



Ten of the Best: Holiday Reads for Summer 2014

Article Author:

[Marilyn Brocklehurst](#) [1]

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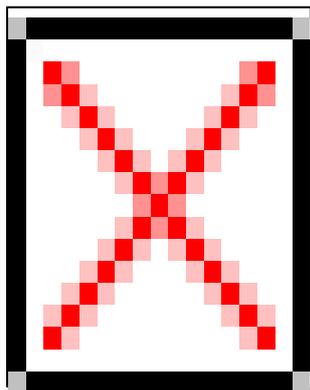
Ten of the Best

Byline:

Holiday reads for summer chosen by **Marilyn Brocklehurst**.

The summer holidays provide great opportunities for enticing children to pick up books, and make new discoveries. Whether you're planning a staycation, or going away, books can make a holiday special. **Marilyn Brocklehurst** has a suitcase of suggestions to keep children reading right through the summer. Don't leave home without them!

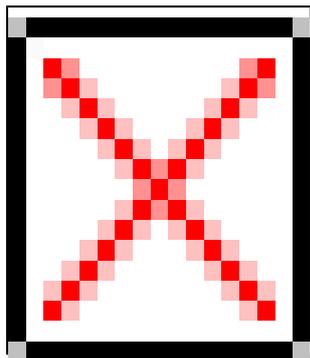
Peace at Last



Jill Murphy, Macmillan Children's Books, 32pp, 978-0230015487, £6.99 pbk

Holidays can be a bit unsettling for the very youngest. Sharing a familiar book at bedtime, or while travelling is a good way to keep things calm and make the unfamiliar less daunting; and the whole family can join in. **Peace at Last** by Jill Murphy is perfect: it takes a familiar situation and serves it up with humour. The story combines repetition and opportunities for joining in with a satisfying resolution. It takes a familiar situation and serves it up with humour - and has to be read with a cuddle.

[Hermelin: The Detective Mouse](#) [3]

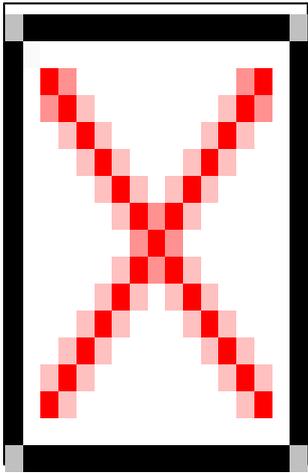


Mini Grey, Jonathan Cape, 32pp, 978-0857550231, £11.99 hbk

Long journeys, especially by train or plane, demand something that will hold the attention of those lively 4 -5 year olds. Top of my list comes Mini Grey's latest, **Hermelin: The Detective Mouse**. Each spread requires close examination and children love to pore over the pictures, gathering clues to work out what's happened. Picture books such as this one

which encourage children to explore and discover are invaluable, providing children the chance to discover layers of meaning while enjoying the humour of the illustrations.

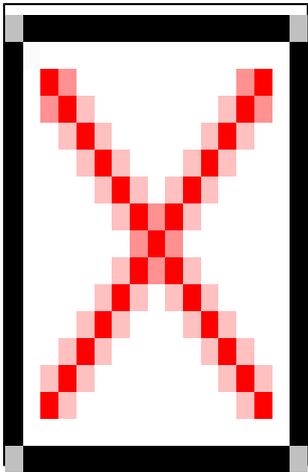
[Operation Bunny \(Wings and Co.\) \[4\]](#)



Sally Gardner, illus David Roberts, Orion Children's Books, 978-1444003727, £5.99 pbk

It's so important to hear stories coming off the page and holidays, whether at home or away, offer the opportunity to share stories read aloud. Everyone will enjoy Eva Ibbotson's [One Dog and his Boy \[5\]](#), while Chris Riddell's [Goth Girl and the Ghost of a Mouse \[6\]](#) offers a breadth of ideas and tongue in cheek humour for listeners of all ages. However, for my family holiday read, I would choose **Operation Bunny**. With a delightful heroine and a cast of quirky characters, a good dollop of magic, lots of humour and a fast-moving plot, you have the perfect recipe for a hugely entertaining family story session.

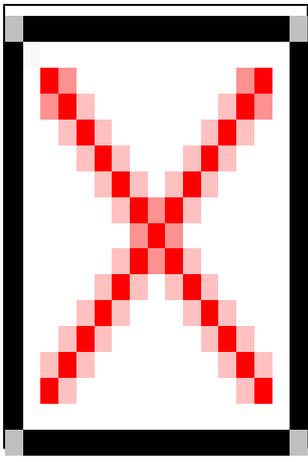
Lulu and the Duck in the Park



Hilary McKay, Scholastic

Holidays of all kinds provide plenty of moments to be by oneself, calling for stories that children can read all by themselves. There are lots of excellent page-turning stories to fit the bill, many in series: Andrew Norris's **Archie** series, **Iggy and me** by Jenny Valentine, Josh Lacey's **Dragonsitter** series and Steve Voake's hilarious books about **Hooley Higgins** among them. However I think Hilary McKay's **Lulu and the Duck in the Park** is the perfect book to put in your suitcase. Lulu is a delightful heroine, and the plot offers an impossible dilemma which McKay brings to a satisfying conclusion (and there are other stories about her too).

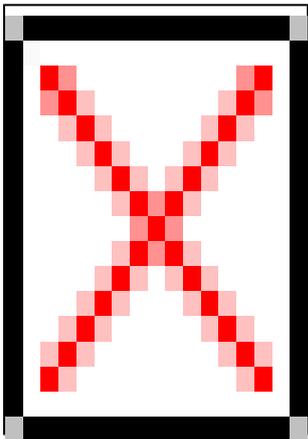
Swallows and Amazons



Arthur Ransome, Vintage Children's Classics, 978-0099572794, £7.99 pbk

While it may not be easy to find a book set in your holiday destination there are titles that vividly evoke the landscape, language and culture of their setting. Books that will not only transport you to a real place but will involve you in a real adventure. **Swallows and Amazons** is the template for all such holiday adventure stories; a classic that is very accessible when read aloud And if you do find yourselves in the Lake District, it will have the whole family on the look-out for Captain Flint's boathouse.

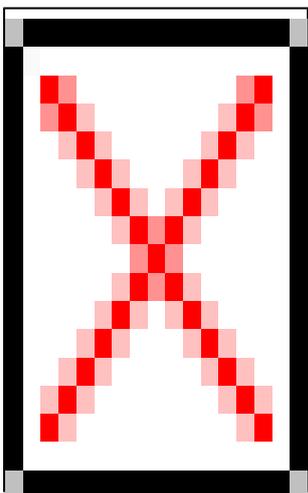
[**The Wild City Book: Fun Things to do Outdoors in Towns and Cities**](#) [7]



Jo Schofield and Fiona Danks, Frances Lincoln, 128pp, 978-0711234888, £9.99

Not every holiday involves a journey abroad. Sometimes you have to stay at home in the city. And that might be just the opportunity for a little home-grown adventure. With this book in hand expeditions around your neighbourhood will be as exciting as any visit to a foreign park.

The Rattle Bag: An Anthology of Poetry



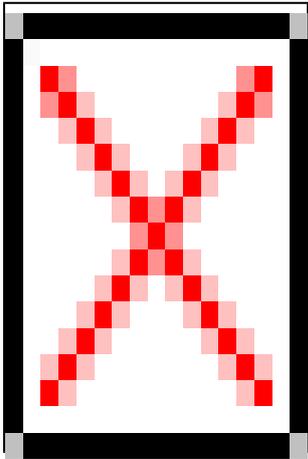
Ed. Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes, Faber & Faber, 496pp, 978-0571225835, £16.99 pbk

Pack some poetry - it's fun to dip into, and nobody can resist reading out their favourites! Jackie Morris's exquisitely illustrated **Barefoot Book of Classic Poems** has a lovely selection, and **A Little Aloud for Children**, edited by Angela

Macmillan, is full of wonderful extracts and has a good selection of poems to perform,

but I'd suggest you pack **The Rattle Bag** edited by Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes for your own pleasure as well as the family. Here are poems to share from around the world - and you don't need a ticket.

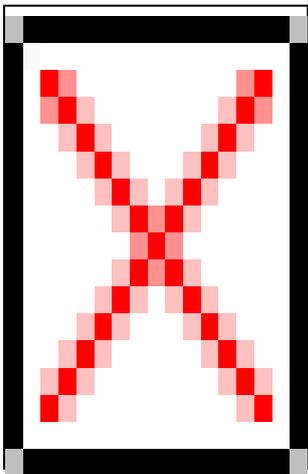
W.A.R.P. The Reluctant Assassin



Eoin Colfer, Puffin, 336pp, 978-0141341743, £6.99 pbk

Long journeys cry out for a good long rip-roaring adventure, especially if you're travelling with anyone aged ten and up. **Itch** by Simon Mayo will have everyone laughing, while Jonathan Stroud's **The Screaming Staircase** is utterly terrifying, but I'd go for Eoin Colfer's **W.A.R.P. The Reluctant Assassin**, the first in a great new series. Non-stop action, dramatic incidents, exciting characters - a book to keep young readers oblivious of the time.

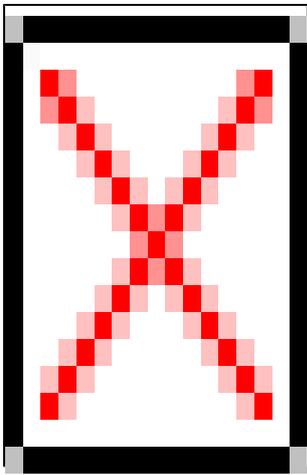
We Were Liars



E. Lockhart, Hot Key Books, 240pp, 978-1471403989, £7.99 pbk

Family holidays are often tolerated by teenagers rather than enjoyed, and time hangs heavy. It might be an opportunity to reacquaint with old favourites, or discover a new author. Hot off the press, **We were Liars** is my recommendation for older girls looking for just such a book. Enigmatic, odd and totally compelling, this is a great read and essential for fans of John Green (I'm assuming your teenagers have already read **The Fault in Our Stars**).

[Postcards from No Man's Land](#) [8]



Aidan Chambers, *Definitions*, 336pp, 978-1862302846, £6.99 pbk

Finally, for your almost grown-ups - and indeed for yourself - holidays might be the time to try something different. Margo Lanagan's reworking of the story of Snow White and Rose Red, **Tender Morsels**, is a read that could leave you quivering. Thought provoking and astonishingly good **This is All** by Aidan Chambers is another hugely powerful novel for young adults . However, my essential read has to be his **Postcards from No Man's Land** for me is one of the best books ever written for young people. Not only that it transports the reader to Amsterdam ? a tempting holiday destination.

Happy holiday reading!

Marilyn Brocklehurst is a former librarian, the owner of the [Norfolk Children's Book Centre](#) [9], and a regular speaker at education conferences and events for teachers.

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