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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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# THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

EDITED BY
M. O. GRENBY
and
ANDREA IMMEL

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JULIA BRIGGS was Professor of English Literature and Women's Studies at De Montfort University until her death in 2007. She had formerly been Fellow of Hertford College, Oxford, and Chair of the Oxford University English Faculty, and was awarded an OBE for her services to English literature and education in 2006. Her books include *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story* (1977), *This Stage-Play World: Texts and Contexts, 1580–1625* (1983, revised 1997), *A Woman of Passion: The Life of E. Nesbit* (1987), *Children and Their Books* (1989, edited with Gillian Avery) and *Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life* (2006).

RICHARD FLYNN is Professor of Literature at Georgia Southern University where he teaches courses in modern and contemporary poetry and children's and adolescent literature. He has been the editor of the *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* since 2004.

M. O. GRENBY is Reader in Children's Literature in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at Newcastle University. He has written widely on eighteenth-century culture and the history of children's literature. His books include *The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British Conservatism and the French Revolution* (2001), *Popular Children's Literature in Britain* (edited with Julia Briggs and Dennis Butts,



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2008) and *Children's Literature* (2008). He is currently working on a study of the child reader in the long eighteenth century.

ANDREA IMMEL has been Curator of the Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University since 1995. She has written widely on the history of illustrated children's books, as well as curated exhibitions, and organised a series of international conferences on various aspects of children's literature. Her descriptive catalogue of the children's books published by the house of Newbery will appear in 2010.

ERIC J. JOHNSON is Assistant Professor and Associate Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts at The Ohio State University Libraries. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of York (UK) and an MLIS from Rutgers University. His research interests encompass a variety of topics, and he has published articles on medieval literature and theology and military propaganda in children's literature. He is currently working on several projects examining nineteenth-century American story papers and dime novels.

U. C. KNOEPFLMACHER is William and Annie S. Paton Foundation Professor of Ancient and Modern Literature Emeritus at Princeton University. He is the author of seven books on nineteenth-century literature and culture, and the editor or co-editor of ten more. Among the former are *Forbidden Journeys: Fairy Tales and Fantasies by Victorian Women Writers* (1992) and *Ventures Into Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales and Femininity* (1998).

RODERICK McGILLIS is a professor of English at the University of Calgary. Recent publications include *Les pieds devant* (2007), *George Macdonald: Literary Heritage and Heirs* (2007) and *The Gothic in Children's Literature* (edited with Anna Jackson and Karen Coats, 2007). His next book will be called *He Was Some Kind of a Man: Masculinity in the B Western*.

LISSA PAUL is a professor in the Faculty of Education at Brock University, Ontario. She is the author of numerous articles and essays on children's literature, literary theories and cultural studies, and of several books, including *Growing with Books: Children's Literature in the Formative Years and Beyond* (1988) and *Reading Otherways* (1998). She is an associate general editor of *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature* (2005) and an editor of the journal *The Lion and the Unicorn*.

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*'Anne of Green Gables'* (1992). Her current project is a study of Victorian children's literature as a literature of empire.

KIMBERLEY REYNOLDS is Professor of Children's Literature in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at Newcastle University. She has been an active figure in children's literature studies for many years, serving on several national and international boards and committees, including as President of the International Research Society for Children's Literature (2003–7). She played a formative role in the creation of the Children's Laureate, and Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books (www.sevenstories.org.uk). She has written numerous books and articles about children's literature and childhood, past and present. Her most recent monograph is *Radical Children's Literature: Future Visions and Aesthetic Transformations* (2007).

DAVID RUDD is Professor of Children's Literature at the University of Bolton, where he runs an MA in Children's Literature and Culture. He has published some 100 articles on children's literature and related areas, and is the author of *Enid Blyton and the Mystery of Children's Literature* (2000). Most recently, he has edited *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature*.

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DEBORAH STEVENSON is a professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois, and editor of the *Bulletin of The Center For Children's Books*, one of the major children's literature review periodicals in the USA.



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LYNNE VALLONE is Professor and Chair of Childhood Studies at Rutgers University. She is an associate general editor of *The Norton Anthology of Children's Literature* (2005) and was the author of *Disciplines of Virtue: Girls' Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (1995) and *Becoming Victoria* (2001), and co-editor of *The Girl's Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830–1915* (with Claudia Nelson, 1994) and *Virtual Gender: Fantasies of Subjectivity and Embodiment* (with Mary Ann O'Farrell, 1999). She is currently working on a book on the miniature and the gigantic in children's literature and culture.



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# PREFACE

Most of the volumes in the Cambridge Companions series examine one author, one well-defined historical period or one particular genre. *The Cambridge Companion to Children's Literature* is, by necessity, much broader. Although it deals with only one category of literature, it is a category that has developed over at least 300 years into an entire parallel universe. Children's literature is now almost as large and varied a field as 'adult literature', encompassing not only prose, verse and drama, but fact as well as fiction, and 'texts' that are composed solely of pictures or digital images. It cuts across almost all genres, from myths to manga, humour to horror, science to self-help and religion to romance. It has its own canon of classics, its own radical and controversial experiments, and genres for which there are no precise equivalents for adults. Children's literature now receives considerable critical attention from scholars and students as well as discussion across the popular media. It has become as profitable and exportable as any other cultural commodity. Many of its characters – and even some of its authors and illustrators – are amongst the most celebrated and recognisable international icons.

But in other ways children's literature differs markedly from literature designed for mature readers. Children's literature, uniquely, is defined by its intended audience, but neither childhood nor the child is so easy to define. Overlapping and conflicting cultural constructions of childhood have existed since children's literature began; some persist, while others shift in response to changing values and conditions. Then there are the complications that arise out of the very polymorphous nature of its readership. The 'child' for whom 'children's literature' is intended can range from the infant being read to, to the teenager on the threshold of adulthood, not to mention those adults who delight in picture books, fantasy novels or fondly remembered classics. This 'crossover audience' is by no means a new phenomenon. It is just one of the reasons that the question of audience presents all sorts of knotty problems. Should we, for instance, regard children's literature as produced exclusively



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for its putative intended audience of children? Or are the adults who (generally) write it, assess it and buy it also to be regarded as important consumers? These grown-ups were all also once children and therefore may be very heavily invested emotionally and intellectually and financially in what children read. In this respect, children's literature is one of the most universal of forms – a truly popular literature – since (unlike most kinds of books for adults) everyone has been part of its target audience. What all this begins to demonstrate is that children's books may be small, short and apparently straightforward, but the study of children's literature is far from simple.

This *Cambridge Companion* confronts this range and complexity directly. No attempt has been made to restrict the subject by imposing artificial limits, whether chronological, generic, thematic or by the intended age of readers. This is not to say that the entirety of children's literature could be covered by this book's sixteen chapters. Some parameters have been inevitable. The focus is on imaginative literature, leaving regrettably little room for the religious, factual and instructive material that has been such an important part of the development of children's books (one important exception being the alphabets that feature in chapter 8). Also largely absent from this volume is detailed consideration of drama, film and some other new media, because they require specialist critical techniques, and certain genres that already have enormous bodies of criticism devoted to them are omitted: fairy tales and comic books for example (although chapter 6, on adaptation, is an exception to both these rules). Finally, only texts first published in English have been included, and particularly those from Britain and America. Concentrating on these traditions, developing in tandem across the last three centuries, has imposed other limits by stealth. It has resulted in a bias towards books written for children who have been understood as highly individual, naturally playful, innocent and malleable, reflecting the dominant cultural construction of childhood in Britain and America since the mid eighteenth century. And because this literature was written for children who were predominantly white, middle-class and heterosexual, this *Cambridge Companion* inevitably reflects these norms, even if it is clearly the case that neither all children, nor all children's literature, can be represented by them. Some discussion of children's books written for different constituencies or with different needs has been possible here. But this *Companion* may serve as a foundation for later studies that will treat in greater depth the more inclusive children's literature of the later twentieth century and today, literature produced for audiences radically different from those of previous generations. To attempt to give multicultural children's literature the attention it deserves, as well as to include discussion of other national traditions, would have broadened the volume's scope, but only at the expense of trivialising these important issues.



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What this *Companion* does try to present is a useful sample of the different critical approaches that have been taken to children's literature. Some of the essays focus closely on the texts themselves, often including their illustrations. Others take more historical, sociological, theoretical or materialist approaches, while some concentrate on readers' responses or the contexts of production. This methodological variety is partly a result of the subject itself. Children's books have a strong utilitarian dimension because they are explicitly designed to achieve some goal (this is often as true today as it was in the past) – and, as a result, formalistic or aesthetic analyses may illuminate books for children less fully than books for adults. Particular physical characteristics of children's books – size, format, binding, illustration, decoration, style, paper engineering and so on – also demand what might be called 'extra-literary' approaches, as do the sorts of non-textual responses that children often have (and indeed are encouraged to have) to their books. This explains why chapters focus on the relationship between text and image, the manufacture of books, their adaptation, their origins, and the makings of canons, as well as questions of age, literacy, gender and the cultural construction of childhood.

This critical heterogeneity is one of the most appealing aspects of the study of children's literature, and, it is to be hoped, of this *Companion*. The volume is characterised also by its historical range. Some children's literature criticism has a strong presentist streak, with a tendency to be hostile to works that no longer conform to current models of childhood or judgments about children's capabilities, concerns or best interests. One of the chief goals of this *Companion* is to erase these distinctions, and to offer historical and conceptual frameworks that enable long views of the genre. Even if it is no longer read by its original intended audience, an appreciation of older children's literature is surely essential to our understanding of the children's books of today, and of the future.

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# CHRONOLOGY

ERIC J. JOHNSON

This chronology includes a selection of 'classic' titles, broadly defined as those that have had a significant and lasting effect on the development of children's literature in Britain and North America. The majority of these titles are discussed in this *Companion*. Many of them have had a considerable impact on other media besides the printed book. Other important events in the history of children's literature have been added, with an emphasis on those technological developments that have had a major effect on the appearance, distribution and consumption of books for children.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1475 | *The Babees Book, or a 'Lytyl Reporte' of How Young People Should Behave*, an early courtesy book |
| 1484 | *Aesop's Fables*, translated and published by William Caxton, an early example of woodcut illustrations |
| 1659 | Johann Amos Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus … Visible World, or Picture and Nomenclature of all the chief things in the world*, translated by Charles Hoole, an early use of intaglio engraving alongside a letterpress text |
| 1671–2 | James Janeway, *A Token for Children* |
| 1686 | John Bunyan, *A Book for Boys and Girls*, subsequently retitled *Divine Emblems* |
| *c.* 1690 | *The New England Primer* |
| 1693 | John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* |
| 1694 | J. G., *A Play-Book for Children to Allure Them to Read Assoon* [*sic*] *As They Can Speak Plain* |
| 1715 | Isaac Watts, *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children*, advertised as a reward book for virtuous children |



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| 1719 | Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* |
| 1722 | Samuel Croxall, *Fables of Aesop and others*, an early use of relief metal engravings |
| 1726 | Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* |
| 1729 | *Histories, or Tales of Past Times*, translated by Robert Samber from Charles Perrault's *Histoires, ou contes du temps passé* of 1697, retellings of traditional French fairy tales |
| 1730 | Thomas Boreman, *Description of Three Hundred Animals* |
| 1740–3 | Thomas Boreman publishes by subscription the *Gigantick Histories*, a series of miniature guidebooks to London bound in 'Dutch gilt paper' |
| 1742 | *The Child's New Play-Thing*, a speller with a fold-out plate of decorative alphabet cards, published by Thomas Cooper |
| 1744 | *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book*, the first collection of nursery rhymes, published by Mary Cooper and printed throughout in intaglio; *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* published by John Newbery |
| 1746 | *Royal Battledore*, a folded-card alphabet intended as an alternative to the hornbook, published by Benjamin Collins |
| 1749 | Sarah Fielding, *The Governess; or, the Little Female Academy*, the first book-length fiction for children |
| 1751–2 | *The Lilliputian Magazine*, the first children's periodical, published in numbers by Thomas Carnan, John Newbery's step-son |
| 1753 | Wove paper is introduced in England |
| 1762 | Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, or On Education* |
| 1765 | *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, published by John Newbery |
| 1767 | James Greenwood, *The London Vocabulary*, issued in 'school canvas' binding; *Adam & Eve*, the first in a series of harlequinades (a type of 'movable book'), published by Robert Sayer in plain and hand-coloured versions |



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|---|---|
| 1778–9 | Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *Lessons for Children*, an early use of different sizes of type for readers of different ages |
| 1780 | *Mother Goose's Melody; or, Sonnets from the Cradle*, a collection of nursery rhymes with illustrations by Thomas Bewick |
| 1782 | *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* issued by Thomas Carnan in pictorial boards |
| 1783 | Noah Webster, *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language* |
| 1783–9 | Thomas Day, *The History of Sandford and Merton* |
| 1789 | William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*, with text and 'illuminations' both relief etched throughout, and issued in a very limited print-run |
| 1790 | Thomas Bewick, *General History of Quadrupeds*, the first major book illustrated with wood engravings |
| 1796 | Maria Edgeworth, *The Parent's Assistant; or, Stories for Children* |
| 1798 | Alois Senefelder invents lithography; first paper-making machine invented |
| 1799 | John Marshall begins publishing his miniature libraries in ornamental boxes; founding of the Religious Tract Society, one of the biggest nineteenth-century publishers of children's books |
| 1800 | Development of stereotyping begins; introduction of the Stanhope iron press |
| 1802–6 | Sarah Trimmer, *The Guardian of Education*, the first review journal of children's books |
| 1804–5 | Ann and Jane Taylor (and others), *Original Poems for Infant Minds* |
| 1805 | Sarah Catherine Martin, *The Comic Adventures of Old Mother Hubbard and her Dog*, an early example of a hand-coloured nursery rhyme picture book that became a bestseller |



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| 1807 | Charles and Mary Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare for the Use of Young Persons*, the earliest English children's book to have remained in print to the present time |
| 1810 | *The History of Little Fanny*, the first in a series of paper-doll books with aquatint illustrations and wallet bindings, published by S. and J. Fuller; introduction of steam-powered rotary printing press |
| 1818–42 | Mary Martha Sherwood, *The History of the Fairchild Family* |
| 1820 | Hugh Blair's *Precepts*, illustrated with steel engravings |
| 1822 | Introduction of mechanical typesetting |
| 1823 | The Brothers Grimm, *German Popular Stories*, translated by Edgar Taylor, illustrated by George Cruikshank |
| 1824 | Mary Sewell, *Walks with Mamma*, an early example of a book bound in cloth by publisher |
| 1828 | Thomas Crofton Croker publishes the first annual produced for children, *The Christmas Box* |
| 1833 | Introduction of the printed book jacket |
| 1834 | Baxter's 'Polychromatic' printing process introduced in Robert Mudie, *The Feathered Tribes of the British Islands* |
| 1836–57 | William Holmes McGuffey, *McGuffey's Eclectic Readers* 1–6 |
| 1838 | Development of rail delivery services begins to affect book distribution |
| 1839 | Catherine Sinclair, *Holiday House* |
| 1840 | Dalziel Bros. founded: the firm would establish wood-engraved illustrations as standard commercial practice |
| 1844 | Fox Talbot's photographic innovations utilised in book publishing: development of photolithography |
| 1846 | Hans Christian Andersen, *Wonderful Stories for Children*, translated by Mary Howitt; Edward Lear, *Book of Nonsense* |
| 1847 | Frederick Marryat, *Children of the New Forest*, the earliest work of children's fiction to remain continually in print to the present time |



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|---|---|
| 1848 | Heinrich Hoffman, *Struwwelpeter* |
| 1854 | Introduction of chemical wood pulp and esparto in paper-making; introduction of photography on wood |
| 1857 | Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* |
| 1858 | R. M. Ballantyne, *The Coral Island* |
| 1863 | Charles Kingsley, *The Water-Babies* |
| 1865 | Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*; Mary Mapes Dodge, *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates* |
| 1865–73 | *Our Young Folks* |
| 1867 | Hesba Stretton, *Jessica's First Prayer* |
| 1868 | Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women*; Walter Crane's first toy book, *Sing a Song of Sixpence*, with wood engravings printed in full colour by Edmund Evans |
| 1870 | Universal, subsidised schooling introduced in Britain by the Elementary Education Act |
| 1871 | Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*; G. A. Henty, *Out on the Pampas* |
| 1872 | Christina Rossetti, *Sing-song* |
| 1873–1943 | *St Nicholas Magazine* |
| 1876 | Mark Twain, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* |
| 1877 | Anna Sewell, *Black Beauty* |
| 1878 | Lothar Meggendorfer, *Living Pictures*, his first mechanical book incorporating complex, simultaneous multiple movements within a single scene, activated by a single 'tab' |
| 1879–1967 | *The Boy's Own Paper* |
| 1880 | Randolph Caldecott, *Sing a Song for Sixpence*; Joel Chandler Harris, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* |
| 1880–1908 | *The Girl's Own Paper* |
| 1881 | Half-tone illustration process introduced |
| 1883 | Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island* |



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| 1885 | Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verses* |
| 1886 | Frances Hodgson Burnett, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* |
| 1889–1910 | Andrew Lang, 'Colour Fairy Books' series |
| *c.* 1890 | Ernest Nister, *Nister's Panorama Pictures*, introduction of 'automatic' pop-up books employing die-cut figures raised by paper guides activated as the reader turns each page |
| 1891 | E. M. Field, *The Child and His Book*, the first serious attempt at a history of children's literature |
| 1894–5 | Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Books* |
| 1898 | Emma Griffith Lumm, *The Twentieth Century Speaker*, an early use of colour half-tone illustrations in a children's book |
| 1899 | Helen Bannerman, *The Story of Little Black Sambo*; E. Nesbit, *The Treasure Seekers* |
| 1900 | L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*; founding of American Library Association section on Library Work with Children |
| 1901 | Beatrix Potter, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, using three-colour half-tones; Net Book Agreement enacted |
| 1904 | First performance of J. M. Barrie, *Peter Pan, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up* |
| 1905 | Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*, illustrated by Arthur Rackham, one of the first so-called 'gift-books'; Stratemeyer Syndicate founded, a book packager specialising in series fiction such as Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys |
| 1906 | Introduction of offset lithography; Hodder and Stoughton and Oxford University Press establish the Joint Venture, the first children's book department headed by its own appointed editor |
| 1908 | Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows*; Peter Newell, *The Hole Book*, an early novelty book; L. M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* |
| 1916 | Bertha Mahony opens the Bookshop for Boys & Girls in Boston, Massachusetts |



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| 1918 | Norman Lindsay, *The Magic Pudding*, the first classic Australian children's title |
| 1919 | Macmillan, New York, establishes a children's department with Louise Seaman Bechtel as editor |
| 1922 | Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit*; first award of the annual Newbery Medal for the most distinguished contribution to American children's literature |
| 1924 | A. A. Milne, *When We Were Very Young*; Bertha Mahony launches *Horn Book Magazine* |
| 1927 | Macmillan launches Happy Hour Books, with illustrations printed by Charles Stringer's new four-colour process at Jersey City Printing Company, allowing for a greater range of tones |
| 1930 | Arthur Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*; Dick and Jane readers introduced |
| 1931 | Jean de Brunhoff, *The Story of Babar*, an outstanding early example of offset colour lithography |
| 1932–43 | Laura Ingalls Wilder, Little House series |
| 1934 | P. L. Travers, *Mary Poppins* |
| 1935 | *Mickey Mouse Magazine*, the first Disney comic book; Penguin begins publishing mass-market paperbacks |
| 1936 | First award of the Carnegie Medal, for the year's most outstanding British children's book |
| 1937 | J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* |
| 1938 | First award of the annual Caldecott Medal for best American picture book; *Action Comics* launched, including earliest appearance of Superman, the first costumed 'superhero' |
| 1940 | Dorothy Kunhardt, *Pat the Bunny: A Touch-and-Feel Book* |
| 1941 | Penguin begins publishing the Puffin Picture Books children's line |
| 1942 | Little Golden Books, a series of high-quality 25-cent picture books, launched by Simon & Schuster |



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| 1947 | Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd, *Goodnight, Moon* |
| 1950–6 | C. S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia* |
| 1952 | *The Diary of Anne Frank*; E. B. White, *Charlotte's Web*; *A Child's Book of Horses*, the first book to be entirely film-set |
| 1952–82 | Mary Norton, *The Borrowers* quintet |
| 1955 | First award of the annual Kate Greenaway Medal for illustration in a British children's book |
| 1956 | Dodie Smith, *The Hundred and One Dalmatians* |
| 1957 | Dr Seuss, *The Cat in the Hat* |
| 1958 | Philippa Pearce, *Tom's Midnight Garden* |
| 1959 | John Knowles, *A Separate Peace* |
| 1963 | Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are* |
| 1964 | Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*; Randall Jarrell, *The Bat-Poet* |
| 1967 | Russell Hoban, *The Mouse and His Child* |
| 1967–72 | Ursula Le Guin, first *Earthsea* trilogy |
| 1970 | John Burningham, *Mr Gumpy's Outing*; Maurice Sendak, *In the Night Kitchen* |
| 1972 | Richard Adams, *Watership Down* |
| 1973 | Rosa Guy, *The Friends* |
| 1974 | Robert Cormier, *The Chocolate War* |
| 1975 | Judy Blume, *Forever* |
| 1979 | Raymond Briggs, *The Snowman*, a wordless picture book |
| 1986 | Allan and Janet Ahlberg, *The Jolly Postman: or Other People's Letters*; Michael Palin, *The Mirrorstone*, first use of a hologram in a book |
| 1986–91 | Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, a graphic novel with cross-generational appeal |



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| 1989 | Picture Me Books launches interactive board books produced using proprietary computer programs to personalise text for individual customers |
| 1990 | Ursula Le Guin, *Tehanu*; Salman Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* |
| 1992 | Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* |
| 1994 | Robert Sabuda, *The Christmas Alphabet*, an elaborate pop-up book |
| 1995–2000 | Philip Pullman, *His Dark Materials* trilogy |
| 1997 | Romain Victor Pujebet, *Lulu's Enchanted Book*, an early interactive multi-media children's book published only on CD-ROM |
| 1997–2007 | J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter* novels |
| 2001 | Melvin Burgess, *Lady: My Life as a Bitch* |



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