

St Martin's School

Year 10 Reading List

The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

When teen Avery inherits a billionaire's fortune there's a catch: she must live in the deceased's sprawling estate with his mysterious family and solve a series of riddles to claim her legacy. This thrilling mystery unveils secrets and rivalries in a high-stakes game of inheritance. The first in a gripping series that's addictive to read.

Thriller | Series



The Kill Factor by Ben Oliver

In this gripping dystopian thriller, young criminals compete in a deadly reality TV show for a chance at freedom. Ben Oliver crafts a suspenseful narrative that delves into the dark truths of the criminal justice system, offering readers a thrilling ride filled with high stakes and unexpected twists. As contestants navigate treacherous challenges, the story raises thought-provoking questions about society, fame, and the concepts of consequences and justice.

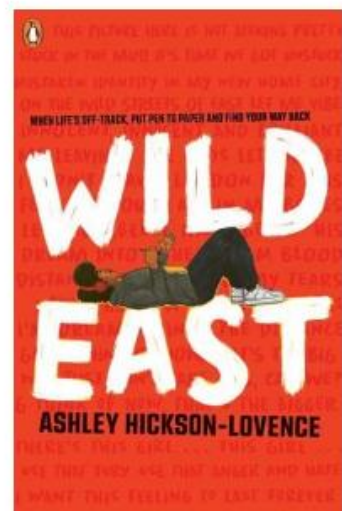
Dystopian



Wild East by Ashley Hickson-Lovence

14-year-old Ronny struggles as one of the few Black teens in a nearly all-white Norwich secondary. Facing new challenges after a tragedy prompts a move from East London to East Anglia, Ronny grapples with identity and ambition, finding solace and inspiration in poetry and rap. A highly accessible YA verse novel, Wild East explores themes of city gangs, knife crime, the dangers of drugs, self-expression, and resilience, offering a relatable narrative with contemporary flair. Highly recommended for Year 10 readers.

Verse novel



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Crossing the Line by Tia Fisher

Written in verse, this gritty and visceral narrative follows teenaged Erik who juggles a difficult home life, school work and the consequences of being groomed by and owing money to a dangerous county lines gang. Crossing the Line is a memorable story of manipulation that will be useful to read and discuss alongside anti-exploitation resources in PSHE and book clubs. Highly recommended. [Read our full review.](#)

Crime | Verse novel



Needle by Patrice Lawrence

Charlene needs her knitting. It takes her mind off being in care. But when a heated argument leads to her stabbing her foster brother with a knitting needle, her whole life unravels in the criminal justice system. Should she apologize, even if she doesn't mean it, to help secure her freedom? This emotional story takes a deep dive into the foster care system and how children struggle. Highlighting themes of racial bias and justice, 'Needle' is ideal for KS4 book club discussion.

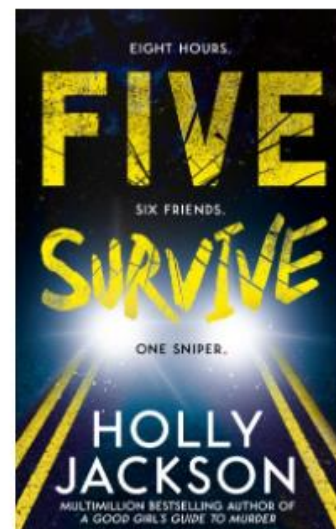
Crime | Family



Five Survive by Holly Jackson

Five strangers are stranded in a remote wilderness. As they battle the elements, secrets emerge, tensions rise, and survival becomes a test of trust and resourcefulness. This thriller explores the depths of human resilience in the face of danger. It's a cracking page-turner for teens who want a fast-paced read.

Crime | Thriller



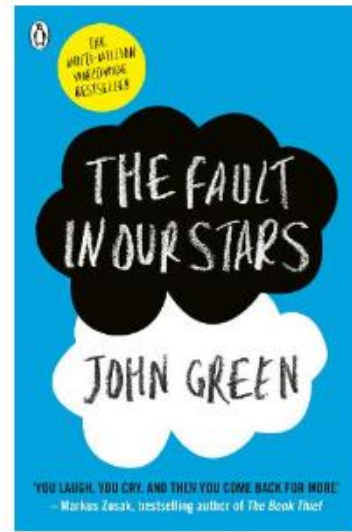
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The Fault in Our Stars by John Green

A must-read for older teens, this is a stunning story of love in the face of desperate adversity. When terminally ill Hazel meets Augustus the short time she has left to live changes course in ways she could never have imagined.

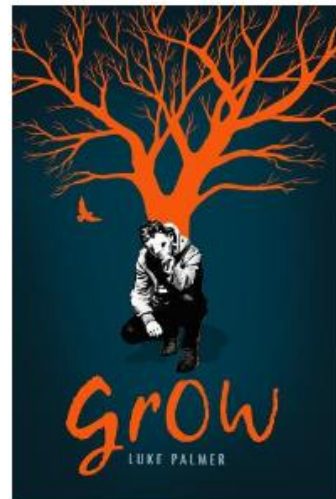
Romance



Grow by Luke Palmer

When Josh's father is murdered in a terrorist atrocity, he finds himself both picked out and fascinated by extreme racists who milk his grief and misfortune. He finds himself in a situation where righting wrongs challenges the status quo and not even he is sure which path he will take. With subtle nuance this startling novel will challenge both educators and teenagers – Grow is a gift for KS4 teachers and pastoral coordinators looking for ways to embed PREVENT strategies that will resonate with pupils.

Crime | Racism



Oxygen Mask by Jason Reynolds, art by Jason Griffin

This is a unique and memorable graphic novel with an intoxicating blend of stirring graphic imagery and perceptive stream-of-consciousness narrative commentary. Oxygen Mask is a benchmark for pandemic-era YA literature, encapsulating the thoughts, aspirations, and fears of a generation lurching from discrimination to COVID and beyond.

Graphic novel



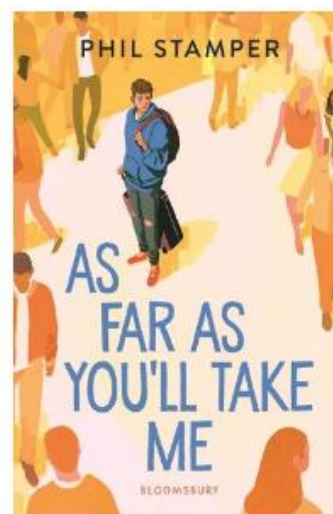
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As Far as You'll Take Me by Phil Stamper

Marty, a teen, flees a suffocating environment at home to pursue his dreams in the more gay-friendly setting of London. However, financial constraints, loneliness, and reality set in. Can he succeed and avoid returning to his religious upbringing in small-town Kentucky? A powerfully emotional read appropriate for KS4.

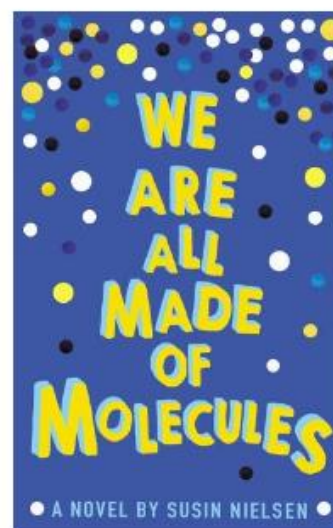
LGBT



We Are All Made of Molecules by Susin Nielsen

Stewart has a slightly different perspective on life from those around him. He finds life difficult enough before he is thrown together with his new stepsister, the extrovert and social magnet Ashley. Life gets even more interesting at school... Funny and heartwarming, this is a great book to promote resilience and challenge bullying.

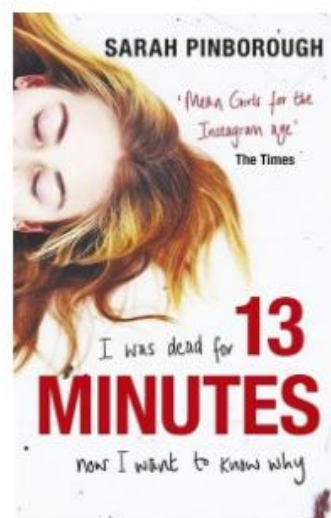
Funny | Resilience



13 minutes: A Novel by Sarah Pinborough

Dead for 13 minutes, Natasha doesn't know how it happened or how she got there. But she is determined to find out. A gripping mystery page-turner set in a nasty and manipulative teenage world. A pacey read for students in Year 10.

Mystery | Thriller



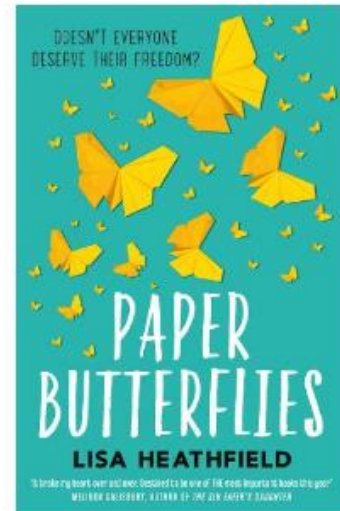
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Paper Butterflies by Lisa Heathfield

A heartbreaking story about June, who feels trapped in her life full of secrets and lies. She longs to escape, and when she meets Blister, she thinks she might have – but her new hope has unimaginable consequences. Very sad and moving.

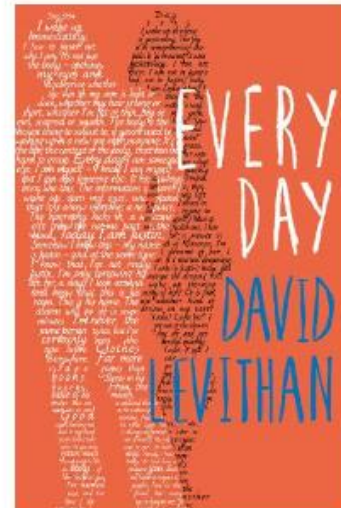
Thriller



Every Day by David Levithan

This thought-provoking story follows 'A', who wakes up each day in a different body. 'A' knows not to change things or get too involved, until one day 'A' meets Rhiannon, who changes everything.

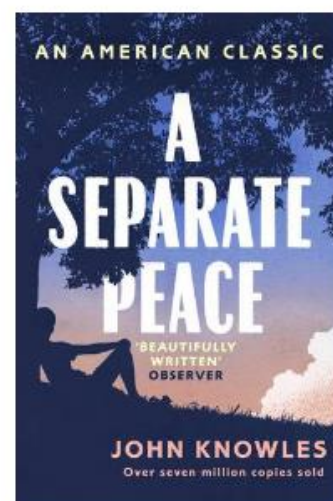
Romance



A Separate Peace by John Knowles

A modern classic exploring the world of introverted teenager Gene who lives out WW2 at boarding school and his polar opposite Phineas who is carefree and dangerous. A must-read YA novel.

Coming of age



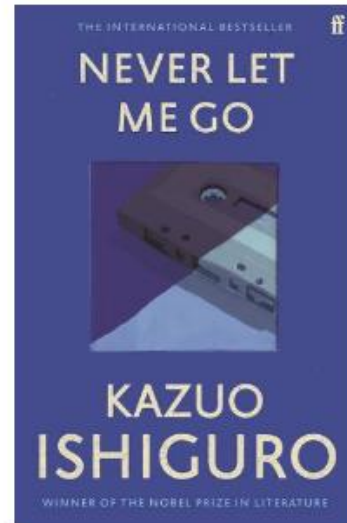
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Never Let Me Go by Kazuo Ishiguro

Told as a series of flashbacks, Kathy tried to make sense of her childhood at the seemingly perfect Hailsham School. The story slowly reveals a shocking dystopia that forces the reader to confront the horrors of modern society. A more challenging read for Year pupils.

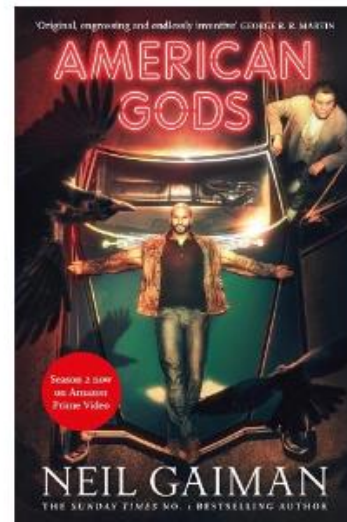
Dystopia



American Gods by Neil Gaiman

A gripping, yet peculiar, story about a man who is released from prison and meets a man who claims to be a godlike King of America. Together, they start to solve murders, sort problems, and make the country great by telling everyone what they want to hear. The climax builds with a storm of biblical proportions.

Contemporary



Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë

A classic love story following the intertwining lives of Catherine and Heathcliff. Spanning many years and life-changing events, this story of passion, revenge, and betrayal is a classic which has stood the test of time. An ideal Year 10 text.

Classic



Our recommendations come from The School Reading List. The site updates these termly:

<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks4-school-pupils/suggested-reading-list-year-10-pupils-ks4-age-14-15/>

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This Book is Cruelty Free by Linda Newbery

This comprehensive lifestyle guide shows teens in KS3 and KS4 how they can adjust and live their lives in ways that avoid contributing, directly or indirectly, to animal cruelty. Issues including food waste, zoos, wild spaces and meat eating are discussed with diagrams, poignant quotes, infographics, statistics and lucid text. An ideal primer to familiarise children with key themes in the animal rights debate, this book will both inspire and help pupils form their own opinions.

Society | Activism



Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

The life of Pip is explored in this timeless saga filled with unique and memorable characters about one boy's self-discovery and drive to become a man, despite unremitting adversity.

Saga | Classic



Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier

A downtrodden orphan thinks her life has changed for the better after meeting Maxim de Winter in the South of France in a whirlwind romance. But moving to Cornwall reveals an unexpected ghost from the past and a nemesis in the mysterious housekeeper, Mrs Danvers. What happened to the previous Mrs de Winter? An interesting book to analyse in Year 10 book clubs.

Classic



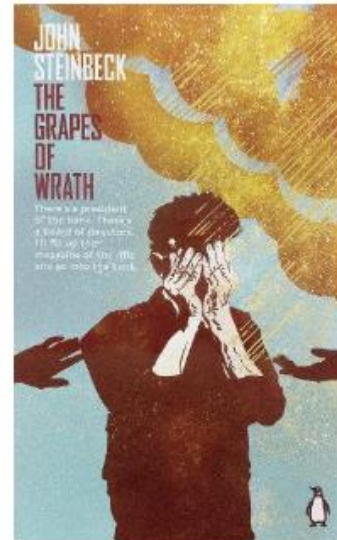
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The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

The Joad family follow their dreams and head to the West Coast of America. Things don't go well for them. A classic in American Fiction, exploring characters, and raw emotions; with many parallels to the broken society of today.

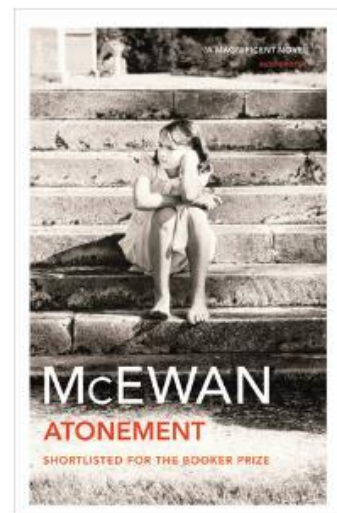
Classic



Atonement by Ian McEwan

13-year-old Briony Tallis stumbles upon something shocking which leads to a downward spiral and life-changing crime. Can Briony ever put the pieces back together? A modern masterpiece.

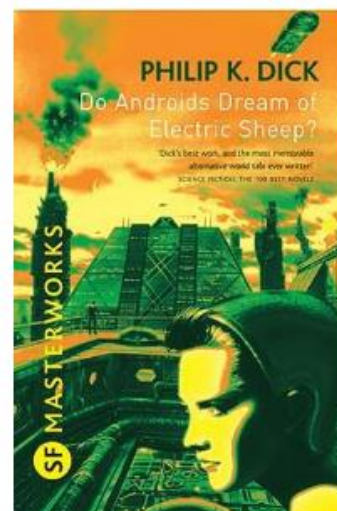
Contemporary | Crime



Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K Dick

A must-read classic sci-fi novel. After a devastating world war, Rick Deckard, a ruthless bounty hunter, takes an assignment to beat all others. Promised a huge reward, he soon finds himself in a bad dream of lies, plots, and treachery. A great addition to any Year 10 library.

Science fiction



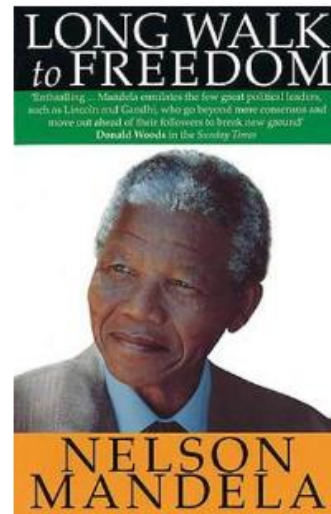
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Long Walk to Freedom by Nelson Mandela

A thought-provoking and emotive autobiography which chronicles the first part of Nelson Mandela's life, leading up to his time in captivity. An examination of the triumph of the human spirit over adversity. A great book for discussion in Year 10.

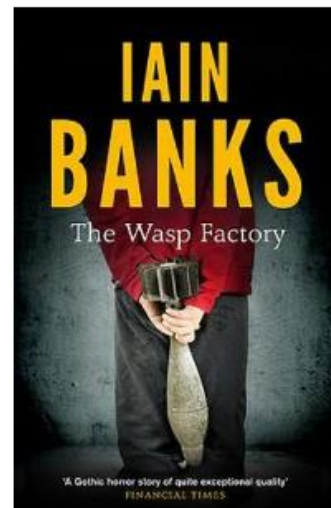
Autobiography



The Wasp Factory by Iain Banks

16-year-old Frank thinks killing various family members was just a stage he was going through. A brilliantly written horror story with strong themes and an unforgettable twist.

Thriller | Horror



The Road by Cormac McCarthy

This multi-award-winning saga follows father and son on a road trip across a post-apocalyptic American landscape heading for the hope of salvation on the coast. Emotive and easy to read, the characters and their emotional scenes are poignant.

Post-apocalyptic



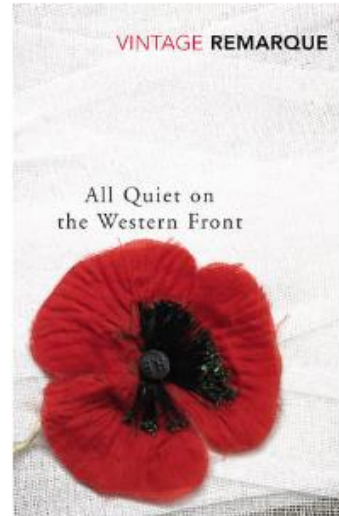
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All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque

A dark first-person account, this is a simply told, yet chilling, story of the realities of war. Pressed into action by a fervent and patriotic teacher, Paul soon witnesses conditions in the trenches. A moving story that beautifully illustrates the pointlessness of conflict. Perfect for more advanced readers in Year 10.

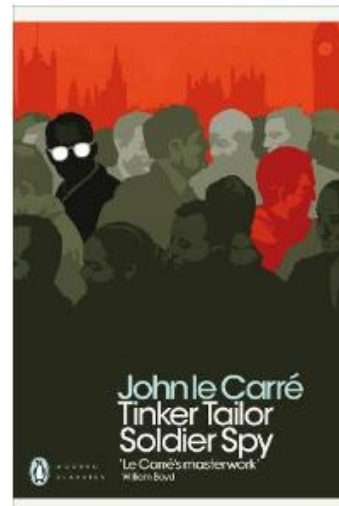
Historical fiction



Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy by John le Carré

A gripping page-turner following George Smiley, a calculating and clever Cold War spy tracking an elusive Russian agent.

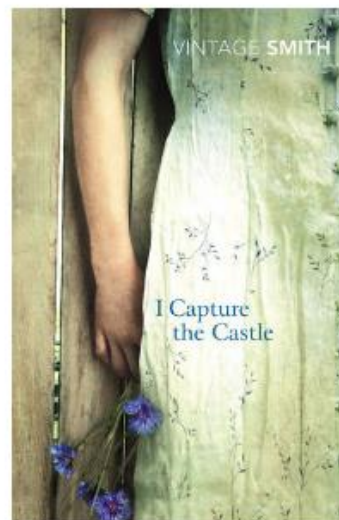
Thriller



I Capture the Castle by Dodie Smith

Cassandra lives a carefree life in a dilapidated castle in the countryside. But her life changes forever when Americans arrive unexpectedly to claim the castle as their inheritance. An interesting book for group discussion in Year 10.

Classic | Romance



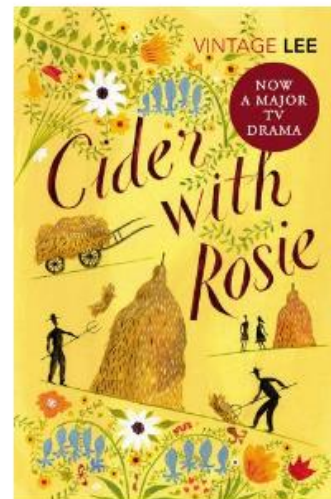
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Cider With Rosie by Laurie Lee

Idyllic childhood memories in the Cotswolds are painted in timeless prose in this evocative reminiscence of growing up in an almost forgotten world.

Memoir



Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell

The dystopian novel without which the world would not have Big Brother, the Ministry of Truth and the Party. Still highly relevant in the modern world of spin, media and the rise of right-wing populism.

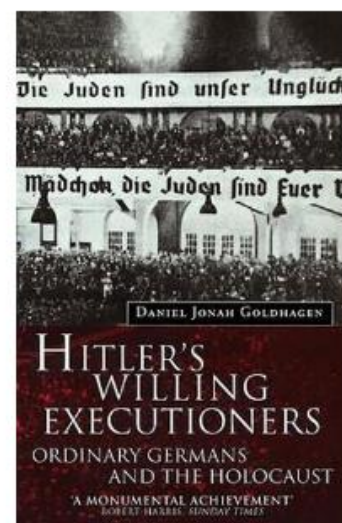
Dystopia



Hitler's Willing Executioners by Daniel Goldhagen

A book which systematically explores how the human condition can go horribly wrong for seemingly rational reasons. One of those books everyone should try to read before the age of 25. Refreshingly clear and concise, this is an essential read for anyone studying modern European history.

Historical analysis



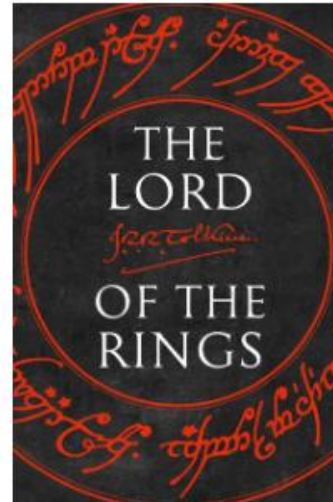
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The Lord of the Rings by JRR Tolkien

Sauron seeks complete power over Middle Earth by controlling magical rings. But the all-important ring to rule them all is now in the hands of a Hobbit called Frodo. High fantasy in this three-volume epic.

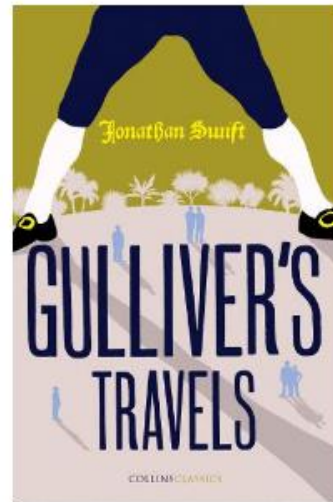
Fantasy



Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift

A fantasy classic which satirizes the eighteenth-century world in which it was written. Gulliver visits the strange and mysterious lands of Lilliput, the Yahoos, and the giants in Brobdingnag. Unique and memorable.

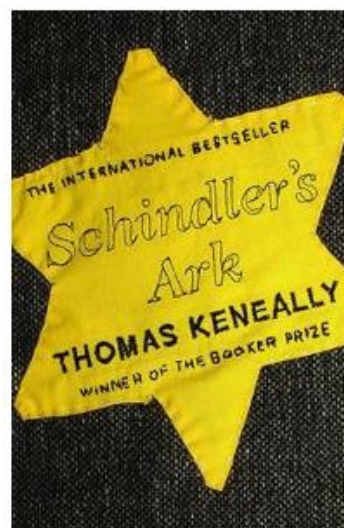
Fantasy | Classic



Schindler's Ark by Thomas Keneally

The book which inspired the film and numerous documentaries, Keneally's account is a touching realisation of determination, adversity, and hope in the unlikely setting.

Historical fiction | True story



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Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit by Jeanette Winterson

Jeanette is brought up in a strict world of privilege and expectation as one of "God's Elect". But she rebels and leaves the church world at the age of 16 to pursue a dangerous relationship. An ideal book for Year 10 book clubs.

Contemporary | LGBT



Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie

The story of Saleem, one of a thousand children born at exactly midnight. Like the other 999, he finds himself blessed, or cursed with a superpower. A moving story charting India's journey after independence.

Contemporary | Fantasy

