

## **Books for reluctant boys**

So which books should the nation's boys be reading if they want to get a headstart? Here's a handy guide to the 10 best books for boys aged seven to 12.

1. Alex Rider Anthony Horowitz's series about a 14-year-old boy recruited by the British secret service has proved phenomenally popular: there are nine novels, from 2000's Stormbreaker to Scorpiia Rising
2. Harry Potter No list would be complete without JK Rowling's much-loved novels
3. Young Bond Covering similar ground to Alex Rider, Charlie Higson's books – suitable for ages 10 and over
4. Horrid Henry Younger boys will love Francesca Simon's series of 20 books, a number of joke books, a series for early readers
5. Flat Stanley This classic children's book, written in 1964 by Jeff Brown. A lot of boys of seven to nine are still not reading very well. This book is really likely to engage them.
6. Artemis Fowl The anti-hero of Irish author Eoin Colfer's seven novels (the last is due out this summer) is like the Blofeld to Higson's Bond: a teenage criminal mastermind named Artemis Fowl II. This is in the solid nine-12 years category
7. Diary of a Wimpy Kid Boys aged seven and up will relate to American author Jeff Kinney's tales about a hopelessly uncool boy named Gregory.
8. Captain Underpants In Dav Pilkey's series of amusingly illustrated novels, two primary-school boys accidentally hypnotise their headteacher, turning him into the eponymous superhero. Exuberant fun for younger boys.
9. The Cherub series Bestselling author Robert Muchamore became the subject of controversy last October, when a north London junior school cancelled his scheduled visit, citing a number of complaints from parents about the challenging subject matter of his books about a group of orphaned teenage spies. First book only for Y6
10. Holes Louis Sachar's award-winning 1998 novel about a 13-year-old boy named Stanley Yelnats, sent to the juvenile detention centre Camp Green Lake after being wrongly accused of stealing a pair of shoes, will appeal to boys of 10 and over.