



Bexhill
Academy

GCSE READING LIST

YEAR 9, YEAR 10 and YEAR 11

The English Department
and the Library

Before you browse this booklist ...

All students studying GCSE English will be expected to read at least five books from this list, or their equivalent, over the two years of the course as well as the texts set for the examinations.

Reading for pleasure improves writing and comprehension skills and has been proven to help performance in exams as well as being a lifelong source of enjoyment.

Some of the books have been starred* to show that they are more suited to Year 9 students or are more accessible than the other titles. Others have

been marked with a cross+ to indicate that the events they depict may be distressing and require maturity of understanding: parental guidance may be needed in these cases.

The list is not intended to be prescriptive and you may choose other books under the guidance of your English teachers, but it is hoped you will pick writers who are challenging and who will expand your experience, understanding and enjoyment of the written word.

Dr A Hutchinson

Director of English



ADVENTURE

BUCHAN John

The Thirty-Nine Steps

A classic thriller that has remained popular since its publication in 1915.

CORMIER Robert

After the First Death*

This tense story, told from different view-points, is set aboard a bus full of schoolchildren that has been hijacked by terrorists.

SEDGWICK Marcus

Revolver*

Sig is guarding his father's corpse in their cabin in the Arctic when a frightening stranger comes to the door.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

DAHL Roald

Boy*

Going Solo

Two volumes of Roald Dahl's autobiography written in his inimitable style.

FRY Stephen

Moab is my Washpot +

The Fry Chronicles +

Stephen Fry's school-days, his partnership with Hugh Laurie and his rise to fame, all told with great honesty.

SIMPSON Joe

Touching the Void

An astonishing and gripping true story of a mountaineering incident.

LEE Laurie

Cider with Rosie

A beautiful description of growing up in a small Gloucestershire village just after the First World War.

McCOURT Frank

Angela's Ashes

Growing up in extreme poverty, Frank McCourt's childhood in America and Ireland was very different to the one portrayed in Cider with Rosie.

CLASSICS

COLLINS Wilkie

The Moonstone

This tale of a stolen diamond, the Moonstone of the title, is generally considered to be the first detective novel in the English language.

GOLDING William

Lord of the Flies

A group of boys survive a plane crash but can they survive living together on a deserted island?

GREENE Graham

Brighton Rock

A story of gangsters and murder set in the seedy underworld of 1930s Brighton.

HARTLEY L.P.

The Go-Between

Thirteen-year-old Leo is the go-between, carrying secret messages between aristocratic Marian and Ted, a tenant farmer.



HEMINGWAY Ernest

The Old Man and the Sea

The story of an aged fisherman called Santiago and his battle to catch a large marlin.

JOYCE James

The Dubliners

A collection of short stories of Dublin life.

KEROUAC

Jack On the Road

A group of friends make road trips across America in the 1940s.

LEE Harper

To Kill a Mockingbird

Eight-year old Scout's father is a lawyer in a court case that splits a small community in the American Deep South.

ORWELL George

Animal Farm

When animals take over their farm from the tyrannical farmer they believe life will be better, but are all animals as equal as they have been led to believe?

ORWELL George

Nineteen Eighty Four

Winston Smith lives in a harsh and grim future where everyone is under the control of the original Big Brother.

SALINGER J.D.

The Catcher in the Rye

Holden Caulfield is confused and alienated after being expelled from school so he takes a train to New York and wanders around aimlessly describing his encounters in his unique style.

TWAIN Mark

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

The colourful and lively adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn as they journey down the Mississippi river.

WAUGH Evelyn

Brideshead Revisited

Charles Ryder, a student at Oxford, gets involved with the aristocratic and wealthy Marchmain family.

CRIME & DETECTIVE

ATKINSON Kate

One Good Turn: A Jolly Murder Mystery

Jackson Brodie is a private investigator in Edinburgh who investigates crimes involving a bizarre cast of characters.

CHANDLER Raymond

The Big Sleep +

The first in the series about hardboiled Los Angeles detective Philip Marlowe.

COLLINS Wilkie

The Moonstone

This tale of a stolen diamond, the Moonstone of the title, is generally considered to be the first detective novel in the English language.

DEXTER Colin

The Remorseful Day+

The Dead of Jericho+

The Wench is Dead+

Three books from a series which features the Jaguar-driving, real-ale drinking, music-loving Inspector Morse.

DONOGHUE Emma

Room +

The disturbing narrative of Jack who is five and a prisoner, along with his mother, in an under-ground room.

DOYLE Arthur Conan

Sherlock Holmes stories

Encounter the famous intellect and crime-solving abilities of Sherlock Holmes.

HANNAH Sophie

Lasting Damage+

When Connie Bowskill takes a virtual tour of a house for sale on a property website she sees the dead body of a woman, but when her husband logs on, it has vanished.

HIGHSMITH Patricia

The Talented Mr Ripley+

Tom Ripley has been described as 'charming, literate and a monster' – find out why.

HILL Reginald

An April Shroud (Book 4 in the Dalziel and Pascoe series)+

Andy Dalziel and Peter Pascoe are two no-nonsense Yorkshire detectives.

RENDELL Ruth

The Monster in the Box (Chief Inspector Wexford series)+

Inspector Reginald Wexford re-encounters a man he suspected of committing unsolved murders many years ago.

WINGFIELD R.D.

Frost at Christmas-Book 1 in the Detective Inspector Jack Frost series)+

Detective Inspector Frost is characterized as 'hopeless with paper-work but unmatched at solving mysteries.'

FA N T A S Y

CONNOLLY John

The Book of Lost Things

Twelve-year old David enters a sinister fantasy world that rivals anything created by the Brothers Grimm.

HEARN Lian

Across the Nightingale Floor

The inhabitants of Tomasu's village, in a fictitious and ancient Japan, have been massacred, but he is rescued by the Otori people who train him in the art of combat.

MARTEL Yann

The Life of Pi

Fantasy adventure which describes how Pi survives aboard a raft with a tiger.

NESS Patrick

Chaos Walking trilogy (The Knife of Never Letting Go, The Ask and the Answer, Mon-sters of Men) *

Todd Hewitt lives in a world inhabited only by men who can hear one another's thoughts. One day he discovers a patch of silence and so begins a heart-stopping adventure.

PULLMAN Philip

His Dark Materials trilogy (Northern Lights; The Subtle Knife; The Amber Spyglass) *

Exciting plots dealing with big ideas: these books are modern classics.

HORROR & GHOST STORIES

JAMES Henry

The Turn of the Screw

A governess is hired to look after two children in a lonely country house. Are the unexplained events that happen there the result of the super-natural or of an overactive imagination?



JAMES M.R.

Collected Ghost Stories

Some of the best ghost stories ever written.

PAVER Michelle

Dark Matter *

Tense and atmospheric tale of strange happenings on an Arctic expedition.

POE Edgar Allan

Tales of Mystery and Imagination

Tales of terror and Gothic horror.

HISTORICAL

HARRIS Robert

Fatherland

A thriller set in an alternative world where the Nazis won World War II.

KINGSOLVER Barbara

The Poisonwood Bible

A missionary and his family move to the Belgian Congo in 1959 and find their expectations completely overturned.

McEWAN Ian

Atonement +

During the summer of 1935, thirteen-year old Briony misunderstands what she sees and hears and changes the lives of those around her forever.

NEWBERY Linda

The Shell House

Graveney Hall links the present-day story of Greg to that of Edmund, the heir to the Hall who disappeared during the First World War.

REEVE Philip

Here Lies Arthur *

Ingenious re-working of the myth of King Arthur.

SANSOM C.J.

Dissolution+

Matthew Shardlake is a sixteenth-century lawyer who investigates a murder at Scarnsea monastery.

SCHLINK Bernard

The Reader +

Michael Berg remembers the year he was fifteen and fell in love with an older woman. He later discovers that Hanna was hiding a painful secret.

SUTCLIFF Rosemary

Eagle of the Ninth *

Marcus Flavius Aquila wants to know the truth about his father's disappearance along with the rest of the Ninth Legion in the wilds of Northern Britain.

TREMAIN Rose

Restoration

The Plague, the Great Fire of London and the reign of King Charles II seen through the eyes of Robert Merivel, a veterinarian in the King's household.

WALLACE Jason

Out of Shadows +

Powerful story of bullying and racism in a boarding school in Zimbabwe in the 1980s.

HUMOUR

ADAMS Douglas

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

"Space is big. You won't believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the road to the chemist's, but that's just peanuts to space."

BATES H.E.

The Darling Buds of May

The Larkin family, Ma and Pop and their six children, don't have a care in the world until, one day, they come home to find a man from the tax office waiting to speak to Pop.

BRYSON Bill

The Lost Continent;

Neither Here Nor There; Notes from a Small Island; A Walk in the Woods; Notes from a Big Country; Down Under

Bill Bryson travels the world and recounts his experiences in a deceptively dry and relaxed style which is always informative and often hilarious

GIBBONS Stella

Cold Comfort Farm

Stella Gibbons created this classic parody of gloomy, melodramatic portrayals of rural life.

GROSSMITH George and Weedon

The Diary of a Nobody

Mr Pooter is a self-important, bumbling, Victorian bank clerk who keeps a diary.

HADDON Mark

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time *

Christopher wants to solve the mystery of the death of his neighbour's dog by using the methods of his hero, Sherlock Holmes.

JEROME Jerome K.

Three Men in a Boat

This was an instant success when it was first published in 1889.

NICHOLLS David

Starter for Ten

Brian Jackson thinks appearing on University Challenge in his first year at university is a sure-fire way to impress a girl.

WODEHOUSE P.G.

The Code of the Woosters (or other Jeeves and Wooster stories)

Bertie Wooster is young, wealthy and idiotic, and Jeeves is his brilliant valet who has to get him out of trouble.

POETRY

DUFFY Carol Ann

New Selected Poems 1984-2004

The World's Wife

FIRST WORLD WAR poets like Vera Brittain, Ivor Gurney, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon found in anthologies such as:

In Time of War (edited by Anne Harvey)

The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry

Scars Upon My Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War

(edited by Catherine W. Reilly)

Up the Line to Death: War Poets, 1914-18

(edited by Brian Gardner)

HUGHES Ted

Collected Poems of Ted Hughes

Crow

What is the Truth?

HUGHES Ted and HEANEY Seamus (editors)

The Rattle Bag

HUGHES Ted and HEANEY Seamus (editors)

The School Bag

ZEPHANIAH Benjamin

Propa Propaganda

Talking Turkeys

Wicked World!

REAL LIFE IN FICTION

ATKINSON Kate

Behind the Scenes at the Museum

Ruby Lennox tells the story of her ordinary family in an extraordinary way.

BATES H.E.

Love for Lydia

Lydia Aspen is not the shy girl she seems at first, but someone who creates havoc amongst the young men who admire her.

BROOKS Kevin

Lucas *

The appearance of a mysterious boy in a small town creates tension and ill-feeling.

COE Jonathan

The Rotters' Club

The friendships of a group of boys in a grammar school in the 1970s.

FAULKES Sebastian

A Week in December

The events of a week before Christmas in 2007 told by very different characters who all live in London.

FRAYN Michael

Spies

Keith and Stephen live in a quiet London suburb at the time of World War II, but Keith believes his mother is a German spy. The two boys set out to discover the truth.

HILL Susan

I'm the King of the Castle

Charles' mother takes on the job of house-keeper for Joseph Hooper and his son Edmund, a mean and menacing bully.

HINES Barry

A Kestrel for a Knave

Billy finds an escape from a life of poverty and neglect by rearing a wild kestrel.

HOSSEINI Khaled

The Kite Runner

The friendship of two boys growing up together in Kabul.

HORNBY Nick

High Fidelity +

Rob wonders why his girlfriend left him, so decides to get in touch with the ex-girlfriends on his 'top five break ups of all time' list.

KNOWLES John

A Separate Peace

Gene remembers his friend Finny and their time at school during World War II.

LE CARRE John

The Constant Gardener +

A British diplomat tries to uncover the truth about his wife's murder.

McCARTHY Cormac

The Border trilogy (All the Pretty Horses; The Crossing; Cities of the Plain) +

Three young American men cross the border between Mexico and the USA to seek a better life.

The Road +

Spare, bleak tale of a father and son journeying through an apocalyptic landscape.

McEWAN Ian

Saturday

A fateful day in the life of Henry Perowne, a successful surgeon.

MITCHELL David

Black Swan Green

Jason is thirteen, has a stammer and lives in a dull English village in the 1980s, but his life is about to change.

MURDOCH Iris

The Sandcastle

The quiet life of teacher, William Mor, is disturbed when a young painter visits his school to paint a portrait of the headmaster.

NICHOLLS David

One Day

Emma and Dexter meet on the night before their graduation in 1988.

What will they be doing on that day next year? And the year after that? And twenty years from then?

SMILEY Jane

A Thousand Acres

The plot of King Lear transplanted to rural America in the twentieth century.

SMITH Zadie

White Teeth

This follows the friend-ship of two wartime friends: one English, the other Bangladeshi, and their families, in present-day London.

TREMAIN Rose

The Road Home

Lev arrives in London from Eastern Europe with little money and no prospects, only the determination to start a new life.

WAUGH Evelyn

The Loved One

A cruelly witty satire on the funeral industry in Hollywood.

SCIENCE FICTION

ADAMS Douglas

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

“Space is big. You won't believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the road to the chemist's, but that's just peanuts to space.”

ASIMOV Isaac

I, Robot

A classic collection of stories upon which the film was based.

BLACKMAN Malorie

Noughts and Crosses*

A Romeo-and-Juliet-style love story set in a racist dystopia.

BRADBURY Ray

Fahrenheit 451

In a futuristic America books are illegal and firemen start fires rather than put them out.

HUXLEY Aldous

Brave New World

The 'brave new world' of the title is a place where there is no war or sadness, but where human beings are grown in laboratories and have their lives controlled.

ISHIGURO Kazuo

Never Let Me Go

Three friends appear to have a happy life at boarding school until they discover a horrifying truth about their existence.

WYNDHAM John

The Day of the Triffids

Bill Masen was one of the few people not to be blinded by a meteor shower, but now he discovers that giant flesh-eating plants called 'triffids' are wreaking havoc on Earth.

WAR

BALLARD J.G.

The Empire of the Sun

The experiences of a young boy at the hands of his Japanese captors during World War II.

FAULKS Sebastian

Birdsong +

Stephen Wraysford's life in France, described before and during World War I, is gruelling but unforgettable.

Charlotte Gray +

The adventures of a young woman who was part of the French resistance during the Second World War.

MORPURGO Michael

Private Peaceful*

The poignant story of two brothers before and during the First World War.

PEET Mal

Tamar *

Two young Dutchmen, who have been trained in England as spies, are parachuted into the Netherlands to help with the war effort during World War II.

REMARQUE Erich Maria

All Quiet on the Western Front

World War I from the point of view of the Germans as written by a German war veteran.

ZUSAK Marcus

The Book Thief

A story narrated by Death and set in Nazi Germany.