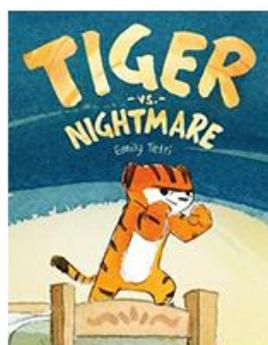
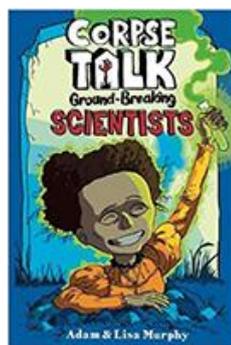
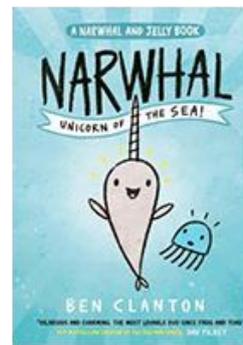
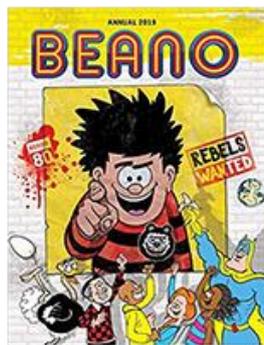




Comics and Graphic Novels

Chatterbooks activity pack



Reading and activity ideas for your Chatterbooks group

Comic and graphic novels

About this pack

In this Chatterbooks activity pack you'll find some great suggestions for comic books and graphic novels for your group to explore, read and enjoy together. We hope you enjoy them, together with all the discussion and activity ideas, and further reading suggestions.

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

The Reading Agency has run Chatterbooks, the UK's largest network of children's reading groups, since 2001. Reading for pleasure has more impact on children's success than education or social class; Chatterbooks groups, which are run in libraries and schools, help children develop a lifelong reading habit. Chatterbooks is a flexible model that can be used with children from 4 to 12, for all different abilities and in targeted or mixed groups.

Find out more at: www.readinggroups.org/chatterbooks

You can buy Chatterbooks welcome packs and the group leader toolkit in The Reading Agency shop: <https://shop.readingagency.org.uk/collections/children>

You can find hundreds of free resources for children on the Chatterbooks resources page: <https://readingagency.org.uk/resources/?programme=chat>

The Reading Agency is a national charity that tackles life's big challenges through the proven power of reading. We work closely with partners to develop and deliver programmes for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Reading Agency is funded by Arts Council England. www.readingagency.org.uk

The Reading Agency's partnership programme brings publishers and literature prize coordinators into a closer relationship with libraries across the country to support the delivery of author events, promotions and reading resources directly to readers.

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[Tips for your Chatterbooks session](#)

Talking about the books: some book-talk questions

Ask lots of open questions to get people talking and encourage discussion about feelings and responses to each story, the characters, and the way the stories are told; some have lots of text or speech to take in, while others have full pages of illustration with minimal text.

Have a good to-ing and fro-ing discussion – everyone will have their own feelings and opinions about the book, and the things they like, or don't like!

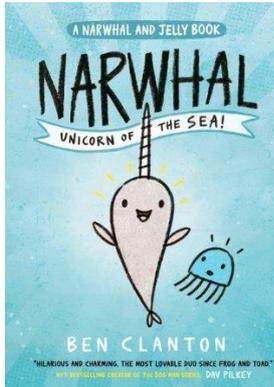
Here are some questions to get you going:

- What did you like about the book/s?
- Was there anything that you didn't like?
- What three words would you use to describe the book?
- Was there anything that puzzled you?
- Was there anything that surprised you?
- Who are your favourite characters? What did you like most about them?
- How would you describe these books to a friend?
- What did you think about the beginning– did the way the book started get you interested?
- How is the experience of reading a comic or graphic novel different to reading a 'regular' novel?
- Do you look at the images first, or the text?
- Do you find it easy to read a comic, or does it take a few pages for you to adapt?

You'll find some more book suggestions at the end of this pack.

Have sheets of flip chart paper and pens handy for collecting everyone's thoughts and ideas.

The Books



Ben Clanton *Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea!*

Egmont 978-1405295307

Narwhal is a happy-go-lucky narwhal. Jelly is a no-nonsense jellyfish. The two might not have a lot in common, but they do they love waffles, parties and adventures. Join Narwhal and Jelly as they discover the whole wide ocean together.

This wonderfully silly early graphic novel series features three short stories and a super fun ocean fact page – and joke page too!

In the first, Jelly learns that Narwhal is a really good friend. Then Narwhal and Jelly form their own pod of awesomeness with their ocean friends. And finally, Narwhal and Jelly read the best book ever!

Ben Clanton is the author/illustrator of the *Narwhal and Jelly* early graphic novel series as well as *It Came In The Mail*, *Vote For Me!*, and *Rex Wrecks It*. When Ben isn't doodling up stories (and often when he is) he likes to cook, explore outdoors, and play basketball. Ben lives in Tacoma, WA with his wife, son and goldendoodle pup.

Discussion

- Have the group read the first story, 'Narwhal is Really Awesome'. How does Jelly feel when they first meet Narwhal? How can you tell? Look at the illustrations on pages 6 and 7 again and this time, cover up the text. Ask each member of the group to describe how Jelly is feeling in each panel using just one word. Discuss how Ben Clanton has created these feelings through the illustrations (hint: eyebrows and tentacles!)
- Read the second story, 'Narwhal's Pod of Awesomeness' and imagine your reading group is a pod! In Narwhal's imagination, a pod "plays ultimate cannonball, eats waffles, fights crime and has super awesome parties!" What does your pod do? Go around the group and have each member suggest an activity for your pod to enjoy. You could even draw a picture of your pod having fun.

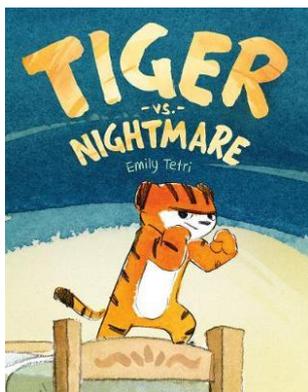
Activities

Have a go a drawing your own versions of Narwhal and Jelly.

What do Narwhal and Jelly look like when they are: Happy | Nervous | Daydreaming | Scared | Excited

There are lots more Narwhal and Jelly activities to enjoy at: <https://www.narwhalandjelly.com/fun-2/>

You could use the name generator to come up with new names for the members of your pod!



Emily Tetri *Tiger Vs. Nightmare*

Roaring Brook Press 978-1626725355

Tiger is a lucky kid: She has a monster living under her bed.

This monster arrived when Tiger was just a baby. It was supposed to scare her - after all, that's what monsters do. But Tiger was just too cute! Now, Tiger and Monster are best friends.

But Monster is a monster, and it needs to scare something. So every night, Monster stands guard and scares all of Tiger's nightmares away. This arrangement works out perfectly, until a nightmare arrives that's too big and scary for even Monster. Only teamwork and a lot of bravery can chase this nightmare away.

Emily Tetri grew up in St Louis, Missouri, where her childhood was mostly spent drawing, making up stories, and running feral outdoors. She went to the University of Southern California where she graduated with a major in animation. She would later work as a background designer and painter for TV animation. She currently lives in Los Angeles where she draws and makes up stories for a living, but continues to run around outdoors with her dog every chance she gets.

Discussion

- Look carefully at the bubbles and boxes used in the story. What kind of text is in the round speech bubbles? What is different about the text that appears in the rectangular boxes? Does the design of the graphic novel make the story easy to follow?
- Emily Tetri used a mechanical pencil and watercolours to create the artwork for *Tiger Vs. Nightmare*. Ask the group what they know about each of these techniques, and encourage them to look up other examples if they're unsure. Can they identify where each style has been used in the book? What colours and styles has Emily used to create the daytime scenes vs. the night-time scenes?

Activity

Making friends with the monster under your bed might seem like a strange thing to do, but Tiger and Monster are a great team. Can you match up these other best friends? Extra points if you know which books they are from!

Matilda Wormwood	Daisy Wells
Wilbur	Toothless
Greg Heffley	Charlotte
Hazel Wong	Lavender
Hiccup	Rowley Jefferson



Beano Annual 2019 DC Thomson 978-1845356798

Celebrating 80 years of the world's longest-running weekly comic, read (and read again) through 112 pages of brand new, hilariously funny stories inside the nation's number one annual.

Join the stars of TV's smash hit *Dennis & Gnasher Unleashed* as well as the usual suspects, Minnie the Minx, Roger the Dodger and the Bash Street Kids as they meet characters from Beantown's colourful past, present and onwards into the future. Take inspiration from their mischief to 'think kid' and remind everyone, every single day, that being a rebel is something we should all be proud of.

Discussion

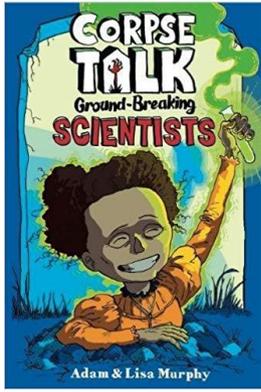
- Have a look through the Beano annual or other comic anthologies. How are they different from the graphic novels the group has seen? A graphic novel is usually longer and follows one or two storylines throughout one book. A comic strip is shorter, and stories can be broken up over several issues. Ask the group to consider the pros and cons of each style of storytelling. Which do they prefer?
- Each section of a comic is called a panel. The borders around the edge of each panel are called frames. Is there anything special about the frames in the Beano comics? How do they add to the experience of reading the story?

Activity

Can you find these words hidden in the wordsearch below? Words can run forwards, backwards, up, down or diagonally. When you've finished, try to find each of the characters in your Beano annual.

P	I	E	C	A	F	E	I	P	V
R	B	E	A	N	O	L	X	J	W
E	R	U	S	A	E	R	T	Y	R
B	O	S	H	M	D	F	E	E	U
E	W	R	K	A	U	T	H	I	B
L	D	E	N	N	I	S	U	N	I
Q	R	M	J	A	A	D	E	N	Y
T	E	M	J	N	B	R	K	I	E
E	A	U	G	A	U	F	P	M	T
Y	D	S	C	B	O	O	K	S	Z

- | | |
|-----------|----------|
| Bananaman | Gnasher |
| Beano | JJ |
| Books | Minnie |
| Dan | Pieface |
| Dennis | Summer |
| Fun | Treasure |
| Read | Yeti |
| Rubi | Pranks |
| Rebel | |



Adam & Lisa Murphy *Corpse Talk: Ground-Breaking Scientists*

David Fickling Books 978-1910989807

Digging up history's most famous, infamous and utterly astounding scientists, host Adam Murphy interrupts their eternal slumber...to ask them the questions no one else will dare!

How did a taste of tortoise inspire Darwin's discoveries?
What led Einstein to unlock the secrets of spacetime?
What's the deal with Marie Curie's deadly discoveries?

Join your host, Adam Murphy, as he gets the answers to these questions and many more, on CorpseTalk, the show where the dead famous spill their guts!

Adam & Lisa Murphy are the team behind the comics *CorpseTalk*, where the reanimated corpses of long-dead historical figures reveal their stories, and *Lost Tales*, beautiful re-tellings of unusual and lesser-known folk-tales from around the globe. Both originally appeared in *The Phoenix*, a weekly kids' comics magazine, and have since been collected as award-winning books. Their work combines humour, extensive research and an ongoing curiosity about what makes people tick.

Discussion

- The chat show setting allows Adam to 'talk' directly to famous figures from the past. Discuss this creative choice with the group – how is this different from a typical history book they might read at school? Is it more exciting to learn about historical figures when you can 'speak' directly to them?
- Does the comic style make it easier to learn and understand lots of new information? You could look at Edward Jenner's Vaccination Stations (p.50) or Charles Darwin's finches (p.87) as examples. Ask each member of the group to share the most interesting or unusual fact they have discovered in *CorpseTalk*.
- Discuss the famous figures the group would like to interview if they had their own chat shows.
- Adam and Lisa work as a team to create their comics. Adam writes and draws the stories. Lisa is a colourist, an artist who adds all the colours to the black and white line art. Lisa also helps Adam come up with story ideas, and makes sure the storyline flows and makes sense. Ask the group to think about what their own strengths would be when writing a book or creating a comic.

Activity

Take a look at Adam's stages of creating a comic on the BookTrust website:

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/features/2017/january/how-comics-are-made-from-the-author-of-lost-tales/>

You could cut out the illustrations and labels (without numbers) and ask the group to put them in the correct order. Group members can then use this structure to help plan their own chat show comic, starring the famous figures they discussed earlier.



Neill Cameron *Mega Robo Revenge*

David Fickling Books 978-1788450904

Alex and Freddy are brothers. Robot brothers!

Alex and Freddy just want to go to school and play football like normal kids, but as the world's most POWERFUL and FAMOUS robots, they can't have it all their own way. TEAM ROBOTIX is after publicity – and will stop at nothing to TAKE THEM DOWN!

And an even more SINISTER THREAT hides in the darkness – the evil robot WOLFRAM is plotting his REVENGE... on their mum! It's the most DANGEROUS adventure ever for the MEGA ROBO BROS!

Neill Cameron is a cartoonist and writer, creator of the comic books *Mega Robo Bros*, *Mo-Bot High*, *The Pirates of Pangaea* (with Daniel Hartwell), *Tamsin and the Deep* (with Kate Brown), and the instructional *How To Make Awesome Comics*. Since 2011 his work has appeared in the weekly children's comic *The Phoenix*. In 2017, *Mega Robo Bros* won the Excelsior Award Jr, a national comic award voted for by school and library reading groups across the UK. Neill also works as an artist-in-residence at The Story Museum in Oxford, frequently travels the country giving workshops in schools, libraries and at festivals, and is a passionate advocate for the role comics can play in developing literacy skills and encouraging children's creativity.

Discussion

- Take a look at the Super Robo Six on p.100-101. Each of Dr Sharma's robots has its own strengths and personality traits. The robots are designed to help people in trouble. How are the Super Robo Six different from the earlier prototypes on p.95-98? What do you notice about the robots' 'Independence' levels compared to their other traits? Why do you think Dr Sharma created them in this way?

Activity

Onomatopoeia is when a word describes a sound and actually mimics the sound of the object or action when it is spoken. Writers can use onomatopoeia to bring a story to life, and it is a common technique used in comics and graphic novels.

As a group, make a list of lots of comic book 'sound' words – you can use *Mega Robo Revenge* to help: BOOM! CLICK! THUNK! SLAM! CRASH!

Have the group members write out each word on a different piece of paper. They could even try to write/draw them in the style of the comic.

In groups of two or three, have the children choose a word and come up with a 'freeze frame' action shot in the style of a comic, with one person holding the word up to complete the picture.

Here are more suggestions for comic books and graphic novels

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISBN
Dav Pilkey	The Adventures of Captain Underpants	Scholastic	978-0439014571
Jean-Yves Ferri and Didier Conrad	Asterix and the Chariot Race	Orion Children's Books	978-1510105003
Tove Jansson, Philip Ardagh and Frank Cottrell Boyce	The Moomins: The World of Moominvalley	Macmillan Children's Books	978-1509810017
Various	The Phoenix Colossal Comics Collection, Volume One	David Ficking Books	978-1338206791
Philip Pullman	Northern Lights - The Graphic Novel Volume 1 (His Dark Materials)	Doubleday Children's	978-0857534620
Cece Bell	El Deafo	Amulet Books	978-1419712173
Lorena Alvarez	Nightlights	Nobrow	978-1910620137
Chad Sell	The Cardboard Kingdom	Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers	978-1524719371
Tor Freeman	Welcome to Oddleigh	Bog Eyed Books	978-0995555365
Leo LaFleur and Adam Oehlers	Errand	Simply Red Books	978-1772290240

Answers

Best Friends

Matilda Wormwood	Lavender	Matilda
Wilbur	Charlotte	Charlotte's Web
Greg Heffley	Rowley Jefferson	Diary of a Wimpy Kid
Hazel Wong	Daisy Wells	Murder Most Unladylike
Hiccup	Toothless	How to Train Your Dragon

Beano wordsearch

