

Top 10 space books

1. [George's Secret Key to the Universe by Lucy and Stephen Hawking](#)

A book that will turn many of its readers into aspiring physicists, GSKTTU (as it is not known by anyone) combines a fast-paced scientific adventure with some (slower paced) adventurous science. An escaping pig leads young George into the world of his unusual neighbours – Penny, her father Eric the absent-minded professor, and a supercomputer named Cosmos. Cosmos has generated a portal into space, allowing for a rambunctious exploration of the universe and cool black hole action. The book is enhanced by Garry Parsons's illustrations and reams of stunning space images. Astronomical!

2. [Doctor Who and the Daleks by David Whitaker](#)

A key inspiration to the writers of the modern TV take on the Time Lord, the first ever Doctor Who book from 1964 has just been reprinted with a new introduction by acclaimed fantasy writer Neil Gaiman. Based on the series' second adventure (and the first to feature the Daleks), it throws the mysterious Doctor and his unwilling companions into an epic struggle for survival on the planet Skaro.

3. [A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle](#)

A year before Doctor Who first aired on our screens this lively and satisfying fantasy gave us Mrs Who, the original mysterious alien to travel the universe with unlikely companions. She's one of three immortal entities (together with Mrs Which and Mrs Whatsit) embroiled in a long struggle against the evil Black Thing, a cosmic cloud of darkness. Three human children are recruited to join the battle, traversing the universe via wrinkles in space-time. Evoking awe and wonder throughout, A Wrinkle in Time is a compelling modern classic.

4. [The Comic Strip History of Space by Sally Kindberg and Tracey Turner](#)

You'd never guess from the title, but this book presents the complete history of space in comic strip form, covering a vast array of subjects and concepts with clarity and laugh out loud humour. Education and entertainment rarely come so perfectly pitched.

5. Kings of Space by Capt WE Johns

The creator of Biggles quotes Jules Verne at the start of this colourful space adventure - "what one man is able to imagine, other men will be able to do". Sadly, no one has yet been able to discover dinosaurs under the clouds of Venus, or tackle killer mosquito infections in the canals of Mars... but I hope to do so one day! Full of scientific lunacy and wild action, this book spawned a slew of sequels chronicling the exploits of group Capt Timothy "Tiger" Clinton RAF (retired), his son Rex, Prof Lucias Brane and his butler Judkins in the good ship Spacemaster (which handily runs on the cosmic rays all around us – which certainly saves on fuel bills). Rip-roaring, space-conqueringly good fun.

6. Space, Black Holes and Stuff by Glenn Murphy

Accessibly written in a conversational style – literally, as the entire book is a dialogue between author and an irreverent imaginary interrogator - this is a popular science book that includes puzzles quizzes and experiments too. A fantastic spur to the imagination, with no boring bits.

7. Larklight by Philip Reeve

An imaginative tour de force, this rousing tale of dauntless pluck in the farthest reaches of space presents an alternative reality where Sir Isaac Newton's great discoveries have made the conquest of space possible. By the Victorian era, Art and Myrtle Mumby live in Larklight, a ramshackle old house that orbits in the deeps beyond the Moon, with British Standard Gravity to keep their feet on the ground. One morning a mysterious visitor calls... triggering a flight through space and an adventure that gleefully marries pulp sci-fi concepts to a 19th-century writing style.

8. The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

The superbly silly pan-galactic adventures of Arthur Dent began over 30 years ago but are still just as fresh and funny today. To quote Russell T Davies from the foreword of the latest edition, "I don't think Douglas Adams is ever included in the list of great children's writers... But while the Great Man wrote with magnificent intellect and dazzling philosophy... there's surely the heart of a Great Big Kid inside these pages."

9. Out of the Silent Planet by CS Lewis

Best-known for his Narnia books, Lewis also turned his hand to science fiction. In this, the first of his so-called Cosmic Trilogy, a man called Ransom is taken to the planet Malacandra (that's Mars to you and me) where he meets intelligent space otters, tall, feathered humanoids, workaholic frog-tapirs and angelic spirits of the ether. But the real menace on Mars is human greed... [Space](#) adventure underpinned with thoughtful philosophy.

10. Aliens Love Underpants by Claire Freedman and Ben Cort

A bedtime story to finish on! "Aliens love underpants of every shape and size, but there are no underpants in space so here's a big surprise..." Yes, forget alien invasions - all those pesky extraterrestrials really want to do is to steal our pants! Ben Cort's witty and vibrant illustrations are the perfect match for Claire Freedman's rollicking text.