

Reading Newsletter

SPRING TERM 2026



January

Last term, we encouraged the children to take part in our Christmas Reading Challenge, and we were delighted by the response. With over 80 reading bookmarks completed, choosing just one winner proved incredibly difficult! Instead, we selected six winners: three from Years 3 and 4 and three from Years 5 and 6. Each winner received a book voucher, and the overall winner from each phase was also awarded a copy of *The Café at the Edge of the Woods* by Mikey Please, the winner of the Hampshire Illustrated Book Awards.



"A bag of bats! That smells like fart!"

"Smells like WHAT?!" SHRIEKED RENE.

Alongside this, we also ran a Reading Log Challenge, where the class in lower school and the class in upper school with the highest number of completed reading logs would earn a special reward. The winners were 4Y in the lower school and 6U in the upper school. Both classes enjoyed a well-deserved film afternoon. Class 4Y chose to come to school in their pyjamas and brought along their favourite mascots while watching *The Wild Robot*. Meanwhile, 6U enjoyed a mufti day and watched *The Lorax*. To make the occasion even more special, both classes were treated to squash, popcorn and sweets.

A huge well done to all the children who took part. The enthusiasm for reading during this challenge was truly wonderful to see. Keep up the fantastic reading!



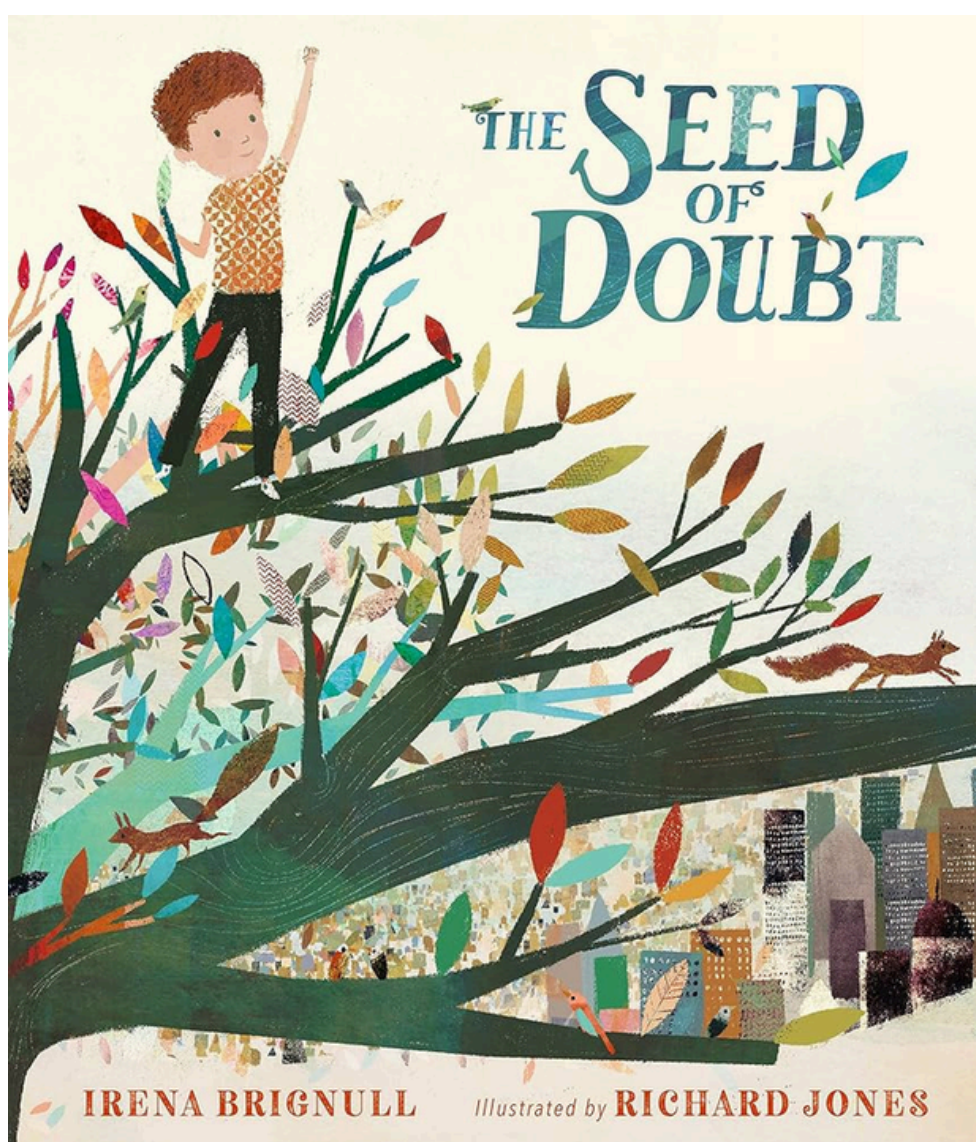
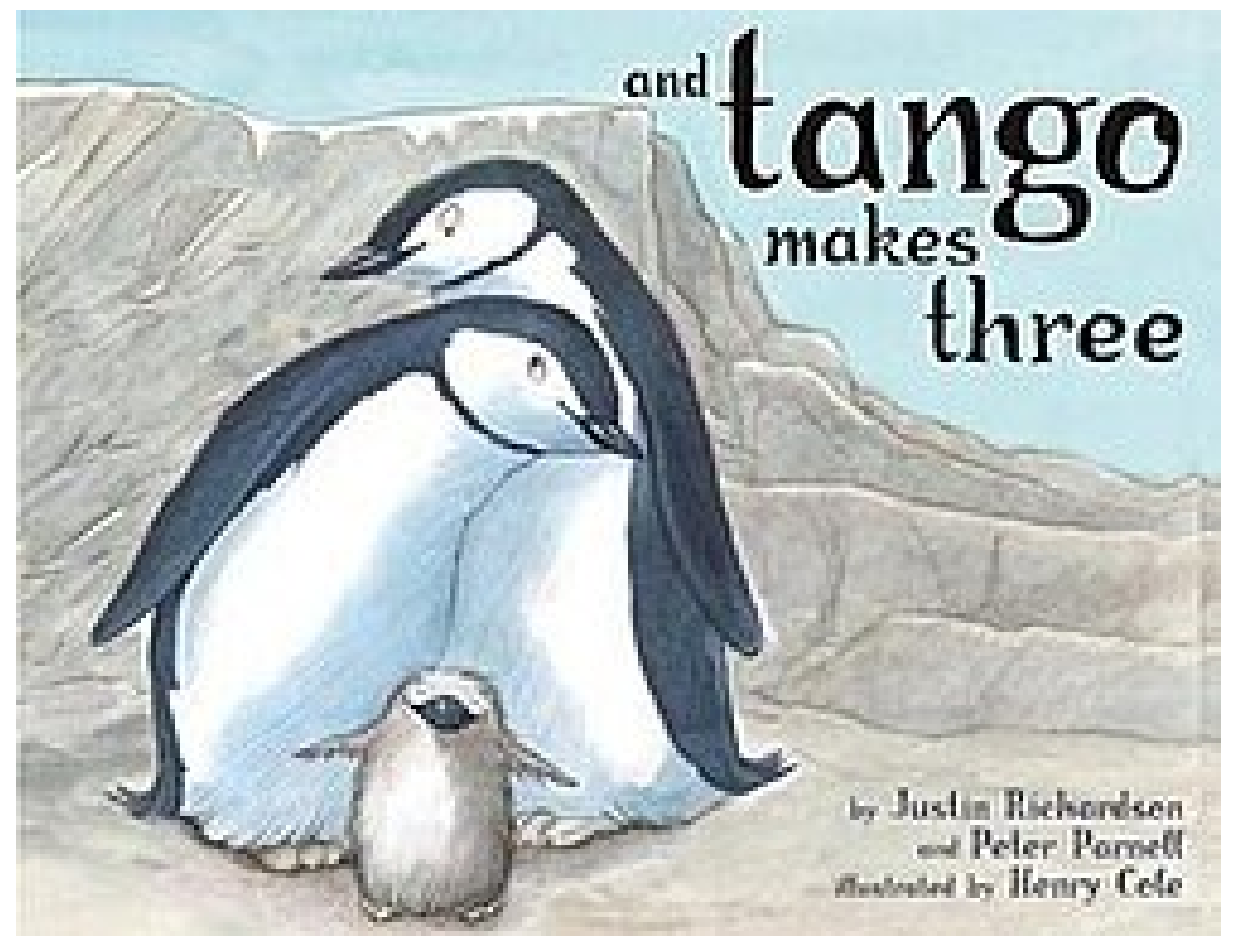


February

In February, we celebrated National Storytelling Week... which lasted a month at SFJS! Each week Miss Brown shared a picture book with the children. Some of the stories included:

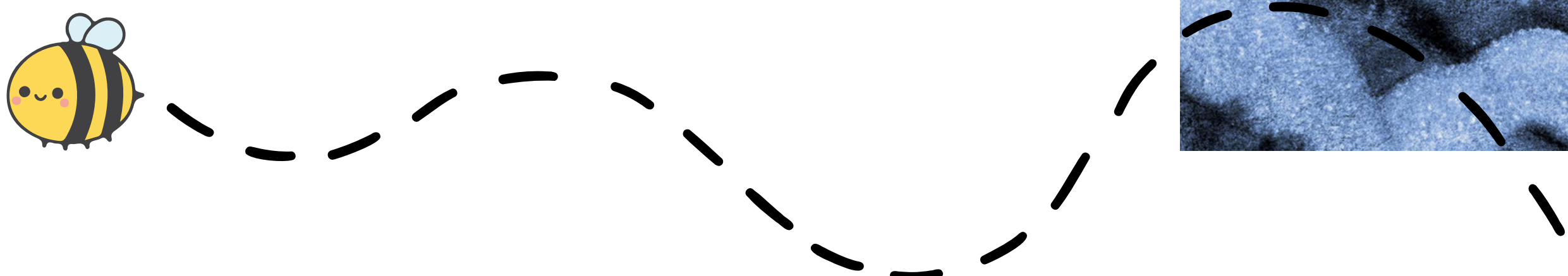
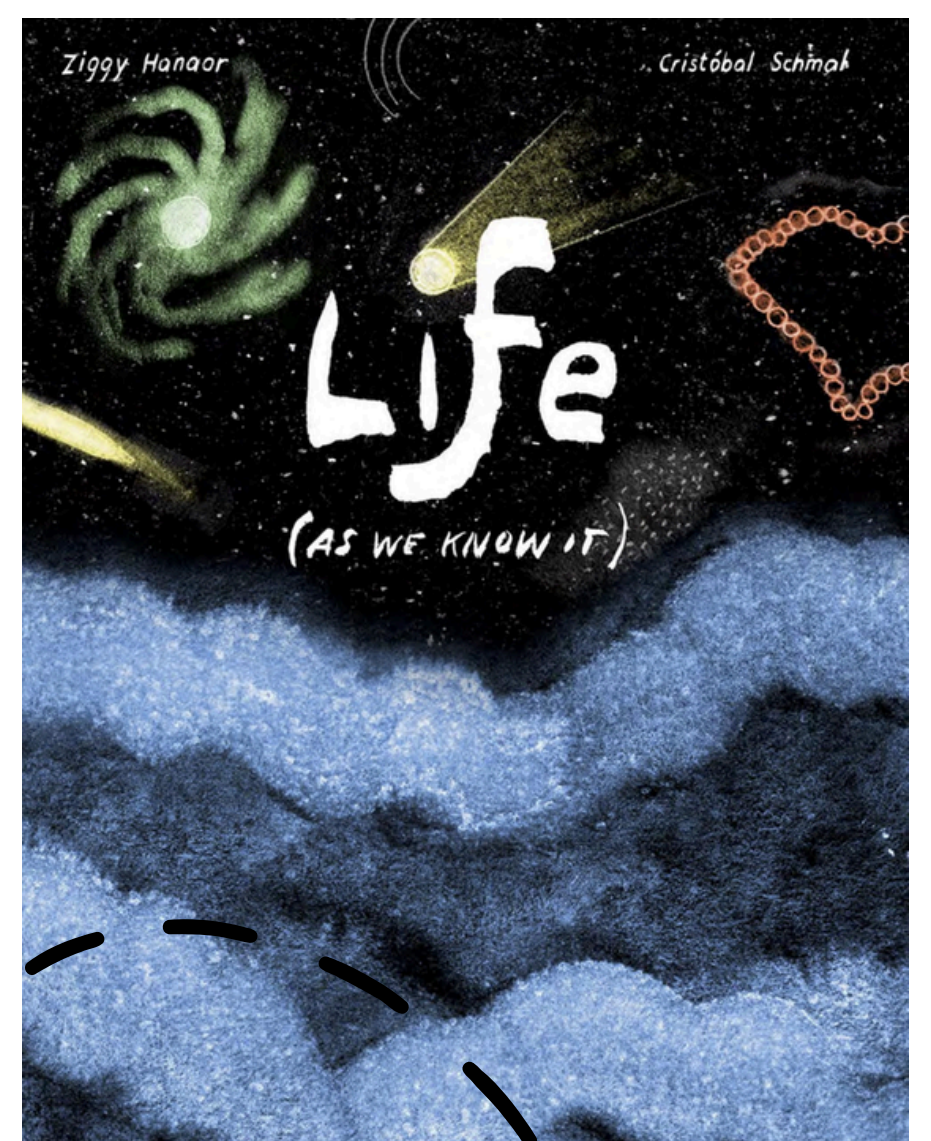


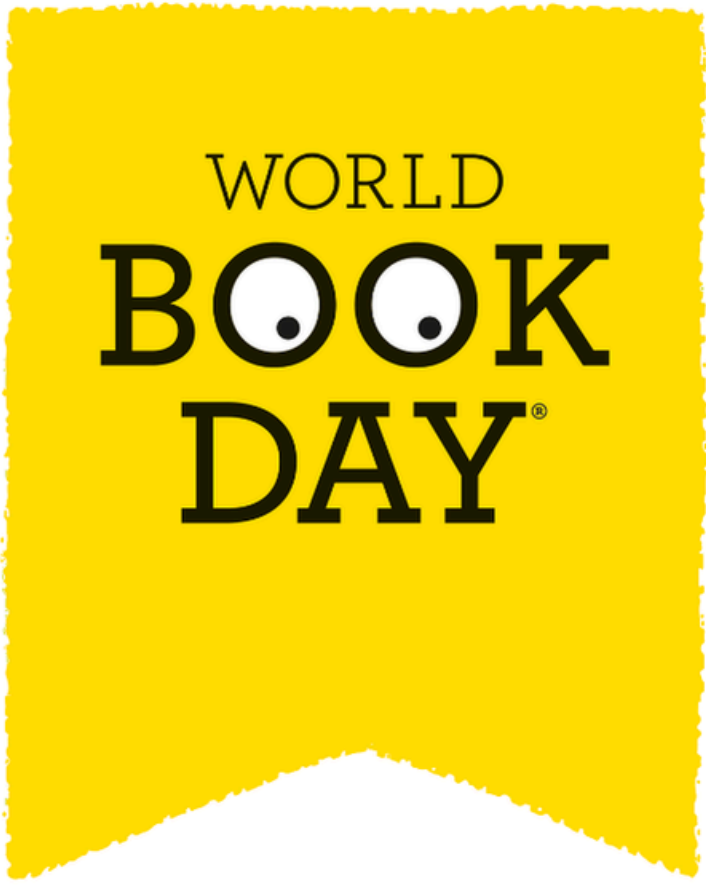
And Tango Makes Three by Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell: Roy and Silo are just like the other penguins at the zoo - they bow to each other, walk together and swim together. But Roy and Silo are a little bit different - they're both boys.



The Seed of Doubt by Irena Brignull: A little boy dreams of a world beyond the farm where he lives - a world full of mountain ranges, oceans and cities, where he could do anything. But one day he plants a seed from which doubt starts to grow. Instead of thinking of all he could do, he thinks more of what he could not.

And as it was National Science Week coming up, we read Life (as we know it) by Ziggy Hanaor: a dizzying ride through 4.6 billion years of life on Planet Earth. Once upon a time, before time even existed, all matter in the universe was concentrated in a single point a fraction of the size of an atom. And then? And then it exploded!





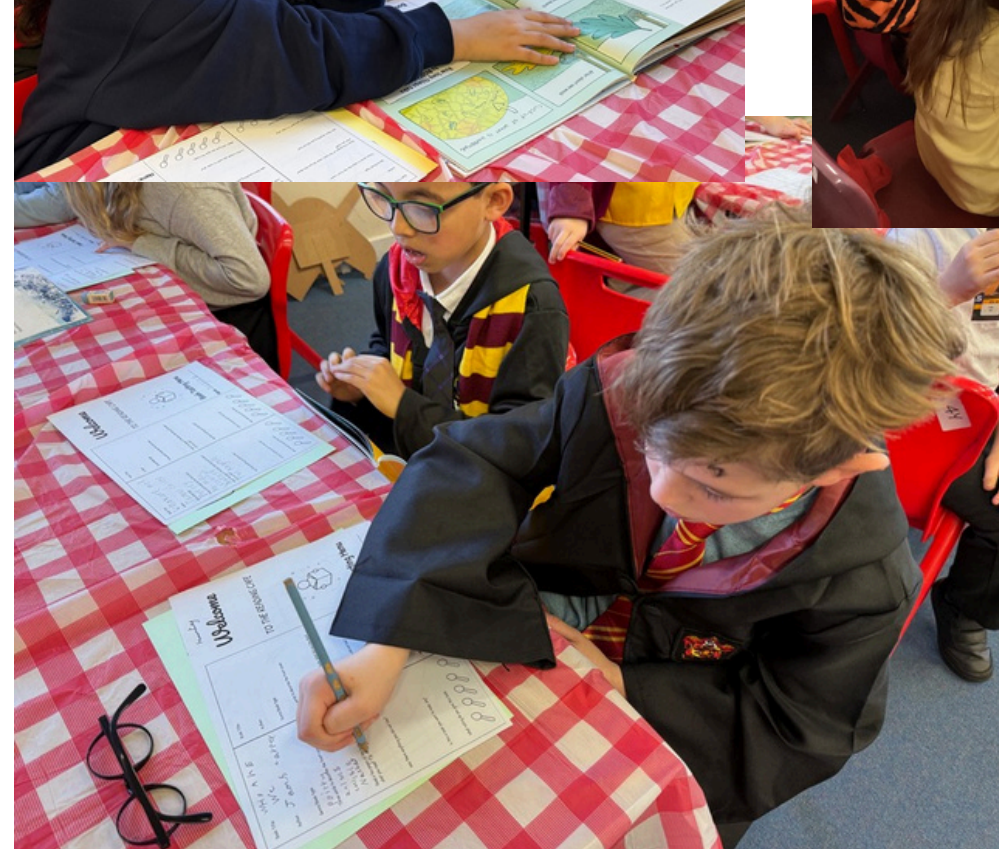
March

South Farnborough had a fantastic time celebrating World Book Day, with children and staff embracing the joy of reading throughout the day. We welcomed families across the school to use the library for the week leading up to World Book Day too.





One of the highlights was our Book Tasting activity, where classrooms were transformed into cosy café spots complete with tablecloths and music. Pupils sampled a selection of age-appropriate books from five different genres, “tasting” a variety of stories and discovering new authors they might like to explore further.



As a whole school, we also shared the picture book *Our Tower* by Joseph Coelho. The story follows three children who climb a tower in their city block and are magically transported into a lush, green landscape filled with nature. Through beautiful illustrations and poetic storytelling, the book explores themes of imagination and hope. Inspired by the story, children created artwork and reflections about their own “safe places,” which were brought together to form a wonderful display, with thanks to Mrs Stilwell, celebrating places where they feel calm, happy, and inspired. To round off the day, pupils took part in a round-robin of activities within their year groups. Each classroom hosted a different activity inspired by their teacher’s costume and chosen book, the children moved between classes to experience a range of creative reading-themed tasks.



On Monday 16th March, we were delighted to welcome author Chitra Soundar to our school. Chitra is an award-winning children’s author and storyteller who has written many popular books and picture books inspired by traditional tales, nature and her childhood in India.



Reading Ambassadors were invited to a Q and A with Chitra, where she told us all about her favourite Indian sweets (Laddu), how she became an author and her travels across the world.



She worked with Years 3 and 4, leading a creative writing workshop where pupils explored ideas, imagination and storytelling techniques. She also delivered inspiring assemblies, sharing her journey to becoming an author and talking about the many forms storytelling can take, including poetry, screenplays and books. Her enthusiasm and passion for stories encouraged our pupils to think creatively and reminded us all that everyone has a story worth telling.

Read for Good

Read for Good is a fantastic charity that encourages children to read for fun whilst raising money for children who are in hospital. Money that is raised goes towards professional storytellers, mobile bookcases and books for children who need it the most, in hospitals across the country. Whilst supporting charity, in turn, the readathon raises money for the school too; 20% of all that is raised goes towards books that will be bought for our school library. In total, we have raised **£892!** I would like to thank every child that took part in the readathon, and every supportive parent, grandparent, family member and friend that sponsored a child. I will be sure to share what the funds raised have been put towards in our Summer Newsletter.

Summer 2026

Next term, pupils in Years 3, 4, and 5 will be visiting Farnborough Library to celebrate the National Year of Reading. To ensure your child can fully participate in the experience, we encourage you to register them for a free library membership before our visit. Having a library card will allow your child to borrow books on the day and continue using the library independently.

As a member of the Hampshire Library Service, your child will be entitled to:

- Borrow up to 20 books at a time for a duration of 28 days.
- Borrow up to 5 magazines for a duration of 7 days.
- Renew items up to five times.
- Access the Digital Library, including e-books and audiobooks, at no additional charge.

You can register for membership and find further details regarding the service via the Hampshire County Council website here: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/membership/jointhelibrary>.

Please Note: If you choose not to register for a card, your child will still participate fully in the school trip and all planned activities. However, please be aware that they will not be able to check out any physical books or materials to bring home during the visit without a valid library card.



Easter Reading Challenge

Get ready to hop into our Easter Reading Challenge!

We want everyone to get lost in a great book over the holidays. Don't forget to log every page on BoomReader or in your reading record! There is a huge prize up for grabs: the classes in both Lower and Upper School with the most reading will win a custom reward, like a cozy pajama day or a movie afternoon.

Let's get reading!

Have a go at the reading challenge bookmark! Show Miss Brown a complete bookmark for a chance of winning a book voucher!

Easter Reading Challenge

Read a page from a non-fiction book.

See how many words you can read in a minute.

Read for 20 minutes non-stop!

Ask an adult what their favourite book was when they were your age.

Build a "nest" out of blankets and pillows and read inside of it!

Visit the library

Find a word in your book that rhymes with "hop."

Use a chocolate wrapper as a book mark.

Spell a tricky word from your spellings using twigs.

Design an Easter egg for each task you complete!