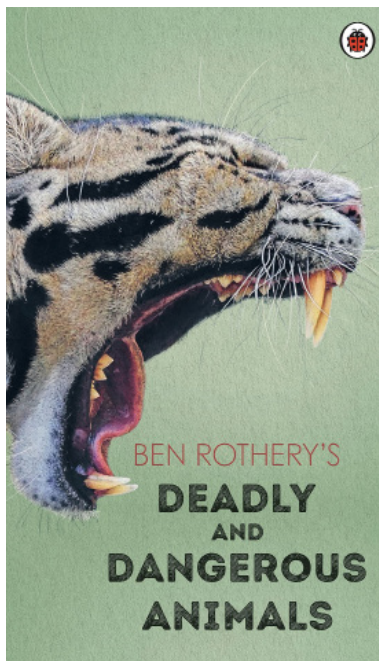


## Book Reviews

*Deadly and Dangerous Animals* Ben Rothery (author & illustrator)

Ladybird Books, Penguin Random House (Hardcover £12.99)



This is a stunningly illustrated book with realistic and intricate drawings and a wealth of information organised into ten different sections. The book title would suggest that the contents will be all claws and teeth but, as the author states, there is much more to it than that, and we are introduced in great detail to a range of deadly creatures from the tiny golden poison frog to the bad tempered 1000 kg Cape buffalo.

The author explains in clear but intelligent language how animals can be deadly in a variety of ways, including by stealth, speed, mimicry and many others, familiar and not so well-known. This book would be worth reading for the minutely detailed illustrations alone, but the accompanying text is so well thought out and presented, children will be fascinated. The glossary at the end explains unfamiliar vocabulary and the book concludes with an author's note about leaving the deadliest creatures of all until last: humans.

We are encouraged to use our intelligence, our most positive feature, to look after our planet and the animals we share it with. All in all, a highly recommended book which deserves a place on your non fiction shelf.

*The Wilderness* Steve McCarthy (author & illustrator)

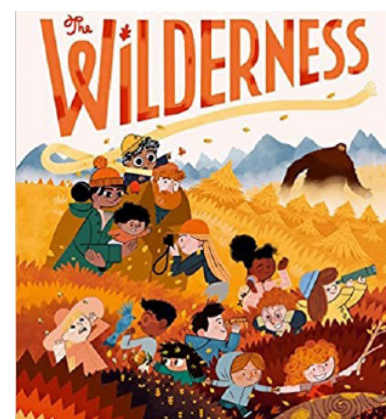
Walker Books (Hardcover £12.99)

The Vasylenko family are a family of adventurers who love the outside world and the excitement of discovering wild things and wild places – all except Oktober, who prefers to take his adventures between the pages of his books with titles like '102 Ways to Avoid Getting Eaten'. While the rest of the family dream of wild adventures, poor Oktober can't sleep for worrying about a monster called 'The Wilderness' that lurks outside.

With encouraging words and hand-holding from his supportive parents, Oktober ventures outside for the first time. Whilst his siblings identify treasures, Oktober only sees a murky mist, which hides hideous creatures and '142 things that leave an itchy rash' and feels that he will never be brave enough for his family.

When the worst happens and Oktober is whooshed into a tornado, he discovers that 'The Wilderness' is not a monster after all. In fact, The Wilderness helps Oktober to see things from a different point of view.

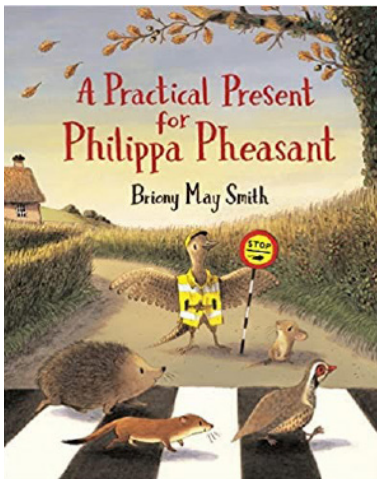
This charming book reassures children that not everything they fear is frightening and the vibrant illustrations complement the story beautifully.



## Book Reviews

*A Practical Present for Philippa Pheasant* [Briony May Smith \(author & illustrator\)](#)

**Walker Books (Hardcover £12.99)**



Philippa Pheasant is fed up by almost being knocked down pancake flat on a daily basis. When she stumbles across a lady in a bright yellow uniform standing in the middle of the road, Philippa has an innovative idea and her woodland search begins.

A delightful story about an enterprising young pheasant will bring enjoyment to any reader. From the clues provided by the cover image, skilled readers will deduce what will happen, but younger readers will be charmed by the unfolding of events as Philippa takes on a new role. Who knew that it would lead to new-found fame and a search and rescue operation? Even the mayor is impressed and Philippa is treated as a celebrity.

Look out for her protégée on the last page, learning from the expert. Well done, Philippa!

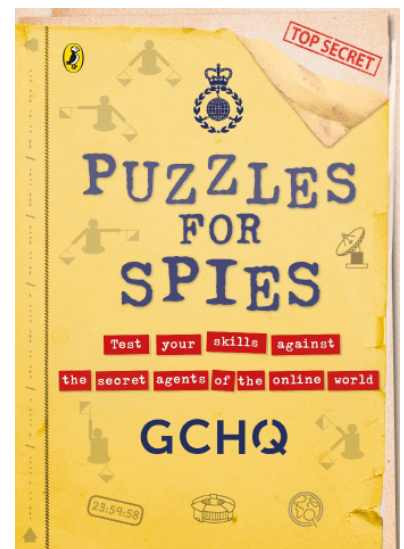
*Puzzles for Spies* [GCHQ \(author\)](#)

**Puffin Books (Paperback £9.99)**

A must for budding problem solvers, prefaced by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, this book is jam-packed with puzzles touching on engineering, codebreaking, maths and analysis amongst other things.

The book tells the story of Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), from the highly secret organisation who, led by Alan Turing, codebreaker extraordinaire, broke the Enigma code in 1941 to the more familiar work they do today (obviously none of the top secret stuff!). Interspersed with history and background information about the kind of people who work at GCHQ and the skills they need, the puzzles are varied and challenging, and encourage perseverance and determination.

Cyber security is explained, and the need to use strong passwords, staying safe online and being alert for anything suspicious which is surely vital for today's online world.



Well written and informative, with challenges presented to the readers on every page, this is a great book which will keep curious minds fascinated for hours. There are no tests, no competitions, no prizes – just the satisfaction of solving the puzzles and having fun doing so. With further things hidden throughout the book, the reader is encouraged to 'keep their eyes peeled'.

## Book Reviews

*Home is Where the Hive is* Claire Winslow (author) & Vivian Mineker (illustrator)

**Sunbird Books (Hardcover £12.99)**



Join Beatrice the honeybee (Flower-Finding Scout Bee #7394 of Big Tree Hive, to be precise) as she and her 50,000 sisters go in search of a new place they can call home, forced from Big Tree Hive by human development. Their current home has everything they need, including a beautiful view, and Beatrice sets out on a mission to find a replacement home.

Beatrice's search is in vain as she finds no flowers, just tall buildings and unfriendly neighbors (American spelling) until, suddenly, she spies a garden that's bursting with tasty blossoms high above the big city. This is perfect!

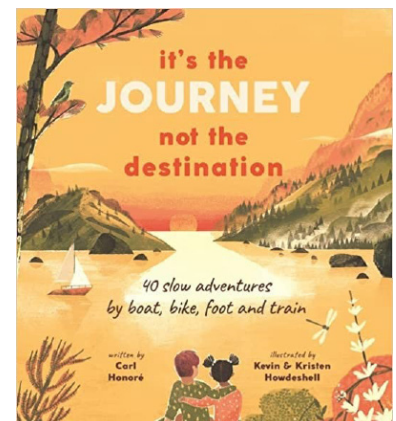
The additional information at the end of the book suggests ways the reader can engage with bees and other pollinators to make them feel at home.

With colourful illustrations and bees with expressive facial expressions, this charming story serves to remind the reader that a new home may be different but still a home nonetheless. And the new location – Big Sky Hive, of course – also has a lovely view.

*It's the journey not the destination* Carl Honoré (author) & Kristen & Kevin Howdeshell (illustrators)  
**Magic Cat Publishing (Hardcover £20.00)**

A series of geographical journeys on foot, bike, boat and train are delightfully described as we are taken around the world on slow journeys. The author encourages the reader to adopt a slower pace of life and take time to notice details and discover new people, sounds, aromas and flavours. He believes that 'travelling slowly turns any journey into a balm for the soul and a banquet for the senses'.

This is certainly a book to leaf through and savour, imagining the places we could travel to, and although there are some exotic destinations, they are not all inaccessible. With journeys to the Great Stones Way in the south of England, or punting on the River Cam, or travelling over the Glenfinnan viaduct a la Harry Potter, we can dream of making the same journeys.



But this does not purport to be a travel guide, more a manual to being present and alive to the here and now, and the 12 tips at the end of the book to travelling slow will strike a chord with teachers and parents as they sweep children from one activity to the next and begin to wonder why.

Each page includes a range of detailed and colourful illustrations, carefully crafted to depict the sights and sounds of the journey in question.

In this hectic world of children being rushed here and there in their busy social lives, perhaps this approach is just what many of them need.

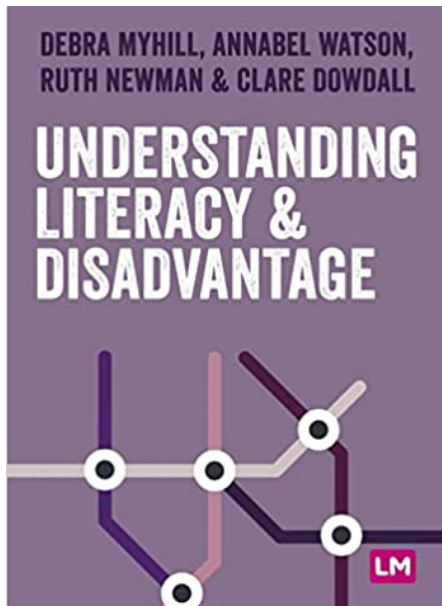


## Book Reviews

*Understanding Literacy and Disadvantage (Primary Teaching Now)*

by Debra Myhill, Annabel Watson, Ruth Newman and Clare Dowdall

**SAGE Publishing (Paperback £22.99)**



Anyone familiar with the work of Professor Debra Myhill (see her article on grammar on page 6 of this magazine) will have high hopes for this latest book from Debra and her colleagues at Exeter University. They will not be disappointed. In fact, the research, vignettes, guidance and conclusions will exceed expectations.

Written to support trainee teachers to explore the complex relationships between literacy achievement and social background, this book is so much more than that, offering practising teachers insights and strategies to address this persistent issue.

Deliberately presented to provoke criticality and intelligent consideration of any strategies or approaches, and really question their use and efficacy rather than blindly using fads and fashions which might not be working, teachers and school leaders are encouraged to take a critical and reflective look at their own current practice.

Drawing on a wide body of evidence and packed with sound and sensible advice, teachers are advised to re-imagine their classrooms and transform them to make literacy a richer, more engaging and more rewarding experience for the children they teach.

It is hard to do this book justice in a short review, but the chapter on 'reading the world' with its recurrent theme of the importance of engagement with reading, and the chapter on 'the challenge of vocabulary' will particularly resonate with teachers in classes where children have been deprived – for whatever reasons – of a rich reading environment. With methods, activities and approaches a-plenty, teachers are asked to take a measured and sensible approach. There is no mention of a 'word of the day'.

One very small point (possibly only relevant to the more mature reader) is that the tiny text will have you reaching for your reading glasses. Apart from that, this book comes highly recommended.

## NATE NEEDS YOU!

Request for book reviewers

Please get in touch if you would like the opportunity to be one of NATE's book reviewers (and have your work published). You may have read and used a book in your own teaching or just liked reading it for pleasure! We can also send out new books to you for review.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Janet Gough**

Editor, *Primary Matters*

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