

## Read Alouds Term 3, 2004

Contributors to this booklist are – Anne Coppel, Bronwyn Fox, Lois Huston, Ann Luxton, and Frances Plumpton.

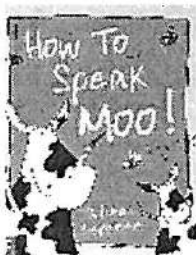
Many people think reading aloud is only for young children, but this is not so. Children learn the rhythm of language through the spoken word, and it is a way to enjoy books that is stress free for those to whom reading is still difficult. Reading does not have to be a solitary activity. The sharing of books by reading aloud can lead to new understanding. In this booklist we have a selection of books suitable for reading aloud from picture books to young adult, and non-fiction as well.

# BOOKLIST



**Down in the Forest**  
 Yvonne Morrison  
 Illustrated by Jenny Cooper  
 Scholastic 2004  
 Pb ISBN 1869435966

“ Down in the forest seeking shelter from the sun, lived a brown mother kiwi and her little kiwi one. ” As the kiwi sleeps, ruru swoop, tuis sing, keas steal, geckos dash and other native creatures are bustling about in this Zealand version of the traditional rhyme “ Over in the Meadow .” Children will enjoy chanting the catchy rhyme as they explore the details in Jenny Cooper’s lovely illustrations. FP



**How to Speak Moo!**  
 Deborah Fajerman  
 Hutchinson, 2002  
 Hb ISBN 0091768993  
 Red Fox Pb ISBN 0099417936

Do all moos sound the same? Does it depend on size or what the cow is doing? Deborah Fajerman’s lively explanation of the diversity of cow language is matched by her entertaining illustrations. Children are quick to pick up the ludicrous situations explained here and join in with gusto with their own versions of the tonal qualities of moo language. FP

**The Biggest Number in the Universe**  
 Julie Leibrich, ill. Ross Kinnaird  
 Scholastic 2004  
 Hb ISBN 1869436024

Nesta needs a number to take to school. A very big number. The biggest number the mathematician knows. But Mr Abacus is too busy, and does not want to help. The very first winner of the Joy Cowley award, this book has colourful illustrations that draw the eye and splendiferous words to speak. Fun for both reader and listeners. 3 years +. LH





**The Best-Loved Bear**

Diana Noonan and Elizabeth Fuller  
Scholastic 1994  
Hb ISBN 1869433009  
Pb ISBN 1869433475

Winner of the Aim Children's Picture Book Award in 1995, this story is a delight to read with younger children. When the teacher announces a "best-loved bear" competition Tim takes along his bear Toby. The only problem is, Toby really is a best-loved bear and looks like it, with his fur rubbed off from so many hugs, ice-cream on his coat from sharing with Tim, a piece of his left ear has been sucked off, and kisses have worn a hole in his nose. What chance has Toby got amongst all the beautiful bears Tim's classmates bring along?

In 2002 this was followed by **The Best-Dressed Bear**. Tim is growing up and his favourite clothes no longer fit him. He doesn't want to give them away but needs to find someone else in the house who will fit into them.  
AL



**Duster**

By Margaret Beames  
Scholastic New Zealand 2002  
ISBN 1869435273

Fliss would love to have a dog but she is not allowed one at home. When she finds a grubby lost pup on the softball field, Fliss encourages the school to adopt him. Duster is very compatible with the school children and soon proves his worth.  
Age 7-9. BF

**The Wild West Gang**

Joy Cowley  
Harper Collins, 1999  
ISBN 186950285X

There is Michael, and then there are his cousins the Wests. Michael's mother does not approve of the Wests – they are too noisy, too untidy and too easy going. However, Michael thinks they're cool.

It can be a lot of fun reading what Michael and his cousins get up to. Five exciting books: **The Wild West Gang, More of the Wild Wests, The Wild Wests and Pong Castle, The Wild Wests and the Haunted Fridge** and just out this June, **Wild West Hullabaloo**. Suitable for ages 7-10. LH



**The Tale of Despereaux being the story of a mouse, a princess, some soup, and a spool of thread**

Kate Di Camillo  
Illustrated by Timothy Basil Ering  
Walker 2003  
Pb ISBN 0744598699

Despereaux was not like the other mice that lived in the castle; he was small, sickly and had extraordinarily large ears, but most alarmingly for his family, he fell in love with a princess. The stories of the adventurous mouse, a malicious rat named Roscuro, a deaf serving girl and the princess are linked skilfully in this unusual tale, which reads almost like a Victorian melodrama with the reader being alerted constantly to the forthcoming action. A complete departure from Kate Di Camillo's earlier books, *Because of Winn-Dixie* and *Tiger Rising*, *The Tale of Despereaux* was written at the request of a friend's son who wanted a book about an unlikely hero with large ears. It was awarded the 2004 Newbery medal. Try this with eight year olds onwards. FP



**Dragon Boy**  
Dick King-Smith, ill  
Jocelyn Wild  
Puffin 1994  
Pb ISBN 0140346538

Montagu Bunsen-Burner is on a human-free diet when he comes across an orphaned boy in Sherwood Forest. Being a kind-hearted dragon, he takes young John home. There John excels in culinary experiments and, through his cunning and imagination, gives Montagu and Albertina (Mrs Bunsen-Burner) the dragon child they have so longed for. With his pet wolf, Bart, at his side John grows up and leads an adventurous life. This book is worth looking for in your local library for a fun read – with enough in-jokes to make it adult-friendly. Ages 8 and over. AC.



**Something Weird About Mr. Foster**  
By Ken Catran  
illustrated by Scott Kennedy

Scholastic New Zealand, 2002  
ISBN 18694 35818

Joe Bennett can't believe his eyes when he sees Mr Foster, his teacher, lengthen his arms by 4 metres to pick up a stray ball. He discovers that Mr Foster is not only from outer space, but a whole lot of aliens in one body. When his energy gets low and he starts to fade away, he turns to Joe for urgent help. It is also because of Mr Foster that Joe challenges and eventually befriends the school bully, and somehow finds himself Vice Captain of the mixed gender netball team.  
A short, fast, funny read.  
8+. BF



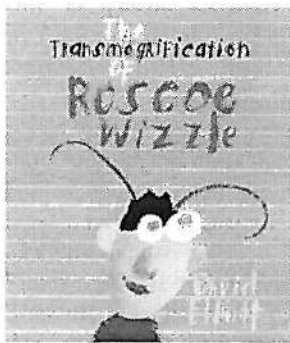
**Sideways Stories From Wayside School**  
By Louis Sachar  
Bloomsbury Books  
2004  
ISBN: 0747571775

This story relates the wacky goings on in the classroom on the 30th floor of Wayside School. The school was supposed to be one story high, with 30 classrooms side by side; instead, it was built with 30 stories high. The first chapter sets the tone, where Mrs. Gorf, the teacher who doesn't like children and turns them into apples, is dispatched of when she herself turns into an apple and is eaten by the caretaker. She is replaced by Miss Jewls. Thereafter, each chapter profiles a different student and the strange things that happen in their class. Quirky and very funny. Recommended for 8+. BF

Sequels:

**Wayside School gets a Little Stranger**

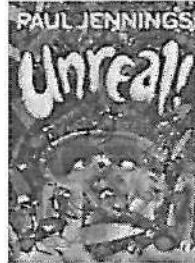
**Wayside School is Falling Down**  
**Sideways Arithmetic from Wayside School**



**The Transmogrification of Roscoe Wizzle**  
By David Elliot  
Walker Books 2001  
ISBN0744573858

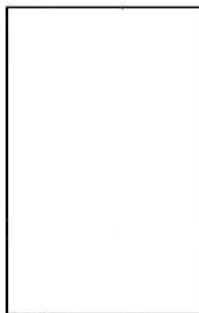
Ten year old Roscoe lives with his eccentric parents, Waldo and Wilma. They have little enthusiasm for cooking and their culinary repertoire comprises mashed potatoes (Dad) because it is quiet sensible food, and tuna surprise casserole (Mum) because she likes the name. One evening, Roscoe's dad sends him to

Gussy's, the newly opened burger bar in town. The next night his mum does the same. After six months of dining at Gussy's, Roscoe discovers that he is turning into a bug! It is up to his best friend Kinchy to track down the cause and solve the mystery. A funny fast paced story, suitable 8-10 year olds. BF



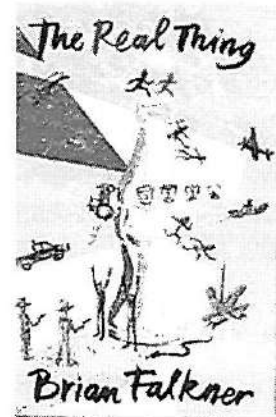
**Unreal!** ISBN 0141301767  
**Unbelievable!** ISBN 0140371001  
**Uncanny!** ISBN 0140371028  
**Unbearable!** ISBN 0140371036  
**Unmentionable!** ISBN 0140371044  
**Undone!** ISBN 014036823X  
**Uncovered!** ISBN 0140369007  
**Unseen!** ISBN 0141305150  
**Tongue-tied!** ISBN 0140385118  
**Quirky Tails!** ISBN 014037101X  
Paul Jennings  
Puffin 2003

Foremost among the 'read alouds' for the 8-12 year olds should be Paul Jennings 'Un-' series (Unreal, Uncanny ...) Recently re-released in vivid new covers, each book contains eight or nine short stories guaranteed to please the child mind, particularly boys. The humour is of the playground, absurd, and sometimes gross, but there are underlying currents of friendship and loyalty. Because of the short nature of the stories, each is easily read in a single timeframe. Excellent to read aloud and for encouraging students to read further. LH



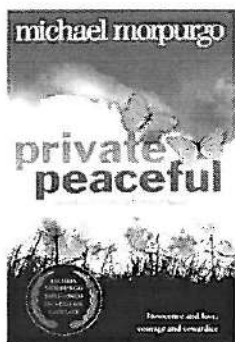
**My Mum the Pirate**  
By Jackie French  
illustrated by Stephen Michael King  
Angus & Robertson, 2003  
ISBN 0207199493

Cecil lives on a pirate ship, the Mermaid, with his Pirate Captain mother and her assorted crew. His only friend is Snap, his pet crocodile. On his birthday Cecil announces that he wants to go to school. This requires the advice of a wizard and the help of a time slip to bring Cecil into the future. All goes well until Cecil's mother insists on attending the school's parent-teacher evening. But the next day, when rising floodwaters threaten the school, students and teachers are glad Cecil's pirate heritage. 8-10. BF



**The Real Thing**  
By Brian Falkner  
Mallinson Rendell, 2004  
ISBN 0 90878382 5

Fizzer (aka Fraser Boyd) has the extraordinary ability to discern different flavours of Coca Cola, as well as the size and composition (glass or plastic) of the bottles any drink comes from. When he discovers that the Coca Cola recipe and production process has been corrupted, and the three people in the entire world who know the original recipe are kidnapped, Fizzer is called to the Coca Cola Head Office in the USA to help. Fizzer, and his friend Tupai, face danger and intrigue as they attempt to find the culprits. The story unfolds at a cracking pace and is full of humorous incident and character.  
10+  
BF



**Private Peaceful**  
Michael Morpurgo  
Collins 2003, Hb ISBN 0007150067  
Collins 2004, Pb ISBN 0007150075

In my opinion this is one of the most powerful books published in recent years. Private Thomas Peaceful spends his lonely vigil reminiscing about his childhood and the relationship he has with his older brother, Charlie. It is only at the very end of the novel do we find out why Tommo is sitting vigil all night – and what he is trying not to think about – his brother's execution. Morpurgo is pretty honest in his portrayal of life in the trenches and contrasts it to the Peacefuls' family life, to brilliant effect. This is an emotionally challenging book, but well worth the read. Ages 10 and over. AC.



**Death or Glory Boys**  
Theresa Breslin  
Egmont Books,  
2002  
ISBN  
1405201096

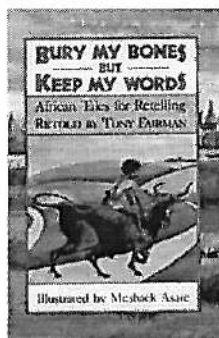
Reading aloud to a teenage class sometimes results in the students feeling 'babied'. This young adult book has short sharp chapters, full of teen energy, not babyish. The main characters, Sarah and Phil, are stunned when a terrorist bomb shatters their world. What should they do? Is pacifism the way or should they meet violence with violence. A thought provoking story. Suitable for 14 years and up. LH



**Weaving earth and sky: Myths and legends of Aotearoa**  
retold by Robert Sullivan  
illustrated by Gavin Bishop  
Random House, New Zealand 2002  
ISBN 1869415167  
2003 NZ Post Children's Book Awards Finalist

Written to be read out aloud, these stories of the Creation, the Maori gods and the activities of the trickster Maui stimulate the imagination and are fun to read. The striking illustrations by Gavin Bishop are large enough to be shown to a group, and help to reinforce the stories being told. A must-read for the children of Aotearoa New Zealand, this introduces the concept of the interdependency of the land, the creatures of the land and sea, and the human race. AL

**Bury my bones but keep my words: African tales for retelling**  
retold by Tony Fairman  
illustrated by Meshack Asare Hartnolls,  
Cornwall 1991  
ISBN 0001849883



Recently discovered at Jabberwocky Children's Bookshop, this collection of African tales is a pleasure to read. The title is a proverb from the Luo people in Kenya, and reflects the desire of storytellers the world over that their stories will continue long after they themselves have gone. These traditional tales, with themes that resonate throughout the world, bring the feeling of families gathered around the fire at night sharing the excitement and wisdom that storytelling can bring - and listeners are encouraged to join in the songs and provide appropriate background noises. AL

**Elsie's War**  
Frank Dabba Smith  
Frances Lincoln Limited,  
2003  
ISBN 0711218617



The reality of war to children is often alien to children's minds. While we should not deliberately cause distress, first hand accounts can bring greater understanding, and hopefully prevent further violence. **Elsie's War** is a photo essay told by Frank Dabba Smith with simplicity and power. Elsie Kuhn-Leitz was the daughter of a well-known German industrialist. When the Nazis came to power in 1933, the Leitz family would secretly help Jews to escape and find good jobs abroad. However, eventually Elsie was taken by the Gestapo. This story does have a happy ending – Elsie is released – but the message is strong and moving. Very suitable for reading aloud, particularly for ages 10 and up. LH



**My Secret Camera**  
Photographs by Mendel Grossman  
Text by Frank Dabba Smith  
Frances Lincoln Limited, 2000  
ISBN 0711214778

A photo essay of Jewish life in World War 2. Mendel Grossman, the photographer, was a captive in the Jewish ghetto of Lodz. He had a secret camera that he would hide under his coat, taking photographs to document the Jewish experience of the war. Developing them by night, hiding the negatives, he sent prints to all his friends. At the end of 1944, Grossman died on a forced march from a prison camp, but his photos were found. **My Secret Camera** is simple and stark, the photographs of hardship but also the celebration of life whatever the circumstances. Thought provoking. Suitable for 10 years and up. LH