



Year 8 recommended reading list

Welcome to Nowhere by Elizabeth Laird

Twelve-year-old Omar and his brothers and sisters were born and raised in the beautiful and bustling city of Bosra, Syria. Omar doesn't care about politics - all he wants is to grow up to become a successful businessman who will take the world by storm. But when his clever older brother, Musa, gets mixed up with some young political activists, everything changes . . .

The Outsiders by S.E.Hinton

According to Ponyboy, there are two kinds of people in the world: greasers and socs. A soc (short for "social") has money, can get away with just about anything, and has an attitude longer than a limousine. A greaser, on the other hand, always lives on the outside and needs to watch his back. Ponyboy is a greaser, and he's always been proud of it, even willing to rumble against a gang of socs for the sake of his fellow greasers--until one terrible night when his friend Johnny kills a soc.

Chinese Cinderella by Adeline Yen Mah

A Chinese proverb says, "Falling leaves return to their roots." In Chinese Cinderella, Adeline Yen Mah returns to her roots to tell the story of her painful childhood and her ultimate triumph and courage in the face of despair. Adeline's affluent, powerful family considers her bad luck after her mother dies giving birth to her. Life does not get any easier when her father remarries. She and her siblings are subjected to the disdain of her stepmother, while her stepbrother and stepsister are spoiled. Although Adeline wins prizes at school, they are not enough to compensate for what she really yearns for -- the love and understanding of her family

The Coral Island by R.M. Ballantyne

Fifteen-year-old Ralph, mischievous young Peterkin and clever, brave Jack are shipwrecked on a coral reef with only a telescope and a broken pocketknife between them. At first the island seems a paradise, with its plentiful foods and wealth of natural wonders. But then a party of cannibals arrives, and after that a pirate ship...what is to become of them?

Coram Boy by Jamila Gavin

Eighteenth-century England is the setting for Jamila Gavin's sweeping saga of growing-up, struggle, tradition and corruption. From an acorn of an idea about a real-life good Samaritan of yesteryear, the author has crafted a satisfying, if occasionally painful, novel that spans the lives of several fortunate and unfortunate young people of the day.

The Day of the Triffids by John Wyndham

Bill Masen, bandages over his wounded eyes, misses the most spectacular meteorite shower England has ever seen. Removing his bandages the next morning, he finds masses of sightless people wandering the city. He soon meets Josella, another lucky person who has retained her sight, and together they leave the city, aware that the safe, familiar world they knew a mere twenty-four hours before is gone forever.

But to survive in this post-apocalyptic world, one must survive the Triffids, strange plants that years before began appearing all over the world. The Triffids can grow to over seven feet tall, pull their roots from the ground to walk, and kill a man with one quick lash of their poisonous stingers. With society in shambles, they are now poised to prey on humankind



Flambards by K.M. Peyton

A totally absorbing novel about twelve-year-old Christina who is sent to live with her fierce uncle and his two sons in their decaying mansion, Flambards. Christina discovers a passion for horses and riding but finds herself part of a strange household, divided by emotional undercurrents and cruelty.

Goggle Eyes by Anne Fine

When Helen Johnston rushes out of registration in tears, Kitty Killin is sent after her. Kitty is not only a great storyteller, she is also the world's leading expert in mothers with unwanted boyfriends.

Kitty Killin is not only a good storyteller, but also the World's Greatest Expert when it comes to mothers having new and unwanted boyfriends. Particularly when there's a danger they might turn into new and unwanted *stepfathers*...

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

Seconds before the 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 *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* who, for the last fifteen years, has been posing as an out-of-work actor.

Together this dynamic pair begin a journey through space aided by quotes from *The Hitchhiker's Guide* ("A towel is about the most massively useful thing an interstellar hitchhiker can have") and a galaxy-full of fellow travellers: Zaphod Beeblebrox—the two-headed, three-armed ex-hippie and totally out-to-lunch president of the galaxy; Trillian, Zaphod's girlfriend (formally Tricia McMillan), whom Arthur tried to pick up at a cocktail party once upon a time zone; Marvin, a paranoid, brilliant, and chronically depressed robot; Veet Voojagig, a former graduate student who is obsessed with the disappearance of all the ballpoint pens he bought over the years.

The Colour of Magic by Terry Pratchett

On a world supported on the back of a giant turtle (sex unknown), a gleeful, explosive, wickedly eccentric expedition sets out. There's an avaricious but inept wizard, a naive tourist whose luggage moves on hundreds of dear little legs, dragons who only exist if you believe in them, and of course THE EDGE on the planet...

Small Steps by Louis Sachar

Two years after being released from Camp Green Lake, Armpit is home in Austin, Texas, trying to turn his life around. But it's hard when you have a record, and everyone expects the worst from you. The only person who believes in him is Ginny, his 10-year old disabled neighbour. Together, they are learning to take small steps. And he seems to be on the right path, until X-Ray, a buddy from Camp Green Lake, comes up with a get-rich-quick scheme. This leads to a chance encounter with teen pop sensation, Kaira DeLeon, and suddenly his life spins out of control, with only one thing for certain. He'll never be the same again.

The Hound of the Baskervilles by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Generations ago, a hound of hell tore out the throat of devilish Hugo Baskerville on the moonlit moor. Poor, accursed Baskerville Hall now has another mysterious death: that of Sir Charles Baskerville. Could the culprit somehow be mixed up with secretive servant Barrymore, history-obsessed Dr. Frankland, butterfly-chasing Stapleton, or Selden, the Notting Hill murderer at large?



Someone's been signalling with candles from the mansion's windows. Nor can supernatural forces be ruled out. Can Dr. Watson--left alone by Sherlock Holmes to sleuth in fear for much of the novel--save the next Baskerville, Sir Henry, from the hound's fangs?

How I Live Now by Meg Rosoff

Fifteen-year-old Daisy is sent from Manhattan to England to visit her aunt and cousins she's never met: three boys near her age, and their little sister. Her aunt goes away on business soon after Daisy arrives. The next day bombs go off as London is attacked and occupied by an unnamed enemy.

As power fails, and systems fail, the farm becomes more isolated. Despite the war, it's a kind of Eden, with no adults in charge and no rules, a place where Daisy's uncanny bond with her cousins grows into something rare and extraordinary. But the war is everywhere, and Daisy and her cousins must lead each other into a world that is unknown in the scariest, most elemental way.

I Am David by Anne Holm

David's entire twelve-year life has been spent in a grisly prison camp in Eastern Europe. He knows nothing of the outside world. But when he is given the chance to escape, he seizes it. With his vengeful enemies hot on his heels, David struggles to cope in this strange new world, where his only resources are a compass, a few crusts of bread, his two aching feet, and some vague advice to seek refuge in Denmark. Is that enough to survive?

David's extraordinary odyssey is dramatically chronicled in Anne Holm's classic about the meaning of freedom and the power of hope.

Joby by Stan Barstow

Eleven-year-old Joby finds the world of August 1939 a disturbing place in which to be growing up. Written in a crisp evocative style, it contains some shrewd insights into personal relationships

Journey to the River Sea by Eva Ibbotson

Sent in 1910 to live with distant relatives who own a rubber plantation along the Amazon River, English orphan Maia is excited. She believes she is in for brightly coloured macaws, enormous butterflies, and "curtains of sweetly scented orchids trailing from the trees." Her British classmates warn her of man-eating alligators and wild, murderous Indians. Unfortunately, no one cautions Maia about her nasty, xenophobic cousins, who douse the house in bug spray and forbid her from venturing beyond their coiffed compound. Maia, however, is resourceful enough to find herself smack in the middle of more excitement than she ever imagined, from a mysterious "Indian" with an inheritance, to an itinerant actor dreading his impending adolescence, to a remarkable journey down the Amazon in search of the legendary giant sloth.

A Kestrel for a Knave by 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.



Looking for JJ by Anne Cassidy

Three children walked away from the cottages on the edge of town toward Berwick Waters. Later that day, only two of them came back . . .

Alice Tully knows exactly what happened that spring day six years ago, though it's still hard for her to believe it. She'll never be able to forget, even though she's trying to lead a normal life--she has a job, friends, and a boyfriend whom she adores. But Alice's past is dangerous, and violent, and sad . . . and it's about to rip her new life apart.

A gripping and emotionally searing novel by accomplished British author Anne Cassidy, *Looking for JJ* infuses a terrifying subject with humanity and hope.

The Tulip Touch by Anne Fine

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.

The Plague Dogs by Richard Adams

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.

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Twelve-year-old Jonas lives in a seemingly ideal world. Not until he is given his life assignment as the Receiver does he begin to understand the dark secrets behind this fragile community.

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson

Jess Aarons' greatest ambition is to be the fastest runner in his grade. He's been practicing all summer and can't wait to see his classmates' faces when he beats them all. But on the first day of school, a new girl boldly crosses over to the boys' side and outruns everyone.

That's not a very promising beginning for a friendship, but Jess and Leslie Burke become inseparable. Together they create Terabithia, a magical kingdom in the woods where the two of them reign as king and queen, and their imaginations set the only limits.



Tightrope by Gillian Cross

When she begins receiving bizarre threatening messages from someone who seems to know her every move, teenage Ashley, after seeking help from the neighbourhood tough guy, comes to realize that she alone can end the stalker's reign of terror.

The Woman in Black by Susan Hill

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 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--*The Woman In Black*.

The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett

Mary is given to the care of her uncle Archibald Craven, whom she has never met. She travels to his home, Misselthwaite Manor located in the gloomy Yorkshire, a vast change from the sunny and warm climate she was used to. When she arrives, she is a rude, stubborn and given to stormy temper tantrums. However, her nature undergoes a gradual transformation when she learns of the tragedies that have befallen her strict and disciplinarian uncle whom she earlier feared and despised.

Unbearable by Paul Jennings

A collection of eight quirky, bizarre, and very funny short stories from the brilliant Paul Jennings.

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

From the moment young Jim Hawkins first encounters the sinister Blind Pew at the Admiral Benbow Inn until the climactic battle for treasure on a tropic isle, the novel creates scenes and characters that have fired the imaginations of generations of readers.

The Haunting by Margaret Mahy

After a shy and rather withdrawn eight-year-old begins receiving frightening supernatural images and messages, he learns about a family legacy which could be considered a curse or a rare gift.

Z for Zachariah by Robert O' Brien

Ann Burden is sixteen years old and completely alone. The world as she once knew it is gone, ravaged by a nuclear war that has taken everyone from her. For the past year, she has lived in a remote valley with no evidence of any other survivors.

But the smoke from a distant campfire shatters Ann's solitude. Someone else is still alive and making his way toward the valley. Who is this man? What does he want? Can he be trusted? Both excited and terrified, Ann soon realizes there may be worse things than being the last person on Earth.

Shadowmancer by G.P.Taylor

Obadiah Demurral 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.



Bone Talk by Candy Gourlay

More than a hundred years ago, a boy named Samkad thinks he knows everything about the world. He knows the mountains he lives in. He knows his people. He knows his blood enemy, the Mangili. And he wants to become a man, to be given his own shield, spear and axe to fight with. His best friend, Luki, wants all the same things – but she is a girl, and no girl has ever become a warrior.

But everything changes when a new boy arrives in the village. He calls himself Samkad's brother, yet he knows nothing of the ways of the mountain. And he brings news of a people called 'Americans', who are bringing war and destruction right to his home . . .

Everything All At Once by Steven Camden

An achingly beautiful collection of poems about one week in a secondary school where everything happens all at once. Zooming in across our cast of characters, we share moments that span everything from hoping to make it to the end of the week, facing it, fitting in, finding friends and falling out, to loving lessons, losing it, and worrying, wearing it well and worshipping from afar.

A Skinful of Shadows by Frances Hardinge

This is the story of a bear-hearted girl . . .

Sometimes, when a person dies, their spirit goes looking for somewhere to hide. Some people have space within them, perfect for hiding.

Twelve-year-old Makepeace has learned to defend herself from the ghosts which try to possess her in the night, desperate for refuge, but one day a dreadful event causes her to drop her guard

Norse Myths by Kevin Crossley Holland

Here are thirty-two classic myths that bring the Viking world vividly to life. The mythic legacy of the Scandinavians includes a cycle of stories filled with magnificent images from pre-Christian Europe. Gods, humans, and monstrous beasts engage in prodigious drinking bouts, contests of strength, greedy schemes for gold, and lusty encounters

Orangeboy by Patrice Lawrence

Sixteen-year-old Marlon has promised his widowed mum that he'll be good, and nothing like his gang-leader brother Andre. It's easy when you keep yourself to yourself, listening to your dead dad's Earth, Wind and Fire albums and watching sci-fi. But everything changes when Marlon's first date with the beautiful Sonya ends in tragedy; he becomes a hunted man and he has no idea why. With his dad dead and his brother helpless, Marlon has little choice but to enter Andre's old world of guns, knives and drug runs in order to uncover the truth and protect those close to him. It's time to fight to be the last man standing.

Hell and High Water by Tanya Landman

Mystery turns to mortal danger as one young man's quest to clear his father's name ensnares him in a net of deceit, conspiracy, and intrigue in 1750s England



I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

I Am Malala 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.

Bog Child by Siobhan Dowd

DIGGING FOR PEAT in the mountain with his Uncle Tally, Fergus finds the body of a child, and it looks like she's been murdered. As Fergus tries to make sense of the mad world around him—his brother on hunger-strike in prison, his growing feelings for Cora, his parents arguing over the Troubles, and him in it up to the neck, blackmailed into acting as courier to God knows what—a little voice comes to him in his dreams, and the mystery of the bog child unfurls.

Blood Family by Anne Fine

Edward is four years old when he is locked away with his mother by her abusive, alcoholic partner, Harris. By the time an elderly neighbour spots his pale face peering through a crack in the boarded-up window and raises the alarm, he is seven.

Mortal Engines by Philip Reeve

"It was a dark, blustery afternoon in spring, and the city of London was chasing a small mining town across the dried-out bed of the old North Sea."

The great traction city London has been skulking in the hills to avoid the bigger, faster, hungrier cities loose in the Great Hunting Ground. But now, the sinister plans of Lord Mayor Mangus Crome can finally unfold.