

# ‘What have you read that you think others should read too?’

## Summer Reading Recommendations

These are recommendations from teachers and boys at Abingdon School – things we have enjoyed, couldn’t put down, and things that made us think. Why don’t you read them too?

‘Never trust anyone who has not brought a book with them’  
Lemony Snicket

‘I find television very educating. Every time someone turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.’  
Groucho Marx

### Book recommendations for Lower School Pupils

1. *Wonder* - R J Palacio. ‘A really unique storyline...enjoyable and full of comic moments.’
2. *Shadow* - Michael Morpurgo. ‘A good book if you like dogs - emotional and captivating.’
3. *A Monster Calls* - Patrick Ness. ‘A stunning novel...I read it cover to cover in two hours.’
4. *Artemis Fowl* - Eoin Colfer. ‘A highly entertaining book.’
5. *My Family and Other Animals* - Gerald Durrell. ‘A light hearted book which will introduce you to non-fiction writing.’
6. *Framed* - Frank Cottrell Boyce. ‘A brilliant fictional diary; very poignant.’
7. *Once* - Morris Gleitzman. ‘The story of a young boy who is determined to escape the orphanage he lives in to save his Jewish parents from the Nazis in the occupied Poland of the Second World War.’
8. *The Garbage King* - Elizabeth Laird. ‘The Garbage King puts everything into perspective: it teaches us not to take things for granted in life. I recommend this for everyone who's anyone.’
9. *Hitler's Canary* - Sandy Toksvig. ‘A good read about Nazi occupied Denmark which needs to be more widely known about.’
10. *Wolf Brother* - Michelle Paver. ‘An excellent book. Gripping story and interestingly historically factual too. Can't wait to read more of the series!’

‘You live several lives whilst reading.’ William Styron

‘Only the very weak minded refuse to be influence by literature or poetry.’ Cassandra Clare

'There are worse crimes than not reading books. One of them is not reading them.'  
Joseph Brodsky

'Think before you speak. Read before you think.'  
Frances Ann Lebowitz

## Book recommendations for Middle School Pupils

1. *Oranges for Christmas* - Margarita Morris. A book set in Berlin during the Cold War. 'It provides a heart-wrenching window into a terrible piece of history. With warm characters and a roller-coaster plot, you will be on the edge of your seat right until the end.'
2. *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* - John Le Carre. 'A mature and interesting book. It has a very good twist in it that you won't see coming. Gives you a good idea of the foreign office in that period.'
3. *Rivers of London* - Ben Aaronovitch. 'Harry Potter grows up as a London policeman - easy beach read.'
4. *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* - Stephen Chbosky. 'A bit American High School, but very readable and a good plot line.'
5. *Brave New World* - Aldous Huxley. 'Fabulous sci-fi. Readable but with clever ideas.'
6. *I, Robot* - Isaac Asimov. 'The classic sci-fi story. Might only be available in a short story collection.'
7. *Who is Tom Ditto?* - Danny Wallace. 'Awesome read. Full of cliff-hangers that have that 'Can't put this book down' appeal. Just brilliant.'
8. *Fatherland* - Robert Harris. What would have happened if Hitler won the war? A thrilling read and an interesting 'what if?' take on history.
9. *Noughts and Crosses* - Malorie Blackman. Another 'what if...?' novel combining big ideas with a very sharp plot.
10. *Maggot Moon* - Sally Gardner. A thought-provoking book. 'One of those occasions where you want to tell people 'I won't give too much away - just read it!''
11. *The Life of Pi* - Yann Martel. 'Teaches you survival skills and is great to read.'
12. *Touching the Void* - the climbing disaster classic. And a real page turner!
13. *Empire of the Sun* - JG Ballard. Based on real experiences of being in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in WW2. Gripping plot and very informative about the period, too.
14. *Down and Out in Paris and London* - George Orwell. Orwell's non-fiction classic takes you into a life of poverty between the wars. Unsentimental and evocative as always with Orwell; a book you will learn a lot from as well as being a really good read.

'What a blessing it is to love books as I love them! To converse with the dead, and to live amongst the unreal!'  
Thomas Babington Macaulay

'We read to know we're not alone.'  
William Nicholson

'To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life.' W. Somerset Maugham

'One glance at a book and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for 1000 years. To read is to voyage through time.' Carl Sagen

## Book recommendations for Upper School Pupils

1. *The One Hundred Year Old Man Who Climbed Out of a Window and Disappeared* - Very amusing - ties in a century's worth of history with a brilliant plotline. Read it before the film comes out!
2. *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* - John Le Carre. A good spy story with an intricate plot.
3. *Bubu of Montparnasse* - Charles-Louis Philippe. The dark world of prostitution in 1900s Paris. Interesting and thought-provoking.
4. *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* – Joy Fowler. An amazing read - the gripping plotline belies a number of clever, interesting allusions.
5. *White Teeth* - Zadie Smith. The last third seemed far-fetched when it was first published - how naive we were....
6. *Remains of the Day* - Kazuo Ishiguro (or anything else by him). An amazing writer who creates a poignant retrospective on missed opportunities.
7. *Tesseract* - Alex Garland. The book for which he should be renowned, rather than *The Beach*.... a clever interweaved series of events.
8. *A Month in the Country* - J.L. Carr. A First World War veteran comes to terms with his survival in a small village of rural England. A very moving story.
9. *The Good Soldier* - Ford Madox Ford. A great inspiration for later twentieth century writers, this novel gives an excellent portrayal of pre-war socialite Europe through the emotional intrigues of two sophisticated couples.
10. *Saturday* - Ian McEwan. All takes place over just one day; it combines a gripping plot with really interesting, big ideas: terrorism, crime, violence, psychology...
11. *Burmese Days* - George Orwell. This early novel of Orwell's is set in British occupied Burma in the 1920s. Very different to his later works (*Animal Farm*, 1984) but very atmospheric and introduces many of the political themes that you will recognise from more famous works.
12. *Travels with Charley* - John Steinbeck. Steinbeck's real life account of travelling around the USA with a dog and a camper van. Full of well observed detail and a sharp eye for human life. Made me want to go on a journey!
13. *Burning Bright* - Ron Rash. A book of short stories set in the Appalachian Mountains. Very accessible, cleanly written, and short: these stories are dark but beautiful and each makes you see life in a bit of a different way.
14. *The Cuckoo's Calling* and *The Silkworm* - Robert Galbraith (aka....). The first two novels in a departure into detective fiction for this reasonably famous author. Decent beach fiction at the very least - the creation of Cormoran Strike adds another flawed but fascinatingly gifted private eye to the Philip Marlowe pantheon.
15. *A Clockwork Orange* - Anthony Burgess. 'The narrator speaks in a different language and offers a shocking and graphic storyline.'

## Challenges

These are open to any year group. There will be **edible prizes** for EVERYONE who submits a complete entry (available at the start of term). The size of the edible prize will be relative to the quality of the entry.

The **top entries** will also receive Amazon vouchers. Again, size of prize will be relative to quality!

The **deadline** for entries will be the Friday of the first full week back at school.

### Reading Challenges

- **The 'book a week' challenge.** Read a book every week, including at least two from this list i.e. 8 books over the summer holidays. Submit a short review of your thoughts and rating out of 10 for each book together with a signature and comment from someone at home to confirm they've seen you reading these books. You can use the template we have attached or come up with your own format.

- **The 'book a fortnight' challenge.** Read a book every fortnight, including at least one from this list i.e. 4 books over the summer holidays. Submit a short review of your thoughts and rating out of 10 for each book together with a signature and comment from someone at home to confirm they've seen you reading these books. You can use the template we have attached or come up with your own format.

### Writing Challenge

- Write a piece in any form you like (narrative, descriptive, discursive, a collection of poems, an essay, a script...) on one of the following topics:

- Can a book change your life?
- In the future, when books are obsolete...
- A long summer
- The importance of words

Guideline length - 500-1000 words. You can adapt these titles if you wish or come up with your own ideas.

“Read, read, read. Read everything -- trash, classics, good and bad, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You'll absorb it.

Then write. If it's good, you'll find out. If it's not, throw it out of the window.” William Faulkner