

young times

Do boys and books mix?

Do boys really hate reading? A study has found that 21 per cent of nine-year-old boys are not interested in books, compared with 13 per cent of girls. The Young Bond books by Charlie Higson, right, are loved by boys and girls alike. **Chloe Lambert** asked him what the fuss was all about



Name The Times book monster!

A new cartoon strip is coming to Young Times, starring this book-loving monster. He lives in a school library and comes out only when the children have gone home.

He might look scary, but he's a gentle giant really. He can't wait to meet you all, but first he needs a name — so what would you call him? Tell us your idea for a name and how you came up with it. The winner will receive a set of five Young Bond books.

E-mail your answer to youngtimes@thetimes.co.uk by Monday, January 19. Please include your name and age.



PUZZLES

Dingbat

Which word or phrase is this? Say what you see

FAR AND

Friday's answer Overall

Puzzle of the day: square deal

Write the name of each object in its row in the grid and then read down the shaded squares to reveal the hidden word.



1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

Friday's answer 1. Swing 2. Sandpit 3. Goalpost 4. Roundabout 5. Hopscotch

Charlie, do boys really hate reading?
 There's no doubt about it — boys should be reading more. But while you might not see boys sitting down with a big novel, that doesn't mean that they're not reading — they are still reading football magazines, the sport pages and the internet.

Did you like reading when you were young?
 I read tons! Anything with a sword and I was happy. I think that there's something magical about a book — it's a bunch of paper with black squiggles on it but somehow it creates a whole new world.

So why do the statistics show that boys don't like books?
 Funnily enough, back in the 1970s it was the other way round. People thought that there weren't enough books aimed at girls and there was a big push to change that. A lot of the books for boys went out of print.

When I started writing the Young Bond books I went to bookshops to see what the competition was like. It was all goblins and dragons, and girls' books.

How do you think we can turn boys back on to books?
 At first my publishers were worried that the Young

Bond books were too extreme, with too much fighting and violence. But the fact is, boys like reading things like that. I have three sons and I looked at the films they watched and the computer games they played, and it was all action and guns.

So what does the future hold for boys' books?
 I think there has been a big change in the past few years. Anthony Horowitz's books have sold tens of millions of copies and people like Andy McNab and Chris Ryan are writing for boys. There's loads of great books out there now.

Fancy some free books for your school? See Page 9



Outstanding Numeracy Initiative



Best e-learning Initiative



Outstanding Staff Training/ Development Initiative



Outstanding New or Refurbished Secondary School



Primary School of the Year



Outstanding Leadership Team Award

Is your staff room brimming with talent?

The Times Educational Supplement Schools Awards are a celebration of the very best in education, a celebration of the initiatives schools take to better the lives of future generations, and a celebration of the people who make these initiatives happen.

For more details and a full list of award categories please visit www.tes.co.uk/awards

