

Text rationales for Year 4

Text	Rationale
Tar Beach	Tar Beach is an important book in the world of children's literature having won the Coretta Scott King Award for illustration and named a Caldecott Honor Book upon its release in 1996. Primarily known as an artist, Faith Ringgold is an important voice in documenting African American history. This book weaves together fiction, autobiography and allegory to create a thought-provoking tale following themes of freedom, equality and following your dreams. Spectacular artwork brings the story to life and will provide vital talking points as well as inspiration for children's own artwork.
Varmints	Covering themes of hope, environmentalism and the cyclical nature of life, this surreal and haunting text provides links to many areas of the curriculum including science, geography, PSHE and art. Helen Ward is a significant children's author and children will enjoy exploring many of her other titles including The Tin Forest (which addresses similar themes) and The Dragon Machine. There is also a BAFTA and Oscar-nominated accompanying short film which will support children's learning and lead to discussion about how to look after the places we live.
The Mermaid of Zennor	This is a fantastical tale about mermaids covering themes of escapism and freedom. It is a classic popular Cornish folk tale, so it represents a great way to learn about the history of the United Kingdom and different ways of life within it. It is written in a poetic style, and the retelling by the poet Charles Causley and contains a wealth of archaic vocabulary that lends itself to literary language. It has been illustrated by the celebrated illustrator (and author in his own right) Michael Foreman. Please note that as this story is old-fashioned in its style and narrative, it contains some gender stereotypes that may need to be addressed within the context of the story.
FARTHER	This stunning picture book by significant author Grahame Baker-Smith won the Kate Greenaway medal in 2011 and explores the relationship between a father a son. Close inspection of the text and illustrations provides subtle links to World War One and ancient Greece, in particular the story of Icarus, as well as strong links to the DT curriculum. There are many opportunities to discuss family relationships, memories and following your dreams.
Until I Met Dudley	Roger McGough is one of Britain's best loved poets and his lyrical creativity shines through in this humorous techno-guide. Chris Riddell's distinctive illustrations bring the text to life and let children in on the secret of how things work – real and imagined. Providing obvious links to the DT curriculum, children will be engaged by the opportunity to design their own inventions and the text will fire up their imaginations for writing explanations for how they work.
The Iron Man	This is a complex text that explores issues around outsiders and fear of change. Former poet laureate Ted Hughes is a significant author who wrote for both adults and children. The narrative lends itself to discussion around standing up for what is right and not judging a book by its cover. The themes raised in the book help with developing empathy.
Frindleswyld	This wintry fable is reminiscent of traditional fairy tales such as The Snow Queen featuring a cast of characters children will easily engage with. Although a picture book, the story is longer in length and complex in its plot which will create high levels of engagement and help develop stamina for reading. Filled with enchanting language and gripping twists and turns, the story will be sure to generate much opportunity for classroom conversation.
Winter's Child	Created by award-winning author-illustrator duo Angela McAllister and Grahame Baker-Smith, Winter's Child is an enchanting story filled with rich language and dilemmas to ponder. The magical, wintry illustrations will pique children's imaginations and generate many questions around the influences of natural vs. human nature. The cyclical nature of the story provides the perfect opportunity to think beyond the ending and also creates links with the science, geography and art curriculums.
The Selfish Giant	This beloved tale by Oscar Wilde has stood the test of time. Including themes of love, forgiveness and redemption, the story will help children build compassion towards the characters and develop empathy for those who find themselves in difficult emotional situations. Following the cycle of the seasons as the giant's emotions gradually change, there are strong links to the science and geography curriculums.

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The Crown	The Crown by Emily Kapff is a beautifully illustrated story taking readers on a journey through the eyes of a girl living in a future Earth buried in waste and wearing a crown made of rubbish inherited from past generations. She discovers a hidden book filled with images of our world today - the blue skies, vibrant seas, and living creatures. With a horse as her companion, she imagines a future where her crown is no longer made from rubbish but from nature's beauty. This touching tale encourages children to appreciate the planet and understand the importance of caring for it, offering a hopeful message about protecting our environment.
The Baker by the Sea	This a warm-hearted story which will show children the importance of community. Set against the backdrop of a remote fishing village where everyone works together to support one another, the story reminds us that everyone is important no matter their role. The back of the book includes a recipe from the author's grandfather for Hot Coconut Buns which the children can enjoy making in the classroom.
The Lion and the Unicorn	Written by beloved children's author Shirley Hughes, this is a story filled with courage and compassion. Set against the backdrop of World War Two, there are obvious links to the history curriculum with insights into measures such as evacuation and rationing in context. This is a longer picture book which will help develop stamina for reading, complemented by heartfelt illustrations which will draw out many inferences from children.
Riddle of the Runes	Riddle of the Runes is set in the Viking Age in the fictional village of Kilsgard, Scandinavia, and so is an excellent companion for the wider history curriculum. Rich in historical detail of Viking life, the novel follows the adventurous Alva as she is thrown into solving a puzzle with extremely high stakes. With a strong female protagonist, this novel brings historical fiction and mystery together, touching upon the Viking raids in Northumberland and their impact on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. It is the first in a series about the young Viking detective and her Uncle Magnus by historian Dr Janina Ramirez. Illustrations are by David Wyatt, who has also illustrated classics by Terry Pratchett, Philip Pullman and J.R.R Tolkien.
The Matchbox Diary	This is an excellent book to learn about history and migration. A text which encourages children to think about their own heritage and the extraordinary lives of those who came before them. High quality text and beautiful illustrations, present a thought-provoking record of a life and suggestions as to how we could record our own.
Weslandia	This is a picture book which encourages inference and has huge potential for relevant links across the curriculum, including to science, PSHE, DT and geography. It is a short story with a tangible dilemma which children can easily relate to. The story can be used to explore connections to wider society and provides a solid platform for exploring life cycles and conservation.
The Ever-Changing Earth	This is from significant author and Greenaway awarded illustrator, Grahame Baker-Smith, who has created a trilogy of books about nature and the world; this is the third in the series, although they are unrelated in narrative. The book expresses awe and wonder through showing the passing of time. The mesmerising artwork showcases natural phenomena around the world through the eyes of two children who live on opposite sides of the Earth to each other. Relevant curriculum links include themes of environment and natural disasters/phenomena, as well as understanding that the planet is a legacy.
The Story of Tutankhamun	This illustrated non-fiction book was nominated for the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway children's book awards in 2018. Including colourful illustrations, maps, inventories and graphic novel storyboards, the book presents a highly engaging way for children to develop historical skills and weave historical knowledge into their writing.
Shackleton's Journey	Shackleton's Journey is a uniquely visual non-fiction re-telling of Ernest Shackleton's epic expedition across the Antarctic. The text has a clear factual style as well as sparse but thought-provoking illustrations by William Grill which are highly engaging. This gives children an understanding of the period after the Victorians and the start of WW1 and about what life was like in Britain.

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The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	This is a classic children's novel, written by significant author C.S. Lewis, which gives a perfect introduction to the fantasy genre. The book forms part of the Chronicles of Narnia series which children can go on to read independently. Featuring a portal to another world and strong female characters, the adventure narrative also provides strong links to topics around World War Two.
Granny Came Here on the Empire Windrush	This is a touching story that highlights the importance of children learning about the past through asking questions of adults and, as a result, finding their place in a larger historical narrative. This story is essential for children to learn about Black British history, particularly the influence of Black historical figures such as Winifred Atwell and Mary Seacole, and the stories of those who emigrated to Britain on the Empire Windrush. Patrice Lawrence MBE, FRSL, is a prolific author and journalist. She has won multiple literature awards such as the Waterstones Children's Book Prize for Older Children, the Jhalak Prize and The Bookseller YA Book Prize. She also writes for older children and teenagers so children will be able to continue to read her work as they grow.
Jabberwocky	This nonsense poem by Lewis Carroll has been a firm favourite since its inclusion in the novel <i>Through the Looking Glass</i> in 1871. The poem presents an opening for children to explore the fantastical world of Alice and her adventures in Wonderland. Including weird and wonderful characters and a host of completely nonsense vocabulary there will be fun opportunities for language acquisition and comprehension, as well for performance poetry.
Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag	Pride is the true story of American civil rights activist and politician, Harvey Milk as retold by author, teacher and LGBTQIA+ rights campaigner, Rob Sanders. It is structured as an illustrated biographical narrative and as such it is highly accessible. It covers a crucial aspect of LGBTQIA+ history, linking with human and civil rights as well as teaching children about key figures in the LGBTQIA+ rights movement.