

## Year 8 English Reading List

There are lots of books out there, but here is a selection of books we, personally, recommend students to read in Year 8. Some of the books are challenging and we recommend that parents decide if the book is suitable for their son or daughter.

We'd like all students to read a range of authors and styles of books as this will help prepare students for their exams and later in life.

\* = a series of books    \_\_ = books related to topics covered in lessons

<i><b>Title</b></i>	<i><b>Author</b></i>	<i><b>Description</b></i>	<i><b>Genre</b></i>
A Kestrel for a Knave	Barry Hines	Life is tough and cheerless for Billy Casper, a troubled teenager growing up in the small Yorkshire mining town of Barnsley. Treated as a failure at school, and unhappy at home, Billy discovers a new passion in life when he finds Kes, a kestrel hawk. Billy identifies with her silent strength and she inspires in him the trust and love that nothing else can, discovering through her the passion missing from his life. Barry Hines's acclaimed novel continues to reach new generations of teenagers and adults with its powerful story of survival in a tough, joyless world.	Real-life Teenage Growing-up
Across the Nightingale Floor *	Lian Hearn	In his black-walled fortress at Inuyama, the warlord Iida Sadamu surveys his famous nightingale floor. Constructed with exquisite skill, it sings at the tread of each human foot. No assassin can cross it unheard. The youth Takeo has been brought up in a remote mountain village among the Hidden, a reclusive and spiritual people who have taught him only the ways of peace. But unbeknownst to him, his father was a celebrated assassin and a member of the Tribe, an ancient network of families with extraordinary, preternatural skills. When Takeo's village is pillaged, he is rescued and adopted by the mysterious Lord Otori Shigeru. Under the tutelage of Shigeru, he learns that he too possesses the skills of the Tribe. And, with this knowledge, he embarks on a journey that will lead him across the famed nightingale floor—and to his own unimaginable destiny..	Adventure Historical

Bone Sparrow	Zana Fraillon	<p>Subhi is a refugee. Born in an Australian permanent detention center after his mother and sister fled the violence of a distant homeland, Subhi has only ever known life behind the fences. But his world is far bigger than that—every night, the magical Night Sea from his mother's stories brings him gifts, the faraway whales sing to him, and the birds tell their stories. And as he grows, his imagination threatens to burst beyond the limits of his containment.</p> <p>The most vivid story of all, however, is the one that arrives one night in the form of Jimmie—a scruffy, impatient girl who appears on the other side of the wire fence and brings with her a notebook written by the mother she lost. Unable to read it herself, she relies on Subhi to unravel her family's love songs and tragedies.</p> <p>Subhi and Jimmie might both find comfort—and maybe even freedom—as their tales unfold. But not until each has been braver than ever before.</p>	Adventure Growing up Global
Cuckoo Song	Frances Hardinge	<p><i>The first things to shift were the doll's eyes, the beautiful grey-green glass eyes. Slowly they swivelled, until their gaze was resting on Triss's face. Then the tiny mouth moved, opened to speak. 'Who do you think you are? This is my family.'</i></p> <p>When Triss wakes up after an accident, she knows that something is very wrong. She is insatiably hungry; she keeps waking up with leaves in her hair, and her sister seems terrified of her. When it all gets too much and she starts to cry, her tears are like cobwebs...</p> <p>Soon Triss discovers that what happened to her is more strange and terrible than she could ever have imagined, and that she is quite literally not herself. In a quest find the truth she must travel into the terrifying Underbelly of the city to meet a twisted architect who has dark designs on her family - before it's too late...</p>	Gothic Mystery Adventure

<p>Hitchhiker's Guide to the galaxy *</p>	<p>Douglas Adams</p>	<p>Seconds before Earth is demolished to make way for a galactic freeway, Arthur Dent is plucked off the planet by his friend Ford Prefect, a researcher for the revised edition of <i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy</i> who, for the last fifteen years, has been posing as an out-of-work actor.</p> <p>Together, this dynamic pair begin a journey through space aided by a galaxyful of fellow travelers: Zaphod Beeblebrox--the two-headed, three-armed ex-hippie and totally out-to-lunch president of the galaxy; Trillian (formerly Tricia McMillan), Zaphod's girlfriend, whom Arthur tried to pick up at a cocktail party once upon a time zone; Marvin, a paranoid, brilliant, and chronically depressed robot; and Veet Voojagig, a former graduate student obsessed with the disappearance of all the ballpoint pens he's bought over the years.</p> <p>Where are these pens? Why are we born? Why do we die? For all the answers, stick your thumb to the stars!</p>	<p>Science Fiction Comedy</p>
<p>I am Malala</p>	<p>Malala Yousafzai</p>	<p><i>I come from a country that was created at midnight. When I almost died it was just after midday.</i></p> <p>When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education.</p> <p>On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive.</p> <p>Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the</p>	<p>True story Growing up Global</p>

		<p>youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize laureate.</p> <p><i>I Am Malala</i> is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons.</p>	
Lampie and the Children of the Sea	Annet Schapp	<p>Every evening Lampie the lighthouse keeper's daughter must light a lantern to warn ships away from the rocks. But one stormy night disaster strikes. The lantern goes out, a ship is wrecked and an adventure begins.</p> <p>In disgrace, Lampie is sent to work as a maid at the Admiral's Black House, where rumour has it that a monster lurks in the tower. But what she finds there is stranger and more beautiful than any monster. Soon Lampie is drawn into a fairytale adventure in a world of mermaids and pirates, where she must fight with all her might for friendship, freedom and the right to be different.</p>	Fantasy Adventure
<b><u>Last of the Spirits</u></b>	Chris Priestley	<p>Sam and Lizzie are freezing and hungry on the streets of Victorian London. When Sam asks a wealthy man for some coins, he is rudely turned away. Months of struggle suddenly find their focus, and Sam resolves to kill the man. Huddling in a graveyard for warmth, Sam and Lizzie are horrified to see the earth around one of the tombs begin to shift, shortly followed by the wraithlike figure of a ghostly man. He warns Sam about the future which awaits such a bitter heart, and so begins Sam's journey led by terrifying spirits through the past, present and future, after which Sam must decide whether to take the man, Scrooge's, life or not.</p> <p>A perfectly layered, tense and supremely satisfying twist on one of Dickens' most popular books, cleverly</p>	Classic Gothic Historical

		reinvented to entice a younger readership.	
<u>Mister Creecher</u>	Chris Priestley	Billy is a street urchin, pickpocket and petty thief. Mister Creecher is a monstrous giant of a man who terrifies all he meets. Their relationship begins as pure convenience. But a bond swiftly develops between these two misfits as their bloody journey takes them ever northwards on the trail of their target ...Victor Frankenstein. Friendship, trust and betrayal combine to form a dangerous liaison in this moving and frightening new book from Chris Priestley.	Gothic Horror
Noughts and Crosses*	Malorie Blackman	Two young people are forced to make a stand in this thought-provoking look at racism and prejudice in an alternate society.  Sephy is a Cross -- a member of the dark-skinned ruling class. Callum is a Nought -- a "colourless" member of the underclass who were once slaves to the Crosses. The two have been friends since early childhood, but that's as far as it can go. In their world, Noughts and Crosses simply don't mix. Against a background of prejudice and distrust, intensely highlighted by violent terrorist activity, a romance builds between Sephy and Callum -- a romance that is to lead both of them into terrible danger. Can they possibly find a way to be together?	Mature Racism Growing-up
Nowhere on Earth	Nick Lake	It starts with a plane crash.  There are survivors: a teenage girl and her little brother. They are running from something. But what?  Then the men arrive. They are hunting the girl and boy. And-  And that's all we can tell you ...	Thriller Adventure Action
Revolver	Marcus Sedgwick	Razor-sharp, psychological thriller set in a snowy Arctic wilderness.  "They say that dead men tell no tales, but they're wrong. Even the dead tell stories."	Thriller Mystery Psychological

		<p>It's 1910. In a cabin north of the Arctic Circle, in a place murderously cold and desolate, Sig Andersson is alone. Except for the corpse of his father, frozen to death that morning when he fell through the ice on the lake.</p> <p>The cabin is silent, so silent, and then there's a knock at the door. It's a stranger, and as his extraordinary story of gold dust and gold lust unwinds, Sig's thoughts turn more and more to his father's prized possession, a Colt revolver, hidden in the storeroom.</p> <p>A revolver just waiting to be used...but should Sig use it, or not?</p>	
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*	Mildred Taylor	<p>Why is the land so important to Cassie's family? It takes the events of one turbulent year—the year of the night riders and the burnings, the year a white girl humiliates Cassie in public simply because she's black—to show Cassie that having a place of their own is the Logan family's lifeblood. It is the land that gives the Logans their courage and pride—no matter how others may degrade them, the Logans possess something no one can take away.</p>	Racism Historical Growing-up
Salt to Sea	Ruta Sepetys	<p>While the Titanic and Lusitania are both well-documented disasters, the single greatest tragedy in maritime history is the little-known January 30, 1945 sinking in the Baltic Sea by a Soviet submarine of the Wilhelm Gustloff, a German cruise liner that was supposed to ferry wartime personnel and refugees to safety from the advancing Red Army. The ship was overcrowded with more than 10,500 passengers — the intended capacity was approximately 1,800 — and more than 9,000 people, including 5,000 children, lost their lives.</p> <p>Sepetys (writer of 'Between Shades of Gray') crafts four fictionalized but historically accurate voices to convey the real-life tragedy. Joana, a</p>	Historical Adventure

		Lithuanian with nursing experience; Florian, a Prussian soldier fleeing the Nazis with stolen treasure; and Emilia, a Polish girl close to the end of her pregnancy, converge on their escape journeys as Russian troops advance; each will eventually meet Albert, a Nazi peon with delusions of grandeur, assigned to the Gustloff decks.	
Shadowmancer*	G.P. Taylor	Obadiah Demurrall is a sorcerer who is seeking to control the highest power in the Universe. He will stop at nothing. The only people in his way are Raphah, Kate, Thomas and the mysterious Jacob Crane. This work takes you into a world of superstition, magic and witchcraft, where the ultimate sacrifice might even be life itself.	Fantasy Mystery
The Climbers	Keith Gray	In this compelling story of teenage rivalry and friendship, award-winning author Keith Gray captures the subtle agonies and reality of life growing up in a small town.  Sully is the best climber in the village. He can scale the Twisted Sister's tangled branches and clamber up Double Trunker with ease. But when new kid Nottingham shows up and astonishes everyone with his climbing skills, Sully's status is under threat and there's only one way to prove who's best. Sully and Nottingham must race to climb the last unnamed tree. Whoever makes it to the top will become a legend. But something spiteful and ugly has reared its head in Sully ... Is it worth losing everything just to reach the top?	Growing up Adventure Relationships
The Enemy *	Charlie Higson	Charlie Higson's <i>The Enemy</i> is the first in a jaw-dropping zombie horror series for teens. Everyone over the age of fourteen has succumbed to a deadly zombie virus and now the kids must keep themselves alive.  <b>When the sickness came, every parent, police officer, politician - every adult fell ill. The lucky ones died. The others are crazed, confused and hungry.</b>	Action Thriller

		<p><b>Only children under fourteen remain, and they're fighting to survive.</b></p> <p>Now there are rumours of a safe place to hide. And so a gang of children begin their quest across London, where all through the city - down alleyways, in deserted houses, underground - the grown-ups lie in wait.</p> <p>But can they make it there - alive?</p>	
The Knife of Never Letting Go*	Patrick Ness	<p>Todd Hewitt is the only boy in a town of men. Ever since the settlers were infected with the Noise germ, Todd can hear everything the men think, and they hear everything he thinks. Todd is just a month away from becoming a man, but in the midst of the cacophony, he knows that the town is hiding something from him -- something so awful Todd is forced to flee with only his dog, whose simple, loyal voice he hears too. With hostile men from the town in pursuit, the two stumble upon a strange and eerily silent creature: a girl. Who is she? Why wasn't she killed by the germ like all the females on New World? Propelled by Todd's gritty narration, readers are in for a white-knuckle journey in which a boy on the cusp of manhood must unlearn everything he knows in order to figure out who he truly is.</p>	Science Fiction Adventure Action
<u>The Lie Tree</u>	Frances Hardinge	<p><i>The leaves were cold and slightly clammy. There was no mistaking them. She had seen their likeness painstakingly sketched in her father's journal. This was his greatest secret, his treasure and his undoing. The Tree of Lies. Now it was hers, and the journey he had never finished stretched out before her.</i></p> <p>When Faith's father is found dead under mysterious circumstances, she is determined to untangle the truth from the lies. Searching through his belongings for clues, she discovers a strange tree. A tree that feeds off whispered lies and bears fruit that reveals hidden secrets.</p>	Gothic Mystery Adventure



		But as Faith's untruths spiral out of control, she discovers that where lies seduce, truths shatter...	
The Other Side of Truth	Beverley Naidoo	<p>After the murder of their mother, twelve-year-old Sade and her younger brother are smuggled out of Nigeria by their journalist father to escape the corrupt military government and growing violence. They are sent to their uncle in London, but when they arrive, he is missing and they are abandoned, passed between foster homes. Their father escapes to England to find them -- but he will be sent back to Nigeria unless Sade can find a way to tell the world what happened to her family.</p> <p>A Silver Medal winner of England's Smarties Book Prize, Beverly Naidoo's new novel explores the issues of family, exile, and freedom with eloquence and stunning realism.</p>	Mystery Political
The Smell of Other People's Houses	Bonnie Sue-Hitchcock	<p>In Alaska, 1970, being a teenager here isn't like being a teenager anywhere else. Ruth has a secret that she can't hide forever. Dora wonders if she can ever truly escape where she comes from, even when good luck strikes. Alyce is trying to reconcile her desire to dance, with the life she's always known on her family's fishing boat. Hank and his brothers decide it's safer to run away than to stay home—until one of them ends up in terrible danger.</p> <p>Four very different lives are about to become entangled.</p>	Relationship Growing-up
Tinder	Sally Gardner	<p>A young soldier, a captive princess, witches, wolves and Death walk hand in hand in COSTA AWARD winner Sally Gardner's exquisitely written new novel inspired by the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale, THE TINDERBOX, illustrated by David Roberts.</p> <p>Otto Hundebiss is tired of war, but when he defies Death he walks a</p>	Fairy-tale Gothic

		<p>dangerous path. A half beast half man gives him shoes and dice which will lead him deep into a web of dark magic and mystery. He meets the beautiful Safire - pure of heart and spirit, the scheming Mistress Jabber and the terrifying Lady of the Nail. He learns the powers of the tinderbox and the wolves whose master he becomes. But will all the riches in the world bring him the thing he most desires?</p> <p>Fairy tales are often the cruellest stories of all; in this exquisite novel Sally Gardner writes about great love and great loss.</p>	
Tulip Touch	Anne Fine	<p>The story of a strange and disturbing friendship seen through the eyes of Natalie as she gets to know Tulip Pierce, a delinquent girl most others go out of their way to avoid. Nobody wants Tulip in their gang. She bunks off school, is rude to the teachers and makes herself unpopular with her classmates by telling awful lies. But none of this matters to Natalie who finds Tulip's behaviour exciting and dangerous. At first she doesn't care that other people are upset by Tulip's bizarre games but as the games become increasingly dangerous and sinister, Natalie realises that Tulip is going too far. Way too far... Tulip becomes even more destructive and after a row with Natalie she commits a terrible crime.</p> <p>This is a compelling story in which Anne Fine explores the dark side of a friendship bordering on obsession, and sensitively depicts one girl's gradual decline into hostility and violence.</p>	Mystery Psychological Thriller
Where the World Ends	Geraldine McCaughrean	<p>Every time a lad came fowling on the St Kilda stacs, he went home less of a boy and more of a man. If he went home at all, that is...</p>	Thriller Adventure

		In the summer of 1727, a group of men and boys are put ashore on a remote sea stac to harvest birds for food. No one returns to collect them. Why? Surely nothing but the end of the world can explain why they have been abandoned to endure storms, starvation and terror. And how can they survive, housed in stone and imprisoned on every side by the ocean?	
Witch Hill	Marcus Sedgwick	The fire was a family tragedy that Jamie can't forget, even in his dreams. Now something terrifying involving a witch and a frightened girl is happening to Jamie in Crownhill, the village where he's been sent to get over his problems.	Historical Mystery
Zom-B*	Darren Shan	Zom-B is a radical new series about a zombie apocalypse, told in the first person by one of its victims. The series combines classic Shan action with a fiendishly twisting plot and hard-hitting and thought-provoking moral questions dealing with racism, abuse of power and more. This is challenging material, which will captivate existing Shan fans and bring in many new ones. As Darren says, "It's a big, sprawling, vicious tale...a grisly piece of escapism, and a barbed look at the world in which we live. Each book in the series is short, fast-paced and bloody. A high body-count is guaranteed!"	Adventure Action

**Challenge Books – these are books we'd suggest students to read if they are wanting something challenging or demanding in Year 8**

<b><i>Title</i></b>	<b><i>Author</i></b>	<b><i>Description</i></b>	<b><i>Genre</i></b>
<b><u>Northanger Abbey</u></b>	<b>Jane Austen</b>	A wonderfully entertaining coming-of-age story, <i>Northanger Abbey</i> is often referred to as Jane Austen's "Gothic parody." Decrepit castles, locked rooms, mysterious chests, cryptic notes, and tyrannical fathers give the story an uncanny air, but one with a decidedly satirical twist.	<b>Gothic Classic Relationships</b>

		<p>The story's unlikely heroine is Catherine Morland, a remarkably innocent seventeen-year-old woman from a country parsonage. While spending a few weeks in Bath with a family friend, Catherine meets and falls in love with Henry Tilney, who invites her to visit his family estate, Northanger Abbey. Once there, Catherine, a great reader of Gothic thrillers, lets the shadowy atmosphere of the old mansion fill her mind with terrible suspicions. What is the mystery surrounding the death of Henry's mother? Is the family concealing a terrible secret within the elegant rooms of the Abbey? Can she trust Henry, or is he part of an evil conspiracy? Catherine finds dreadful portents in the most prosaic events, until Henry persuades her to see the peril in confusing life with art.</p>	
<u>The Red Room</u>	H.G. Wells	<p>"It's your own choosing," said the man with the withered arm once more. I heard the faint sound of a stick and a shambling step on the flags in the passage outside. The door creaked on its hinges as a second old man entered, more bent, more wrinkled, more aged even than the first. He supported himself by the help of a crutch, his eyes were covered by a shade, and his lower lip, half averted, hung pale and pink from his decaying yellow teeth. He made straight for an armchair on the opposite side of the table, sat down clumsily, and began to cough.</p>	<b>Gothic Classic Ghost Story</b>
<u>Turn of the Screw</u>	Henry James	<p>A very young woman's first job: governess for two weirdly beautiful, strangely distant, oddly silent children, Miles and Flora, at a forlorn estate...An</p>	<b>Gothic Classic Ghost story</b>

		<p>estate haunted by a beckoning evil. Half-seen figures who glare from dark towers and dusty windows- silent, foul phantoms who, day by day, night by night, come closer, ever closer. With growing horror, the helpless governess realizes the fiendish creatures want the children, seeking to corrupt their bodies, possess their minds, own their souls... But worse-much worse- the governess discovers that Miles and Flora have no terror of the lurking evil. For they want the walking dead as badly as the dead want them.</p>	
<p><b><u>Hound of the Baskervilles</u></b></p>	<p><b>Arthur Conon Doyle</b></p>	<p>Could the sudden death of Sir Charles Baskerville have been caused by the gigantic ghostly hound that is said to have haunted his family for generations? Arch-rationalist Sherlock Holmes characteristically dismisses the theory as nonsense. And immersed in another case, he sends Watson to Devon to protect the Baskerville heir and observe the suspects close at hand. With its atmospheric setting on the ancient, wild moorland and its savage apparition, <i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i> is one of the greatest crime novels ever written. Rationalism is pitted against the supernatural, good against evil, as Sherlock Holmes seeks to defeat a foe almost his equal.</p>	<p><b>Gothic Classic Mystery</b></p>
<p><b><u>The Woman in Black</u></b></p>	<p><b>Susan Hill</b></p>	<p>Set on the obligatory English moor, on an isolated causeway, the story has as its hero Arthur Kipps, an up-and-coming young solicitor who has come north from London to attend the funeral and settle the affairs of Mrs. Alice Drablow of Eel Marsh House. The routine formalities he anticipates give</p>	<p><b>Gothic Classic Ghost story</b></p>

		<p>way to a tumble of events and secrets more sinister and terrifying than any nightmare: the rocking chair in the deserted nursery, the eerie sound of a pony and trap, a child's scream in the fog, and most dreadfully--and for Kipps most tragically--<i>The Woman In Black</i>.</p> <p><i>The Woman In Black</i> is both a brilliant exercise in atmosphere and controlled horror and a delicious spine-tingler--proof positive that this neglected genre, the ghost story, isn't dead after all.</p>	
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