

The Reading Agency's Winter Mini Challenge 2021 Booklist



In a pivotal year for climate action, the Winter Mini Challenge 2021, in partnership with WWF-UK, focuses on acting for nature and tackling environmental issues. Join the Wild World Heroes characters as they go on an Arctic adventure to explore and celebrate our natural world.

This reading list is full of stories that inspire, challenge, and take you on adventures. Perfect for encouraging children of all ages to keep reading over the winter holidays. There are also brilliant non-fiction reads to choose from, which will spark or encourage young people's interest in protecting nature and our planet.

Tell us what you enjoy reading on social media by tagging @readingagency and using the hashtags #WinterMiniChallenge and #WildWorldHeroes.

Picture books

***You're Snug with Me* by Chitra Soundar, ill. Poonam Mistry (Lantana)
ISBN: 978-1911373476**

At the start of winter, two bear cubs are born, deep in their den in the frozen North. "Mama, what lies beyond here?" they ask. "'Above us is a land of ice and snow.'" "What lies beyond the ice and snow?" they ask. "The ocean, full of ice from long ago." And as they learn the secrets of the Earth and their place in it, Mama Bear whispers, "You're snug with me."

'A heartwarming tribute to creatures of the Arctic' – ALA Booklist

***Tiny Reindeer* by Chris Naylor-Ballesteros, ill. Chris Naylor-Ballesteros (Andersen Press)**

ISBN: 978-1839130328

Meet Santa's smallest helper: Tiny Reindeer! He doesn't quite fit in, but when a very special letter arrives before Christmas Eve, he embarks on a mission to find his place in the world.

Tiny Reindeer just can't find his place in the busy North Pole. Being much smaller than the other reindeer, he's not very good at any of the jobs Santa gives him. But when a letter comes from a little girl with a Christmas wish to help keep the memory of her grandfather alive, Tiny knows exactly what he needs to do.

***Extraordinary!* by Penny Harrison, ill. Katie Wilson (New Frontier Publishing)**

ISBN: 978-1912858309

A gentle tale about reaching for the stars and being extraordinary... but remembering the ordinary too. Extraordinary celebrates the best moments in life: the ones we share with friends and family. They may be simple, they may be ordinary, but they are moments we will cherish forever. This is the perfect book for exploring nature. From a firework double page spread, to swimming with dolphins, gardening, and gorgeous snow spreads.

***Snow* by Walter de la Mare, ill. Carolina Rabei (Faber & Faber)**

ISBN: 978-0571305575

Walter de la Mare's classic poem is revisited in a stunning fashion in this picture book for children that celebrates the wonder of snow. As the day draws to a close, a family prepares for Christmas – decorating the tree, hanging stockings by the fire, putting out a plate of mince pies... Outside, the world turns to white.

***The Twelve Green Days of Christmas* by Barry Timms, ill. Sian Roberts (Farshore)**

ISBN: 978-0008498993

Christmas spirit is in the air and all the animals are feeling the cheer. But in the excitement, what has happened to the forest? There is litter EVERYWHERE! Appalled by what he sees, Santa writes a letter to his animal friends asking them to clear up. And over the course of twelve fun-filled days, they work together to do just that! A fun-filled eco picture book based on the classic festive rhyme and the perfect introduction to recycling and reusing for a new generation.

Middle grade

***Happy Narwhalidays: A Narwhal and Jelly Book Series* by Ben Clanton, ill. Ben Clanton (Farshore)**

ISBN: 978-0735262515

It's Christmas in the worldwide waters. Narwhal is spreading his trademark good cheer and warm waffles, but also news of the amazing Merry Mermicorn, part mermaid, part unicorn. Jelly isn't feeling the festive spirit – or excitement about the mermicorn – quite as much until he receives a mysterious

present... But who is it from? A wonderfully silly early graphic-novel series featuring a fun ocean fact page and joke page.

***Agents of the Wild: Operation Icebreak* by Jennifer Bell, ill. Alice Lickens (Walker Books)
ISBN: 978-1406388466**

Agnes and Attie are bound for the Antarctic on their second creature-crazy wildlife-rescue adventure. When SPEARS receives an emergency distress call from its marine outpost in Antarctica, there is only one team they can send. Agnes and Attie are soon up to their eyes in an icebound mystery. What is causing the tremors threatening to destroy the rescue centre? Why are the local Adelie penguins behaving so bizarrely?

***ANIMALS: The Wide World Awaits!* by Susan Martineau, ill. Vicky Barker (b small publishing)
ISBN: 978-1-911509-88-2**

Explore the link between humans and the animal kingdom! From food chains to endangered species, a curious pack of fascinating facts and figures is now at your fingertips. What you learn might just stay with you for the rest of your life. The wide world awaits!

***The Secret Explorers and the Missing Scientist* by SJ King (DK Children)
ISBN: 978-0241442296**

Children will be inspired to discover the world with these character-driven adventure stories for children aged 7 to 9 years old. Learn all about polar expeditions and the Arctic in this climate-related installment of DK Books' new educational fiction series for children. In this fun, fact-filled children's book, engineering expert Kiki and Connor the marine biologist are sent on a mission to the Arctic. There they discover a research vessel studying the effects of climate change that has become trapped in the sea ice.

***Every Leaf a Hallelujah* by Ben Okri, ill. Diana Ejaita (Head of Zeus)
ISBN: 978-1800241633**

In the forest near Mangoshi's village in Africa there grows a very special flower. Mangoshi knows that only this flower can save her mother's life. It can save her village too. All she has to do is find it. Ben Okri and Diana Ejaita have created a magical world of beauty and colour, an enchanting array of extraordinary trees, each with its own personality and voice. An environmental fairytale made for our times, written to be read by adults and children.

***50 Things to Try in Winter* by Kim Hankinson, ill. Kim Hankinson (B Small Publishing)
ISBN: 978-1912909926**

A positive journal-style, pocket-sized activity book full of mindful activities to help children feel festive, perfect their crafting skills and learn about holidays from around the world. Activities include

celebrating the winter solstice, following a full Moon cycle, making unique decorations and even tips for the perfect, warming hot chocolate. Comes with a back cover pocket for storing treasured memories.

***A Mouse Called Miika* by Matt Haig, ill. Chris Mould (Canongate)**
ISBN: 978-1838853686

One independent mouse sets out on a quest of his own to prove that cheese exists, and learns to appreciate other creatures. It is also a tale of great love (of cheese) and great danger. And learning the lesson that, with cheese, as with life, what matters most is not how strongly you smell, but how strong you are on the inside. Funny, cheeky, wise, and packed full of Matt Haig's signature warmth. This is set to become a year-round children's favourite.

***Climate Action: The Future is in our Hands* by Georgina Stevens, ill. Katie Rewse (Little Tiger)**
ISBN: 978-1838911614

In this book, we share the facts, but we also share hope. Learn about the causes of climate change and how it is affecting our world. Explore the human impact and what it means to have a carbon footprint. Read about creative ideas for tackling the climate crisis. Be inspired by the positive stories from young changemakers around the globe. Get tips on how to take actions and reduce your carbon footprint.

8-12 years

***A Poem for Every Winter Day* by Allie Esiri (Pan Macmillan)**
ISBN: 978-1529045253

Perfect for reading aloud and sharing with all the family, this book dazzles with an array of familiar favourites and remarkable new discoveries. These seasonal poems – together with introductory paragraphs – have a link to the date on which they appear.

***How to Save the World with a Chicken and an Egg* by Emma Shevah, ill. Kirsti Beautyman (Chicken House)**
ISBN: 978-1910655474

Ivy believes she can talk to animals, while Nathaniel, is obsessed with animal facts. They come together unexpectedly on a cold English beach with the arrival of a rare and wondrous sea creature: a giant leatherback turtle. Soon they're on a mission to make a difference to the world – even if they have to do it one animal at a time. This is a terrific positive-action mystery and first in a series of hilarious, poignant and highly original stories on environmental matters.

***Race to the Frozen North* by Catherine Johnson, ill. Katie Hickey (Barrington Stoke)**

ISBN: 978-1781128404

When orphan Matthew Henson ran away from his violent stepmother to find a new life in the big city, no one could have predicted that he would become the first man to reach the North Pole. A little luck and a lot of hard work led to a life of adventure on the high seas and in the Arctic, but back home in America his achievements were ignored due to the colour of his skin. *Race to the Frozen North* tells his remarkable true story. This book has a dyslexia-friendly layout, typeface and paper-stock so that more readers can enjoy it.

***Frostheart* by Jamie Littler, ill. Jamie Littler (Puffin)**

ISBN: 978-0241355220

This debut children's novel takes a sleigh ride into the heart of a magical adventure. A young boy called Ash and his disagreeable yeti guardian find themselves on an explorers' expedition, where his special powers could come in very handy. Can the daring explorers help Ash find his family?

Bursting with brilliant characters, adventure and tons of laughs.

***The Girl Who Speaks Bear* by Sophie Anderson, ill. Kathrin Honesta (Usborne)**

ISBN: 978-1474940672

Found abandoned in a bear cave as a baby, Yanka has always wondered about where she is from. She tries to ignore the strange whispers and looks from the villagers, wishing she was as strong on the inside as she is on the outside. But, when she has to flee her house, a journey far beyond one that she ever imagined begins: from icy rivers to mountains, meeting extraordinary friends along the way.

***Sky Song* by Abi Elphinstone (Simon & Schuster)**

ISBN: 978-1471146077

In the snowy kingdom of Erkenwald, whales glide between icebergs, wolves hunt on the tundra and polar bears roam the glaciers. Join Eska and Flint as they journey to the Never Cliffs and beyond in search of an ancient, almost forgotten, song with the power to force the Ice Queen back.

More information on the Challenge and how to get involved can be found at wintermini.org.uk.

Happy reading!