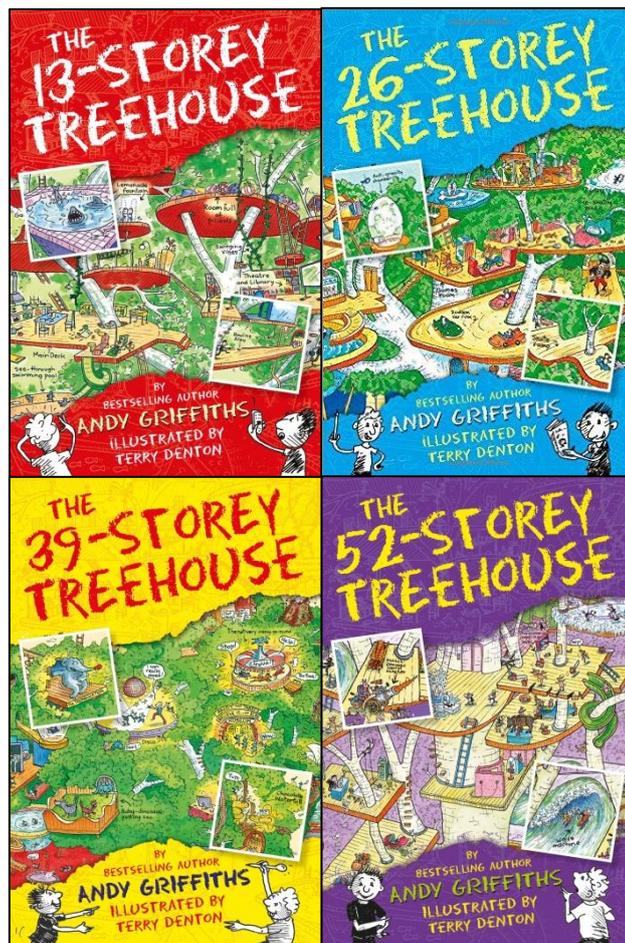


Chatterbooks Activity Pack

The Treehouse Series



Reading and activity ideas for your Chatterbooks group



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
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**THE
READING
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Chatterbooks activity pack: **The Treehouse Series**

This Chatterbooks pack is all about the ever-expanding **Treehouse Series** by writer Andy Griffiths and his best mate Terry Denton, and published by Macmillan Children's Books. As it says on Andy's website: "Andy and Terry live in an incredible ever-expanding treehouse and create very silly books together. Andy writes the words and Terry draws the pictures... well, when they're not too distracted by all the amazing things going on in their incredible ever-expanding treehouse!"

Each story follows Andy and Terry's crazy adventures in their treehouse as they try to write a book, and is told through a combination of text and fantastic cartoon-style illustrations.

Here are activity and discussion ideas for your Chatterbooks group, inspired by the first three books in the series, plus some suggestions for further reading.

And when you have enjoyed these books and the ideas in this pack, look out for the next three books in the series – the treehouse continues to expand!

This pack is brought to you by **The Reading Agency** and their **Children's Reading Partners** publisher partner **Macmillan Children's Books**.

Chatterbooks [www.readinggroups.org/chatterbooks] is a reading group programme for children aged 4 to 14 years. It is coordinated by The Reading Agency and its patron is author Dame Jacqueline Wilson. Chatterbooks groups run in libraries and schools, supporting and inspiring children's literacy development by encouraging them to have a really good time reading and talking about books.

The Reading Agency is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more through programmes for adults, young people and Children – including the Summer Reading Challenge, and Chatterbooks. See www.readingagency.org.uk

Children's Reading Partners is a national partnership of children's publishers and libraries working together to bring reading promotions and author events to as many children and young people as possible.

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The Treehouse Series: the authors



Andy Griffiths is Terry's best mate. He is also Australia's number one children's author. Andy has worked as a teacher, been the lead singer in a rock band, and a stand-up comedian. He is a passionate advocate for literacy and lives in Melbourne, Australia. See www.andygriffiths.com.au

Terry Denton is Andy's best mate. He is a bestselling and award-winning illustrator based in Melbourne. His work includes the *Horrible Science* series for Scholastic UK. See www.terrydenton.com.au

The Treehouse Series: what people say about them

My 10 year old loves this series, I can't even say how many times he has re-read them. He told me this is 5 stars! Haven't read them myself, but they have been passed around to several kids, all of whom have loved them. My son can't wait for the next!

A very entertaining story for my 6 year old, he loved reading this book, found the illustrations very accessible too and he loved the humour. This was probably the first book I've seen him properly glued to (well second actually, the first one was 13-storey Treehouse!) - he couldn't put it down - took it everywhere with him!

The book is funny, quick to read and encourages out of the box thinking for my daughter.

The 26-Storey Treehouse is utterly silly nonsense and wonderfully imaginative and intelligent fun. Terry Denton's illustrations are always amazingly detailed and elaborate. There's always so much to see and to discover. I'm a Treehouse fan. My whole family is.

My son loved it...so bizarre and funny, it inspired him to write and illustrate his own book and he's only 6!

The Treehouse Series: talking about the books

Here are some **book-talking tips and warm up activities** to get the Chatterbooks chat going, whichever book you are reading.

Introducing the book

Look at the cover and the blurb, set the scene, read aloud the first chapter to introduce the book, and show everyone the pictures of the treehouse – and maybe have one or two tasters further on to attract people into the story. Then read the book all the way through or select several chapters, either reading aloud to everyone together, or letting people read and experience the book for themselves.

Talking about the book: some book-talk questions

Get everyone to share their first responses to this book. This could be with the whole group – or children could discuss in small groups, and then share their main feelings and questions with everyone.

Then explore further what people think about the story. Encourage lots of discussion – there are no wrong answers!

- How did you feel when reading this book? And when you'd finished it?
- Which parts of the story do you remember most?
- Did you skip any parts? Which ones?
- What do you think about the pictures? Which were your favourites?
- Was there anything that took you by surprise?
- Were there any parts you couldn't make sense of?
- If you gave up on this book can you say why?
- What were the funniest bits for you?
- What single word (or two!) describes this book for you?



The Treehouse Series: general activity ideas

What's the storey?

For each treehouse book make a list of all the storeys and activities you can find in the pictures – e.g. for the 13-Storey Treehouse:

1. Andy's bedroom
2. Terry's bedroom
3. Lemonade fountain
4. Theatre and library

Choose your favourite storey in each book.

Tell each other about your favourite and why you like it best.

Design and make a new storey for the treehouse

What new storey could you add to the treehouse? Let your imagination run wild!

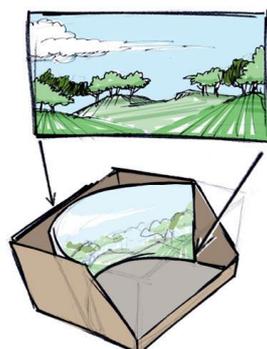
A beach with palm trees? A cream cake conveyor belt?

Make notes for your idea and then make a drawing of your new storey.

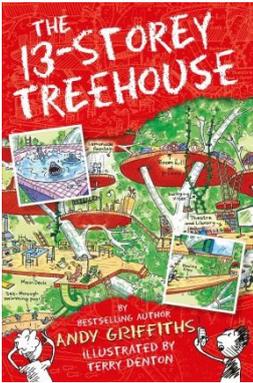
Annotate your drawing giving details explaining each feature – e.g. “moving rubber conveyor belt to take cakes to people's bedrooms”.

Then make a box model of your storey! Here are some tips for doing this:

- Get a shoe box with a matching, fitted lid
- Collect objects and materials you could use – e.g. cotton reels, matchboxes, fabrics, plasticene, fabric, wallpaper, things from nature – make sure their size works for the planned scene. People may want to make items – e.g. a small table from cardboard
- Paint, colour, or stick coloured paper, to the outside and inside of the box.
- When it's dry arrange the items in the box to get the desired layout
- Stick the items in the box starting from the back of the box and working towards the open front. Use glue, masking tape, or bluetak.
- Use the lid to protect the contents when transporting it.



The Treehouse Series: the books



The 13-Storey Treehouse 978-1447279785

Andy and Terry live in the WORLD'S BEST treehouse! It's got a giant catapult, a secret underground laboratory, a tank of man-eating sharks and a marshmallow machine that follows you around and shoots marshmallows into your mouth whenever you're hungry! Just watch out for the sea monkeys, and the monkeys pretending to be sea monkeys, and the giant mutant mermaid sea monster . . . Oh, and, whatever you do, don't get trapped in a burp-gas-filled bubble!

We live in a tree. Well, when I say 'tree' I mean treehouse. And when I say 'treehouse' I don't mean any old treehouse – I mean a 13-storey treehouse! So what are you waiting for? Come on up! It's got a bowling alley, a see-through swimming pool, a tank full of man-eating sharks, vines you can swing on, a games room, a secret underground laboratory, a lemonade fountain, a vegetable vaporiser, and a marshmallow machine...

Writing and making a book

Andy and Terry realise that it would be great to base their book on 'stuff that actually happens'. *We don't have to think **anything** up. We've just lived through a **really** interesting day. All we have to do is write it all down, draw some pictures and we'll have our book! (p221)*

Look at pages 222-8, and think about an interesting day that you have had. Make notes about what happened and what you did, and plan your story. Draft it in rough first – like many authors, you may need to do a few versions before your story really shapes up. You could present your final version as an actual book – here's a link to a website with some [great ideas for making books](#).

Here is Andy's advice about writing: *Get an exercise book and write in it every day... five minutes a day to start with, and gradually increase to at least thirty minutes a day. You get better at writing like you get better at everything else—through constant practice. A good idea is to write the sort of stories that you love to read because, without realising it, you know a lot about this particular type of story and how it is supposed to work. My latest book, Once Upon A Slime, is full of writing tips!*

Self portrait of your toe!

On p46 Terry has drawn a funny selfie of his finger!
Try doing one of your toe – or maybe your ear or your nose!

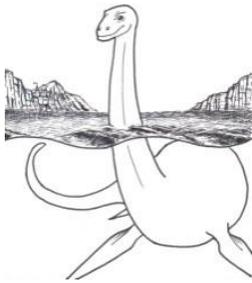
Sea monsters

One of Terry's sea-monkeys turns out to be a surprising kind of mermaid (p105): *Mermaidia wasn't Mermaidia any more. **She was a sea monster!** ...there was her*

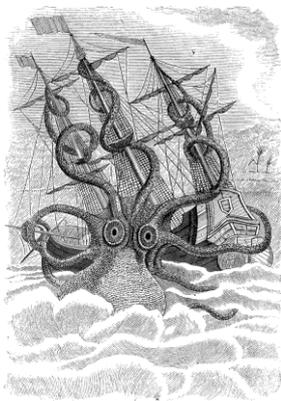
slimy sea-monstery skin... and her slimy sea-monstery tentacles... and her slimy sea-monstery stench...

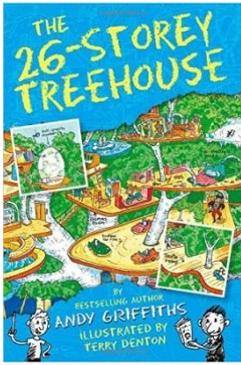
See what you can find out about these two legendary sea monsters!

The Loch Ness Monster



The Kraken





The 26-Storey Treehouse 978-1447279808

Andy and Terry have expanded their treehouse! There are now 13 brand-new storeys, including a dodgem-car rink, a skate ramp, a mud-fighting arena, an antigravity chamber, an ice-cream parlour with seventy-eight flavours run by an ice-cream-serving robot called Edward Scooperhands, and the Maze of Doom - a maze so complicated that nobody who has gone in has ever come out again . . . well, not yet anyway . . .

The dumbest things!

The top 5 dumbest things Terry has ever done are seriously weird! – including rowing with an elephant, putting jelly crystals in the penguin bath, and trying to wash his underpants in the shark tank!

What are the dumbest things that people in your group have done? Maybe not quite so weird but still something to talk about!

78 flavours of ice-cream!

Amazing ice-cream flavours – which would you choose?! Triple chocolate? Egg and bacon? Or dark side of the moon? What do you think ‘Dark side of the moon’ might taste like?! For a warm up activity:

Write a list of all 78 flavours on a flip chart and get your group to call out their favourites, and the ones they would strike off the list. When you’ve narrowed down the list, get everyone to vote for a group favourite!

How I met my best friend

Do you believe Andy’s story about how he met Terry?

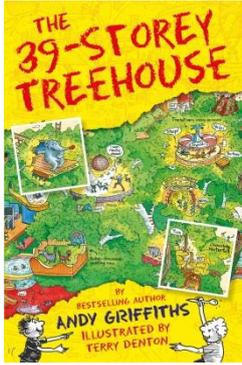
How did you meet your best friend? Have a go at making up an amazing and incredible story about this – and then describe what really happened!

Drum up a storm!

On page 180 there is a very vivid description of a storm, told in words and pictures. Can your group act out this storm? What sounds and actions could you have for each stage? – the rain, the thunder, the hail stones. You could have two groups each creating a storm adventure and then acting it out to each other.

Swallowed by Gorgonzola!

Captain Woodenhead gets trapped in a fish’s belly – ‘a foul and friendless prison’. Find out about other stories where someone is swallowed alive by a great sea creature – for example there’s the Bible story about Jonah and the whale, and Pinocchio, the tale of a puppet, by Carlo Collodi.



The 39-Storey Treehouse 978-1447281580

Andy and Terry's amazing treehouse has thirteen new levels! They've added a chocolate waterfall you can swim in, a volcano for toasting marshmallows, a bulldozer-battling level, a baby-dinosaur-petting zoo, a not-very-merry merry-go-round, a boxing elephant called the Trunkinator, an X-ray room, a disco with light-up dance floor, the world's scariest roller-coaster and a top-secret thirty-ninth level which hasn't even been finished yet! But what good is all this stuff when Andy and Terry are trying to write their fastest book ever?

Swimming in chocolate...

What might happen if you swam in a chocolate waterfall? Or when you got out?!

Write a short story about someone who does this – think how it might feel trying to do breast-stroke in chocolate! What if it was a cold day?

Andy and Terry also have an active (non-erupting) volcano in their treehouse – but what could happen if it did erupt?!

A Once-upon-a-time machine.

Terry invents a Once-upon-a-time machine which will write their book for them. All they have to do is programme it to come up with the book they want.

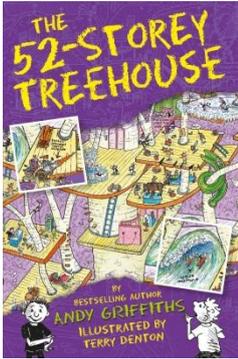
Have a look at all the instrument panels and set a programme for a story you'd like to read – or better still, use what you've programmed as a template for writing your own story! Here's an example of a **story template** using the settings on Terry's machine – you could have a go at writing this!

DIAL	SETTING
FUNNY	Full smile funny
ACTION	64 – half-way round the scale
CHARACTERS	Andy; Terry; Penguins; Floppy the flying cat; Birthday card bandits
SETTINGS	Treehouse; Dark side of the moon
ROMANCE	3 hearts!
DISASTER	Meteor shower
TRANSPORT	Cruising carrots
PAGELENGTHOMETER	1-2 pages

Dot-to-dot

On page 205 Andy and Terry make a rocket by drawing it dot-to-dot. Can you create a dot-to-dot puzzle? It could be a house, a flower, an animal – whatever you choose. Tip: make a simple drawing first in pencil, and mark and number the dots on it. Then rub out the pencil outline and you have your puzzle for someone to have a go with! You can also find plenty of dot-to-dot puzzle sheets on the internet.

Here are two more Treehouse books to look out for:



***The 52-Storey Treehouse* 978-1447287575**

Andy and Terry's incredible, ever-expanding treehouse has thirteen new storeys, including a watermelon-smashing level, a wave machine, a life-size snakes and ladders game (with *real* ladders and *real* snakes!), a rocket-powered carrot launcher, a Ninja Snail Training Academy and a high-tech detective agency with all the latest high-tech detective technology. Which is lucky, because they have a **BIG** mystery to solve - *Where is Mr Big Nose???* Come on up!

...and The 65-Storey Treehouse, coming in June 2016!

More books about trees and living in trees

AUTHOR	TITLE	ISBN
Enid Blyton	<i>The Magic Faraway Tree</i>	978-1405272209
Timothee de Fombelle	<i>Toby Alone</i> (Toby is one & a half mm high and lives in Great Oak Tree)	978-1406307269
A.A.Milne	<i>Winnie the Pooh</i> (Owl lives in a tree called 'The Chestnuts')	978-1405211161
Andy Stanton	<i>Mr Gum and the Cherry Tree</i>	978-1405274982
J.R.Tolkien	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> (The Ents – treelike creatures)	978-0261103252
Laura Ingalls Wilder	<i>The Little House in the Big Woods</i>	978-1405272162