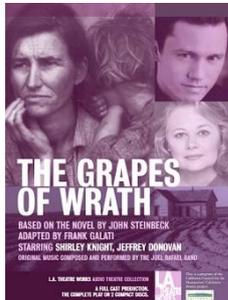


Suggested Yr11 Reading List

The books in this list have all been enjoyed by many students – read the synopses to decide which ones you would like to read.

If you've read and enjoyed any of these books, consider leaving a [review](#) for other students to see too!



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Croydon Library](#)

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

Set against the background of dust bowl Oklahoma and Californian migrant life, it tells of the Joad family, who, like thousands of others, are forced to travel West in search of the promised land.

Their story is one of false hopes, thwarted desires and broken dreams, yet out of their suffering Steinbeck created a drama that is intensely human, yet majestic in its scale and moral vision; an eloquent tribute to the endurance and dignity of the human spirit.

Themes: Family, Suffering

Guided Reading Questions: How much of the suffering in the book is caused by the way people treat each other?



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Brighton Rock by Graham Greene

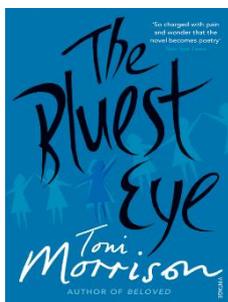
A gang war is raging through the dark underworld of Brighton.

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.

Themes: Morality, Good & Evil

Guided Reading Questions: How does Greene examine the difference between Right and wrong and Good and Evil?



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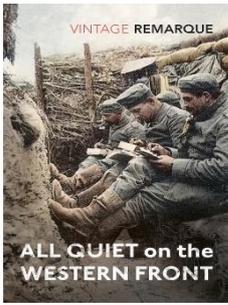
The Bluest Eyes by Toni Morrison

THE BLUEST EYE chronicles the tragic, torn lives of a poor black family in 1940s Ohio: Pauline, Cholly, Sam and Pecola.

Pecola, unlovely and unloved, prays each night for blue eyes like those of her privileged blond white schoolfellows. She becomes the focus of the mingled love and hatred engendered by her family's frailty and the world's cruelty as the novel moves toward a savage but poignant resolution.

Themes: Racism, Child Abuse

Guided Reading Questions: Pecola wants new eyes to change the way she sees and is seen – what does this show us about her world?



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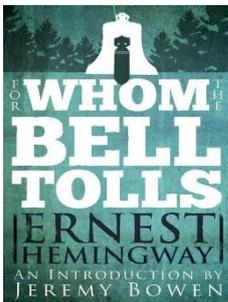
All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque

One by one the boys begin to fall...In 1914, a room full of German schoolboys, fresh-faced and idealistic, are goaded by their schoolmaster to troop off to the 'glorious war'.

With the fire and patriotism of youth, they sign up. What follows is the moving story of a young 'unknown soldier' experiencing the horror and disillusionment of life in the trenches.

Themes: War

Guided Reading Questions: Do you agree with any of the characters' assessments of war?



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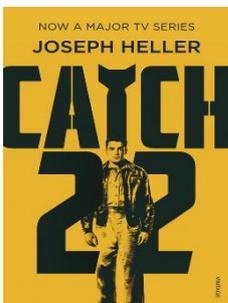
For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway

Hemingway's evocation of the pride and the tragedy of the civil war that tore Spain apart.

A young American volunteer is sent to handle the dynamiting of a bridge behind the lines of Franco's army. In the mountains he finds the dangers and the intense comradeship of war - and he discovers Maria.

Themes: Victims of War, Love

Guided Reading Questions: How does Hemingway use animal imagery in this book?



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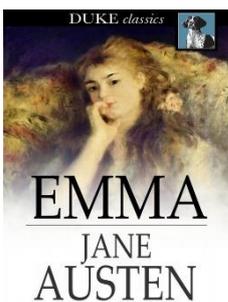
Catch 22 by Joseph Heller

At the heart of Joseph Heller's bestselling novel, first published in 1961, is a satirical indictment of military madness and stupidity, and the desire of the ordinary man to survive it.

It is a tale of the dangerously sane Captain Yossarian, who spends his time in Italy plotting to survive.

Themes: Morality, Patriotism

Guided Reading Questions: Is being mad sometimes an advantage?



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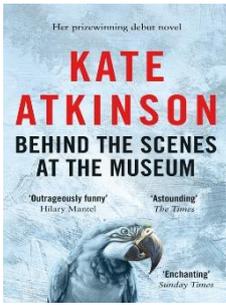
Emma by Jane Austen

Beautiful, clever, rich - and single - Emma Woodhouse is perfectly content with her life and sees no need for either love or marriage. Nothing, however, delights her more than interfering in the romantic lives of others.

But when she ignores the warnings of her good friend Mr Knightley and attempts to arrange a suitable match for her protegee Harriet Smith, her carefully laid plans soon unravel and have consequences that she never expected.

Themes: Romance, Relationships

Guided Reading Questions: Jane Austen thought that no-one would like Emma Woodhouse very much – do you?



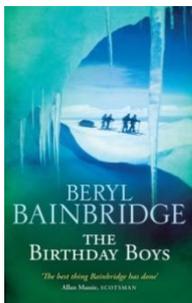
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Behind the Scenes at the Museum by Kate Atkinson

Bunty had never wanted to marry George, but here she was, stuck in a flat above the pet shop in an ancient street beneath York Minster, with sensible and sardonic Patrica aged five, greedy cross-patch Gillian who refused to be ignored, and Ruby...Ruby tells the story of The Family, from the day at the end of the nineteenth century when a travelling French photographer catches frail beautiful Alice and her children, like flowers in amber, to the startling, witty, and memorable events of Ruby's own life.

Themes: Family, Death, Role of Women

Guided Reading Questions: What does this book show about the role of women in family life?

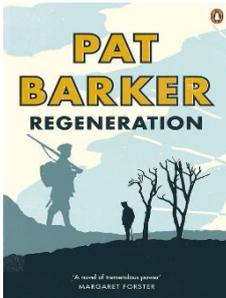


The Birthday Boys by Beryl Bainbridge

A brilliantly realized evocation of the thoughts and voices of Captain Scott and the four men with him, who suffered extraordinary hardships before finally dying during their 1912 attempt to be the first to reach the South Pole. 'A whole lost era of fantastic courage, determination, idealism, curiosity, boyish foolishness and class mores is brought brilliantly and touchingly back by Bainbridge's penetrating psychological acumen and her superb scene and action painting...

Themes: Exploration

Guided Reading Questions: What does this book show about the truth?



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Regeneration by Pat Barker

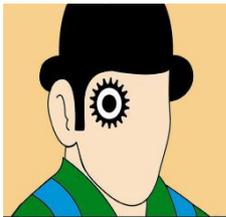
Under his care are the poets Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, as well as mute Billy Prior, who is only able to communicate by means of pencil and paper.

River's 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.

Themes: Friendship, Madness, War

Guided Reading Questions: How does the symbolism in this book underline the horror of the trenches?



ANTHONY BURGESS
A Clockwork Orange
A BBC RADIO 4 FULL-CAST DRAMATISATION

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Croydon Library](#)

A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess

Burroughs Fifteen-year-old Alex doesn't just like ultra-violence - he also enjoys rape, drugs and Beethoven's ninth. He and his gang of droogs rampage through a dystopian future, hunting for terrible thrills.

But when Alex finds himself at the mercy of the state and subject to the ministrations of Dr Brodsky, and the mind-altering treatment of the Ludovico Technique, he discovers that fun is no longer the order of the day.

Themes: Violence, Future

Guided Reading Questions: How much or not can laws and regulations make people good?



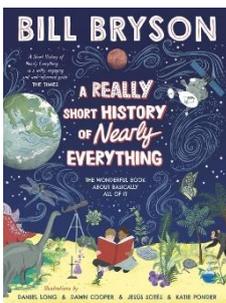
PENGUIN CLASSICS
Metaphysical Poetry
Edited by COLIN BURROW

Metaphysical Poetry by Colin Burrow

This compelling collection of the best and most enjoyable poems from the era includes tightly argued lyrics, erotic and libertine considerations of love, divine poems and elegies of lament by such great figures as Donne, Herbert, Marvell and Vaughan, alongside pieces from many other less well known but equally fascinating poets of the age, such as Anne Bradstreet, Katherine Philips and Thomas Traherne.

Themes: Poetry, Literature

Guided Reading Questions: In what ways do these poets use humour in their poems?

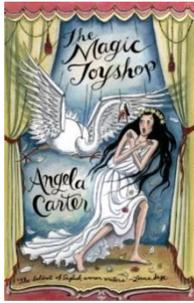


A Really Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson

Ever wondered how we got from nothing to something? Or thought about how we can weigh the earth? Or wanted to reach the edge of the universe? Uncover the mysteries of time, space and life on earth in this extraordinary book - a journey from the centre of the planet, to the dawn of the dinosaurs, and everything in between. And discover our own incredible journey, from single cell to civilisation, including the brilliant (and sometimes very bizarre) scientists who helped us find out the how and why. The ideal book for curious young readers everywhere.

Themes: Science

Guided Reading Questions: Does this book really contain everything there is to know about life?



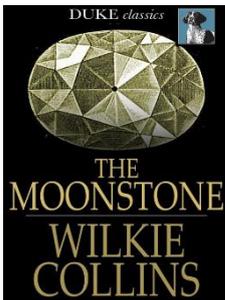
The Magic Toyshop by Angela Carter

She was in the night again, and the doll was herself. One-night Melanie walks through the garden in her mother's wedding dress.

The next morning her world is shattered. Forced to leave her rural home, she is sent to London to live with relatives she has never met: gentle Aunt Margaret, mute since her wedding day; and her brothers, Francie, whose graceful music belies his clumsy nature, and the volatile Finn.

Themes: Magical Realism

Guided Reading Questions: This book has been described as an allegory of the passage into womanhood – do you agree?



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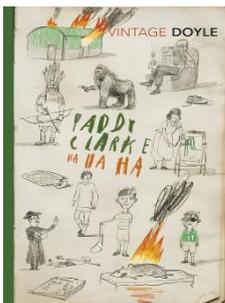
The Moonstone by Wilkie Collins

The Moonstone, a priceless Indian diamond which had been brought to England as spoils of war, is given to Rachel Verrinder on her eighteenth birthday.

That very night, the stone is stolen. Suspicion then falls on a hunchbacked housemaid, on Rachel's cousin Franklin Blake, on a troupe of mysterious Indian jugglers, and on Rachel herself. The phlegmatic Sergeant Cuff is called in, and with the help of Betteredge, the Robinson Crusoe-reading loquacious steward, the mystery of the missing stone is ingeniously solved.

Themes: Crime

Guided Reading Questions: T S Eliot described this book as “the first, the longest and the best of Modern English detective novels.” Do you agree?



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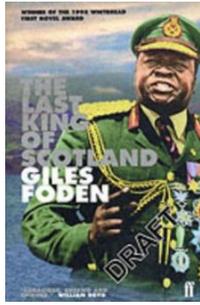
Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha by Roddy Doyle

The Moonstone, a priceless Indian diamond which had been brought to England as spoils of war, is given to Rachel Verrinder on her eighteenth birthday.

That very night, the stone is stolen. Suspicion then falls on a hunchbacked housemaid, on Rachel's cousin Franklin Blake, on a troupe of mysterious Indian jugglers, and on Rachel herself. The phlegmatic Sergeant Cuff is called in, and with the help of Betteredge, the Robinson Crusoe-reading loquacious steward, the mystery of the missing stone is ingeniously solved.

Themes: Childhood

Guided Reading Questions: How would this book be different if it was narrated by an adult?



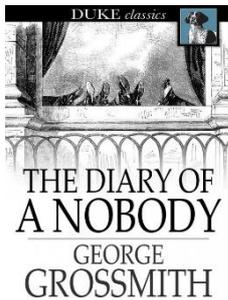
The Last King of Scotland by Giles Foden

What would it be like to become Idi Amin's personal physician?

Giles Foden's best-selling thriller is the story of a young Scottish doctor drawn into the heart of the Ugandan dictator's surreal and brutal regime. Privy to Amin's thoughts and ambitions, he is both fascinated and appalled. As Uganda plunges into civil chaos, he realises action is imperative - but which way should he jump?

Themes: Dictatorship, Violence

Guided Reading Questions: How much do you think this is a biography of Idi Amin



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Diary of a Nobody by George Grossmith

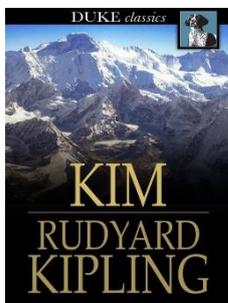
A gang war is raging through the dark underworld of Brighton.

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.

Themes: Humour, Daily Life

Guided Reading Questions: Written in 1892, this book has never been out of print – but is it still funny?



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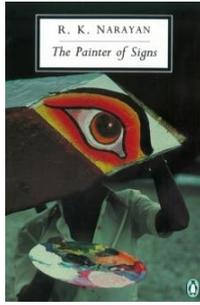
Kim by Rudyard Kipling

Kim himself is a resourceful lad who befriends a lama, an ageing priest; and both embark on a combined quest. Whereas Kim has an insatiable interest in the varied activities around him, the lama seeks redemption from the 'Wheel of Life'.

Kim becomes involved in the 'Great Game';, undertaking espionage for the British rulers. This engrossing and moving novel, with its diversity of memorable characters, offers many insights into political, religious and social tensions.

Themes: Equality, Unity

Guided Reading Questions: Can there be equality in a society dominated by class?

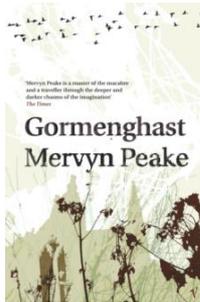


The Painter of Signs by R. K. Narayan

In this wry, funny, bittersweet story, love gets in the way of progress when Raman, a sign painter, meets the thrillingly independent Daisy, who wishes to bring birth control to the city of Malgudi.

Themes: Society, Relationships

Guided Reading Questions: Can tradition and modernity exist together?



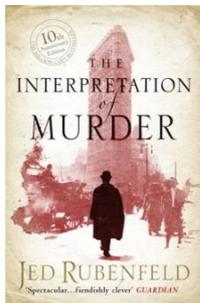
Gormenghast by Mervyn Peake

Enter the world of Gormenghast...the vast crumbling castle to which the seventy-seventh Earl, Titus Groan, is Lord and heir.

Gothic labyrinth of roofs and turrets, cloisters and corridors, stairwells and dungeons, it is also the cobwebbed kingdom of Byzantine government and age-old rituals, a world primed to implode beneath the weight of centuries of intrigue, treachery, manipulation and murder.

Themes: Fantasy, Self-Discovery, Freedom

Guided Reading Questions: This book has been described as a tale of self-discovery – do you agree?



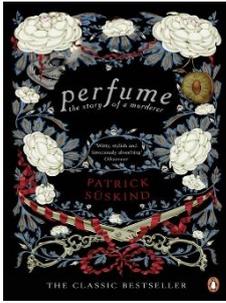
The Interpretation of Murder by Jed Rubenfeld

When a wealthy young debutante is discovered bound, whipped and strangled in a luxurious apartment overlooking the city, and another society beauty narrowly escapes the same fate, the mayor of New York calls upon Freud to use his revolutionary new ideas to help the surviving victim recover her memory of the attack, and solve the crime.

But nothing about the attacks - or about the surviving victim, Nora - is quite as it seems. And there are those in very high places determined to stop the truth coming out, and Freud's startling theories taking root on American soil.

Themes: Murder, Psychoanalysis, Freud

Guided Reading Questions: Is these three stories or one?



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Perfume by Patrick Süskind

In eighteenth-century France there lived a man who was one of the most gifted and abominable personages in an era that knew no lack of gifted and abominable personages.

His name was Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, and if his name has been forgotten today, it is certainly not because Grenouille fell short of those more famous blackguards when it came to arrogance, misanthropy, immorality, or, more succinctly, wickedness, but because his gifts and his sole ambition were restricted to a domain that leaves no traces in history: to the fleeting realm of scent . . .

Themes: Horror, Absurd, Morality

Guided Reading Questions: What does our identity consist of?