



The School of Monsters has begun, let's read along and have some **fun!**

By Sally Rippin

Get your child reading ready

PARENT PACK

Art by Chris Kennett



PLUS stacks of activities for kids!

Turn around and
quickly **run** ...

WELCOME TO THE *SCHOOL OF MONSTERS*: the silliest, smelliest, funniest school around.

From playful witches to cheeky vampires, timid ghosts to farting sea creatures, there's a monster for every young person you know!

School of Monsters is a series for our very youngest readers, ready to cross that sometimes daunting bridge from picture books to early readers.

Like all young people, these little monsters discover that being in school and making new friends can teach them as much about their own strengths and qualities as the skills they will learn in the classroom.

Anyone who has a little monster at home at the start of their reading journey is welcome to join us in the *School of Monsters*. But be warned: it can get a little bit noisy and a **LOT** smelly.

Love,
Sally Rippin



School is
starting. Don't
be **late!**

The **SCHOOL** of **MONSTERS** has **begun!**



From one parent to another...

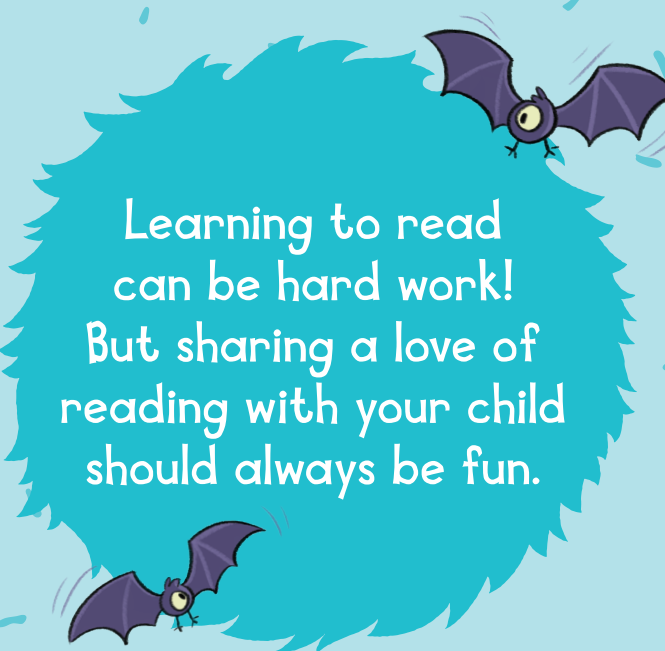


After writing books for children for over twenty-five years, nothing has taught me as much about reading as having a child who couldn't.

When my youngest son was unable to learn to read as easily as his older brothers, I began to change my approach to writing and set out to create books for our most struggling readers. Not only children who have been identified as dyslexic, like my youngest, but any child who may have slipped through the gaps and finds themselves unable to acquire literacy skills they will need for life.

When children struggle to learn to read, it can affect more than their schoolwork, damaging their self-esteem and their ability to integrate wholly in the classroom. While nothing will replace an educator's role in teaching a child to read, my hope is that everything I write will be engaging and accessible enough to entice even the most reluctant readers to want to learn.

As parents, we can support our child's reading journey at home by reading to them as much and for as long as they will allow us, and by supplying them with as wide a range of reading material as possible.



Learning to read
can be hard work!
But sharing a love of
reading with your child
should always be fun.



In writing the *School of Monsters*, I set myself the challenge of using the simplest words and sentences possible, while aiming to create characters and a world kids would love.

I thought about the films my kids had enjoyed when they were young – *Monsters Inc.*, *Hotel Transylvania*, *The Addams Family* – and hoped to distill this mix of spookiness and comedy into a series of early readers that combined the rhyming silliness of Dr. Seuss, the busy world of Richard Scarry and the collectability of the Mr. Men books.

Then, while constructing these stories, I wrote down lists of the easiest words I could find for young readers to sound out for themselves and placed them at the end of every sentence in bold, to match with the rhyming word on the opposite page.

Children will always need to receive dedicated reading instruction at school with the appropriate educational resources, but my hope is that this will be a fun series your child can use to practice reading at home.

READ ALOUD, READ ALONG, READ ALONE

Start by simply **reading aloud** to your child. This is all that is needed at first to assure them that books are fun, and reading is how we access great stories. Next, you might like to encourage your child to **read along**. Can they sound out any of the words in bold for themselves? Are any familiar from school? Can they recognize any of them again in the back of the book, out of context? You will notice the language, rhythm and sentence structure becomes slightly more challenging as the series progresses.

Lastly, the moment that is the most thrilling of all for any parent of a struggling or emerging reader, your child might be ready to **read alone**. This is certainly something to celebrate. Some kids will get to this stage easily and quickly. Others will take a bit longer. There is no rush. But if you do find your child is still struggling after at least three years of reading instruction in school, this could be a good time to seek out extra support.

Good luck!
From one mother
of a struggling
reader to you.



Get ready to read with

the SCHOOL of MONSTERS



Being ready to read isn't just about learning sounds and recognizing letters or words on the page; often it begins in the home with basic skills that can help children become lifelong readers.

The biggest thing parents and caregivers can do is support their child: encourage them with positive words and actions when they begin to demonstrate an interest in reading, and don't hold them accountable to expected milestones. Everyone learns at their own pace, and children may be discouraged if they feel like they are not succeeding in the same way as their peers.

Support can take many forms: talking to children about books, taking them to libraries, and teaching them to hold a book on their own. You can listen to child-friendly podcasts or musical narrations, and discuss their favorite stories together.

But the most important element of being "reading ready" is simply reading together. We know that one of the biggest positive influences on a child's language and literacy development is being read to on a daily basis, particularly for children four to five years old. Reading storybooks every day has been shown to equip children with language growth, emergent literacy and reading achievement over the course of their school years. It also creates positive associations with reading, even if it's a task they don't immediately succeed at. Simply creating a supportive and consistent environment for children to engage with books can do wonders for their confidence.

Just some of the benefits of raising a lifelong reader...



Reading builds vocabulary

We all love a good word nerd. Stories help build vocabularies and communication skills – kids who read are exposed to more words and are able to better comprehend new stories, express their own feelings, and learn new words faster.

It's good for mental health

People often feel a sense of connectivity through stories, and can use fiction as a way to escape the stresses of everyday life. A regular reading program can form part of a positive self-care routine throughout a child's school years and beyond.

Reading helps with a good night's sleep

Children love being read to at bedtime – it relaxes them and prepares them for sleep, so make it part of your nightly routine. Paper books are key here, because the blue light generated from digital screens can disrupt the brain's natural sleep-wake cycles. Getting into the habit of reading before bed can help with a lifetime's worth of good sleep!

It creates empathy

Books contain diverse stories and characters, and are written by people with unique experiences from all over the world. Books can help children understand difficult situations or process major changes, and assist them in building a strong sense of empathy for others.



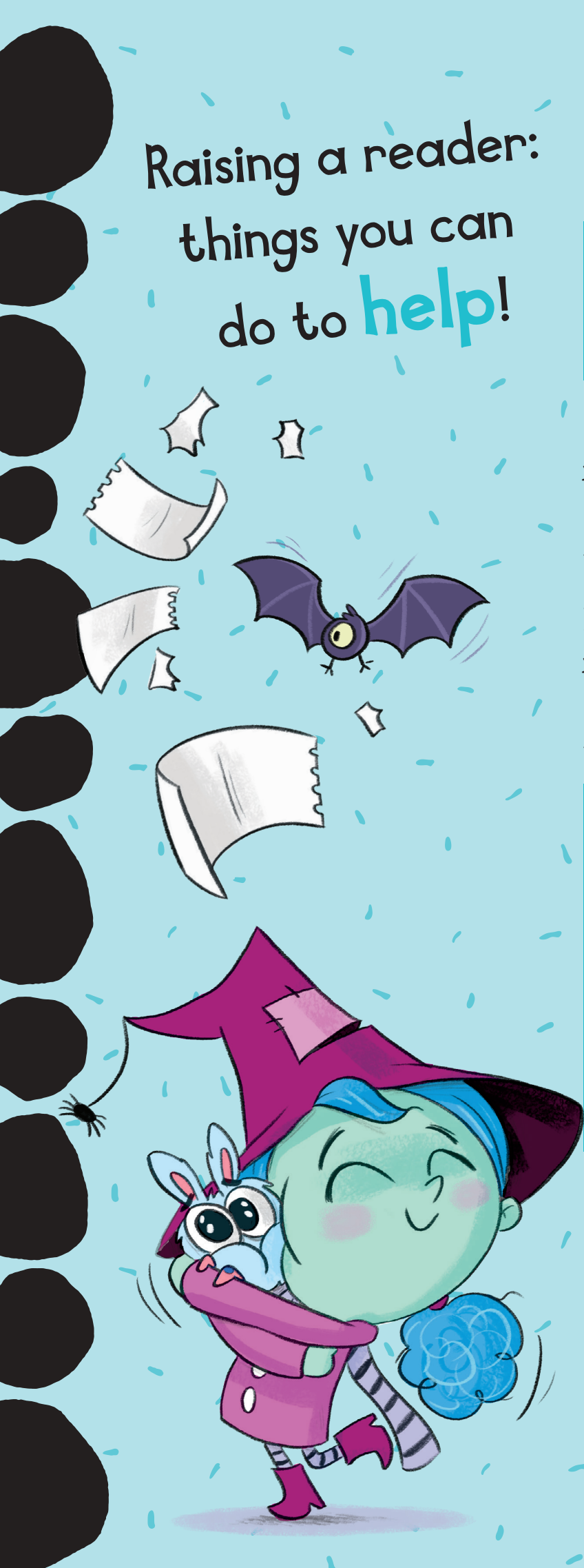
Raising a reader: things you can do to **help!**

There are some key skills that can help children take the first steps toward becoming lifelong book lovers.

Fine motor skills: It sounds simple, but reading begins at the very first page – literally. Teach young children how to hold a book the right way up, open the cover and turn the pages. Look for books they can hold on their own and favorites that they might begin to recognize.

Always time for storytime: Tell stories, listen to audiobooks together, ask questions about books you read aloud. What happens next? How might it end? Children often like to verbally retell stories themselves, which can be a sign that they are ready to start reading.

A, B, Cs: Reading-ready kids are likely to be starting to learn the alphabet, and may begin to recognize letters (but remember, everyone learns at their own pace!). You can help them by placing parchment paper or tracing paper over some letters, and having the child trace over them, or making tactile activities out of items around the home (clay dough, water fun or sand tracing are all fun and educational activities!).



Time to rhyme: Kids can often recognize patterns in language and may start to guess words based on rhyming narratives. Books with a rhyming flow, like *School of Monsters*, may help them better engage with books.

Writing their own name: This can be an exciting indicator that kids are ready to read. Children may learn how to write their name and familiarize themselves with different letters. You can show them how to write their name and encourage them to copy and learn in their own time.

Read aloud, read along, read alone.

Children begin their **reading** journey by **having an adult read aloud** while they listen. Over time, as they become more familiar with written words, you can encourage them to **read along** with the story – in *School of Monsters*, you can ask them to read the last word of every sentence! As their confidence grows, they will start to reach the next milestone of **reading alone** and will eventually read stories without assistance.



Creating good reading habits

Your child is starting to learn to read in the classroom. What's next for parents and caregivers at home? Try these steps to help support your child's reading journey.

Read aloud

This is the first step most families take – selecting a book to read out loud, with their child listening to the story and looking at the pictures. Reading aloud is a key first step and helps children build confidence around books.

Read along

Your children might start to recognize a few words! Encourage them to read along with you. *School of Monsters* is perfect for this engagement with text – the parent or caregiver reads most of the sentence, with the child reading the last word on every page! These words are usually shorter and easier for a child to read, boosting their confidence as they build toward reading on their own.

Read alone

Look at them go! Kids who are becoming confident readers will start to read on their own. They might not know every word, but they're still trying their best and selecting their favorite stories to read by themselves. Of course, it can still be helpful to have an adult present to encourage them if needed, and to praise them for trying their best.

Try these next: **Billie B. Brown and Hey Jack!**

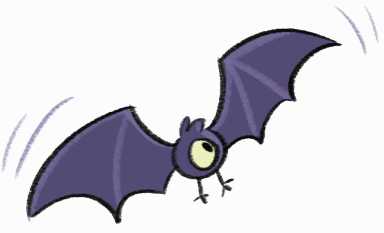




Ready to read alone?
Try Sally Rippin's
Billie B. Brown or
Hey Jack! series



Meet your
monster
friends
and color them in



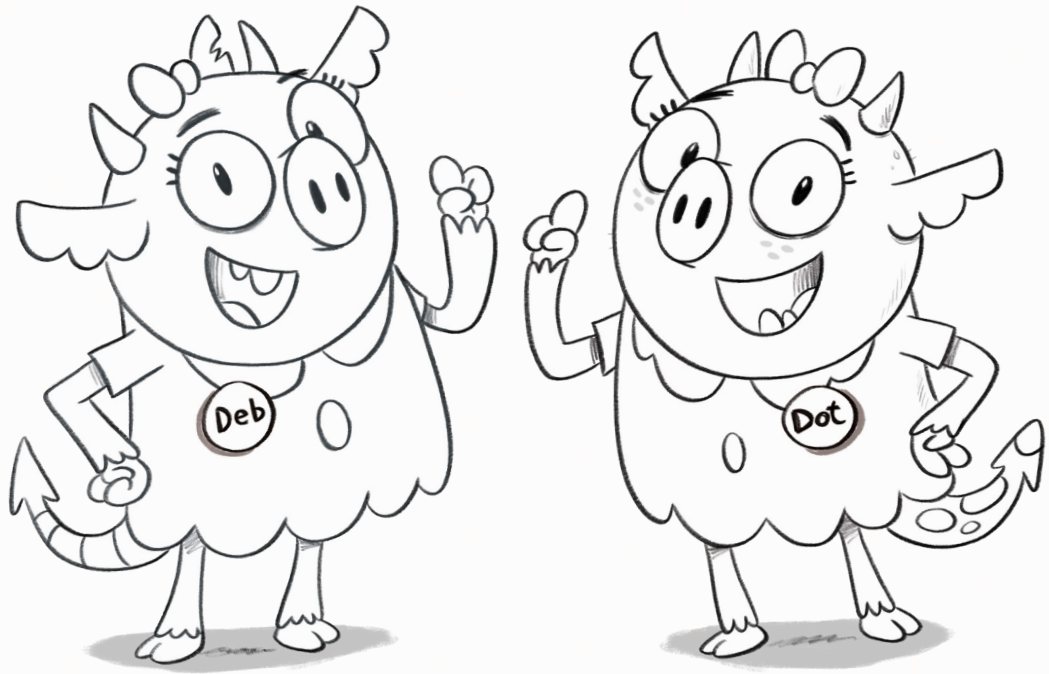
PETE



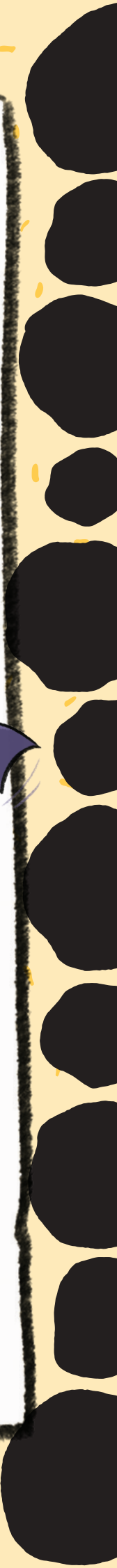
SAM



MARY



DEB and DOT



There are lots of words in *School of Monsters* that we are learning to read. Can you trace these words from the stories and sound them out? You might like to do this activity with an adult if you need help!



Go Pet

No Sun

Hat Run

Mat Look

Wet Book

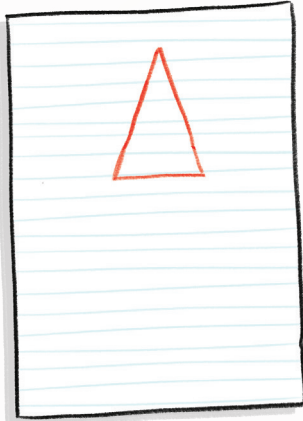


BONUS ACTIVITY: Read *Mary Has the Best Pet* and *Pete's Big Feet* with an adult to see if you can find these words in the book!

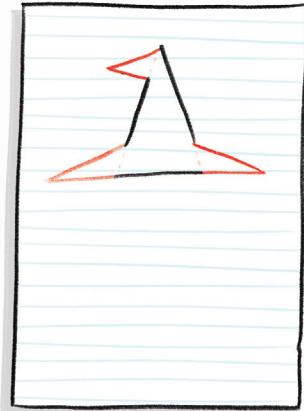


HOW TO DRAW

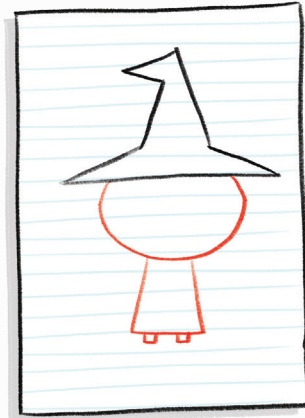
MARY



① Using a pencil, draw a tall, skinny triangle.



② Add 3 smaller triangles to form a hat shape. Erase the lines that overlap.



③ Draw a circle for the head, a sloped rectangle for the body, and little boxes for legs.



④ Draw circles for the eyes and the buttons. Scribble 2 bunches for the hair.



⑤ Draw U shapes for the ears, nose, and mouth. Add bendy straws for arms.



⑥ Time for the extra details! Add hands, feet, more hair, and a scarf. Don't forget the SPIDER!



There are lots of little monsters in the *School of Monsters* series! Some of them have hats and horns, some of them have lots of hair or big feet; some are green or blue, short or tall. Use the space below to draw your own little monster – you can make it as silly as you like!

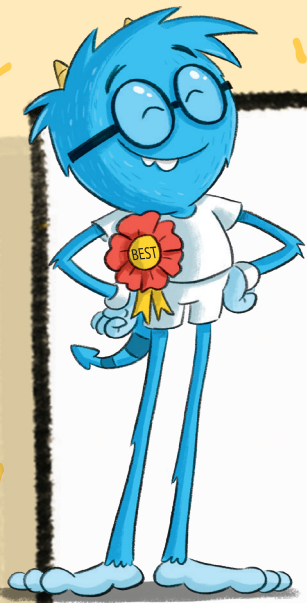


Color along with the monsters



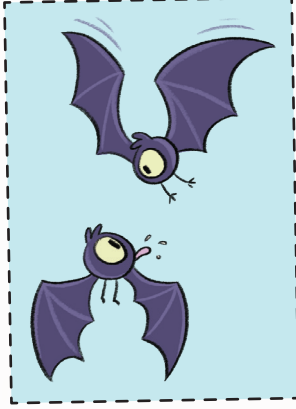
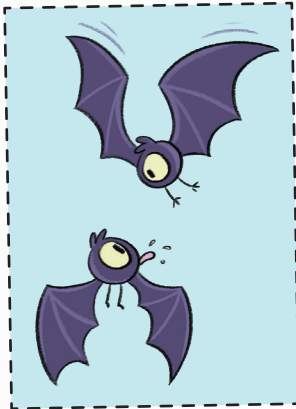
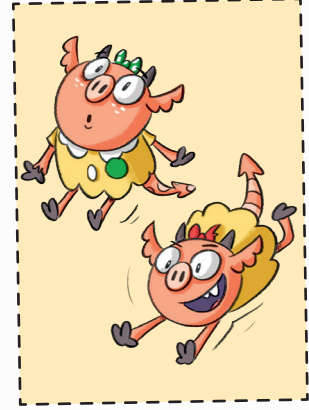
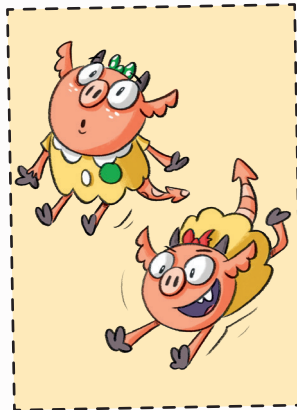
Color the monsters





Memory cards!

Print and play activity! Print these pages and cut around the cards for a fun memory game. Turn the pieces upside down and take turns to see if you can find the matching sets.





Now that you've learned to read along with Sally Rippin's School of Monsters, meet her other friends!



Billie B. Brown

Hey Jack!

Down-to-earth, real-life stories for real-life kids!

Billie B. Brown

is brave, brilliant and bold, and she always has a creative way to save the day!

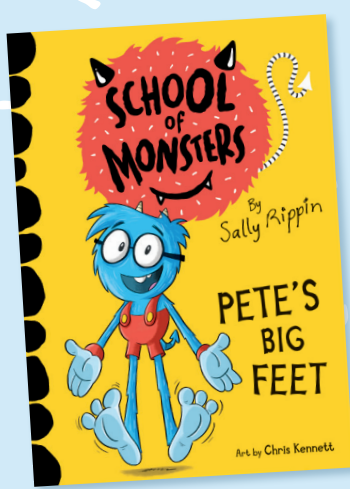


Jack has a big heart and an even bigger imagination. He's Billie's best friend, and he'd love to be your friend, too!

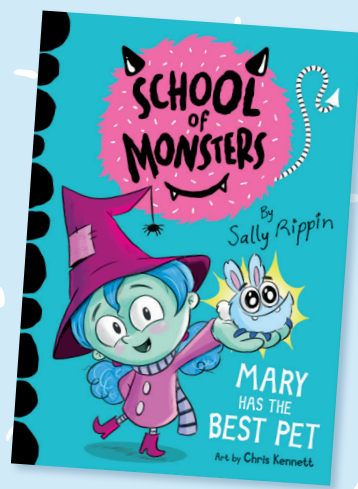


Collect them all!

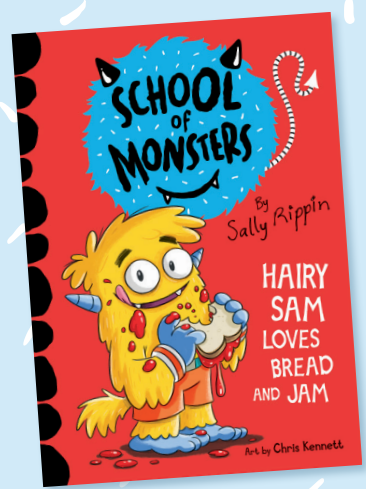
OUT NOW!



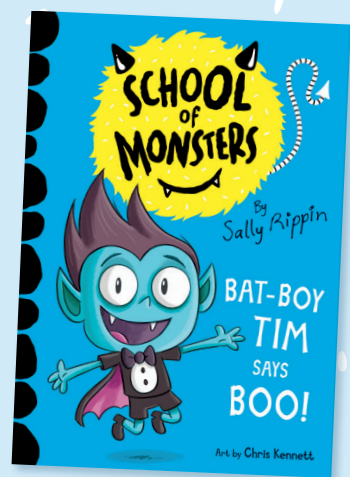
Today it's Sports Day in the sun. But do you think that Pete can run?



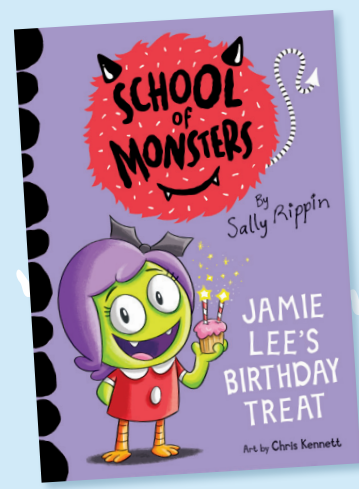
You shouldn't bring a pet to school. But Mary's pet is super cool!



Sam makes a mess when he eats jam. Can he fix it? Yes, he can!



When Bat-Boy Tim comes out to play, why do others run away?



Jamie Lee sure likes to eat! Today she's got a special treat ...

