



**Recommended Reading for more ambitious readers
and pupils in the Sixth Form**

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Please use this list in conjunction with our more regularly updated reading suggestions on the intranet.

Dealing With Life and Relationships

- Jim Crace, *Quarantine*
Under an endless and unforgiving sky, four travellers enter the Judean desert in search of redemption. Instead, amidst the barren rocks, they are met by a dangerous man, Musa, and fall under his dark influence. So begin forty days and nights in one of the most inhospitable terrains on earth.
- Michael Ignatieff, *Scar Tissue*
A report from that other country called illness. At its heart is a son's memoir of his mother's voyage into the world of neurological disease, where she loses first her memory, and then her very identity, only to gain - at the very end - a strange serenity.
- Martin Amis, *The Rachel Papers*
Charles Highway, a precociously intelligent and highly sexed teenager, is determined to sleep with an older woman before he turns twenty. Rachel fits the bill perfectly and Charles plans his seduction meticulously, sets the scene with infinite care - but it doesn't come off quite as Charles expects.
- Alan Hollinghurst, *The Line of Beauty*
It is the summer of 1983, and young Nick Guest has moved into an attic room in the Notting Hill home of the Feddens. In an era of endless possibility, Nick finds himself able to pursue his own private obsession, with beauty – a prize as compelling to him as power and riches are to his friends.
- Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*
Kathy, Ruth and Tommy were pupils at Hailsham, an idyllic establishment situated deep in the English countryside. What unfolds is the haunting story of how Kathy, Ruth and Tommy, slowly come to face the truth about their seemingly happy childhoods - and about their futures.
- Nicole Krauss, *The History of Love*
Leo Gursky is a man who fell in love at the age of ten and has been in love ever since. These days he is just about surviving life in America, tapping his radiator each evening to let his upstairs neighbour know he's still alive, drawing attention to himself at the milk counter of Starbucks.
- Marian Lewycka, *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*
Sisters Vera and Nadezhda must put aside a lifetime of feuding to save their émigré engineer father from voluptuous gold-digger Valentina. With her proclivity for green satin underwear and boil-in-the-bag cuisine, she will stop at nothing in pursuit of Western wealth.
- Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses*
John Grady Cole is the last bewildered survivor of long generations of Texas ranchers. Finding himself cut off from the only life he has ever wanted, he sets out for Mexico with his friend Lacey Rawlins. Befriending a third boy on the way, they find a country beyond their imagining: barren and beautiful, rugged yet cruelly civilized; a place where dreams are paid for in blood.

- Ian McEwan, *Saturday*
- Henry Perowne, a man comfortably ensconced in an enviable upper middle class existence. His wife is a successful newspaper lawyer, his daughter Daisy a budding poet. But as he wakes one Saturday morning and witnesses a plane accident through his window, he is not yet aware that this is a harbinger of a sustained assault on all that he holds dear.
- DBC Pierre, *Vernon God Little*
- Teenager Vernon Gregory Little's life has been changed by the Columbine-style slaughter of a group of students at his high school. Soon his hole-in-the-wall town is blanketed under a media siege, and Vernon finds himself blamed for the killing. Eulalio Ledesma is his particular nemesis, manipulating things so that Vernon becomes the fulcrum for the bizarre and vengeful impulses of the townspeople of Martirio.
- Annie Proulx, *Close Range*
- A collection of short stories inspired by the harsh and unforgiving landscape of Wyoming. Proulx demonstrates her taste for the macabre in a grisly tale of bad weather, gambling and amputation set a hundred years ago. Inventive, compassionate and wildly funny, these marvellous stories explore the unbreakable bond between a people and their land.
- Will Self, *The Book of Dave*
- Shuttling between the recent past and a far-off future where England is terribly altered, *The Book of Dave* is a strange and troubling mirror held up to our times: disturbing, satirizing and vilifying who and what we think we are.
- Vikram Seth, *An Equal Music*
- A chance sighting on a bus; a letter which should never have been read; a pianist with a secret that touches the heart of her music . . . A book about love, about the love of a woman lost and found and lost again; it is a book about music and how the love of music can run like a passionate fugue through a life. It is the story of Michael, of Julia, and of the love that binds them.
- Bernhard Schlink, *The Reader*
- The Reader* is a brief tale about sex, love, reading and shame in post-war Germany. Michael Berg is 15 when he begins a long, obsessive affair with Hanna, an enigmatic older woman. He never learns very much about her and when she disappears one day, he expects never to see her again. But, to his horror, he does. Hanna is a defendant in a trial related to Germany's Nazi past and it soon becomes clear that she is guilty of an unspeakable crime. As Michael follows the trial, he struggles with an overwhelming question: what should his generation do with its knowledge of the Holocaust?
- Ian McEwan, *Atonement*
- We meet 13-year-old Briony Tallis in the summer of 1935, as she attempts to stage a production of her new drama *The Trials of Arabella* to welcome home her elder, idolised brother Leon. But she soon discovers that her cousins, the glamorous Lola and the twin boys Jackson and Pierrot, aren't up to the task, and directorial ambitions are abandoned as more interesting preoccupations come onto the scene. The charlady's son Robbie Turner appears to be forcing Briony's sister Cecilia to strip in the Fountain and sends her obscene letters; Leon has brought home a dim chocolate magnate keen for a war to

promote his new "Army Amo" bar; and upstairs Briony's migraine-stricken mother Emily keeps tabs on the house from her bed. Soon, secrets emerge that change the lives of everyone present...

Jackie Kay, *The Red Dust Road*

From the moment when, as a little girl, she realizes that her skin is a different colour from that of her beloved mum and dad, to the tracing and finding of her birth parents, her Highland mother and Nigerian father, Jackie Kay's journey in *Red Dust Road* is one of unexpected twists, turns and deep emotions. In a book remarkable for its warmth and candour, she discovers that inheritance is about much more than genes: that we are shaped by songs as much as by cells, and that what triumphs, ultimately, is love.

Rose Tremain, *The Colour*

Joseph and Harriet Blackstone emigrate from Norfolk to New Zealand in search of new beginnings and prosperity. But the harsh land near Christchurch threatens to destroy them almost before they begin. When Joseph finds gold in the creek he is seized by a rapturous obsession with the voluptuous riches awaiting him deep in the earth. Abandoning his farm and family, he sets off alone for the new gold-fields over the Southern Alps, a moral wilderness where many others, under the seductive dreams of 'the colour', are violently rushing to their destinies.

Fantasy, Thrillers, Mystery and Detective Stories

Audrey Niffenegger, *The Time Traveller's Wife*

This extraordinary, magical novel is the story of Clare and Henry who have known each other since Clare was six and Henry was thirty-six, and were married when Clare was twenty-two and Henry thirty. Impossible but true, because Henry is one of the first people diagnosed with Chrono-Displacement Disorder: periodically his genetic clock resets and he finds himself pulled suddenly into his past or future.

Michael Crichton, *Timeline*

An old man wearing a brown robe is found wandering disoriented in the Arizona desert. He is miles from any human habitation and has no memory of how he got to be there, or who he is. The only clue to his identity is the plan of a medieval monastery in his pocket. So begins the mystery of *Timeline*, a mystery that will catapult a group of young scientists back to the Middle Ages and into the heart of the Hundred Years' War.

Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*

Pigs might not fly but they are strangely altered. So, for that matter, are wolves and racoons. A man, once named Jimmy, lives in a tree, wrapped in old bed sheets, now calls himself Snowman. The voice of Oryx, the woman he loved, teasingly haunts him. And the green-eyed Children of Crake are, for some reason, his responsibility.

John Gardner, *Grendel*

When Grendel is drawn up from the caves under the mere where he lives with his bloated, inarticulate hag of a mother into the fresh night air, it is to lay waste Hrothgar's Meadhall and heap destruction on the humans he finds there. What else can he do? This is the Old English classic *Beowulf* retold from the villain's point of view with a distinctly

post-modern air.

Paul Auster, *Oracle Night*

Several months into a man's recovery from a near-fatal illness, novelist Sidney Orr enters a stationery shop in Brooklyn and buys a blue notebook. It is September 18, 1982, and for the next nine days Orr will live under the spell of this blank book, trapped inside a world of eerie premonitions and bewildering events that threaten to destroy his marriage and undermine his faith in reality.

Donna Tartt, *The Secret History*

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.

Historical Fiction

Sarah Waters, *Fingersmith*

Sue, orphaned at birth, is born among petty thieves - fingersmiths - in London's Borough. From the moment she draws breath, her fate is linked to another orphan, growing up in a gloomy mansion not too many miles away.

Melvin Bragg, *Credo*

Britain during the Dark Ages is the setting for the fascinating story of Bega, a young Irish princess who became a saint, and her lifelong bond with Padric, prince of the north-western kingdom of Rheged. This dramatic, far-reaching tale brings to life a land of warring kings, Christians and pagans, and tribes divided by language and culture, illuminating a little-known yet critical period in British history.

Umberto Eco, *The Island of the Day Before*

The year is 1643. Roberto, a young nobleman, survives war, the Bastille, exile and shipwreck as he voyages to a Pacific island straddling the date meridian. There he waits now, alone on the mysteriously deserted Daphne, separated by treacherous reefs from the island beyond: the island of the day before. If he could reach it, time - and his misfortunes - might be reversed. But first he must learn to swim...

Andrea Levy, *Small Island*

It is 1948, and England is recovering from a war. But at 21 Nevern Street, London, the conflict has only just begun. Queenie Bligh's neighbours do not approve when she agrees to take in Jamaican lodgers, but with her husband, Bernard, not back from the war, what else can she do?

Patrick Neate, *Twelve Bar Blues*

At its heart is Lick Holden, a young jazz musician, who sets New Orleans on fire with his cornet at the beginning of the last century. But Lick's passion is to find his lost step-sister and that's a journey that leads him to a place he can call 'home'. Meanwhile, at the other end of the century, we find Sylvia, an English prostitute, and Jim, a young drifter. They're in search of Sylvia's past, lost somewhere in the

mists of the Louisiana bayou.

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

It is the mid-1800s. At Sweet Home in Kentucky, an era is ending as slavery comes under attack from the abolitionists. The worlds of Halle and Paul D. are to be destroyed in a cataclysm of torment and agony. The world of Sethe, however, is to turn from one of love to one of violence and death - the death of Sethe's baby daughter Beloved, whose name is the single word on the tombstone, who died at her mother's hands, and who will return to claim retribution.

War and Conflict

John Banville, *The Untouchable*

Concerns the suddenly-exposed double agent Victor Maskell, a character based on the real Cambridge intellectual elites who famously spied on the United Kingdom in the middle of the 20th century. But Maskell--scholar, adventurer, soldier, art curator and more--respected and still living in England well past his retirement from espionage, looked like he was going to get away with it when unexpectedly, in his 70s and sick with cancer, he is unmasked.

Sebastian Barry, *A Long Long Way*

One of the most vivid and realised characters of recent fiction, Willie Dunne is the innocent hero of Sebastian Barry's highly acclaimed novel. Leaving Dublin to fight for the Allied cause as a member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, he finds himself caught between the war playing out on foreign fields and that festering at home, waiting to erupt with the Easter Rising.

Jonathan Saffran Foer, *Everything is Illuminated*

A young man arrives in the Ukraine, clutching in his hand a tattered photograph. He is searching for the woman who fifty years ago saved his grandfather from the Nazis. Unfortunately, he is aided in his quest by Alex, a translator with an uncanny ability to mangle English into bizarre new forms; a "blind" old man haunted by memories of the war; and an undersexed guide dog named Sammy Davis Jr., Jr.

Jonathan Saffran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

Nine-year-old Oskar Schell is an inventor, amateur entomologist, Francophile, letter writer, pacifist, natural historian, percussionist, romantic, Great Explorer, jeweller, detective, vegan, and collector of butterflies. When his father is killed in the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Centre, Oskar sets out to solve the mystery of a key he discovers in his father's closet.

Valerie Martin, *Property*

Manon Gaudet is unhappily married to the owner of a Louisiana sugar plantation. She misses her family and longs for the vibrant lifestyle of her native New Orleans, but most of all, she longs to be free of the suffocating domestic situation. The tension revolves around Sarah, a slave girl who may have been given to Manon as a wedding present from her aunt, whose young son Walter is living proof of where Manon's husband's inclinations lie.

Novels from Around the World

- Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*
- Strikingly imagined, gracious and funny, this novel is at once epic and intimate. Exploring the role of Fate in our lives - those who accept it; those who defy it - it traces the extraordinary transformation of an Asian girl, from cautious and shy to bold and dignified woman.
- JM Coetzee, *Disgrace*
- A divorced, middle-aged English professor finds himself increasingly unable to resist affairs with his female students. When discovered by the college authorities, he is expected to apologise and repent in an effort to save his job, but he refuses to become a scapegoat in what he sees as a show trial designed to reinforce a stringent political correctness. He pre-emptively leaves his job, and the city, to spend time with his grown-up lesbian daughter on her remote farm.
- Damon Galgut, *The Good Doctor*
- Laurence Waters arrives at his rural hospital posting full of optimism. Frank, the disgruntled deputy, is forced to share his room with the new arrival but is determined to stay out of Laurence's ambitious schemes. When the dilapidated hospital is looted, the two men find themselves uneasy allies in a world where the past is demanding restitution from the present.
- Hari Kunzuru, *The Impressionist*
- In India, at the birth of the last century, an infant is brought howling into the world, his remarkable paleness marking him out from his brown-skinned fellows. Revered at first, he is later cast out from his wealthy home when his true parentage is revealed. So begins Pran Nath's odyssey of self-discovery.
- 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 orangutan - and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger.
- Orhan Pamuk, *My Name is Red*
- In the late 1590s, the Sultan secretly commissions a great book: a celebration of his life and his empire, to be illuminated by the best artists of the day - in the European manner. At a time of violent fundamentalism, however, this is a dangerous proposition. Even the illustrious circle of artists are not allowed to know for whom they are working. But when one of the miniaturists is murdered, their Master has to seek outside help.
- Michael Ondaatje, *The English Patient*
- This is the story of the entanglement of four damaged lives in an Italian monastery as the second world war ends. The exhausted nurse, Hana; the maimed thief, Caravaggio; the wary sapper, Kip: each is haunted by the riddle of the English patient, the nameless, burn victim who lies in an upstairs room and whose memories of passion, betrayal and rescue illuminate this book like flashes of sheet lightning.
- Ben Okri, *The Famished Road*
- This is the story of Azaro, a spirit-child. Though spirit-children rarely stay long in the painful world of the living, when Azaro is born he

chooses to fight death: "I wanted", he says, "to make happy the bruised face of the woman who would become my mother." Survival in his chaotic African village is a struggle, though. Azaro and his family must contend with hunger, disease and violence, as well as the boy's spirit-companions, who are constantly trying to trick him back into their world.

Wole Soyinka, *The Interpreters*

A gang of Nigerian intellectuals are trying to make something worthwhile of their lives and talents in a society where corruption and consequence, cynicism, social climbing and confirming give them alternate cause for despair and laughter. This book won the Nobel Prize in 1986.

Graphic Novels

Art Spiegelman, *Maus* (Series)

The complete story of Vladek Spiegelman and his wife, living and surviving in Hitler's Europe. By addressing the horror of the Holocaust through cartoons, the author captures the everyday reality of fear and is able to explore the guilt, relief and extraordinary sensation of survival - and how the children of survivors are in their own way affected by the trials of their parents.

Graham Rawlf, *Woman's World*

Norma Fontaine lives in a perfect woman's world of handy tips and sensible advice. Whether it's choosing the right foundation garment or practising feminine allure through meticulous grooming, Norma measures life by the standards set in the magazines she reads. So when she bumps into Mr Hands and he suggests taking tea at the Excella Cafe, how could she possibly refuse? What could be more exhilarating, or more appropriate?

Paul Auster, *City of Glass*

The New York Trilogy is an astonishing and original book: three cleverly interconnected novels that exploit the elements of standard detective fiction and achieve a new genre that is all the more gripping for its starkness. In each story the search for clues leads to remarkable coincidences in the universe as the simple act of trailing a man ultimately becomes a startling investigation of what it means to be human. Auster's book is modern fiction at its finest: bold, arresting and unputdownable.

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

This is the story of Marjane Satrapi's life in Tehran from the ages of six to fourteen, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution and the devastating effects of war with Iraq. The intelligent and outspoken child of radical Marxists, and the great-granddaughter of Iran's last emperor, Satrapi bears witness to a childhood uniquely entwined with the history of her country.

George A. Walker, *Graphic Witness: Four Wordless Graphic Novels*

Presents a collection of wordless graphic novels that cover the themes of social unrest and the plight of the downtrodden worker and are illustrated with wood cuts and lino-engraving.

Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Gorazde*

In late 1995 and early 1996, cartoonist/reporter Joe Sacco travelled four times to Gorazde, a UN-designated safe area during the Bosnian War, which had teetered on the brink of obliteration for three and a half years. Still surrounded by Bosnian Serb forces, the mainly Muslim people of Gorazde had endured heavy attacks and severe privation to hang on to their town while the rest of Eastern Bosnia was brutally ‘cleansed’ of its non-Serb population.

A Pick of the Classics

Don Quixote, Miguel De Cervantes

Pilgrim’s Progress, John Bunyan

Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe

Gulliver’s Travels, Jonathan Swift

Tom Jones, Henry Fielding

Clarissa, Samuel Richardson

Tristram Shandy, Laurence Sterne

Dangerous Liaisons, Pierre Choderlos De Laclos

The Novels of Jane Austen

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley

Nightmare Abbey, Love Peacock

The Counte of Monte Cristo, Alexandre Dumas

The Novels of Charles Dickens

Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, Anne Brontë

The Novels of Charlotte Brontë

Vanity Fair, WM Thackeray

The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne

The Novels of Louisa May Alcott

The Novels and Short Stories of Mark Twain

Madame Bovary, Gustave Flaubert

The Woman in White & *The Moonstone*, Wilkie Collins

The Way We Live Now, Anthony Trollope

Anna Karenina, Leo Tolstoy

The Brothers Karamazov, Dostoevsky

The Portrait of a Lady, Henry James

The Turn of the Screw, Henry James

Dr Jeekyll and Mr Hyde, RL Stevenson

The Plays of Oscar Wilde

The Picture of Dorian Gray, Oscar Wilde

The Novels of Thomas Hardy

The Call of the Wild, Jack London

Nostromo, Joseph Conrad

In Search of Lost Time, Proust

The Good Soldier, Ford Madox

Ulysses, James Joyce

Mrs Dalloway, Virginia Woolf

The Great Gatsby, F Scott Fitzgerald

The Trial, Franz Kafka

As I Lay Dying, William Faulkner

Brave New World, Aldous Huxley

The Big Sleep, Raymond Chandler

The Plague, Albert Camus

The Quiet American, Graham Greene

On the Road, Jack Kerouac

Lolita, Vladimir Nabokov

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, Muriel Spark

One Hundred Years of Solitude, Gabriel Garcia Marquez

If On A Winter’s Night A Traveller, Italo Calvino

A Bend in the River, VS Naipaul

The New York Trilogy, Paul Auster

Money, Martin Amis

The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, Milan Jundera

American Pastoral, Philip Roth

Austerlitz, WG Sebald

