

# Puffinalia

for educators

## Melina Marchetta

on writing for her daughter

Chapter books:  
the best of 2020

Why reading  
aloud is good  
for the brain

Non-fiction  
**in focus**

Middle-grade  
must-haves

# PICTURE



These gorgeous Puffin picture books are being released in the first half of 2020.

# THIS



## Roo Knows Blue

*Renee Trembl*

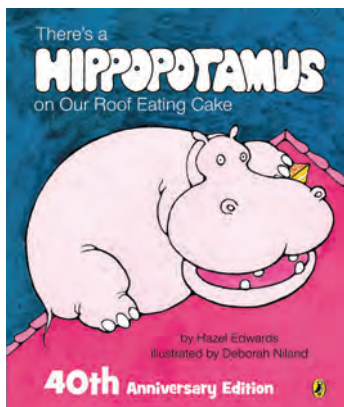
Sing along with Roo and Possum as they practise their colours. Out January.



## Goodnight, Glow Worms

*Aura Parker*

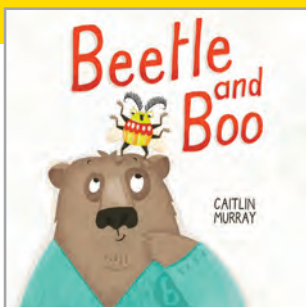
A cuddly, snuggly bedtime book filled with joyous illustrations and bouncing rhythms. Out April.



## There's a Hippopotamus on the Roof Eating Cake

*Hazel Edwards, Deborah Niland*

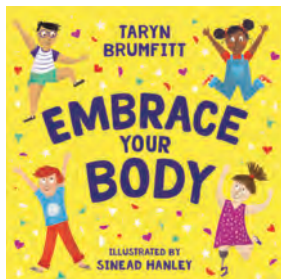
A special 40th anniversary edition about the imaginary hippo who can do what he likes on the roof. Out March.



## Beetle and Boo

Caitlin Murray

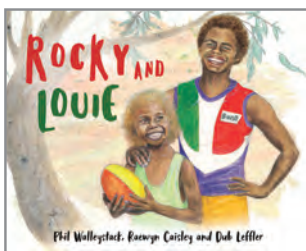
Brave and boastful Beetle says she's not scared of anything. Will Boo prove her wrong? Out February.



## Embrace Your Body

Taryn Brumfitt, Sinead Hanley

Based on the song written by Taryn Brumfitt, this book will help everyone appreciate their body. Out June.



## Rocky and Louie

Dub Leffler, Phillip

Walleystack, Raewyn Caisley  
Louie's big brother Rocky has big dreams to chase but will he forget his connection to country? Out May.

## Dear educator,

This year we are very proud to celebrate 80 years of Puffin. The first Puffin books were released at the start of World War II to help children understand the evacuations. Very soon they moved from non-fiction to fiction, with *Worzel Gummidge* published in 1941 and titles like *Charlotte's Web* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* later appearing. The next few decades produced some of the most popular books in the world, including *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Where's Spot?* In Australia, 1963 saw the release of *Kangaroo Tales*, followed by *The Bunyip of Berkeley's Creek* and *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat*. From its beginning, Puffin Australia was committed to sharing Australian stories, building the Australian identity and providing quality literature for children, an ethos that exists to this day.

We hope you enjoy this overview of some of our books for the start of 2020. The title to our little booklet, *Puffinalia*, is a nod to the magazine, launched in 1977, which was sent to Australian Puffin Club members.

Best wishes,  
The Puffin  
Australia team

*Celebrating*  
**80**  
years of Puffin



Some of the original editions of *Puffinalia*. Photo courtesy Margot Lindgren.

# Best books for beginner readers

These books for beginner readers feature short, easy-to-read chapters, age appropriate vocabulary, great stories and plenty of illustrations to assist comprehension and add to the fun. Best of all they each kick off a series, which is a great way to get kids hooked on reading.

## **The Besties**

**Felice Arena, illustrated by Tom Jellett**

Neighbours and besties Oliver and Ruby get up to all sorts of backyard adventures as imagination and play rule the day! This series is about kids being kids and highlights familiar situations most children will relate to. Each book features extra content that includes jokes, a comic and a ukulele song with instructions on how to play. The first two books in the series are out in January.

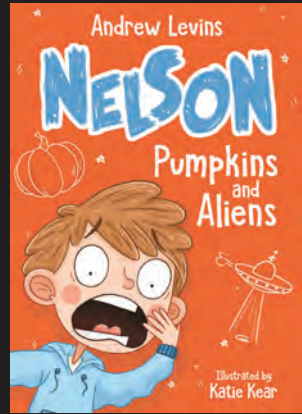






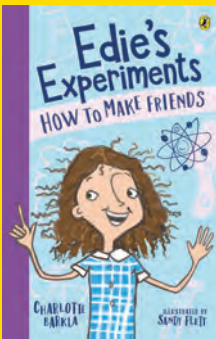
## What Zola Did Melina Marchetta, illustrated by Deb Hudson

An entire generation has grown up with Melina Marchetta's books and there is a reason she's so beloved. One of her unparalleled qualities is her ability to create real characters with affection and humour. Zola lives on Boomerang Street with her mum and nonna. Every day of the week is a new adventure, but no matter how hard she tries, she can't keep out of trouble! The first book is out in June. Read our interview with Melina on page 8 to learn about her inspiration for the series.



## Nelson Andrew Levins, illustrated by Katie Kear

Nelson hates vegetables but his weirdo family loves them, as does his best friend Olive. When an alien race swoops into town and holds his school hostage, will eating vegetables give him superpowers? And most importantly, has Nelson worked out what scurvy is yet? The first book is out in April.



## Edie's Experiments 1: How to Make Friends Charlotte Barkla, illustrated by Sandy Flett

Edie loves science. When she starts at a new school, she tries to impress everyone with a slime experiment – what could go wrong? Great for understanding what it's like to be the new kid, and a springboard to discuss STEM. The first book is out in February.

*Charlotte Barkla is a debut author who worked as an engineer and physics teacher before rediscovering her love for children's literature.*



# Edie's Experiments

Follow-up a reading of  
*Edie's Experiments* with this  
fun do-it-yourself slime.

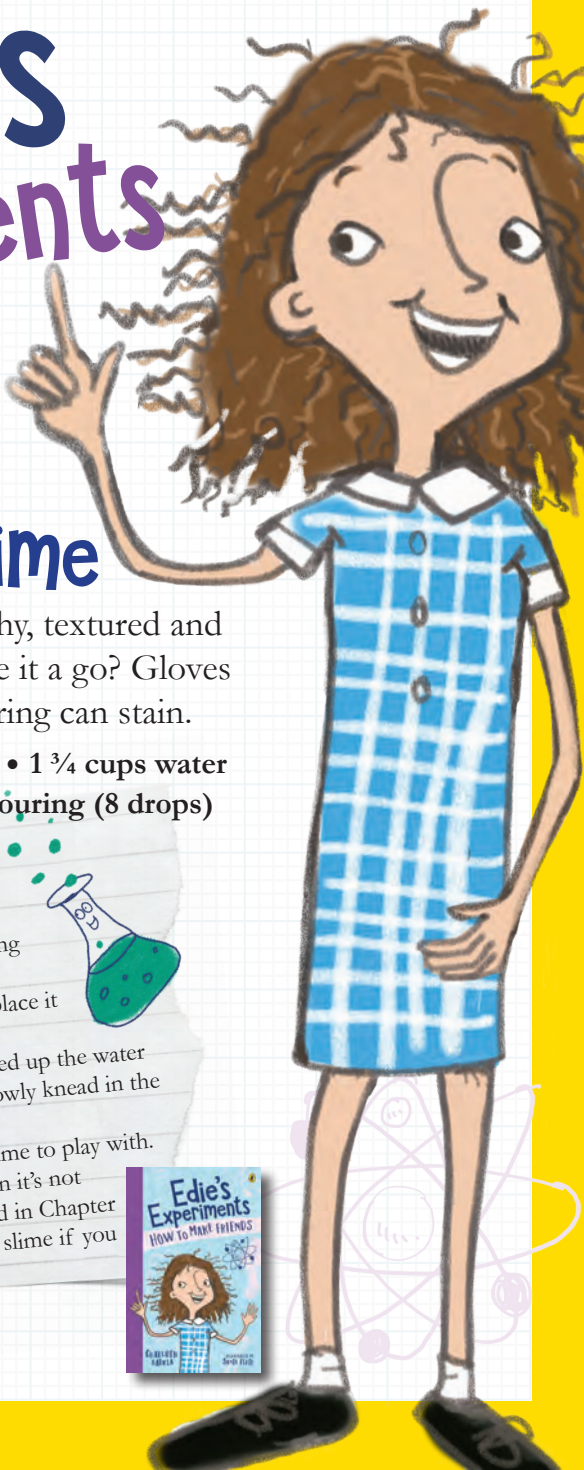
## Green Chia Slime

This slime is deliciously squelchy, textured and taste-safe for kids. Why not give it a go? Gloves optional, though food colouring can stain.

**EQUIPMENT:** •  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chia seeds •  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups water  
• 3 cups cornstarch • Food colouring (8 drops)

### Method:

1. Place the chia seeds in a large bowl and pour the water over the top.
2. Add a few drops of green food colouring (or a different colour if you prefer!).
3. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and place it in the fridge overnight.
4. The next day, the chia seeds have soaked up the water and are ready to be turned into slime! Slowly knead in the corn starch.
5. Ta-dah! You have a globby blob of slime to play with. Make sure you store it in the fridge when it's not being used (don't let it melt like Edie did in Chapter 5!) and add some water to revitalise the slime if you need to.



# MEET **the author** Melina Marchetta



Melina Marchetta is an award-winning young adult, adult fantasy and crime fiction novelist, most famous for her coming-of-age novel *Looking for Alibrandi*. So why is she now writing for 6-8 year-olds?



**M**y 8-year-old daughter is a very reluctant reader. When she was in Year 1 she especially struggled with literacy so I wrote it for her. Although the character is named Zola (who is named after a young friend) the character is very much based on Bianca. I'm always searching for diversity in books for any age.

## **What does Bianca think of the series?**

She is very excited about it. Apart from our dog Gigi being in it, so are the dogs next door, as well as my nephew, whose middle name is Alessandro. In the books, Alessandro lives behind Zola and they hang out via a little gate in the fence. We will soon move into a house that will be separated by a similar door, so they are both excited. The other night Bianca read a chapter to my mum and her cousin and they were very charmed.

## **Is Zola's Nonna Rosa similar to anyone in your family?**

My mum is a bit like Nonna Rosa. We went on holidays once and left our dog Gigi with her and she had to build a barrier around her entire garden. The moment we let Gigi loose in the backyard, she



jumped the barriers and went for a dig-a-thon. It's all we heard about the whole time we were away.

### **Are you a passionate gardener?**

I'm a terrible gardener. The problem is that I love gardens, so I would be the happiest person in the world if I had a personal gardener. Once in a while I tell myself that I'm going to grow tomatoes. I've done that successfully once, but it's all about the quality of the soil. I also love eggplant and capsicum.

### **What is your favourite scene in the first book?**

My daughter is a busybody about what the neighbours are up to so I love the scene where Zola and her cousin are on the trampoline reporting on what neighbouring kids are doing.

### **The illustrations are just gorgeous. How did you feel when you first saw them?**

I've never had illustrations in my novels before so the visuals have always been in my head. I love Deb's illustrations because she has captured the personalities of humans and dogs perfectly.

### **What other types of adventures will Zola have during the rest of the week?**

My father passed away this year and prior to that he had purchased a little yellow boat to fix up for his

grandchildren. In the New Year my cousins and my parents' neighbours and my nephews are determined to work on it, so one of the books will be based on the little yellow boat and what happens when Zola and Alessandro and the dogs get into the paint!



### ***What Zola did on Monday***

launches in June with book 2, ***What Zola did on Tuesday***, releasing in August. The books are 'like a warm hug' and are filled with beautiful illustrations by Deb Hudson.

# The timeless appeal of reading ALLOUD



Children love having books read to them and it has been proven to give them a cognitive boost. But it's not just kids' brains that benefit, there's a positive effect on everyone, no matter what age.

## Reading aloud is good for the listener and the reader

For the reader, they're using a different part of the brain than used for silent reading. This stimulus is so beneficial that reading aloud is widely recommended for dementia patients. New research shows it aids verbal memory and improves vocabulary. For the listener, as well as improving concentration, vocabulary and literacy, being read to enhances imagination. In fact children who are often read to show more brain activity in regions that process visual information. This is even when listening to a story with no illustrations; the act of picturing it in their mind stimulating these areas.

## Reading to older kids

People often read to young children

but it's also beneficial for older students. Teachers can demonstrate phrasing, intonation, pronunciation and cadence. Audio books can also be used for this purpose, though they won't always have local accents. With older students, books can be chosen that interest the reader as well as the listener. In this case, the teachers' genuine interest in the story will convey another important message: *that reading is something to enjoy.*

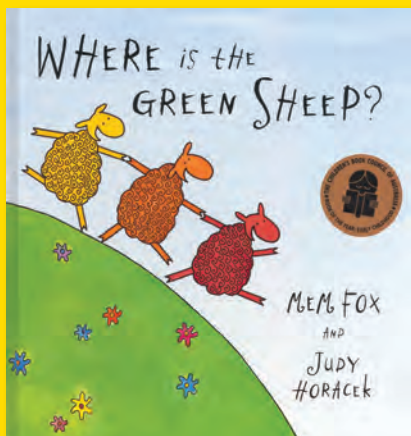
## What if I can't read aloud?

Some people are confident silent readers but find reading aloud stressful. If reading to another human is embarrassing, research has found that reading aloud to dogs is beneficial to both the owner and, would you believe it, the pet!

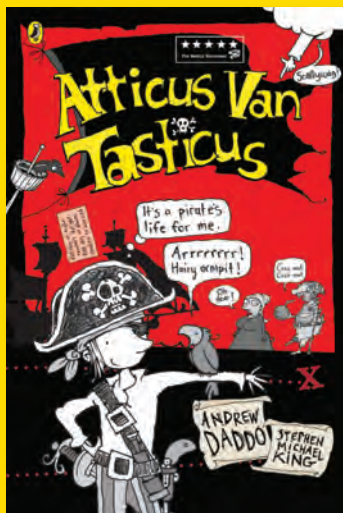
It doesn't matter if words are mispronounced, or the pace is slow and stumbling, reading aloud strengthens neural pathways and introduces words that might not be used in everyday conversation.

## Something for homework?

To improve the reading aloud experience, we recommend tips from one of Australia's most beloved storytellers, Mem Fox. See [memfox.com/for-teachers/for-anyone-interested-a-read-aloud-lesson/](http://memfox.com/for-teachers/for-anyone-interested-a-read-aloud-lesson/)



## Why not try?



### Atticus Van Tasticus

Andrew Daddo and  
Stephen Michael King

Lots of fun to read aloud because of all the silly names, the puns and the pirate voices that can be used. The illustrations are also great for sharing and laughing over.

### Where is the Green Sheep?

Mem Fox and Judy Horacek

This is one of the best-selling picture books of the last decade for a very good reason. Children love having it read to them again and again.



### Alice-Miranda at School

Jacqueline Harvey

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, this mystery series will keep any class hooked. Plus it's fun doing different voices and saying all the long names.

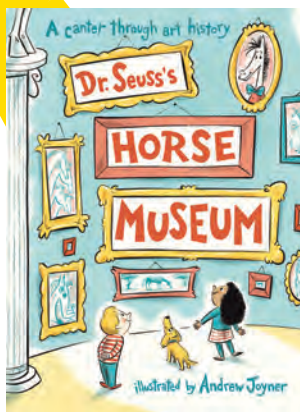
# NON-fiction in focus

Some kids just love reading facts. Feed their curiosity with these great books.



## If a child is sporty . . .

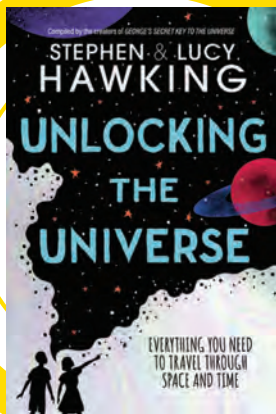
Be inspired by stars like Ash Barty and Sam Kerr with the wonderful picture book **Super Sporty Girls**. Complete with photos of the sportswomen involved, this book will motivate any child, especially girls, to get moving. **Ages 4-8.**



## If a child likes drawing . . .

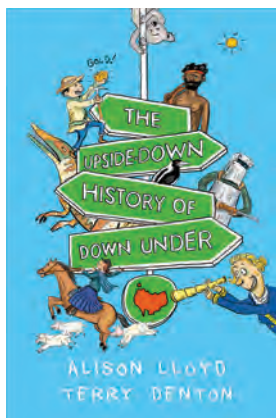
Try **Dr. Seuss's Horse Museum**, which is based on a manuscript and sketches by Dr. Seuss and illustrated by Australia's own Andrew Joyner. It's a fun look at what art is all about, told by a horse. From Chinese terracotta statues to cave painting, surrealism, impressionism and more. **Ages 6-15.**





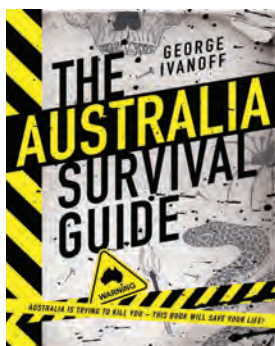
## If a child is a stargazer . . .

Try **Unlocking the Universe** by Stephen and Lucy Hawking, which is a must-read for kids interested in space, physics, matter, and life itself. Bringing together facts and essays from the world's leading scientists, everything is simply explained whilst at the same time up-to-date. **Ages 10-18.**



## If a child loves history . . .

Try this fresh view of Australia's past with **The Upside-down History of Down Under**, by Allison Lloyd and Terry Denton. Fun, fascinating and interesting and filled with fabulous pictures, this also won the NSW Premier's Young People's History Prize in 2019. **Ages 7-18.**



## If a child seeks adventure . . .

Then **The Australia Survival Guide** by George Ivanoff may one day save their life. Containing tips on how to handle everything from mosquito attacks to cyclones, jellyfish stings to our own Aussie vernacular, kids will LOVE the fun facts and the Dead-O-Meter. **Ages 6-16.**



## If a child wants to save the planet . . .

There are two books we'd recommend: **How to Save the Whole Stinkin' Planet** by Lee Constable and illustrated by James Hart and **Hope: 50 Ways to Help Our Planet Every Day**. Both contain fun, easy-to-take steps that will make a real difference to our environment and future. **Ages 6-14.**



# Reading for PLEASURE

Not only does reading for the pure joy of it improve literacy, numerous studies have shown it enhances maths ability. These fun books are perfect for independent readers in years 3-6.



## The Peski Kids: Near Extinction

*R.A. Spratt*

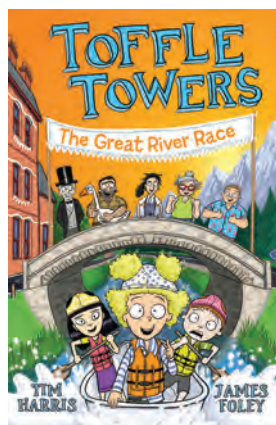
This hilarious series, from the bestselling author of Friday Barnes, stars the Peski family, their dog and the next door neighbour. In book 4, the annual geography excursion soon turns to chaos.  
Out January.



## Kensy and Max: Freefall

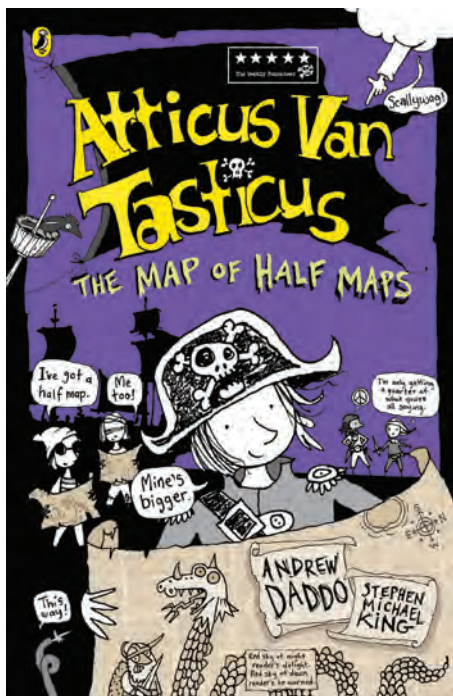
*Jacqueline Harvey*

The young spies' adventures continue. This time they're holidaying in New York when they find themselves embroiled in a most unusual case. Will they save their friends and family from danger?  
Out March.



## Toffle Towers: The Great River Race

*Tim Harris, James Foley*  
Think Fawltly Towers meets Treehouse and you'll understand this madcap series. In book 2, young Chegwin finds himself in a race to save his hotel, Toffle Towers, and the beloved staff.  
Out January.



## Atticus Van Tasticus: The Map of Half Maps

Andrew Daddo, Stephen Michael King

Having escaped certain disaster on the high seas, Atticus and his motley crew of pirates are back, looking for treasure. This laugh-out-loud series is full of wacky illustrations that will tickle any landlubber's funny bone. Out March.

## Drop everything and read

Many schools have quiet reading time as a regular part of the day. It's important that teachers read too in that period to show that reading is for everyone and something to make time for. Plus here's some extra motivation: a University of Sussex study found that reading something enjoyable reduces stress by up to 68 per cent and acts faster than listening to music or drinking a cup of tea.



## Super Sidekicks: Trial of Heroes

Gavin Aung Than

Any kid who loves The Bad Guys or Big Nate will love this series, which is jam-packed full of illustrations, just like a graphic novel. The Super Sidekicks have saved the world but will they pass the test to join HERO? Out May.



# OLDER READERS

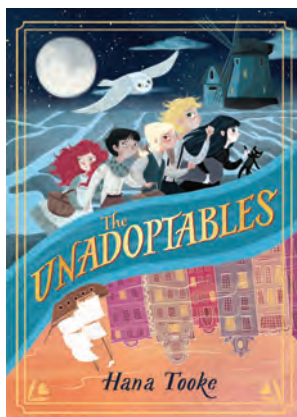
As tastes mature so should reading material. Here are three stand-out Puffin titles we'd recommend for Years 5-8.



## Orphans of the Tide

*Struan Murray*

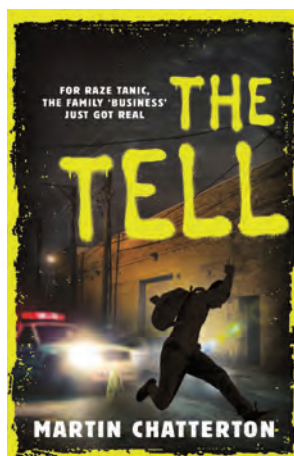
In a drowned world, the City is mankind's last refuge. When a mysterious boy emerges from a dead whale's belly, the superstitious citizens assume he is the Enemy, come once again. Out February.



## The Unadoptables

*Hana Tooke*

Nevermoor fans will love this. Five friends flee their orphanage in an adventure set in Amsterdam in the 1800s. Packed with villains, puppets and pirate ships, will they find their mysterious new home? Out May.



## The Tell

*Martin Chatterton*

Rey Tanic is not like other 14 year olds. His dad is a mafia boss. His dad is also in jail. When Rey's life explodes, every decision he makes will shape the rest of his life. Out May.



## From Puffin to Penguin

Books with the Puffin logo are aimed at readers 12 years of age and under, whilst those with the Penguin logo are for teen readers and older. For suggested texts for years 5-12, see [penguin.com.au/articles/2484-penguin-2019-secondary-catalogue](https://penguin.com.au/articles/2484-penguin-2019-secondary-catalogue)

