

Books to Pick in 2026!

As we've just learned from this week's Picture News pack, 2026 is going to be a very exciting Year of Reading! It also looks set to be a busy year for new books being released. One of the biggest treats this year is a brand-new Gruffalo story by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. It will be published on 10th September 2026 and is the first new Gruffalo tale in more than 20 years. The book takes readers back to the deep, dark wood for another adventure with the much-loved characters. What will the mouse get up to this time? Another new book is Mr Darwin's Tortoise, written by Angela McAllister, and will be published on 12th February 2026. It is a colourful story



Pictured: Children reading together.
Source: Canva.

about a curious boy in the Galápagos Islands who meets Charles Darwin (a scientist who studied animals and nature). Together they explore the wildlife and share a sense of wonder about the natural world. With new stories like these on the way, 2026 looks like a brilliant year to curl up with a book, explore new worlds, and enjoy reading even more! ***What is your favourite book? Are you excited to read some new books this year?***

Paw-some News!

A wildlife survey has revealed exciting news from Nepal! The country's latest camera-trap study has confirmed that the snow leopard population has now stabilised at nearly 400. Special cameras were placed high in the Himalayas, to capture photos of these shy animals as they moved through their cold mountain home.



Pictured: A snow leopard, mid jump!
Source: Canva.

Snow leopards are rare big cats that live in some of the coldest, steepest places on Earth. They have large, furry paws that work like snowshoes, and long, thick tails that help them balance and stay warm. They cannot roar, but they can leap up to six metres in a single jump! Because snow leopards are difficult to spot, scientists rely on camera traps to learn more about them. Experts say these stable numbers show how important it is to protect their mountain homes and support the people who live alongside them. ***Do you know of any other animals that live in the snow?***

How might challenges help us grow?



If you don't believe,
you can't achieve!

Isla

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Air Flight Anniversary

Air flight enthusiasts have marked the 75th anniversary of the world's first passenger jet flight. On 9th January 1951, a de Havilland Comet plane flew from Chicago, Illinois to New York City. It was a significant event in aviation history. The Comet officially entered service with BOAC (now British Airways) on 2nd May 1952, flying from



Pictured: A de Havilland DH106 1A Comet. **Source:** The de Havilland Aircraft Museum on Facebook.



Pictured: Inside the cockpit of a de Havilland DH106 1A Comet. **Source:** The de Havilland Aircraft Museum on Facebook.

London to Johannesburg. The jet made five stops on the 7,000-mile, 23-hour journey. The Comet DH106 1A was powered by four de Havilland Ghost turbo jets, which were embedded into the wings. One of the airplanes has been restored and is now on display at the de Havilland Aircraft Museum, near London. 'It's a beautiful aircraft, even now after all these years,' says Eddie Walsh, a retired volunteer leading the DH106 restoration project. 'It was practically mission impossible.'

Have you seen any old planes?

Do they interest you or do you prefer to look at modern ones?

Dogs Boost Teenagers' Mental Health

A scientific paper, published in iScience, has found that having a dog as part of your family can benefit your mental health. The study focused mostly on how teenagers were affected. Some people have long believed that having a pet in your home can improve your mood. Researchers from Azabu University in Japan say that this is because dogs prompt changes in the collection of microbes that live in and on our bodies. Hundreds of studies have shown that this community of microbes play a crucial role in health, immunity, digestion, and emotional wellbeing. 'The benefits of living with dogs are likely the result



Pictured: A teenager with a dog. **Source:** Canva

of tens of thousands of years of human-canine coexistence,' said lead author of the study, Professor Takefumi Kikusui. He also explained, 'The implication is that the benefits of dog ownership include providing a sense of security through interaction, but I believe it also holds value in its potential to alter the symbiotic microbial community.'

Do you or any of your family or friends have any pets at home?

How do they impact your mood?

How might challenges help us grow?



When things are hard for you to do you learn how to stick at things and not give up. This is really important.

Mia

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