

GCSE ENGLISH READING LIST

The books below are recommended by English staff at Blatchington Mill. Some are books we enjoyed as teenagers; some are recent reads; some are literary classics. They are all great reads which will entertain, stimulate and challenge you.

| TITLE | AUTHOR | SHORT DESCRIPTION | Recommended by... |
|---|-------------------|--|--------------------------|
| To Kill A Mockingbird | Harper Lee | A tense exploration of racial tensions in the American South | AB |
| Tales of the Unexpected | Roald Dahl | A collection of short stories: full of unease, surprises, twists and dark humour. | AB |
| Macbeth | Jo Nesbo | An atmospheric, modern retelling of the Shakespeare play. This is a dark, satisfying and gripping thriller. | BT RK concurs! |
| The Kite Runner | Khaled Hosseini | Coming of age story about friendship and the trauma of the past- set in war torn Afghanistan. | BF |
| A Thousand Splendid Suns | Khaled Hosseini | Two women from different circumstances battle for freedom in Afghanistan during a period of great change. | BF |
| The Poet X | Elizabeth Acevedo | In the face of a world that may not want to hear her, Xiomara refuses to be silent. A powerful novel in verse. | FM BH concurs! |
| The Bluest Eye | Toni Morrison | The searing first novel from the celebrated author of Beloved, immerses us in the tragic, torn lives of a poor black family in post-Depression 1940s Ohio. | FM |
| Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire | Akala | Non-Fiction: Natives covers everything from the police, education and identity to politics, sexual objectification and the far right. | BH |
| All the Bright Places | Jennifer Niven | A tale of an unexpected and wonderful friendship, adventure, love and heart-breaking trauma, all told through a shared narrative. A beautiful and important story. | BH |
| The Handmaid's Tale | Margaret Atwood | Set in a dystopian America, this novel explores gender and politics. It's frighteningly realistic and lots of parallels can be drawn with the world today. | LB |

| TITLE | AUTHOR | SHORT DESCRIPTION | Recommended by... |
|---|------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Every Light in the House Burnin' | Andrea Levy | A semi-autobiographical story is of a Jamaican family living in London in the 1960s. Short, funny, moving. | LB |
| Wide Sargasso Sea | Jean Rhys | Bertha Mason's story. The 'mad woman' in the attic from Jane Eyre tells her side of the story: a short, rich read. | LB |
| I Am Malala | Malala Yousafzai | The true story of how a young girl from Pakistan went from being shot in the head to being the youngest ever winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. | LB |
| Bonjour Tristesse | Francoise Sagan | A short book about a rebellious teenager in the South of France. Written by the writer when she was a teenager herself. | LB |
| The Outsiders | S E Hinton | Written when the author was only 16, this is a classic story of teenage rebellion and growing up, set in America. | RE |
| Uprooted | Naomi Novik | A darkly magical fantasy book, with a great heroine. | IS |
| Every Day | David Levithan | A fresh, funny book about a character (A) who wakes up in a different body everyday. Things get complicated when A meets Rhiannon... | IS |
| The Color Purple | Alice Walker | The story of Celie, a black woman living in the South of America, and her struggles in life. Uplifting and empowering. Written in the form of a diary. | IS |
| 1984 | George Orwell | Written to be set in the future (in 1948. About a society with total control of everyone. Coined the phrase Room 101 where you face your darkest fears. | RK |
| New York Trilogy | Paul Auster | 3 different stories in detective/mystery genre with complex layers of meaning. | RK |
| Where the Crawdads Sing | Delia Owens | A character-driven novel which centres on the life of Kya and how she is shaped by the landscape and nature around her but also by her loneliness and her deeply-rooted longing for human connection | BH |

| TITLE | AUTHOR | SHORT DESCRIPTION | Recommended by... |
|--|---------------------|--|--------------------------|
| The Book Thief | Markus Zusak | 1939. Nazi Germany. Death has never been busier. Liesel, a nine-year-old girl, is living with a foster family on Himmel Street. Her parents have been taken away to a concentration camp. Liesel steals books. This is her story and the story of the inhabitants of her street when the bombs begin to fall. | MMP |
| The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared | Jonas Jonasson | After a long and eventful life, Allan Karlsson ends up in a nursing home, believing it to be his last stop. The only problem is that he's still in good health. A big celebration is in the works for his 100th birthday, but Allan really isn't interested, so he decides to escape. Hugely uplifting and lighthearted story. | MMP |
| On Writing | Stephen King | The famous horror writer's memoir is easy to read and full of amazing tips on how to become an excellent writer. His advice might surprise you as he writes about the importance of simple language and telling a story in a straightforward way. For example, 'Never use two words when one will do.' | EH |
| My Sister the Serial Killer | Oyinkan Braithwaite | Very short chapters and an extremely concise style for anyone who has been put off reading. A real page turner about two sisters and whether anything can break their special relationship. | EH |
| Rebecca | Daphne de Maurier | A classic coming of age novel but also a fantastic ghost story. Similar to Jane Eyre, Rebecca is about a young woman who becomes embroiled in a relationship full of secrets and haunting figures from the past. | EH |
| The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo | Taylor Jenkins Reid | A now reclusive Hollywood movie icon is ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and, at times, scandalous life. A tale of ambition, fierce friendships, unexpected love and a journey to embrace her own identity and sexuality, this is a mesmerising and addictive read! | BH |

| TITLE | AUTHOR | SHORT DESCRIPTION | Recommended by... |
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| I heard what you said | Jeffrey Boakye | Non-Fiction: Boakye has spent a lifetime navigating places of learning that are white by default. He reflects on what he has found out about the habits, presumptions, silences and distortions that black students and black teachers experience, and which underpin British education. | BH |
| Open Water | Caleb Azumah Nelson | A tender story about the connection between two artists who meet in a bar. It offers a potent and deeply moving insight into race and masculinity and the search for ways to give a voice to trauma | BH |
| Normal People | Sally Rooney | The narrative focuses on Marianne and Connell as they navigate the changing landscape of their relationship from school into adulthood; a tale of how one person can forever shape and impact another | BH |