



Welcome to Reading Together

Spring has brought wonderful reading moments across our schools! This month, we're celebrating Share a Story Month – recognising the power of stories to bring people together, build bonds, and create everyday wonder in our homes.

☀️ THE 10-MINUTE CHALLENGE ☀️

Can your family read together for just 10 minutes every day?
That's all it takes!



- Why 10 minutes?
- It fits into the busiest lives
- Children look forward to it when it's part of the routine
- Over an hour each week adds up!
- It shows reading is important AND enjoyable

Part of the
National Year of Reading 2026

GO
ALL
IN.

May is Share a Story Month

This May we're celebrating Share a Story Month as part of the National Year of Reading. It's all about the joy of reading aloud and the power of stories to bring people together.

Why does sharing stories matter?

Research from Book Trust shows:

- Shared reading helps nurture vital connections between adults and children
- For young children especially, reading together supports literacy, bonding, emotional regulation and communication
- It's the emotional quality of shared reading (cuddling, smiling, singing, laughing) that supports strong attachment – not the adult's reading skill

The good news? You don't need to be a confident reader yourself to share stories with your child. What matters most is spending that time together, enjoying the experience, and following your child's interests.



Go All in: Stories are everywhere

Stories aren't just in books. This month, try finding stories in different places:

- **At the dinner table:** Tell stories about your day, or make up adventures together
- **On screens:** Watch shows together and talk about characters, feelings, and what might happen next
- **Before bed:** Make up stories featuring your child as the hero
- **At the library:** Let children choose their own books – even if it's the same one again!

As the weather warms up, try reading outdoors! Here are some spring reading ideas:

- **Into gardening?** Read seed packets together, plant guides, books about nature
- **Love the outdoors?** Take a book to the park, beach, or garden
- **Enjoy Easter?** Read stories about spring, new beginnings, adventure





Design a magical creature competition



Laura Ellen Anderson, patron of St Austell Festival of Children's Literature, has launched an exciting competition!

Have you ever imagined a beast that lives on another planet? An insect made of metal? A dragon that dives underwater? Now's your chance to share these ideas!

How to enter:

- Download the competition sheet from: staustellfestivalofchildrensliterature.com/design-a-magical-creature-competition
(we've also included the sheet at the end of this newsletter – if you can't print it you can just use plain paper but make sure you include all your details)
- Create your creature using any materials (drawing, painting, collage)
- Include details about its habitat, eating habits, and magical powers
- Submit your design online by 1st June 2026

Prize: A collection of Laura Ellen Anderson's books and signed prints!

Open to ages 6-11. Winner announced: 13th June 2026 at the festival!



Simple ideas for reading at home

Educator and parent Bennie Kara shares practical ways families can weave stories into everyday life:

Bedtimes are Story Time

No evening needs to end without a book or story. Use voices, react to the pictures, let children turn the pages. It's wonderful to drift off into imagination and be soothed into sleep.

The Library is Your Friend

Libraries let children choose their own books. Pull out books, fill up bags, explore them together. Choice is powerful – books are about loving what you love.

Stories All Day

Make up stories at dinner, in the car, before sleep. Simple adventures featuring characters a bit like your child. Let them tell stories too, even if there's no plot yet!

Reading as Something We Do

Let children see you reading. Sit down with your own book after dinner. Say "Shhh, I'm reading and this is a really good bit." Show them what loving reading looks like.



Read Bennie Kara's full article 'How we read at home' at:
benniekara.substack.com/p/how-we-read-at-home

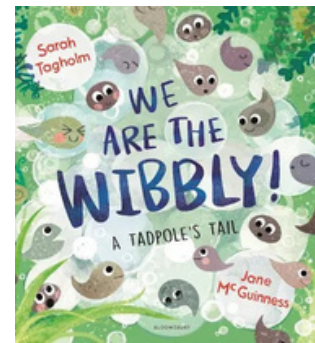
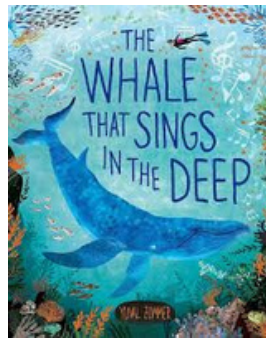
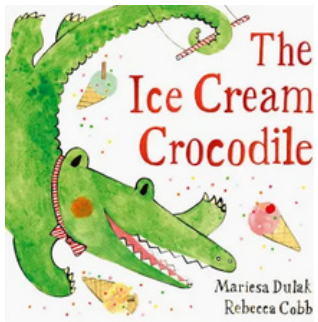


Book Recommendations This Month

These brilliant books are by authors visiting CELT schools for the St Austell Festival Schools Day on 12th June! Get a head start and read them before you meet the authors:

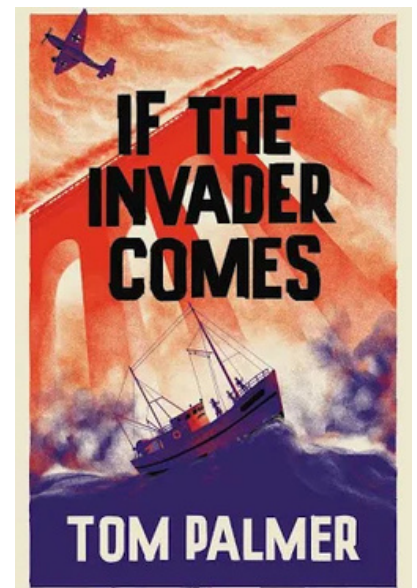
For younger readers:

- The Ice-Cream Crocodile illustrated by Rebecca Cobb - A charming story about a crocodile who won't be sidelined, perfect for reading aloud with voices!
- The Whale that Sings in the Deep by Yuval Zommer - Follow a blue whale's incredible journey with stunning illustrations
- We Are the Wibbly! by Sarah Tagholm - A hilarious story about frogspawn growing up



For older readers:

- SPYGLASS: Mastermind of Mayhem by David Solomons - A laugh-out-loud spy adventure with gadgets, villains, and plenty of action
- SCRAP by Guy Bass - A sci-fi adventure about a robot and two human sisters on a dangerous planet
- If the Invader Comes by Tom Palmer - A gripping wartime tale set in Cornwall during World War Two





Coming Soon...

May Half Term: Author Visits in St Austell!

Tom Palmer at St Austell Library

Meet award-winning author Tom Palmer! He'll be talking about his new Cornwall-set wartime book *If the Invader Comes*.

When: 11.45am - 12.15pm during May half term

Where: St Austell Library

Cost: FREE

Holly Webb at St Austell Arts Centre

Meet bestselling author Holly Webb!

Where: St Austell Arts Centre

Cost: £1

Tickets - www.staustellfestivalofchildrensliterature.com

June: Magical Creature Competition Closes - 1st June

Final chance to submit your designs!

June: St Austell Festival Schools Day - 12th June

CELT schools will welcome visiting authors - watch out for more details from your child's school!

June: St Austell Festival Family Day - 13th June

Author visits, workshops, and the magical creature winner announcement! Get your tickets now.

July-August: Summer Reading Challenge

Join your local library for the Reading Agency's summer challenge. Keep reading over the holidays!

St Austell Festival of Children's Literature - Get Your Tickets!

Friday 13th June 2026 - Family Day

Join us for a day of author visits, workshops, and reading activities across St Austell. It's our BIG celebration of children's literature and we'd love to see CELT families there!

Tickets available now at:

staustellfestivalofchildrensliterature.com/2026-family-day



DESIGN A MAGICAL CREATURE COMPETITION!

Have you ever imagined a kind of beast that lives on another planet or a robot insect with glowing eyes, or a dragon that lives in a garden shed? If so, now is your chance to share these ideas with us, and with our St Austell Festival of Children's Literature Patron, the brilliant author and illustrator Laura Ellen Anderson!



Large empty rectangular box for drawing a magical creature.

CREATURE FEATURES:

Where does your creature live?

What does it like to eat?

Does it have a magical power?

What is your creature's name?



To enter the competition and view the terms and conditions, visit:
www.staustellfestivalofchildrensliterature.com



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