

Great Books For The Under Sevens

Choosing books for young children is not simple. There is so much choice it can be overwhelming. The best advice for parents would be to stick to the classics. But what makes a classic?

It is tempting to go into shops such as Tesco or your local newsagent and pick up the latest on the shelf directed at children. You will see cheap, gaudy, badly produced books or comics by unknown authors featuring brightly coloured unicorns, multiracial princesses and rainbows. You know the ones? Packaged inside a plastic bag, usually containing a free 'gift.'

It seems no one can write a book for children anymore without trying to 'culturally enrich' their minds and we know what that means! Therefore, the following essentials are recommended for your child's bookshelf. These books have been around for years; they are timeless in content, have been written by authors who understand the minds of children, and are full of iconic artwork. They are all books children will return to again and again, and keep in their collections for years to come.

Here are thirty 'greats' for the under sevens:

Peepo - Alan and Janet Ahlberg

Each Peach Pear Plum - Alan and Janet Ahlberg

Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See? - Bill Martin

Polar Bear, Polar Bear What Do You Hear? - Bill Martin

Where's Mrs Bear? - Ingela P Arrhenius

Spot's First Walk - Eric Hill

The Hungry Caterpillar - Eric Carle

The Bad Tempered Ladybird - Eric Carle

Rosies Walk - Pat Hutchins

A Quiet Night In - (*and other books about the Large family*) - Jill Murphy

Whatever Next - Jill Murphy

Owl Babies - Martin Waddell
The Tiger Who Came to Tea - Judith Kerr (*please ignore the fact that the tiger is all alleged to represent the Gestapo! Just see it as a great story!*)
Dogger - Shirley Hughes
Alfie Gets In First (*and other Alfie books*)- Shirley Hughes
The Gruffalo - Julia Donaldson
Monkey Puzzle - Julia Donaldson
The Rainbow Fish - Marcus Pfister
The Tale of Peter Rabbit - Beatrix Potter
The Snowman - Raymond Briggs
Father Christmas- Raymond Briggs
Eat Your Peas - Nick Sharratt
Once Upon A Time - (*a great 'pop in the slot' make up your own story book*) - Nick Sharratt
Dear Zoo - Rod Campbell
Paddington Bear - Michael Bond
Meg and Mog - Helen Nicoll and Jan Pienkowski
Where The Wild Things Are - Maurice Sendak
We're All Going On A Bear Hunt - Michael Rosen
Now We Are Six - AA Milne
Green Eggs And Ham - Dr Seuss

These authors have written many other books and obviously this is not a definitive list. A great deal depends on children's tastes and preferences. Don't forget traditional nursery rhymes and fairy tales. (Nick Sharratt produces some lovely pop up rhyming ones). They are an essential part of our literary tradition.

Also, don't forget non-fiction. Children start to be curious about all sorts of things; space, transport, animals - you name it! They particularly love picture atlases and will pour over them for hours.

Please feel free to add to this list; all suggestions are very welcome.