



Penguin Random House NZ

Education Highlights for 2026

Intermediate & Secondary

Schools



Penguin
Random House
New Zealand



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Novels from NZ Authors



FOR AGES
9-12

Secrets at Red Rocks

Rachael King



Selkie mythology meets Wellington's rugged, windswept south coast in this spine-tingling adventure novel, which won the 2013 Esther Glen Medal for Junior Fiction.

In *Secrets at Red Rocks*, the mysterious Celtic myth of the selkies – seal people – meets Aotearoa New Zealand's wild southern landscape and an ordinary boy is thrown into a terrifying adventure tinged with ancient magic. With its beautiful writing and eerie atmosphere, middle-grade readers will be thrilled and moved by this captivating story by the author of *The Grimmelings*.

Recently adapted to screen as a Sky Originals TV series.

Key themes:

- Problem solving
- Overcoming fears
- Family
- Celtic myths

See how our School Kit Teacher Road Testers taught *Secrets at Red Rocks* in the classroom

Teachers' Notes available



9781776953462
4th March 2025
Paperback | 256pp
RRP: \$22

NZ Novels

Dreamslinger

Graci Kim



Enter a world of secrets and spells, dragons and phoenixes; a place where your wildest dreams — or your darkest nightmares — come to life . . .

Dragons and phoenixes roam the skies of Seoul, meals magically appear based on your mood and dreams literally come to life . . . *Nevermoor* meets *Pokémon* in New Zealand author Graci Kim's thrilling middle-grade fantasy series!

Look out for Slinger Series Book 2: *Royalslinger* - coming 2026!

Key themes:

- Community and belonging
- Self-identity
- Power overreach and social ostracism
- Intolerance
- Critical thinking

See how our School Kit Teacher Roadtesters taught *Dreamslinger* in the classroom

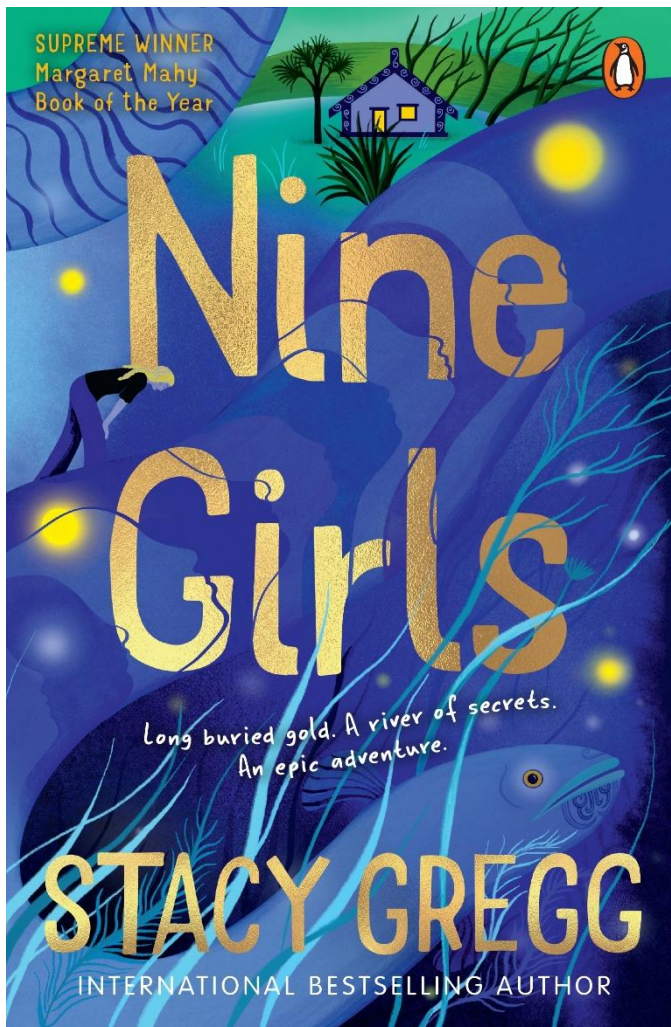


9781776953431
29th April 2025
Trade Paperback | 304pp
RRP: \$24

NZ Novels

Nine Girls

Stacy Gregg



Key themes:

- Colonisation
- Feeling like an outsider
- Identity
- Importance of family and friendship

“(A) New Zealand classic that should be in every home, classroom and library.” - Joanna Ludbrook, Radio New Zealand

Winner of the Margaret Mahy Book of the Year and the Esther Glen Award for Junior Fiction.

Titch is determined to find the gold buried somewhere on her family’s land. It might be cursed but that won’t put her off.

Then an unexpected encounter with a creature from the river reveals secrets lying beneath its surface . . .

As Titch uncovers the truth about the hidden treasure, she learns about her own heritage — and what it’s like to feel like an outsider in your own world.

A story about growing up in a time of social unrest in early 1980s New Zealand, *Nine Girls* is a page-turning adventure woven with suspense from the author of *Pony Club Secrets* and *The Princess and the Foal*.

See how our School Kit Teacher Road Testers taught *Nine Girls* in the classroom



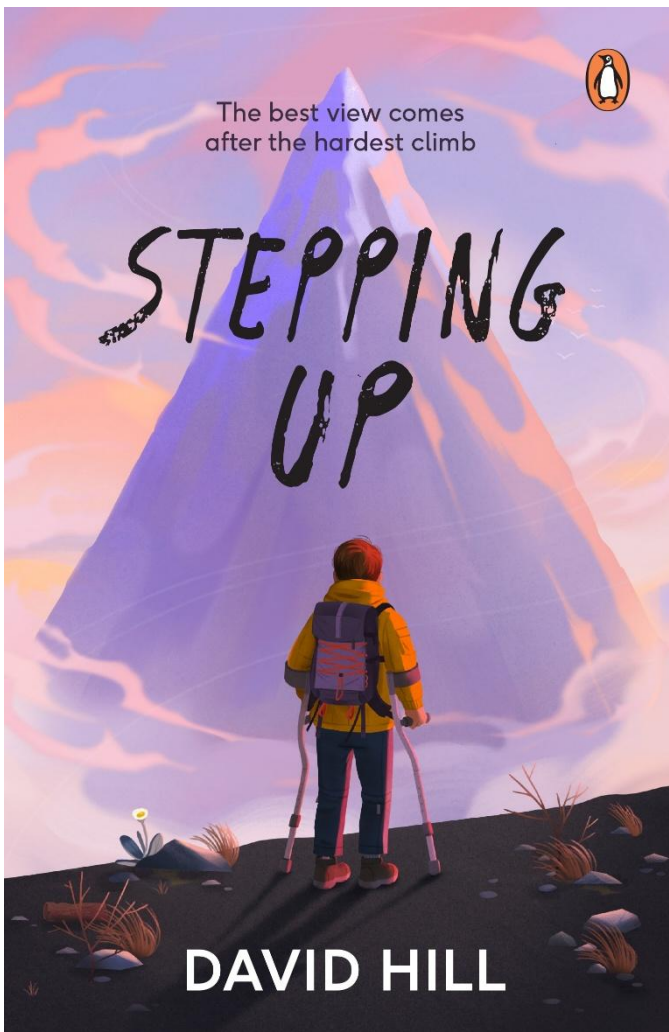
9781776958146
26th March 2024
Paperback | 288pp
RRP: \$22

Example text in
new curriculum

NZ Novels

Stepping Up

David Hill



Build empathy in young readers with this gripping new medical drama from beloved author David Hill.

What if you took a shortcut below some rocks and your entire life came sliding down?

High on the shingle slopes of Pangoonui, 14-year-old Ben cuts below a pile of huge, half-buried boulders. All of a sudden there's a terrible sound, and a massive rock is tumbling towards him.

In the painful weeks that follow a surgery to remove Ben's shattered lower leg, his mind returns to the mountain, his impatience, that split-second decision. Will anything ever be 'normal' again?

One goal keeps him going: he will finish the climb he started.

An affirming exploration of disability, identity, and resilience in the wake of an outdoorsy teen's life-changing mountain hiking accident, *Stepping Up* sensitively examines some of the prejudices and patronising attitudes people living with disability can encounter. Told with plenty of warmth and humour to balance the grief and drama, the book never feels too heavy and is overwhelmingly positive and life affirming.

Key themes:

- Outdoor safety
- Disability equity and equality
- Dealing with trauma and grief
- Perseverance and resilience



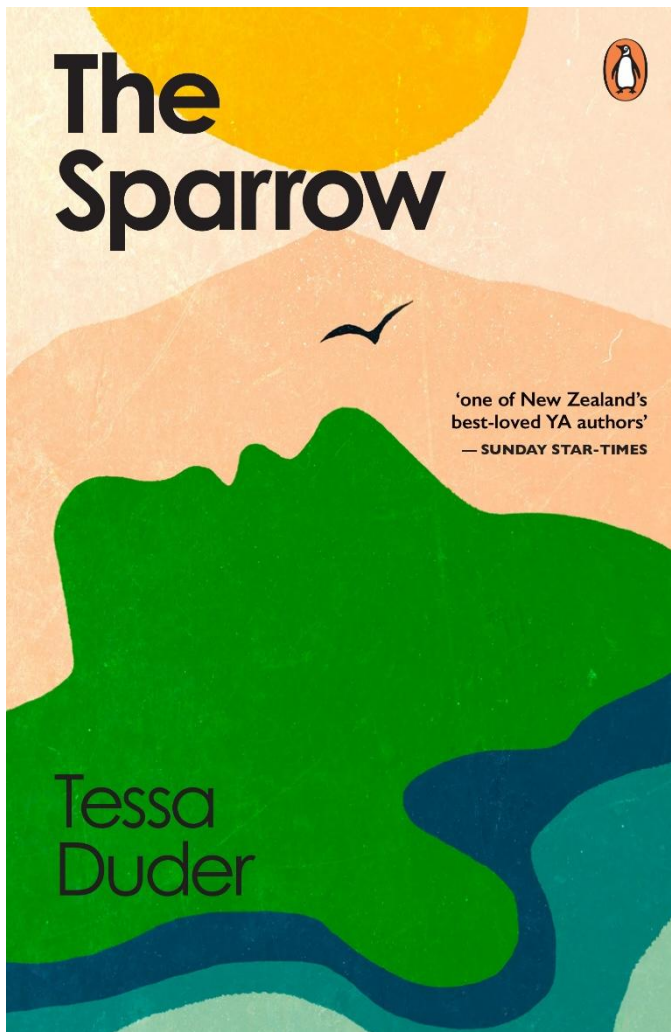
9781776953424
3rd February 2026
Paperback | 272pp
RRP: \$22

New for 2026

NZ Novels

The Sparrow

Tessa Duder



A powerful historical novel from one of New Zealand's best-loved YA authors.

In September 1840, two ships arrive on the shores of the Waitematā Harbour to establish Auckland, the new capital of New Zealand. Among the settlers on board the Platina is young Harry, travelling alone and determined to return to family in England. But the more immediate challenge is finding food and shelter — and hiding the truth about Harry's real identity and what was left behind in Van Diemen's Land.

See how our School Kit Teacher Road Testers taught *The Sparrow* in their classrooms

Key themes:

- Colonisation
- Identity
- Gender

Teachers' notes available

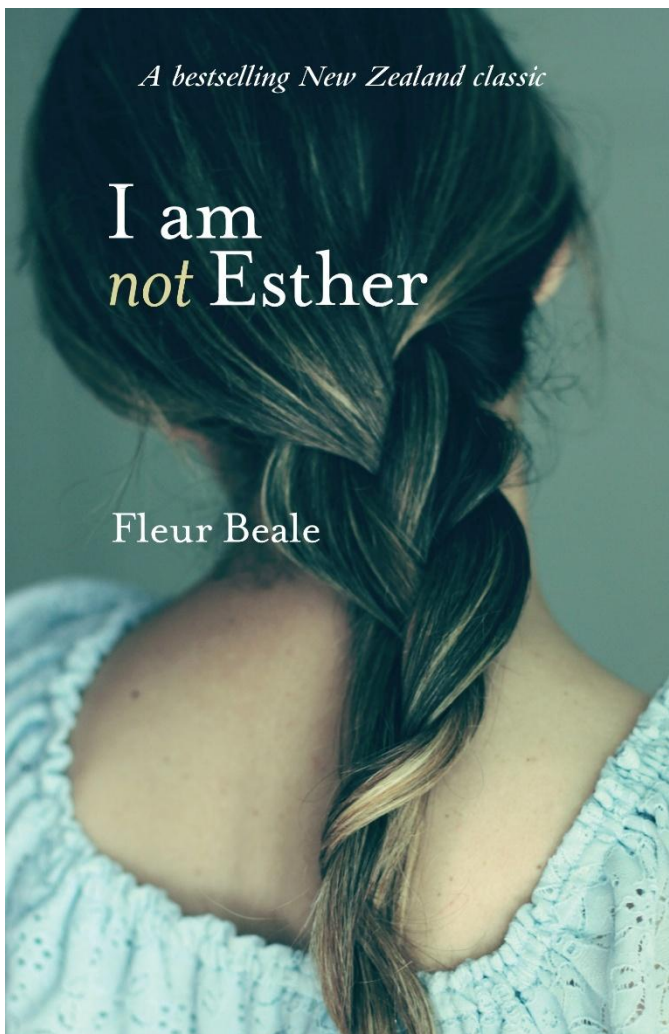


9781761047671
2nd May 2023
Paperback | 304pp
RRP: \$22

NZ Novels

I Am Not Esther

Fleur Beale



Key themes:

- Family
- Cults
- Religion
- Identity

A classic bestseller that's been in print for over 20 years, this gripping YA thriller follows a teenage girl caught in a religious cult.

Imagine that your mother tells you she's going away. She is going to leave you with relatives you've never heard of - and they are members of a strict religious cult. Your name is changed, and you are forced to follow the severe set of social standards set by the cult. There is no television, no radio, no newspaper. No mirrors. You must wear long, modest clothes. You don't know where your mother is, and you are beginning to question your own identity.

I Am Not Esther is a gripping psychological thriller written by award-winning children's writer Fleur Beale. In *Esther* she creates an enthralling and utterly compelling portrait of a teenager going through her worst nightmare.

Teachers' notes available

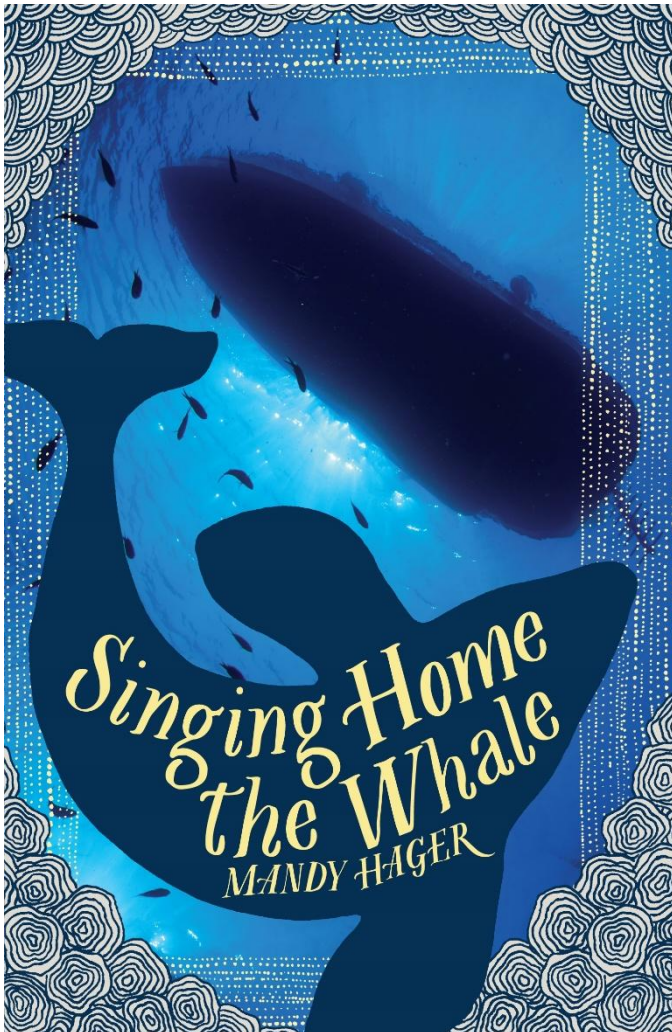


9781869799076
2nd March 2012
Paperback | 224pp
RRP: \$22

NZ Novels

Singing Home the Whale

Mandy Hager



Key themes:

- Environmentalism
- Animal-human relationships
- Being true to oneself
- Peer pressure and bullying
- Justice
- Loss

Teachers' notes available

An award-winning and extraordinary story of a boy who protects a baby orca that locals believe is threatening their livelihood.

Will Jackson is hiding out, a city boy reluctantly staying with his uncle in small town New Zealand while he struggles to recover from a brutal attack and the aftermath of a humiliating YouTube clip gone viral.

After he discovers a young abandoned orca whale his life is further thrown into chaos, when he rallies to help protect it against hostile, threatening interests. This threatens to tear apart the small fishing community and forever changes Will's life.

The boy and the whale develop a special bond, linked by Will's love of singing. With echoes of classic book and film *The Whale Rider* this powerful connection is utterly convincing on the page.

See how our School Kit Teacher Road Testers taught *Singing Home The Whale* in the classroom



9781775536574
5th September 2014
Paperback | 336pp
RRP: \$22

NZ Novels

Catch a Falling Star

Eileen Merriman



Jamie Orange is careening out of control the closer he comes within reach of his dreams – the powerful, frenetic, heart-stopping winner of four YA fiction awards!

Francesca – known to everyone as Frankie – has scored the part of Princess Fiona in the forthcoming musical production. Even though Jamie Orange has missed out on the part of Shrek, he's happy: *The day I found out I was a donkey was one of the best days of my life.* He may not be Frankie's leading man on stage, but he can still try to win her heart.

However, all is not well with Jamie. He can't sleep, he can't stop his thoughts: *My brain was still wired, racing around in circles or spirals or – gah, it was driving me crazy. If only there was a magic switch so I could turn it off.*

Bouncing between exultant highs and terrible lows, what will happen when this rising star starts to fall?

Key themes:

- Mental health
- Friendships and relationships
- Music
- School life



9781776953400
4th July 2023
Paperback | 240pp
RRP: \$22

Potiki

Patricia Grace



A prize-winning classic novel, as relevant today as when it was first written.

Patricia Grace's classic novel is a work of spellbinding power in which the myths of older times are inextricably woven into the political realities of today.

In a small coastal community threatened by developers who would ravage their lands it is a time of fear and confusion – and growing anger. The prophet child Tokowaru-i-te-Marama shares his people's struggles against bulldozers and fast money talk. When dramatic events menace the marae, his grief threatens to burst beyond the confines of his twisted body. His all-seeing eye looks forward to a strange and terrible new dawn.

Potiki won the New Zealand Book Award for Fiction in 1987.

Key themes:

- Land loss
- Protest
- Family
- Disability

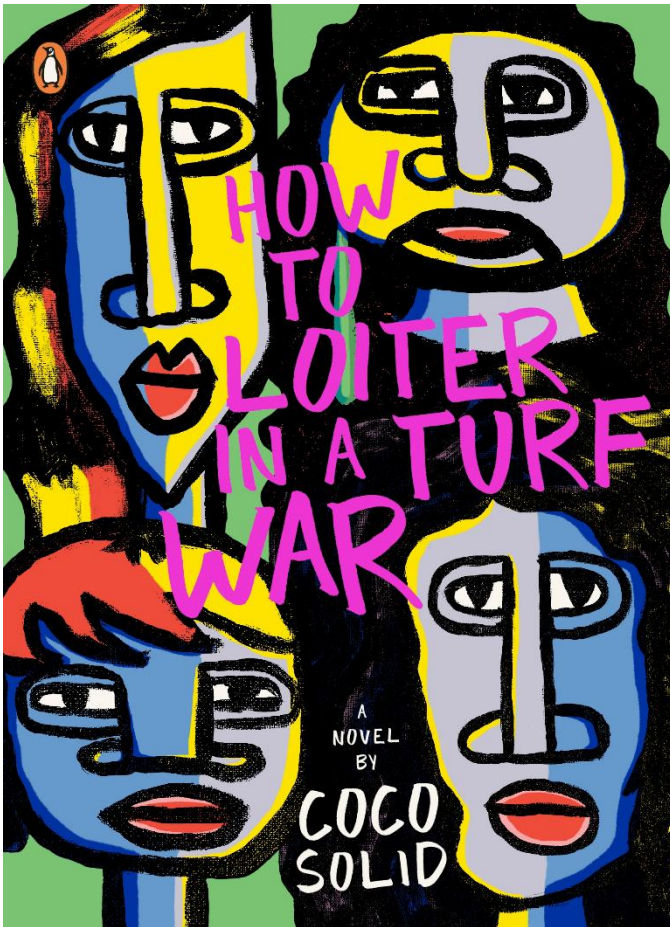


9781776950676
Paperback | 192pp
RRP: \$15.99

NZ Novels

How to Loiter in a Turf War

Coco Solid



Key themes:

- Friendship
- Gentrification
- Coming of age
- Identity
- Colonisation

A genre-bending work of autobiographical fiction from one of Aotearoa's fiercest and most versatile artists.

It's a day in the life of three friends beefing with their own city, Tamaki Makaurau. With gentrification closing in and racial tensions sweltering, the girls must cling to their friendship like a life raft, determined not to let their neighbourhood drift out to sea.

Fast, ferociously brilliant, crack-up funny and unforgettably true.

'This book paints a picture of the Auckland I grew up in — when waiting for the 025 to town was a gamble, and the answer to the question 'where are you from?' was an essay, not a sentence. Like everything she makes, Coco Solid imbues this book with fierce intelligence, laser-sharp specificity and cosmic warmth.' — Rose Matafeo

Teachers' notes available



9780143778585

3rd May 2022

Trade Paperback | 176pp

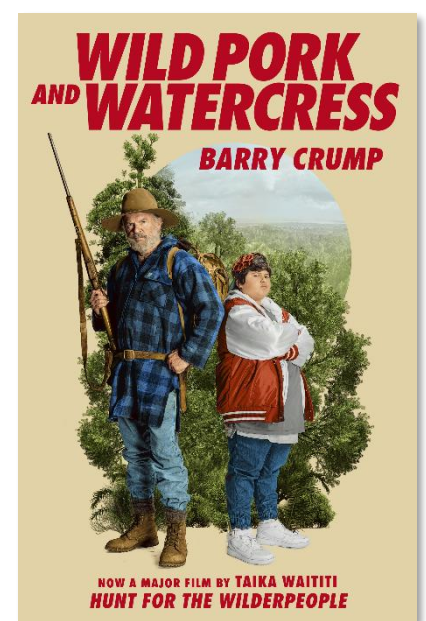
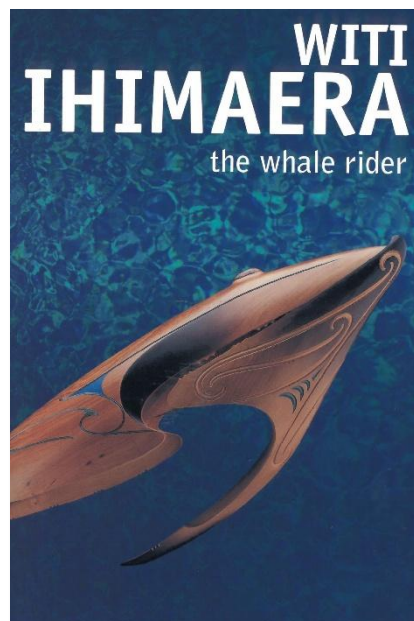
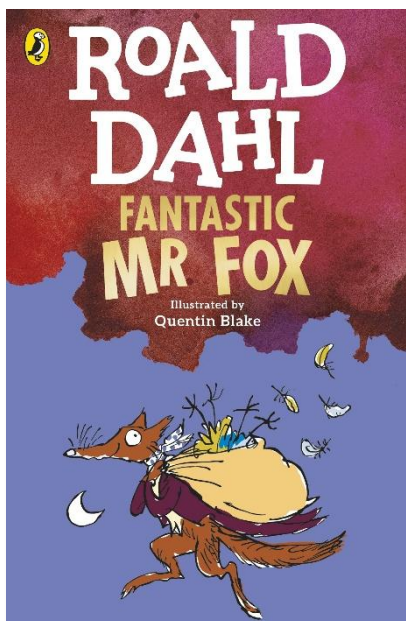
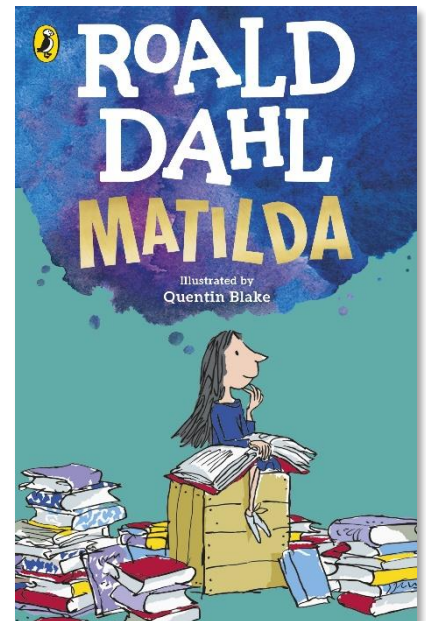
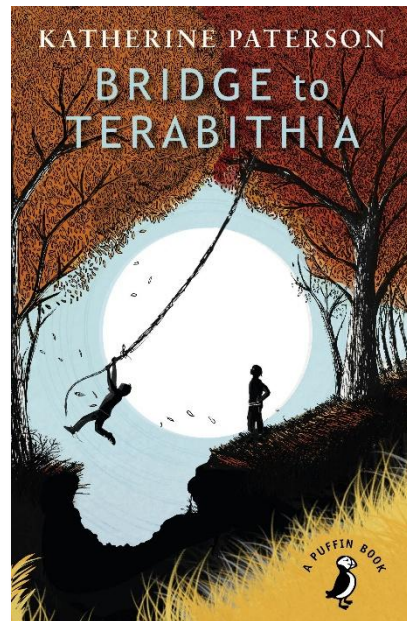
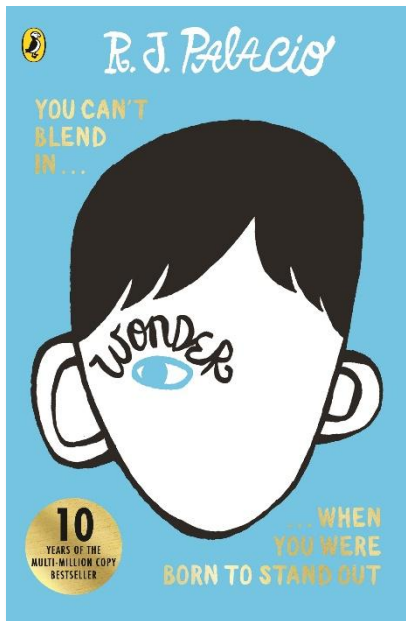
RRP: \$28

NZ Novels

**Film Studies: Read the
book, watch the movie**



Enrich film study discussions by reading the book before the film to compare and contrast.



Teachers' notes
available

Teachers' notes
available



Short Stories & Poetry



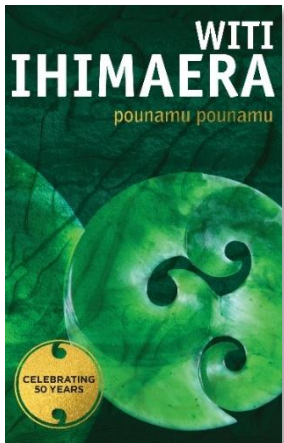


Bird Child and Other Stories

Patricia Grace

Mythology and contemporary Māori life are woven together seamlessly in this spectacular collection by Aotearoa's foremost short story writer. Moving artfully across decades, landscapes, time and space, with tenderness and charm, *Bird Child and Other Stories* shows an author as adept and stimulating as ever.

See how our School Kit Teacher Road Testers taught *Bird Child and Other Stories* in the classroom

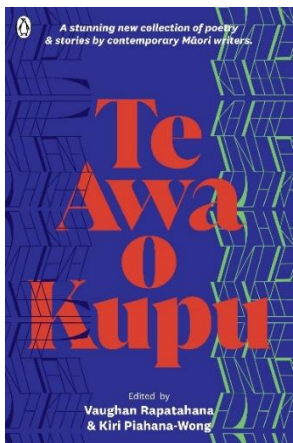


Pounamu Pounamu

Witi Ihimaera

Pounamu Pounamu is classic Ihimaera and also classic New Zealand literature. The vivid stories in this collection not only explore but also celebrate what it is to be a New Zealander, and they do so from a lively Māori perspective.

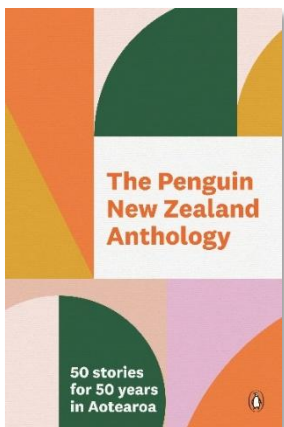
Teachers' notes available



Te Awa o Kupu

Edited by Vaughan Rapatahana, & Kiri Piahana-Wong

A stunning collection of poetry and stories by contemporary Māori writers. Over 80 contemporary Māori writers explore a vast array of issues that challenge, stimulate and intrigue. With originality and insight, these poems and short stories express compassion, concern, curiosity, suffering and joy.



The Penguin New Zealand Anthology

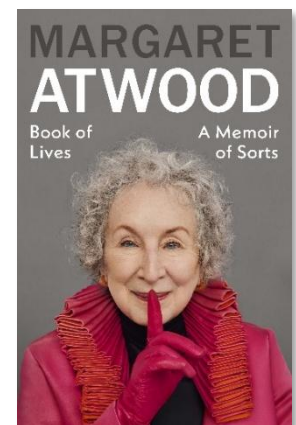
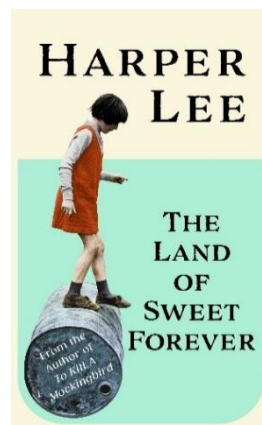
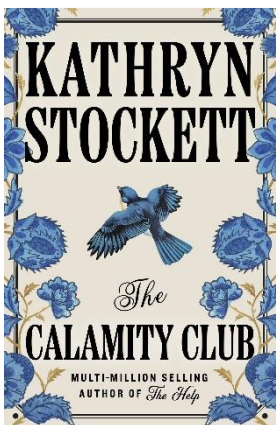
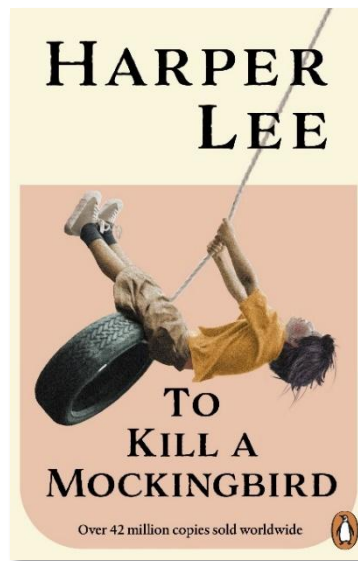
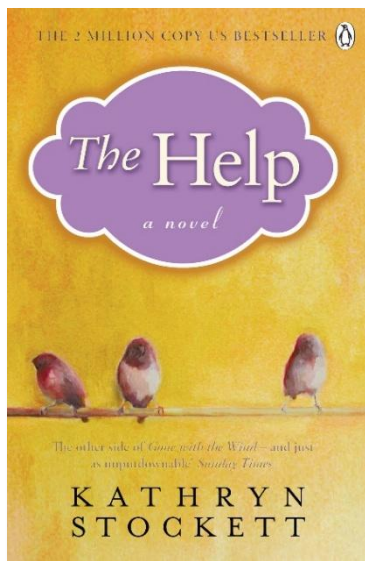
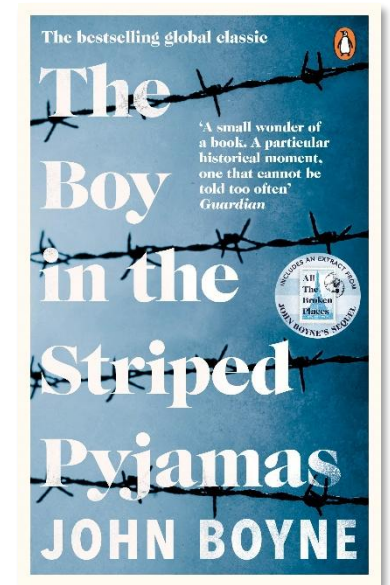
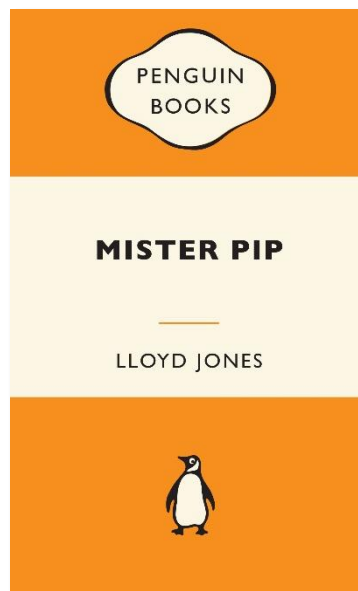
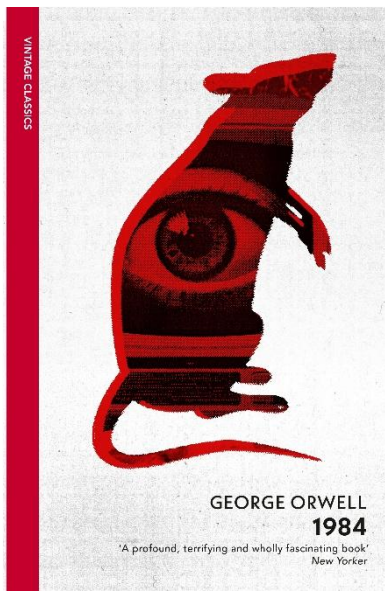
This anthology brings together 50 enthralling stories from some of the country's finest writers. From established authors to new, emerging names, these stories track the changing styles, voices and preoccupations explored through the short story over the past five decades.

Short story writing tips from NZ authors



Seminal Works





New from Kathryn Stockett

A sweeping story of a group of underestimated women and an 11-year-old orphan girl whose fates converge in Mississippi in 1933.

New from Harper Lee

A posthumous collection of stories and essays, offering a fresh perspective on the remarkable literary mind of Harper Lee.

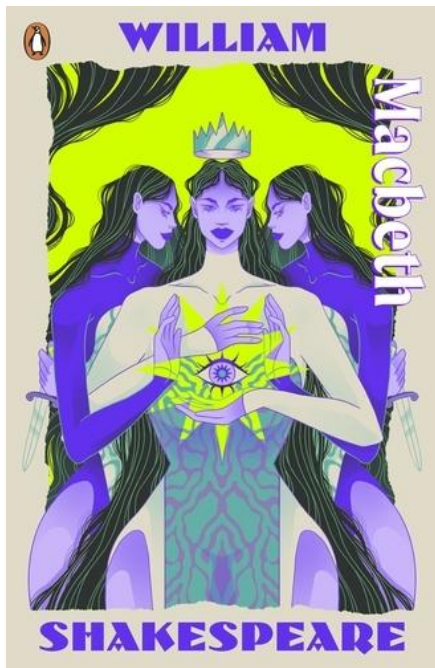
New from Margaret Atwood

Immerse yourself in the creative universe of Margaret Atwood for a riot of life, art and everything in between: the greatest writer of our time tells her own story.



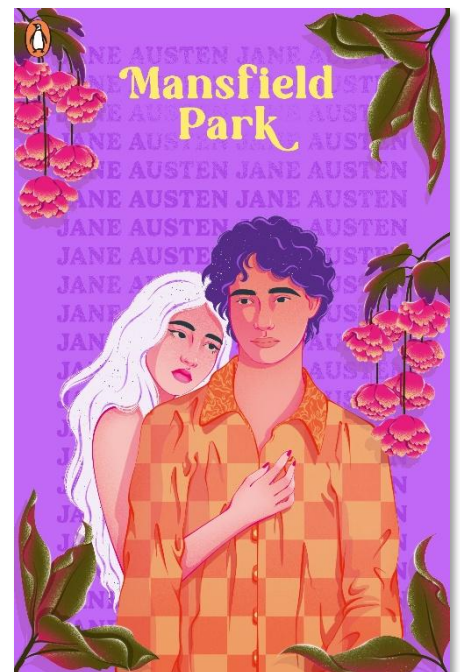
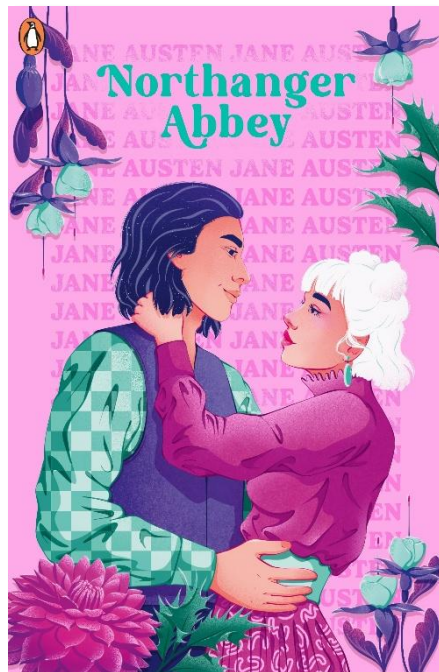
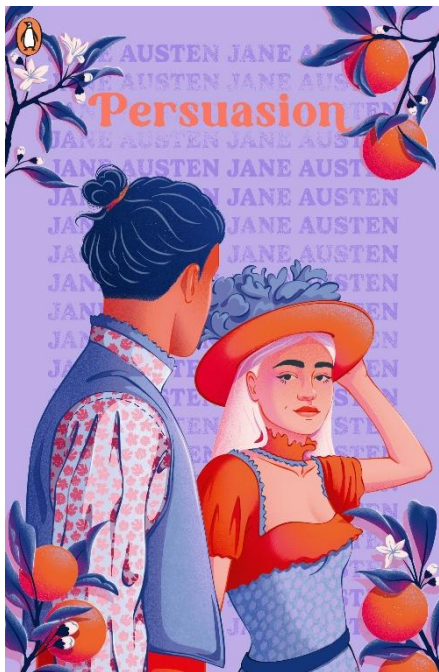
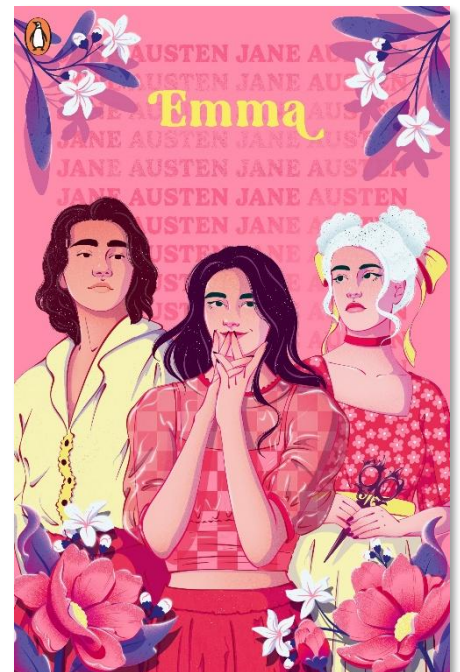
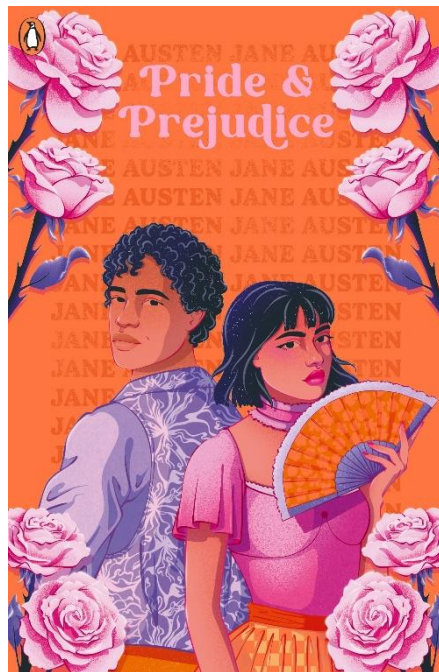
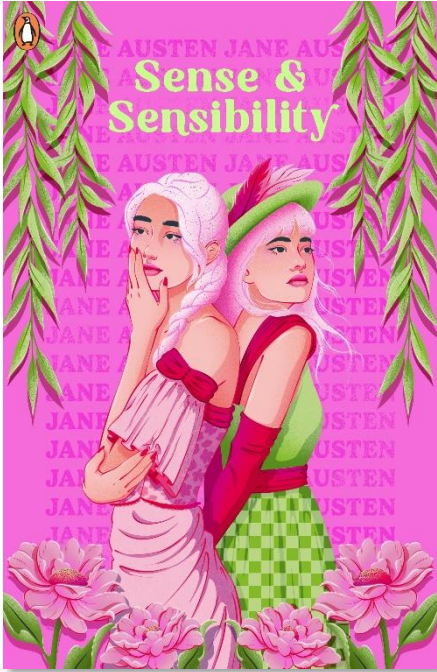
Staged: Shakespeare YA

With introductions from some amazing YA authors, and in a dyslexic-friendly font, this beautifully designed collection is the perfect way to get into Shakespeare's most iconic stories.



First Impressions: Jane Austen YA

This beautifully redesigned collection of treasured Austen novels, featuring forewords from leading romance authors, offers a perfect introduction to her most iconic stories for YA readers.



Non-Fiction Texts





Ngā Kupu Wero

Edited by Witi Ihimaera

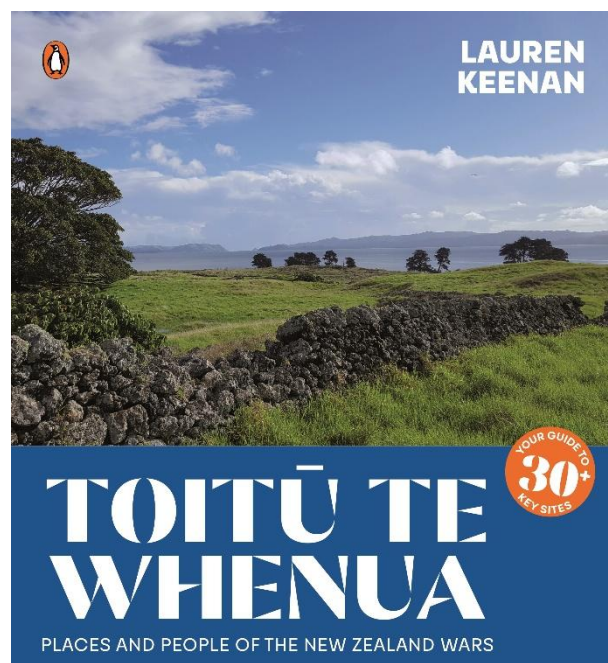
Ngā Kupu Wero brings together a bounty of essays, articles, commentary and creative non-fiction on the political, cultural and social issues that challenge us today. From colonisation to identity, from creativity to mātauranga Māori, over 60 writers explore the power of the word.

Toitū Te Whenua

Lauren Keenan

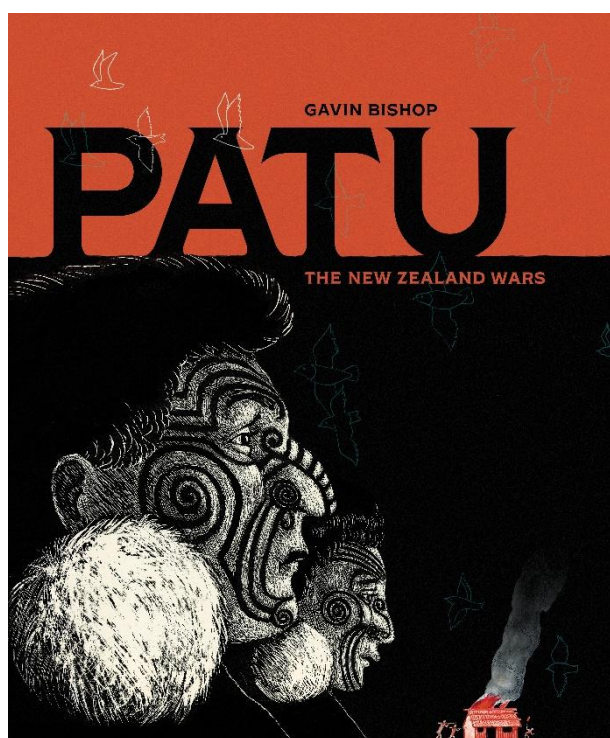
An accessible guide to significant places and people of the New Zealand Wars from a Māori perspective.

This comprehensive guidebook journeys through the pivotal sites of the New Zealand Wars, from the Far North to the top of the South Island, offering a unique perspective on events that shaped Aotearoa New Zealand.



PATU: The New Zealand Wars

Gavin Bishop



Teachers' notes available

A large-format, stunning visual history of the New Zealand Wars of the 1800s, suitable for children and adults, by the multiple-award-winning Gavin Bishop

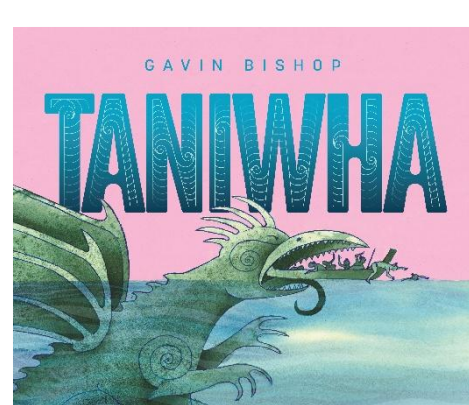
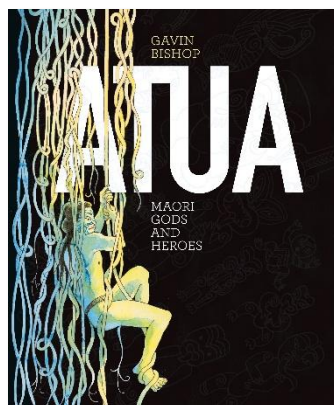
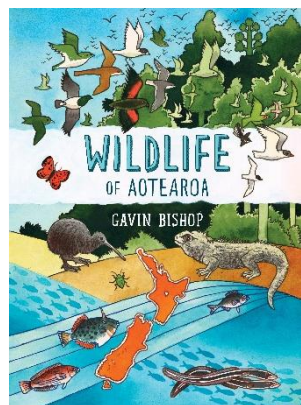
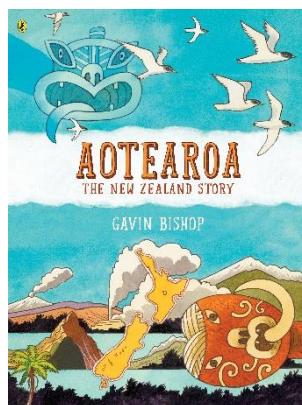
Navigate the defining moments of the wars, visit the battle sites and explore the sweeping change that took place in Aotearoa during the 19th century.

Guiding readers through the bitter armed clashes over land and sovereignty, *PATU* is an essential book for every home, school and library.

A stunning large format hardback, complete with foldout maps of key pā, villages and battle sites, this is a book to engross children and adults, bringing to life a complex period of Aotearoa's past that has urgent relevance for our present and future.

See how our School Kit Teacher Road Testers taught *PATU* in their classrooms

More from Gavin Bishop:



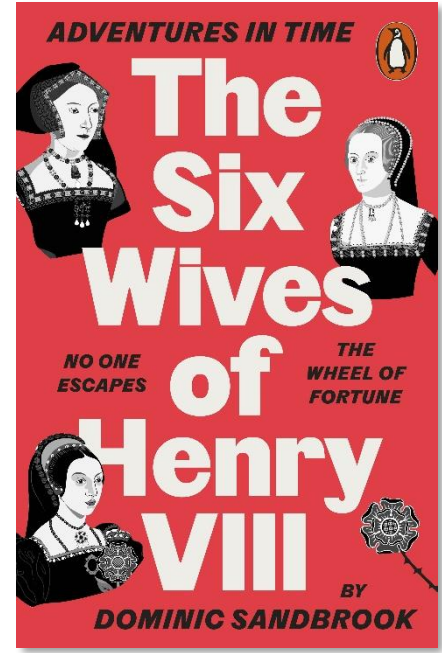
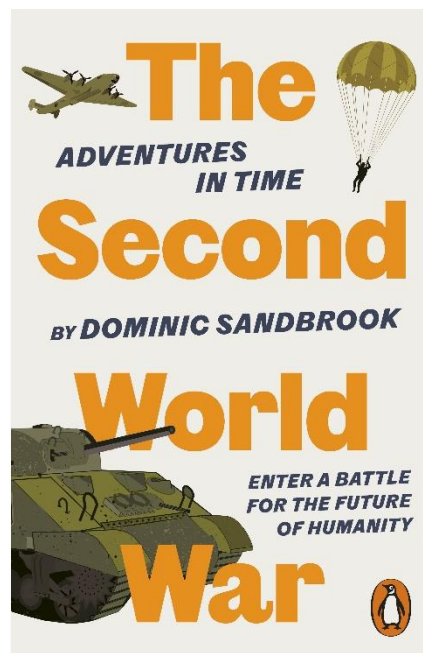
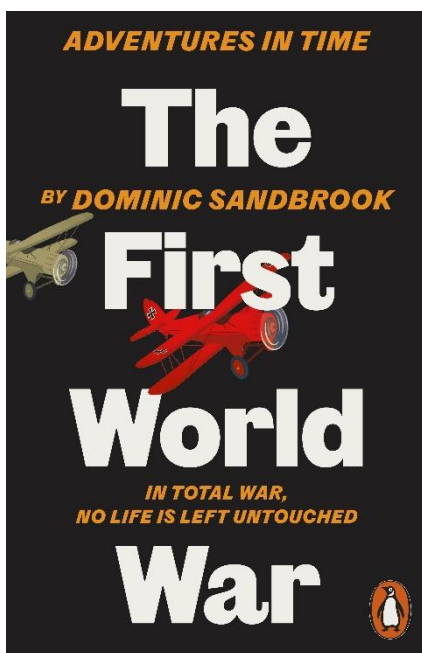
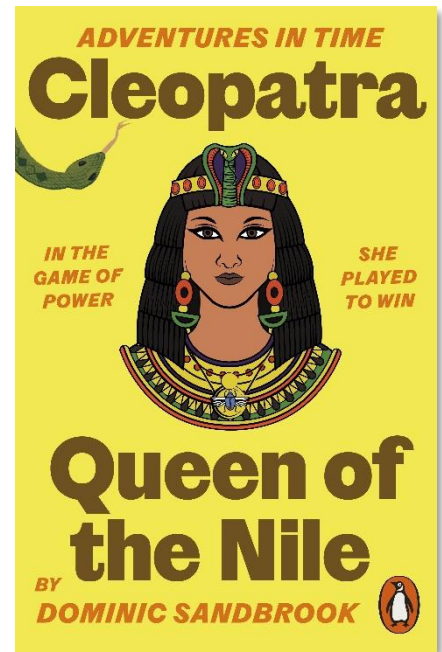
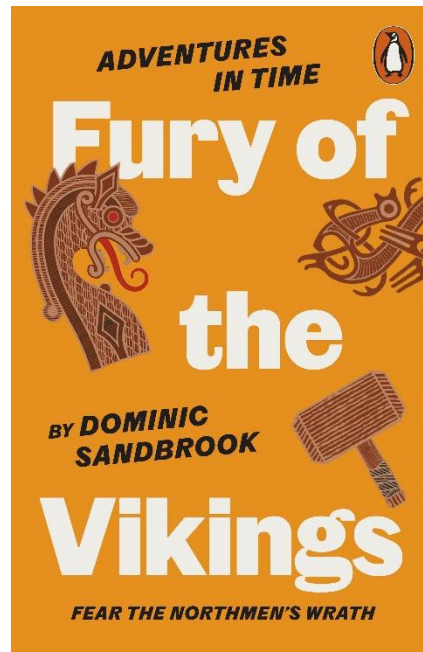
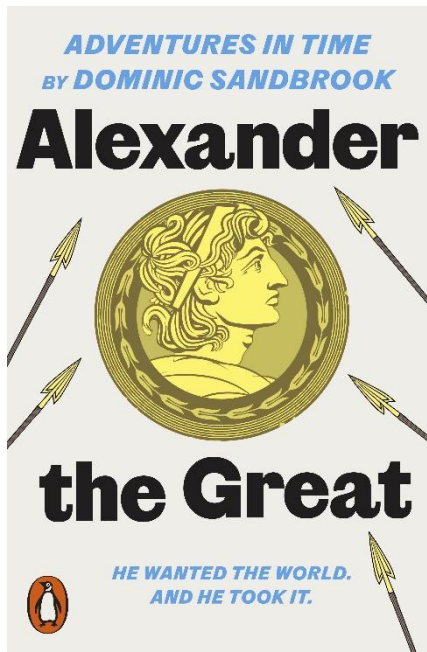
9781761048616
3rd October 2023
Hardback | 64pp
RRP: \$40

Non-Fiction

Adventures in Time Series

Dominic Sandbrook

The *Adventures in Time* series brings the past alive for twenty-first century children. These stories are every bit as exciting as those of Harry Potter or Matilda Wormwood. The only difference is they actually happened . . .



Join The Huddle



We are proud to partner with School Kit — an organisation dedicated to creating beautiful, tactile learning kits that teachers love — on The Huddle. This is an online and in-classroom space within which each term teachers road test selected Penguin books then share learnings and resources.

[Find out more](#)



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reviews and more?**

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