

S4 - S6 Recommended Reading

The "Classic" Classics

Austen, Jane

Pride and Prejudice

Every proud posh boy deserves a prejudiced girl. And a stately pile. This is the mother of all Romantic Comedies, and the Great, Great, Great Gran of Bridget Jones' Diary.

Brontë, Charlotte

Jane Eyre

Poor and obscure and plain as she is, Mr Rochester wants to marry her. Illegally. (One of Mrs Weir's Top Three of All Time)

Brontë, Emily

Wuthering Heights

Out on the winding, windy moors Cathy and Heathcliff become each other's "souls". Then he storms off.

Dickens, Charles

David Copperfield

Debt and deception in Dickens's semi-autobiographical Bildungsroman crammed with cads, creeps and capital fellows.

Defoe, Daniel

Robinson Crusoe

A slave trader is shipwrecked but finds God, and a native to convert, on a desert island.

Dumas, Alexandre

The Three Musketeers

"One for all and all for one": the eponymous swashbucklers battle the mysterious Milady.

Eliot, George

Middlemarch

"One of the few English novels written for grown-up people," said Virginia Woolf. (One of Mrs Weir's Top Three, okay, four)

Forster, EM

A Passage to India

A false accusation exposes the racist oppression of British rule in India.

A Room With a View

A young Englishwoman makes her first visit to Florence, Italy in the early 1900's. There, she meets a quiet yet eccentric young man.

Hardy, Thomas

Tess of the D'Urbervilles

Sexual double standards are held up to the cold, Wessex light in this rural tragedy.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel **The Scarlet Letter**

A novel set in the Puritan community of Boston in the seventeenth century.

Shelley, Mary

Frankenstein

Human endeavours “to mock the stupendous mechanism of the Creator of the world” have tragic consequences.

Sterne, Laurence

Tristram Shandy

The critic Samuel Johnson thought Sterne’s bawdy, experimental novel was too odd to last. Pah!

Twain, Mark

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

A boy and a runaway slave set sail on the Mississippi, away from Antebellum “civilisation”.

Wilde, Oscar

A Picture of Dorian Grey

Dorian Grey’s vile and deceptive actions fail to have any consequence for him, but a painting of him shows that the stains on his soul exist. A Gothic horror classic.

Wharton, Edith

The House of Mirth

Lily Bart craves luxury too much to marry for love. Scandal and sleeping pills ensue.

Tolstoy, Leo

Anna Karenina

Tolstoy’s doomed adulteress grew from a daydream of “a bare exquisite aristocratic elbow”.

Modern Classics (1900 - 1970)

Burgess, Anthony

A Clockwork Orange

A nightmare vision of youth culture in revolt.

Achebe, Chinua

Things Fall Apart

A Nigerian yam farmer’s local leadership is shaken by accidental death and a missionary’s arrival.

Fitzgerald, F Scott

The Great Gatsby

A mysterious millionaire’s love for a woman with “a voice full of money” gets him in trouble. The epitome of roaring 20s Jazz Age style.

Amis, Kingsley

Lucky Jim

An uncommitted history lecturer clashes with his pompous boss, gets drunk and gets the girl.

Greene, Graham

Brighton Rock

The story of Pinkie, a boy gangster and seaside sociopath who mucks up murder and marriage in pre-war Britain in Greene’s literary Punch and Judy show.

Ishiguro, Kazuo

The Remains of the Day

This 1989 Booker Prize winner attempts to capture a period in British history and draw a portrait of a man in old age.

Joyce, James	Ulysses	Modernist masterpiece reworking of Homer with humour. Has one of the longest “sentences” in English literature: 4,391 words.
Kerouac, Jack	On The Road	1950’s underground America: ‘The living epitome of beat’
le Carré , John	Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy	Nursery rhyme provides the code names for British spies suspected of treason.
Lee, Harper	To Kill a Mockingbird	A child’s-eye view of racial prejudice and freaky neighbours in Thirties Alabama. This is novel everyone should read. (One of Mrs Weir's Top Three of all Time)
Maupin, Amistead	Tales of the city	Living and loving in the city of San Francisco in the 1970’s.
Morrison, Toni	Beloved	Set in Kentucky in the mid-1800’s, a prize winning, jazz inflected novel about the abolition of slavery.
Salinger, JD	The Catcher in the Rye	Expelled from a “phony” prep school, adolescent anti-hero goes through a difficult phase.
Steinbeck, John	The Grapes of Wrath	“Okies” set out from the Depression dustbowl seeking decent wages and dignity. An American Classic.
Tolkein , JRR	The Lord of the Rings	WH Auden thought this tale of fantastic creatures looking for lost jewellery was a “masterpiece”.
Walker, Alice	The Color Purple	The story of a woman forced into an ugly marriage, with no one to talk to but God, until she meets a woman who offers her love and support.
Waugh, Evelyn	Scoop	Waugh based the hapless junior reporter in this journalistic farce on former Telegraph editor Bill Deedes.

Contemporary Literature (1970 -)

- Ali, Monica **Brick Lane**
- The tale of Nazneen and her journey from her home in Bangladesh to London where she must build a new life.
- Coetzee, JM **Disgrace**
- Teacher-student relationships in South Africa. Booker Prize for Fiction 1999
- Cleave, Chris **The Other Hand**
- The story of two women who meet, one of whom has to make a terrible choice. This is the tale of what happens when they meet two years later.
- Coelho, Paulo **The Alchemist**
- The story of a young shepherd boy who learns how to live his dream.
- Deighton, Len **Funeral in Berlin**
- Set in 1960's Berlin, this novel tells of the selling of an important Russian scientist to the West. But the hero soon discovers that, behind the façade of a mock funeral, lies a game of deadly manoeuvres and ruthless tricks.
- DeLillo, Don **Underworld**
- From baseball to nuclear waste, all late-20th-century American life is here.
- Faber, Michel **Some Rain Must Fall**
- A collection of stories that reveal an extraordinary imagination, a deep love of language and an adventurous versatility.
- Under the Skin**
- A character is obsessed with picking up lone, male hitchhikers who are muscular and fit.
- Fowles, John **The Collector**
- The tale of a collector and his captive. We watch as she struggles to escape and free herself.
- Garland, Alex **The Beach**
- A young traveller discovers paradise in Thailand but, soon, his heaven turns into hell.
- Irving, John **A Prayer for Owen Meany**
- Eleven year old Owen Meany hits a foul ball in a baseball game and kills his best friend's mother. He does not believe there is such a thing as accidents and believe he has been God's instrument.
- McEwan, Ian **Atonement**
- A young girl mistakes something she sees and her resulting actions go on to cause misery for others. This is the book that dares to put the "c" word in the classic English country house novel.

Némirovsky, Irène **Suite Francaise**

Published 60 years after their author was gassed, these two novellas portray city and village life in Nazi-occupied France.

Tan, Amy **The Joy Luck Club**

A story of four mothers and their first generation Chinese-American daughters.

Tremain, Rose **The Road Home**

Lev travels to Britain from Eastern Europe to find a brighter financial future.

Warner, Alan **The Sopranos**

A girl's choir heads off to the big city for the national finals of a major competition but the girls are more interested in pub-crawling, shoplifting and body-piercing.

Crime

Chandler, Raymond **The Big Sleep**

"Dead men are heavier than broken hearts" in this hardboiled crime noir.

Child, Lee **Gone Tomorrow**

Detective Jack Reacher notices a suspicious looking passenger who matches the specifications for a potential suicide bomber.

Collins, Wilkie **The Moonstone**

Hailed by TS Eliot as "the first and the best of modern English detective novels".

Doyle, Arthur Conan **The Hound of the Baskervilles**

A drug addict chases a ghostly dog across the midnight moors.

Highsmith, Patricia **The Talented Mr Ripley**

Tom Ripley is given an assignment to go to Italy to persuade a son and heir to return home. Instead he murders him and contrives to inherit his fortune.

Hoeg, Peter **Miss Smilia's Feeling for Snow**

A little boy falls off a roof in Copenhagen and is killed. Smilla, his neighbour, suspects it is not an accident.

Rankin, Ian **Mortal Causes**

Scottish crime fiction with Detective John Rebus with a violent opening chapter set in Mary King's Close in Edinburgh's old town.

Science Fiction

Adams, Douglas **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy**

Earth is demolished to make way for a Hyperspatial Express Route. Don't panic. The answer to life, the universe and everything will be revealed.

Atwood, Margaret **The Handmaid's Tale**

The Republic of Gilead offers Offred only one option; to breed. If she doesn't comply then she will be hanged at the wall or sent outside to die slowly of radiation sickness.

Bradbury, Ray **Fahrenheit 451**

First published in 1953, a vision of a weird but not too distant future where scholars are outcasts and books are burnt.

McCarthy, Cormac **The Road**

In a post-apocalyptic world, a father and son fight for survival, battling against cold, hunger and gangs of cannibals.

Orwell, George **1984**

In which Big Brother is even more sinister than the TV series it inspired.

Wells, H.G. **The War of the Worlds**

Classic Sci-Fi tale in which martians descend on the Cotswolds.

The Time Machine

The Time Traveller recounts his experiences of time as a fourth dimension to his dinner guests.

War

Ballard, JG **Empire of the Sun**

A young boy who goes from living in a wealthy British family in Shanghai, to becoming a prisoner of war in a Japanese internment camp, during World War II. A coming of age semi-autobiographical war story.

De Bernieres, Louis **Captain Corelli's Mandolin**

When the Axis powers reach a Greek island, Captain Corelli is billeted on the doctor's house and falls in love with his daughter.

Faulks, Sebastian **Birdsong**

A love story, set in France before and during the First World War.

Faulks, Sebastian

Charlotte Gray

Set in Nazi-occupied France at the height of World War II, Charlotte Gray tells the compelling story of a young Scottish woman working with the French Resistance in the hope of rescuing her lover, a missing RAF pilot.

Keneally, T

Schindler's Ark

The story of a flamboyant German industrialist who risked his life to protect Jews in Nazi occupied Germany.

Schlink, Bernhard

The Reader

Traces the relationship between a German lawyer and an older woman, who he discovers had been a guard at Auschwitz.

Scottish Literature

Banks, Ian

Complicity

When several prominent people die mysteriously, the police beat a path to the door of an Edinburgh journalist known for his addiction to drugs and computer games.

Brookmyre, Christopher **Quite Ugly One Morning**

A journalist finds himself involved with a number of characters including an inept hit man from Essex, a gambling medic, now dead, his ex-wife, and a female detective constable with attitude.

Donovan, Anne

Buddha Da

A humorous tale of how a Glaswegian man discovers Buddhism.

Galloway, Janice

The Trick is To Keep Breathing

A young drama teacher in the West of Scotland struggles with psychological problems.

Greig, Andrew

Electric Brae

Love, loyalty, betrayal – and ice climbing. Prize-winning novel with the Old Man of Hoy at its centre.

Jenkins, Robin

The Changeling

Thirteen year old Tom is on probation for theft when one of his teachers decides to take him on holiday with his family. The effect of this decision forms the basis of the story.

Lindsay, Douglas

The Long Midnight of Barney Thomson

Set in Glasgow, this tells the tale of a serial killer barber. Black humour.

McIlvanney, William

The Big Man

The story of Dan Scoular, a legend of physical prowess in a decaying Ayrshire community.

McIlvanney, William **Laidlaw**

The unconventional detective Jack Laidlaw makes his debut. Set in Glasgow.

Spark, Muriel **The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie**

An Edinburgh schoolteacher imposes her big personality and views on the girls she decides to transform – with unexpected results.

Spence, Alan **Way To Go**

This Novel lifts the lid on the Glasgow undertaking industry and continues the theme of exploring spirituality and emotional salvation.

Stevenson, R.L. **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde**

The tale of a doctor who discovers the ultimate drug and how it turns him into something else.

Humour

Doyle, Roddy **Paddy Clarke, Ha Ha Ha**

A ten-year old boy in Dublin describes his world.

The Woman Who Walked Into Doors

Prize-winner Roddy Doyle's novel is the story of an ordinary woman from Dublin and her stormy relationship with her husband.

The Commitments

The story of a soul band set up by a group of unemployed youngsters.

Fry, Stephen **Making History**

A plot involving the creation of an alternative historical time line - one where Adolf Hitler never existed.

Nicholls, David **Starter for Ten**

The misadventures of student Brian Jackson in his first year at university and a stern warning against cheating on televised quiz shows.

Townsend, Sue **Number Ten**

Teenage and mid-life crises in the family from hell. A bleak, perceptive and wickedly entertaining novel about a dysfunctional Edinburgh family.

Biography

Angelou, Maya **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings**

A child from the American South is sent to live with her grandmother after her parents divorce. A book as joyous and painful, as mysterious and memorable, as childhood itself.

Bauby, Jean-Dominique **The Diving Bell and the Butterfly**

The true story of Elle editor Jean-Dominique Bauby who suffered a stroke and was paralysed, with the only exception of some movement in his head and eyes. The entire book was written by Bauby dictating by blinking his left eyelid, which took ten months (four hours a day). Two days after the book was published, Bauby died.

Bryson, Bill **Notes From A Big Country**

Hilarious observational humour from famous travel writer; this time he entertains us with what it is like to live in the USA.

Fry, Stephen **Moab is My Washpot**

Stephen Fry's autobiography, covering the first 20 years of his life. He is candid about his many weaknesses, including stealing, cheating and lying.

Hind, Laura **Born Free**

Heart warming tale of the real-life couple who raised Elsa the Lioness, an orphaned lion cub, to adulthood, and released her into the wilderness of Kenya. Animal lovers will love this.

This is just a small selection of books which are of a high quality and will stretch you as readers. Your vocabulary will develop and you will experience a variety of techniques, structures and plots which may help to inspire you. The authors mentioned will usually have more than one work and this is really just a starting point for you.

If you are struggling to get into reading in the first place then below are a number of websites which will give you some good ideas for interesting reads.

<http://www.modernlibrary.com/top-100/100-best-novels/>

http://www.goodreads.com/list/show/43.Best_Young_Adult_Books

<http://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/booklists/>

http://www.tvbookclub.co.uk/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/qs_home_tbp?storeId=351&catalogId=353&langId=100