

LHS

Reading Newsletter

**Miss Osbaldeston reviews
her favourite book**

Summer 1

**Could you win one of
our competitions?**
Find out more inside

**Student book
reviews -
totally
honest!**
**Exclusive
interview
with Mr Brown!**

**Find out why
you should
read classics!**

**The importance of
reading in lockdown**





Reading Newsletter

Summer 1



Welcome again to another reading newsletter and another new term. The newsletter this term has been designed by our amazing literacy leader Chloe (Year 9). Chloe is keen to make the newsletter more visually appealing as she believes that this will enhance the appeal to parents and learners. I think you'll agree, she's done a fantastic job!

I'd like to thank our contributors this term. Mair- May G, Louis K and Sian W. I'd also like to thank our staff contributors Miss Ashworth, Mr Brown and Miss Osbaldeston.

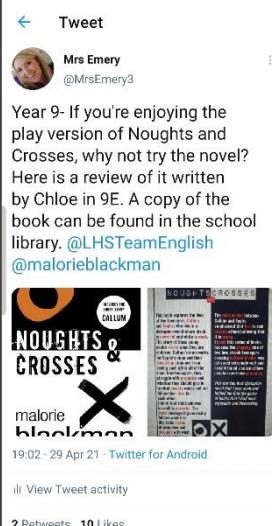
We have sent out a final questionnaire this term to parents and learners about the reading culture in school. We would really appreciate any feedback you could give. This features questions about Sora, the school library, DEAR time and our new 'smart start' in English lessons. We really value your feedback and aim to act on as much as we possibly can. Your feedback will also help us plan for September, and we will feedback on the findings from this in our final newsletter in Summer 2.

I would like to mention that we have a twitter page, and will be tweeting out recommendations on this throughout the term. Please do follow us to keep up to date with new releases and purchases in the library (@LHSTeamEnglish). It was great to get a 'like' on one of our learner book reviews, from none other than the author herself, Malorie Blackman!

Just a quick reminder that all learners must have a book, magazine or newspaper in their bags at all time. This is for their English lessons, but may also be used in tutor time or other lessons. If you are in need or a book please do contact me by email as we have a selection of books your child could choose from.

Thank you for all of your support

Mrs Emery



Classic literature

Louis Kidger

Older works are often perceived as being archaic; as being outdated works that represent a bygone era, with language that hinders the enjoyment of reading; of being written by and representing the views of white middle and upper class males isolated from reality. It is largely for these reasons that many people in the modern era have a seeming aversion to these great works. However, it is my belief that these books have a lot to offer to the modern reader.

Many modern works of literature are based upon the stories of older works, for example Noughts and Crosses, which follows a similar plot to that of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, which in turn ultimately branched from Ovid's Pyramus and Thisbe, the difference between oldest and youngest being nearly two millennia. This shows how the stories told in older literature are as good as, if not better than, the plots and stories of modern literature. The stories themselves are timeless classics.

I would love to be able to say that older literature is as easy to read as more modern literature; however this, unfortunately, is not always the case. Older texts can be perceived to be denser and more challenging than modern works. Often, however, this is, I believe, due to their greater, more vivid description, perhaps at the sacrifice of succinctness. Exposure to this style of writing will certainly aid the eloquence and comprehension of a modern reader. In my experience, older texts soon become easy to read as one becomes used to the style of writing.

Classic literature is just as relevant today as it was when it was written. Classic literature can provide a fascinating insight into the way in which we live in the modern world just as much as a modern Carnegie medal winning book or similar. An example of this is the aforementioned Homer's Odyssey. Despite being over two and a half millennia old, The Odyssey presents vividly relatable characters and their struggles in a way that would rival the greatest modern works, and I think that this is a trait that can be seen across the spectrum of all great classic literature.

This serves to demonstrate how the constancy of humanity and its flaws allows for all great works of literature, no matter their age, to be fascinating, and to provide the reader with unique insight into the way in which we live.

Overall, it is obviously imperative that as wide a variety of literature as possible is read as to allow greater comprehension and understanding, however it is my view that old works can be the most fascinating for the reader and provide a greater insight and understanding of the modern world, despite their age.

Recommendations:

The Picture of Dorian Grey, Oscar Wilde
A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens
Persuasion, Jane Austen
Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë
Treasure Island, R.L. Stevenson
A Study in Scarlet/ the Sign of the Four, A.C. Doyle
The Odyssey, Homer



MR BROWN AND BOOKS

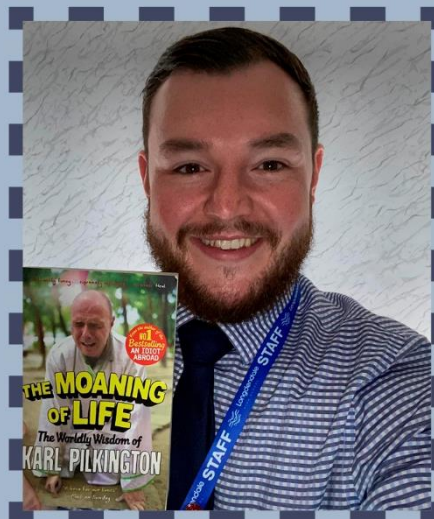
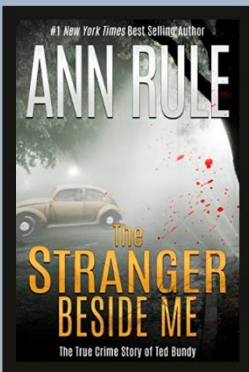
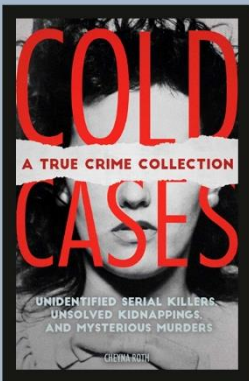
INTERVIEWED BY MAIR MAY GORT



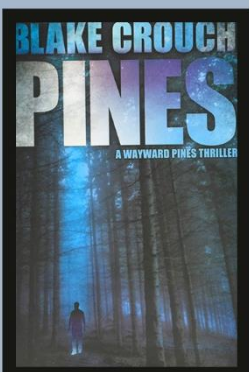
My favourite book when I was younger was James Corden's Autobiography 'May I Have Your Attention Please?'. The reason behind this is as I read his story, I found similarities in James's childhood to mine and realised we shared similar experiences and personality traits. This allowed me to really connect and empathise with his story and life and gave me inspiration to pursue drama just as he had done.

My favourite genre currently is anything related to True Crime. This is because I find myself 'hooked' on anything that is factual and allows me an insight into how criminals and police operate during high profile investigations.

I think reading is extremely important as it allows the readers imagination to paint the scenarios being described in the book. This opens the door for the reader to expand and utilise their imagination and allows them to forget all the real-world troubles and immerse themselves into something.

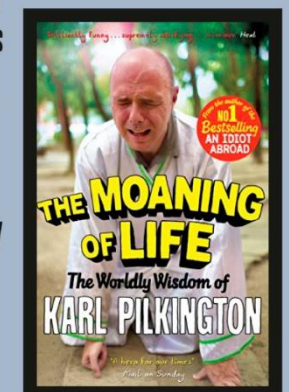


My favourite book currently is Pines by Blake Crouch. Although this book doesn't fit my preferred genre, I find the story extremely gripping as it has many twists and turns which are keeping me hooked.



My biggest literary inspiration must be William Shakespeare. As a drama student and teacher, I have studied his work for many years. The fact his work is still so relevant today shows how powerful and talented he was with his words. I also feel he has inspired many of the great stories we see today and I'm confident he will inspire many more in the future.

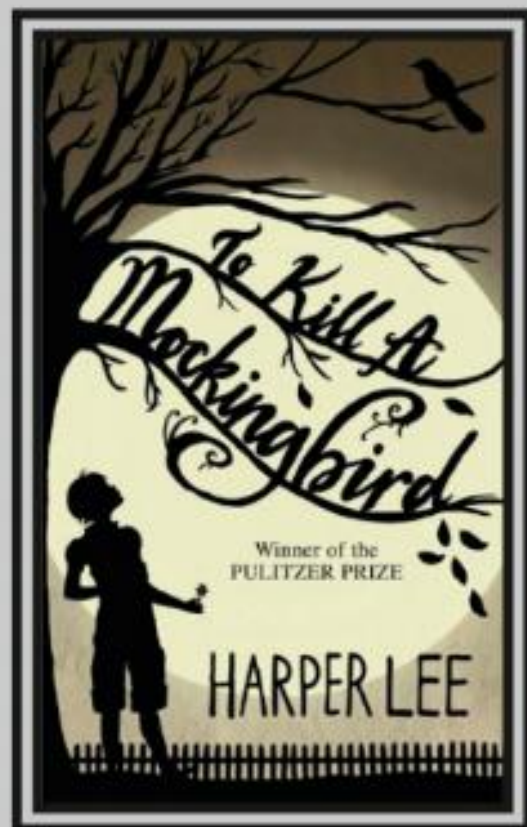
My favourite book quote is one from comedian Peter Kay's autobiography 'The Sound of Laughter'. The quote reads: "When I was a kid, I used to pray every night for a new bike. Then I realised that The Lord doesn't work that way, so I stole one and asked Him to forgive me". This quote stuck with me as it matches humour with the writer's real-life experiences in a fantastic way.





To Kill a Mockingbird

Review by
Miss Os



When I was in secondary school, one of the set texts we had to read was 'To Kill a Mockingbird'. From that day in my year 10 English class, it has become one of my favourite books and one I am always quick to recommend to others. What is so amazing about this book? Well, it is suitable for teens as well as adults. The message of the story is as important as the day it was published in 1960 and is still so relevant now! It teaches wonderful lessons about tolerance, justice, racism, prejudice, and courage, among others. It is essentially a story told through the eyes of Scout Finch who lives in a small town. Her father, Atticus Finch is defending an innocent black man accused of a crime. However, it goes much deeper than this. It explores important and sensitive issues and has themes of racism, justice, and prejudice.

It is set in the deep south of the USA which was divided for so many years along lines of colour and class. It is set in the fictional town of Maycomb which is not intended to be an exact

location but to represent the kind of small Southern towns that existed in the 1930s. Scout often describes the town as being 'tired' and 'suffocating'. This tells you the kind of attitudes that are present in the town.

Because the story is through Scout's eyes and as a child you learn and question about the world around her. You also have to remember because of the time period it was published, it contains words that we no longer use, and we now deem to be inappropriate. This word is used within the story to show the real attitudes, racism and prejudice which existed at the time.

Within the story I think that the author is doing this on purpose so that you question what is happening around you and understand that everything is not so easily divided. You, like Scout in the story have to question and learn how to break away from stereotypes and attitudes!

I will leave you with one of my favourite quotes from the book. *"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it."*

I found this review almost impossible to write. It is so hard to try and summarise this amazing book into a couple of lines. I don't want to list it for you rather I want you to dive straight in and discover it for yourself.

READING IN LOCKDOWN

SIÂN WALKER

During lockdown, managing emotions has been difficult for the majority of people. Although Coronavirus has been boring, depressing and extremely difficult, having books to read has been part of a cure to this crisis.

According to a recent article in The Guardian the people in the UK have spent more time reading books; in fact, it has almost doubled since the beginning of lockdown. The boredom that the virus has caused, has also influenced millions to pick up a book, simply due to all the spare time they have been given.

As well as physically, Coronavirus has been mentally draining for lots of people. Many have said: "reading in lockdown, has been a way to escape the events that have taken place." This statement proves just how effective reading can be. It can rid you of your depression, and transform you into someone else's shoes. People have described reading as "comforting." This means, they use reading to relax, to relieve the stress they may carry.

We have all been affected in many ways. Whether you have just been bored from being stuck in your house, or have been affected physically by the virus itself. Either way, reading has been extremely beneficial to ensure that we feel relaxed and comforted. A book can mean so much more than words to multiple people, a book can be a mental

cure, it can save someone's happiness, and it can take people away from their own life. Perhaps, a book will take you to another city, maybe it will take you to the past, sometimes it can even take you to a universe that could never exist, wherever the book takes you, it always takes you away from where you are emotionally. It gives you the power to dwell on something other than yourself.

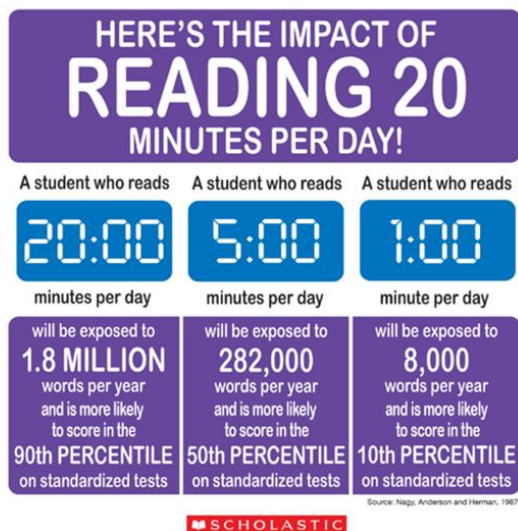
If you haven't yet recognized the joys of reading, there is no better time than now, to pick up a book, and become lost in another place. It doesn't matter if the book you enjoy is fiction or non-fiction, realistic or unrealistic, light or deep. Every book has its own story, and if you're lucky, you might find a story that you are drawn too forever.

During Coronavirus, a little touch of empathy can be extremely effective. If one of your friends has been affected by the virus, if you show understanding to them, without realising, that could dissolve their misery. Sometimes, just a few minutes of your time can relieve someone of their deep pain.

After reading this, I hope you understand just how many benefits reading a book has. Perhaps, you could pick up a book and experience something you never knew existed.



Sora- The Digital Library



Sora has been very popular over the lockdown period, with 596 books being checked out in March, and 189 in April.

If there is a book or series your child is enjoying reading that they would like adding to Sora please let us know. We are always looking to add to our collection.

Below is the data for Sora access in Spring 1.

March:

Books Accessed- 1100

Checkouts- 596

Average Minutes per day, per user: 38:02

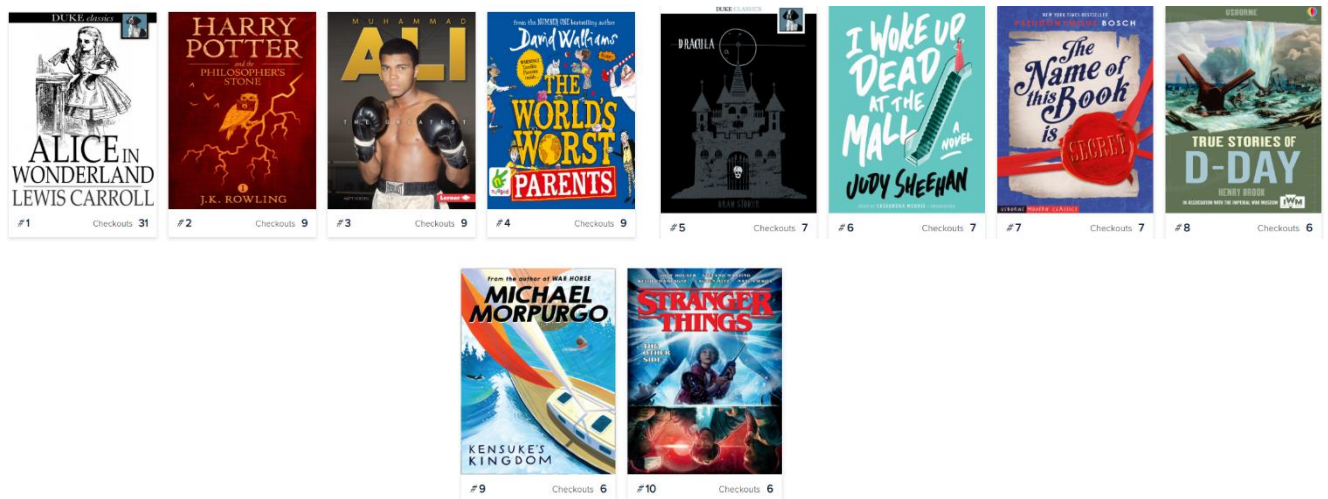
April:

Books Accessed: 447

Checkouts- 189

Average Minutes per day, per user: 31:27

Top 10 Most Popular Books on Sora- March-April



New Reading Rewards Policy

Below is a reminder of the new reading rewards policy, which details how the learners who prefer to read physical books can obtain their silver and gold awards.

Physical Books

Bronze-

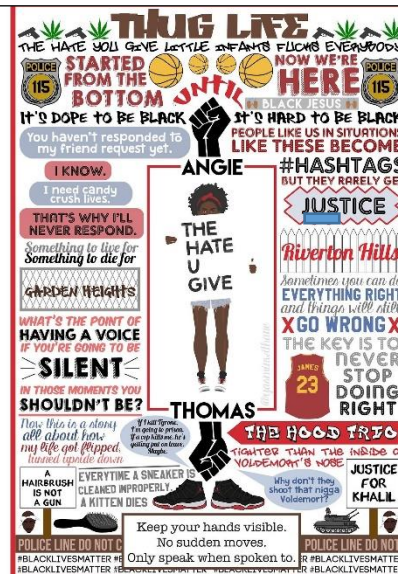
- Submit a 300 word book review to Mrs Emery
- Enter one of the World Book Day Competitions
- Read and review a Bronze challenge book recommended by the literacy leaders.

Silver-

- 5 detailed book reviews which are at least 500 words in length.
- Read and review a Silver challenge book recommended by the literacy leaders
- A collage which represents the books you have read (see images below)Or one book you loved. This could include images/quotes. This can be drawn/painted/designed on the computer. It should be neat and suitable for display

Gold-

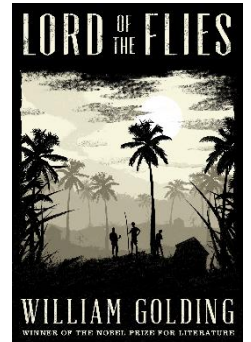
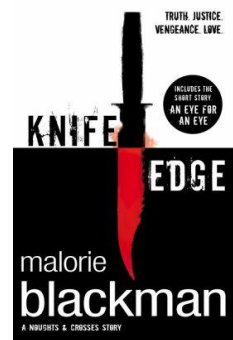
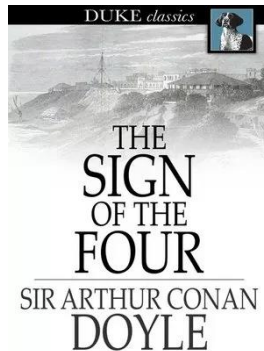
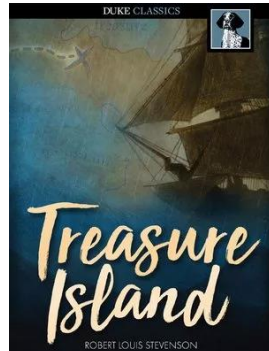
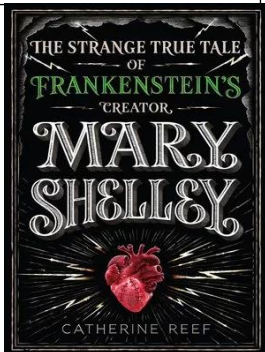
- 10 detailed book reviews which are at least 500 words in length
- Read and review a Gold challenge book recommended by the literacy leaders
- Produce and edit a vlog review of a book which has changed your life.
- Interview a staff member and produce a vlog/podcast about a book that changed their life.



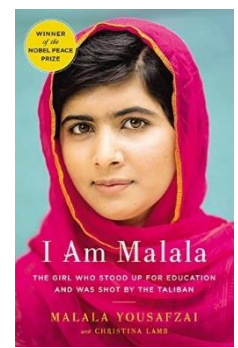
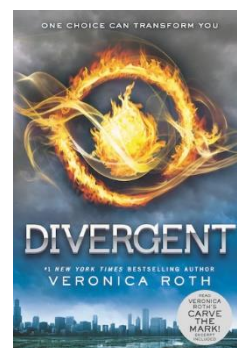
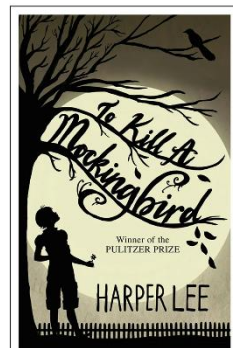
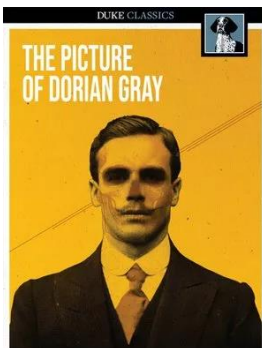
Literacy Leader Challenge Books

To achieve Bronze, Silver and Gold awards, choose one of the challenging books below to read, and write a 500 word review. Email these across to: d.emery@lhs.aspireplus.org.uk

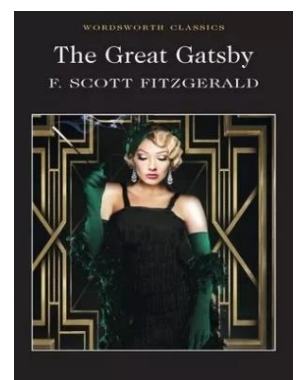
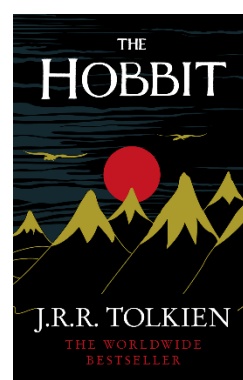
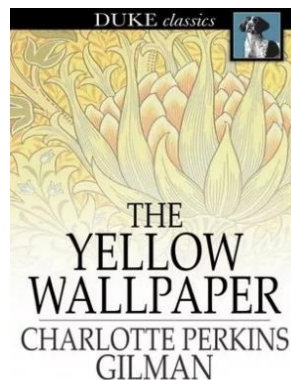
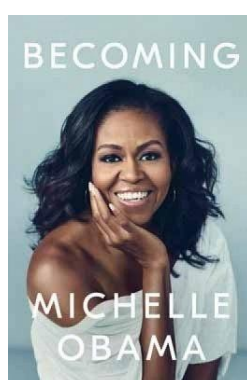
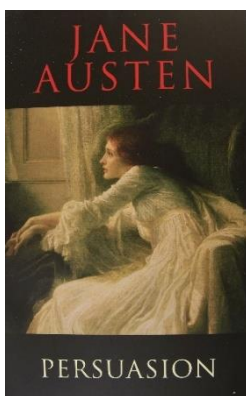
Bronze Award

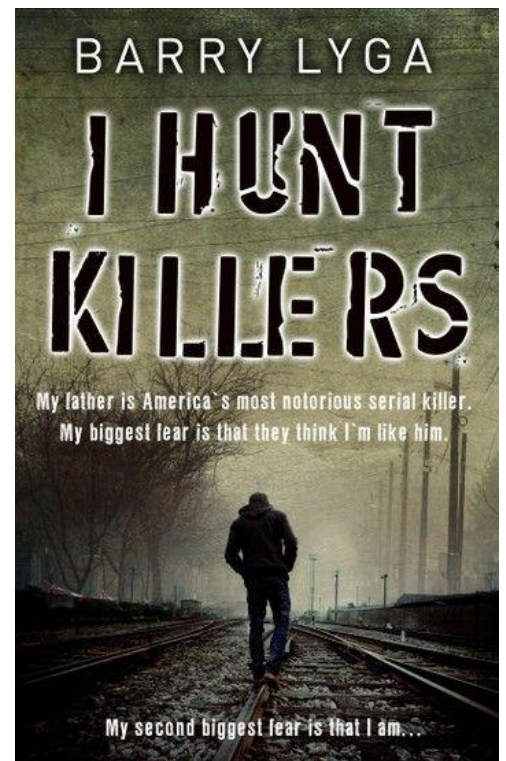


Silver Award



Gold Award





Books with a dystopian setting interest me very much and 'Divergent' is exactly that. After hearing about it and watching the films, I was immediately drawn to the book and wanted to find out about this world in more detail. It has a very intriguing plot and the deeper you dive into the book the more you feel like you are actually there; feeling the same emotions as the characters, whose lives lie between the pages. Beatrice and Four's slow-burn connection is a lot stronger than your typical relationship. With the weight of hardship, loss of the loved ones and the inability to thrive in a world that is safe and at peace, they stick by each other's side all the way through. Their personalities are very different yet they both share something in common that the Dauntless aren't supposed to have. Weakness. They support each other through the tough times they face with their trust and respect for each other developing through the twists and turbulent times they encounter. Like the films, I would recommend this book and the rest of the trilogy to people aged 12+ due to the advanced vocabulary, plot and the frequent inappropriate/distressing content.





Longdendale

HIGH SCHOOL



Learner Book Recommendations

**We have
10 copies
of this book
to give
away to
learners in
Years 9-11!**

If you like the sound of this book and would like a copy, email Mrs Emery.

**These will be
given on a
first come
first served
basis.**

**Reviewed
by**

Katie L

Year 10

Starr Carter is a black teenager, who narrates the story. She lives in the mostly poor black neighbourhood of Garden Heights, where gang membership, drug dealing, and shootings are rife but her and her brothers attend an affluent, predominantly white private school 45 minutes away. This makes her lead a double lifestyle as she tries to modify her behaviour to try and fit in. Her wealthy friends don't come to her house in 'the ghetto' for sleepovers and she speaks differently at school although she can recite the Black Panthers' Ten-Point Programme off by heart she doesn't want to be seen as the "angry black girl".

The story starts with Starr attending a spring party in Garden Heights with her friend Kenya. Starr feels isolated at the party and ends up reconnecting with her childhood best friend Khalil. Then, when a gang dispute breaks out at the party, Khalil and Starr flee the scene. Whilst driving, their car is pulled over by a white police officer. Khalil questions the motivation for stopping the car, so the officer then orders Khalil out of the car to search him. The officer commands Khalil not to move and returns to his car. Khalil opens the door to check on Starr. The officer then fires three shots at Khalil. Starr watches him die, unable to do anything. The book then follows the growth of Starr as she becomes less afraid to speak out against racism and to stand up for what's right.

I like how *The Hate U Give* not only focuses on discrimination based on the colour of skin but also "casual racism", such as how words that meant no harm or weren't said in a negative way can have a negative impact, for example through her friend Hailey. I also like how honest and emotional the book was, and how it allowed you to see racism in another person's shoes. I liked that the characters in this book felt real and involved rather than made up, however I didn't like the stereotypes some of the characters held. i.e. black characters shown to be into rap music, Jordan's, and doing drugs. However, this book does send out an important message and is definitely worth the read. Due to its mature language, I would recommend this book for teens - i.e. 13 and up.



The Hate U Give
Author: Angie Thomas

Although I felt the plot was slightly slow, I do think this is a good book, with eloquent language that makes you think about gender roles and how loyalty is expected.

the perks of being a wallflower

'The Perks of Being a Wallflower' is a book written by Stephen Chbosky, about a fifteen year old boy entering his freshman year of high school. Charlie is seen to be the "wallflower" - paying close attention to everything going on around him, mostly just from the sidelines as he is quiet and withdrawn but very thoughtful. Charlie starts writing letters to a stranger, who is apparently nice but he has never met, to lessen the anxiety of starting high school alone and coping with his friend Michael's suicide. In this new environment, Charlie starts to open up and experience new things. His English teacher becomes a mentor to him and from this, Charlie finds the confidence to talk to his classmate, Patrick, who becomes Charlie's best friend, along with his step sister, Sam.

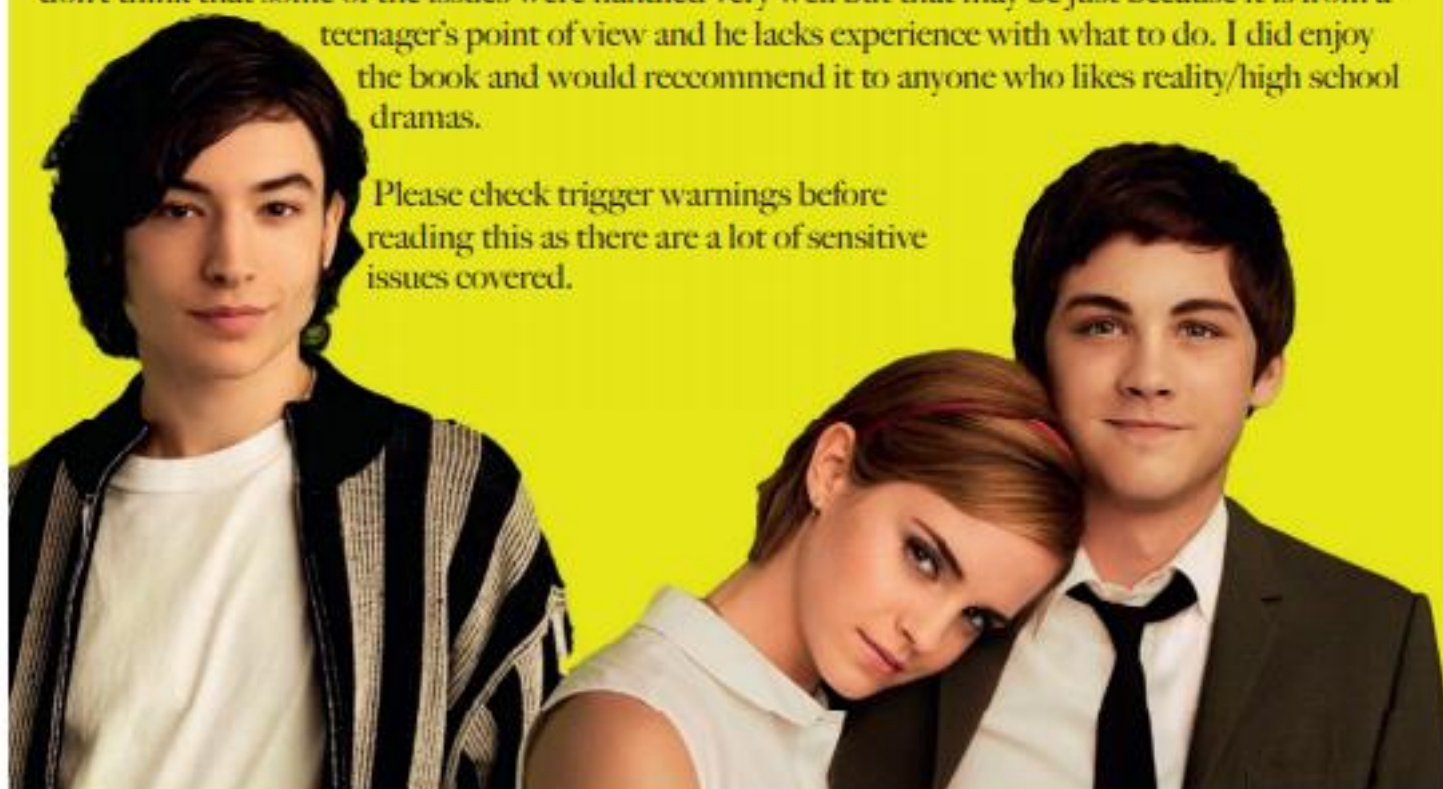
Because of the way this book is written, we experience the truth of everything with Charlie as he experiments with drugs and drinking, has his first date, deals with bullies, makes friends, loses friends, reads lots of classic books and gets involved with the Rocky Horror Picture Show production.

Although, as things take a turn, Charlie realises a family secret he has blocked out of his memory and ends up in hospital after a mental breakdown.

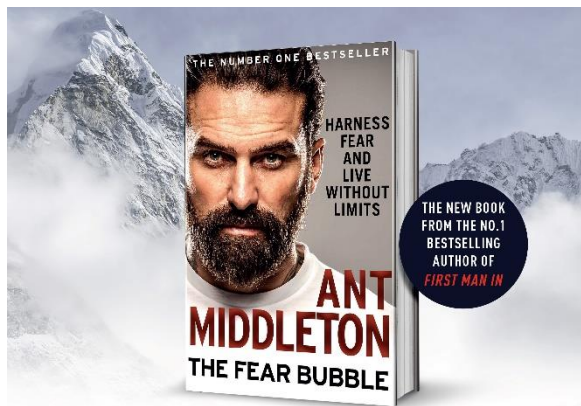
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In my opinion, this book was an easy read because of the simplistic language used. Overall, I don't think that some of the issues were handled very well but that may be just because it is from a teenager's point of view and he lacks experience with what to do. I did enjoy the book and would recommend it to anyone who likes reality/high school dramas.

Please check trigger warnings before reading this as there are a lot of sensitive issues covered.



Staff Book Recommendations



Reviewed by Mrs Emery

This book is available as an e-book on Sora.

I listened 'The Fear Bubble' over half term as an audiobook on Audible. I usually prefer to read a book, but have recently enjoyed listening to audiobooks when in the car, or when pottering around in the kitchen!

I have read Middleton's first autobiography, and found his motivational advice on mindset interesting and useful. Ant Middleton has had a fascinating life, and has overcome many challenges to become really successful.

This second book focuses on his expedition up Mount Everest. He uses this event to talk through how to overcome your fears, and push through to become the person you are meant to be. There are some powerful anecdotes in there where he talks about speaking with people who are really struggling, including a teen who has lost his best friend, and is struggling to even get out of bed in the morning. He uses basic tips and advice, to help the reader understand how to completely change their mindset by making small adjustments and steps to 'harness the fear' they feel, and work with it, rather than allowing it to control and define you.

This book is more suitable for older readers, as in typical 'Middleton' style he uses strong language on occasions.

You may like this book if you enjoy any of his shows, are an adrenaline junkie, or if you want advice on how to have a more positive mindset.

Does your child have a book recommendation that they would love to share with our learners? Next term we are looking to feature reviews from some of our learners from across school. These can be submitted to their English teacher, or emailed across to Mrs Emery on

d.emery@lhs.aspireplus.org.uk

Staff Book Recommendations



I ORIGINALLY READ THIS BOOK WHEN I WAS IN YEAR 5 AT THE AGE OF 10! IT WAS MY READING BOOK FROM HOME AND I'M NOT SURE IF MY TEACHER WAS IMPRESSED, OR CONCERNED! HAHA!

IT IS AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF FRANK'S LIFE GROWING UP IN A POVERTY STRICKEN IRISH FAMILY. HIS STORY BEGINS IN NEW YORK CITY, WHERE FRANK LIVES WITH HIS MOTHER AND FATHER, YOUNG BROTHERS AND ONE NEWBORN SISTER. THEY LIVE IN A SMALL APARTMENT AND HAVE LITTLE MONEY FOR FOOD. SADLY, FRANK'S SISTER DIES A COUPLE OF WEEKS AFTER SHE IS BORN, THIS CAUSES HIS FATHER TO DISAPPEAR AND HIS MOTHER GOES INTO A GREAT STATE OF DEPRESSION.

POOR FRANK IS LEFT TO CARE FOR HIS YOUNGER BROTHERS, MALACHY AND TWINS, OLIVER AND EUGENE. THIS SPURS A CHAIN OF EVENTS, AS FRANK AND HIS FAMILY SAIL BACK TO IRELAND, THE IRISH FAMILY SAYING GOODBYE TO THE STATUE OF LIBERTY, INSTEAD OF HELLO. HIS STORY CONTINUES IN IRELAND AS YOU FOLLOW HIM GROWING UP, YOU GET TO MEET FRANK'S MOTHER'S FAMILY, WHO DON'T THINK MUCH OF FRANK'S NORTHERN IRISH FATHER.

IT IS A SAD, BUT UPLIFTING STORY, AS WITH LIFE YOU TAKE THE GOOD WITH THE BAD, AND FRANK SHOWS THIS REALLY WELL WITH HIS STORY.

WARNING! THERE ARE EXAMPLES OF SOME CHOICE LANGUAGE, SENSITIVE ISSUES AND THIS IS ALSO WRITTEN PHONETICALLY IN AN IRISH ACCENT.

ANGELA'S ASHES REVIEW - MISS ASHWORTH

Reluctant Reader- KS4

Is your child a reluctant reader, but loves binge watching shows on Netflix? Below is a compilation of suggested reads for KS4 learners, based upon some popular Netflix shows. Sometimes it's just about finding the right book to hook your child into reading, and these recommendations (from TES) may help!

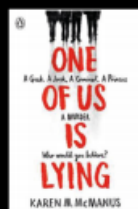
BOOKFLIX

TOP BOY



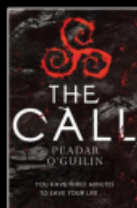
This gritty urban drama explores male friendship in a fragmented, impoverished society. When money and power are everything, can our hero avoid a life of crime or will he be drawn into the dark underworld of delinquency?

RIVERDALE



Wish you lived in the atmospheric town of **Riverdale**? Indulge your obsession with *One of Us is Lying* as it transports you to a town filled with mystery and intrigue, rumours and relationships, and one awfully chilling murder. Full of plot twists at a breathless pacing, this whodunnit will keep **Riverdale** fans rapt for days. Just keep in mind, everyone's a suspect.

STRANGER THINGS



Every teenager in Ireland is randomly called to a menacing, alternate world for three minutes. All they have to do is survive. Easier said than done when this sinister world is a worthy rival to the Upside Down. Dark wit, a ruthless enemy and terrifying world building – what more could a **Stranger Things** fan ask for?

PEAKY BLINDERS



Political and dramatic, filled with gang warfare and corruption, New Reynes is a city of wickedness evocative of the **Peaky Blinders'** Birmingham. Described as 'a seedy mix of titillation and sin', if immoral, scheming gangsters are your thing then you need look no further.

DYNASTY



A feel good, over-the-top glamorous read with a whip-smart, sassy female lead. Dysfunctional family? Check. Secret Romances? Check. Love triangles, exquisite fashion and intoxicating drama? Check, check, and definitely CHECK.

BLACK SAILS



This epic tale of pirates fully immerses you into the cold-blooded world of merciless villains and bandit brutality. Marianne, the super fierce female lead, can be likened to the infamous Anne Bonny with her deadly prowess and cunning. Read this for the badass buccaneers, a deadly quest for revenge and the smashing of a toxic patriarchy.

ALIAS GRACE



Captivating and disturbing, *Allegedly* is the ideal choice for anyone who enjoys the hypnotic yet disconcerting charm of **Alias Grace**. A finely crafted novel examining themes of guilt and innocence. Murderer or victim, what will you decide?

CHILLING ADVENTURES OF SABRINA



A deliciously dark tale that perfectly captures the spirit of **Chilling Adventures of Sabrina** with witchcraft at its heart. This story of a cursed family is set on an eerie island, featuring plenty of vengeance and spellbinding fun. *The Price Guide to the Occult* is a macabre story to die for.

MAKING OF A MURDERER



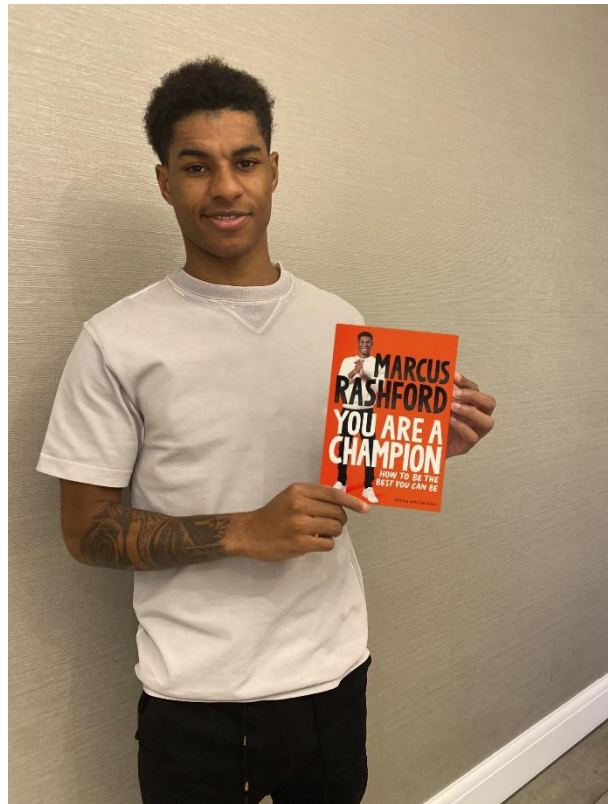
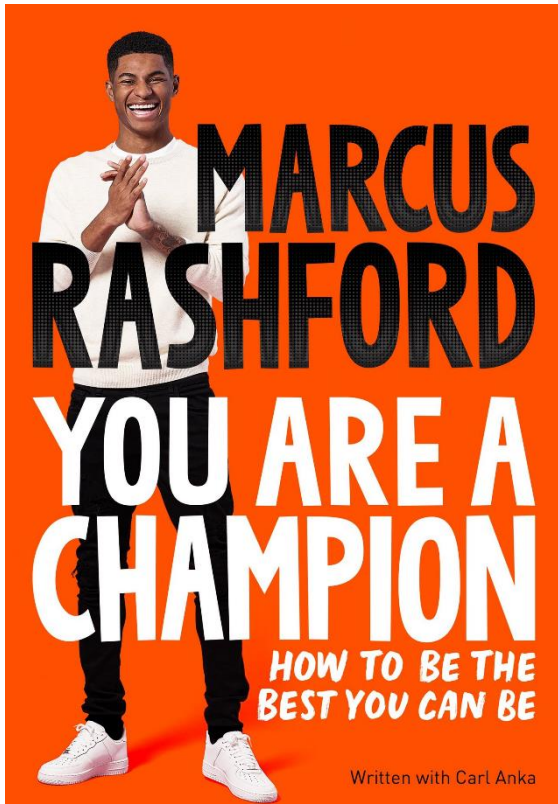
If true crime is your thing, then this novel will be right up your street as it examines an enraging miscarriage of justice. Written by the investigative journalist who solved the case, this tale is an exemplar of the importance of uncovering the *real* truth, no matter the consequences.

YOU



Equally fascinating as disturbing, *Bad Girls with Perfect Faces* is a tale of dark obsession with similar thrilling tension and narrative twists that can be found in **You**. This enthralling novel will appeal to anyone who enjoys protagonists like Joe Goldberg — multi-layered, complex and of course, with a well-hidden, delicious dark side.

Marcus Rashford- You Are A Champion

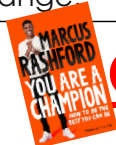


Marcus Rashford's new book aimed at young people is due to be released in May this year. Rashford, Manchester United footballer and anti-poverty campaigner, has signed a publishing deal with Macmillan books, in order to break the cycle of literacy poverty, in children from all backgrounds. He says: "There were times where the escapism of reading could have really helped me. I want this escapism for all children. Not just those that can afford it."

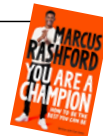
His publishing deal begins initially with the release of his own motivational book, entitled 'You Are A Champion,' which he describes as 'A guide that I hope will inspire ALL children to dream big and help those who need it most.'

Written in collaboration with the journalist Carl Anka and the performance psychologist Katie Warriner, the book draws on stories from Rashford's own life to show readers that "success is all about the mindset" and promises to reveal "how positive thinking can change your life, build mental resilience, learn how to navigate adversity and discover the unstoppable power of your own voice".

Rashford recently tweeted 'Approx 390,000 children in the UK have never owned a book. Time for that to change.'



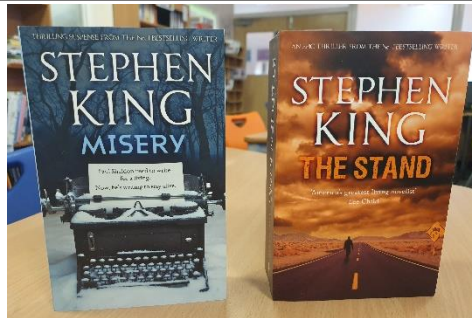
Competition Time!



Would you like the chance to win a copy of Rashford's new book? **Just email a short motivational message** to people your age, which aims to promote a positive mindset, achievement and success for all. It could be about remaining positive through change; it could be advice on how you remain focused in difficult circumstances, or how to be successful in sport. This should be no longer than 200 words. You may wish to include an image with your entry. **Email your entries to Mrs Emery by Friday 14th May.** Winners will be

New Books in the Library!

As the library is now reopen to all learners, we've invested in lots of new titles you might want to have a look at. Below are some images of what to expect. Ask Miss Payton if you can't find what you're looking for.

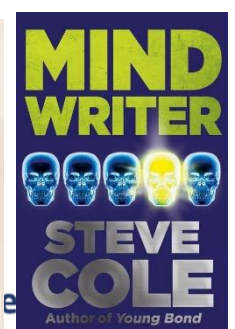
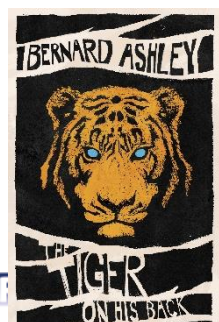
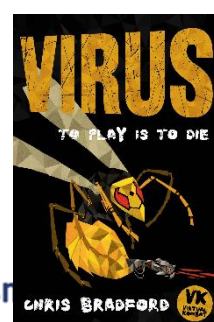
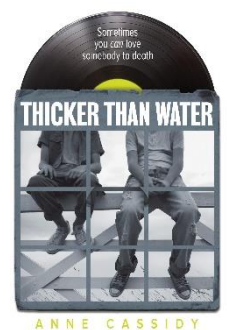
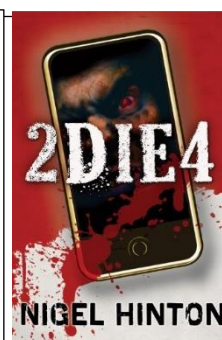


Barrington Stoke Collection

Does your child find reading more of a challenge due to dyslexia or visual impairments? Do they want to read teen fiction, but find these books difficult to access? Would you child prefer a shorter book, which is engaging, but they can read more quickly?

Barrington Stoke are a publisher who work with some of the best teen and young adult fiction authors, to produce books which are age appropriate, but accessible for all. At Longdendale we have just purchased an additional 50 Barrington Stoke books, in order to add more variety for all learners.

Across is an example of some of the books that are available. These can be found on the bookshelf as you enter the library, near the tutor pigeon-holes, along with our other new books.



Learner Short Story

This short story was written by one of our learners. It focuses upon mental health. We would love to hear what you think of it.

THE NEGATIVE ROOM

I bend my knees up to my chest and wrap my arms around them, trying to keep myself warm for, despite the burning fire next to me, I'm freezing. The fire is blue and lonely, it is cold but would burn any soul that would have the idiocy to try and touch it. The fire mirrors the room of my head I am in I presume. Everyone has this room, it is their negative room, everyone's negative room is different. A negative room is a room in your mind where all your negative emotions lie. We come here when we need to release our anger, or our sadness or our loneliness. It is a room where many are lost in at the moment.

My negative room is small in width but has very tall walls. It may not be scary for anyone else, but once it was scary. It isn't scary anymore. It isn't scary anymore because I have learnt that here is a safe space for me to look at all my negative emotions and learn how to handle them, not how to ignore them or bury them so deep down that I cannot feel them. Learn how to let them come and go naturally like cars on a motorway, but not let them cause a car crash and take over my life. In this room I can let them come and go, but not get in the way of anything else. The only problem is, it is hard to find the exit.

A lot of people struggle to find the exit of their negative room, that is why we all avoid it so much, but once you have stepped in it and found your way out- you should always remember that you can do it again. It may have changed since the last time you were in it, especially since last time you may have been in it, you may have been more prepared and set it up real nice for your visit. But the secret is to know that if you got into the room, you can get out. It does not matter if that means you must create a ladder to climb up, that just means it may take a little longer, and may be a little harder. But you can always find a way out.

So, whenever you find yourself stuck in your negative room, whether it is because of another lockdown or a loss of a family member or you are suffering with terrible anxiety, just remember- everyone else has a room like that too (though they may not have discovered it) and there is always an exit. You may feel like you must find it on your own, but you do not. A lot of people can empathise with you and can help you. If they cannot, it is because they haven't found their negative room yet- but when they do, they will need your help.

