



SUMMER READING NEWSLETTER FOR KS3 AND KS4

As the end of the academic year approaches, you and your child will no doubt be planning what to do over the summer. This welcome break from routine will provide opportunities for children to go out and do activities they may not have been able to do for a while, as well as exploring interests they may have developed through the curriculum this past year.

In addition, it would be very beneficial for children to continue their reading. Reading benefits many areas of education and life. In addition to the obvious benefits on reading comprehension and attainment, it also impacts upon:

- vocabulary
- understanding of grammar
- spelling skill
- writing attainment
- attitudes to reading and writing
- knowledge and understanding of the world and other people
- achievement in other subjects, including maths
- empathy and understanding of emotions
- mental wellbeing
- development of our sense of 'self' and identity.

To help you and your child select some reading material for this summer, we have collated a range of books which your child may enjoy immersing themselves in over the break. **Please note that unless otherwise stated, the texts are suitable from 11-years-old, but please do research the books before selecting them to ensure that they are appropriate for your child.**

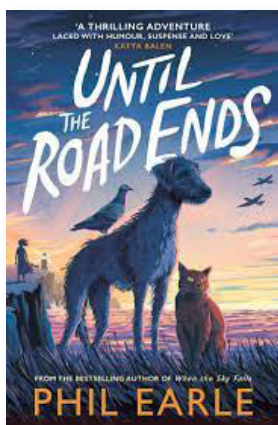
In addition, this newsletter provides you with a range of interactive, virtual cultural experiences that can help to build their wider knowledge and interests. This is obviously not an exhaustive list – there's so much they could explore. Whatever they are curious about, or take interest in, consider looking at books around the topic, or encouraging them to research into the area further through non-fiction texts such as online articles.

We are delighted to also share videos of book recommendations and summer challenges from our PiXL Reading Ambassadors – award-winning authors Phil Earle, Holly Race and Darren Simpson. We hope that amongst all of the recommendations shared here, you and your child find something to read this summer.

We wish you a truly wonderful summer and hope that you enjoy adventuring through a range of stories too.

PHIL EARLE RECOMMENDS... AND A SUMMER CHALLENGE!

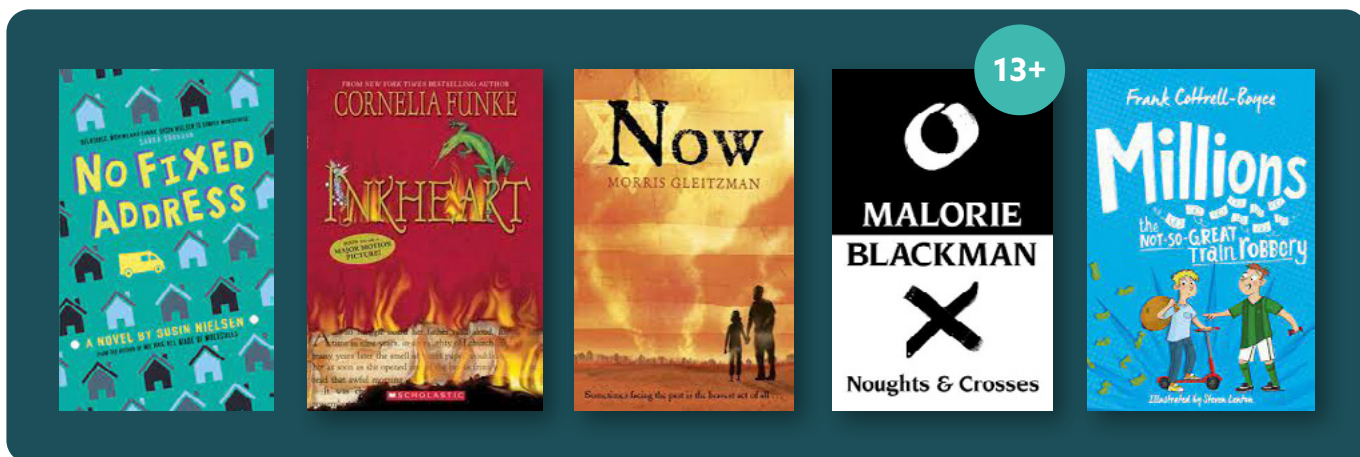
We are delighted that award-winning author Phil Earle has been a PiXL Reading Ambassador again this academic year, sharing his book recommendations and tips for reading. Despite finding reading difficult when he was younger, Phil has gone on to write many incredible books; his most recent novels are *When the Sky Falls* and *While the Storm Rages* and these have been extremely popular. His new book, *Until the Road Ends*, has just been published – you can find out more about this below! Phil has set you a summer challenge, so do watch his video via the QR code to find out more!



Until the Road Ends PHIL EARLE

When Peggy saves a stray dog from near-death, a beautiful friendship begins. Peggy and Beau are inseparable: the only thing that can ever come between them is war. Peggy is evacuated to the safety of the coast, but Beau is left behind in the city, where he becomes the most extraordinary and unlikely of war heroes.

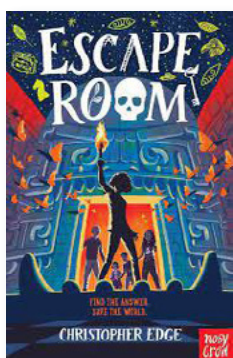
Night after night, as bombs rain down and communities are destroyed, Beau searches the streets, saving countless families. But then disaster strikes, changing Peggy's life forever. With her parents killed, both she and Beau are left alone, hundreds of miles apart. But Beau has a plan to reunite them at long last... **To watch Phil talk about his new book, scan the QR code:**



SHORTER-LENGTH READS

Accessible novels for 11-14-year-olds with dyslexia-friendly font and engaging stories

Escape Room CHRISTOPHER EDGE



When twelve-year-old Ami arrives at The Escape, she thinks it's just a game - the ultimate escape room with puzzles and challenges to beat before time runs out. Meeting her teammates, Adjoa, Ibrahim, Oscar and Min, Ami learns from the Host that they have been chosen to save the world and they must work together to find the Answer. But, as he locks them inside the first room, they quickly realise this is no ordinary game... **To watch Christopher talk about his book, scan the QR code.**



Ghost Stadium TOM PALMER

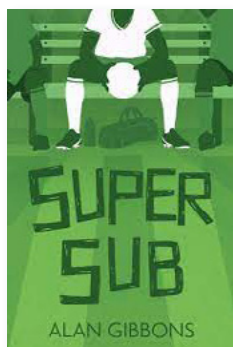


Lucas, Irfan and Jack want to mark the beginning of their summer holidays in style! Tricking their parents with a camping cover story, the boys sneak into the old abandoned football stadium to spend the night. But are the rumours about it being haunted true? They're about to find out...



Super Sub ALAN GIBBONS

New boy Smithy can't understand why everyone is so excited about a player on the football team called "Bengo". He's been absent for the first few games of the season, and starts the next game on the bench - surely he can't be that special? But Smithy soon gets a chance to see him in action. Bengo is easily the best player Smithy's ever seen, putting in perfect crosses and generally running the opposition ragged. So why is Bengo left on the bench so often, and why does he seem to bottle it when any strong tackles come his way?



Operation Banana TONY BRADMAN

TONY BRADMAN

Susan is worried about her mum. She's struggling with long hours at her job in the factory and it's a long time since they've heard from Susan's dad, who's on the front line in North Africa. Everything is in short supply in London, but Susan decides she's going to cheer her mum up by getting her a treat, and what could be more rare at that time than a sweet, delicious banana? But what lengths will Susan have to go to find one? Let Operation Banana commence!

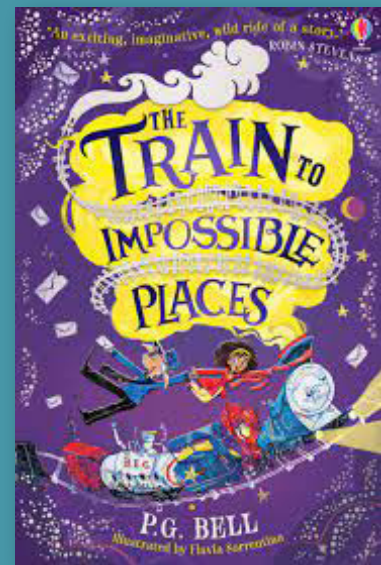


LONGER FICTION READS

The Train to Impossible Places

P.G. BELL

When Suzy hears a strange noise in the middle of the night, she creeps downstairs to find a train roaring through her house. But this is no ordinary train. This is the magical delivery express for the Union of Impossible Places. Whisked on board by a troll-boy, Suzy's world is turned upside down when she's asked to deliver a cursed package to a fearsome sorceress. And, quite suddenly, Suzy realizes the fate of the Impossible Places is in her hands...

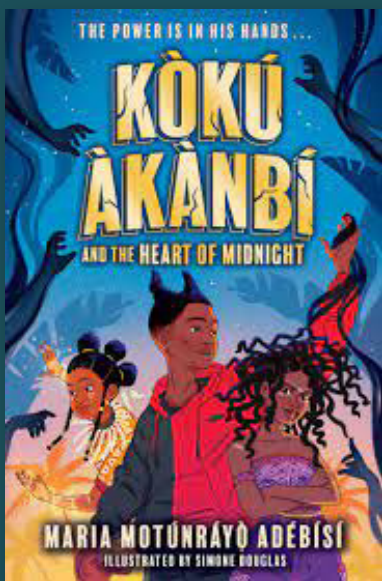
**Just Like Everyone Else**

SARAH HAGGER-HOLT

Thirteen-year-old Aidan can't breathe in his crowded family home. Running is his only respite from four loud sisters and involved, touchy-feely parents. Then his mum makes an announcement: she's having another baby. Only, this time it's not for her; she will be a surrogate for gay couple Justin and Atif.

Aidan is incensed. As if his family wasn't embarrassing - or big - enough already. But he's also scared. Aidan thinks he might be gay, and he's really struggling to accept this possibility. He's definitely not ready to come out, but what if being around Justin and Atif exposes him as gay? If only he was just like everyone else.





Kòkù Àkànbí and the Heart of Midnight

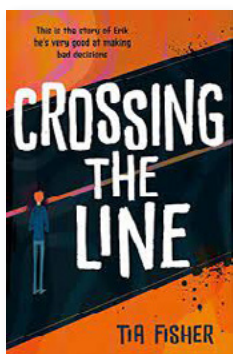
MARIA MOTÚNRÁYÒ ADÉBÍ SÍ

After cynical thirteen year-old orphan Koku accidentally releases a demon on a trip to the British Museum, his uncle sends him to Olori, the West African land of origins, for the summer. Cursed with a weird name and an illness to match, Koku thinks life can't get any worse. His sickle cell anaemia has always left him feeling unwanted and powerless, and now he's being parcelled off to a country he barely remembers. But when Koku arrives in Olori, he finds himself in a land of endless sun and powerful magical tribes - and on the wrong side of a war. The ruling Ogún tribe is trying to destroy the night, and the magical creatures who need it, forever. As the last living descendent of the darkness-controlling Olókun tribe, Koku is the only one who can stop them...

Crossing the Line

TIA FISHER

13+



Erik's life has been falling apart ever since his dad died. Homework and being good at school stop feeling important when you're the new man of the house. When Erik's bad behaviour attracts the wrong crowd, he's sucked into a terrifying new world of drug dealing, trap houses and

violence. Making money feels good but Erik soon learns that a small favour can become a huge debt. And when his sisters' lives are threatened, Erik will have to cross one more line to save them...

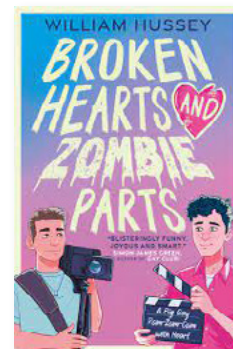
Broken Hearts and Zombie Parts

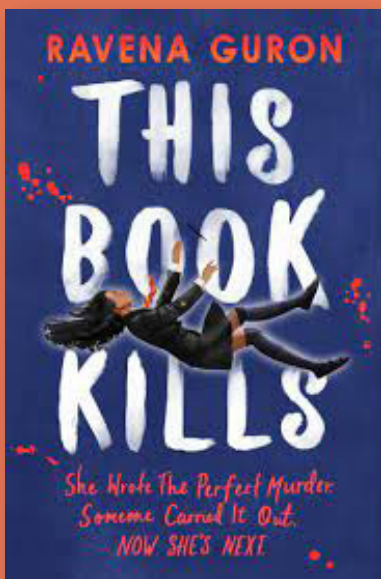
WILLIAM HUSSEY

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Jesse Spark has a broken heart and in a few short weeks he'll require major surgery to repair it - which means he only has a month to accomplish two almost-impossible tasks.

- 1) Shoot his epic zombie movie on a shoestring budget, if he has any hope of getting into film school.
- 2) Fall in love, before this surgery lands him with a huge scar - because how will anyone ever fancy him after that?





This Book Kills

RAVENA GURON

13+

When Hugh Henry Van Boren, one of the most popular and richest kids in Jess Choudhary's school, is found dead, the student body is left reeling and wondering who the murderer could be... Jess, a student under strict instructions to keep her record clean or risk losing her scholarship, finds herself at the centre of the investigation when it's revealed that Hugh died in the exact same way as a character in a short story she wrote. And then Jess receives an anonymous text thanking her for the inspiration...

The Sad Ghost Club

LIZE MEDDINGS



This is the story of one of those days - a day so bad you can barely get out of bed, when it's a struggle to leave the house, and when you do, you wish you hadn't. But even the worst of days can surprise you. When one sad ghost, alone at a crowded party, spies another sad ghost across the room, they decide to leave together. What happens next changes everything. Because that night, they start the The Sad Ghost Club - a secret society for the anxious and alone, a club for people who think they don't belong.

To watch Lize talk about her book, scan the QR code.



Stand Up NIKESH SHUKLA

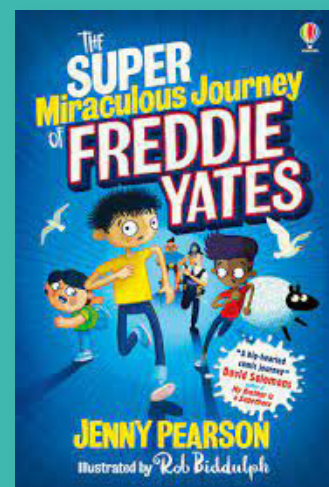
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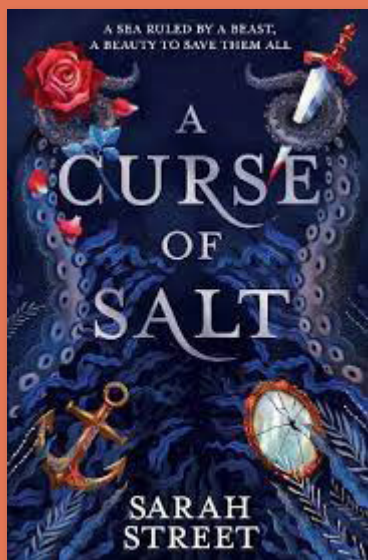
Madhu is 17 and has the weight of the world on her shoulders: her dad is putting pressure on her to apply to university, she misses her estranged sister but contact is strictly forbidden, and she's pulling in every single shift possible at a pizza place to help support her family. What she really wants, though, is to be a world-famous stand-up comedian...

Just as she's about to turn her back on this dream a YouTube clip of Madhu goes viral and she is suddenly catapulted into the bright lights of stardom. It's not long before she catches the attention of a fellow Asian comedy legend who offers her the chance of a lifetime. But the road to comedy glory is not a barrel of laughs - and Madhu's own struggles with her family and identity soon catch up with her. Can she follow her dreams and stay true to herself and those she loves in the process?

**The Super Miraculous Journey of Freddie Yates** JENNY PEARSON

Freddie Yates likes facts. Just not the one staring him in the face - that his secret plan is not, in fact, secret. Because Freddie's journey wasn't meant to involve Big Trev and the onion-eating competition or the loo-exploding pear-and-potato turnovers. And Freddie definitely didn't expect to end up, with his two best friends, on national television in a supergirl costume. But journeys never take you where you think they will. And for Freddie, that fact might just have to be enough...





A Curse of Salt

SARAH STREET

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Bodies are washing ashore and everyone knows who's to blame. Legends of the Heartless King shroud the continent in fear; they call him a pirate, a monster, a god. When his mercenaries raid her father's merchant ship, Ria's family is faced with a horrifying demand. They will spare his life, in exchange for one of his daughters. Determined to save her sisters, Ria launches herself into the world of pirates. Face-to-face with the Heartless King, she finds he is far more than the stories told. He is a man, with a human name and blood-stained hands, bound to the seas by a centuries-old curse. As their chemistry blooms into something more, Ria finds herself caught in an ancient web of secrets...

The Severed Thread

LESLIE VEDDER

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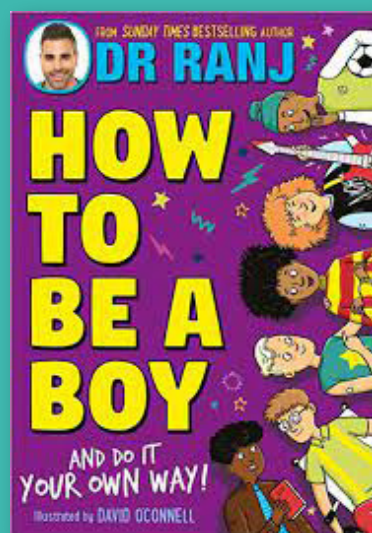
Packed with kick-ass fight scenes and featuring two romantic storylines, this retelling of Sleeping Beauty is the breathtaking sequel to The Bone Spindle. Having woken the sleeping prince, Briar Rose, Fi and Shane still have a curse to break, and a terrifying foe to face: the Spindle Witch. If they can defeat her, the land of Andar will be free again. The three journey to the secret city of Everlynd, and all the while Fi is fighting her feelings for Briar, while he is fighting the ever-growing pull of the Spindle Witch. On the way, they are ambushed by Red, the girl who Shane can't stop flirting with and arguing with. The girl in the service of the Spindle Witch. After an accident, the two are forced to work together. But then they're captured by a pack of Witch Hunters. Will Red finally pick the right side?



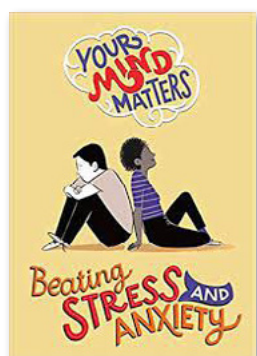
NON-FICTION

How to be a boy and do it your own way DR. RANJ

Whether it's thinking about hobbies or standing up to your mates, Dr Ranj is here to encourage boys to grow up happy with confidence, positivity and kindness. Dr Ranj reflects on what it really means to be a boy in today's world, looking at everything from stereotypes and peer pressure to mental health and respect for women. In a world where everyone seems to have an opinion about what it means to be a man, he is here to reassure readers that there isn't one way to be a boy - just one way to be true to yourself. To watch Dr Ranj talk about his book, scan the QR code.



Your Mind Matters: Beating Stress and Anxiety HONOR HEAD

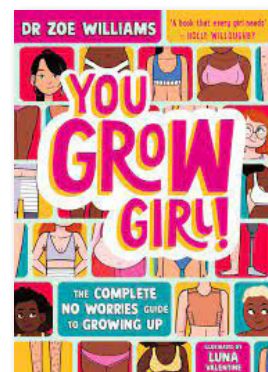


Everyone experiences stress and anxiety at times in their lives, but sometimes the feelings build up and can affect our physical and mental health.

This book will help you to recognise the signs of feeling stressed and anxious and what you can do to feel better.

You Grow Girl DR. ZOE WILLIAMS

Growing up is exciting, but it can also be a strange and confusing time. This book will help you can ride your rollercoaster more smoothly! We'll cover the usual things such as periods and body changes, but also equip you with the knowledge you need to flourish and thrive in today's world, from self-care and recognising healthy relationships to talking about your mental health with confidence. Packed with easy-to-understand information, myth-busting advice and fun illustrations, this is the ultimate growing-up guide for girls who want to feel empowered, informed and positive about becoming the very best version of themselves. To watch Zoe talk about her book, scan the QR code.



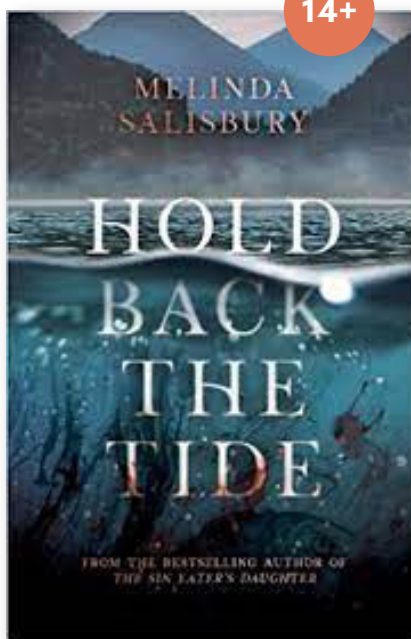
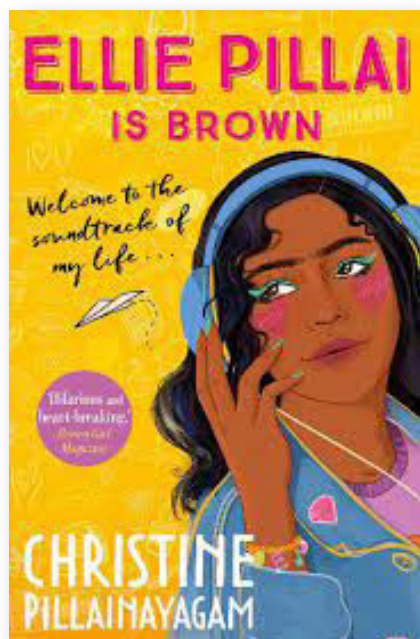


HOLLY RACE RECOMMENDS...

Holly Race is the fantastic author of a trilogy which starts with *Midnight's Twins* – a book which was featured on our newsletters last year. We are delighted that Holly has been working with us as a PiXL Reading Ambassador this year – she is so passionate about reading and her recommendations will hopefully open doors to stories and topics you may not have considered exploring before. She has recommended some great books for you this half term and has also give you a summer reading challenge! Please do scan the QR code below to watch her video:



Holly has also recorded a summer reading challenge video for you. To read this, scan the QR code here.



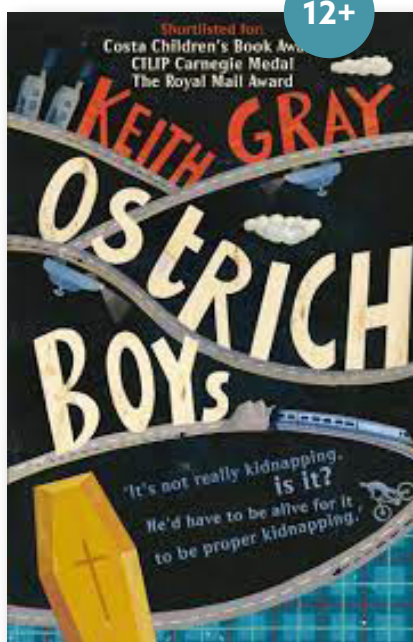


DARREN SIMPSON RECOMMENDS...

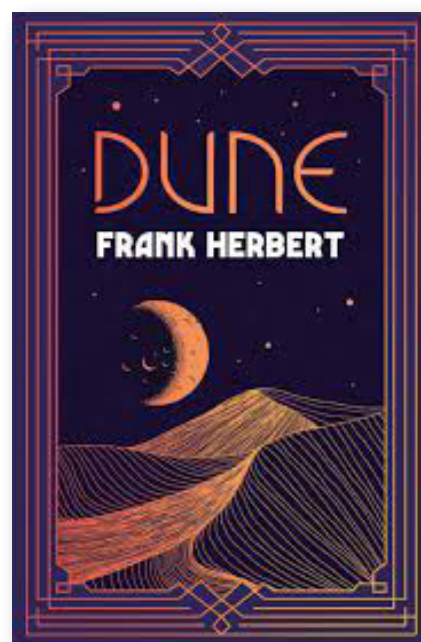
Darren Simpson is a fantastic author, and his three books were shared on various newsletters last academic year: *Scavengers*, *The Memory Thieves* and *Furthermoor*. We are so pleased that Darren has been a PiXL Reading Ambassador this academic year. He is passionate about sharing book recommendations with students and parents, but also to hear what they think about books he's shared or ones they'd like him to explore, so feel free to use the hashtag #PiXLReading on Twitter to share your thoughts! **To watch his video containing several recommendations for students across the Key Stage 3-4 range, scan the QR code below:**



Darren has also recorded a summer reading challenge video for you. To read this, scan the QR code here.



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Exploring a wide variety of experiences and activities helps to introduce your child to knowledge and interests they may not otherwise have acquired. You may already have lots of ideas for getting out and about over the summer, but we have also collated a few ideas to start you off below. These may spark an interest in something your child may then want to read about, either through a story book or through non-fiction texts.

- In this ten-part podcast series, the most frequently asked questions about Shakespeare's life are explored. Listen to the podcasts related to the questions you are interested in finding out more about [here](#).
- Watch a 'making of' video about a film of your choice. For example: *Pirates of the Caribbean, The Curse of the Black Pearl* [here](#) or this video entitled *Creating Harry Potter* [here](#). Both of these videos are full of interesting information about details you may not have noticed or thought of whilst watching them and are fascinating insights into the production of films.
- Explore areas of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. You can see their permanent, current and past exhibits [here](#).
- Watch this interview event with Tim Peake, focusing on his experience in space [here](#).
- Explore the TED-Ed YouTube playlist for myths from around the world [here](#).
- Over the centuries, music has changed with developments in harmony, rhythm and technology, to name but a few. Listen to Snarky Puppy's instrumental piece of jazz fusion [here](#).
- Watch the first episode of the Grand Canyon In Depth Video Series, and any other episodes you are interested in [here](#).
- Spend time browsing through the last 500 years of art on the Tate Britain website, viewing artworks and watching videos from the curators [here](#).
- Explore the English Timeline on the British Library website [here](#).
- Watch the TED-Ed video *The unexpected math behind Van Gogh's Starry Night* [here](#).

