher (remember to put your name on it)

The closing date is Friday January 10th.

1.

2.

3.

4.


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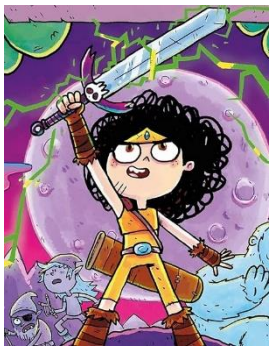

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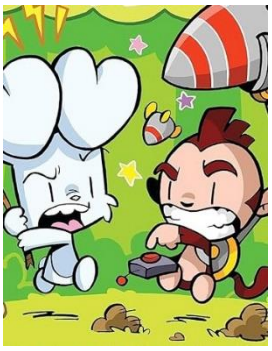
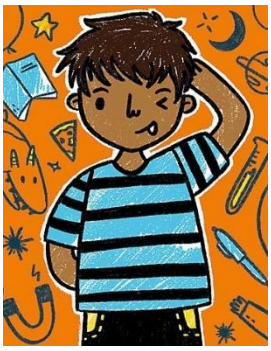


9.

10.

11.


12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

Hint: if you are finding it tricky, try looking at our suggested list of recently published books.

Reading During the Holidays

Don't forget we have access to books, comics and magazines on the Sora app. You can find instructions for logging in on the Strand website.

The books available change regularly so it is worth logging in to see what is there. Check out the latest arrivals.

Libraries Online

Have you discovered BorrowBox or Libby?

They are apps that allow you to read books available at the library.

If you haven't tried them yet, follow these four steps:

1. Join your local library
2. Download the app on your device:
   - iOS devices: Apple App Store
   - Android devices: Google Play
   - Amazon Fire tablets: Amazon Appstore
3. Sign in with your library card details
4. Now you are ready to choose from the huge range of books online and start reading.

If you are looking for more inspiration, check out the favourite children's book of the year as decided by Scholastic, the Book Trust or Waterstones.
The LoveReading4Kids website has also got a great list or you can scroll through their Books of the Month. You get 10% off any books you buy from them while they contribute 25% for our school to get more books for our classroom shelves.

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