

St Martin's School

Year 12 Reading List

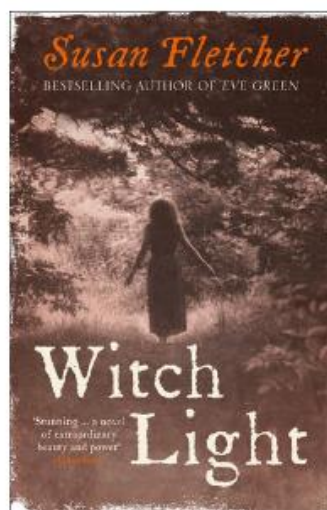
Eve out of her Ruins by Ananda Devi

This complex love story will draw older teen readers into an atmospheric and stark world that tourists don't get to see when holidaying in Mauritius. Told through monologues and descriptive narrations, the lives of four teens are explored through pain, love, sexuality and control in a searing and memorable account of modern alienation. This would be a good novel to contrast with *Catcher in the Rye* in sixth-form book clubs.



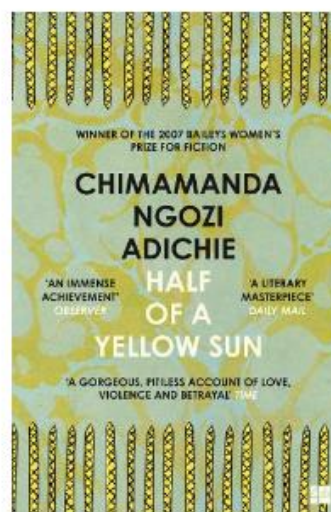
Witch Light by Susan Fletcher

When Charles Leslie hears of a young woman who has been locked up, accused of being a witch and due to be burned at the stake, he decides to delve deeper into her story. Uncovering details of a wicked and brutal crime, both of them are faced with an unenviable dilemma in this gripping tale of broken loyalties, superstition and resilience against all the odds. A powerful and atmospheric page-turner.



Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Caught in the middle of the Nigerian Civil War three disparate characters find their lives inextricably intertwined in this visceral study of race, class, privilege and love. Told through a unique and startling narration, this novel creates a searingly powerful image of African politics and the catastrophic and enduring effects of war. A memorable novel, and one that is ideal for book club discussions.

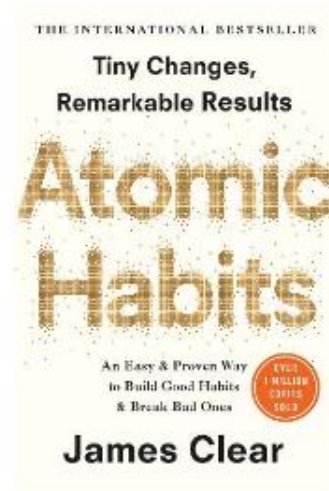


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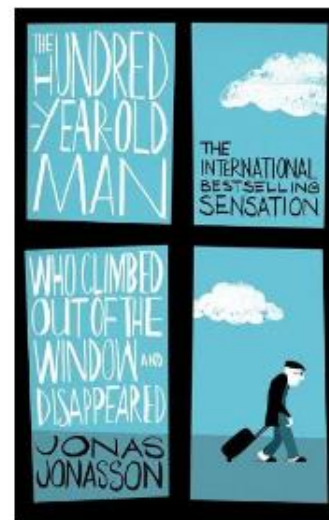
Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones by James Clear

The ultimate guide to building lasting good habits that can apply to study, learning, life and work. The accessible writing style makes this a useful book for sixth-formers, with narrative life lessons and manageable efficiency hacks that will work well for young people who want to plan how to achieve their goals.



The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared by Jonas Jonasson

While everyone else is gearing up for Allan Karlsson's milestone 100th birthday, he isn't remotely interested and decides to sneak out. So begins the story of his compelling and surprising journey through life at the centre of key historical events. This is a novel of spectacular ambition and scope, and one which will provide endless talking points.



Fake Law: The Truth About Justice in an Age of Lies by The Secret Barrister

The revealing non-fiction series of anecdotes and essays uncover how justice really works in 21st-century Britain. Cutting through fake news, media tropes and even common sense, The Secret Barrister reveals how ignorance of the law is not only not a defence but also presents an insidious danger that threatens us all. A useful and challenging book for older teenagers to read, and one which will debunk many commonly held urban myths.

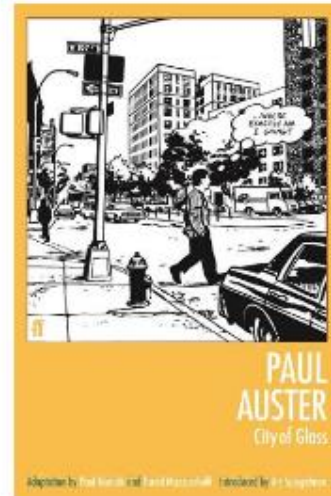


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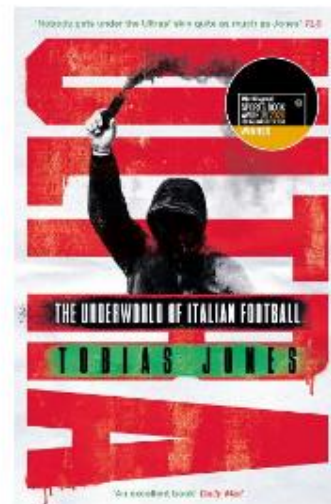
City of Glass by Paul Auster

Adapted from Paul Auster's novel by artists Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli, this revered graphic novel is a must-read. In a postmodernist metafiction mystery, the reader is toyed with by a private investigator who instigates a case that may involve a writer who turns out to be the author of his own story. Ideal for book groups, since it is highly likely everyone will have their own interpretation of the story.



Ultra: The Underworld of Italian Football by Tobias Jones

A gripping account of what happens when football fandom goes too far and becomes an obsessive, criminal and organised counter-culture. This non-fiction investigation is a fascinating insight into both Italian culture and how a common cause can radicalise people in unexpected ways. An award-winning book, Ultra is highly recommended for teens interested in social anthropology, sport, criminology and philosophy.



The Midnight Library by Matt Haig

When Nora finds herself in a supernatural library where she can choose to change her life for a different one, she is presented with the chance to right wrongs, correct mistakes and live out her dreams. But, the book asks the reader, what defines a good life? A warm-hearted and compelling bestseller that's a guaranteed good read.

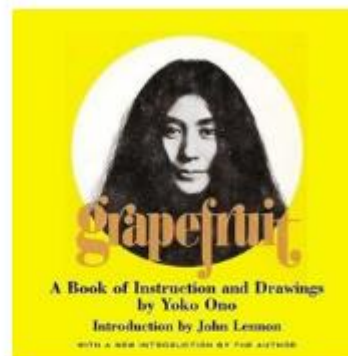


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Grapefruit: A Book of Instructions and Drawings by Yoko Ono

This collection of poetic lines, instructions and drawings conceptualise the profound, absurd, intellectually seditious and fun. Over fifty years have passed since this book was first published, yet the ideas retain a sharp and lingering focus. Still fresh and prescient, each piece of art will provide a springboard for debate, conversation and creative writing.



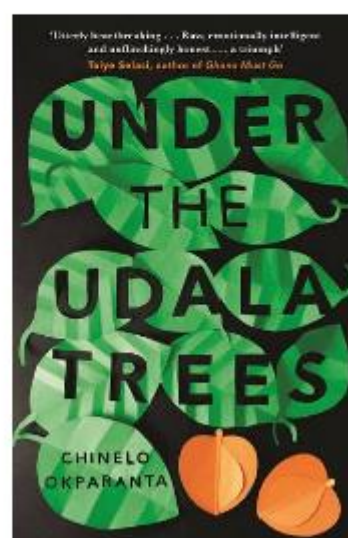
The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks

This fascinating work of narrative nonfiction explores the lives of patients with brain disorders and is based on case history studies by neurologist Oliver Sacks. Memory, perception, and the idea of self are challenged in ways that will provide many discussion opportunities in book clubs. A must-read for students interested in careers in nursing, social care or medicine.



Under the Udala Trees by Chinelo Okparanta

A startlingly fresh and original novel about the power of love in a desperate and dangerous world. Set in the Biafran war, Ijeoma finds herself on her own in Nigeria, without family or friends, until she meets another lost soul, Amina, and the pair seek refuge in each other's company, becoming first friends and falling in love – a difficult situation in West Africa, where LGBT couples are not tolerated. With daring and impassioned prose, *Under the Udala Trees* is ideal for book club discussion.

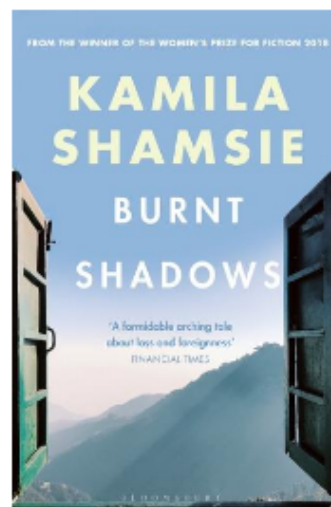


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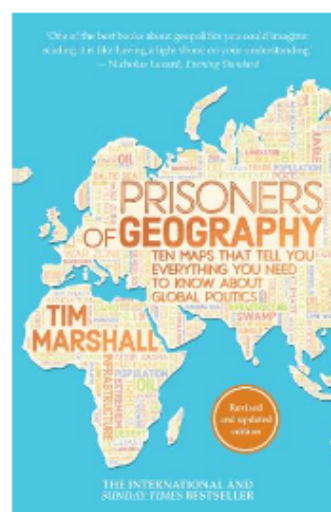
Burnt Shadows by Kamila Shamsie

Set on the day of the Nagasaki atomic bomb detonation in August 1945, this story follows Hiroko as her life changes in an instant, how she moves to Delhi and how her life moves again, to New York, with an astonishing turn of events. This moving novel combines a sweeping narrative with absorbing characters set to a backdrop of history, politics and social comment.



Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Tell You Everything You Need to Know About Global Politics by Tim Marshall

A great book to help broaden sixth-formers' geopolitical horizons and perceptions of the world we live in. Chronicling past and current thinking on foreign affairs through 10 infographic maps, this is an ideal book to appeal to students interested in international relations and world history.



Running Upon The Wires by Kae Tempest

This verse collection by poet, songwriter and singer Kae Tempest dissects the theme of love, from blossoming romance, familiarity, division, and break-up to new flames. The direct imagery and unflinching style will linger in the memory. Ideal for reading, performing and using as impetus, Running Upon The Wires will appeal to teens interested in drama and creative writing.

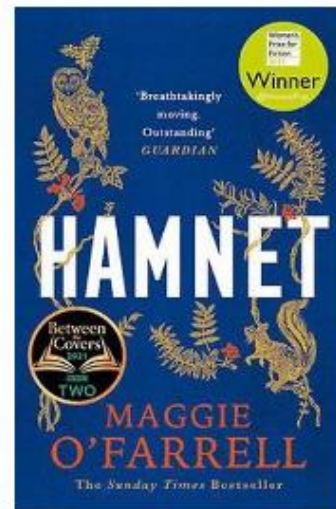


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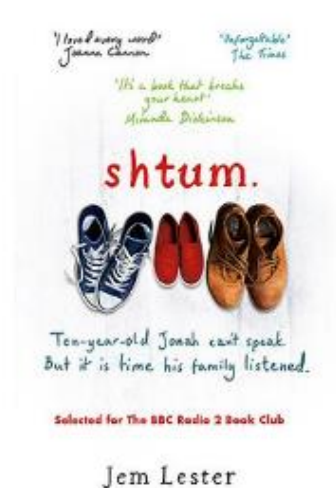
Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell

In this unputdownable and award-winning historical novel, Maggie O'Farrell tells the story of Hamnet, the son of a revered playwright. Using pieces of real history, Shakespeare's culture, and a richly imaginative storytelling style, a fascinating plot of loss and love in plague-ridden England is spun.



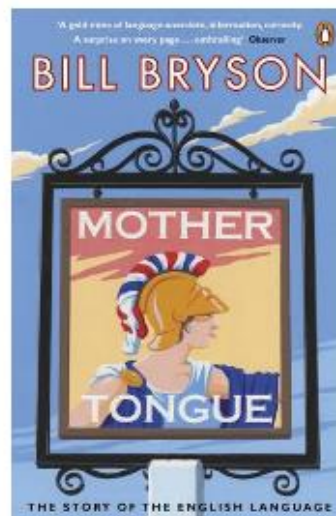
Shtum by Jem Lester

An unforgettable novel that marries a child's autism, family life struggles and the many faces of human relationships into a darkly funny and emotionally moving story. Both compelling and powerful, there's a lot of subject matter for sixth-form book club discussion and this is a good pick for students interested in careers in education or law.



Mother Tongue: The Story of the English Language by Bill Bryson

An entertaining read, Mother Tongue sweeps through the history of the English Language, from its starting point as a hybrid of ancient dialects, through to the impact of invader languages, and the nuances of modern grammar, spelling and pronunciation conventions. A great read for students interested in languages, linguistics and English.



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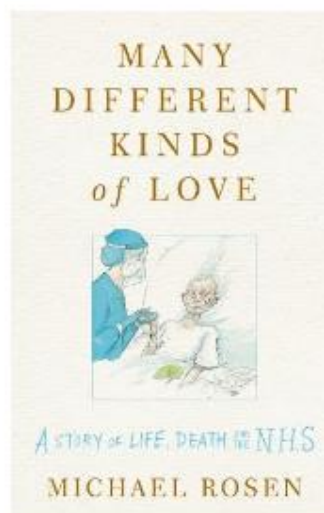
The Ballad of Jacob Peck by Debra Komar

When Mercy Hall is murdered in the cold wilds of New Brunswick in Canada, Amos Bradley is quickly accused and hanged for the crime. Over 200 years later, Debra Komar re-investigates the case and reveals that without the influence of preacher Jacob Peck, the murder might never have happened. This cold and clinical treatment challenges the reader's ideas of truth, facts and evidence. A visceral read for fans of true crime podcasts.



Many Different Kinds of Love: A story of life, death and the NHS by Michael Rosen

Poems, diary entries, doctor's notes and nurses' observations make up this moving account of Michael Rosen's six weeks in a Covid-induced coma. An antidote to anti-vaxxers and Covid denial, Many Different Kinds of Love is a warm expression of hope, strength and positivity and it's a compelling read for all sixth-formers.



Uncle Petros and Goldbach's Conjecture by Apostolos Doxiadis

Uncle Petros is the family misfit, a reclusive figure who isn't understood and has become a figure of fun. But his intrepid nephew digs deeper and finds out that he's a former mathematician who is tantalizingly within reach of solving a famous unsolved problem – the Goldbach Conjecture. Infectious reading for Mathematicians, this novel will also appeal to those who enjoy complex plots and mysteries.



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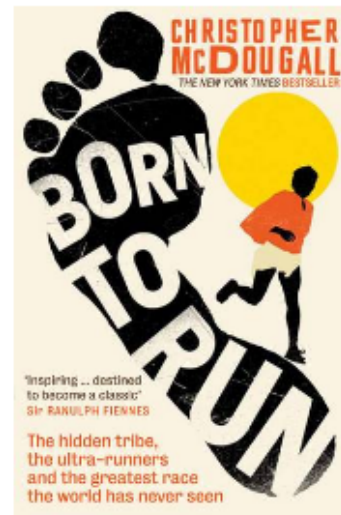
A Boy's Own Story by Edmund White

Based on the author's own life, this groundbreaking coming-of-age story follows the narrator's difficult upbringing, how he deals with bullies and how he copes with being gay in a conservative and homophobic 1950s world. The writer's deft turns of phrase and use of irony make this surprising story both sharply focused and uplifting as it creeps towards an unexpected ending.



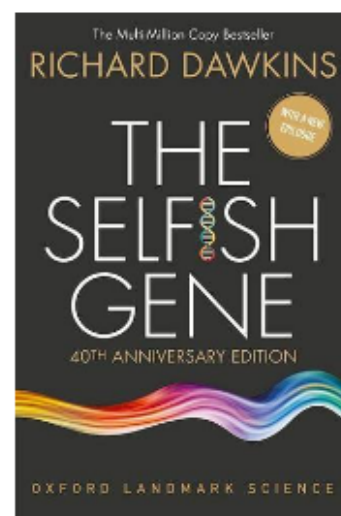
Born to Run: The Hidden Tribe, the Ultra-Runners, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen by Christopher McDougall

This part collection of motivational stories and part guide to how to run and push yourself is more gripping than a running shoe sole. When a group of committed endurance athletes seeks out the obscure Tarahumara, a people with mythical distance running abilities, two cultures collide in this exposition of sports mechanics, knowledge, and strong-willed characters. An unforgettable read for sports enthusiasts.



The Selfish Gene by Richard Dawkins

This unique book presents the history of life not through the lens of civilisation, but from the point of view of genetics. It is both provocative and intellectually challenging and bound to provoke debate. It's essential reading for students interested in studying anthropology, game theory or life sciences at university.



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It Ends With Us by Colleen Hoover

When Lily leaves her small-town upbringing and moves to the city, she meets Ryle, a dashing surgeon who promises the best of lives. But then a former boyfriend reappears and things become far more turbulent and complex. A hit with fans on TikTok, *It Ends With Us* is a romantic rollercoaster easy read that might reignite a love of leisure reading in older teens.



Cloud Atlas by David Mitchell

This tremendously ambitious novel follows six people whose lives span different periods and places, yet are all strangely connected by intrigue and a tattoo. Themes of power, ambition and where we fit in the universe underpin a plot of epic proportions. A good source of ideas for students interested in creative writing.



Underland: A Deep Time Journey by Robert Macfarlane

In this unique work, Robert Macfarlane takes the reader on a series of descriptive journeys underground, to places both exotic, remote and largely untouched. Caves, caverns, and a nuclear shelter are explored through immersive prose in a series of stories that force the reader to explore the relationship between man and earth. A great choice for students interested in natural history, geology and geography.

