

Text rationales for Year 6

Text	Rationale
The Arrival	This wordless picture book is a silent tribute to every displaced person, migrant or refugee who has made a journey. Children will develop empathy for those facing difficult, life-changing circumstances and explore themes such as migration, relationships, community and belonging. Shaun Tan is a beloved, award-winning children's author-illustrator who brings difficult concepts into sharp focus; children will recognise his distinctive style if they have previously studied <i>The Lost Thing</i> or many of his other well-known titles.
The Invention of Hugo Cabret	Also a blockbuster motion picture, <i>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</i> is part novel and part wordless picture book. In fact, Brian Selznick became the first author to win the prestigious Caldecott Medal (usually awarded to picture books) with this unique offering. Reading like a movie on paper, children will be challenged to fill the gaps by creating their own narratives and dialogues using the wonderfully detailed and atmospheric illustrations. Links can also be made with the history of cinema and historical figures such as Georges Méliès.
Leila and the Blue Fox	This poignant novel, breathtakingly brought to life through Kiran Millwood Hargrave's lyrical prose and Tom de Freston's haunting monochrome illustrations, is an important exploration into the themes of migration, movement and conservation. With strong links to the science, geography and PSHE curriculums, and featuring a confident female protagonist, children will relate to the highly relevant issues portrayed. This novel also has close connections with the first novel by this pairing, <i>Julia and the Shark</i> .
Windrush Child	This poignant story, written by influential poet Benjamin Zephaniah, delves into the history of the Windrush generation. Through studying the text, children will engage with the experiences of those who left behind their homes in the Caribbean and arrived on the shores of Britain after the Second World War. An accompanying study of the poem <i>Windrush Child</i> by John Agard helps children to understand the personal experiences of those involved and the reasons why this period in history is so important to remember today.
The Promise	This engaging picture book presents a cyclical tale of life, growth and repair which continues its journey beyond the last page of the book. Laura Carlin's illustrations and use of colour to depict particular moods and emotions, tell deep layers of the story and children will develop inference skills as they read both the text and images alongside one another. Nicola Davies is a prolific children's author who focuses on important themes around the environment and conservation.
Can We Save the Tiger?	The plight of tigers and many other critically endangered animals are highlighted in this visually stunning picture book. As a starting point for discussing conservation and protection, children will learn important environmental messages and understand the need to raise awareness of how to look after what we have left. Compelling illustrations by Vicky White accompany powerful text by Martin Jenkins and the book may act as a springboard into other non-fiction texts on the same theme.
The Last Bear	This text links a gripping story with important social issues relating to the environment and climate change. Children will be able to explore these important topics through the eyes of the main character while also considering the experiences and prospects of the animals affected. Themes of kindness and adventure are explored, as well as the importance of fighting for what you believe in.
The Hidden Forest	Jeannie Baker is a beloved children's author, known especially for her detailed collage illustrations which portray subtle the environmental changes happening all around us. This book dives beneath the surface of the ocean to the giant kelp forest below. Through the eyes of main character Ben, children will be challenged to view the world from a different perspective and with a sense of wonder, considering the impact of human development on the environment, and in particular the parts that we cannot always see. With strong environmental messages, there are obvious links to the geography and science curriculums and plenty of opportunity for discussion and debate.
Resist	<i>Resist</i> has been nominated for and won multiple awards including the Historical Association Young Quills award 2023 and the Carnegie Medal 2023. Tom Palmer is a significant and multi-award winning author with a diverse back catalogue. Exploring themes such as protest and activism, <i>Resist</i> is part of a series of engaging historical fiction texts, covering a number of personal stories around the Second World War. This text, centered around the childhood of Hollywood icon Audrey Hepburn and her role in the Dutch resistance, is a superb text to engage children in the personal struggles of someone fighting Nazi occupation - not with weapons, but rather through covert operations, a love of and talent for dancing and caring for others.

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Suffragette	This narrative non-fiction book by David Roberts offers fascinating insights into the complex history of the Suffragette movement, looking beyond the stereotypes to include working-class women and diverse stories from around the world. With strong historical links, children will develop analytical skills and explore ideas around comradeship, courage and protest.
Stonewall	The story of the Stonewall uprising is brought to life in this book by LGBTQ+ rights campaigner Rob Sanders and teaches children about an important moment in LGBTQ+ history. Presented as a picture book, visual depictions of the story by Jamey Christoph will allow children to understand the magnitude of events that took place and the power of protest to bring about change. The book will open up discussions around gay rights and raise children's awareness of the people who stood for justice and the continued fight for progress.
Paradise Sands	This book is a lot of things all at once: surreal fairy tale, dystopian fantasy, dark narrative, picture book. Portrayed through hauntingly cryptic artwork, the illustrations tell as much of the story as the words on the page and children will want to return again and again to decipher the hidden meanings. Throwing up more questions than answers, this eerie but captivating tale of perseverance, willpower and resistance will open up discussions around symbolism, family relationships, choices and consequences. Levi Pinfold is a Kate Greenaway award winning author-illustrator known for his often-curious picture books; children may wish to explore his back catalogue after reading this title.
The Three Little Pigs Project	This video advertisement was created by the Guardian newspaper and won the Cannes-Lion award upon its release. Created to portray the newspaper's approach to open journalism, it shows how they would report on a story like The Three Little Pigs in print and visually. Children will explore bias, objectivity and justice as they unpick the different voices and perspectives which make up the well-known story. The advert will open up plenty of opportunities for debate and children will understand the importance of considering all sides of a story before jumping to conclusions.
Boy in the Tower	This book was shortlisted for the Blue Peter Book Award and was runner up in the Teach Primary New Children's Fiction Award in 2015. Dealing with themes such as isolation, depression and loneliness, the book provides a relatable context and a safe space within which to explore these concepts with children. With modern day links to The Day of the Triffids, Polly Ho-Yen has created an engaging, dystopian narrative through which children will develop their skills of inference and deduction.
The Last Wild	This text by Piers Torday is the first in a magnificent, science-fiction series. It tells the story of Kester, a boy living in a dystopian future. This text has strong links to science and acts as an engaging springboard to discuss environmental issues. It also gives children the opportunity to explore the science fiction genre and consider the importance of communication.
Grimm Tales for Young and Old	Philip Pullman is a significant and award-winning children's author and we chose this reworked collection of classic fairy tales for his engaging style and clarity of storytelling. Children will learn the stories of well-known characters and keep the tradition of storytelling alive. The rich and multi-layered tales will provoke much debate amongst the children for their presentation of characters, and the roles, fates and consequences they occupy.
The Wind in the Wall	This is an enchanting picture book for older readers which will grip children with its mysterious happenings and gothic, other-worldly feel. With its foundations its mythical folklore and traditional tales, the story is told in lyrical prose which will captivate children with its rich language and provide a basis for their own writing. Stunning illustrations in a muted colour palette contribute to the ethereal atmosphere and children will gain confidence in making inferences from images to enhance their understanding of the text.
Romeo and Juliet	This is a playscript version of one of Shakespeare's most classic stories, including the original language and meter which will inspire children to go on and read further of the bard's plays on their own. The most well-known of Shakespeare's stories, Rome and Juliet covers themes of love, rivalry and tragedy, this will be a good starting point for children to share their opinions on loyalty and betrayal and whether it is always the best thing to follow your heart.
Rain Player	This beautiful picture book makes direct links with the history of the Mayan civilisation as the story cleverly weaves aspects of the ancient customs and beliefs through the narrative. Children will learn about Mayan culture as it was then and the ways in which we still see influences around us today. Themes such as loyalty and bravery are also explored and colourful cut-paper artwork will engage children throughout.

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The Unforgotten Coat	Frank Cottrell-Boyce is a significant children's author and children may already be familiar with some of his other titles such as <i>Cosmic</i> and <i>Millions</i> . This poignant story won the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize in 2012 and we chose it for the richness of its offering: from the compelling characterisation and unique dialogue and dialects to the Polaroid photos which help to tell the story. There are strong links to the themes of migration, movement and belonging and the familiar school setting will help children fully engage with the plights of the characters within.
Some Places More Than Others	This rich and inspiring novel provides the context for children to navigate their own personal journey of discovery, mirroring the experiences of the main character as she strives to understand her roots. Presented as a transition sequence of learning, it will help children explore the unique qualities that make them who they are as they move on to secondary school. Significant links are made to black history through exploration of key figures from Harlem and the story is told from the perspective of a powerful female protagonist.
A Beautiful Lie	This multi-layered novel is set at an important time in Indian history. Children will engage with the inviting cast of characters and see how the dilemmas and consequences people faced in the past are often still relevant today; many opportunities for debate and discussion will arise. We chose this text for its richness of language (including much culturally significant vocabulary) and complexity of themes, including tolerance, love, religion and family.
Night Mail	We chose this poem by prolific British-American poet WH Auden to highlight to children the connection between poetry, film, music and history. Children will enjoy the performance aspect of poetry, especially how the rhythm fits with the movement of the train, and how the visuals from the film bring the words to life. The poem will act as inspiration for their own poetry writing, which can also be performed to an audience.
The Final Year	This award-winning verse novel by Matt Goodfellow is carefully illustrated by Joe Todd-Stanton and tells the story of a child's experience of the final year in Primary School. As a trained Primary Teacher, Matt Goodfellow authentically brings to life relatable and heart-wrenching insights to life in Year 6. Children will empathise with the characters and the story. Not only does it tell the story of the final year in Primary School, but it also brings to the forefront challenging times including health issues and potential loss in a family. This is framed within an urban Mancunian context, with a single parent who enjoys cider and bingo. It is a key text for supporting children in seeing themselves, understanding others and enjoying the power of written word: specifically, verse poetry. Links can be made to PSHE and transition from Primary to Secondary education. The text links to the theme of Belonging & Equality, and Fate vs Free Will.