

Off the shelf

By Erin Wamala

Keeping up to date with recent publications and authors can be a daunting task for many librarians. Basic catalogue information can only tell you so much. How do you know that the books will interest you and your students?

Earlier this year Penguin Books produced our first online magazine for teachers and librarians, *Off the Shelf*. Our aim in producing this magazine was to give you an insight into the authors and illustrators behind some of our recent publications. Being online, we were not hampered by length or print costs – we were able to put together a publication full of interviews, videos and links and hopefully create something that people would want to read over their morning coffee. To our great surprise, however, it soon became apparent that the magazine was a lot more. Many teachers and librarians contacted us to let us know that they had been using it with their students – from playing the videos to discussing the interview style in the Morris Gleitzman piece.

This was something that we had not anticipated and it naturally led us to a different way of thinking when we were compiling our second edition.



<http://issuu.com/penguinaustralia/docs/off-the-shelf-aug-2011>

We not only thought about the authors and illustrators that students would find interesting, but also the issues facing teachers and librarians today. Inside this edition you will find interviews with popular authors

Melina Marchetta and Isobelle Carmody, alongside a piece on visual literacy and another on using eBooks in the classroom. Dystopian fiction is popular with young adult readers so we decided to ask one of our YA bloggers to give us her take on the genre. The result, and we hope you will agree, is a well-rounded publication with a little bit of something for everyone. More than just a showcase of new books, the articles give you an insight into the author's personalities and the thinking behind their latest venture. We will be producing the magazine twice a year, in May and August, and it is free and available for anyone to access at any time.

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Off the Shelf is, however, just one way you can keep up-to-date with recent publications. In March we also launched our new blog **Penguin Teachers' Corner**. With regular posts almost every day, we try to bring you a mix of author posts, videos, teachers' notes and reviews by teachers. Over time, the blog will house a wealth of information for you to use with both your staff and your students. We would also love to hear from you. Do you have an interesting project surrounding books going on in your school? We would love to share it on the blog.

We are very excited about our new online ventures and we hope that you continue to find them interesting and useful.

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