



The Queen with world leaders.

## Queen hosts special meeting

The Queen and world leaders have marked 70 years of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in London. NATO is an organisation of 29 countries – including France, the UK and the US. Its purpose is to protect the freedom and security of its members through political and military means. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson led a meeting of the leaders on 4 December, reminding them of the importance of the organisation. The Queen hosted an event for the leaders at Buckingham Palace.



The famous house.

## Harry Potter house for sale

Anthony and Jane Ranzetta from Lavenham, in Suffolk, are trying to sell their house. It's no ordinary home – it featured in the film *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* as the place where Harry's parents lived. The Ranzettas are fed up with the number of visitors turning up at their door – they say a person once knocked and asked, "Is Harry home?" Despite the troublesome tourists, Jane Ranzetta says it is an honour to live in such an unusual place.



## Secret Santa spreads joy

A secret Santa has been hiding presents around a village in Leicestershire. The unidentified gift giver in Kegworth has attached hand-written notes to the small parcels, which are mostly sweet treats, including a wrapped Christmas pudding. Around 3,500 people live in the village, but nobody knows who the secret Santa is. Other residents have now been inspired to leave their own surprise gifts.



**LISTEN UP**  
Audiobooks, which are recordings of a book being read aloud, are becoming very popular. In 2020, they are expected to earn £115 million in the UK.

# Study finds that thousands of children don't own a book

A study by the National Literacy Trust has revealed that more than 380,000 children in the UK do not own a single book. The National Literacy Trust is a charity that works to improve reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

The charity conducted a survey of more than 56,000 children between the ages of nine and 18. Just over 6% of those who took part said that they didn't have any books at home. As a result, the charity estimates that this is the case for 383,774 children across the country.

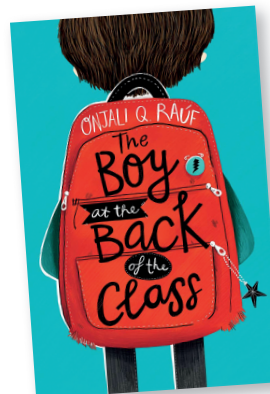
The survey found that children who do own a book are six times more likely to read above the expected level for their age, nearly three times more likely to enjoy reading and more than twice as likely to say that reading is cool. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds were found to be less likely to own a book. However, in the past six years, the gap in book ownership

between disadvantaged children and more advantaged children has halved.

Jonathan Douglas, who is in charge of the National Literacy Trust, said, "Books have the power to transform children's reading skills, enjoyment and mental wellbeing. Yet far too many children are missing out on the chance to reach their full potential simply because they don't have a book of their own at home."

For Christmas, the National Literacy Trust is asking people to donate money to the charity, so they can send books to children. In the past six years, the charity has given away more than 340,000 books.

The charity is also encouraging more people to give books as present this Christmas, through its Ultimate Christmas book list. This is an Advent calendar of book recommendations. The books were selected by famous authors such as Cressida Cowell, who recommends *The Boy at the Back of the Class* by Onjali Q. Raúf. One book will be revealed each day on social media.



## THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

**"Merseyside Police horse starts every day with a mug of tea in bed"** *standard.co.uk*



# Study finds that thousands of children don't own a book

Read the article and then try the following activities...



## Hold a debate

Is it essential for children to own books? No one is doubting that reading books is extremely important and becoming a confident reader is a valuable life skill. But is it really necessary to own them? After all, you can borrow books from libraries or read them on electronic devices, both of which save trees by reducing the amount of paper we use. Anyway, many books spend most of their lives just sitting on a shelf taking up space and not everyone has a big house or flat. Or do you think that it is important to have books in your house because sometimes you can't get to a library? What's more, some people don't have electronic devices. Also, many people enjoy reading at bedtime, yet we are often told that it is not healthy to be looking at screens just before we go to sleep. What do you think?

## Writing challenge!

Choose one of the following writing warm-ups.

**1** Write a review of a good book you have read recently. Remember to say what it is and who wrote it and give a brief summary of the plot before explaining what you thought of it. Use examples from the book to support your opinions.

**2** Write a letter to your favourite author, telling them how much you enjoy their books. Try to add two or three interesting questions to ask the author about either themselves or the characters in their books.

## Investigate

What are the UK's all-time top ten favourite children's books? Find some research that has looked into this question and write down the titles and authors of those books. Indicate which ones you have actually read or had read to you. (Do not include those for which you have only seen the film or TV programme.)