

As well as being great for our mental health, research indicates that students who read independently become better readers, score higher on achievement tests in all subject areas, and have greater content knowledge than those who do not (Krashen 1993; Cunningham and Stanovich 1991; Stanovich and Cunningham 1993).

Reading widens your scope beyond the curriculum too, a fact that is particularly relevant for those of you considering higher education options.

Below are reading recommendations from staff across the school. Get into a good book and kick-start positive reading habits to last you a lifetime.

Title of text and author	One sentence synopsis	Why read this?
The Birmingham Dispatch	An online newspaper for Birmingham -	Well written, indepth articles, good for awareness and a different style of language use. Unfortunately the website is blocked by the school server (it's published via Substack)
The Wind Knows My Name - Isabel Allende	The story of two refugees, one from Nazi occupied Austria and one from El Salvador, which are intertwined.	This book will give the reader a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by refugees and the long term impact this has on their lives.
The girl with the louding voice- Abi Dare	Story of how hardship is overcome by a young Nigerian girl. Written from her perspective	Gives an excellent insight to a world of hardship that has a positive ending
Rendezvous With Rama, Arthur C Clarke	A huge cylindrical object is approaching Earth from beyond the Solar System. What can the small team of astronauts sent to investigate find out about the mysterious artifact?	If you like space, physics, the search for extra terrestrial intelligence, this book might be for you! The author, Arthur C Clarke invented geostationary satellites in his books years before they were actually built!
Shades of Magic Series by V.E Schwab	Different versions of London living parallel to each other, and a magician who can travel between them...	The plot is amazing as is the compelling writing of V.E Schwab
These Violent Delights - Chloe Gong	Romeo and Juliet reimagined in a 1920s Shanghai brimming with violent gangster mayhem, a mysterious monster, and a plague-like madness.	Fabulous reimagining that keeps you entertained throughout. Setting is brilliantly realised and immersive.
The Silk Roads: A New History of the World	The silk road was a network of paths connecting civilizations in the East and West that was well traveled for approximately 1,400 years. 'The Silk Roads' reveals how connected the world was; economically, culturally and socially, during a time where travel was not as easy as it is today.	The Silk Road sheds light on a historically significant trade route that shaped much of the ancient world. It connected China via the Middle East to Europe facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas, religions and cultures. Reading this book will provide insights into how civilizations interacted and influenced one another over centuries. Reading this book will help you understand how ancient civilizations have shaped modern societies. Globalisation and cultural fusion existed long before the 21st Century.
'Alchemy' by Rory Sutherland	An advertising expert promotes the power of original thinking and reveals the	Perfect for students of Psychology, Business, and/or Economics (or just people who are interested in knowing

	psychological reasons behind much of the modern world..	things!) It will open your eyes to much that goes on in the world, especially when it comes to advertising and marketing. It'll also help you to find unconventional solutions in your own life. In the words of the author: "to be brilliant, you have to be irrational."
Rosie Frost and the Falcon Queen - by Geri Halliwell-Horner	A story of empowerment and overcoming adversity in this fast-paced adventure	It is an inspiring, exciting, positive, and fun novel to read
BRIEF HISTORY OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE What it Is, where We Are, and where We are Going By MICHAEL WOOLDRIDGE	A one-stop-shop for AI's past, present, and world-changing future.	Allows you to explore AI from multiple angles, providing both technical knowledge and a wider perspective on its implications for society, careers, and future innovation.
The Time Traveler's wife- Audrey Niffenegger	A love story about a man who time travels (genetic disorder) and how his wife copes	It cleverly explores love, loss and huge ultimate questions of fate, determinism and how we cope with the wonders of love and the price we pay for it.
Ada Lovelace Cracks the Code" by Emily Arnold McCully	A historical biography for young readers, highlighting the life and achievements of Ada Lovelace, the world's first computer programmer.	This book introduces young readers to Ada Lovelace, one of the pioneers of computer science. It's inspiring and offers a historical perspective that helps students understand the foundations of programming.
Blown to Bits, Harold Abelson	A deep dive into how digital technologies shape our privacy, freedom, and the balance of power in the modern world.	Potential warnings: This book delves into topics like privacy invasion, digital surveillance, and the misuse of data. While it's educational, it discusses the darker aspects of digital life, which may be unsettling for some readers.
Computational Fairy Tales, Jeremy Kubica	A collection of imaginative stories that teach fundamental computer science concepts through entertaining narrative adventures.	This is a fun, story-based way to introduce computational concepts. Each tale teaches a specific computer science concept, making it accessible and enjoyable for younger students.
Algorithms to Live By: The Computer Science of Human Decisions" by Brian Christian and Tom Griffiths	A fascinating exploration of how computer algorithms can be applied to solve everyday human decision-making problems.	This book bridges the gap between theoretical computer science and real-life decision-making, showing students how algorithms can solve everyday problems. It's relevant for understanding algorithms at an advanced level.
The Innovators, Walter Isaacson	The story of the pioneers who invented computers, programming, and the internet, shaping the modern digital age.	A fascinating look into the history of computing, this book will help A-Level students appreciate the people and

		events that shaped the world of technology. It's great for inspiring those interested in technology's future.
Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies, Nick Bostrom	A thought-provoking look at the future of artificial intelligence and its potential impact on humanity, exploring both the promise and the peril of superintelligent AI.	This thought-provoking book discusses the future of artificial intelligence, a topic that A-Level students may encounter in discussions about AI and ethics. It challenges them to think critically about technology's potential risks and rewards.
Ways of Seeing, John Berger	'Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.'	This gives a great insight into art as a communication tool and it's interpretation - first published alongside a BBC series
Suite Francaise	Fictional stories of life in occupied France in WW2 based on the author's personal experiences	It's a very evocative way of exploring what life was like for ordinary people in occupied France, and especially poignant when you read about the context of the author's experiences.
OUTSTANDING HIGH SCHOOL SKETCHBOOKS	This book shows some amazing sketchbooks that contain some stunning use of media and techniques - really great articles to go alongside the imagery too	The examples illustrate a wide range of approaches to sketchbook content, annotation, and layout. They cover a range of disciplines, including drawing, painting, mixed media, graphic design, sculpture, 3D design, architecture, printmaking, photography, textiles, and fashion. The large-scale images show annotation and fine detail, providing excellent learning opportunities.
Noughts And Crosses by Malorie Blackman	Sephy is a Cross: she lives a life of privilege and power. Callum is a nought: he's considered to be less than nothing - a blanker, there to serve Crosses.	The examples illustrate a wide range of approaches to sketchbook content, annotation, and layout. They cover a range of disciplines, including drawing, painting, mixed media, graphic design, sculpture, 3D design, architecture, printmaking, photography, textiles, and fashion. The large-scale images show annotation and fine detail, providing excellent learning opportunities.
Stolen Focus	Stolen Focus explains how constant distractions from social media, technology, and modern life are making it harder for teenagers to concentrate and how to overcome this.	On average, teens pick up their phone about 200 times a day. Stolen Focus explains why technology is so addictive and offers tips on how to regain control of your screen time and improve your attention, academic performance and personal wellbeing.
Ender's Game - Orson Scott Card	military science fiction novel about a young genius who leads a war against an alien race.	Andrew "Ender" Wiggin thinks he is playing computer simulated war games; he is, in fact, engaged in something far more desperate. The result of genetic experimentation, Ender may be the military genius Earth desperately needs in a war against an alien enemy seeking to destroy all human life. The only way to find out is to throw Ender into ever harsher training, to chip away and find the diamond inside, or destroy him utterly.
Glutton: The Multi-Course Life of a Very Greedy Boy. Ed Gamble	a comedic route through Ed's relationship with food, from his early life up to the point of starting the off menu podcast with James Acaster	a lighthearted look at food snobbery

Golden Hill by Francis Spufford	A mysterious stranger arrives in New York City in 1746 - but why is he there?	Well-drawn characters and the central mystery is compelling
The Wych Elm by Tana French	Toby's charmed life is changed when he is attacked one night, but is the past exactly as he remembers it?	Twisty story - which asks how far you can trust the narrator.
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks	Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. How her cells—taken without her knowledge—became one of the most important tools in medicine.	<p>.....because its great!! Interested in medicine??</p> <p>Discover the massive impact one unknown Afro-American woman's unique biological cell structure known as HeLa, has had on scientific research since 1950 and how Henrietta's cells have facilitated research into the association of HPV and cervical cancer, the HPV vaccine, the polio vaccine, countless cancer treatments and allowed cosmetics to be tested without using animals.</p> <p>Also the injustice done to many Afro-Americans for many years especially as her family were not aware that her cells were being bought & sold for use in scientific research globally</p> <p>The first “immortal” human cells grown in culture, they are still alive today, though she has been dead for more than sixty years. If you could pile all HeLa cells ever grown onto a scale, they'd weigh more than 50 million metric tons—as much as a hundred Empire State Buildings.</p> <p>Yet Henrietta Lacks remains virtually unknown, buried in an unmarked grave.</p>
Babel by Rebecca F Kuang	A magical world where words have power	If you liked His Dark Materials you will love this magical and dangerous world where the people who know the power of languages rule and some people want to challenge these rules, regardless of the danger.
The Goldfinch by Donna Tarrt	New York teenager goes to live with dysfunctional father in Vegas after losing his mother in a terrorist attack	Part coming of age story, part thriller, part love story, utterly believable (and lovable) characters.
Where the Crawdads Sing - Delia Owens	A master piece of non fiction - As real as dark, cold, sticky mud between your toes!	Easy to read, taken to another time and place, believable, thought provoking and beautifully written. I still miss reading it!
The Country Girls trilogy by Edna O'Brien	The life and times of two girls in 1960s' Ireland.	This is an engaging exploration of the impact of familial and societal expectations upon two adventure seeking young women.
The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce	Harold Fry intends to post a letter but ends up walking 600 miles instead, a journey of self discovery, human connections and revelations.	Lovely story of self discovery, beautifully written (an easy read). You are taken along on the journey with Harold as he comes to terms with his life, love and loss and the various people he meets along the way.

The book <i>Thief</i> by Markus Zusak	The story of Liesel growing up in WW2 who steals books to learn to read/read as a form of escapism. 'Death' narrates the story.	Such a moving book, interestingly narrated by 'Death' (a compassionate Death who cares about the lives he takes). Covers ideas of hope, bravery and kindness during Nazi occupation.
The greatest show on Earth - Richard Dawkins	A fantastic book discussing the evidence and understanding of evolutionary biology	A fantastic introduction of evolutionary biology which is accessible for engaged A-level students, and begins to cover concepts they would study for biology at university. One of the most mind-blowing books of science I have read that is accessible for school ages.
The Green Mile – Stephen King	the story of Paul Edgecombe, a death row prison guard in the 1930s, who encounters John Coffey, a gentle and mysterious inmate with miraculous healing powers, challenging the boundaries of justice, compassion, and the supernatural.	a powerful story about humanity, justice, and redemption, set against the haunting backdrop of death row in the 1930s, and it explores profound themes of compassion, prejudice, and the supernatural—all woven together by Stephen King's masterful storytelling and memorable characters.
Humble Pi – Matt Parker	explores the real-life consequences of mathematical errors, from small miscalculations to large-scale disasters, highlighting the importance of math in our everyday lives and the chaos that ensues when it goes wrong.	an entertaining and enlightening look at how mathematical mistakes shape the world around us, revealing both the serious and hilarious consequences of errors in engineering, finance, technology, and beyond, while reminding us of the importance—and sometimes surprising fun—of getting the maths right.
The History of the Universe in 100 Stars by Florian Freistetter	explores the cosmos through the stories of 100 significant stars, blending astronomy, history, and science to reveal how each star has shaped our understanding of the universe and humanity's place within it.	it offers a unique, accessible journey through the cosmos, using fascinating stories of individual stars to illuminate the science, history, and wonder of the universe, making complex astronomical ideas both engaging and relatable.

"A book, too, can be a star, 'explosive material, capable of stirring up fresh life endlessly,' a living fire to lighten the darkness, leading out into the expanding universe."

- from *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle (1962)