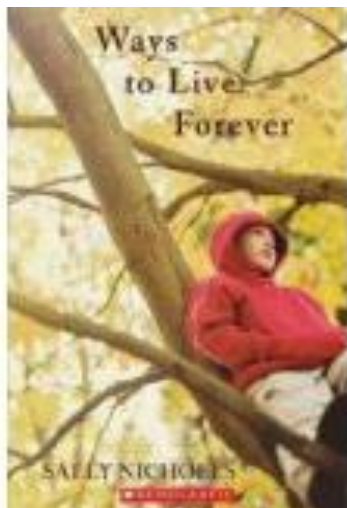
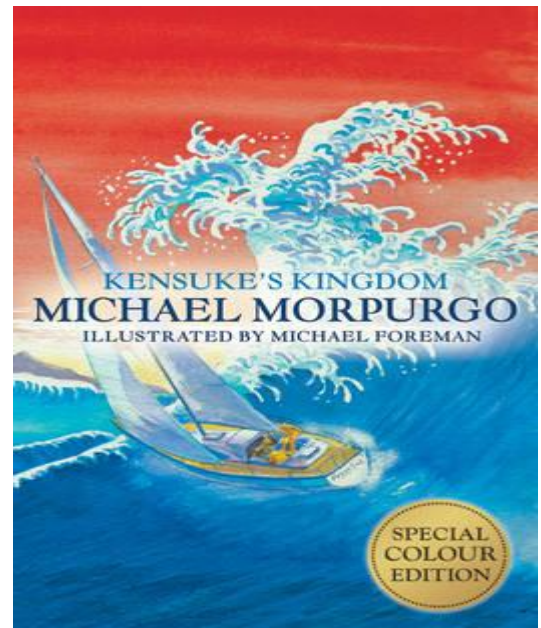


Choosing a high quality key text

Helping children engage with quality texts is crucial not only for developing pupils' reading and comprehension but also their writing skills. During this project Year 6 teachers will need to plan class activities around a key text and provide pupils with a home-school pack linked to the book. A sample pack based on *Kensuke's Kingdom* is available as part of the project resources. Below we have highlighted some texts that you might like to explore with your Y6 pupils.

***Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo**

Written as a flashback, Michael recalls how at the age of 12 he disappeared after falling overboard, he became shipwrecked on a desert island, and later met the elderly Kensuke, alone himself post-Nagasaki. Despite language barriers a strong bond between them slowly forms, although Michael dearly wants to go home, unlike Kensuke. With endearing characters and literary language this very moving tale by an artful storyteller explores many themes, including coping with change and challenge. A sure-fire winner with Year 6 classes.

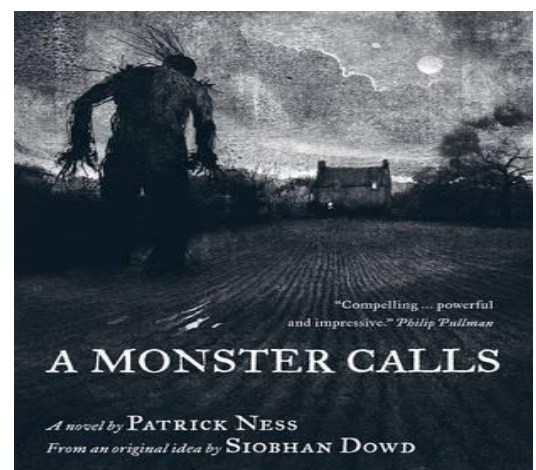


***Ways to Live Forever* by Sally Nicholls**

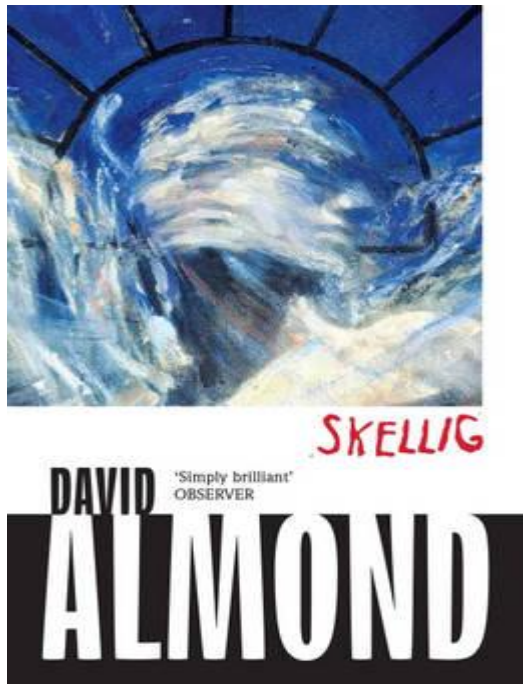
Told from the perspective of Sam who is dying from leukaemia, nonetheless this novel is an optimistic and heart-warming account of the last few months of his life. Sam's scrapbook like, diary style entries include lists, plans, (e.g. to kiss a girl- to learn about UFOs), questions about the world and multiple reflections upon life. They keep readers amused, moved, engaged and inspired throughout. Winner of the Waterstones Award, this novel represents a rich read and a potent resource for making connections and undertaking collective explorations of ourselves, our friendships and family.

***A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness**

A stunning multiple award winning book- in 2012 it won both the Carnegie and the Kate Greenaway medals- based on an original idea by Siobhan Dowd. Connor's mother is undergoing treatment and in his nightmares she is slipping away from him. A monster (both terrifying and tender) from ancient legend comes to call



and tells Connor three stories, demanding that Connor tell him the fourth story– his own truth. The unusual monochrome illustrations add depth and detail and help the reader access the layered meanings in this book which retains the full attention of its readers. A rich resource for exploring both our deep fears of loss and grief and our capacity to deal with such emotions.

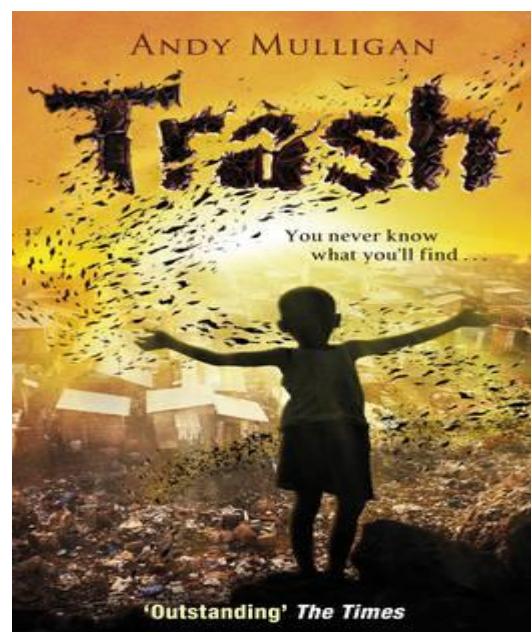


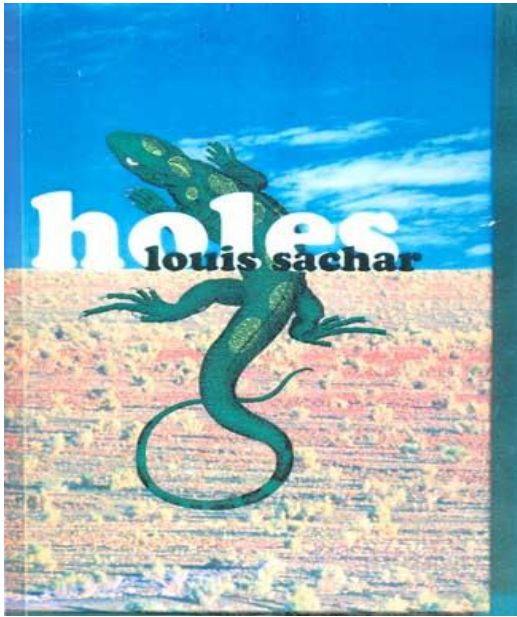
Skellig by David Almond

A magical, highly emotional story centred on a boy who has to cope not only with moving to a new home, but his baby sister's critical illness. One afternoon, in the old, junk filled garage of his new home, he finds something magical- a strange creature - part owl, part angel - a being who needs Michael's help if he is to survive. With his new friend Mina, who is being educated at home, Michael helps Skellig and is later thanked and 'rewarded' for his kindness. A thought provoking, evocative tale about faith and hope, fear, love and loss, healing and recovery, potent tool to support the children's explorations of such issues.

Trash by Andy Mulligan

A very fast-paced and dramatic tale about a group of children who live on a rubbish dump and the harsh realities they face. The tale, which documents their feelings, hopes and dreams, is rich with intrigue and mystery, but is also full of excitement and fear. Raphael and his friends Gardo and Rat find a leather pouch full of money and risk their lives for a man they've never met. They end up being wanted for murder and chased across the city and beyond by police as they seek to carry out the dying wishes of a good man. A great resource for a unit on adventure and mystery, but also for exploring the children's plans for possible futures .



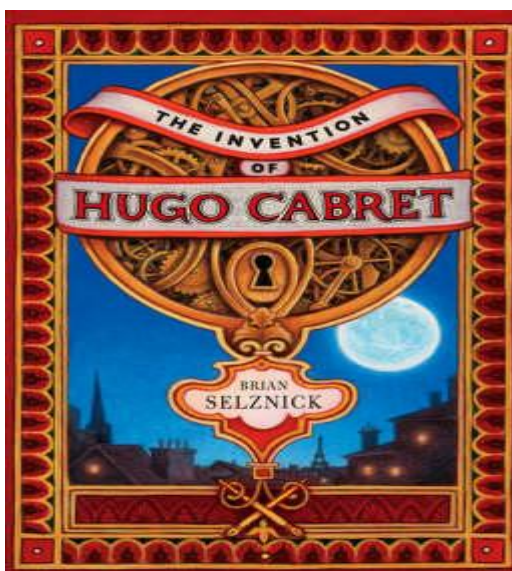
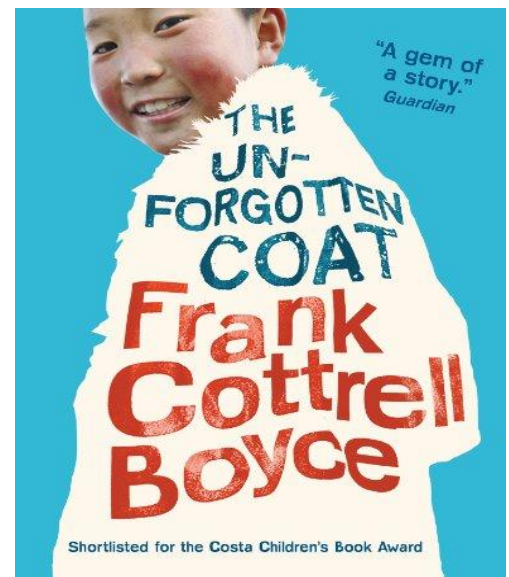


***Holes* by Louis Sachar**

An adventure tale, this novel is jam-packed with flashbacks, twists and turns making it a fast action-packed read. Stanley Yelnats is unjustly accused of stealing a pair of trainers and is sent to a detention centre where like all the other juveniles present he is made to dig holes in the desert, in the dried up lake. But why? What for? Who for? Rich with suspense and mystery, this is a page-turning narrative which explores friendship, issues of justice, morality and includes some magic. It engages all readers and has been made into a successful film. It was also winner of the 2001 Sheffield Children's Book Award.

***The Unforgotten Coat* by Frank Cottrell Boyce**

This stunning gem of a book is presented as if it is in an exercise book by Julie who looks back on an extraordinary incident that happened when she was in Year Six. She describes the arrival at the school of Chingis and Nergui, two refugee brothers from Mongolia and how, as their 'Good Guide' at school she becomes drawn into their stories and the imaginary and the real dangers that they face. The underlying issues of loss, fear, friendship, compassion, tolerance and the individuality of all children are well handled. It offers a rich resource for examining our varied sense of home, family and country. It was the winner of the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize 2012.



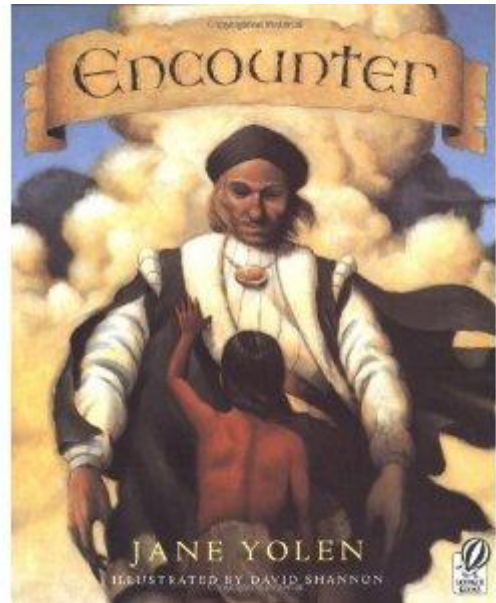
***The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick**

An unusual and beautiful book; a novel in words and pictures, one to hold, read, examine closely, discuss and enjoy. Hugo is a clock-keeper and a thief who lives in the walls of a Paris train station. He believes a wind-up figure will make his dreams come true, but things do not go according to plan and his undercover life and precious secret are placed in desperate danger ... This cinematic 'tour de force' book has original drawings and is beautifully presented as a part print, part graphic

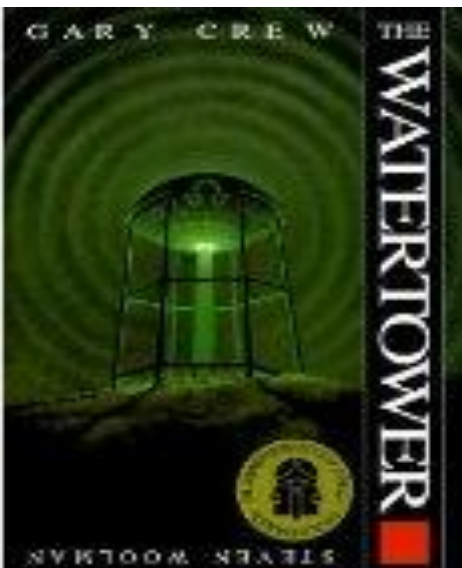
mystery novel. It really draws the reader in and offers rich material for class explorations of the history of cinematography.

***Encounter* by Jane Yolen**

This challenging picture book offers a brilliant alternative perspective on Christopher Columbus and is a retelling of his arrival on San Salvador, seen through the eyes of a young Taino boy. The language is rich and literary and the visuals equally compelling. It draws readers in and offers scope for examining and inhabiting the roles of both the natives and the explorers, as well as comparing this account with more popular tales about Columbus. The accompanying notes are also a rich resource.



***The Watertower* by Gary Crew**



A mysterious and tense picture-book. The tale explores how two boys Bubba and Jake play in an old watertower, swimming in it to escape the heat of the Australian summer. One boy Bubba, whilst alone in the watertower sees something, although the reader knows not what he sees. What is clear is that the tower exerts some kind of strange influence over the community and eventually over Bubba too, though what the consequences of this are remain unknown... Always a winner, its ambiguity intrigues and the stunning visuals offer rich possibilities which leave much to the readers' imagination.

With thanks to Teresa Cremin for these recommendations