



# The Airship Dreams Big Book List

Before jet planes, enormous floating airships flew people around the world. Nearly 100 years ago, an airport for airships was being built in Bedford.

Flying through the clouds is pretty amazing and inspiring. Perhaps that's why there are so many fantastic books out there about huge balloons and escaping gravity with flying machines.

We asked librarian Sue Shead and children's literature expert Rachael Rogan to recommend the best books about flight.

There are epic adventures with flying jellyfish, pirates in the sky and astronaut squirrels... which book will you read first?

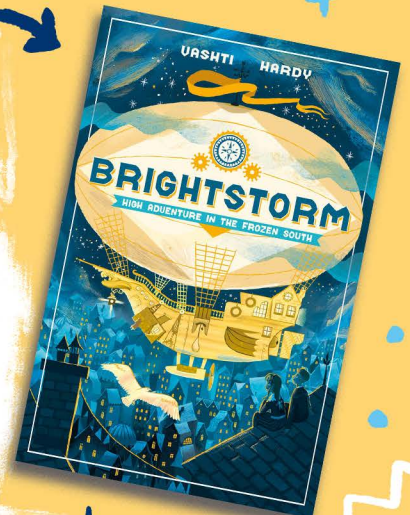


The next five pages contain fiction and non-fiction books available to borrow from Bedford Borough Libraries.

Hear literature expert Rachael talk about the books here: [bit.ly/AirshipLiterature](https://bit.ly/AirshipLiterature)

Check out our video of author Vashti Hardy reading from her book: [bit.ly/Brightstorm](https://bit.ly/Brightstorm)

*Twins Arthur and Maudie Brightstorm's famous explorer father has died in a failed attempt to reach the southernmost point in the world. Not only that, but he has been accused of stealing fuel before he died! The twins don't believe the news, and they answer an ad to join a new attempt to reach South Polaris. It's their only hope of learning the truth... and salvaging their family's reputation.*

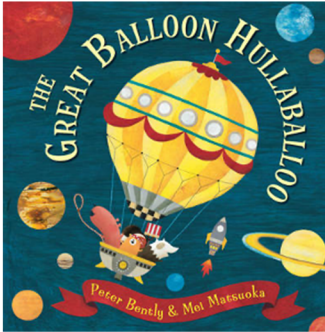




# Recommended Reading List: Ages 3+

Here's our big list of recommended books linked to the theme of flight and airships. All the books can be borrowed from Bedford Libraries!

## Age Range 3+



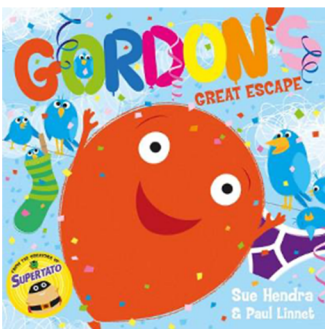
### The Great Hullabaloo by Peter Bently and Mel Matsuoka

Simon the squirrel gets distracted on a shopping errand for his Mum when he gets the chance to go into space in a hot air balloon.



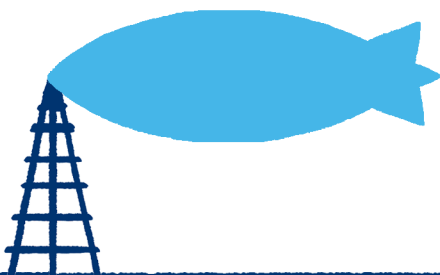
### Wishing for a Dragon by Becky Cameron

Olive, Barney and Ella go on a magical hot air balloon ride in search of a dragon!



### Gordon's Great Escape by Sue Hendra and Paul Linnet

What would happen if a balloon were to come to life, escape and seek adventure? Find out with this bold, bright and funny book!





# Recommended Reading List: Ages 5+

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## Age Range 5+



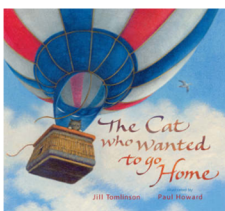
### **Ocean Meets Sky by The Fan Brothers**

Finn lives by the sea and the sea lives by him. Every time he looks out his window it's a constant reminder of the stories his grandfather told him about the place where the ocean meets the sky. Where whales and jellyfish soar and birds and castles float. Finn's grandfather is gone now but Finn knows the perfect way to honour him. He'll build his own ship and sail out to find this magical place himself!



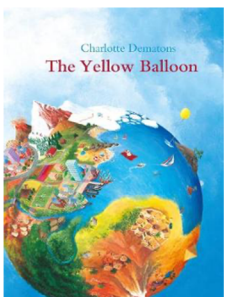
### **The Blue Balloon by Mick Inkpen**

A boy, a dog and a balloon... with mysterious and magical properties. This book is a celebrated classic, which needs to be treasured, loved, read time and time again!



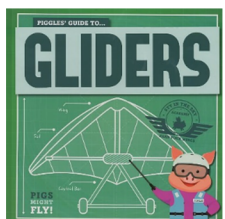
### **The Cat Who Wanted to go Home by Jill Tomlinson and Paul Howard**

High in a hot air balloon, flying away all alone. How is Suzy the cat ever going to find her way home?



### **The Yellow Balloon by Charlotte Dematons**

Invites the reader to spot different details as a yellow balloon floats over scenes around the world depicting scenes both real and fantasy, and from different time periods.



### **Piggles' Guide to... Gliders by Kirsty Holmes**

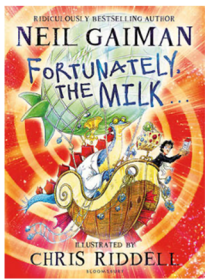
Piggles, your expert instructor, is here to teach you how gliders work.



# Recommended Reading List: Ages 7+

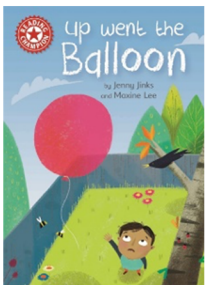
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## Age Range 7+



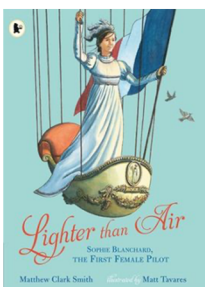
### Fortunately, The Milk by Neil Gaiman and Chris Riddell

A brilliantly bonkers illustrated adventure about what happens (or what Dad says happens) when Mum is away at a conference and Dad is left in charge. Huge silver alien space-ships, pirate ships, airships, (or floaty-ball-person-carriers), dinosaurs, wumpires, and milk. A fun adventure for younger readers, illustrated throughout.



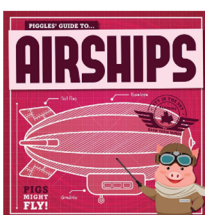
### Up Went the Balloon by Jenny Jinks and Maxine Lee

Dev has a balloon but a gust of wind comes – and up it goes! Great for beginning to read independently.



### Lighter Than Air by Matthew Clark Smith and Matt Tavares

Take to the skies with the beautifully told tale of Sophie Blanchard, an extraordinary woman who is largely forgotten despite her claim to being the very first female pilot in history.



### Piggles' Guides to... Airships by Kirsty Holmes

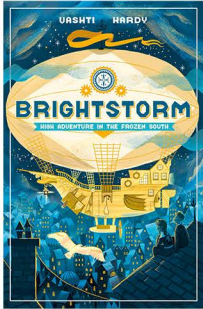
Piggles, an expert instructor for all things aviation, covers everything you need to know about flying machines. From the basics to tips and tricks, this fun and factual book teaching children about flying machines and aircraft. Handy diagrams and illustrations make for an insightful book about airships and their uses.



# Recommended Reading List: Ages 9+

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## Age Range 9+



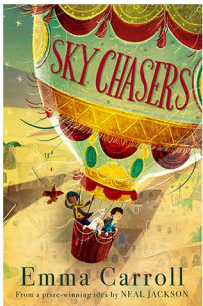
### Brightstorm by Vashti Hardy

Brightstorm is a story set in a fantasy world where adventurers and explorers travel the world in airships. This really captures the spirit of excitement and romantic travel that airships represent.



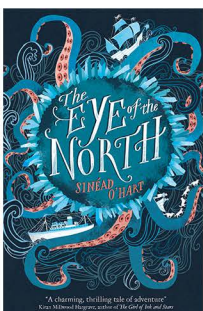
### Cogheart by Peter Bunzl

From its opening scene aboard an airship harpooned in mid-air, Cogheart is filled with fabulous visual images and a tangible sense of adventure.



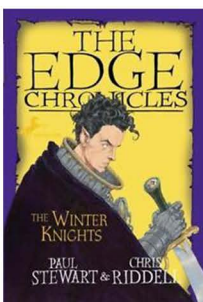
### Sky Chasers by Emma Carroll

A young pickpocket on the streets of Paris finds her life changed after a chance encounter with the Montgolfier family and their quest to be the first people to fly in a hot air balloon.



### The Eye of the North by Sinead O'Hart

Travelling to the icy regions of the North and the South, airships serve as a fantastical mode of transport, whisking the reader into a world unlike our own.



### The Edge Chronicles by Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell

The stories of The Edge Chronicles take place in the fictional world of The Edge, a vast cliff with no apparent bottom. The books are grouped into sagas, covering a 600-year period, divided into three "Ages of Flight". The power of flight is a major theme of the books, with each age defined by the current technology used for air travel.



# Recommended Reading List: Ages 9+

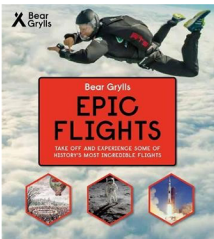
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### Machines in the Sky by Kay Banham

Exploring the engineering behind a variety of flying machines including hot air balloons, airships, jet engines and drones.



### Epic Flights by Bear Grylls, Andy Briggs and Von Hardesty

Tells the story of nine of the most amazing flights in history including crossing the Atlantic solo and circling the globe in a hot air balloon.



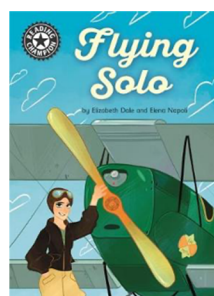
### The Science of Flight: The Amazing Truth About Planes and Helicopters by Ian Graham

A fascinating book full of interesting facts to explain how and why aeroplanes work.



### The Story of Flight by Jakob Whitfield

A beautifully illustrated history of the iconic flying machines that have helped us soar through the skies, from the earliest balloons and airships to the latest stealth jet. Traces the history of flight from the Wright Flyer to cutting-edge drones, looking at how the social upheavals of the past 240 years influenced the flight path: two world wars, equality for women and the fight against climate change. Finally, explore the incredible inventions that await us in the future.



### Flying Solo by Elizabeth Dale and Elena Napoli

Recounts Amy Johnson's solo flight from England to Australia in 1930.