

Reading for Pleasure

GRADES 10 and upwards



Red: the book may be available in the school library

Blue: the book is not currently in the school library

Modern British Classics

Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner by Alan Sillitoe

Smith is a defiant young rebel, inhabiting the no-man's land of institutionalised Borstal. As his steady daily jog transports him over an unrelenting, frost-bitten earth, he wonders why, for whom and for what he is running. The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner' captured the grim isolation of the working class in the English Midlands when it was first published in 1960s.

Scoop by Evelyn Waugh

Lord Copper, newspaper magnate and proprietor of the Daily Beast, has always prided himself on his intuitive flair for spotting ace reporters. That is not to say he has not made the odd blunder, however, and may in a moment of weakness make another. Acting on a dinner-party tip from Mrs Algernon Smith, he feels convinced that he has hit on just the chap to cover a promising little war in the African Republic of Ishmaelia. An irreverent satire of Fleet Street and its hectic pursuit of hot news.

Down and Out in Paris and London by George Orwell

Orwell follows the life of an impoverished English writer living in two great European cities during the early 1930s. He painstakingly documents a world of unrelenting drudgery and squalor - sleeping in bug-infested hostels and doss houses of last resort, working as a dishwasher in Paris's vile 'Hôtel X', surviving on scraps and cigarette butts, living alongside tramps, a star-gazing pavement artist and a starving Russian ex-army captain.

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

The novel tells of a young man named Dorian Gray, the subject of a painting by artist Basil Hallward. Realizing that one day his beauty will fade, Dorian expresses a desire to sell his soul to ensure the portrait Basil has painted would age rather than he. Dorian's wish is fulfilled, plunging him into debauched acts. The portrait serves as a reminder of the effect

each act has upon his soul, with each sin displayed as a disfigurement of his form, or through a sign of ageing.

Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha by Roddy Doyle

This Booker Prize-winning novel describes the world of ten-year-old Paddy Clarke, growing up in Barrytown, north Dublin. From fun and adventure on the streets, boredom in the classroom to increasing isolation at home, "Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha" is the story of a boy who sees everything but understands less and less.

Modern American Classics

For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway

High in the pine forests of the Spanish Sierra, a guerrilla band prepares to blow up a vital bridge. Robert Jordan, a young American volunteer, has been sent to handle the dynamiting. There, in the mountains, he finds the dangers and the intense comradeship of war. And there he discovers Maria, a young woman who has escaped from Franco's rebels. To

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

A coming-of-age story, an anti-racist novel, a historical drama of the Great Depression and a sublime example of the Southern writing tradition. Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with exuberant humour the irrationality of adult attitudes to race and class in the Deep South of the thirties. The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence and hypocrisy is pricked by the stamina of one man's struggle for justice.

Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

Drought and economic depression are driving thousands from Oklahoma. As their land becomes just another strip in the dust bowl, the Joads, a family of sharecroppers, decide they have no choice but to follow. They head west, towards California, where they hope to

find work and a future for their family. But while the journey to this promised land will take its inevitable toll, there remains uncertainty about what awaits their arrival.

To Sir With Love by ER Braithwaite

In post-war London Rick, a young black teacher, begins his first job in a tough East End school. Slowly and painfully some of the prejudices and barriers he initially experienced are broken down. He shames his pupils, wrestles with them, enlightens them and eventually comes to love them. To Sir With Love is the story of a dedicated teacher who turns hate into love, teenage rebelliousness into self-respect, and contempt into consideration for others.

The Great Gatsby by F Scott Fitzgerald

A rich summary of the "roaring twenties", and a devastating expose of the 'Jazz Age'. Through the narration of Nick Carraway, the reader is taken into the superficially glittering world of the mansions which lined the Long Island shore in the 1920s, and to encounter Nick's cousin Daisy, her brash but wealthy husband Tom Buchanan, Jay Gatsby and the mystery that surrounds him.

Crime thrillers

The Best of Sherlock Holmes by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

A collection of twenty of the very best tales from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fifty-six short stories featuring the arch sleuth. Stories full of villains and the weirdest and most puzzling mysteries ever seen in print. And there at the centre, in a London swathed in eddies of fog and illuminated by gaslight, is to be found the remarkable character of Sherlock Holmes and his staunch companion, Doctor John H. Watson.

The Big Sleep by Raymond Chandler

Los Angeles PI Philip Marlowe is working for the Sternwood family. Old man Sternwood, crippled and wheelchair-bound, is being given the squeeze by a blackmailer and he wants Marlowe to make the problem go away. But with Sternwood's two wild, devil-may-care

daughters prowling LA's seedy backstreets, Marlowe's got his work cut out - and that's before he stumbles over the first corpse ...

Casino Royale by Ian Fleming

Le Chiffre is a businessman with expensive tastes, and SMERSH's chief operative in France. But as his dissolute lifestyle threatens to ruin him, his only hope is to risk his paymasters' money at the card table. James Bond, the finest gambler in the service, has a deadly new mission: to outplay Le Chiffre and shatter his Soviet cell. Amidst the opulence of Casino Royale, the two men face each other for a game with the highest stakes of all.

The Murders in the Rue Morgue Edgar Allan Poe

Dupin investigates the bloody, brutal and baffling murder of a mother and daughter in Paris. The book has been defined as the first detective story and an almost complete manual of detective theory and practice.

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

A harsh focus on the daily struggle for existence in a Soviet Gulag. A brutal, glimpse of the fate of millions of Russians under Stalin. Discover the importance of a piece of bread or an extra bowl of soup, the incredible luxury of a book, the ingenious possibilities of a nail, a piece of string or a single match in a world where survival is all. Here safety, warmth and food are the first objectives. A world of incarceration, brutality, hard manual labour and freezing cold - and participate in the struggle of men to survive both the terrible rigours of nature and the inhumanity of the system that defines their conditions of life.

Swashbucklers

The Three Musketeers by Alexandre Dumas

The story of the early adventures of the young Gascon gentleman, D'Artagnan and his three friends from the regiment of the King's Musketeers - Athos, Porthos and Aramis. The four defend the honour of the regiment against the guards of Cardinal Richelieu, and the honour of the queen against the machinations of the Cardinal himself as the power struggles of seventeenth century France are vividly played out in the background.

Ivanhoe by Sir Walter Scott

Set in the reign of Richard I, Coeur de Lion, and packed with sieges, ambushes and combats - and characters such as Cedric of Rotherwood, the die-hard Saxon; his ward Rowena; the fierce Templar knight, Sir Brian de Bois-Gilbert; the Jew, Isaac of York, and his beautiful, spirited daughter Rebecca; Wamba and Gurth, jester and swineherd respectively.

Scarlet Pimpernel by Baroness Orczy Paris, 1792.

Each day scores of the French nobility feed the guillotine. They are trapped in the capital. There is no escape. But rumours whisper of a league of young English gentleman of unparalleled daring who are risking their lives to spirit aristocrats across the Channel. They leave no trace behind them except a note from the 'Scarlet Pimpernel'. The ruthless spy master Chauvelin is determined to stop the rescuers by fair means or foul, and, desperately outnumbered, the Scarlet Pimpernel and his men must use all their wits to evade capture and stay alive.

Philosophical Novels

Sophie's World by Jostein Gaarder

When Sophie encounters a mysterious mentor who introduces her to philosophy, and the great philosophers, mysteries deepen in her own life. Why does she keep getting postcards addressed to another girl? Who is the other girl? Who is Sophie? To solve the riddle, she uses her new knowledge, but the truth is strange indeed.

Jonathan Livingston Seagull by Richard Bach

Jonathan Livingston Seagull tells the story of a bird determined to be more than ordinary. A fable about seeking a higher purpose in life, even if your flock, tribe or neighbourhood finds your ambition threatening. By not compromising his higher vision, Jonathan earns life's greatest reward - transcendence.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy

A father and his young son walk alone through burned America, heading slowly for the coast. Nothing moves in the ravaged landscape save the ash on the wind. They have nothing but a pistol to defend themselves against the men who stalk the road, the clothes they are wearing, a cart of scavenged food and each other.

Survival of Inhumanity

Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher

Stowe Centred round the long-suffering Uncle Tom, a devout Christian slave who endures cruelty and abuse from his owners, Tom is often celebrated as the first black hero in American fiction who refuses to obey his white masters. With other strong protagonists such as Eliza, a courageous slave who flees to the North with her son when she learns that he is to be sold, The novel highlights the plight of southern slaves and the breaking up of black families.

Schindler's Ark by Thomas Keneally

In the shadow of Auschwitz, a flamboyant German industrialist grew into a living legend to the Jews of Cracow. He was a womaniser, a heavy drinker and a bon viveur, but to them he became a saviour. This is the extraordinary story of Oskar Schindler, who risked his life to

protect Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland and who was transformed by the war into a man with a mission, a compassionate angel of mercy.

Contemporary Novels

Mister Pip by Lloyd Jones

In a small village on a lush tropical island the villagers' safe, predictable lives come to a halt. Bougainville's children are surprised to find the island's only white man, re-opening the school. Pop Eye, aka Mr Watts, explains he will introduce the children to Mr Dickens. Matilda and the others think a foreigner is about to visit and are shocked to discover their acquaintance with Mr Dickens will be through Mr Watts' inspiring reading of Great Expectations. But on an island at war, the power of fiction has dangerous consequences.

Life: an exploded Diagram by Mal Peet

A coming-of-age story set against the backdrop of the Cold War and events leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Clem Ackroyd lives with his parents and grandmother in a claustrophobic home too small to accommodate their larger-than-life characters in the bleak Norfolk countryside. Clem's life changes irrevocably when he meets Frankie, the daughter of a wealthy farmer, and experiences first love, in all its pain and glory.

Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

Kathy, Tommy and Ruth live in a world and a time that feel familiar to us, but are not quite like anything we know. They spend their childhood at Hailsham, a seemingly idyllic English boarding school. When they leave the shelter of the school and the terrible truth of their fate is revealed to them, they must also confront the deep feelings of love, jealousy and betrayal that threaten to pull them apart .

Spies by Michael Frayn

Keith and Stephen suspect that the comfortably ordinary houses in the Close and their inhabitants are not what they seem. As Keith, the leader in all their enterprises, authoritatively informs the trusting Stephen, the whole district is riddled with secret

passages and underground laboratories - hideaways for any number of murderers, unsung war heroes and secret agents. Then one day Keith announces an even more disconcerting discovery: the Germans have infiltrated his own family. And when the secret underground world they have dreamed up emerges from the shadows they find themselves engulfed in mysteries far deeper and more painful than they had bargained for.

Woman in Black by Susan Hill

Arthur, a junior solicitor, is summoned to attend the funeral of Alice Drablow, sole inhabitant of Eel Marsh House. The house is wreathed in fog and mystery, and holds tragic secrets. At the funeral, he glimpses a wasted young woman, dressed all in black. He has a creeping sense of unease deepened by the reluctance of the locals to talk of the woman in black - and her terrible purpose.

Pompeii by Robert Harris

A sweltering week in late August. But as Rome's richest citizens relax in their villas around Pompeii and Herculaneum, there are warnings that something is going wrong. Wells and springs are failing, a man has disappeared, and now the greatest aqueduct in the world - the mighty Aqua Augusta - has suddenly ceased to flow. Told through the eyes of four characters - a young engineer, an adolescent girl, a corrupt millionaire and an elderly scientist - the fate of Pompeii is a luxurious world on the brink of destruction.

The Other Hand by Chris Cleave

The interweaving story of three characters - a Nigerian refugee and a middle class white couple who all share the reality of a horrific incident on an idyllic beach in Africa. The story is a humorous, shocking morality tale.

War

Regeneration by Pat Barker

Craiglockhart War Hospital, Scotland, 1917, and army psychiatrist William Rivers is treating shell-shocked soldiers. Under his care are the poets Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen,

as well as mute Billy Prior, who is only able to communicate by means of pencil and paper. Rivers' job is to make the men in his charge healthy enough to fight. Yet the closer he gets to mending his patients' minds the harder becomes every decision to send them back to the horrors of the front.

Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks

Stephen, a young Englishman, arrives in Amiens in 1910. Over the course of the novel he suffers a series of traumatic experiences, from the clandestine love affair that tears apart the family with whom he lives, to the unprecedented experiences of the war.

All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque

Told by a young soldier in the trenches of Flanders during the First World War. Through his eyes we see the realities of war; under fire, on patrol, waiting in the trenches, at home on leave, and in hospitals and dressing stations. There is a feeling of youth betrayed and a deceptively simple indictment of war - of any war - told for a whole generation of victims.

Philosophical Tales

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert Pirsig

The story of a father and son's motorcycle trip across America in the 1960s. During the trip from Minnesota to California the maintenance of the motorcycle becomes an illustration of how to unify the cold, rational realm of technology with the warm, imaginative realm of artistry. The narrator wrestles with some important philosophical questions of the 20th century.

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

Santiago, a young shepherd living in the hills of Andalusia, feels that there is more to life than his humble home and his flock. One day he finds the courage to follow his dreams into distant lands, each step galvanised by the knowledge that he is following the right path: his

own. The people he meets along the way, the things he sees and the wisdom he learns are life-changing.

The Trial by Franz Kafka

The terrifying tale of Joseph K, a respectable functionary in a bank, who is suddenly arrested and must defend his innocence against a charge about which he can get no information. A nightmare vision of the excesses of modern bureaucracy and humanity.
Spy/Thrillers

Devil May Care by Sebastian Faulks

M has summoned agent 007 to London. It's the swinging Sixties and a flood of narcotics is pouring into Britain. Sinister industrialist Dr Julius Gorner is identified as the source and James Bond is dispatched to investigate. The trail takes Bond to Paris and then Persia. Here Bond uncovers Gorner's cold-blooded plans for world domination. Only by playing Gorner's twisted game can Bond stop him . . .

The Talented Mr Ripley by Patricia Highsmith

Ripley is struggling to stay one step ahead of his creditors and the law, when an unexpected acquaintance offers him a free trip to Europe and a chance to start over. Ripley wants money, success and the good life and he's willing to kill for it. When his new-found happiness is threatened, his response is shocking.

The House of Silk by Anthony Horowitz

An agitated gentleman who arrived unannounced at 221b Baker Street begs Holmes and Watson for help, telling the unnerving story of a scar-faced man with piercing eyes who is stalking him. They find themselves drawn into a series of sinister events, from the streets of London to the underworld of Boston. As they delve into the case, they stumble across a whispered phrase "the House of Silk": a mysterious entity and foe more deadly than any Holmes has encountered.

Fabulous Stories

Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller

As Achilles and Patroclus grow into men skilled in the arts of war, their bond blossoms - despite the displeasure of Achilles's mother Thetis, a cruel sea goddess. But when word comes that Helen of Sparta has been kidnapped, Achilles must go to war in distant Troy and fulfill his destiny. Patroclus goes with him, little knowing that the years that follow will test everything they hold dear.

The Bloody Chamber by Angela Carter

Familiar fairy tales and legends - Red Riding Hood, Bluebeard, Puss in Boots, Beauty and the Beast, vampires and werewolves - are recreated an absorbing collection of dark, sensual, fantastic stories.

The Book of Lost Things by John Connolly

As twelve-year-old David takes refuge from his grief in the myths and fairytales so beloved of his dead mother, he finds the real world and the fantasy world begin to blend. That is when bad things start to happen. That is when the Crooked Man comes. And David is violently propelled into a land populated by heroes, wolves and monsters, his quest to find the legendary Book of Lost Things.

Modern British/Irish Classics

Brighton Rock by Graham Greene

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 and is exposed to a world of loneliness and fear, of life lived on the 'dangerous edge of things'.

This Sporting Life by David Storey

Rugby League football in an industrial northern city circa 1960 is a life of grime, mud, intrigue and naked ambition. Through Arthur Machin the gladiatorial hero of the local team

we are taken into this raw, often brutal world of players, backers, bloody noses and broken teeth, landladies and communal baths.

Nineteen Eighty Four by George Orwell

Winston Smith works for the Ministry of Truth. Big Brother stares out from every poster, and the Thought Police uncover every betrayal. But he discovers that life does not have to be deadening, and despite the police helicopters that circle overhead he begins to question the Party. But Big Brother will not tolerate dissent - even in the mind. For those with original thoughts they invented Room 101.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce

Against the backdrop of nineteenth century Dublin, a boy becomes a man: his mind testing its powers, obsessions taking hold and loosening again, the bonds of family, tradition, nation and religion transforming from supports into shackles; until the young man devotes himself to the celebration of beauty, and reaches for independence and the life of an artist.

The True History of the Kelly Gang by Peter Carey

The thrilling story of Ned Kelly, the Australian outlaw and his life as an orphan, as Oedipus, as a horse thief, farmer, bushranger, reformer, bank-robber, police-killer and, finally, as his country's beloved Robin Hood.

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

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.

Shadow of the Wind by Carlos Ruiz Zafon

Hidden in the heart of the old city of Barcelona is the 'cemetery of lost books', a labyrinthine library of obscure and forgotten titles that have long gone out of print. To this library, a man brings his 10-year-old son Daniel one cold morning in 1945. Daniel is allowed to choose one book from the shelves and pulls out 'La Sombra del Viento' by Julian Carax. But as he grows up, several people seem inordinately interested in his find. Then, one night Daniel is approached by a figure who reminds him of a character from La Sombra del Viento, - the devil. This man is tracking down every last copy of Carax's work in order to burn them. What begins as a case of literary curiosity turns into a race to find out the truth behind the life and death of Julian Carax and to save those he left behind.

Contemporary Novels

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt

A sad, funny, bittersweet memoir of growing up in extreme hardship and suffering, in Brooklyn tenements and Limerick slums – too many children, too little money, his mother Angela barely coping as his father Malachy's drinking bouts constantly brings the family to the brink of disaster. It is a story of courage and survival against apparently overwhelming odds.

The Secret History by Donna Tartt

A misfit at an exclusive New England college, Richard finds kindred spirits in the five eccentric students of his ancient Greek class. But his new friends have a horrific secret. When blackmail and violence threaten to blow their privileged lives apart, they drag Richard into the nightmare that engulfs them. And soon they enter a terrifying heart of darkness from which they may never return ...

Atonement by Ian McEwan

13-year-old Briony sees her sister Cecilia plunge into the fountain in the garden of their country house. Watching her is Robbie, her childhood friend who, like Cecilia, has recently come down from Cambridge. By the end of that day, the lives of all three will have been changed forever. Robbie and Cecilia will cross a boundary and become victims of the younger girl's imagination. Briony will have committed a crime for which she will spend the rest of her life trying to atone.

The Rotters Club by Jonathan Coe

Benjamin Trotter and his friends' coming of age during the 1970s is a heartfelt celebration of the joys and agonies of growing up. Featuring, IRA bombs, prog rock, punk rock, bad poetry, first love, prefects, detention, a few bottles of Blue Nun, lots of brown wallpaper, industrial strife, and divine intervention in the form of a pair of swimming trunks.

Pigeon English by Stephen Kelman

Eleven-year-old Harrison Opoku, the second best runner in Year 7, races through his new life in England with his personalised trainers - the Adidas stripes drawn on with marker pen - blissfully unaware of the very real threat around him. Newly-arrived from Ghana with his mother and older sister Lydia, Harri absorbs the many strange elements of city life, from Haribo sweets, to the frightening, fascinating gang of older boys from his school. But his life is changed forever when a boy is murdered. As the victim's nearly new football boots hang in tribute on railings behind fluorescent tape and a police appeal draws only silence, Harri decides to act, unwittingly endangering the fragile web his mother has spun around her family to keep them safe.