



UPPER SCHOOL READING LIST 2024/25

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

Jane Eyre is the story of passionate love between the courageous orphan Jane Eyre and the brilliant, brooding, and domineering Rochester. The loneliness and cruelty of Jane's childhood strengthens her natural independence and spirit, which prove invaluable when she takes a position as a governess at Thornfield Hall. But after she falls in love with her sardonic employer, her discovery of his terrible secret forces her to make a heart-wrenching choice.

A Thousand Boy Kisses by Tillie Cole

When seventeen-year-old Rune Kristiansen returns from his native Norway to the sleepy town of Blossom Grove, Georgia, where he befriended Poppy Litchfield as a child, he has just one thing on his mind. Why did the girl who was one half of his soul, who promised to wait faithfully for his return, cut him off without a word of explanation? Rune's heart was broken two years ago when Poppy fell silent. When he discovers the truth, he finds that the greatest heartache is yet to come.

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

Marie-Laure has been blind since the age of six. Her father builds a perfect miniature of their Paris neighbourhood so she can memorise it by touch and navigate her way home. But when the Nazis invade, they flee with a dangerous secret. Werner is a German orphan, destined to labour in the same mine that claimed his father's life, until he discovers a knack for engineering. His talent wins him a place at a brutal military academy, but his way out of obscurity is built on suffering. At the same time, far away in a walled city by the sea, an old man discovers new worlds without ever setting foot outside his home. But all around him, impending danger closes inches.

A Thousand Perfect Notes by C. G. Drews

Beck hates his life, his violent mother, his home but most of all, he hates the piano that his mother forces him to play hour after hour, day after day. He will never play as she did before illness ended her career but Beck is too scared to stand up to her, and tell her his true passion, which is composing his own music - because the least suggestion of rebellion on his part ends in violence. When Beck meets August, a girl full of life, energy and laughter, love begins to awaken within him and he glimpses a way to escape his painful existence. But dare he reach for it?

Crossing the Line by Tia Fisher

Erik's life has been falling apart ever since his dad died. Homework and being good at school stop feeling important when you're the new man of the house. When Erik's bad behaviour attracts the wrong crowd, he's sucked into a terrifying new world of drug dealing, trap houses and violence. Making money feels good but Erik soon learns that a small favour can become a huge debt. And when his sisters' lives are threatened, Erik will have to cross one more line to save them. Written in stunning verse, this is a poignant story about seeking safety and asking for help in times of crisis.

Cold Comfort Farm by Stella Gibbons

When sensible, sophisticated Flora Poste is orphaned, she decides to descend on her relatives at Cold Comfort Farm and put their lives in order. The inhabitants of the farm – Aunt Ada Doom, the Starkadders, and their extended family and workers – feel obliged to take her in to atone for an unspecified wrong once done to her father.

Man Down by James Goodhand

Will Parks needs to man up. A man stands. A man fights. A man bleeds. These are the first lessons you learn in a town where girls are objects, words are weak and fists do the talking. Will's more at home in the classroom than the gym, and the most important woman in his life is his gran. So how can a boy who's always backed away from a fight become the hero who saves the day? Because a disaster is coming. One that Will can prevent. But only if he learns the most important lesson of all: sometimes to step up, you have to man down.

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

Teenagers in a small Oklahoma town have split into two gangs, divided by money, tastes and attitude. The Socs' idea of having a good time is beating up Greasers like Ponyboy Curtis. Ponyboy knows what to expect and knows he can count on his brothers and friends - until the night someone takes things too far, and life is changed forever.

Can You See the Sun

Alice Sun has always felt invisible at her elite Beijing international boarding school, where she's the only scholarship student among China's most rich and influential teens. But then she starts uncontrollably turning invisible—actually invisible. When her parents drop the news that they can no longer afford her tuition, even with the scholarship, Alice hatches a plan to monetize her strange new power—she'll discover the scandalous secrets her classmates want to know, for a price. But as the tasks escalate from petty scandals to actual crimes, Alice must decide if it's worth losing her conscience—or even her life.

The Crossing by Manjeet Mann

Natalie's world has turned upside down. She's lost her mum and her brother is descending further and further into anger and violence with a far-right gang who march the streets of Dover. Sammy has fled his home and family in Eritrea for the chance of a new life in Europe. Every step he takes is a step into the unknown - into a strange country and a hidden future. A twist of fate brings these two teens from opposite sides of the channel together, but will their journey end in hope or despair?

Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys

Inspired by Jane Eyre, this tells the story of Jane Eyre's 'madwoman in the attic', Bertha Rochester. Born into the oppressive, colonialist society of 1930s Jamaica, white Creole heiress Antoinette Cosway meets a young Englishman who is drawn to her innocent beauty and sensuality.

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold

"I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973". In heaven, Susie Salmon can have whatever she wishes for - except what she most wants, which is to be back with the people she loved on earth. In the wake of her murder, Susie watches as her happy suburban family is torn apart by grief; as her friends grow up, fall in love, and do all the things she never had the chance to do herself. But as Susie will come to realise, even in death, life is not quite out of reach.

The Boxer by Nikesh Shukla

Told over the course of the ten rounds of his first fight, this is the story of amateur boxer Sunny. A seventeen year old feeling isolated and disconnected in the city he's just moved to, Sunny joins a boxing club to learn to protect himself after a racist attack. He finds the community he's been desperately seeking at the club, and a mentor in trainer Shobu, who helps him find his place in the world. But racial tensions are rising in the city, and when a Far Right march through Bristol turns violent, Sunny is faced with losing his new best friend Keir to radicalisation.

Dry by Neal Shusterman

When the California drought escalates to catastrophic proportions, one teen is forced to make life and death decisions. The drought - or the Tap-Out, as everyone calls it - has been going on for a while now. Everyone's lives have become an endless list of don'ts: don't water the lawn, don't fill up your pool, don't take long showers. Until the taps run dry. Suddenly, Alyssa's quiet suburban street spirals into a warzone of desperation; neighbours and families turn against each other in the hunt for water. And when her parents don't return and her life - and the life of her brother - is threatened, Alyssa has to make impossible choices if she's going to survive.

I Know You Did It by Sue Wallman

There's a killer at Ruby's new school. It's Ruby. On her first day at a new school, Ruby finds a note in her locker saying "I KNOW YOU DID IT". She's terrified that someone has found out she was responsible for the death of a girl called Hannah in a playground when they were both toddlers - a secret that has haunted her for years. When first one, then two students are found dead, it looks like Ruby is being framed by another killer. Or, she might be next.