

BOOKS

8 Books On Gandhi Your Child Must Read

From 'Ahimsa' by Supriya Kelkar to 'Being Gandhi' by Paro Anand, here are 8 books children will both enjoy and learn from.

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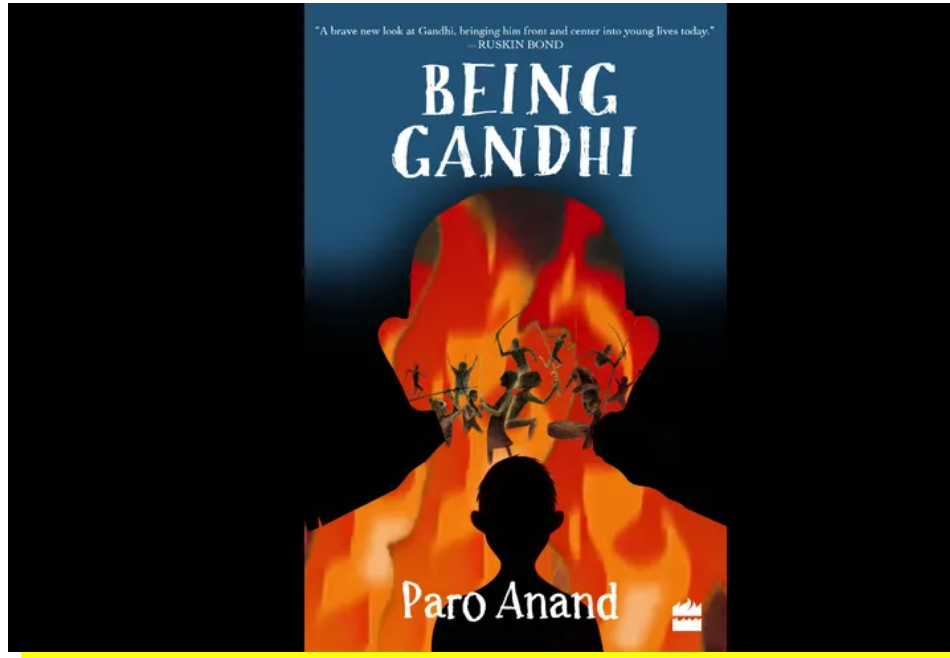


The birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi is a good time to reflect on the values he lived by and relearn the lessons he taught the world. Apart from his own writings, there are a number of well-written books that can help introduce one of the most important figures of Indian history to children. From picture books to middle-grade novels, here are eight titles that children will both enjoy and learn from.

TRENDING



1. *Being Gandhi* by Paro Anand



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If I have to name just one children's book based on Gandhi that is most relatable to kids today, it has to be this powerful novel. *Being Gandhi* is a young adult novel that should be a part of every school's curriculum, instead of the boring, generic stuff that we've been reading on Gandhi all this while. Set during the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi in 1984, it's a story about Chandrashekhar, who's asked to act like Gandhi for a school project. He couldn't even have imagined how his role in real life would change as the days go from bad to worse. On being asked about the inspiration behind her book, Paro Anand says, "The more I studied about Gandhi, I realized it's not necessarily a historical lesson that

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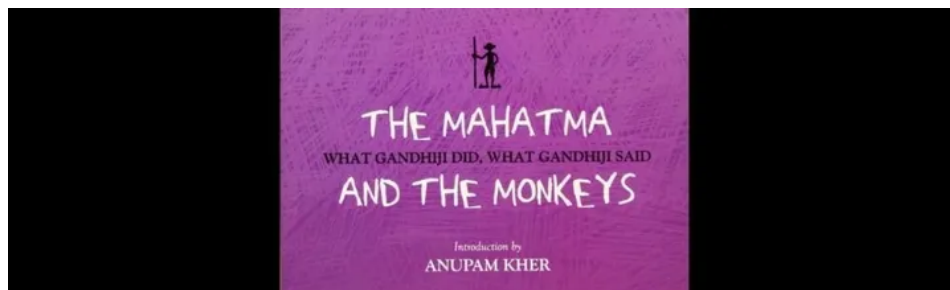
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children need. It's more about the Gandhian way of life that children need to know and his ideas that are so much more relevant today than ever before. If all of us could find our inner Gandhi, the world would be a better place.”

2. [Picture Gandhi](#) by Sandhya Rao

This picture book beautifully captures the life and times of Gandhi in brief for children. Real photographs from the Mahatma's life, sourced from Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Smriti, have been used in this book with some playful add-ons and speech bubbles. This helps young readers make a better connection to this global icon, who was born 150 years ago, and yet continues to remain relevant. *Picture Gandhi* begins with these simple lines which encapsulate his life well: “Once upon a time there was a man who lived a life so ordinary, he died without a paisa to his name. He was a man of peace who believed in the force of truth and love...”

3. [The Mahatma and the Monkeys](#) edited by Anuradha Kumar



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This book covers various aspects of Gandhi's life and is spread over 20 succinct chapters. There are chapters titled caring for others, telling the truth, the wonder years, doing things yourself and everyone is equal. In his introduction to this book, Anupam Kher mentions that although he had first heard of Gandhi as a child, he had thought of him as an old, wise and great man who lived long ago. He learnt more about Gandhi while researching and producing the film [Maine Gandhi Ko Nahin Maara](#). He urges the readers to not let Gandhi just remain in book chapters, road signs or statues but to read his life story to realize that he did things in a simple way but his accomplishments weren't simple at all. Each chapter concludes with a few pages of interesting and relevant quotes from Gandhiji and there's also a fun quiz for children towards the end of the book.

4. [My Gandhi Story](#) by Nina Sabnani, Rajesh Chaitya Vangad and Ankit Chadha

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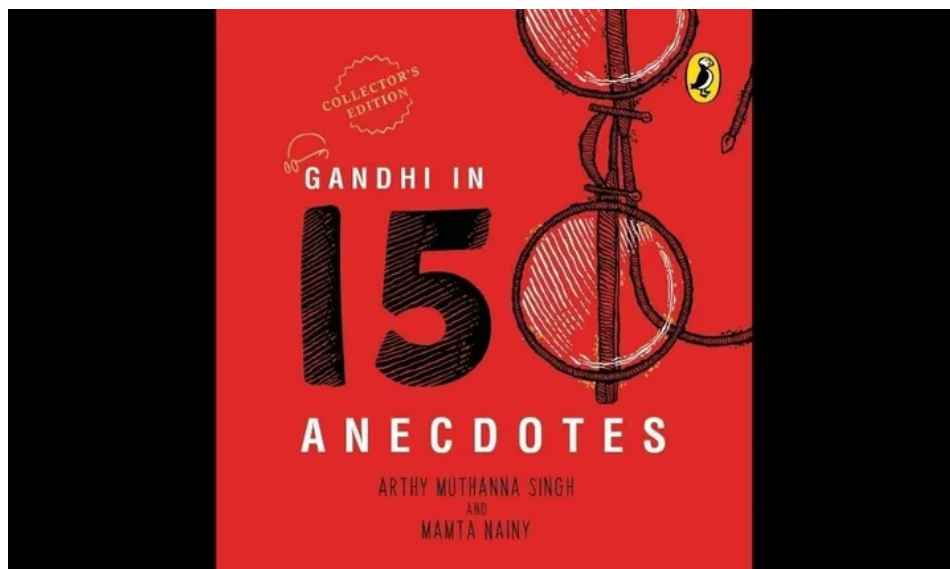
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This multiple award-winning picture book is good to read aloud to children as young as five, and has been made possible by the collaborative effort of three people: a Warli artist, a storyteller and an animation filmmaker. The book's pages are adorned with fabulous traditional Warli paintings on Gandhi's life by the well-known artist Rajesh Chaitya Vangad. The story is told in the form of snippets and questions posed by a childlike narrator, while being answered by Gandhi himself. The question, '*did Gandhiji work hard in school too?*' is answered in the book as 'I was not lazy, but I was not very good at studies. I found multiplication very difficult. I was also shy...' and so on. These sneak peeks into Gandhiji's life make young children feel that he was just another simple child like any of them.

5. [Gandhi in 150 Anecdotes](#) by Arthy Muthanna Singh and Mamta Nainy



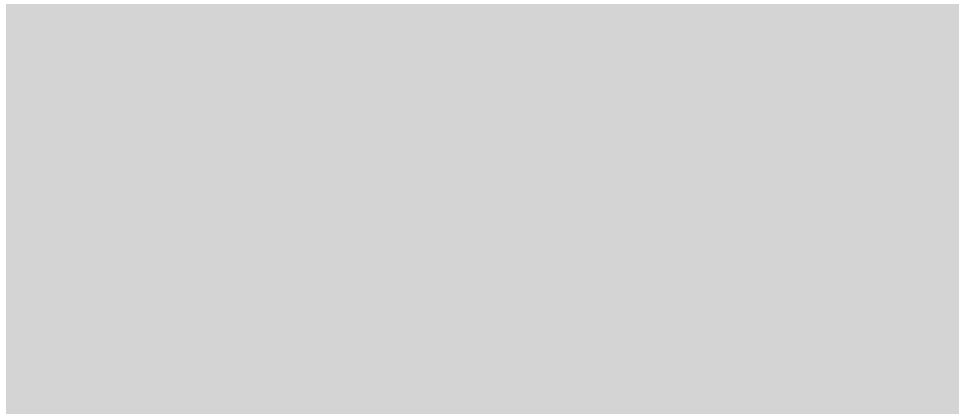
This pretty red hardcover book was published just a week before India celebrated Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary last year. In the introduction titled *A superhero with a Walking Stick*, the authors ask the children whether superpowers, a cool costume or a fancy name are necessary to make a superhero. Going through the 150 interesting anecdotes and incidents from Gandhi's life helps us understand the kind of man he was and the caring, determined but childlike nature he possessed. Several little-known anecdotes from Gandhi's life fill this beautifully illustrated book. An incident in the book describes how kind and compassionate he was. Once as a little child, Gandhi's elder sister saw him climbing up a guava tree in a neighbour's backyard with pieces of torn cloth. The fruits on the tree were pecked at by birds and seeing this, little Bapu tried to bandage the seemingly injured guavas!

6. *Great Lives: Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi* written by Aditi De and illustrated by Pooja Pottenkulam

This book has a distinctive text and graphic novel-like comic book format which makes it attractive and draws in children easily. After every few pages of descriptively written interesting text, the story has been told in pictures in comic book format at regular

intervals. While the first chapter describes Gandhi's birth and family, the comic content after that illustrates some of the scenes from his childhood: his vow to look after his parents on watching wandering minstrels tell the story of Shraavan Kumar from the Ramayana and his first tryst with the evils of untouchability and the caste system when his mother forbade him to share sweets and play with a friend named Uka, who belonged to an oppressed caste. On being asked about the need for today's children to read about Gandhi even after 150 years of his birth, the author, Aditi De says, "Children today have few icons to look up to, barring sports or screen stars. Once high school students realize that young Mohandas had dilemmas and fears like theirs, they identify with him powerfully. During my workshops on this book, whether at Bangalore or Ambala, young readers have often chosen Gandhian tools to resolve our polarized world's problems. That filled me with wonder."

7. Mahatma Gandhi: The Father of the Nation by Subhadra Sen Gupta



Written by an experienced Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Award winning author, this children's biography of the Mahatma is told in an engaging tone that would make both children and adults wonder how Gandhi's times must have been, laugh a little as well as think and reflect deeply. Gandhi's ideas on equality, secularism, humour and childlikeness, kindness, a life of simplicity, non-violence, self-dependence, education and empowerment are described throughout the book in an interesting manner. In the book, the author describes Gandhi's food habits like this: "His diet was so boring that people avoided sitting next to him at meals because he would promptly offer them his bland mash of boiled vegetables cooked without salt, oil or spices and bitter *neem chutney* that he insisted was great for digestion!" However, the extraordinarily popular man that Gandhi was, 'people would walk for days and then wait patiently under the hot sun for hours just to catch a glimpse of him.'

8. [Ahimsa](#) by Supriya Kelkar

Written by a screenwriter and producer for both Bollywood and Hollywood movies, *Ahimsa* is a historical novel for middle-grade readers, which won the [New Visions Award](#) in 2016. Set in the pre-

independence era of the 1940s, this book explores the life of 10-year-old Anjali and the challenges that creep into her life at the brink of India's independence. The book opens with a scene where Anjali and her friend Irfaan decide to stealthily paint a big black Q symbolizing 'Quit India' on a wall of the house of Captain Brent, a stern British officer who was Anjali's mother's former boss. This compelling, fast-paced and heart touching story is narrated from the perspective of the young girl and is inspired by the author's great-grandmother Anasuyabai Kale's experience working with Gandhi in that era.



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