

Reading beyond the classroom

English, Years 7 – 9

BYRCHALL
HIGH SCHOOL

While in Years 7, 8 and 9 students should try and read a wide variety of books. The more students read then the better and more disciplined they become at writing as they witness a range of writing styles, techniques and deliberate use of structure and punctuation.

Newspapers and magazines are a good source of reading and these types of text will help prepare students for their English Language examinations in Years 10 and 11. There are a number of high-quality news sites online:

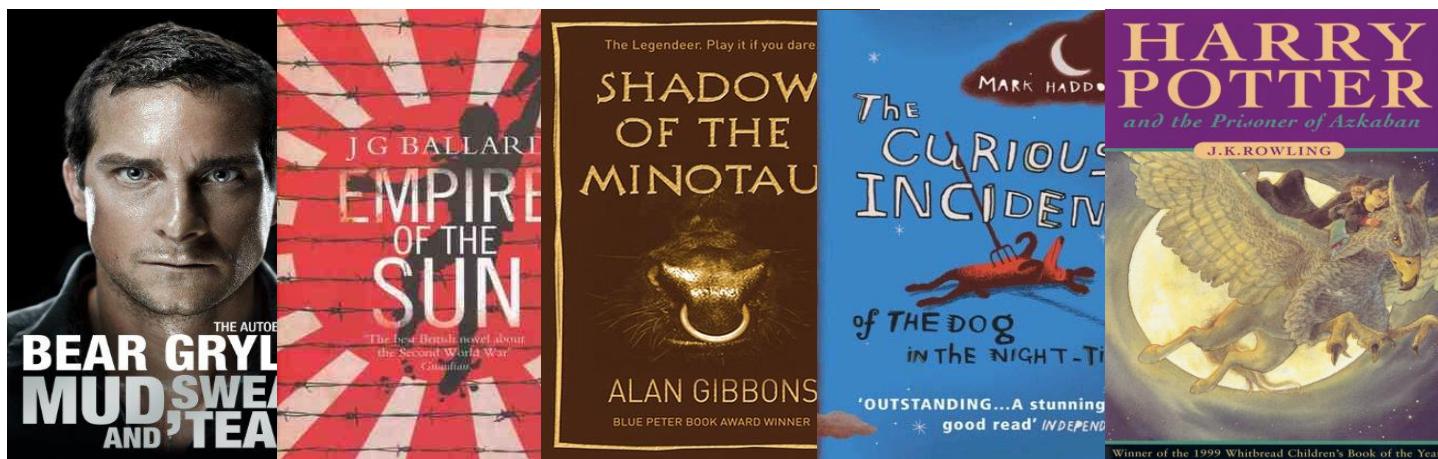
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news>
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk>
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/index.html>
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/>
<https://www.independent.co.uk/>

You may find the following websites useful in helping to choose suitable reading material for your child.

www.readingmatters.co.uk
www.booktrustchildrensbook.org.uk/Teenager-Books
www.cool-reads.co.uk
www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk
www.ukchildrensbooks.co.uk

These websites will provide you with recommendations from students, parents and critics across the country.

In addition to this, our recommendations follow below. These texts do not form part of our schemes of work so reading them will not spoil students' enjoyment of future lessons. They will most likely complement the work we do.



Non-fiction

Basic

Terry Dreary *Horrible Histories*

Gory but an entertaining and accurate investigation of history.

The blood curdling box set is available, containing twenty books in the series. The Vile Victorians is my personal favourite and students will experience Victorian literature throughout their studies in English here. The stories are factual, but they are retold with such vivid humour and delicious silliness that even the least historically minded person will be chuckling along gleefully.

Average

Bill Bryson *Notes from a Big Country*

An American's funny and exaggerated perspective of British culture. Having returned to America after twenty years living in the UK, Bryson is having trouble finding his true American identity. Bryson is a travel writer with a difference; he will drag you along on a hilarious journey full of insightful caricatures of the people and

places that he encounters along the way. With Bill Bryson, you can travel the world from the comfort of your armchair.

Gerald Durrell *My Family and Other Animals*

A young boy and his crazy family move to Crete. With snakes in the bath and scorpions on the lunch table, their house, on the island of Corfu, is a bit like a circus. You will find it difficult to distinguish his family from the animals (his words, not mine)!

Anne Frank *The Diary of a Young Girl*

A Jewish Dutch girl has to hide from the Nazis in a tiny room for two years. As Jews in German-occupied Holland, the Frank family fears for their lives. When Anne's sister, Margot, is called to appear before the authorities—which would almost surely mean she was being sent to a concentration camp—Anne and her family go into hiding.

Bear Grylls *Mud, Sweat and Tears*

The life of the famous adventurer and risk-taker, from his own perspective. A very popular read with boys. There are two editions of this book available: an adult edition and a junior edition (abridged to 352 pages). Known and admired by millions, Bear Grylls has survived where few would dare to go. Now, for the first time, Bear tells the story of his action-packed life. Gripping, moving and wildly exhilarating, "Mud, Sweat and Tears" is a must-read for adrenalin junkies and armchair adventurers alike.

Tom and Leila Hirschfeld *It's Up to You, Abe Lincoln: How I Made the Biggest Decisions of My Life*

Written in the second tense "you," this book puts you squarely in the driver's seat as Abe Lincoln. It describes your life starting from childhood with photos, fun facts, and quizzes of "What Would You Do?" For example, when you're considering marrying Mary What Do You Do? You'll be given a list of four choices, each with elaboration. The choices, in this case, are: A. Break up with Mary. B. Date other women. C. Marry fast, before your feet get even colder. D. Consult a pastor. Then, you'll read the reveal — what choice you made. (A. Break up with Mary.) The writing flows smoothly, the layout is eye-catching, and the information is interesting and historically important.

Advanced

Laurie Lee *Cider with Rosie*

The funny and emotional autobiography of a young boy growing up in a Cotswold village, a village without cars and electricity, a timeless place on the verge of change. Lee depicts a world that is vivid, real and now only a distant memory. The novel is an account of Lee's childhood in the village of Slad, Gloucestershire, England, in the period soon after the First World War. It chronicles the traditional village life which disappeared with the advent of new developments, such as the coming of the motor car, and relates the experiences of childhood seen from many years later

Kath Shackleton *Survivors of the Holocaust: True Stories of Six Extraordinary Children*

Holocaust survivor stories like these MUST be told. Because these six children started just like any of the kids reading their stories, they were ordinary kids who experienced the hardest things a child could face...being torn from their homes, separated from family, captured as a prisoner, and/or forced to hide. Graphic storytelling with unique artwork supports the clear, compelling narratives that will stay with you. It's pretty sad to witness the tragedies in these children's lives. Powerful, emotional, deeply disturbing that leaves us with a sense of loss, even with these children's survival. We need more books like this. We must never forget.

Robert Burleigh *O Captain, My Captain: Walt Whitman, Abraham Lincoln, and the Civil War*

Dramatic, lyrical, and beautifully illustrated, O Captain, My Captain tells the story of one of America's greatest poets and how he was inspired by one of America's greatest presidents. Whitman and Lincoln shared the national stage in Washington, DC, during the Civil War. Though the two men never met, Whitman would often see Lincoln's carriage on the road. The president was never far from the poet's mind, and Lincoln's "grace under pressure" was something Whitman returned to again and again in his poetry. Whitman witnessed Lincoln's second inauguration and mourned along with America as Lincoln's funeral train wound its way across the landscape to his final resting place.

Fascinating and important! I learned so much history that I didn't know about both Abraham Lincoln and Walt Whitman. Whitman observed Lincoln as a candidate and later as the President. The Civil War affected Whitman deeply, he hated the suffering and visited wounded soldiers regularly.

Fiction: emotional

Basic

Sharon Creech *Heartbeat*

A touching story about a young girl finding her identity and learning how it fits with the many rhythms of life. Twelve-year-old Annie loves to run. When she's barefoot and running, she can hear her heart beating . . . *thump-THUMP, thump-THUMP*. It's a rhythm that makes sense in a year when everything's shifting: Her mother is pregnant, her grandfather is forgetful, and her best friend, Max, is always moody. Everything changes over time, just like the apple Annie's been assigned to draw. But as she watches and listens, Annie begins to understand the many rhythms of life, and how she fits within them.

Average

Tanya Landman *Apache: Girl Warrior*

Siki is an orphan of the Black Mountain Apache. Her mother was killed by Mexicans three years ago and her father lost in an ambush the winter before that. When Siki witnesses the brutal murder of her little brother Tazhi, she vows to become an Apache warrior and avenge her brother's death.

Kevin C. Holland *Gatty's Tale*

Gatty, who has never been further than her own village, is picked by Lady Gwyneth of Ewloe to join the band of pilgrims accompanying her to Jerusalem. The journey is fraught with danger and uncertainty, but opens Gatty's eyes to new wonders and transforms her.

Advanced

J.G. Ballard *Empire of the Sun*

Based on Ballard's own childhood, this is the extraordinary account of a boy's life in Japanese-occupied wartime Shanghai – a mesmerising, hypnotically compelling novel of war, of starvation and survival, of internment camps and death marches. It blends searing honesty with an almost hallucinatory vision of a world thrown utterly out of joint.

Louise Rennison *Angus, Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging*

Welcome to the world of Georgia Nicolson - an angst-ridden teenage girl who keeps a diary to record the rollercoaster of emotions and experiences she faces every day. Parents, boyfriends, bullies and hair-bleaching disasters are all part of Georgia's eventful life, which she relates with tremendous verve, wit and humour.

This riotous novel is the first in a series of hilarious Georgia Nicholson stories from bestselling author Louise Rennison, which are beloved by teenage girls across the world.

Fiction: action and adventure

Basic

Alex Shearer *Bootleg*

The Good for You Party is improving the health of the nation. Fruit and vegetables are compulsory and chocolates are banned. When best friends Smudger and Huntly discover an overlooked stock of cocoa and sugar, their secret chocolate-making business takes off fast. Can they stay ahead of the law?

Average

Nevil Shute *A Town Like Alice*

Jean Paget is just twenty years old and working in Malaya when the Japanese invasion begins. When she is captured she joins a group of other European women and children whom the Japanese force to march for miles through the jungle - an experience that leads to the deaths of many. Due to her courageous spirit and ability to speak Malay, Jean takes on the role of leader of the sorry gaggle of prisoners and many end up owing their lives to her indomitable spirit.

R.L. Stevenson *Treasure Island*

When young Jim Hawkins finds a packet in Captain Flint's sea chest, he could not know that the map inside it would lead him to unimaginable treasure. Shipping as cabin boy on the *Hispaniola*, he sails with Squire Trelawney, Captain Smollett, Dr Livesey, the sinister Long John Silver and a frightening crew to Treasure Island. There, mutiny, murder and mayhem lead to a thrilling climax. Probably the best adventure story ever written!

J.V. Marshall *Walkabout*

Mary and her young brother Peter are the only survivors of an air crash in the middle of the Australian outback. Facing death from exhaustion and starvation, they meet an aboriginal boy who helps them to survive, and guides them along their long journey. But a terrible misunderstanding results in a tragedy that neither Mary nor Peter will ever forget . . .

Alan Gibbons *Shadow of the Minotaur*

For Phoenix it's easy. He hates his new home and the new school where he is bullied. He's embarrassed by his computer geek dad. But when he logs on to The Legendeer, the game his dad is working on, he can be a hero. He is Theseus fighting the terrifying Minotaur, or Perseus battling with snake-haired Medusa. It feels as though he's really there. The Legendeer is more than just a game. Play it if you dare.

Cornelia Funke *Inkheart*

Meggie is the daughter of a revered bookbinder called Mo whose peaceful existence is one night shattered by the arrival of Dustfinger--a shadowy man with a mysterious link to Mo's past. Mo and Meggie are soon on the move, running from something that threatens everything they hold dear. But the past inevitably catches up with them and Mo is forced to reveal to his daughter for the first time his terrible secret. He has the ability, or curse, to breathe life into any story he reads and make the characters come alive. Just such a character, the sinister Capricorn, is after Mo to ensure that he stays alive and is never returned to the pages from which he was sprung. And, of course, he'll stop at nothing to guarantee success.

Sam Angus *A Horse Called Hero*

London 1940. Dodo and her little brother Wolfie do not know what has happened to their father. A cavalry officer, war hero and veteran of the Somme, he has gone missing at Dunkirk. The children are evacuated to the West Country where they are alone and frightened as their father is accused of cowardice and desertion. Wolfie finds an abandoned foal, names him Hero and raises him. Together they roam the hills finding freedom and happiness, little suspecting the dark shadow that hangs over them and the test that lies in store for them both...

Advanced

William Golding *Lord of the Flies*

A plane crashes on an uninhabited island and the only survivors, a group of schoolboys, assemble on the beach and wait to be rescued. By day they inhabit a land of bright fantastic birds and dark blue seas, but at night their dreams are haunted by the image of a terrifying beast. Join the boys as they gradually descend into a world of fighting, tribal politics and slaughter; leaving behind their British values for a dark and murderous chaos.

S.E. Hinton *The Outsiders*

The Socs' idea of having a good time is beating up Greasers like Ponyboy. Ponyboy knows what to expect and knows he can count on his brothers and friends - until the night someone takes things too far. According to Ponyboy, there are two kinds of people in the world: greasers and socs. A soc (short for "social") has money, can get away with just about anything, and has an attitude longer than a limousine. A greaser, on the other hand, always lives on the outside and needs to watch his back. Ponyboy is a greaser, and he's always been proud of it, even willing to rumble against a gang of socs for the sake of his fellow greasers--until one terrible night when his friend Johnny kills a soc.

Scott Westerfield *Uglies*

Tally can't wait to turn sixteen and become Pretty. Sixteen is the magic number that brings a transformation from a repellent Ugly into a stunningly attractive Pretty, and catapults you into a high-tech paradise where your only job is to have a really great time. In just a few weeks, Tally will be there. But Tally's new friend, Shay, isn't sure she wants to be Pretty. She'd rather risk life on the outside. When Shay runs away, Tally learns about a whole new side of the Pretty world - and it isn't very pretty.

Fiction: family and relationships

Basic

Meg Cabot *All American Girl: Ready or Not*

A year ago Sam Madison saved the President of the USA from assassination. A year ago she became a teen celebrity - and started dating David, the First Son. Now, one year on, everyone thinks Sam is ready - for just about anything. Her art teacher thinks she's ready to draw naked people. The President thinks she's ready to present his Return to Family bill to the American people on live TV. And scariest of all, David seems to think

he and Sam are ready to crank their relationship up to the next level. They are ready to do it! Everyone thinks Sam is ready - except Sam herself.

Alex Shearer *The Crush*

Ally Morgan is in love, and not with just anybody - she's fallen for Stevie: good-looking, talented, popular and unattainable, Stevie Manns. But Ally hasn't just fallen for the boy next door: Stevie is the lead vocalist in Five - Britain's boy band phenomenon. Still, Ally knows that she and Stevie are meant to be together.

Michael Morpurgo *Who's a Big Bully Then?*

School bully, Darren Bishop, is furious after he is out paced in the school race by that 'little git' - and he can't have that now, can he? So when the 'little git' challenges Darren to a battle of courage, he thinks he can't lose and can't wait to show him who's boss.

Average

Dodie Smith *I Capture the Castle*

Cassandra Mortmain lives with her bohemian and impoverished family in a crumbling castle in the middle of nowhere. Her journal records her life with her beautiful, bored sister, Rose, her fadingly glamorous stepmother, Topaz, her little brother Thomas and her eccentric novelist father who suffers from a financially crippling writer's block. However, all their lives are turned upside down when the American heirs to the castle arrive and Cassandra finds herself falling in love for the first time.

Mildred Taylor *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

Cassie finds it difficult to understand why the farm means so much to her father. But, as she witnesses the hatred and destruction all around her, she begins to learn the importance of standing up for your rights. A story set during America's Great Depression.

Elizabeth Laird *The Garbage King*

Inspired by a true story, When Mamo's mother dies, he is abandoned in the shanties of Addis Ababa. Stolen by a child-trafficker and sold to a farmer, he is cruelly treated. Escaping back to the city, he meets another, very different runaway. Dani is rich, educated – and fleeing his tyrannical father. Together they join a gang of homeless street boys who survive only by mutual bonds of trust and total dependence on each other.

Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*

A murder mystery like no other, where the detective, and narrator, is Christopher Boone. Christopher is fifteen and has Asperger's Syndrome. He knows a very great deal about maths and very little about human beings. He loves lists, patterns and the truth. He hates the colours yellow and brown and being touched. He has never gone further than the end of the road on his own, but when he finds a neighbour's dog murdered he sets out on a terrifying journey which will turn his whole world upside down.

Alyssa Brugman *Walking Naked*

Megan is one of the leaders of the in-group. She wouldn't dream of talking to Perdita, 'the Freak'. But when they are thrown together in detention, she finds herself drawn into a spiky, challenging almost-friendship. Megan faces an uncomfortable truth: Perdita or the group?

Advanced

Charles Dickens *Oliver Twist*

Dark, mysterious and mordantly funny, *Oliver Twist* features some of the most memorably drawn villains in all of fiction - the treacherous gang master Fagin, the menacing thug Bill Sikes, the Artful Dodger and their den of thieves in the grimy London backstreets. Dicken's novel is both an angry indictment of poverty, and an adventure filled with an air of threat and pervasive evil.

Charlotte Bronte *Jane Eyre*

A tale of love between the governess Jane Eyre and her master Mr Rochester, and the chilling secret set to tear them both apart. This bildungsroman takes the reader on an exciting journey through life in Victorian England- experiencing the hardships and heartaches of life for impoverished and disadvantaged women. The tale is made captivating by its Gothic elements and hair-raising frights which will keep the reader in suspense until the last page.

Fiction: fantasy

Basic

Michelle Paver *Wolf Brother*

Thousands of years ago the hunter-gatherers roam. They know every tree and herb and they know how to survive in a time of enchantment and powerful magic. Until an ambitious and malevolent force conjures a demon: a demon so evil that it can be contained only in the body of a ferocious bear that will slay everything it sees, a demon determined to destroy the world. Only one boy can stop it - 12 year old Torak, who has seen his father murdered by the bear.

J.K. Rowling *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*

A mysterious letter, delivered by the friendly giant Hagrid, wrenches Harry from his dreary, Muggle-ridden existence: "We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry". Of course, Uncle Vernon yells most unpleasantly, "I AM NOT PAYING FOR SOME CRACKPOT OLD FOOL TO TEACH HIM MAGIC TRICKS!" Soon enough, however, Harry finds himself at Hogwarts with his owl Hedwig ... and that's where the real adventure--humorous, haunting, and suspenseful--begins.

Average

J.K. Rowling *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

After just about surviving yet another summer with the dreadful Dursleys, the arrival of Aunt Marge is the final straw and, in a fit of anger, Harry casts a spell on her, causing her to blow up like a balloon. He fully expects to be expelled from Hogwarts for his blatant flaunting of the rule not to use magic outside term time, but the arrival of the mysterious Knight Bus and a meeting with Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic, result in Harry enjoying the rest of the holidays in the wonderful surroundings of the Leaky Cauldron. Meanwhile Sirius Black--one-time friend of Harry's parents, implicated in their murder and follower of "You-Know-Who"--escapes from Azkaban and this has serious implications for Harry. Back at Hogwarts, Harry's movements are restricted by the presence of the Dementors--guards from Azkaban on the lookout for Black.

Richard Adams *Watership Down*

Fiver could sense danger. Something terrible was going to happen to the warren - he felt sure of it. So did his brother Hazel, for Fiver's sixth sense was never wrong. They had to leave immediately, and they had to persuade the other rabbits to join them. And so begins a long and perilous journey of a small band of rabbits in search of a safe home. Fiver's vision finally leads them to Watership Down, but here they face their most difficult challenge of all . . .

Cornelia Funke *Dragon Rider*

A dragon. A boy. A journey. Firedrake, a brave young dragon, his loyal brownie friend Sorrel and a lonely boy called Ben are united as if by destiny. Together, they embark on a magical journey to find the legendary place where silver dragons can live in peace for ever. With only a curious map and the whispered memories of an old dragon to guide them, they fly across moonlit lands and seas to reach the highest mountains in the world. Along the way, they discover extraordinary new friends in unlikely places and a courage they never knew they had. Just as well, for the greatest enemy of all is never far behind them - a heartless monster from the past who has been waiting a very long time to destroy the last dragons on earth.

C.S. Lewis *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Four adventurous siblings—Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy Pevensie—step through a wardrobe door and into the land of Narnia, a land frozen in eternal winter and enslaved by the power of the White Witch. But when almost all hope is lost, the return of the Great Lion, Aslan, signals a great change . . . and a great sacrifice.

JK Rowling *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*

In the pages of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child, one of the very great creations of children's literature – the incredible world of Harry Potter – lives once again, the unmistakable and authentic voice of J.K. Rowling given sparkling form by writer Jack Thorne's unmatched understanding of the series. As both companion to the play and as a standalone volume in its own right, the *Official Script Book* is the ultimate passport of return to the world's most treasured fictional universe.

Ursula Le Guin *The Wizard of Earthsea*

The island of Gont is a land famous for wizards. Of these, some say the greatest - and surely the greatest voyager - is the man called Sparrowhawk. As a reckless, awkward boy, he discovered the great power that was in him - with terrifying consequences. Tempted by pride to try spells beyond his means, Sparrowhawk

lets loose an evil shadow-beast in his land. Only he can destroy it, and the quest leads him to the farthest corner of Earthsea

Advanced

J.R.Tolkein *The Hobbit*

Bilbo Baggins is a hobbit who enjoys a comfortable, unambitious life, rarely travelling further than the pantry of his hobbit-hole in Bag End. But his contentment is disturbed when the wizard, Gandalf, and a company of thirteen dwarves arrive on his doorstep one day to whisk him away on an unexpected journey 'there and back again'. They have a plot to raid the treasure hoard of Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon...

Philip Pullman *Northern Lights*

Lyra Belacqua and her animal daemon live half-wild and carefree among scholars of Jordan College, Oxford. The destiny that awaits her will take her to the frozen lands of the Arctic, where witch-clans reign and ice-bears fight. Her extraordinary journey will have immeasurable consequences far beyond her own world...

Philip Pullman *The Book of Dust: La Belle Sauvage*

We delve back in to alternate-world Oxford, miles from armoured bears but surrounded yet again by daemons and the mysterious alethiometers, following a young boy named Malcolm who is stuck in a world where young working-class boys are mostly discouraged from learning beyond their schooling and are fervently taught that religion is the only truth.

There is really no great ingenuity here that came previously with *His Dark Materials* and honestly, that is the only place to start with Philip Pullman. It begins idyllic and slow, building the story as the rain falls. Intrigue comes in to place in many parts, but it's quite often when you expect it. We meet characters we met in *His Dark Materials* and you are setting yourself up for some major spoilers if you read this book first, but truthfully it is the journey of a book not the ending that makes it.

Peter Dickinson *The Ropemaker*

The magic in the Valley is dying. In the forest, the cedar trees whisper the news. The age-old spell can no longer protect the land from its enemies. Four companions must find the sorcerer who conjured the ancient power. He has not been seen for centuries, hidden in the dark heart of an evil Empire. Their journey is desperately dangerous, and the travellers are shadowed by a mysterious figure. Is the shape-changing Ropemaker their ally? Or a deadly enemy? And does he command the deepest magic of all? That weaves and unweaves the great rope that is time itself....

Frank Herbert *Dune*

Set in the far future amidst a sprawling feudal interstellar empire where planetary dynasties are controlled by noble houses that owe an allegiance to the imperial House Corrino, *Dune* tells the story of young Paul Atreides (the heir apparent to Duke Leto Atreides and heir of House Atreides) as he and his family accept control of the desert planet Arrakis, the only source of the 'spice' melange, the most important and valuable substance in the cosmos. The story explores the complex, multi-layered interactions of politics, religion, ecology, technology, and human emotion as the forces of the empire confront each other for control of Arrakis.

Published in 1965, it won the Hugo Award in 1966 and the inaugural Nebula Award for Best Novel. *Dune* is frequently cited as the world's best-selling sf novel.

Raymond E. Feist *Magician*

To the forest on the shore of the Kingdom of the Isles, the orphan Pug came to study with the master magician Kulkan. But though his courage won him a place at court and the heart of a lovely Princess, he was ill at ease with the normal ways of wizardry. Yet Pug's strange sort of magic would one day change forever the fates of two worlds. For dark beings from another world had opened a rift in the fabric of space-time to being again the age-old battle between the forces of Order and Chaos.

Fiction: horror

Basic

R.L.Stine *Goosebumps Horrorlands – The Streets of Panic Park*

A spooky tale where a group of kids already terrified because they were trapped in Horrorland reach a place called Panic Park where they meet fear face to face. The kids trapped in HorrorLand thought they had reason enough to panic. That was before they reached Panic Park - a perilous place that makes HorrorLand seem like HappyLand. Now they must find a way to end this scary journey, once and for all. All of HorrorLand's shocking secrets will finally be revealed ... but can the kids ever make it out alive?

Charlie Higson *The Enemy*

When the sickness came, every parent, police officer, politician - every adult fell ill. The lucky ones died. The others are crazed, confused and hungry.

Only children under fourteen remain, and they're fighting to survive.

Now there are rumours of a safe place to hide. And so a gang of children begin their quest across London, where all through the city - down alleyways, in deserted houses, underground - the grown-ups lie in wait. But can they make it there - alive?

Neil Gaiman *The Graveyard Book*

When a baby escapes a murderer intent on killing the entire family, who would have thought it would find safety and security in the local graveyard? Brought up by the resident ghosts, ghouls and spectres, Bod has an eccentric childhood learning about life from the dead. But for Bod there is also the danger of the murderer still looking for him - after all, he is the last remaining member of the family. A stunningly original novel deftly constructed over eight chapters, featuring every second year of Bod's life, from babyhood to adolescence. Will Bod survive to be a man?

Adam Stower *King Coo – The Curse of the Mummy's Gold*

Ben Pole is back at school and back in trouble!

A band of burglars and an ancient mystical curse have him in a terrifying tangle.

Who will save the day? Will they catch the Midnight Mob? Will Ben survive breakfast?

He needs a genius. He needs a fearless bearded girl. He needs KING COO!

Average

Darren Shan *Vampire Blood Trilogy – start with Cirque Du Freak*

Darren goes to a banned freak show with his best mate Steve. It's the wonderfully gothic Cirque Du Freak where weird, frightening half human/half animals appear who interact terrifyingly with the audience. Darren – a spider freak – 'falls in love' with Madam Octa – an enormous tarantula owned by Mr Crepsley. Darren determines to steal the spider so that he can train it to perform amazing deeds. But his daring theft goes horribly wrong and Darren finds himself having to make a bargain with a creature of the night.

Marcus Sedgwick *My Swordhand is Singing*

In the bitter cold of an unrelenting winter Tomas and his son, Peter, arrive in Chust and despite the inhospitability of the villagers settle there as woodcutters. Tomas digs a channel of fast-flowing waters around their hut so they have their own little island kingdom. Peter doesn't understand why his father has done this, nor why his father carries a long battered box everywhere they go, and why he is forbidden to know its contents. This is a chilling vampire tale set in the 17th Century and based on traditional Transylvanian folk tales.

Anthony Horowitz *Scared to Death*

A collection of short stories by the master of horror.

This terrifically twisted and wickedly funny collection of spine-tingling short stories is only recommended for the most fearless of readers.

From man-eating massage chairs, to terrifying train rides with the living dead or sinister sat-navs that direct you to doom, these ten gruesome tales are guaranteed to make your blood curdle.

Advanced

Susan Hill *The Woman in Black*

Terrifyingly written in the first person, this gothic horror explores the nightmare experienced by Arthur Kipps as he is confronted by a woman in black. This gripping horror will pull the reader along a truly horrific journey as the protagonist races against time to find out the truth about this mysterious and deadly woman.

Fiction: science fiction

Basic

Robert Swindells *Hydra*

It was sick and hungry and a long, long way from home...

Something is causing mysterious circles to appear in the cornfields of Cansfield Farm. And someone, or *something*, has obviously terrified Barry Cansfield, the farmer's bullying son. But when friends Ben and Midge

Imagine you're the only boy in a town of men. And you can hear everything they think. And they can hear everything you think. Imagine you don't fit in with their plans...Todd Hewitt is just one month away from the birthday that will make him a man. But his town has been keeping secrets from him. Secrets that are going to force him to run...The new edition of this unflinching novel about fear, flight and the terrifying path of self-discovery features the short story, *The New World*. Set before the events of *The Knife of Never Letting Go*, it is the story of Viola's dramatic journey to the New World.

Aldous Huxley *Brave New World*

Far in the future, the World Controllers have created the ideal society. Through clever use of genetic engineering, brainwashing and recreational sex and drugs all its members are happy consumers. Bernard Marx seems alone harbouring an ill-defined longing to break free. A visit to one of the few remaining Savage Reservations where the old, imperfect life still continues, may be the cure for his distress... Huxley's ingenious fantasy of the future sheds a blazing light on the present and is considered to be his most enduring masterpiece

Orson Scott Card *Ender's Game*

An alien threat is on the horizon, ready to strike. And if humanity is to be defended, the government must create the greatest military commander in history. The brilliant young Ender Wiggin is their last hope. But first he must survive the rigours of a brutal military training program - to prove that he can be the leader of all leaders. A saviour for mankind must be produced, through whatever means possible. But are they creating a hero or a monster? This is the multiple award-winning classic 'Ender's Game' - a ground-breaking tale of war, strategy and survival.

William Gibson *Neuromancer*

William Gibson revolutionised science fiction in his 1984 debut *Neuromancer*. The writer who gave us the matrix and coined the term 'cyberspace' produced a first novel that won the Hugo, Nebula and Philip K. Dick Awards, and lit the fuse on the Cyberpunk movement. More than three decades later, Gibson's text is as stylish as ever, his noir narrative still glitters like chrome in the shadows and his depictions of the rise and abuse of corporate power look more prescient every day. Part thriller, part warning, *Neuromancer* is a timeless classic of modern SF and one of the 20th century's most potent and compelling visions of the future.

Fiction: mystery and thriller

Basic

Ian Sasom *Case of the Missing Library Books*

Sounds boring? Never judge a book by its cover. After Israel Armstrong arrives in Ireland to take up his first ever job as a librarian he discovers 15,000 books missing from the library. Who would steal library books?

Average

Anne Cassidy *Missing Judy*

A gripping novel about the mystery surrounding the disappearance of a six year old and the guilt of a sixteen year old sister who feels responsible. Eight years ago, Kim Hockney's little sister Judy disappeared. The family have never been able to stop hoping that she's still alive. Kim can never forget that she let Judy run off that afternoon, but now someone thinks they've found her.

Valerie Mendes *Girl in the Attic*

Chilling mystery novel/ghost story set in Cornwall after a family move from London. Thirteen-year-old Nathan is furious when his mum hauls him off to Cornwall for Christmas and then tells him they are to move there for good. He knows he must accept the fact that his dad has left them, but he is desperate to be back with him in London. He has never been separated from his best friend, Tom, either. Life, it seems to him, has become intolerably unfair.

Advanced

Philip Pullman *The Butterfly Tattoo*

The agony of a first love and the unfortunate tale of violence and tragedy that ensues. Chris, a naive lad, suspended between school and college, and Jenny, a free spirit fleeing a traumatised childhood, fall in love against the backdrop of modern Oxford. But they are caught in the crossfire, as the past of Barry Miller catches up with him in the form of Carson, a gangster out for revenge

Philip Pullman *Ruby in the Smoke*

Exceptional mystery about a girl trying to discover the reasons behind her father's murder. A further two novels involving the protagonist Sally Lockhart were subsequently published. The novel is the story of 16-year-old Sally Lockhart, who has to grow up fast when her beloved father is lost at sea, and the mysteries – and mysterious deaths – start to pile up around her. Searching for the truth in the underbelly of Victorian London, she learns of a mutiny in India and a missing jewel, but she must outwit the murderous Mrs Holland, who seems to be on her trail.

Ransom Riggs *Tales of the Peculiar*

A unique book of fairy tales set in the world of Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children, the internationally bestselling series by Ransom Riggs has been adapted to a major motion picture from acclaimed director Tim Burton. In this collection, you are invited to uncover hidden information about the peculiar world. A fork-tongued princess, and wealthy cannibals who dine on the discarded limbs of peculiars, are just two of the stories sure to please the many fans of the series. Featuring stunning illustrations from world-renowned artist Andrew Davidson, this compelling, rich, and truly peculiar anthology is the perfect gift for not only fans, but for all lovers of great storytelling.

'A room without books is like a body without a soul'

Marcus T. Cicero (Philosopher)