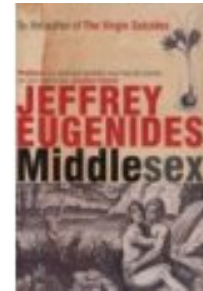
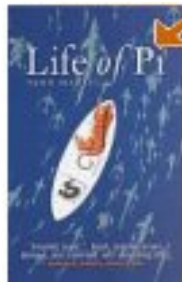
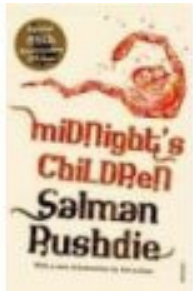




There is a wealth of good quality modern fiction available; this is just a small selection.

Many of these texts contain adult content.



***Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie**

Winner of the Booker of Bookers – judged the best book ever to have won the Booker prize. A swirling and evocative magical realist epic, covering the emergence of Modern India. Saleem is born at the midnight of India's independence and joins 1000 children born at that time, each with an amazing talent. Amazon says 'Quite simply, *Midnight's Children* is amazing – fun, beautiful, erudite; both fairy tale and political narrative told through a supernatural narrator who is caught between different worlds'. Particularly good if you are interested in: international politics, stories and India.

***The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel**

A boy drifts across the ocean on a yacht with only a tiger for company. From this unconventional beginning, a novel exploring religion, philosophy and humanity is born, written in beautifully simple prose. People were reading this all over the Tube for a good reason. Spicy, vivacious, kinetic and very entertaining fiction. Particularly good if you are interested in: philosophy, animals and reasoning.

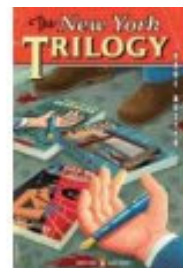
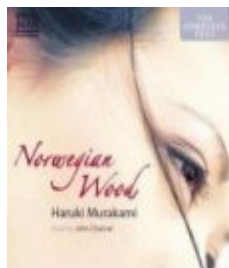
***Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides**

No, it's not about outer London. Calliope is a hermaphrodite, born to Greek-American parents in the 1960s. Her story is epic: entertaining, broad, philosophical and gripping. It's a book about love, family, genetics, immigration, history, secrets and more.

'This year's most sumptuously enjoyable book . . . superb'.

Sunday Times Books of the Year:

Particularly good if you like: family sagas, epics, international fiction, twists and turns in plots.



***Vernon God Little* by DBC Pierre**

Last year's Booker winner, is a hilarious tragedy (trust me) about Vernon Gregory Little: a teenager in Texas caught up in a Columbine-style massacre at his high school. Told in Vernon's inimitable Texan drawl, peppered with swear-words, this is a biting satirical take on modern American culture with an extremely comic supporting cast of typical Southerners. A true original. Particularly good if you are interested in: Michael Moore, America, teenagers and satire.

***Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell**

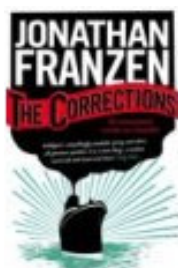
A dazzling interweaving of six very different stories and genres. This hyper-modern novel is amazingly crafted and brilliantly entertaining. The reader is catapulted through time and space via six linked narratives which range from the story of an exploited nineteenth century explorer to a post-apocalyptic Hawaii via a Blade-runner-esque tale of clones in Korea. It's astoundingly original and absolutely gripping – one for the philosophers among you. Particularly good if you are interested in: power politics, lots of different genres.

***Norwegian Wood* by Haruki Murakami**

This novel threw Murakami onto the international stage – he's now a cult novelist worldwide with the highest critical acclaim to boot. A whimsical yet deep look at young love – Toru Watanabe is looking back on the love and passions of his life and trying to make sense of it all. As his first love Naoko sinks deeper into mental despair, he is inexorably pushed to find a new meaning and a new love in order to survive. Particularly good if you are interested in young people, Japan, the mind and memory.

***The New York Trilogy* or *The Book of Illusions* by Paul Auster**

Auster is one of the most respected and best reviewed modern American novelists. *The New York Trilogy* consists of three gripping detective stories which will certainly exercise your brain: classic American crime writing with a post-modern twist. *The Book of Illusions* is about David Zimmer, who finds solace from the grief of losing his wife and two sons in a plane crash by immersing himself in the films of silent comedy star, Hector Mann. An academic by profession, David writes a critical study of Mann's films, but, as the book is published, he is contacted by sources who claim that Hector Mann, who hasn't been seen for almost sixty years and is presumed dead, is alive and living in New Mexico. This is gripping, suspenseful and taut. Both good if you like: big cities, crime writing and America.



***Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels**

The stories of two men from different generations whose lives have been transformed by war. A young boy, Jakob Beer, is rescued from the mud of a buried Polish city during World War II and taken to an island in Greece by an unlikely saviour, the scientist/humanist Athos Roussos. Written in an extraordinary lyrical style, this book will haunt you for years. Don't dismiss it! Particularly good if you are interested in: WW2, Holocaust, survivors' guilt/ repressed memories, beautiful writing, the generation gap and philosophy.

***The Corrections* by Jonathan Franzen**

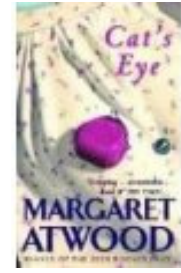
A huge success in the States, this modern epic focuses on matriarch Enid Lambert's attempts to gather her three grown children back home for Christmas. *The Corrections* examines their lives: Enid's husband Alfred, sinking into dementia; her sons, banker Gary and writer Chip (now in Lithuania); daughter Denise, a chef, busily re-evaluating her sexual identity. Examines the foibles, fears, neuroses and worries of 21st century family life. Particularly good if you are interested in: family sagas and America.

***The Secret History* by Donna Tartt**

WARNING: You won't be able to put this down. A boy leaves California to attend a college in New England and falls in with a group of students of Ancient Greek. Four of their number work themselves into a trance-like condition one night, and murder a local farmer. One of the most talked about books of the nineties, people were literally walking down the street reading this as soon as it came out. This synopsis really doesn't do it justice! Particularly good if you are interested in: Classics, psychology, murder, incest, school, America, young people and crime.

***White Teeth* by Zadie Smith**

Another much-discussed book, *White Teeth* is a comic epic of multicultural Britain which tells the story of immigrants in England over a period of 40 years. Set in contemporary London, the dialogue and stories are comic and richly entertaining. Particularly good if you are interested in: comic novels, modern Britain and multiculturalism.



***Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* by Patrick Suskind**

The opening sentence of this novel tells you almost everything you need to know: ‘In eighteenth-century France there lived a man who was one of the most gifted and abominable personages in an era which knew no lack of gifted or abominable personages.’ Jean Baptiste Grenouille is born, astoundingly, without any personal smell. From this unusual premise grows a gripping tale of crime and murder that will have you spellbound until the bitter end. Particularly good if you enjoy books about: murder, crime, criminals and psychology.

***Regeneration* by Pat Barker**

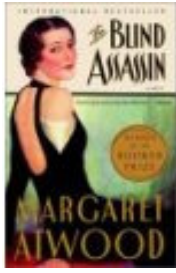
You may well have read some of Wilfred Owen’s poetry at GCSE – the first novel in Barker’s trilogy focuses on the presumed meetings between Owen and Sassoon in a mental hospital in Scotland during World War One. In Craiglockhart war hospital, Doctor William Rivers attempts to restore the sanity of officers from the War. When Siegfried Sassoon publishes his declaration of protest against the war, the authorities decide to have him declared mentally defective and send him to Craiglockhart. The novel is about the effects of war on a man’s sanity. Particularly good if you are interested in: war, madness, poetry and psychology.

***Carter Beats the Devil* by Glen David Gold**

Glen David Gold’s impressive debut *Carter Beats The Devil* is an inspired delight, a dazzling combination of fact and fiction. Charles Carter is given his stage name, ‘Carter the Great’, by the legendary Harry Houdini and the jazz age of the early 1900s is clearly well researched, yet the romance and strong cast of characters must owe more to the imagination than to history. The novel begins in 1923 with the most daring performance of Carter’s life. Unfortunately, two hours into the performance, US President Harding is dead and the magician must flee the country, pursued by the Secret Service. This is an ambitious and compulsive novel and deserves all the praise that Carter himself received and more. Particularly good if you are interested in: magic, history, America, escapology, 1920s, jazz age, wild animals . . . the list goes on!

***Cat’s Eye* or *The Blind Assassin* by Margaret Atwood**

Atwood is one of the most prolific and respected female authors writing in the world today. *Cat’s Eye* was her first major success; it’s a story about childhood bullying and the effect on later life. Sounds worthy but is wonderfully written, using humour to remind readers of details of childhood they may have forgotten. Particularly good if you are interested in: childhood, memory and psychology.



***The Blind Assassin* won the Booker in 2000. At the end of her life, Iris Griffen takes up her pen to record the secret history of her family, the romantic melodrama of its decline and fall between the two World Wars. Conjuring a world of prosperity and misery, marriage and loneliness, the central enigma of Iris's tale is the death of her sister, Laura Chase, who 'drove a car off a bridge' at the end of the Second World War; suicide or accident? The story gradually unfolds, interspersed with sketches of Iris's present-day life – confined by age and ill-health – and a second novel, *The Blind Assassin* by Laura Chase. Particularly good if you are interested in: books about writing, mystery, suspense and the 1950s.**

***One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez**

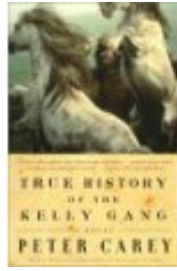
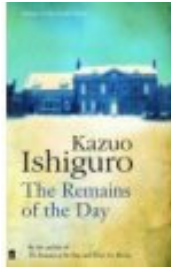
Marquez was one of the founders of the magical realist style, by now a hallmark of Latin American Literature. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a journey through the story of the Buendias family, living in Macondo in the heart of the South American jungle. The family is filled with inimitable characters that live through love, civil war, tragedy – so far, so good. But what sets this book apart is Marquez's distinctive style wherein metaphor becomes reality – at one point a character is nervous and so a host of yellow butterflies fly out of her mouth. This is dazzling and engrossing. Particularly good if you like: history, fairy tales, family epics and tragedy.

***Enduring Love* by Ian McEwan**

Recently adapted for the cinema, this novel has one of the most gripping opening sequences in modern fiction. It begins with a balloon accident that quickly spirals into an obsessive relationship. McEwan's narrative is carefully constructed so that you are never quite sure whether the narrator is telling the truth – a hallmark of modern fiction. Particularly good if you are interested in: psychology, thrillers and London.

***The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy**

Another Booker Prize winner, this is a gloriously evocative tragedy set in Kerala. It's about the events surrounding a Christian family in an obviously Indian setting, and while the story itself is gripping, the inventive and original style of Roy's writing stands out. You might be interested to know that Roy has not written a novel since and is now an international campaigner against the Indian government's Narmada Dam project – her work on this subject is intensely political and well worth reading. Particularly good if you like/are interested in: Indian politics and society, beautiful writing, family sagas and tragedies.



***Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro**

You may be familiar with this from the Merchant-Ivory film with Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson – the book is even better (a favourite English teacher cliché, but true in this case). Told in the first person and set in the 1930s, this is the story of Stevens, a straight-laced and coldly inhuman butler who nevertheless convinces us he has a human side through his relationship with Miss Kenton, a housemaid in his employer's household. This is a novel about what might have been, that will also appeal to anyone who is interested in England's history. Particularly good if you are interested in: English history, compelling stories, moving stories, human pressures and emotional pressures – a riveting book.

***True History of the Ned Kelly Gang* or *Oscar and Lucinda* by Peter Carey**

Peter Carey is one of Australia's foremost authors and these are two of his most renowned – though utterly different – novels. *The True History of the Ned Kelly Gang* is about Australia's most famous outlaw. Told in Carey's version of Kelly's unmistakable Aussie drawl, the reader comes to feel pity for the robber as we see his creation through poverty and ignorance. Particularly good if you are interested in: Australia, crime, poverty and nature vs nurture.

***Oscar and Lucinda* is perhaps Carey's best-loved book. Set onboard an ocean liner travelling to Australia in 1864, this novel is both a love story and an historical tour-de-force that relates the developing romance between Oscar Hopkins, an Oxford seminarian, and Lucinda Leplastrier, a Sydney heiress with a fascination for glass. They both, however, are addicted to gambling and Carey reveals through their childhoods where this compulsion has come from. The plot is gripping (although a bit outrageous) and Carey's language is engrossing.**

***The Bloody Chamber* by Angela Carter**

This is a collection of short stories; modern re-imaginings of fairy tales that will challenge your perception of the myths that are an essential part of our culture. You may think you know legends like Bluebeard, Puss in Boots and Beauty and the Beast, but Carter's adult re-workings are dazzling, taut and sometimes erotic visions of these cultural pillars. Particularly good if you like: short stories, myths and legends.

Possession by AS Byatt

An enthralling literary detective story as well as a beautiful modern love story, which won the Booker in 1990. 'Literary critics make natural detectives', says Maud Bailey, heroine of a mystery where the clues lurk in university libraries, old letters and dusty journals. Together with Roland Michell, a fellow academic and accidental sleuth, Maud discovers a love affair between the two Victorian writers the pair have dedicated their lives to studying: Randolph Ash, a literary great long assumed to be a devoted and faithful husband, and Christabel La Motte, a lesser-known 'fairy poetess' and chaste spinster. At first, Roland and Maud's discovery threatens only to alter the direction of their research, but as they unearth the truth about the long-forgotten romance, their involvement becomes increasingly urgent and personal. Particularly good if you like: poetry, the nineteenth century, romance, and detective stories.

Cold Mountain by Charles Frazier

Yet another film adaptation and once again the book is far superior! Don't be put off by the Nicole Kidman snooze-fest, this book is subtle and detailed. The story begins near the end of the Civil War as Inman, a Confederate soldier, recuperates from his wounds and reflects on four years of ferocious fighting. Soon, he realises that he will be sent back to fight some more. Overcome by that thought, he dreams of home instead. He sneaks out of the hospital through a window and begins a long, difficult trek home. At the same time, Ada, his love from before the war, has just lost her father in the hill country in the Smokies. Brought up as an educated lady to her minister father in Charleston, she is unprepared to fend for herself. Soon befriended by Ruby, she begins the unremitting toil to get her farm working again without the proper help, resources and training. Particularly good if you are interested in: American Civil War, historical fiction and film adaptations.



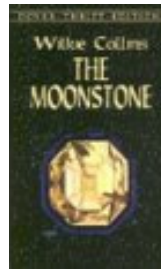
Spies by Michael Frayn

In Michael Frayn's novel *Spies* an old man returns to the scene of his seemingly ordinary suburban childhood. Stephen Wheatley is unsure of what he is seeking but, as he walks once-familiar streets he hasn't seen in 50 years, he unfolds a story of childish games colliding cruelly with adult realities. It is wartime and Stephen's friend Keith makes the momentous announcement that his mother is a German spy. The two boys begin to spy on the supposed spy, following her on her trips to the shops and to the post, and reading her diary. Keith's mother does have secrets to conceal but they are not the ones the boys suspect. Frayn skilfully manipulates his plot so that the reader's growing awareness of the truth remains just a few steps beyond Stephen. Particularly good if you are interested in: WW2, childhood, psychology and unreliable narrators.

***A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* by Julian Barnes**

A fictional history of the world in which stories echo each other as themes deepen and images recur. Very similar in style to *Cloud Atlas* – another hyper-modern novel which rewards concentration while reading it. Particularly good if you are interested in: history, myths, legends, different styles and genres.

Some essential reads and a good starting point for those who want to dabble their toes in the sea of classic novels.



***1984* by George Orwell**

Written in the late 19th Century, Orwell envisages a future where your every move is watched and monitored. Discover where Channel Four and BBC2 found their inspiration for 'Big Brother' and 'Room 101', as well as Orwell's stark social warning. Orwell creates a futuristic society that has some disturbing similarities with our own. Not one for the faint hearted, or if you don't like rats!

***Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen**

An Austen classic. When rich and oh so handsome Mr Darcy arrives at Netherfield Elizabeth Bennett's life is turned up side down. Elizabeth already has more than enough on her hands coping with her family: a push mother, a distantly affectionate father, a love lorn older sister, and two silly younger sisters who are far too excited by the arrival of the military officers. Will she overcome the obstacles of loathing Mr Darcy at first sight and will Darcy ever accept her awful family?

***The Moonstone* by Wilkie Collins**

A cracking detective novel with a good dose of Victorian melodrama thrown in. A must read for fans of detective fiction. If you enjoy this novel, try another Collins classic called *The Woman in White* for more skulduggery and diabolical villains.

***A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens**

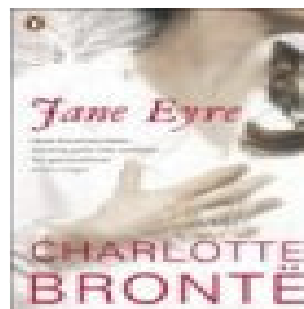
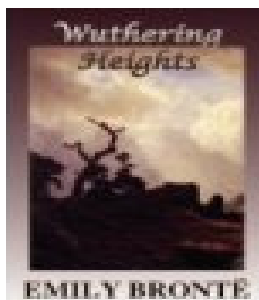
An old favourite but still worth reading. A timeless tale of Christmas ghosts all out to show Scrooge the error of his ways. One of the most popular of Dickens novels, which has been adapted into film on numerous occasions, that captures the spirit of Christmas.

***Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte**

A classic, yet unconventional, love story. A twisted relationship between Cathy and Heathcliff causes heartache for both, set against the harsh backdrop of the Yorkshire moors. With sinister characters and supernatural occurrences, the novel has remained a firm favourite amongst literary circles.

***Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte**

Forced to support herself as a governess, Jane becomes a little too close to her employer, the handsome Mr Rochester; but Rochester is a man with a secret past. What are the noises Jane has heard in the night and who exactly is living in his attic? If you enjoy this novel, try *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a modern novel, by Jean Rhys which delves into the background behind Rochester's dark secret.



What about your favourite reads? If you have a particular book that has captured your imagination or that you could never put down, please share it with those around you! Let your English teacher and fellow students know, so that they can love reading too!