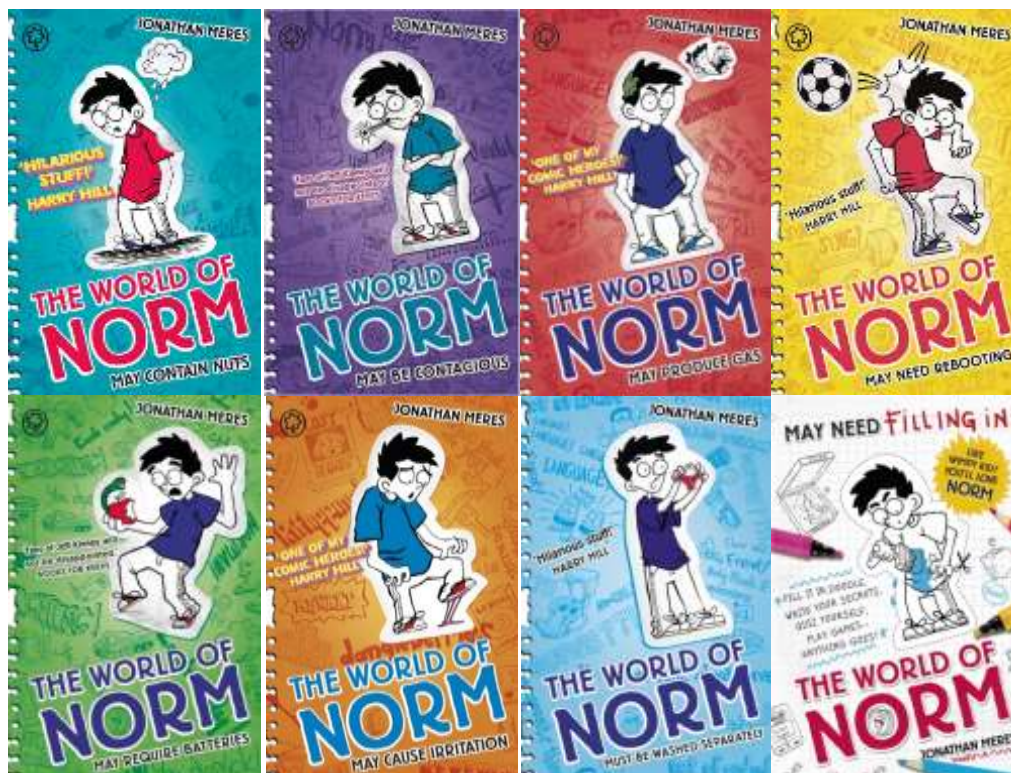




# THE WORLD OF NORM



## Chatterbooks activity pack



# **THE WORLD OF NORM by Jonathan Meres**

**Illustrated by Donough O'Malley**

## **About this pack**

Here's a pack about the wonderful (if maybe at times unfair?!) **World of Norm**.

Norm is 12, nearly 13, with two younger brothers, parents who have decided to move to a smaller house (why?), and go to IKEA quite a lot, and a dog called John (Lennon). There's also a dog called Simon Cowell....

Read all about life's ups and downs for Norm as he tackles the challenges of overdue homework, a missing bike, an embarrassing picture on Facebook, and a pizza well past its sell-by date..... and enjoy these **World of Norm** discussion ideas and activities with your Chatterbooks group!

*The World of Norm's* author is Jonathan Meres, who is one of our **Chatterbooks champions**

This pack is brought to you by **The Reading Agency** and their Children's Reading Partner, [Hachette Children's Books](#)

**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.

## **Contents**

3	The author – and Chatterbooks champion - Jonathan Meres
3	The books – with some activity and discussion ideas for each title
7	More ideas for your Chatterbooks sessions – inspired by the series <i>The World of Norm</i>
11	More reading suggestions



## ***The World of Norm* –author Jonathan Meres**

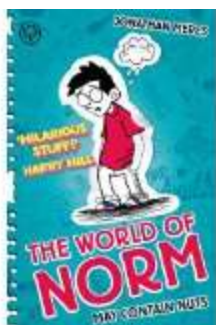
Jonathan Meres left school at the age of 16 to join the merchant navy spent the next 7 years sailing around the world. Since then he has worked as an ice cream van driver and in Harrods, got a band together, appeared in a pop video and been a stand-up comedian. He's won a Time Out Award for Comedy and been nominated for The Perrier Award at the The Edinburgh Festival. He began writing full time in 1994: he's the author of the bestselling *World of Norm* series, a comedy about a boy whose life is very unfair... [www.jonathanmeres.com](http://www.jonathanmeres.com)

Here's what readers have said about *The World of Norm*:

*Both these books (1 & 2 in the series) were hilarious to read and made me really laugh out loud. Norm doesn't realise that when he does stupid things, they're really funny and I'm still giggling about some of the things he does. Also, the stories are illustrated by fantastic cartoons which really add to the stories.*

*'May be Contagious'(5) is a very funny and amazing book to read. I actually loved the book so much that I went and bought the rest of the set!...I think it is a great, exciting and an amazing book which suits my age group. I would say it is for 8 to 13 year olds, and I would rate it a strong 5 out of 5!*

## **The books – all published by Orchard Books**



### ***The World of Norm: 1: May Contain Nuts* 978-1408313039**

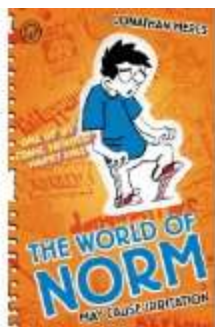
Why on earth did Norm's family have to move, anyway? In their old house he'd never tried to pee in anything other than a toilet. And when Norm is in bed, he's kept awake by his dad snoring like a constipated rhinoceros! Will life ever get less unfair for Norm?

**A taste:** Norm was in no great hurry to get home. Whatever his parents had in store for him was unlikely to be pleasant. Whatever music he was about to face was unlikely to be to Norm's personal taste. He certainly didn't expect to be dancing. For once Norm was perfectly happy to get off his bike and walk up the hill. He even stopped to admire the view – a sure-fire sign that Norm was in no hurry. Norm didn't do views...But Norm knew that he couldn't delay his arrival home forever, much as he would have liked to. And anyway, his iPod needed recharging.

**Waking up but still in a dream Norm forgets that his family has moved house, thinks his parents' bedroom is the bathroom – and tries to pee in the wardrobe!  
Have you ever woken up in a new or strange place and wondered where you were? Talk about how it felt, what you thought – & anything strange that you did!**

**To get to sleep Norm tries counting sheep jumping over a gate – what tricks do you use to try to get to sleep?**





## ***The World of Norm: 2: May Cause Irritation***

**978-1408313046** Norm knew it was going to be one of those days when he woke up and found himself standing at a supermarket checkout, totally naked. It might be a dream, but Norm soon finds that things go from bad to worse - when his perfect cousins arrive for a walk. If there was one thing worse than spending time with his perfect cousins it was being forced to go on a flipping walk with them! What's the point in going for a walk - except to get from A to B?!

**A taste:** *In the unlikely event of there being a race to school the next day between Norm and an arthritic snail, there would have been only one winner. And it wouldn't have been Norm. Norm had never been the biggest fan of school. But he knew it was one of those things you had to do. There was no point moaning, even though he often did. You just got on with it, even though he frequently wished he didn't have to. It was a bit like going to the dentist. But less fun...*

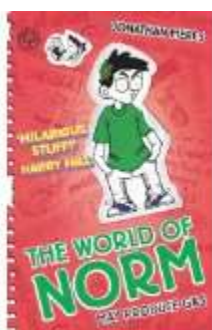
**Norm has some very weird dreams – but as it is with dreams, they're often linked with things on his mind. Do you dream? Tell each other what you dream about.**

**Some people think that dreams can tell the future – or that the things you dream about have special meanings – eg. a dream about a baby could mean new beginnings for you; or birds could symbolise your hopes and ambitions. What do you think about this?**

**Norm's brothers name their dogs after real people – John Lennon and Simon Cowell. What are your pets called? Talk about how you and your family decided on their names.**

**John and Simon Cowell get away with a lot - like drinking from the toilet! – what do your dogs/pets get up to?**

**Norm's cousin Ed has 'TANZANIA' written on his T shirt – '*just because he'd flipping been there*'(p188). What's your favourite slogan on a T shirt? Can you come up with some ideas for T shirt slogans you'd like to see?**



## ***The World of Norm: 3: May Produce Gas***

**978-1408323601**

It seems like the whole world has gone mad. His dad's obsessed with gas, his best friend has come down with a case of hormones and his brother is in dire need of deodorant. Looks like there's going to be quite a stink. Is life still unfair for Norm?

**ABSO-FLIPPING-LUTELY!**

**A taste:** *'It's Mikey,' said Norm. 'What about him?' said Grandpa.*

*'He thinks he's changing.' 'Does he now?' 'He's got hormones,' said*

*Norm. 'Has he now? And how do you know that?'*

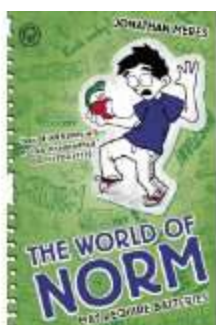
*'He told me,' said Norm. 'He's started to use Stynx.' 'Stynx?' said Grandpa. 'Deodorant,' said Norm.*

**'Hang on, thought Norm....He was the last person on earth who should worry about doing something to somebody else that wasn't flipping fair! (p107). Do you think life is unfair to Norm? And is life unfair to you sometimes? What kind of things do you think aren't fair?**

Norm's dad is concerned about global warming and ways we could save energy (p114) – eg turning lights off, not over-filling the kettle, not leaving the TV on stand-by. Make a list of all the ways you can think of that you could do to save energy.

*'We used to actually have to get up and walk to the television and switch it off by hand' said Grandpa. (p143) Find out more from books, internet – and parents and grandparents! – about how much technology has developed over the years, the differences between then and now! Share all this in your group on a big flipchart sheet.*

The Way Things Were!	THEN	NOW
Television		
Mobile phones		
Landline phone		
Recorded Music		
Computers		



### ***The World of Norm: 4: May Require Batteries*** **978-1408326145**

What with overdue homework, overdue pocket money and a bag full of overdue newspapers, one thing's for sure: life for Norm isn't getting any less unfair. And did he mention the fact that he's the only kid on the planet without an iPad?

ABSO-FLIPPING-LUTELY RIGHT HE DID!

**A taste:** Norm sat up and got out of bed on the **other** side. This time, however, it was most definitely the **wrong** side of the bed. For the second time that day Norm trod on something he shouldn't have. Only this time, he **really** shouldn't have trodden on it. Certainly not without socks or slippers on anyway. He didn't need to look to know what it was either. But he still did.

*'Phwoar! That is dis-flipping-gusting!' said Norm, wafting his hand in front of his face. 'Stupid dog!'*

Talk about what we mean when we say that someone has '**got out of the wrong side of bed**' – though Norm really did manage to put his foot down on the wrong side!

Talk about idioms – sayings which you don't usually take literally – eg. 'go round the houses'; 'get carried away'; 'pulling someone's leg'; 'spill the beans'; 'raining cats and dogs'.



### ***The World of Norm: 5: May Be Contagious*** **978-1408328392**

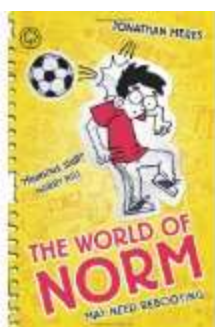
Following on from his first four massively unfair adventures, Norm is back! And he knows that it's just going to be one of those days... Before long a dog-related injury prevents him from biking, and an old "friend" threatens the one thing even more important to Norm than his bike. And we're not talking pizza! Upset plans and upset stomachs...Norm's out of luck. And it may be contagious!

**A taste:** *It wasn't easy sitting on the toilet, checking Facebook **and** eating pizza at the same time- but Norm soon got the hang of it. And anyway, it wasn't like he had a choice. He **needed** to eat and he **needed** to check Facebook to see what – if anything – was going on. It wasn't **his** flipping fault that the only place he could do **both** was in the bathroom.*

*What Norm needed to do **most** of all, though, was think for a while...what better place to do that, thought Norm, than sitting on the toilet?*

**Talk about where you like to read. Where do you like to sit and think? And when are you best times for reading and thinking?**

**Norm uses the acronym WIP (Work in Progress). Collect together some more acronyms people use, probably several will be from texting – eg. LOL; BTW; ETA; BFF; GSOH**



### ***The World of Norm: 6: May Need Rebooting*** **978-1408329498**

If only he hadn't fallen asleep in History! And if only he'd done his punishment exercise! And if only he could go biking instead of playing stupid football! Except Norm *can't* go biking. Why not? BECAUSE HIS BIKE'S BEEN STOLEN, THAT'S WHY! Nightmare? It's worse than that... IT'S AN ABSO-FLIPPING-LUTE DISASTER!

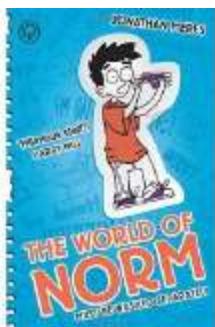
**A taste:** *It didn't take Norm very long to remember **why** he 'strongly detested' football quite so much. Football, in Norm's opinion, was completely pointless. A load of blokes running around a field like headless chickens, falling over whenever anyone came anywhere near them? ...At least with mountain biking there was a very definite beginning and an end. It was all about who could get from A to B the quickest.*

**Have a look at Norm's 'Wanted/Reward' Poster for his missing bike – on the inside front cover of this book. Design a poster for a missing person, or for something you have lost/or which may have been stolen.**

***Norm yawned and stretched theatrically. (p137)*** In pairs have a go at doing different things 'theatrically' – then perform to your group! Here are some more adverbs from this *World of Norm* book, to try with different actions:

**'groggily'; 'nonchalantly'; 'forlornly'; 'furiously' (2 meanings); 'wearily'.**

**And how about trying this one?! 'like a slug with an attitude problem' (p33)**

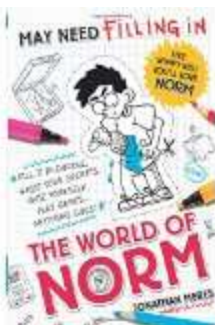


### ***The World of Norm: 7: Must Be Washed Separately*** **978-1408329511**

*Norm knew it was going to be one of those days when he was woken by the sound of an elephant breaking wind in the next room... Not the best start to a day, but it's about to get a whole lot worse. As if a trip to see his perfect cousins isn't bad enough, they've only gone and got the brand new 'Call Of Mortal Battle'! Not that Norm could play anyway he's banned off Xbox due to a curious incident of a stinky dog at bath time.*

Business as usual? ABSO-FLIPPING-LUTELY!!!

**A taste:** *The rest of the day – what was left of it – had passed Norm by in a bit of a blur. A blur of doom and gloom and general despondency, with a side order of deep-fried bitterness and simmering resentment thrown in for good measure. Banned from the Xbox? For something that wasn't actually **his** fault? Flipping typical!*



### ***The World of Norm: May Need Filling In*** **978-1408334270**

The first full-length activity book dedicated to the World of Norm! Packed with quizzes, games, doodles, fun facts and lots more. You'd be abso-flipping-lutely mad to miss out!

### ***'My World of Norm' Chatterbooks Reading Diary***



This fun reading diary is available in the Chatterbooks Welcome Pack – available from the [Reading Agency Shop](http://www.readingagencyshop.co.uk).

## How to draw Norm!

Let Donough O'Malley, illustrator of the World of Norm books, show you how on [this Guardian web page!](#)



## Discussion and Activity ideas for your Chatterbooks sessions

First of all let everyone read at least one of the books. You could start by introducing it in a session and reading one or two chapters together – and also read tasters from more of the books.

### Warm up Scrambled!

Can you unscramble these words? They are the names of things and people in the *World of Norm* books – Plus two of Norm's favourite words!

YEMIK      SHEACLE      PARDANG      BINAR      VEAD      NIMBEKUATION (2 words)

PINGPILF      HOUTDUNG

### Plain food – grand descriptions!

In the book *May Produce Gas* Norm's Mum describes baked beans like this!

*'Pulses marinated in tomato sauce, served on a bed of lightly scorched bread'*

What are these dishes? Have a go at 'over the top' describing your favourite foods!

<i>Floury potatoes sliced into elegant wedges, immersed until crisp and golden-brown, in bubbling hot sunflower oil</i>	.....
<i>A hand-risen dough base topped with a medley of Mediterranean vegetables and luscious Italian cheeses</i>	
<i>A deep-fried yeasty bun swathed in sugar</i>	



## Longer activities

### Norm knew it was going to be one of those days...

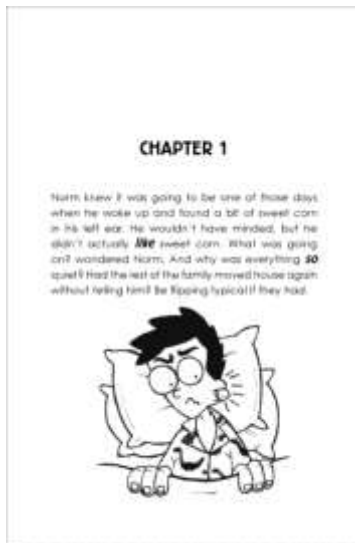
Each *World of Norm* book begins like this:

*Norm knew it was going to be one of those days...*

*...when he woke up and got blamed for global warming*

*...when he woke up and found a bit of sweetcorn in his left ear*

*...when he woke up and found himself in the middle of the French Revolution*



Write a short story – at least a page – about a day in your life which doesn't go quite right.

Start your story with '*I knew it was going to be one of those days when I woke up and.....*

### What do you know about Norm?

From all the *World of Norm* books you have read, collect and write down as many things as possible that you know about what Norm is like. Here are a few to get you going:

- doesn't do views
- does things which are wrong and tries to work a way round them
- likes coke, crisps, pizza
- favourite words are - 'flipping' – and??
- hates cauliflower
- hates walking
- doesn't do feelings – or does he??

Talk about other book characters who are a bit like Norm – eg. Wimpy Kid/Greg. Make a list of them all and next to each one jot down particular things about them – eg. Greg wants to be cool. Which character do you like best? Why?

*See the Further Reading suggestions on p11 of this pack*

## Your favourite characters in *The World of Norm*

Talk together about the characters in these stories – collect their names on a flipchart and then ask everyone to choose their favourite character/s and draw them and write about them – eg.

- Dad worries about global warming
- Mum likes online shopping
- Simon Cowell is Polish

## Illustrations 1.

Look at how the book is illustrated – with simple line drawings which often make you laugh – and take you a bit further in imagining what someone is like, or what they're up to.

Try doing your own illustrations for this passage from *May Contain Nuts* (Bk 1):

*'Here' said Norm's Dad, holding out the same wad of folded-up bank notes that Norm had given his mum the night before.*

*Norm stared at the money, thinking of all the stuff he'd be able to buy for his bike now.*

*'Well, go on then,' said Norm's dad. 'Take it.'*

Or you could choose a different passage to illustrate.

## Illustrations 2.

One of Norm's favourite words for describing people – especially his friend Mikey! - is 'doughnut', and through the books there are pictures of Mikey's face, drawn like a doughnut.



See if you can draw faces so they look like other cakes – you could do a muffin, or a jam tart, or a cupcake!



## Storyboard a day in the life of Norm

Get together lots of old magazines and newspapers.

Choose one day from any of the *World of Norm* books and plot it out in a storyboard, then put together the story using cut-out text and pictures from the magazines and papers.

## More Reading

AUTHOR	TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISBN
Jeff Kinney	<i>Diary of a Wimpy Kid: the Long Haul</i>	Puffin	978-0141354217
Anthony McGowan	<i>The Donut Diaries: Book One</i>	Corgi	978-0552564373
Chris O'Dowd & Nick V Murphy	<i>Moone Boy: the Blunder Years</i>	Macmillan	978-1447270942
James Patterson & Chris Tebbetts	<i>Save Rafe! (Middle School)</i>	Random House	978-0099596394
Lincoln Peirce	<i>Big Nate: the Crowd Goes Wild</i>	Andrews McMeel	978-1449436346
Liz Pichon	<i>The Brilliant World of Tom Gates</i>	Scholastic	978-1407120690
Rachel Renee Russell	<i>Once Upon a Dork (Dork Diaries)</i>	Simon & Schuster	978-1471122774
Jim Smith	<i>Barry Loser and the Holiday of Doom</i>	Jelly Pie	978-1405268028
Jamie Thompson	<i>Dark Lord: the Teenage Years</i>	Orchard Books	978-1408315118
Henry Winkler	<i>Hank Zipzer: the World's Greatest Underachiever and the Best Worst Summer Ever</i>	Walker	978-1406344936

