



## STEM BOOKS IN YOUR SHOP BY DR THOMAS BERNARD AND LISA MOSS

Did you know by 2035, the UK government predicts we will need over 1.9 million STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) professionals<sup>1</sup>? This is a hugely exciting opportunity for children. One day they will be working to solve problems using technologies we can't even imagine!

Therefore, it is essential that children engage with STEM from a young age. Books are the perfect vehicle for this. Not just traditional fact-filled science non-fiction (although we do love these), but fiction, picture books and biographies to name but a few. Your shop could make all the difference to our next generation of innovators!

When we developed the SuperQuesters series, we knew we wanted to use a unique blend of fictional stories integrated with interactive learning elements and science facts to encourage children to love STEM. Our books have plots that completely absorb the reader. Subjects - which may have seemed overwhelming, such as coding or renewable energy - become approachable through the storytelling. The result is an exciting fusion of art and science, which draws children in and starts discussions.

Once you start looking, you will find that some books already on your shelves are STEM books in disguise! Take *The Three Little Pigs*. Children learn to think like engineers as the pigs experiment with



Meet the Authors  
Dr Thomas Bernard and  
Lisa Moss



And their twin  
Daughters!

different building materials and, ultimately, discover how effective (or ineffective!) they are when the Big Bad Wolf wants his supper!

Inspire young readers with a 'Secret STEM books' display. This could feature *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (sequencing), *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler (habitat, food chains and ecology) and *The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes (magnetic energy). While for non-fiction, think wider and include books on baking, building with LEGO bricks and nature.

Diversity is also crucial. Just 8% of the STEM workforce coming from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds<sup>2</sup>. While, shockingly, a third of parents and teachers (inaccurately) perceive STEM as a topic for boys<sup>3</sup>. As parents of twin daughters, we personally found it difficult to find positive portrayals of diverse STEM role models. This inspired our SuperQuesters characters. Make sure your selection includes titles such as *Am I Made of Stardust?* by Maggie Aderin-Pocock, *Look Up!* by Nathan Bryon and *Dapo Adeola and Goodnight Stories* for Rebel Girls.

As your display pulls together books usually dispersed across your shop, it makes it so much easier for parents, teachers and children to discover STEM. If you can't create a whole display, try a STEM Book of the Month or STEM reading group.

Refresh your STEM offering and showcase different aspects of STEM by linking to national awareness days such as World Environment Day (5 June), Coding Week (September) and World Space Week (October). Or feel free to get in touch with us for more ideas or tips.

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<sup>1</sup> Universities UK, Jobs of the future

<sup>2</sup> Black History Month UK, The Urgency of Greater Diversity in the UK's STEM Workforce

<sup>3</sup> Accenture Ireland and I Wish