

## **GCSE English at Mayfield- Recommended Reading**

At Mayfield, we study the AQA English Language and Literature curriculum. The core texts which we study are as follows:

### **GCSE Core texts**

**Macbeth**, William Shakespeare

**The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde**, Robert Louis Stevenson

**An Inspector Calls**, J.B. Priestley

**Power and Conflict** poetry, AQA GCSE anthology

It is essential that you continue reading throughout year 10 and 11, to maintain and develop this fundamental skill which underpins all your academic progress. A recent PISA report found that three-quarters of adults with the lowest level of reading literacy were either in relatively low-paying jobs (in the bottom 40% of earners) or not working, so your reading skills may even have an impact on your employability in the future. To help you remain consistent, we have created a list of recommended reading which compliments your GCSE course; you should find this to be sometimes challenging, but always enjoyable to indulge in.

### **Useful websites:**

<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks4-school-pupils/suggested-reading-list-year-11-pupils-ks4-age-15-16/>

<https://www.rsc.org.uk>

<http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk>

<https://www.cliffsnotes.com>

<https://www.goodreads.com>

<https://www.poetryarchive.org/collection/aqa-prescribed-poets-unseen-poetry>

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/poetry>

<https://poetrysociety.org.uk/>



Mayfield School  
being the best that we can be

<https://www.readbrightly.com/nonfiction-books-for-teens/>

<https://rivetedlit.com/2018/03/16/noteworthy-nonfiction-books/>

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/nonfiction-teen-young-adult>

### **Shakespeare:**

**Hamlet**, Shakespeare, a tragedy, set in Denmark, depicting Prince Hamlet and his revenge against his uncle Claudius who has murdered his father, in order to seize the throne and marry Hamlet's mother.

**Romeo and Juliet**, Shakespeare, a tragedy, about two young star-crossed lovers whose deaths bring their feuding families together.

**Julius Caesar**, Shakespeare, based on true events from [Roman history](#), the play depicts the moral dilemma of [Brutus](#) as he joins a conspiracy led by [Cassius](#) to murder [Julius Caesar](#) to prevent him from becoming dictator of Rome.

**The Merchant of Venice**, Shakespeare, Antonio, an anti-semitic merchant, takes a loan from the Jew Shylock to help his friend to court Portia. Antonio can't repay the loan, and without mercy, Shylock demands a pound of his flesh.

**Measure for Measure**, Shakespeare, Vienna is teeming with brothels and loose morality, but the Duke doesn't want to use his authority to clean up the city. He departs, dressed as a friar, leaving his deputy, Angelo, in charge. Angelo is at first reluctant, but he soon starts to make changes.

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**, Shakespeare, a feuding fairy King and Queen of the forest cross paths with four runaway lovers and a troupe of actors trying to rehearse a play. As their dispute grows, the magical royal couple meddle with mortal lives leading to love triangles, mistaken identities and transformations... with hilarious, but dark consequences.

**As You Like It**, Shakespeare, follows its heroine [Rosalind](#) as she flees persecution in her uncle's court, accompanied by her cousin [Celia](#) to find safety and, eventually, love, in the Forest of Arden.

### **19<sup>th</sup> Century Novels:**

**A Christmas Carol**, Charles Dickens, recounts the story of [Ebenezer Scrooge](#), an elderly [miser](#) who is visited by the ghost of his former business partner [Jacob Marley](#) and the spirits of [Christmas Past](#), [Present](#) and [Yet to Come](#).



**Mayfield School**  
being the best that we can be

**Great Expectations**, Charles Dickens, Pip, a young orphan living with his sister and her husband in the marshes of Kent, sits in a cemetery one evening looking at his parents' tombstones. Suddenly, an escaped convict springs up from behind a tombstone, grabs Pip, and orders him to bring him food and a file for his leg irons.

**Jane Eyre**, Charlotte Bronte, the novel describes the passionate love between the courageous orphan Jane Eyre and the brilliant, brooding, and domineering Rochester. The loneliness and cruelty of Jane's childhood strengthens her natural independence and spirit, which prove invaluable when she takes a position as a governess at Thornfield Hall.

**Frankenstein**, Mary Shelley, tells the story of Victor **Frankenstein**, a young scientist who creates a hideous sapient creature in an unorthodox scientific experiment.

**Pride and Prejudice**, Jane Austen, The novel follows the character development of [Elizabeth Bennet](#), the dynamic protagonist of the book, who learns about the repercussions of hasty judgments and eventually comes to appreciate the difference between superficial goodness and actual goodness.

**Silas Marner**, George Eliot, a tale of a solitary miser gradually redeemed by the joy of fatherhood

**Robinson Crusoe**, Daniel Defoe, first published in London in 1719. Defoe's first long work of fiction, it introduced two of the most-enduring characters in [English literature](#): [Robinson Crusoe](#) and Friday.

**War of the Worlds**, H.G. Wells, one of the earliest stories to detail a conflict between mankind and an [extraterrestrial](#) race.

**Oliver Twist**, Charles Dickens, Oliver, an orphan since birth, spends much of his childhood at a "child farm" (orphanage) with too many children and too little food.

**Wuthering Heights**, Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights* opens with Lockwood, a tenant of Heathcliff's, visiting the home of his landlord. A subsequent visit to Wuthering Heights yields an accident and a curious supernatural encounter, which pique Lockwood's curiosity.

**Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**, Mark Twain, Finding civilized life confining, Huck Finn's spirits are raised somewhat when Tom Sawyer helps him to escape one night past Miss Watson's slave [Jim](#), to meet up with Tom's gang of self-proclaimed "robbers".

**The Moonstone**, Wilkie Collins, generally considered to be the first [detective novel](#), and it established many of the ground rules of the modern detective novel. a young English woman, inherits a large Indian diamond on her eighteenth birthday. It is a legacy from her uncle, a corrupt British army officer who [served in India](#).



**Wives and Daughters**, Elizabeth Gaskell, the novel opens with young Molly Gibson, who has been raised by her widowed father, Dr. Gibson. During a visit to the local aristocratic 'great house' of Lord and Lady Cumnor, Molly loses her way in the estate and falls asleep under a tree.

**Far From the Madding Crowd**, Thomas Hardy, Gabriel Oak is a young [shepherd](#). With the savings of a frugal life, and a loan, he has leased and stocked a farm. He falls in love with a newcomer eight years his junior, Bathsheba Everdene, a proud beauty who arrives to live with her aunt.

**Around the World in 80 Days**, Jules Verne, [Phileas Fogg](#) of London and his newly employed [French valet Passepartout](#) attempt to [circumnavigate](#) the world in 80 days on a £20,000 [wager](#) (£2,242,900 in 2019)<sup>[3][4]</sup> set by his friends at the [Reform Club](#).

### **Modern Texts:**

**Maus**, Art Spiegelman, a graphic novel depicting the Holocaust in a deeply moving and personal way

**Looking for Alaska**, John Green, Miles' life is turned upside down when he comes across Alaska and her world of risk

**East of Eden**, John Steinbeck, the descendants of Adam and Eve are recast as the warring Trask and Hamilton families in this tale of rivalry

**The Crucible**, Arthur Miller, a play about the witch-hunts and trials in seventeenth-century Salem, Massachusetts. Based on historical people and real events,

**A View from the Bridge**, Arthur Miller, a two-act play set by the docks of Red Hook, a working-class part of Brooklyn, New York.

**One Hundred Years of Solitude**, Gabriela Garcia Marquez, tells the story of the Buendia family, and chronicles the irreconcilable conflict between the desire for solitude and the need for love

**A Taste of Honey**, Shelagh Delaney, *A Taste of Honey* is set in [Salford](#) in North West England in the 1950s. It tells the story of Jo, a seventeen-year-old working class girl, and her mother, Helen

**Blood Brothers**, Willy Russell, a contemporary [nature versus nurture](#) plot, revolving around [fraternal twins](#) Mickey and Eddie, who were separated at birth, one subsequently being raised in a wealthy family, the other in a poor family.



**The History Boys**, Alan Bennett, the play follows a group of history pupils preparing for the [Oxford](#) and [Cambridge](#) entrance examinations under the guidance of three teachers (Hector, Irwin, and Lintott) with contrasting styles

**DNA**, Dennis Kelly, a group of teenagers do something really bad, then panic and cover the whole thing up.

**Anita and Me**, Meera Syal, revolves around Meena, a British [Punjabi](#) girl (the "me" of the title), and her relationship with her best friend, English neighbour Anita, as they grow up in the fictional [Midlands](#) village of Tollington in the late 1960s

**Pigeon English**, Stephen Kelman, told from the point of view of Harrison Opoku, an eleven-year-old Ghanaian immigrant living on a tough London estate

**To Kill a Mockingbird**, Harper Lee, loosely based on Lee's observations of her family, her neighbors and an event that occurred near her hometown of [Monroeville, Alabama](#), in 1936, when she was 10 years old.

**The Kite Runner**, Khaled Hosseini, set in Afghanistan in 1975, the novel hinges on one event which will change Hassan's life forever, and one which years later he seeks to put right.

**Fahrenheit 451**, Ray Bradbury, a fantasy dystopia where books are forbidden and subject to enforced bureaucratic burning, a small group try to keep knowledge, reading and freedom alive.

**Out of Shadows**, Jason Wallace, set in 1980s Zimbabwe during the rise of Robert Mugabe, times are changing fast in Robert's new boarding school.

## Poets/Poetry

**Brian Patten**, an English poet and author. He came to prominence in the 1960s as one of the Liverpool poets, and writes primarily lyrical poetry about human relationships.

**Owen Sheers**, Welsh poet, author, playwright and TV presenter. He was the first writer in residence to be appointed by any national rugby union team

**Jo Shapcott**, born in London, her most recent collection, *Of Mutability*, was published in 2010 and won the Costa Book Award. In 2011 Jo Shapcott was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry.

**Tony Harrison**, noted especially for his out-spoken politics, Harrison's poetry treats issues of class, race and power with extraordinary formal brilliance and technique.

**Sophie Hannah**, poet and novelist, her style is often compared to the [light verse](#) of [Wendy Cope](#) and the [surrealism](#) of [Lewis Carroll](#)



**Mayfield School**  
being the best that we can be

**Maya Angelou**, American poet, singer, memoirist, and civil rights activist. As a civil rights activist, Angelou worked for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

**Wilfred Owen**, was an English poet and soldier. He was one of the leading poets of the First World War.

**Wendy Cope**, taught in primary schools for many years before publishing her first book of poetry, *Making Cocoa for Kingsley Amis* (1986).

**W.H.Auden**, an English-American poet. Auden's poetry was noted for its stylistic and technical achievement, its engagement with politics, morals, love, and religion, and its variety in tone, form and content

**Christina Rossetti**, an English poet who wrote a variety of romantic, devotional, and children's poems. She is famous for "Goblin Market" and "Remember".

**Thomas Hardy**, an English novelist and poet. A Victorian realist in the tradition of George Eliot, he was influenced both in his novels and in his poetry by Romanticism, especially William Wordsworth.

**John Keats**, one of the main figures of the second generation of Romantic poets, along with [Lord Byron](#) and [Percy Bysshe Shelley](#)

**William Blake**, an English poet, painter, and printmaker. Largely unrecognised during his lifetime, Blake is now considered a seminal figure in the history of the [poetry](#) and visual arts of the [Romantic Age](#)

**Carol Ann Duffy**, a British poet and playwright. She is a professor of contemporary poetry at Manchester Metropolitan University, and was appointed Britain's Poet Laureate in May 2009, resigning in 2019.

**Gillian Clarke**, born in Cardiff and lives in Ceredigion. Her work has been on the GCSE and A Level exam syllabus for over thirty years

**John Agard**, an [Afro-Guyanese playwright](#), [poet](#) and children's writer, now living in [Britain](#). In 2012, he was selected for the [Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry](#)

**Imtiaz Dharker**, a poet, artist and documentary film-maker. Awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 2014, recipient of the Cholmondley Award and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, her collections include *Purdah* (Oxford University Press)

## Non- Fiction

**A Short History of Nearly Everything**, Bill Bryson, a quest to understand everything that has happened from the Big Bang to the rise of civilization - how we got from there, being nothing at all, to here, being us.

**The Last Lecture**, Jeffrey Zaslow, Randy Pausch, fleshes out Pausch's lecture and discusses everything he wanted his children to know after his [pancreatic cancer](#) had taken his life. It includes



Mayfield School  
being the best that we can be

stories of his childhood, lessons he wants his children to learn, and things he wants his children to know about him.

**Cosmos**, Carl Sagan, 13 heavily illustrated chapters, corresponding to the 13 episodes of the Cosmos television series. In the book, Sagan explores 15 billion years of cosmic evolution and the development of science and civilization.

**Do You Know Who You Are**, Megan Kaye, Learn about your skills, dreams, desires, and personality with "Do You Know Who You Are?" a guided journal for young adults who want to discover more about themselves.

**The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion and the Fall of Imperial Russia**, Candace Fleming, nonfiction book detailing the last generation of Romanovs to rule Russia from 1894 to 1917, and the fall of Russia's autocracy through the Russian Revolution.

**Limitless**, Leah Tinari, acclaimed artist Leah Tinari offers a spectacular collection of portraits, celebrating iconic, inspirational, and groundbreaking American women

**Life Inside My Mind**, Jessica Burkhart, Ellen Hopkins, Maureen Johnson, and more recount their own experiences with mental illness in this raw, real, and powerful collection of essays that explores everything from ADD to PTSD

**One Cut**, Eve Porinchak, tells the story of the events surrounding the death of Jimmy Faris, a young teen killed during a scuffle in 1995

**Tweak**, Nic Sheff, a raw and moving portrait of addiction follows author Nic Sheff, a man who dealt with addiction to a bevy of substances starting from childhood.

**Breakaway**, Alex Morgan, the face of the World Champion and Olympic Gold Medalist US Women's National Soccer Team, her story is a touching reminder of the power of sports and the potential of young women.

**Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend**, Karen Blumenthal, what was life really like for Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker in the early 1930s? How did two dirt-poor teens from west Texas morph from vicious outlaws to legendary couple? And why?

**Shout**, Laurie Halse Anderson, a poetic memoir and call to action from the award-winning author of *Speak*

**Accused!**, Larry Dane Brimner, this chilling and harrowing account tells the story of the Scottsboro Boys, nine African-American teenagers who, when riding the rails during the Great Depression, found their lives destroyed after two white women falsely accused them of rape

**Muhammad Ali: The King of the Ring**, Lewis Helfand, A three-time World Heavyweight Champion he is widely considered one of the greatest boxers of all time. But Ali's legacy reaches far beyond the world of sports.

**I am Malala**, Malala Yousafzai, autobiographical story of a girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban