

# *Action and Adventure*

## Chatterbooks activity pack



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
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**CHATTER  
BOOKS**

**THE  
READING  
AGENCY**

## Action and adventure

### About this pack

Here are some great new **action and adventure stories**, plus ideas for activities in your Chatterbooks reading group, and suggestions for much more reading.

In Fleur Hitchcock's book *Saving Sophia*, the main character Lottie longs for adventure and escapes into exciting stories, with 'heroes facing the impossible, life and death situations, people clinging to the sides of mountains by their fingertips.'

She then gets into some real life adventures and realises that 'they're mostly brilliant but not the bits where you nearly die.'

Through the books and activities in this pack your groups can be carried away into fantastic adventures and imaginings, and also think about the adventures that could happen in real life.

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

**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](http://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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## Ideas for your Chatterbooks sessions

### Things to talk about

Get everyone to say what are their favourite adventure stories and series – gather together a collection of these books and ask each person to recommend a book to the rest of the group.

Choose one title for everyone to read, and then all talk about it.

To get everyone involved, you could try using the following **discussion structure**. Give people one of these roles or ‘thinking hats’ for discussing the book – they could work in pairs:

- Questioner – asks questions to clarify the story; and can also challenge and criticise the text
- Passage Master – tells everyone about passages which they liked best, and which they think are really important in the story
- Word Wizard – picks out unfamiliar words and words with special meanings; finds out their meaning and shares with the rest of the group
- Summariser – gives a brief summary of the main points of the story
- Researcher – takes a topic related to the text and researches it

### Action genres

Collect on a flip chart all the different kinds of adventure and action stories you can think of – eg:

- Historical
- Scifi
- Dystopia
- Crime/detective
- Fighting
- Quest/journey
- Fantasy

Talk about each genre, and find at least one book title for each.

Vote for your favourite kind of adventure story!

### Action heroines and heroes

Collect on a flip chart all the adventure story heroes and heroines you can think of! eg: the Famous Five; Percy Jackson; Spiderman.....

## Activity ideas

### WARM UPS

#### It's the way that you do it.....

Talk about adverbs, and how they describe action – the way someone does something – eg: he fell *heavily*; she shouted *loudly*.

Decide on a simple action – eg. putting a book on a shelf, or walking across a room.

Then give each person a different adverb and ask them to perform the action in that way – eg. gently, elegantly, slowly, speedily, clumsily etc

This can be really funny, depending on the combination of action and adverb!



#### Motorbike Scramble – and more!

Unscramble these action sports:

KITEBROOM ANGRIC

FINRUGS

TABLIPLAN

XMB

SKATEWIRING

SCOTROOMS

ONOBLESWIM

MOCKRIBCLING

## LONGER ACTIVITIES

### Adventure kit – what goes in your backpack?

First, talk about the different kinds of adventures you have read about in books. Are they in far-away lands or exotic locations? Do the characters have to camp out in the wild or survive dangerous situations? Talk about some of the things that you would need to take with you on an adventure. Here are some examples:

- Binoculars
- Water bottle
- Compass
- Emergency food rations
- Torch
- Whistle
- Map
- Rope
- Matches.

Get your group to draw and label their very own adventure kit.



### Library adventure hunt

Set your group a series of challenges in and around the library to make up an **adventure hunt**.

Award prizes for those who complete the challenges. Some examples of challenges could be:

- Hunt for a book that was published the same year you were born, or a hundred years ago. (You can first show the children how to find the publication date of a book.)
- Look for the biggest book in the library. Take a picture of you holding it.
- Browse the travel section, find an exciting place to have an adventure, write down the place and how you plan to get there.
- Hunt for authors with the same surname as you

## Create your own action scenes

Adventure books have lots of action. Often the main character is put in perilous situations and has to think and act quickly to get themselves and others out of danger.

In your group, discuss situations that you think would feel dangerous and/or scary. They may be situations you have read about in books, or things you are frightened of yourself, for example, being trapped at the top of a burning building or falling into a pit of man-eating spiders.

Think of ways you could escape these situations. Discuss the different ways of escape, and decide who has the best plan.

Put all the different scenes together and hey presto – you have your very own adventure story!

## Graphic novels and comic books

Get together a collection of comics and graphic novels with adventure stories.

Look at how the feeling of action is got across – with action lines, action words, shapes.



Choose a short bit of action text from an adventure story and get your group to have a go at creating a single comic book frame to illustrate this action.

You could try this passage from *Ninja Death Touch* – “Then I see a river of black flowing down the mountain. I have to wipe away my tears before I realise that it’s another ninja clan. Cho is leading them. I can see her double-edged sword glinting in the morning sun.”

## Action and Adventure!! Some recent fiction for you to enjoy



### **Chris Bradford *Ninja-Death Touch* Barrington Stoke 978-1781122105**

Lord Oda has sworn to destroy all ninja. Now Taka and Cho must help to protect their village from the invading samurai army, but they are outnumbered ten to one. Will they be able to save everyone? This is an action-packed sequel to *Ninja-First Mission*; it is particularly suitable for struggling, reluctant and dyslexic readers of 9+

**Chris Bradford** is a true believer in 'practising what you preach'. For his award-winning *Young Samurai* series, he trained in samurai swordsmanship, karate, ninjutsu and earned his black belt in Zen Kyu Shin Taijutsu. His first book *The Way of the Warrior* is one of Puffin's '70 Best Ever Books', alongside *Treasure Island* and *Robin Hood*.

*The sheer size of Lord Oda's army is too great. Half of my clan are already dead or dying. Tenshin calls for any ninja still alive to retreat to the village square. I run with Renzo for this last stronghold. A samurai is right behind us, slashing with his sword. We turn into an alley and leap over a hidden ditch. The samurai follows but he doesn't see the ditch. We hear his screams as he tumbles into the trap.*

### **Activity: Find out more about ninja and samurai**



### **Allan Burroughs *Ironheart* Macmillan 978-1447235996**

Since her father went missing while prospecting for oil in Siberia, life has been tougher than ever for India Bentley. Little does she know that he was actually searching for Ironheart, a legendary fortress containing the secrets of the old world. A place some say could save humanity . . . or destroy the world. Along with tech-hunter Verity Brown and her android, Calculus, India must go to Siberia to find her father. But others are fighting to find Ironheart – with very different goals in mind.

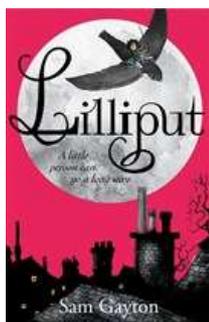
**Allan Burroughs** is a business adviser and writer with a passion for classic adventure stories. His debut novel *Ironheart* was inspired by his travels in Siberia. He is also a founding member of Future Perfect Writers, who perform regularly at spoken-word events. He lives in London and Cornwall.

*India Bentley stopped wading through the thick tidal mud and checked the horizon for any sign of southsiders. The first thing you learned when you lived on the North London shores was to keep your eyes peeled for southsiders. They'd come tearing across the water in skim boats and if they caught you unawares then you'd most likely get taken.*

**Activity: 'When the old world governments knew the Great Rains were coming they built an underground storehouse...then they filled it with the most valuable things in the world.'**

**What do you think should be saved and stored if the Great Rains came again?**

**Sam Gayton *Lilliput* Andersen 978-1849397483**

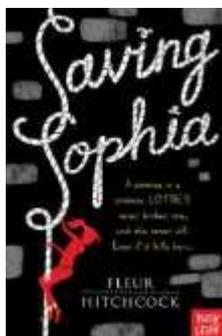


Inspired by *Gulliver's Travels*, *Lilliput* is an exhilarating adventure filled with cunning escape plans, evil clockmakers and very talkative parrots. Lily is three inches tall. Her clothes are cut from handkerchiefs, stitched with spider silk. Imprisoned in a birdcage by the giant Gulliver, she longs for freedom. At midnight, she will attempt Escape Plan #34. Join Lily as she travels over rooftops, down chimneys and into chocolate shops on a journey to find the one place in the world where she belongs.

**Sam Gayton** lives in South London. His first book was *The Snow Merchant*. He loves American novels, Italian food and the English countryside. When he's not writing, he likes playing old board games, strumming his guitar and joining as many rock bands as possible (currently at seven).

*Maybe tonight she would be finally free. But flying out of the window would be dangerous. The desk was the perfect place for Lily to jump – from there she could glide to the window ledge at least. First she'd have to climb up there, and there was only one way to the top: Gulliver. Once upon a time Lily would never have dreamed of climbing up a giant. But now she was twelve moons old. She was bigger, she was braver and she was desperate.*

**Activity:** Make the connection with *Gulliver's Travels* – read to your group an excerpt from *Gulliver's Lilliput* adventure. Look at other stories about small people – *The Borrowers*, *Tom Thumb*.



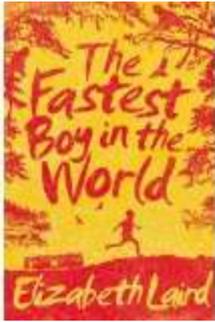
**Fleur Hitchcock *Saving Sophia* Nosy Crow  
978-0857631749  
(published July 2014)**

All Lottie wants to do is have adventures - but no such luck, until she meets Sophia, a girl with an excitingly mysterious history. When the two run away from a staged kayak accident to find Sophia's mum, Lottie learns a lot about having adventures (they're mostly brilliant but not the bits where you nearly die) and about friendship and the truth.

**Fleur Hitchcock** studied English in Wales, and, for the next twenty years, sold Applied Art in the city of Bath. She graduated with a distinction from the Writing for Young People MA at Bath Spa, and her books include *The Trouble with Mummies* and *Dear Scarlett*. She lives near Bath.

*'I wanted something exciting to happen' I say. 'I get so bored, here'... Mum doesn't say anything... 'I know it sounds silly,' I say, 'but I wanted to be a hero.' She squeezes my shoulders. 'It doesn't sound silly at all. I think we all want to be heroes. When I was your age I wanted to be a hero; sometimes I still do. We all want to solve problems for other people – there's nothing wrong with it. Anyway, from what I heard, you were a hero.'*

**Activity:** Lottie keeps referring to the adventure stories that she's read. What is your favourite story or series? Or author?  
She overcomes her fear to go on a ladder – is there anything you have managed to dare to do?



**Elizabeth Laird *The Fastest Boy in the World* Macmillan  
978-1447267171**

Eleven-year-old Solomon loves to run! The great athletes of the Ethiopian national team are his heroes and he dreams that one day he will be a gold-medal-winning athlete like them. When his grandfather says that he's going to take Solomon to Addis Ababa, Solomon cannot believe his ears.

Solomon's joy is increased when he realizes that the Ethiopian running team will be doing a victory parade through the city that day. But when his grandfather collapses, getting help from his village is up to Solomon. It's a twenty-mile run from city to home - grandfather's life hangs in the balance. Can the small bare-footed runner with the big heart do it?

**Elizabeth Laird** is the multi-award-winning author of several much-loved children's books including *The Garbage King* and *Red Sky in the Morning*. She has been shortlisted for the prestigious Carnegie Medal five times. She lives in Britain now, but still likes to travel as much as she can.

*That day, I learned the most important thing of all, and here's what it is. Running isn't all about your legs and arms. They do the work, of course (your legs especially), but what really matters is what's going on in your head. You have to get your mind into a place where it's not worrying about tiredness. It's not thinking about the soreness in your feet, or the ache in your legs, or the pain in your lungs.*

**Activity: 'The Arrow' and 'The Bullet' are nicknames given to two fast runners in this story. Can you think up some nicknames for people really good at a sport? Eg. 'The Flier' for a skier. Find out more about the Ethiopian running heroes in this book.**



**Cas Lester *Harvey Drew and the Bin Men from Outer Space*  
Hot Key 978-1471402234**

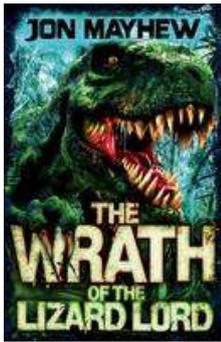
Harvey Drew is an ordinary eleven-year-old who dreams of great adventures in outer space. The Toxic Spew is an intergalactic waste disposal ship. After Harvey unwittingly responds to an alien signal, he is transported to the flight deck of the Toxic Spew by the ship's bad-tempered computer, who promptly loses his return address. Harvey becomes Captain of the stropy, pizza-obsessed, brave (but grubby) crew, and almost immediately has to save them from dangerous

exploding space-rubbish and a multiple spaceship pile-up on Hyperspaceway B16. Luckily, leading his crew out of danger isn't so different from captaining his football team, and Harvey is just the boy to save the day!

**Cas Lester** spent many years working in children's television drama with CBBC, on programmes including *Jackanory* and *The Story of Tracy Beaker*. She now writes books for children, and helps out in a primary school library. She would absolutely love to go into space. But not on the Toxic Spew.

*The cargo hold of the Toxic Spew was one huge rubbish bin, but that doesn't even begin to describe it. Quite honestly, unless you've actually been inside a giant wheelie bin – one that hasn't been cleared out for months, if ever – then you're going to struggle to grasp how unbelievably horrible it was...It was the most disgusting place Harvey had ever seen.*

**What's the most disgusting place that you have ever seen?! What could be done about it?**



**Jon Mayhew *Monster Odyssey: The Wrath of the Lizard Lord*  
Bloomsbury 978-1408826324**

Prince Dakkar and his mentor Count Oginski discover a plot by arch-enemy Cryptos to kill Napoleon. Arriving on their revolutionary submersible to intercept Cryptos, they glimpse a terrifying monster that seems to escape back into the bowels of the Earth. They discover an amazing underground world, and a plan more nefarious than they could ever have believed - even from Cryptos.

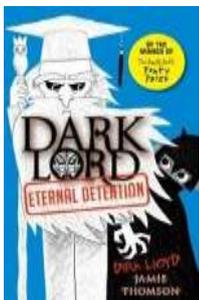
The stage is set for an epic showdown complete with a giant reptilian cavalry and the Battle of Waterloo, in another breathlessly paced adventure. (Sequel to *The Eye of Neptune*)

**Jon Mayhew** spent most of his childhood playing in the ruins of a Victorian zoo – and writing or telling stories. His first book *Mortlock* was published by Bloomsbury in April 2010.

*In the clearing stood a lizard, a biped, smaller than the one that had chased them up the tree. It pinned a wounded giant down with one powerful leg and sank its teeth into the poor man's neck. Dakkar stared in horror – the lizard was harnessed and bridled like a horse, and a man sat on its back, wearing the black uniform of Count Cryptos.*

**Activity:** This book is inspired by Jules Verne's story *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* – read to your group an excerpt from Verne's book.

Find out more about Mary Anning and how she found an ichthyosaurus on Lyme Regis beach.



**Jamie Thomson *Dark Lord 3: The Eternal Detention*  
Orchard Books 978-1408330258**

Fear me, o miserable worm! I, the Great Dirk, take up my pen once more to record the utter misery that is SCHOOL. My sworn enemy, Hasdruban the White, has infiltrated Whiteshields School and seeks vengeance on me. Naturally, I will triumph. But it is the Dirkest Hour indeed...

**BUY THIS BOOK OR SUFFER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

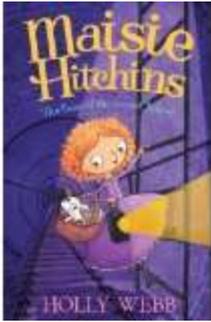
Being dosed with a Potion of Mind Control or Poisoning by the Black Hag's Fingernails..

**Jamie Thomson** is the minion and slave of the Dark Lord, Dirk Lloyd. Jamie has been writing books, comics and computer games for his Dark Master for many years now. He lives in the dungeons below his Master's Iron Tower, chained to a desk, where he spends every day writing for his overlord. Or else. He is also winner of the 2012 Roald Dahl Funny Prize.

*Is this what he could expect next, an attack from the Black Hag? He'd better be on his guard then, for her talons were coated with a deadly poison. One scratch was usually fatal. Dirk had to get home, send a message to Agrash telling him to search the Dark Library for everything he could find about the Black Hag. He hurried home as fast as he could. The Black Hag was dangerous indeed.*

**Have a look at *The Demon Headmaster* by Gillian Cross.**

**Dirk calls a knife 'the holy sword' and a fork is 'the white wizard's evil trident'. What magic names could you give to these items? Dinner plate; pepper pot; rolling pin; kettle; corkscrew.**



**Holly Webb *Maisie Hitchens: The Case of the Secret Tunnel Stripes* 978-1847154361**

Maisie Hitchens longs to be a detective. She's sure there are lots of adventures to be had on the streets of Victorian London. And, together with her faithful puppy, Eddie, she is determined to follow even the slightest scent of a mystery - no matter what! In Book 5 of the Maisie Hitchens series, Maisie is intrigued by a new lodger, Mr Fred Grange, who isn't quite what he seems...Mr Grange claims to work as a clerk for a biscuit company, but he's out and about on the London streets at odd hours, and Maisie soon discovers something very precious hidden in his rooms. Before long, Maisie and her friends are led into a web of mystery lurking underground... The Maisie Hitchens mystery series is perfect for readers aged six to eight years.

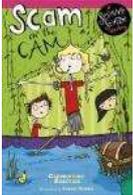
**Holly Webb** lives in Reading. She started writing eleven years ago while working as a children's books editor and now writes full-time. She has written over seventy books including *The Scruffy Puppy*, *Emily Feather and the Starlit Staircase*, and *Maisie Hitchens: The Case of the Secret Tunnel*.

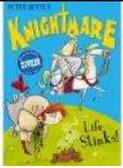
*Maisie was glad that Richmond station was at ground level – she found the idea of climbing down under the earth rather frightening too...This train was almost the same as the one they had taken from Paddington, just a little smaller. She wasn't quite sure what she had expected. Something that looked safer for travelling along tunnels cut deep through the earth? Something with armour-plating perhaps. The little carriages were neatly painted, though rather dusty, but they didn't look as though they would be much protection against falling rocks...*

**The passage above describes how strange it was for Holly, in Victorian times, to be on a tube train. Talk about the new experiences you have had - eg: your first time on a plane, or a boat**

**Activity: Look at the lovely cut-away 'dolls' house' plan of the house where Holly lives. Have a go at a drawing which shows the rooms of your house in the same way.**

**More exciting action and adventure books!**

<p>Scoular Anderson</p>		<p><i>Vigi the Viking and the Dream Dragon</i> Action to get back a stolen Viking boat</p>	<p>Barrington Stoke</p>	<p>978- 1781122426</p>
<p>Clementine Beauvais</p>		<p><i>Scam on the Cam</i> A case for No.1 supersleuth Sesame Seade</p>	<p>Hodder</p>	<p>978- 1444912548</p>

Peter Bently		<i>Knightmare: Life Stinks</i> More adventures with Sir Percy and Prancelot	Little Tiger	978-1847154330
Peter Bently		<i>Those Magnificent Sheep in their Flying Machine</i> A ripping picture book adventure!	Andersen	978-1849396349
Peter Jay Black		<i>Urban Outlaws</i> Gadget- packed non-stop action	Bloomsbury	978-1408851418
Frank Cottrell Boyce		<i>Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Over the Moon</i> '...a brilliant bonkers adventure'	Macmillan	978-0230757752
Simon Cheshire		<i>SWARM Operation Sting</i> Saving the world's electronic communications	Little Tiger	978-1847154378
Sarah Courtald		<i>Buckle and Squash and the Nonstrous Moat-Dragon</i> Princesses, a dragon and a goat	Macmillan	978-1447255550
Gillian Cross		<i>The Mystery of the Man with the Black Beard</i> Solving clues to rescue a Crime Buster	Barrington Stoke	978-1781123591
Christopher Edge		<i>The Black Crow Conspiracy</i> 1902 – and apparitions, kidnap and treason	Nosy Crow	978-0857630544
Chris Judge		<i>The Great Explorer</i> A picture book adventure in the North Pole	Andersen	978-1849394017

Jon Mayhew		<i>The Wrath of the Lizard Lord</i> A thrilling and gripping adventure	Bloomsbury	978-1408826324
Maile Meloy		<i>The Apothecary</i> Ancient spells to save the modern world	Andersen	978-1849395069
Helen Peters		<i>The Secret Hen House Theatre</i> Action and acting to save a farm	Nosy Crow	978-0857630650
Julian Sedgwick		<i>Mysterium: The Black Dragon</i> Life is being on the wire – an adventure for older readers	Hodder	978-1444913705

### Answers: Motorcycle Scramble...

- MOTORBIKE RACING
- SURFING
- PAINTBALL
- BMX
- WATERSKIING
- MOTOCROSS
- SNOWMOBILE
- ROCKCLIMBING