

Reading beyond the classroom

English Language and Literature, Years 10 & 11

BYRCHALL
HIGH SCHOOL

While in Years 10 and 11 students should try and read a wide variety of books and poetry. 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 particularly great source of reading at this age, gives insight into the world around us and will help prepare students for their English Language examinations. There are a number of high-quality news sites online:

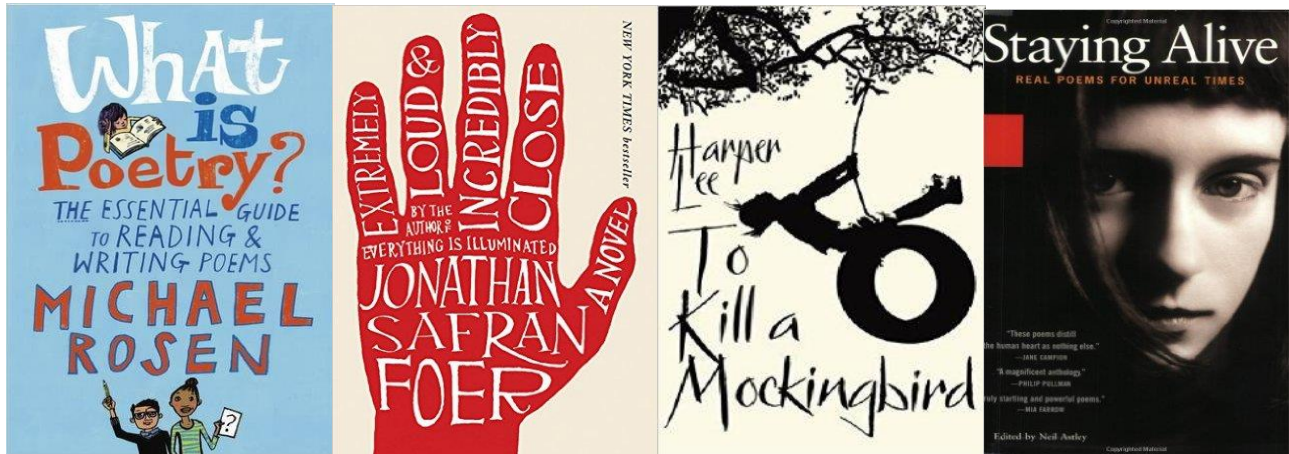
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news>
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk>
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/index.html>
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/>
<https://www.independent.co.uk/>

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.lovereadin4kids.co.uk
www.ukchildrensbooks.co.uk
www.thepoetryhour.com

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

In addition to this, my 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

Terry Pratchett *A Slip of the Keyboard: Collected Non-fiction*

Terry Pratchett earned a place in the hearts of readers the world over with his bestselling Discworld series – but in recent years he became equally well-known as an outspoken campaigner for causes including Alzheimer's research and animal rights. *A Slip of the Keyboard* brings together the best of Pratchett's non-fiction writing on his life, on his work, and on the weirdness of the world: from Granny Pratchett to Gandalf's love life; from banana daiquiris to books that inspired him; from getting started as a writer to the injustices that he fought to end.

Rosemary J Mundhenk *Victorian Prose: an Anthology*

This anthology covers non-fiction writings from a range of well-known Victorian writers covering a plethora of issues that were central to Victorian life. It is an essential read for students who wish to familiarise themselves with the language of the 19th Century and the complex vocabulary and sentence structure they are likely to encounter

Maya Angelou *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Sent by their mother to live with their devout, self-sufficient grandmother in a small Southern town, Maya and her brother, Bailey, endure the ache of abandonment and the prejudice of the local "powhitetrash." At eight years old and back at her mother's side in St. Louis, Maya is attacked by a man many times her age—and has to live with the consequences for a lifetime. Years later, in San Francisco, Maya learns that love for herself, the kindness of others, her own strong spirit, and the ideas of great authors ("I met and fell in love with William Shakespeare") will allow her to be free instead of imprisoned. Poetic and powerful, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* will touch hearts and change minds for as long as people read.

Sal Polisi *The Sinatra Club: My Life Inside the New York Mafia*

As a member of New York's feared Colombo Family, Polisi ran The Sinatra Club, an illegal after-hours gambling den that was a magic kingdom of crime and a hangout for up-and-coming mobsters like John Gotti and the three wise guys immortalized in Martin Scorsese's *GoodFellas*—Henry Hill, Jimmy Burke, and Tommy DeSimone. But the nonstop thrills of Polisi's criminal glory days abruptly ended when he was busted for drug trafficking. Already sickened by the bloodbath that engulfed the Mob as it teetered toward extinction, he flipped and became one of a breed he had loathed all his life—a rat. In this shocking, pulse-pounding, and, at times, darkly hilarious first-person chronicle, he paints a never-before-seen picture of a larger-than-life secret underworld that, thanks to guys like him, no longer exists.

Nick Hornby *Fever Pitch*

In America, it is soccer. But in Great Britain, it is the real football. No pads, no prayers, no prisoners. And that's before the players even take the field.

Nick Hornby has been a football fan since the moment he was conceived. Call it pre-destiny. Or call it preschool. *Fever Pitch* is his tribute to a lifelong obsession. Part autobiography, part comedy, part incisive analysis of insanity, Hornby's award-winning memoir captures the fever pitch of fandom — its agony and ecstasy, its community, its defining role in thousands of young mens' coming-of-age stories. *Fever Pitch* is one for the home team. But above all, it is one for everyone who knows what it really means to have a losing season.

Charles Brandt *Heard You Paint Houses: Frank "The Irishman" Sheeran and Closing the Case on Jimmy Hoffa*

The first words Jimmy Hoffa ever spoke to Frank "the Irishman" Sheeran were, "I heard you paint houses." To paint a house is to kill a man. The paint is the blood that splatters on the walls and floors. In the course of nearly five years of recorded interviews Frank Sheeran confessed to Charles Brandt that he handled more than twenty-five hits for the mob, and for his friend Hoffa. Sheeran learned to kill in the U.S. Army, where he saw an astonishing 411 days of active combat duty in Italy during World War II. After returning home he became a hustler and hit man, working for legendary crime boss Russell Bufalino. Eventually he would rise to a position of such prominence that in a RICO suit then-U.S. Attorney Rudy Giuliani would name him as one of only two non-Italians on a list of 26 top mob figures. When Bufalino ordered Sheeran to kill Hoffa, he did the deed, knowing that if he had refused he would have been killed himself. Sheeran's important and fascinating story includes new information on other famous murders, and provides rare insight to a chapter in American history. Charles Brandt has written a page-turner that is destined to become a true crime classic

Nicholas Pileggi *Wiseguy: Life in a Mafia Family*

'At the age of twelve my ambition was to be a gangster. To me being a wiseguy was better than being president of the United States. To be a wiseguy was to own the world.' "GoodFellas" is Henry Hill's own story, telling the fascinating and sometimes brutal details of the day-to-day life of a working New York mobster - the violence, wild spending sprees, his wife, his mistress, his code of honour. From the small-time scamming of his early years, his first arrest at the age of sixteen and initiation into the dealings of his wiseguy friends and bosses, Henry Hill tells of the good times, dodgy dealings, indulgences, and the insularity of the mob-controlled neighbourhoods. But things start to go

too far. To save his own life, Hill turns into a Federal witness, and the mob is to this day still hunting him down for revealing their involvement in hundreds of crimes including arson, extortion, hijacking, the six-million dollar Lufthansa heist (the most successful cash robbery in US history), and murder.

Claire Hartfield *A Few Drops: The Chicago Race Riot of 1919*

On a hot day in July 1919, five black youths went swimming in Lake Michigan, unintentionally floating close to the “white” beach. An angry white man began throwing stones at the boys, striking and killing one. Racial conflict on the beach erupted into days of urban violence that shook the city of Chicago to its foundations. This mesmerizing narrative draws on contemporary accounts as it traces the roots of the explosion that had been building for decades in race relations, politics, business, and clashes of culture.

Sonia Sotomayor *The Beloved World of Sonia Sotomayor*

Sonia Sotomayor was just a girl when she dared to dream big. Her dream? To become a lawyer and a judge even though she’d never met one of either, and none lived in her neighbourhood.

Sonia did not let the hardships of her background—which included growing up in the rough housing projects of New York City’s South Bronx, dealing with juvenile diabetes, coping with parents who argued and fought personal demons, and worrying about money—stand in her way. Always, she believed in herself. Her determination, along with guidance from generous mentors and the unwavering love of her extended Puerto Rican family, propelled her ever forward.

Eventually, all of Sonia’s hard work led to her appointment as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court in 2009, a role that she has held ever since.

Bridget Heos *Blood, Bullets and Bones*

Since the introduction of DNA testing, forensic science has been in the forefront of the public’s imagination, thanks especially to popular television shows like CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. But forensic analysis has been practiced for thousands of years. Ancient Chinese detectives studied dead bodies for signs of foul play, and in Victorian England, officials used crime scene photography and criminal profiling to investigate the Jack the Ripper murders. In the intervening decades, forensic science has evolved to use the most cutting-edge, innovative techniques and technologies.

In this book, acclaimed author Bridget Heos uses real-life cases to tell the history of modern forensic science, from the first test for arsenic poisoning to fingerprinting, firearm and blood spatter analysis, DNA evidence, and all the important milestones in between. By turns captivating and shocking, *Blood, Bullets, and Bones* demonstrates the essential role forensic science has played in our criminal justice system.

Candace Fleming *The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion and the Fall of Imperial Russia*

Any student who claims history is boring should get their hands on this book. Fleming writes about Russia’s last royal family and its downfall in a gripping way, covering every spot of doom in its gilded halls.

Here is the tumultuous, heartrending, true story of the Romanovs—at once an intimate portrait of Russia’s last royal family and a gripping account of its undoing. Using captivating photos and compelling first person accounts, award-winning author Candace Fleming (*Amelia Lost*; *The Lincolns*) deftly manoeuvres between the imperial family’s extravagant lives and the plight of Russia’s poor masses, making this an utterly mesmerizing read as well as a perfect resource for meeting Common Core standards.

Deborah Hopkinson *Ordinary, Extraordinary Jane Austen*

It is a truth universally acknowledged that Jane Austen is one of our greatest writers.

But before that, she was just an ordinary girl.

In fact, young Jane was a bit quiet and shy; if you had met her back then, you might not have noticed her at all. But she would have noticed you. Jane watched and listened to all the things people around her did and said and locked those observations away for safekeeping.

Jane also loved to read. She devoured everything in her father’s massive library, and before long she began creating her own stories. In her time, the most popular books were grand adventures and romances, but Jane wanted to go her own way . . . and went on to invent an entirely new kind of novel.

Deborah Hopkinson and Qin Leng have collaborated on a gorgeous tribute to an independent thinker who turned ordinary life into extraordinary stories and created a body of work that has delighted and inspired readers for generations.

Fiction: historical/war

Kurt Vonnegut *Slaughterhouse 5*

Kurt Vonnegut's absurdist classic *Slaughterhouse-Five* introduces us to Billy Pilgrim, a man who becomes unstuck in time after he is abducted by aliens from the planet Tralfamadore. In a plot-scrambling display of virtuosity, we follow Pilgrim simultaneously through all phases of his life, concentrating on his (and Vonnegut's) shattering experience as an American prisoner of war who witnesses the firebombing of Dresden.

Don DeLillo *Libra*

In this powerful, eerily convincing fictional speculation on the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Don DeLillo chronicles Lee Harvey Oswald's odyssey from troubled teenager to a man of precarious stability who imagines himself an agent of history. When "history" presents itself in the form of two disgruntled CIA operatives who decide that an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the president will galvanize the nation against communism, the scales are irrevocably tipped. A gripping, masterful blend of fact and fiction, alive with meticulously portrayed characters both real and created, *Libra* is a grave, haunting, and brilliant examination of an event that has become an indelible part of the American psyche.

Hilary Mantell *Wolf Hall and Bringing Out the Bodies*

England in the 1520s is a heartbeat from disaster. If the king dies without a male heir, the country could be destroyed by civil war. Henry VIII wants to annul his marriage of twenty years and marry Anne Boleyn. The pope and most of Europe opposes him. Into this impasse steps Thomas Cromwell: a wholly original man, a charmer and a bully, both idealist and opportunist, astute in reading people, and implacable in his ambition. But Henry is volatile: one day tender, one day murderous. Cromwell helps him break the opposition, but what will be the price of his triumph?

Colson Whitehead *The Underground Railroad*

Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia, she is also an outcast and she is approaching womanhood where greater pain and danger lies. So when Caesar, a slave newly arrived from Virginia, tells her about the underground railroad, Cora takes the monumental decision to accompany him on his escape to the North.

Thus begins Cora's perilous journey as she is pursued by a ruthless slave-catcher named Ridgeway, obsessed by both Cora and her mother, who eluded in years before.

Ernest Hemingway *A Farewell to Arms*

This is the unforgettable story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front and his passion for a beautiful English nurse. Set against the looming horrors of the battlefield - the weary, demoralized men marching in the rain during the German attack on Caporetto; the profound struggle between loyalty and desertion—this gripping, semiautobiographical work captures the harsh realities of war and the pain of lovers caught in its inexorable sweep. Ernest Hemingway famously said that he rewrote his ending to *A Farewell to Arms* thirty-nine times to get the words right.

Robert Harris *Enigma*

Bletchley Park: the top-secret landmark of World War Two, where a group of young people were fighting to defeat Hitler, and win the war. March 1943, the Second World War hangs in the balance, and at Bletchley Park a brilliant young codebreaker is facing a double nightmare. The Germans have unaccountably changed their U-boat Enigma code, threatening a massive Allied defeat. And as suspicion grows that there may be a spy inside Bletchley, Jericho's girlfriend, the beautiful and mysterious Claire Romilly suddenly disappears.

Zadie Smith *White Teeth*

At the centre of this invigorating novel are two unlikely friends, Archie Jones and Samad Iqbal. Hapless veterans of World War II, Archie and Samad and their families become agents of England's irrevocable transformation. A second marriage to Clara Bowden, a beautiful, albeit tooth-challenged, Jamaican half his age, quite literally gives Archie a second lease on life, and produces Irie, a knowing child whose personality doesn't quite match her name (Jamaican for "no problem"). Samad's late-in-life arranged marriage (he had to wait for his bride to be born), produces twin sons whose separate paths confound Iqbal's every effort to direct them, and a renewed, if selective, submission to his Islamic faith. Set against London's racial and cultural tapestry, venturing across the former empire

and into the past as it barrels toward the future, *White Teeth* revels in the ecstatic hodgepodge of modern life, flirting with disaster, confounding expectations, and embracing the comedy of daily existence.

Michael Ondaatje's *English Patient*

With ravishing beauty and unsettling intelligence, this novel traces the intersection of four damaged lives in an Italian villa at the end of World War II. Hana, the exhausted nurse; the maimed thief, Caravaggio; the wary sapper, Kip: each is haunted by the riddle of the English patient, the nameless, burned man who lies in an upstairs room and whose memories of passion, betrayal, and rescue illuminate this book like flashes of heat lightning.

Heather Morris *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*

In April 1942, Lale Sokolov, a Slovakian Jew, is forcibly transported to the concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau. When his captors discover that he speaks several languages, he is put to work as a *Tätowierer* (the German word for tattooist), tasked with permanently marking his fellow prisoners.

Imprisoned for more than two and a half years, Lale witnesses horrific atrocities and barbarism—but also incredible acts of bravery and compassion. Risking his own life, he uses his privileged position to exchange jewels and money from murdered Jews for food to keep his fellow prisoners alive. A vivid, harrowing, and ultimately hopeful re-creation of Lale Sokolov's experiences as the man who tattooed the arms of thousands of prisoners with what would become one of the most potent symbols of the Holocaust, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* is also a testament to the endurance of love and humanity under the darkest possible conditions.

Fiction: action and adventure

Yann Martel *The Life of Pi*

After the tragic sinking of a cargo ship, a solitary lifeboat remains bobbing on the wild, blue Pacific. The only survivors from the wreck are a sixteen year-old boy named Pi, a hyena, a zebra (with a broken leg), a female orang-utan -- and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger. The scene is set for one of the most extraordinary and best-loved works of fiction in recent years

Khaled Hosseini *The Kite Runner*

Afghanistan, 1975: Twelve-year-old Amir is desperate to win the local kite-fighting tournament and his loyal friend Hassan promises to help him. But neither of the boys can foresee what will happen to Hassan that afternoon, an event that is to shatter their lives. After the Russians invade and the family is forced to flee to America, Amir realises that one day he must return to Afghanistan under Taliban rule to find the one thing that his new world cannot grant him: redemption.

Markus Zusak *The Book Thief*

It is 1939. In Nazi Germany, the country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier - and will become busier still. By her brother's graveside, Liesel's life is changed forever when she picks up a single object, abandoned in the snow. It is *The Gravedigger's Handbook*, and this is her first act of book thievery. So begins Liesel's love affair with books and words, and soon she is stealing from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library . . . wherever there are books to be found. But these are dangerous times, and when Liesel's foster family hides a Jew in their basement, nothing will ever be the same again.

Benjamin Zephania *Refugee Boy*

Alem is on holiday with his father for a few days in London. He has never been out of Ethiopia before and is very excited. They have a great few days together until one morning when Alem wakes up in the bed and breakfast they are staying at to find the unthinkable. His father has left him. It is only when the owner of the bed and breakfast hands him a letter that Alem is given an explanation. Alem's father admits that because of the political problems in Ethiopia both he and Alem's mother felt Alem would be safer in London - even though it is breaking their hearts to do this. Alem is now on his own, in the hands of the social services and the Refugee Council. He lives from letter to letter, waiting to hear from his father, and in particular about his mother, who has now gone missing...

Fiction: family and relationships

Arundhati Roy *The God of Small Things*

Compared favorably to the works of Faulkner and Dickens, Arundhati Roy's Booker Prize winning debut novel is a modern classic that has been read and loved worldwide. Equal parts powerful family

saga, forbidden love story, and piercing political drama, it is the story of an affluent Indian family forever changed by one fateful day in 1969. The seven-year-old twins Estha and Rahel see their world shaken irrevocably by the arrival of their beautiful young cousin, Sophie.

Anita Desai *Fire on the Mountain*

Nanda Kul is old. She has chosen to spend her last years high in the mountains, but her solitude is broken with the arrival of her great-granddaughter, Raka. Through the long hot summer, hidden dependencies and old wounds are uncovered, until tragedy becomes inevitable. This is a heart-breaking and compelling read.

Rohinton Mistry *A Fine Balance*

With a compassionate realism and narrative sweep that recall the work of Charles Dickens, this magnificent novel captures all the cruelty and corruption, dignity and heroism, of India. The time is 1975. The place is an unnamed city by the sea. The government has just declared a State of Emergency, in whose upheavals four strangers--a spirited widow, a young student uprooted from his idyllic hill station, and two tailors who have fled the caste violence of their native village--will be thrust together, forced to share one cramped apartment and an uncertain future.

Harper Lee *To Kill a Mockingbird*

The unforgettable novel of a childhood in a sleepy Southern town and the crisis of conscience that rocked it, *To Kill a Mockingbird* became both an instant bestseller and a critical success when it was first published in 1960. It went on to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award-winning film, also a classic. Compassionate, dramatic, and deeply moving, *To Kill a Mockingbird* takes readers to the roots of human behaviour - to innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humour and pathos.

Holly Bourne *Are We All Lemmings and Snowflakes?*

Welcome to Camp Reset, a summer camp with a difference. A place offering a shot at “normality” for Olive, a girl on the edge, and for the new friends she never expected to make – who each have their own reasons for being there. Luckily Olive has a plan to solve all their problems. But how do you fix the world when you can't fix yourself?

John Green *Turtles All the Way Down*

It all begins with a fugitive billionaire and the promise of a cash reward. *Turtles All the Way Down* is about lifelong friendship, the intimacy of an unexpected reunion, Star Wars fan fiction, and tuatara. But at its heart is Aza Holmes, a young woman navigating daily existence within the ever-tightening spiral of her own thoughts.

In his long-awaited return, John Green shares Aza's story with shattering, unflinching clarity.

Angie Thomas *The Hate U Give*

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

Fiction: fantasy

Terry Pratchett *The Discworld Series*

This series has been a worldwide phenomenon. Hilarious, bizarre and still somehow utterly connected with reality, these novels really do offer a world for the reader to disappear into. Take care when reading on the bus as Pratchett's unique writing style may have you guffawing loudly and making a fool of yourself. You've been warned.

Philip Pullman *Once Upon a Time in the North*

When Lyra is studying at Oxford University, she comes across the story of Lee Scoresby and Iorek Byrnison's first meeting, many years ago, along with much evidence of the adventure that brought them together. When a young Texan balloonist, Lee Scoresby, comes down to earth in the harbour of

an Arctic town in the North, little does he realise that he is about to be embroiled in an out-and-out political brawl. Lee and his daemon, Hester, find themselves the target of political factions trying to take over the running (and oil) of the town. And also resident in the town are huge arctic bears, ignored and patronised by the people and treated like second-class citizens. When Lee and Lorek first meet, they cement a friendship that will continue throughout their lives, as the tensions and pressure in town lead to a deadly conclusion...

Neil Gaiman *The Norse Mythology*

The great Norse myths are woven into the fabric of our storytelling - from Tolkien, Alan Garner and Rosemary Sutcliff to *Game of Thrones* and Marvel Comics. They are also an inspiration for Neil Gaiman's own award-bedecked, bestselling fiction. Now he reaches back through time to the original source stories in a thrilling and vivid rendition of the great Norse tales. Gaiman's gods are thoroughly alive on the page - irascible, visceral, playful, passionate - and the tales carry us from the beginning of everything to Ragnarok and the twilight of the gods. Galvanised by Gaiman's prose, Thor, Loki, Odin and Freya are irresistible forces for modern readers and the crackling, brilliant writing demands to be read aloud around an open fire on a freezing, starlit night.

Fiction: horror

Charlie Higson *The Enemy Series*

Charlie Higson's *The Enemy* is the first in a jaw-dropping zombie horror series for teens. Everyone over the age of fourteen has succumbed to a deadly zombie virus and now the kids must keep themselves alive. 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.

Stephen King *The Bazaar of Bad Dreams: Stories*

Stephen King delivers a collection of stories, featuring revelatory autobiographical comments on when, why, and how he came to write (or rewrite) each story. There are thrilling connections between these works—themes of mortality, the afterlife, guilt, and what we would do differently if we could see into the future or correct the mistakes of the past. Magnificent, eerie, and utterly compelling, *The Bazaar of Bad Dreams* is one of Stephen King's finest gifts to readers everywhere—a master storyteller at his very best.

Henry James *The Turn of The Screw*

Widely recognized as one of literature's most gripping ghost stories, this classic tale of moral degradation concerns the sinister transformation of two innocent children into flagrant liars and hypocrites. The story begins when a governess arrives at an English country estate to look after Miles, aged ten, and Flora, eight. At first, everything appears normal but then events gradually begin to weave a spell of psychological terror.

Horace Walpole *The Castle of Otranto*

In a faraway medieval realm, Manfred, an arrogant and evil prince, rules with an iron fist. Banishing his wife to the castle dungeon, he confines — and plans to wed — the lovely Isabella, fiancée of his recently deceased son. The prince's plans are foiled, however, when a well-meaning peasant helps the young woman escape through the castle's underground passages. Grisly, supernatural events further aid in fulfilling a prophecy that spells doom for the prince and justice for Isabella's rescuer and rightful heir to the throne. One of the first and greatest of Gothic novels, this thrilling tale ranks among the most influential books in literary history.

Bram Stoker *Dracula*

A stunningly beautiful clothbound hardback edition of one of the most famous Gothic horror stories in the world.

Jonathan Harker is travelling to Castle Dracula to see the Transylvanian noble, Count Dracula. He is begged by locals not to go there, because on the eve of St George's Day, when the clock strikes midnight, all the evil things in the world will come full sway. But business must be done, so Jonathan makes his way to the Castle - and then his nightmare begins. His beloved wife Meena and other lost souls have fallen under the Count's horrifying spell. Dracula must be destroyed...

Stephen King *The Shining*

Jack Torrance's new job at the Overlook Hotel is the perfect chance for a fresh start. As the off-season caretaker at the atmospheric old hotel, he'll have plenty of time to spend reconnecting with

his family and working on his writing. But as the harsh winter weather sets in, the idyllic location feels ever more remote...and more sinister. And the only one to notice the strange and terrible forces gathering around the Overlook is Danny Torrance, a uniquely gifted five-year-old.

Stephen King *Carrie*

Carrie White is no ordinary girl.

Carrie White has the gift of telekinesis.

To be invited to prom night by Tommy Ross is a dream come true for Carrie - the first step towards social acceptance by her high school colleagues.

But events will take a decidedly macabre turn on that horrifying and endless night as she is forced to exercise her terrible gift on the town that mocks and loathes her.

Stephen King *The Gunslinger*

Stephen King introduces readers to one of his most enigmatic heroes, Roland of Gilead, The Last Gunslinger. He is a haunting figure, a loner on a spellbinding journey into good and evil. In his desolate world, which frighteningly mirrors our own, Roland pursues The Man in Black, encounters an alluring woman named Alice, and begins a friendship with the Kid from Earth called Jake. Both grippingly realistic and eerily dreamlike, *The Gunslinger* leaves readers eagerly awaiting the next chapter.

Wilkie Collins *The Woman in White*

The Woman in White famously opens with Walter Hartright's eerie encounter on a moonlit London road. Engaged as a drawing master to the beautiful Laura Fairlie, Walter becomes embroiled in the sinister intrigues of Sir Percival Glyde and his 'charming' friend Count Fosco, who has a taste for white mice, vanilla bonbons, and poison. Pursuing questions of identity and insanity along the paths and corridors of English country houses and the madhouse, *The Woman in White* is the first and most influential of the Victorian genre that combined Gothic horror with psychological realism.

Anne Rice *Interview with the Vampire*

In a darkened room a young man sits telling the macabre and eerie story of his life - the story of a vampire, gifted with eternal life, cursed with an exquisite craving for human blood.

Anne Rice's compulsively readable novel is arguably the most celebrated work of vampire fiction since Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was published in 1897.

Fiction: mystery and thriller

John Green *Paper Towns*

When Margo Roth Spiegelman beckons Quentin Jacobsen in the middle of the night—dressed like a ninja and plotting an ingenious campaign of revenge—he follows her. Margo's always planned extravagantly, and, until now, she's always planned solo. After a lifetime of loving Margo from afar, things are finally looking up for Q . . . until day breaks and she has vanished. Always an enigma, Margo has now become a mystery. But there are clues. And they're for Q.

Johnathan S. Foer *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

Nine-year-old Oskar Schell has embarked on an urgent, secret mission that will take him through the five boroughs of New York. His goal is to find the lock that matches a mysterious key that belonged to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on the morning of September 11. This seemingly impossible task will bring Oskar into contact with survivors of all sorts on an exhilarating, affecting, often hilarious, and ultimately healing journey. Don't be put off by the young protagonist, this is no bedtime story; it's a seriously sassy and compelling narrative with complex ideas and language to challenge any reader.

Daphne Du Maurier *Rebecca*

The novel begins in Monte Carlo, where our heroine is swept off her feet by the dashing widower Maxim de Winter and his sudden proposal of marriage. Orphaned and working as a lady's maid, she can barely believe her luck. It is only when they arrive at his massive country estate that she realizes how large a shadow his late wife will cast over their lives--presenting her with a lingering evil that threatens to destroy their marriage from beyond the grave...

Graham Greene *Brighton Rock*

A gang war is raging through the dark underworld of Brighton. Seventeen-year-old Pinkie, malign and ruthless, has killed a man. Believing he can escape retribution, he is unprepared for the courageous,

life-embracing Ida Arnold. Greene's gripping thriller, exposes a world of loneliness and fear, of life lived on the 'dangerous edge of things.'

Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow.

Although gifted with a superbly logical brain, for fifteen-year-old Christopher everyday interactions and admonishments have little meaning. He lives on patterns, rules, and a diagram kept in his pocket. Then one day, a neighbor's dog, Wellington, is killed and his carefully constructed universe is threatened. Christopher sets out to solve the murder in the style of his favourite (logical) detective, Sherlock Holmes. What follows makes for a novel that is funny, poignant and fascinating in its portrayal of a person whose curse and blessing are a mind that perceives the world entirely literally.

Dan Brown *The Da Vinci Code*

While in Paris, Harvard symbologist Robert Langdon is awakened by a phone call in the dead of the night. The elderly curator of the Louvre has been murdered inside the museum, his body covered in baffling symbols. As Langdon and gifted French cryptologist Sophie Neveu sort through the bizarre riddles, they are stunned to discover a trail of clues hidden in the works of Leonardo da Vinci—clues visible for all to see and yet ingeniously disguised by the painter.

Even more startling, the late curator was involved in the Priory of Sion—a secret society whose members included Sir Isaac Newton, Victor Hugo, and Da Vinci—and he guarded a breathtaking historical secret. Unless Langdon and Neveu can decipher the labyrinthine puzzle—while avoiding the faceless adversary who shadows their every move—the explosive, ancient truth will be lost forever.

Ray Celestin *The Axeman's Jazz*

New Orleans, 1919. As a dark serial killer - the Axeman - stalks the city, three individuals set out to unmask him:

Detective Lieutenant Michael Talbot - heading up the official investigation, but struggling to find leads, and harbouring a grave secret of his own.

Former detective Luca d'Andrea - now working for the mafia; his need to solve the mystery of the Axeman is every bit as urgent as that of the authorities.

And Ida - a secretary at the Pinkerton Detective Agency. Obsessed with Sherlock Holmes and dreaming of a better life, she stumbles across a clue which lures her and her musician friend, Louis Armstrong, to the case - and into terrible danger . . .

As Michael, Luca and Ida each draw closer to discovering the killer's identity, the Axeman himself will issue a challenge to the people of New Orleans: play jazz or risk becoming the next victim.

Fiction: dystopian

George Orwell *1984*

The year 1984 has come and gone, but George Orwell's prophetic, nightmarish vision in 1949 of the world we were becoming is timelier than ever. *1984* is still the great modern classic of "negative utopia"—a startlingly original and haunting novel that creates an imaginary world that is completely convincing, from the first sentence to the last four words. No one can deny the novel's hold on the imaginations of whole generations, or the power of its admonitions—a power that seems to grow, not lessen, with the passage of time.

Margaret Atwood *A Handmaid's Tale*

Offred lives in The Republic of Gilead. To some, it is a utopian vision of the future, a place of safety, a place where everyone has a purpose, a function. But The Republic of Gilead offers Offred only one function: to breed.

If she deviates, she will, like dissenters, be hanged at the wall or sent out to die slowly of radiation sickness. But even a repressive state cannot obliterate desire - neither Offred's nor that of the two men on which her future hangs.

Jo Nesbo *Macbeth*

He's the best cop they've got.

When a drug bust turns into a bloodbath it's up to Inspector Macbeth and his team to clean up the mess.

He's also an ex-drug addict with a troubled past.

He's rewarded for his success. Power. Money. Respect. They're all within reach.

But a man like him won't get to the top.

Plagued by hallucinations and paranoia, Macbeth starts to unravel. He's convinced he won't get what is rightfully his.

Unless he kills for it.

Lois Lowry *The Giver*

The Giver was written in 1993 (before *Divergent*, *The Hunger Games* and the rest of those YA dystopian novels!) and is written by Lois Lowry. I think it's ideal for readers 12+, girls and boys alike. [The Giver](#) follows Jonas, a young boy living in a society where emotion and privacy has been eradicated and the people rely on the government to make their choices.

It begins with Jonas feeling apprehensive and nervous about his fast approaching Ceremony, where Jonas will find out his job the elusive Elders have selected for him. Jonas is given the position of 'The Receiver of Memory', a job only given every 10 years, that holds a lot of mystery and reverence. Jonas meets the Giver (the previous Receiver of Memory): an old, burdened man, with light eyes, that shows Jonas whole new experiences and memories, of the world their society left behind long ago.

I really, truly enjoyed this book. It's quite difficult to explain the world in which it is set in, without spoiling it, but it makes sense once you begin!

Fiction: comedy drama

Meera Syal *Anita and Me*

The the story of Meena, the daughter of the only Punjabi family in the British village of Tollington. With great warmth and humour, Meera Syal brings to life a quirky, spirited 1960s mining town and creates in her protagonist what the *Washington Post* calls a "female Huck Finn." The novel follows nine-year-old Meena through a year spiced with pilfered sweets and money, bad words, and compulsive, yet inventive, lies. *Anita and Me* offers a fresh, sassy look at a childhood caught between two cultures.

Douglas Adams *Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

'People of Earth, your attention please. This is Prostetnic Vogon Jeltz of the Galactic Hyperspace Planning Council.

Plans for development of the outlying regions of the galaxy require the building of a hyper spatial express route through your star system, and regrettably your planet is scheduled for demolition.

The process will take slightly less than two of your Earth minutes. Thank you.'

DON'T PANIC

For Arthur Dent, earthling and homeowner, the severe case of planning blight announced above is the overture to a quite remarkable set of travels, guided en route by an equally remarkable book.

Vikas Swarup *Q and A*

This debut novel opens in a jail cell in Mumbai, India, where Ram Mohammad Thomas is being held after correctly answering all twelve questions on India's biggest quiz show, *Who Will Win a Billion?* It is hard to believe that a poor orphan who has never read a newspaper or gone to school could win such a contest. But through a series of exhilarating tales Ram explains to his lawyer how episodes in his life gave him the answer to each question.

Ram takes us on an amazing review of his own history - from the day he was found as a baby in the clothes donation box of a Delhi church to his employment by a faded Bollywood star to his adventure with a security-crazed Australian army colonel to his career as an overly creative tour guide at the Taj Mahal.

Fiction: satire

Joseph Heller *Catch 22*

The novel is set during World War II, from 1942 to 1944. It mainly follows the life of Captain John Yossarian, a U.S. Army Air Forces B-25 bombardier. Most of the events in the book occur while the fictional 256th Squadron is based on the island of Pianosa, in the Mediterranean Sea, west of Italy. The novel looks into the experiences of Yossarian and the other airmen in the camp, who attempt to maintain their sanity while fulfilling their service requirements so that they may return home.

Chuck Palahniuk *Fight Club*

It follows the experiences of an unnamed protagonist struggling with insomnia. Inspired by his doctor's exasperated remark that insomnia is not suffering, the protagonist finds relief by impersonating a seriously ill person in several support groups. Then he meets a mysterious man named Tyler Durden and establishes an underground fighting club as radical psychotherapy.

F. Scott Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby*

F. Scott Fitzgerald's third book, stands as the supreme achievement of his career. This exemplary novel of the Jazz Age has been acclaimed by generations of readers. The story is of the fabulously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his new love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, of lavish parties on Long Island at a time when The New York Times noted "gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession," it is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s.

Fiction: bildungsroman

J.D. Salinger *The Catcher in the Rye*

The hero-narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye* is an ancient child of sixteen, a native New Yorker named Holden Caulfield. Through circumstances that tend to preclude adult, second-hand description, he leaves his prep school in Pennsylvania and goes underground in New York City for three days. The boy himself is at once too simple and too complex for us to make any final comment about him or his story. Perhaps the safest thing we can say about Holden is that he was born in the world not just strongly attracted to beauty but, almost, hopelessly impaled on it. There are many voices in this novel: children's voices, adult voices, underground voices-but Holden's voice is the most eloquent of all. Transcending his own vernacular, yet remaining marvellously faithful to it, he issues a perfectly articulated cry of mixed pain and pleasure. However, like most lovers and clowns and poets of the higher orders, he keeps most of the pain to, and for, himself. The pleasure he gives away, or sets aside, with all his heart. It is there for the reader who can handle it to keep.

Charles Dickens *David Copperfield*

David Copperfield is the story of a young man's adventures on his journey from an unhappy and impoverished childhood to the discovery of his vocation as a successful novelist. Among the gloriously vivid cast of characters he encounters are his tyrannical stepfather, Mr Murdstone; his brilliant, but ultimately unworthy school-friend James Steerforth; his formidable aunt, Betsey Trotwood; the eternally humble, yet treacherous Uriah Heep; frivolous, enchanting Dora Spenlow; and the magnificently impecunious Wilkins Micawber, one of literature's great comic creations. In *David Copperfield* - the novel he described as his 'favourite child' - Dickens drew revealingly on his own experiences to create one of the most exuberant and enduringly popular works, filled with tragedy and comedy in equal measure.

Poetry

Edna Longley *The Bloodaxe Book of Twentieth Century Poetry*

This rich and vital anthology of fifty-nine poets and more than 350 poems offers readers intricate conversations between poets and poems, between the living and the dead, between the present and the future. It is a book that will enrich the reader's experience and understanding of modern poetry. Edna Longley shows us the key poets of the century-from England, Scotland, Wales, and the north and south of Ireland-and through inter-linking commentary and biographical sketches points out the connections between them as well as their relationship with the continuing poetic traditions of the British Isles.

Neil Astley *Staying Alive: Real Poems for Unreal Times*

Assembling a diverse mix of contemporary poets-Mary Oliver, W.H. Auden, Maya Angelou, Billy Collins, Louise Glück, Gwendolyn MacEwen, Rita Dove, and hundreds more-*Staying Alive* is a unique anthology that illuminates the vital force of our humanity, the passion of our aspirations, the power of our spirituality. From the enigma of death to the sweetness of friendship, these poems speak to life's mysteries and consolations and help us navigate the most trying times in recent memory.

Michael Rosen *What is Poetry?: The Essential Guide to Reading and Writing Poems*

A detailed and very personal guide to reading and writing poetry by one of the country's leading children's poets. Over many years as a working poet, Michael Rosen has thought a great deal about

what poems are, what they can do and the pleasure that comes from writing and reading poetry. Starting with a detailed analysis of a number of classic poems, he offers a real "writer's guide" to writing and performing poems, as well as a wealth of technical information and tips. He then takes a fascinating look at a selection of his own poems and explains how and why he wrote them.

John Cooper Clarke *Ten Years in an Open Necked Shirt*

The rhythmic and lyrical verse alongside morbid, melancholy themes casts John Cooper Clarke as a cruder, wittier Edgar Allan Poe, in my eyes. With lines such as; "you've got this slippery quality / it makes me think of phlegm / and a dual personality / I hate both of them,"

John Cooper Clarke engages with contemporary issues and ideas within his pieces e.g. 'euro communist/ gucci socialist' and 'beezley street.' But he truly shines as a performance poet. I highly recommend watching a few of his recitals before reading his poetry, to understand his unique tone, style and narrative voice.

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

Marcus T. Cicero (Philosopher)