

Year 8 Recommended Reading List

Check out this fantastic list of modern books! The books have been specially selected for Year 8 students and the English department are particularly excited about the diverse range of voices and stories that are collected here.

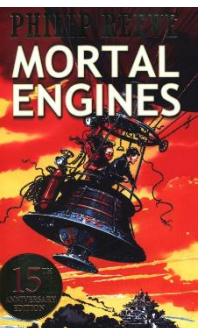
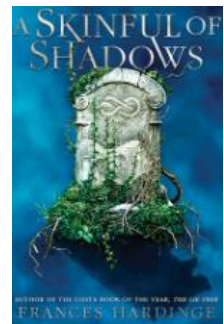
We think there's something for everyone...

For more suggestions visit: LoveReading4Schools on <https://www.lovereadingschools.co.uk>

Fantasy and Ghost Stories

A Skinful of Shadows – Frances Hardinge

This is the story of a bear-hearted girl . . . Sometimes, when a person dies, their spirit goes looking for somewhere to hide. Some people have space within them, perfect for hiding. Twelve-year-old Makepeace has learned to defend herself from the ghosts which try to possess her in the night, desperate for refuge, but one day a dreadful event causes her to drop her guard. And now there's a spirit inside her. The spirit is wild, brutish and strong, and it may be her only defence when she is sent to live with her father's rich and powerful ancestors. There is talk of civil war, and they need people like her to protect their dark and terrible family secret. But as she plans her escape and heads out into a country torn apart by war, Makepeace must decide which is worse: possession - or death.

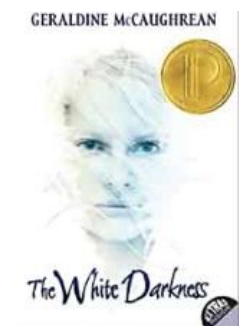


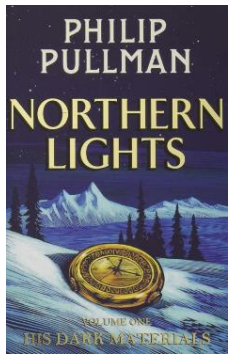
Mortal Engines – Philip Reeve

Set thousands of years in the future, in the aftermath of the Sixty Minute War which destroyed the civilisation of the 21st century the Mortal Engines series is a modern masterpiece, blending science-fiction, adventure and wonderful strangeness. Airships storm the skies whilst deep in the oceans submarines lie waiting for prey. In this dangerous landscape the cities and their anti-tractionist enemies race to capture the remnants of perilous technologies to put to use. The first instalment introduces young apprentice Tom Natsworthy and the murderous Hester Shaw, flung from the fast-moving city of London into heart-stopping adventures in the wastelands of the Great Hunting Ground.

The White Darkness – Geraldine McCaughrean+

When she is taken on a mystery expedition by her eccentric uncle Victor, Sym can't believe her luck. Destination Antarctica - the very place she's always wanted to visit. But Victor has other plans, more sinister than Sym could possibly imagine. Could it be that Titus, the one who perished in that very place, will be the means of her survival?





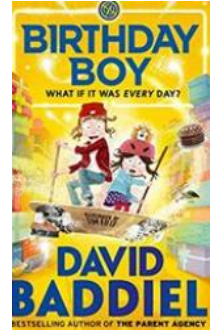
Northern Lights – Philip Pullman

Lyra and her animal daemon live a carefree life amongst the scholars of Jordan College, Oxford. Yet the destiny that awaits her will take her far from her home, to the magical frozen lands of the Arctic, amongst the witch-clans and ice-bears. Here, she will discover the truth about her identity, which will have immeasurable consequences reaching beyond her own world.

Comedy

Birthday Boy – David Baddiel

his is the story of Sam Green, who really, really, really loves birthdays. He loves the special breakfasts in bed. The presents. The themed parties. Blowing out the candles on his cake. Everything. He is so excited about his 11th birthday, in fact, that he wishes it was his birthday every day. So, at first, it's quite exciting when his birthday happens again the next morning. And again. And again. And again...But it's not long before things start to go wrong. Soon, disaster strikes, threatening something Sam loves even more than birthdays. Sometimes you have to be careful what you wish for...

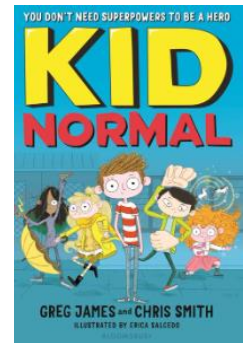


The Midnight Gang – David Walliams

When the clock strikes midnight most children are fast asleep, but for The Midnight Gang the journey is just beginning. This extraordinary story of five children in a wonderfully inventive and eccentric hospital setting promises to take fans from around the globe on an unmissable midnight adventure. A story of friendship, theatre and magic – and of making dreams come true.

Kid Normal series by Greg James

Not all heroes have superpowers. Don't believe us? Well Murph Cooper is living proof. Since becoming Kid Normal, he and the Super Zeroes have been catching baddies all over the place. But being a hero is about to get a whole lot harder ... Far away in a top-secret prison, the world's most feared supervillain has broken a thirty year silence. His first words? 'Bring Kid Normal to me!'



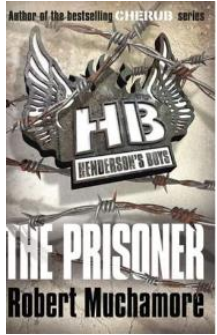
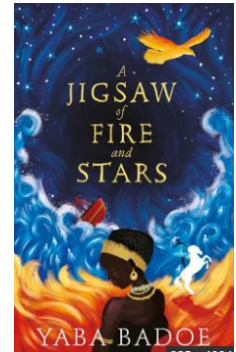
The Summer I Robbed a Bank by David O'Doherty & Chris Judge

Rex's parents have split up, he's about to make the daunting move to secondary school, and to make matters worse he has to spend his summer holiday on a remote and rainy Irish island - with lots of unruly sheep for company. The only upside: he'll be staying with his strange and brilliant Uncle Derm. Then Rex discovers Uncle Derm is about to execute his most hair-brained plan yet - to rob the island's travelling bank! Like the local legend of medieval Pirate Queen Grace O'Malley, Uncle Derm plans to redistribute the money to local needy causes on the island. And he needs Rex's help . . .

Adventure and Action

A Jigsaw of Fire and Stars – Yaba Badoe+

Sante was a baby when she was washed ashore in a sea-chest laden with treasure. It seems she is the sole survivor of the tragic sinking of a ship carrying migrants and refugees. Her people. Fourteen years on she's a member of Mama Rose's unique and dazzling circus. But, from their watery grave, the unquiet dead are calling Sante to avenge them: A bamboo flute. A golden bangle. A ripening mango which must not fall... .. are these the missing pieces of the jigsaw which will tell Sante's story?

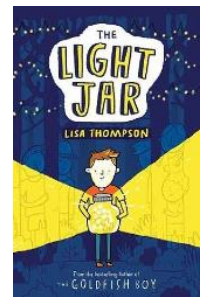


The Henderson Boys Series by Robert Muchamore+

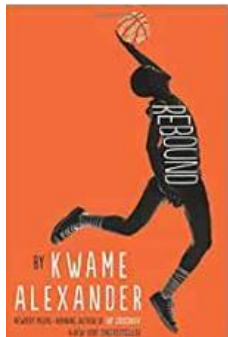
Summer, 1940. Hitler's army is advancing towards Paris, and millions of French civilians are on the run. Amidst the chaos, two British children are being hunted by German agents. British spy Charles Henderson tries to reach them first, but he can only do it with the help of a twelve-year-old French orphan. The British secret service is about to discover that kids working undercover will help to win the war. For official purposes, these children do not exist.

The Light Jar – Lisa Thompson

Nate and his mother are running away, hiding out in a tumbledown cottage in the middle of a forest. When Mum heads off for provisions, and then doesn't return, Nate is left alone and afraid, with the dark closing in all around him. But comfort can come from the most unexpected of places - a mysterious girl trying to solve the clues of a treasure hunt and the reappearance of an old friend from his past. Will Nate find the bravery needed to face the troubles of his present and ultimately illuminate the future?



Sport

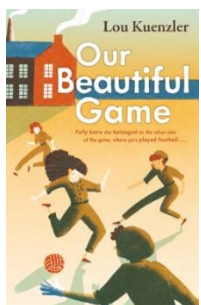
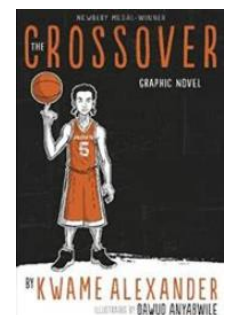


Rebound – Kwame Alexander

It's 1988. Charlie Bell is still mourning his father, and struggling to figure out how he feels for his best (girl) friend, CJ. When he gets into trouble one too many times, he's packed off like the Fresh Prince to stay with his grandparents for the summer. There his cousin Roxie introduces him to a whole new world: basketball. A legend on the courts is born. But can Charlie resist when trouble comes knocking once again?

The Crossover (graphic novel) – Kwame Alexander

Thanks to their dad, Josh and his twin brother, Jordan, are kings on the court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood - he's got mad beats, too, which help him find his rhythm when it's all on the line.

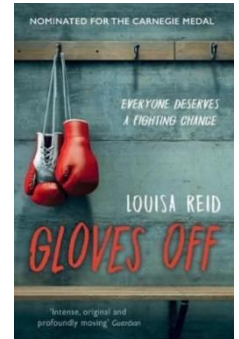


Our Beautiful Game – Lou Kuenzler

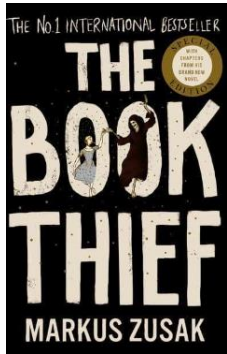
A hundred years before the Lionesses, Lily Parr, Alice Woods and their teammates were proudly playing their beloved, exciting and skilful game. As men were sent to fight in the war, women and girls took their place in munitions factories. Football became a favourite pastime and, before long, they were creating all-female sides and playing public matches to sell-out crowds, overshadowing the men's football. Despite drawing crowds of 50,000, women's football was outlawed by the Football Association in 1921, who deemed it 'unsuitable for females'. This is the incredible story of these amazing women.

Gloves Off – Louisa Reid+

Lily turns sixteen with two very different sides to her life: school, where she is badly bullied, and home with her mum and dad, warm and comforting but with its own difficulties. After a particularly terrible bullying incident, Lily's dad determines to give his daughter the tools to fight back. Introducing her to boxing, he encourages Lily to find her own worth. It is both difficult and challenging but in confronting her own fears she finds a way through that illuminates her life and friendships. Meeting Rose, and seeing that there is another world out there, enables her to live her own life fully and gives her the knowledge that she is both beautiful and worth it.



History and Conflict



The Book Thief – Marcus Zusak+

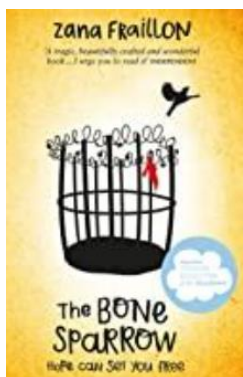
1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier. Liesel, a nine-year-old girl, is living with a foster family on Himmel Street. Her parents have been taken away to a concentration camp. Liesel steals books. This is her story and the story of the inhabitants of her street when the bombs begin to fall. **SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION - THIS NOVEL IS NARRATED BY DEATH.** It's a small story, about: a girl, an accordionist, some fanatical Germans, a Jewish fist fighter, and quite a lot of thievery. **ANOTHER THING YOU SHOULD KNOW - DEATH WILL VISIT THE BOOK THIEF THREE TIMES.**

Once – Morris Gleitzman

Felix has been living in an orphanage for three years and eight months when the men in armbands arrive to burn the books. Going on the run in search of his parents, Felix soon learns that Poland in 1942 is not a safe place for Jewish boys. But can his gift for storytelling keep him one step ahead of the Nazis and help him find his parents? After all, everybody deserves to have something good in their life at least once.



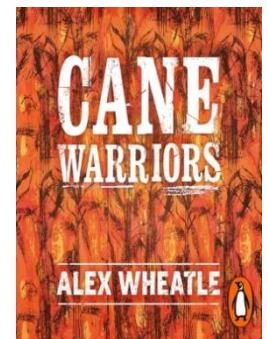
The Bone Sparrow – Zana Fraillon



Born in a refugee camp, all Subhi knows of the world is that he's at least 19 fence diamonds high, the nice Jackets never stay long, and at night he dreams that the sea finds its way to his tent, bringing with it unusual treasures. And one day it brings him Jimmie. Carrying a notebook that she's unable to read and wearing a sparrow made out of bone around her neck - both talismans of her family's past and the mother she's lost - Jimmie strikes up an unlikely friendship with Subhi beyond the fence. As he reads aloud the tale of how Jimmie's family came to be, both children discover the importance of their own stories in writing their futures.

Cane Warriors – Alex Wheatle+

Moa is fourteen. The only life he has ever known is toiling on the Frontier sugar cane plantation for endless hot days, fearing the vicious whips of the overseers. Then one night he learns of an uprising, led by the charismatic Tacky. Moa is to be a cane warrior, and fight for the freedom of all the enslaved people in the nearby plantations. But before they can escape, Moa and his friend Keverton must face their first great task: to kill their overseer, Misser Donaldson. Time is ticking, and the day of the uprising approaches ...Irresistible, gripping and unforgettable, Cane Warriors follows the true story of Tacky's War in Jamaica, 1760.



Dystopian/Sci-fi

Gone – Michael Grant+

In the blink of an eye, everyone disappears. Gone. Except for the young. There are teens, but not one single adult. Just as suddenly, there are no phones, no internet, no television. No way to get help. And no way to figure out what's happened. Hunger threatens. Bullies rule. A sinister creature lurks. Animals are mutating. And the teens themselves are changing, developing new talents—unimaginable, dangerous, deadly powers—that grow stronger by the day. It's a terrifying new world. Sides are being chosen, a fight is shaping up. Townies against rich kids. Bullies against the weak. Powerful against powerless. And time is running out: On your 15th birthday, you disappear just like everyone else...



Scythe – Neal Shusterman+



A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery. Humanity has conquered all those things, and has even conquered death. Now scythes are the only ones who can end life—and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control.

Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe—a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own.

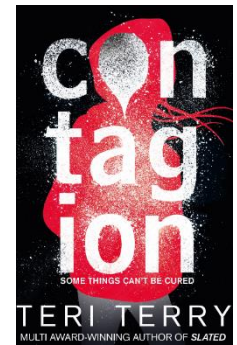
Contagion – Teri Terry+

Callie is missing.

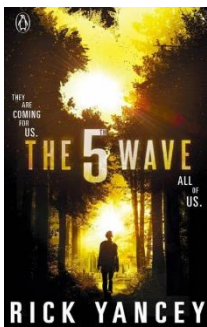
Her brother Kai is losing hope of ever seeing her again. Then he meets Shay, a girl who saw Callie the day she disappeared, and his hope is reignited.

Their search leads them to the heart of a terrifying epidemic that is raging through the country.

Can Kai and Shay escape death and find Callie?



The 5th Wave – Rick Yancey



After the 1st wave, only darkness remains. After the 2nd, only the lucky escape. And after the 3rd, only the *unlucky* survive. After the 4th wave, only one rule applies: trust no one.

Now, it's the dawn of the 5th wave, and on a lonely stretch of highway, Cassie runs from Them. The beings who only look human, who roam the countryside killing anyone they see. Who have scattered Earth's last survivors. To stay alone is to stay alive, Cassie believes, until she meets Evan Walker. Beguiling and mysterious, Evan Walker may be Cassie's only hope for rescuing her brother—or even saving herself. But Cassie must choose: between trust and despair, between defiance and surrender, between life and death.

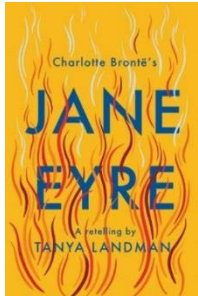
Relationships and Growing Up

One – Sarah Crossan+

Grace and Tippi. Tippi and Grace. Two sisters. Two hearts. Two dreams. Two lives. But one body. Grace and Tippi are conjoined twins, joined at the waist, defying the odds of survival for sixteen years. They share everything, and they are everything to each other. They would never imagine being apart. For them, that would be the real tragedy. But something is happening to them. Something they hoped would never happen. And Grace doesn't want to admit it. Not even to Tippi.



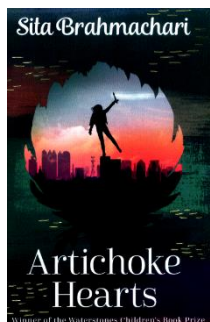
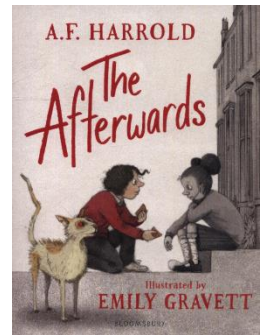
Jane Eyre - A retelling – Tanya Landman*



Orphaned as a child, tormented by her guardian and cast out to a harsh boarding school, Jane Eyre has been raised in the shadow of cruelty and isolation. But when she takes a job as governess in Thornfield Hall, where secrets lurk in the attic and strange laughter echoes through the night, Jane meets the elusive Mr Rochester - and her life is irrevocably transformed. Poignantly and powerfully retold in this stunning edition, Jane Eyre is the tale of a spirited heroine's search for love, independence and belonging.

The Afterwards – A.F. Harrold

Ember and Ness are best friends, completely inseparable. Ember can't imagine what life would be without Ness. Until Ness dies, in a most sudden and unexpected way. Ember feels completely empty. How can this even be real? Then Ember finds a way into the afterworld—a place where the recently dead reside. She knows there must be a way to bring Ness back, so she decides to find it. Because that's what friends do: rescue each other. But the afterworld holds its own dangers. How far will Ember go to make things the way they were again?



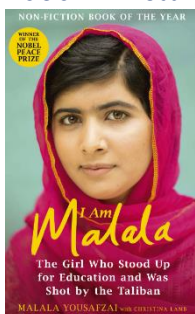
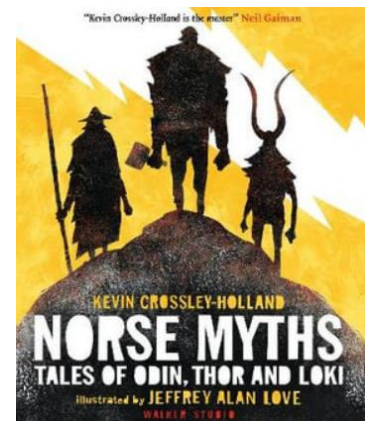
Artichoke Hearts – Sita Brahmachari

Twelve-year-old Mira comes from a chaotic, artistic and outspoken family where it's not always easy to be heard. As her beloved Nana Josie's health declines, Mira begins to discover the secrets of those around her, and also starts to keep some of her own. She is drawn to mysterious Jidé, a boy who is clearly hiding a troubled past and has grown hardened layers - like those of an artichoke - around his heart. As Mira is experiencing grief for the first time, she is also discovering the wondrous and often mystical world around her.

Non-Fiction

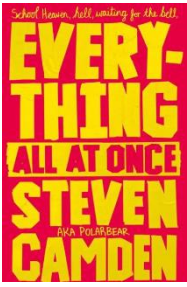
Norse Myths – Kevin Crossley- Holland

Here are thirty-two classic myths that bring the Viking world vividly to life. The mythic legacy of the Scandinavians includes a cycle of stories filled with magnificent images from pre-Christian Europe. Gods, humans, and monstrous beasts engage in prodigious drinking bouts, contests of strength, greedy schemes for gold, and lusty encounters. The Norse pantheon includes Odin, the wisest and most fearsome of the gods; Thor, the thundering powerhouse; and the exquisite, magic-wielding Freyja. Their loves, wars, and adventures take us through worlds both mortal and divine, culminating in a blazing doomsday for gods and humans alike. These stories bear witness to the courage, passion, and boundless spirit that were hallmarks of the Norse world.



I am Malala – Malala Yousafzai

I Am Malala is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons

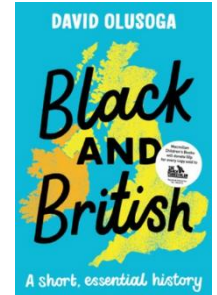


Everything All At Once – Steven Camden

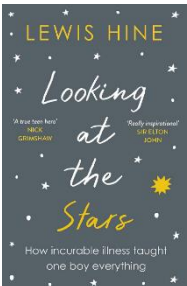
An achingly beautiful collection of poems about one week in a secondary school where everything happens all at once. Zooming in across our cast of characters, we share moments that span everything from hoping to make it to the end of the week, facing it, fitting in, finding friends and falling out, to loving lessons, losing it, and worrying, wearing it well and worshipping from afar.

Black and British: A short, Essential History - David Olusoga

Olusoga concisely explains the much-overlooked history of Black peoples in Britain and beyond; from the multiculturally diverse society of Roman times and the first Africans in Britain to the link between the Industrial Revolution and the American Civil War, as well as more modern history such as the Second World War and the *Windrush* scandal. Maps, bite-sized facts, photos and paintings illustrate each rich and varied period of history.



Looking at the Stars – Lewis Hine

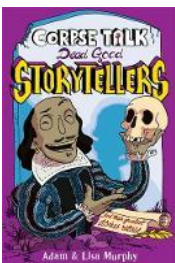
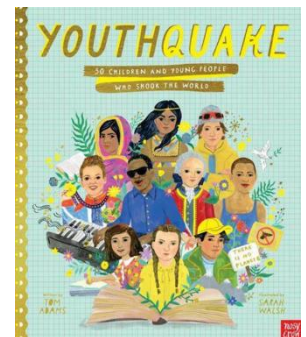


Diagnosed with a life-threatening brain tumour and water on the brain at 17 months, Lewis wasn't expected to survive. But he proved everyone wrong; he's not only surviving but thriving. His story will make you laugh, cry and above all, feel inspired by life's endless possibilities, looking at the stars.

Autobiography/Biography

Youthquake 50 Children and Young people Who Shook the World - Tom Adams

This is the story of fearless activists, brilliant inventors, champion athletes, gifted creators and inspiring leaders. It is the story of tremendous trailblazers who have influenced change with their passion, courage and determination, and whose inspirational actions and groundbreaking achievements have shaken the world...

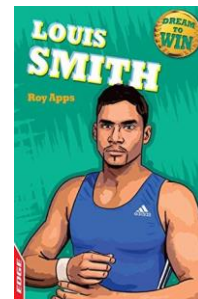


Dead Good Story Tellers – Adam and Lisa Murphy

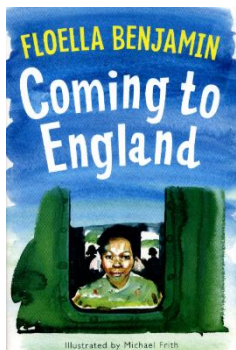
Discover MARY SHELLY and her electrifying FRANKENSTEIN! Look in on LEO TOLSTOY and read WAR AND PEACE in four pages! Keep up with CHARLES DICKENS and his GREAT EXPECTATIONS! Uncover all this and more in CORPSE TALK, the hilarious and mind-expanding chat show that brings the dead famous to life!

Jamie Vardy – Roy Apps*

This inspirational biography, written by award-winning author Roy Apps, follows the dream-come-true story of Jamie Vardy and his amazing rise to become a star striker in Leicester City's Premier League-winning side and top England goalscorer.



Coming to England – Floella Benjamin



Floella Benjamin reveals the hopes and fears, and the pain she experienced when leaving the Caribbean for an unfriendly new life in England. Her feelings are shared by any child who has had to adapt to a new life in a strange environment and culture.

*Dyslexia friendly and/or good for reluctant readers

+Young Adult texts – the content may reflect this