

Summary

Early readers often progress through different types of books quickly, and they appreciate the mixture of visual information and text that comic books offer. However, popular comic books sometimes deal with mature subjects so can be unsuitable for younger readers. This advice sheet contains a list of comic books that are suitable for younger readers.

Introduction

Emotional development is sometimes out of line with high learning potential children's reading ability and anyone supporting them needs to consider the appropriateness of the subject of the book, along with the level of difficulty. It is important that children with high learning potential are given support in understanding what they are reading. This can be done through discussing characters' feelings, asking what they think will happen next, discussing what they would do in a certain situation or looking up unknown words in a dictionary.

Adventure

Tintin by Hergé, featuring the hero of the series, Tintin, a young Belgian reporter. He is aided in his adventures from the beginning by his faithful fox terrier dog Snowy. Later, popular additions to the cast included the brash, cynical and grumpy Captain Haddock; the bright, hearing-impaired Professor Calculus and other colourful supporting characters such as the incompetent detectives Thomson and Thompson.

Asterix and Obelix books by Goscinny and Uderzo. The series follows the exploits of a village of ancient Gauls as they resist Roman occupation. They do so by means of a magic potion, brewed by their druid, which gives the recipient superhuman strength. The central character, Asterix, along with his friend, Obelix, have various adventures. In many cases, this leads them to travel to various countries around the world, though other books are set in and around their village.

Magic School Bus series by Joanna Col feature the antics of Ms Valerie Frizzle, and her class, who board a magical school bus which takes them on field trips to impossible locations such as the solar system, clouds, the past and the human body. The books are written in the first person from the point of view of an unnamed student in "the Friz's" class. The class pet, Liz, a lizard, accompanied the class on their field trips.

The Invention of Hugo Cabret by Brian Selznick. Orphan, clock-keeper, and thief, twelve-year-old Hugo lives in the walls of a busy Paris train station, where his survival depends on secrets and anonymity. But when his world suddenly interlocks with an eccentric girl and the owner of a small toy booth in the train station, Hugo's undercover life, and his most precious secret, is put in jeopardy.

Power Pack series by June Brigman, Mary Wilshire, Mark Badger and Brent Anderson is a fictional team of comic book superheroes consisting of four young siblings who appear in books published by Marvel Comics.

Tiny Titans series by Art and Franco Baltazar features alternate versions of DC Universe characters, primarily those from the *Teen Titans* series. It is set in a child-friendly school environment. Issues typically consist of several individual stories as opposed to one cohesive storyline.

Adventures of Daniel Boom Aka Loud Boy by David Steinberg and Brian Smith. In this action-packed and fast-paced series, Daniel and his friends each have a problem. Daniel has no volume control of his voice, while other kids throw tantrums or fidget constantly. When they face threats like the evil Kid-Rid corporation, Daniel and his friends tap into their own bad habits, which are actually superpowers, to restore peace and defeat the villains!

Lunch Lady by Janet Krosoczka. The Lunch Lady is an undercover spy at Thompson Brook School solving crimes and serving lunch to students who have no idea of her alter ego. Along with her fellow lunch lady, Betty, and the Breakfast Bunch – students Hector, Terrence, and Dee – Lunch Lady foils the criminal and saves the day every time. Whether it be a robot masquerading as a substitute teacher, an author who has been hypnotized, or an evil league of librarians, Lunch Lady uses her brains and technological gadgets to put things back to right.

Bone by Jeff Smith. Three modern cartoon cousins get lost in a pre-technological valley, spending a year making new friends and out-running dangerous enemies. Their many adventures include crossing the local people in The Great Cow Race, and meeting a giant mountain lion called RockJaw – Master of the Eastern Border. They learn about sacrifice and hardship in The Ghost Circles and finally discover their own true natures in the climatic journey to The Crown of Horns.

Chester Crab Comix series by Bently Boyd. All of the books are excellent ways to make history interesting and engaging for kids. The drawing and content is easy to understand and is highly recommended for engaging children in historical subjects.

Mr William Shakespeare's Plays by Marcia Williams. Take your place at the Globe Theatre of Shakespeare's day to see seven of his best-loved plays in performance. Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, The Winter's Tale and The Tempest are all brought vividly to life!

The Iliad and the Odyssey by Marcia Williams. *The Iliad* tells the story of the war between the Greeks and the Trojans: the love between Helen and Paris, Achilles and Hecotor's deadly combat,

the Trojan Horse. *The Odyssey* depicts the perilous voyage home of the Greek warrior, Odysseus: his struggles against the one-eyed Cyclops, the deadly Sirens, and the dreadful six-headed Scylla.

***The Secret Science Alliance* by Eleanor Davis.** Julian's struggle to make friends, while shown in a funny way, is really sympathetic and understanding. Anyone who's had trouble forging friendships or shamed for their smarts can understand what he's going through. It's also great that smarts win in the end of this book, and Julian realises it's okay to be a brainiac.

***Babymouse* by Jennifer and Matthew Holm.** Meet Babymouse, a sassy young mouse who dreams of glamour, excitement, adventure, straight whiskers, being queen of the world, and of course, being invited to Felicia Furrypaws's oh-so-exclusive party. Readers will love Babymouse's vivid imagination – an empty locker becomes a black hole that sucks her into space, a boring party becomes a Wild West adventure.

Comedy

***Calvin and Hobbes* by Bill Watterson** follows the humorous antics of Calvin, a precocious and adventurous six-year-old boy, and Hobbes, his sardonic stuffed tiger.

***Peanuts* by Charles M. Schulz.** Precocious children interacting in a world where adults are never seen, the underlying level of pathos of its main hero Charlie Brown, and most phenomenally, the growth from a minor role to eventual stardom by his dog Snoopy.

***Pogo* by Walt Kelly** combines both sophisticated wit and slapstick comedy in a heady mix of allegory, Irish poetry, literary whimsy, puns and wordplay, lushly detailed artwork and broad humour. The same series of strips can be enjoyed on different levels both by young children and savvy adults.

***Garfield* by Jim Davis** chronicles the life of the title character, the cat Garfield; his owner, Jon Arbuckle; and Arbuckle's dog, Odie.

***Captain Underpants* series by Dav Pilkey.** Part comic book, part novel about two school children who accidentally turn their head teacher into a super hero.

***Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney** is about a boy named Greg Heffley as he goes through middle school, deals with annoying siblings, and everyday struggles. Jeff Kinney makes these things silly, down-to-earth and something you can relate to. There is also a series aimed specifically to girls, *Dork Diaries* by Rachel Renée Russell.

Non-Fiction

***Basher Science* by Dan Green and Simon Basher.** These 8 x 8 inch books are laid out with two page spreads, each science term or item is the topic on the two page spread. Components of the

definition of the featured item are made into an attractive illustration providing visual clues as to the term's meaning.

The Way Things Work by David Macaulay and Neil Ardley serves as an entertaining introduction to everyday machines. It covers machines as simple as levers and gears and as complicated as radio telescopes and automatic transmissions. The book's most notable feature is the illustration: every page consists primarily of one or more large diagrams describing the operation of the relevant machine. These diagrams are informative but playful; most feature the internal workings of the machines being operated by woolly mammoths.

Three Cheers for Inventors! by Marcia Williams. Read about Johannes Gutenberg, James Watt, Thomas Edison, the Wright Brothers and many more. Follow the inventors through their successes and difficulties. Be amazed by the variety of their inventions, from worm-destroying lozenges to the mobile phone.

Horrible Histories by Terry Deary; designed to engage children in history by concentrating on the unusual, gory, or unpleasant.

Horrible Science by Nick Arnold; a spin-off series from the popular Horrible Histories books, engages children in science by also concentrating on the unusual, gory, or unpleasant.

Horrible Geography by Anita Ganeri; another spin-off from the Horrible Histories books, engages children in geography.

Murderous Maths by Kjartan Poskitt; teach maths, spanning from basic arithmetic to relatively complex concepts such as the quadratic formula. The books are written in an informal similar style to the Horrible Histories series, involving evil geniuses, gangsters, love stories and smelly burgers!

Further Information

PA106 Reading List for Early Years High Learning Potential Children	This advice sheet comprises a list of some materials suitable for high learning potential Early Years advanced reader. It includes a variety of different kinds of reading material, as well as general advice on supporting early readers with high learning potential.
P107 Reading List for Key Stage 1 High Learning Potential Children	This advice sheet comprises a list of some materials suitable for confident Key Stage 1 readers who are ready to move on. The materials are listed in ascending order of difficulty.

Potential Plus UK Date of Issue: February 2017

Potential Plus UK Planned Review Date: February 2020

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