

Time spent indoors doesn't need to be boring! Between Netflix shows and social media feeds, it's the perfect time to read that book you always said you'd get round to. To make things even easier, many books are available online, for free. Additionally, with an Amazon account or a Kindle, you can access hundreds of free eBooks.

For a different experience <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen> has many free audiobooks which have been made available for as long as schools are closed.

Stories stir the imagination; they allow you to escape your surroundings into an alternate world. There are books for all ages, tastes, and in all genres. Just pick one and let yourself be transported...

Have a look at some of our top recommendations:

#### AVAILABLE AS AUDIOBOOKS

**Littlest Listeners:** Winnie the Pooh, A. A. Milne • Peter Rabbit, Beatrix Potter • Just So Stories, Rudyard Kipling.

**Elementary:** The Secret Garden, Frances Hodgson Burnett • Robin Hood, Howard Pyle • Sovereign, Jeff Hirsch.

**Tween:** The Spies that Bind, Ally Carter • Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe • Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, J.K. Rowling.

**Teen:** Ties that Bind, Lensey Namioka • RAD American Women, Kat Schatz • Squint, Chad Morris • Do tigers drink blood?, Arefa Teshin.

**Classics:** Frankenstein, Mary Shelley • Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen • Hamlet (Dramatised), William Shakespeare.

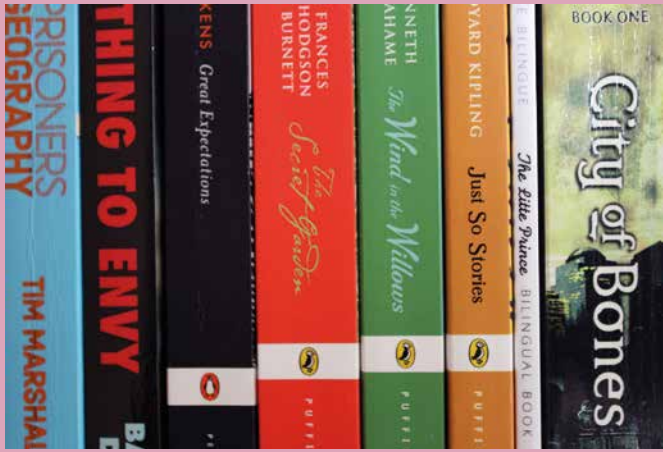
Foreign language audiobooks are invaluable tools to improve listening skills or expand vocabulary.

• Try searching for a translation of a book you have read in English.

• Try out some fairy tales in other languages.

## Good books

*"I do believe something very magical can happen when you read a good book." – JK Rowling*



• Listen to City of Bones, Cassandra Clare, in French (La Cité des ténèbres).

• Have a look at Harry Potter, J.K. Rowling, in German or Spanish.

#### BOOKS AND EBOOKS

Most of these suggestions can be found free online, and all of them have been recommended by us!

**Nonfiction:** Nothing to Envy, Barbara Demick • Prisoners of Geography, Tim Marshall • Chicken Soup for the Soul, Amy Newmark, Mark Victor Hansen, Jack Canfield • CGP Higher Education books

**Romance:** The Real Cinderella, Yesenia Vargas

**Fantasy:** Ranger's Apprentice series, John Flanagan • Septimus Heap, Angie Sage

**Adventure:** The Lost Prince, Frances Hodgson Burnett • The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain • The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain • Kidnapped, Robert Louis Stevenson.

**Classics:** A Little Princess, Frances Hodgson Burnett • The Wind in the Willows, Kenneth Grahame • Great Expectations, Charles Dickens • The Little Prince, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

**Younger Readers:** Read with Biff, Chip and Kipper: Let's Recycle!, Roderick Hunt • The Railway Children, E. Nesbit.

#### THE SECRET GARDEN

Matching our 'eco' theme, The Secret Garden (Frances Hodgson Burnett) is an enchanting tale exploring the growth of a spoiled – but unloved – girl, who flowers into an independent, adventurous young woman. At first, Mary is ungrateful, torn from an Indian life of servants and privilege, and thrust into the unfamiliar English countryside under the care of her mysterious uncle. New friendships and adventures blossom, after Mary meets her cousin, Colin, a young invalid. Together, along with her friend Dickon, they delve deeper into the secrets of her new home, and its hidden garden...

Any of Burnett's novels are captivating classics – coming from a deprived childhood herself, she found solace (as well as much-needed income) from her writing. Her candid emotions are only made more vivid by her experiences.

Other books recommended above, also by her, include A Little Princess – an almost autobiographical riches to rags to riches fairytale; and The Lost Prince – a thrilling story of secret missions to save the throne of Samavia.

ISABELLE

## Green Quiz!

A few fun questions to keep your brain going in isolation:

1. What are three ways you can reduce your own impact on the environment?
2. What colour are Hydrangea plants when the soil is acidic? And alkaline?
3. When is the best time to water your plants?
4. Why shouldn't you suddenly add lots of water to your plant pot if you've forgotten to water it?
5. What bush is nicknamed the butterfly bush? Why is it called that?
6. What's the difference between RSPO palm oil and other palm oils?
7. What are air miles?

## Green Challenge!

A few activities for you to try out...

1. Want to try out Meat Free Monday? Look up a few vegan recipes!
2. How many of the fruits and vegetables in your kitchen have plastic packaging? Are there any you think might not need it?
3. Pick five foods from your kitchen. Where are they sourced from? How far is it from the UK?
4. What fruits are 'in season' during your birthday month?
5. What are some ways you could exercise at home?
6. What's your favourite song to dance to? Try choreographing a dance!
7. Are there any books you've always wanted to read? Set yourself the most challenging one!
8. Can you pick up a new skill? Try your hand at arts and crafts, make origami, or sign up to an online course!
9. How many flowers can you name? What colours are they?
10. What kinds of plants can you grow on a window-sill? Try growing small pots of herbs or cress by a window? (Don't forget to keep them regularly watered!)

ISABELLE

Answers: (1) Any 5 from: eat plant-based foods, eat locally sourced foods, eat seasonal produce, reduce your amount of plastic packaging, try to use sustainable palm oil, produce single-use plastic products, turn off lights if you're not using them (and anything else that counts!). (2) When they are acidic they are blue; when alkaline they are pinky-purple. (3) Early morning or evening – not during the day. (4) (i) It might flood if you do. (5) Buddleia – because butterflies and bees love it. (6) RSPO is guaranteed to be sustainable and responsibly farmed palm oil. (7) Air miles refer to the distance our food or other goods travel (often by plane) before getting to us.

## Gardening

One of the most fun ways in which you can help the environment is by gardening. Gardening is beneficial for the planet, because trees and plants absorb carbon dioxide, and give off oxygen for you to breathe. Flowers and fruits also provide food and shelter for bees and butterflies, which is very important. Although at the moment, gardening centres and nurseries are closed, you can still buy plants online, or maybe even just care a little bit for the plants already in your garden.

One of the most important things to do in your garden is weeding. Weeds are little plants that you don't want growing in your garden, because you want there to be enough space and sunshine for your plants to grow. Weeds can still be pretty though, for example daisies, so you don't always have to pull them up.

Another important thing to do is water your garden. It's always best to water your garden in the early morning or in the evening, as doing it in the heat of the day brings the roots up to the surface and risks them getting scorched, which makes the plant unhealthy. In terms of a whole garden, a hose is usually best, but with pots, use a watering can. If you've forgotten to water a pot for a few days, lift it up and see how heavy it feels. If it's very light, you need to water it, but take your time and water it slowly bit by bit, as you don't want to flood the pot.

There are lots of amazing plants you can grow in your garden, an example of which is a buddleia. Butterflies and bees love buddleia, and the plant is even often nicknamed the butterfly bush! They produce tall stalks with cones of gorgeous lilac flowers, but they can occasionally come in yellow or red flowering varieties. (See the picture on the right of a butterfly I snapped enjoying some buddleia). You should plant these in the spring, so right around now, and ensure to give them lots of water, as they are very thirsty plants, and they also like lots of sunlight. Why not plant some in a pot near a window and keep an eye out for all the different kinds of butterfly you can spot!

Another really lovely plant you can grow is a hydrangea. This one is especially good for any budding scientists who want to carry out an experiment. Hydrangea plants come in a range of colours, however what decides the colour of the blooms is down to the soil.



When the soil is acidic, the flowers are blue, as seen in the photo. But when the soil is alkaline, the flowers turn pinky-purple. If you have a garden you could plant a small hydrangea. Plant a hydrangea in the back garden, and you can work out what kind of soil you have. Hydrangeas are bushes, so they get quite big, and need a lot of water, as well as a lot of space to grow in.

Gardens are wonderful. You can eat meals outside, play games, watch wildlife and have all sorts of fun. Building an insect house is lots of fun, and there are kits you can buy that allow you to make little homes for all the creepy crawlies your heart desires. Or you can take photos of your garden. The photos in this article were taken by me, although admittedly not both in my garden. Whatever you choose to do in your garden, take care of it and help save the planet, just by looking after your plants and the creatures that make them their homes.

Even if you don't have a garden, you can easily create one in your home. Window troughs can bring a little greenery to your home, with very little work at all. You can plant flowers such as mini daffodils, which are very pretty, or trailing petunias, which trail from a trough like a waterfall from a mountain. Another way to bring a garden inside is with houseplants, which brighten up any room, and are scientifically proven to help you relax.

JOANNA

## Quarantine crafts: Homemade bird feeder

It's really important to maintain biodiversity in our gardens. Especially living in a city it can be quite hard for many wild animals to find food. This easy bird feeder will attract birds to your garden, which can be very exciting to watch!

You will need: cardboard, string/wool, scissors, hole-punch, peanut butter\*, a mixture of edible seeds (I used chia, pumpkin, flax and sunflower).

- 1) Take your cardboard and draw some shapes (any shapes you want). If you want your feeder to be longer draw more shapes.
- 2) Cut out your shapes and hole punch them on the top and bottom.
- 3) Cut your string to the desired length of your bird feeder and thread it through each hole and tie a loop to attach your shapes together.
- 4) Take your peanut butter (or alternative) and spread a thin layer onto each cardboard shape.

- 5) Take your seeds and sprinkle them onto the peanut butter and make sure it's all covered. Push the seeds into the peanut butter gently to make sure that they stick.
- 6) Hang outside and watch the birds flock to your garden!

\*Note: If you have a nut allergy, then a great alternative to peanut butter is cooked rice. Just mix the cooked rice with a few spoons of water to make into a sticky paste.

MADHU



## Maths

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