



The Pangbourne Reading Canon

Welcome to the Pangbourne Canon, a specially curated selection of books for the whole Pangbourne community to enjoy.

It includes challenging and through-provoking fiction and non-fiction titles which we believe will stretch curious minds, broaden awareness of the world around us and foster a life-long love of reading.

The books have been chosen in collaboration with subject teachers to ensure they include a broad range of subjects, issues and interests. There are six recommended titles for each year group.

One tutor period a week is dedicated to shared reading and all of the books have been chosen from the Pangbourne Canon.

Copies of all of the books are available in the library with some also available as audio and/or ebooks from our digital library.

YEAR 7

Pangbourne Reading Canon



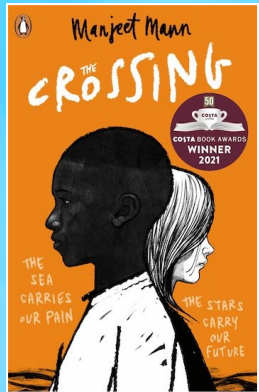
Wonder by R J Palacio

August Pullman was born with a facial difference that, up until now, has prevented him from going to a mainstream school. Starting 5th grade at Beecher Prep, he wants nothing more than to be treated as an ordinary kid—but his new classmates can't get past Auggie's extraordinary face. *Wonder*, begins from Auggie's point of view, but soon switches to include his classmates, his sister, her boyfriend, and others.



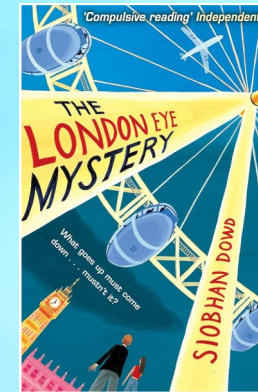
Friend or Foe by Michael Morpurgo

'There was nothing threatening or frightening about them, they were just two exhausted, pale-looking men with sad eyes and kind faces. These were the men who had bombed London and Plymouth and killed thousands. Yet one of them had saved his life.' It's the Second World War, and the Germans are bombing London. Now, because of the Blitz, David and Tucky have been evacuated to the county to live with strangers. Then one night they see a German plane crash on the moors. They feel they should hate the airmen inside, but can they just leave them to die?



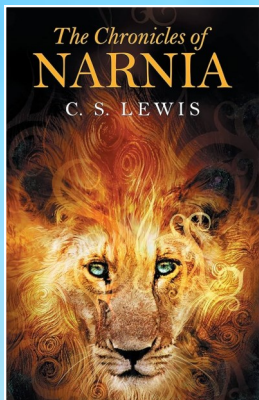
The Crossing by Manjeet Mann

A profound story of hope, grief, and the very real tragedies of the refugee crisis. Natalie's world is falling apart. She's just lost her mum and her brother marches the streets of Dover full of hate and anger. Swimming is her only refuge. Sammy has fled his home and family in Eritrea for the chance of a new life in Europe. Every step he takes on his journey is a step into an unknown and unwelcoming future. Fate brings them together and gives them both hope.



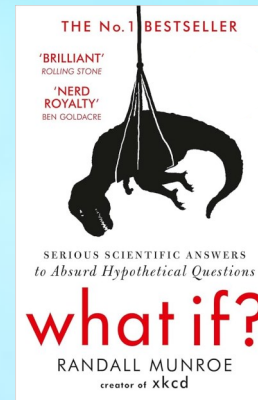
The London Eye Mystery by Siobhan Dowd

Ted and Kat watch their cousin Salim get on board the London Eye. When the pod lands and the doors open. People exit in all shapes and sizes – but where is Salim? Ted and his sister Kat become sleuthing partners since the police are having no luck. Despite their prickly relationship, they overcome their differences to follow a trail of clues across London desperate to find their cousin. And ultimately it comes down to Ted, whose brain runs on its own unique operating system, to solve the mystery.



The Chronicles of Narnia by C S Lewis

Journeys to the end of the world, fantastic creatures, and epic battles between good and evil. The Chronicles of Narnia is comprised of seven books, including *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. For the past fifty years, *The Chronicles of Narnia* have transcended the fantasy genre to become part of the canon of classic literature. Each of these books is a masterpiece, drawing the reader into a land where magic meets reality, and the result is a fictional world whose scope has fascinated generations.

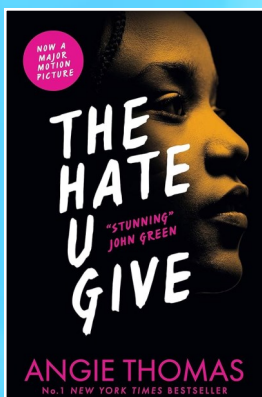


What If? Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions By Randall Munroe

How fast can you hit a speed bump, driving, and live? How many humans would a T Rex rampaging through New York need to eat a day? In pursuit of answers, Randall Munroe runs computer simulations, pores over stacks of declassified military research memos, solves differential equations and consults nuclear reactor operators. His responses are masterpieces of clarity and hilarity. They often predict the complete annihilation of humankind, or at least a really big explosion.

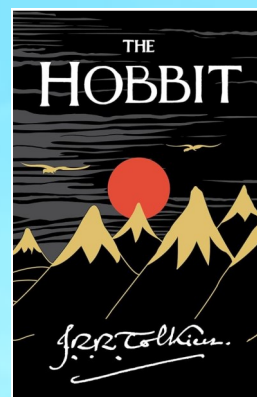
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Pangbourne Reading Canon



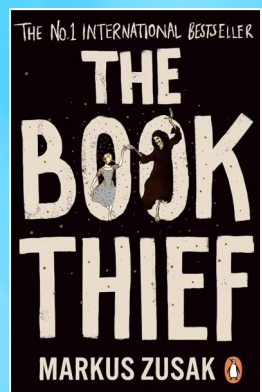
The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful novel about inequality, police violence, 21st century prejudice and one girl's struggle for justice. Sixteen-year-old Starr lives in two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she was raised and her posh high school in the suburbs. The uneasy balance is shattered when Starr is the only witness to the fatal shooting of her unarmed best friend, Khalil, by a police officer. Now what Starr says could destroy her.



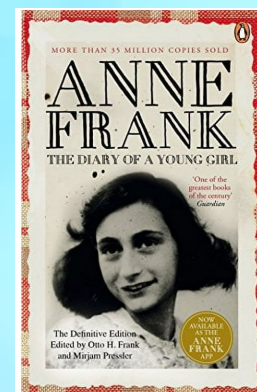
The Hobbit by J R R Tolkien

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort. Published in 1937, now a timeless classic, this introduction to the hobbit Bilbo Baggins, the wizard Gandalf, Gollum, and the spectacular world of Middle-earth recounts of the adventures of a reluctant hero, a powerful and dangerous ring, and the cruel dragon Smaug the Magnificent.



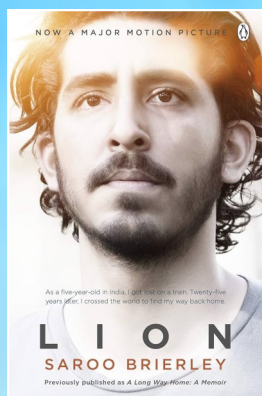
The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

In 1939, Nazi Germany the country is holding its breath. Liesel's life is changed when she picks up The Gravedigger's Handbook hidden in the snow, her first act of book thievery. Her love affair with books and words begins as, with the help of her accordion-playing foster father, learns to read. Soon she is stealing from Nazi book-burnings, the mayor's wife's library, wherever books are found. When Liesel's foster family hides a Jew in their basement, Liesel's world is both opened up, and closed down.



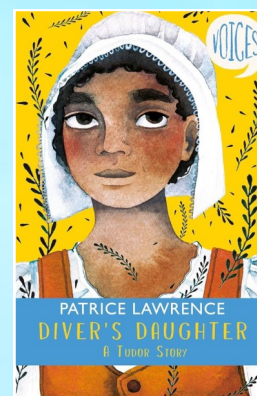
The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank

In 1942, with the Nazis occupying Holland, a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl and her family fled Amsterdam and went into hiding. For the next two years, until their whereabouts were betrayed to the Gestapo, the Franks and another family lived in the "Secret Annexe" of an office building. Cut off from the outside world, they faced hunger, boredom and the ever-present threat of discovery and death. In her diary Anne Frank recorded vivid impressions of her experiences



Lion: A Long Way Home by Saroo Brierley

Aged just five, Saroo Brierley was separated from his family in India when he boarded a train that took him 1500km from his hometown. After weeks surviving alone on the streets of Calcutta, he was eventually adopted by an Australian couple. Years later, he swapped the map of India on his wall for Google Earth, scouring it for landmarks he knew from his childhood. One day, he saw something he recognised, and he set off on a journey to find his mother...

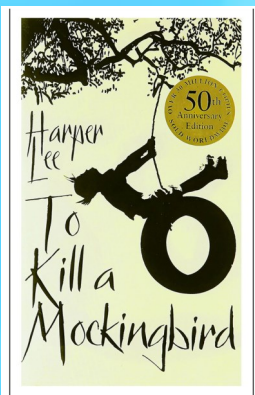


Diver's Daughter: A Tudor Story by Patrice Lawrence

This thrilling adventure brings Eve and her mother, who was stolen from her family in Mozambique as a child, from the slums of Elizabethan London to the south coast. They hear from a Mary Rose survivor that one of the African free-divers who was sent to salvage its treasures is alive and well and living in Southampton, they try to find him and attempt to dive the wreck of another ship, rumoured to be rich with treasures. But will they survive when the man arrives to claim his 'share'? Based on real events,

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To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee

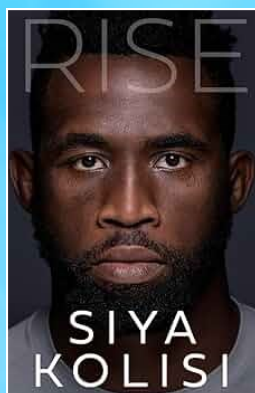
'Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird.'

A lawyer's advice to his children as he defends the real mockingbird of Harper Lee's classic novel - a black man falsely charged with the rape of a white girl. Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with exuberant humour the irrationality of adult attitudes to race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s.



Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

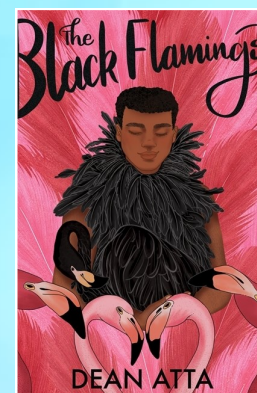
Great Expectations charts the progress of Pip from childhood through often painful experiences to adulthood, as he moves from the Kent marshes to busy, commercial London, encountering a variety of extraordinary characters ranging from Magwitch, the escaped convict, to Miss Havisham, locked up with her unhappy past and living with her ward, the arrogant, beautiful Estella. Pip must discover his true self, and his own set of values and priorities. Whether such values allow one to prosper in the complex world of early Victorian England is the question posed..



Rise by Siya Kolisi

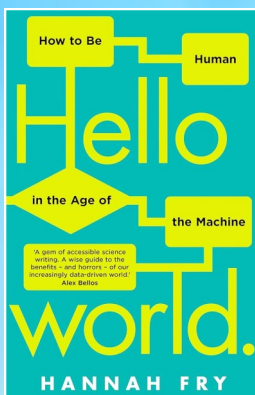
Siya Kolisi shares his story in an extraordinarily intimate memoir, charting his journey from being born into the impoverished Zwide township, to leading his proud nation to an astonishing victory at the Rugby World Cup in 2019.

However, Rise is not simply a chronology of matches played and games won; it is an exploration of a man's race and his faith, a masterclass in attaining a positive mindset, and an inspirational reminder that it is possible to defy the odds, no matter how they are stacked against you.



The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta

A boy comes to terms with his identity as a mixed-race gay teen - then at university he finds his wings as a drag artist, The Black Flamingo. A bold story about the power of embracing your uniqueness. Sometimes, we need to take charge, to stand up wearing pink feathers - to show ourselves to the world in bold colour.



Hello World: Being Human in the Age of Algorithms by Hannah Fry

When it comes to artificial intelligence, we either hear of a paradise on earth or of our imminent extinction. It's time we stand face-to-digital-face with the true powers and limitations of the algorithms that already automate important decisions in healthcare, transportation, crime, and commerce. Hello World is indispensable preparation for the moral quandaries of a world run by code.

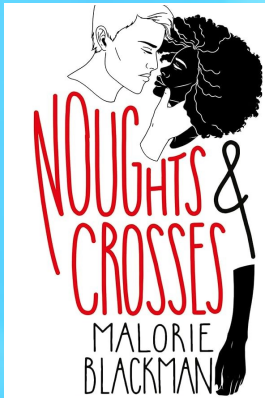


You Don't Know What War Is by Yeva Skalietska

Yeva Skalietska's story begins on her twelfth birthday in Kharkiv, where she has been living with her grandmother since she was a baby. Ten days later, the only life she'd ever known was shattered. On February 24, 2022, her city was suddenly under attack as Russia launched its horrifying invasion of Ukraine. Yeva and her grandmother ran to a basement bunker, where she began writing this diary. She describes the bombings they endured while sheltering underground, and their desperate journey west to escape.

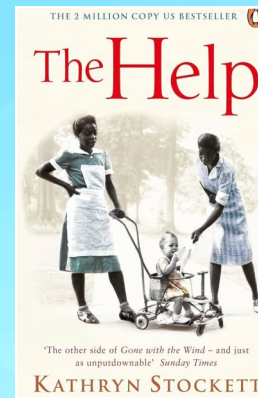
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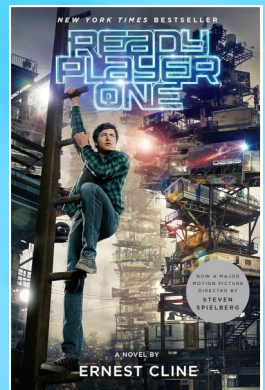
Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman

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?



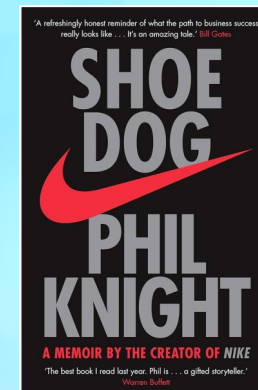
The Help by Kathryn Stockett

There's Aibileen, raising her seventeenth white child and nursing the hurt caused by her own son's tragic death; Minny, whose cooking is nearly as sassy as her tongue; and white Miss Skeeter, home from College, who wants to know why her beloved maid has disappeared. Skeeter, Aibileen and Minny. No one would believe they'd be friends; fewer still would tolerate it. Each is in a search of a truth. And together they have an extraordinary story to tell...



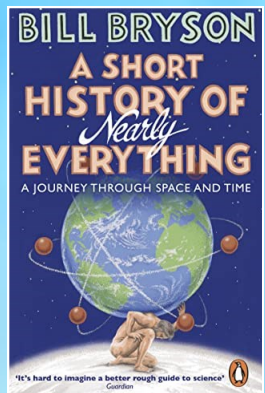
Ready Player One by Ernest Cline

It's 2044 and the only time teenager Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines, puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise power and fortune to whoever can unlock them. But when Wade stumbles on the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on.



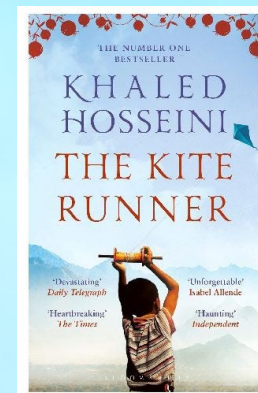
Shoe Dog: A Memoir by the Creator of Nike by Phil Knight

In this candid and riveting memoir, for the first time ever, Nike founder and CEO Phil Knight shares the inside story of the company's early days as an intrepid start-up and its evolution into one of the world's most iconic, game-changing, and profitable brands. Knight details the many risks and setbacks that stood between him and his dream—along with his early triumphs. He recalls the formative relationships with his first partners and employees, a ragtag group of misfits and seekers who became a tight-knit band of brothers.



A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson

A Short History of Nearly Everything is Bryson's 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 challenge is to take subjects that normally bore the pants off most of us, like geology, chemistry and particle physics, and see if there isn't some way to render them comprehensible to people who have never thought they could be interested in science.

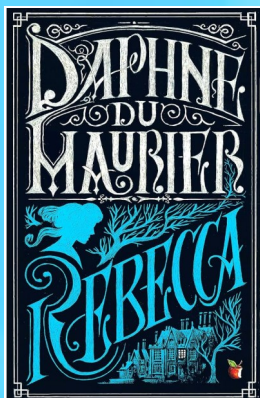


The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

.1970s Afghanistan: Twelve-year-old Amir is desperate to win the local kite-fighting tournament and his loyal friend Hassan promises to help him. But neither of the boys can foresee what would happen to Hassan that afternoon, an event that is to shatter their lives. After the Russians invade and the family is forced to flee to America, Amir realises that one day he must return to an Afghanistan under Taliban rule to find the one thing that his new world cannot grant him: redemption.

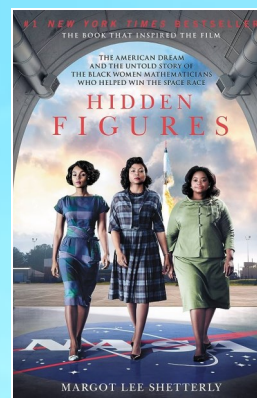
YEAR 11

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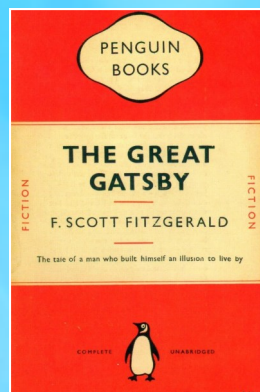
Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier

The novel begins in Monte Carlo, where our heroine is swept off her feet by the dashing widower Maxim de Winter and his sudden proposal of marriage. Orphaned and working as a lady's maid, she can barely believe her luck. It is only when they arrive at his massive country estate that she realizes how large a shadow his late wife will cast over their lives--presenting her with a lingering evil that threatens to destroy their marriage from beyond the grave.



Hidden Figures by Margot Lee Shetterly

Set amid the civil rights movement, the true story of NASA's African-American female mathematicians who played a crucial role in America's space program. A group of professionals worked as 'Human Computers', calculating the flight paths that would enable these historic achievements. Among them were bright, talented African-American women. Segregated from their white counterparts, these 'coloured computers' used pencil and paper to write the equations that would launch rockets and astronauts, into space.



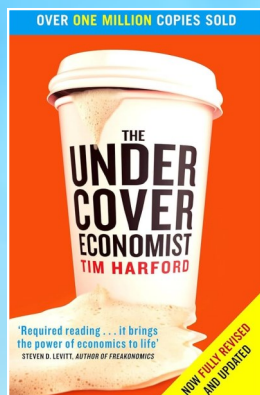
The Great Gatsby by F Scott Fitzgerald

Young, handsome and rich, Jay Gatsby is the bright star of the Jazz Age in 1920s America, but as writer Nick Carraway is drawn into the decadent orbit of his Long Island mansion, where the party never seems to end, he finds himself faced by the mystery of Gatsby's origins and desires. Beneath the shimmering surface of his life, Gatsby is hiding a secret: a silent longing that can never be fulfilled. And soon, this destructive obsession will force his world to unravel.



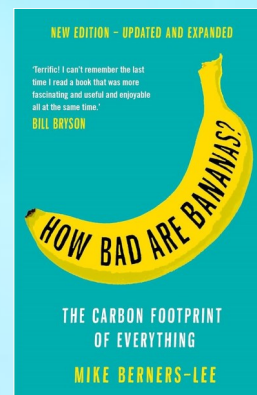
Too Many Reasons to Live by Rob Burrow

An inspirational memoir from rugby league legend Rob Burrow on his extraordinary career, his incredible friendship with fellow Rhino Kevin Sinfield, and his battle with motor neurone disease. Written with honesty and humour this is a story of a man who resolved to turn a terrible situation into something positive. It is about the power of love, between Rob and his childhood sweetheart Lindsey, and of the life-changing bond of friendship between Rob, Kevin Sinfield, and their Rhino teammates.



The Under Cover Economist by Tim Harford

An economist's version of The Way Things Work, this engaging volume is part Economics 101 and part exposé of the economic principles lurking behind daily events, explaining everything from traffic jams to high coffee prices. Covering an array of economic concepts including scarce resources, market power, efficiency, price gouging, market failure, inside information, and game theory, Harford sheds light on how these forces shape our day-to-day lives, often without our knowing it.

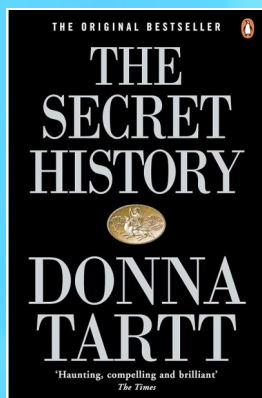


How Bad Are Bananas: The Carbon Footprint of Everything by Mike Berners-Lee

From a text message to a war, from a Valentine's rose to a flight, How Bad are Bananas? gives us the carbon answers we need and provides plenty of revelations. Mike Berners-Lee sets out to give us a carbon instinct for the footprint of literally anything we do, buy and think about. He helps us pick our battles by laying out the orders of magnitude. The book ranges from the everyday and the global. Be warned, some of the things you thought you knew about green living may be about to be turned on their head.

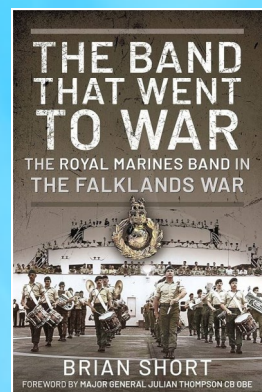
YEAR 12

Pangbourne Reading Canon



The Secret History by Donna Tartt

Under the influence of their charismatic classics professor, a group of clever, eccentric misfits at an elite New England college discover a way of thinking and living that is a world away from the humdrum existence of their contemporaries. But when they go beyond the boundaries of normal morality they slip gradually from obsession to corruption and betrayal, and at last—inexorably—into evil.



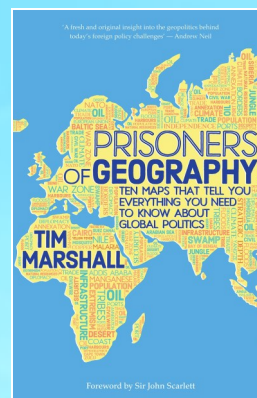
The Band That Went to War by Brian Short

A graphic first-hand account of the Falklands War. It describes the roles played by Royal Marine musicians in the conflict; unloading the wounded from helicopters, moving tons of stores and ammunition, burying their dead at sea and guarding and repatriating Argentine prisoners of war. These and other unseen tasks were achieved while still ready to provide morale boosting music to their commando brethren and other frontline troops. These men are not just musicians; they are Royal Marines.



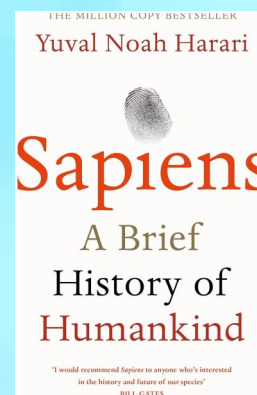
Doppelgänger by Naomi Klein

What if you woke up one day and found you'd acquired another self—a double who was almost you but not you at all? The celebrated activist and public intellectual Naomi Klein had just such an experience—she was confronted with a doppelgänger whose views she found abhorrent but whose name and public persona were sufficiently similar to her own that many people got confused about who was who. A comic memoir with chilling reportage and cobweb-clearing analysis, Klein seeks to smash that mirror and chart a path beyond despair



Prisoners of Geography by Tim Marshall

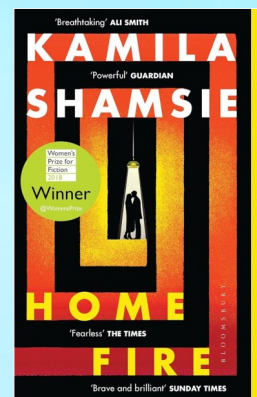
In ten, up-to-date maps of each region, Marshall explains the complex geo-political strategies of these key parts of the globe. What does it mean that Russia must have a navy, but also has frozen ports six months a year? How does this affect Putin's treatment of Ukraine? How is China's future constrained by its geography? Why will Europe never be united? Why will America never be invaded? Shining a light on unavoidable physical realities that shape our aspirations and endeavours, *this* a critical guide to one of the major determining factors in world.



Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari

We are the most advanced and most destructive animals ever to have lived. What makes us brilliant? What makes us deadly? What makes us Sapiens?

In this bold and provocative book, Yuval Noah Harari explores who we are, how we got here and where we're going. Sapiens is a thrilling account of humankind's extraordinary history - from the Stone Age to the Silicon Age - and our journey from insignificant apes to rulers of the world.

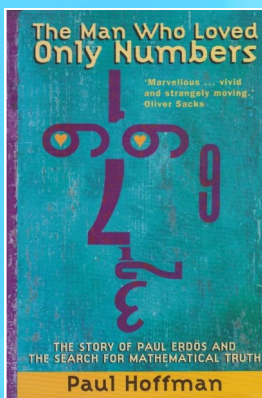


Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie

Two families' fates are inextricably, devastatingly entwined in this searing novel that asks: what sacrifices will we make in the name of love? A contemporary reimagining of Sophocles' Antigone, Home Fire is an urgent, fiercely compelling story of loyalties torn apart when love and politics collide .

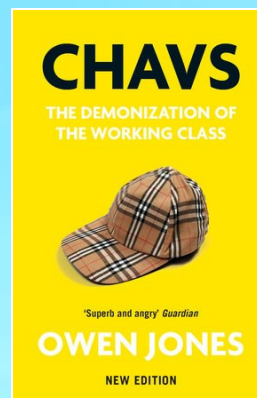
YEAR 13

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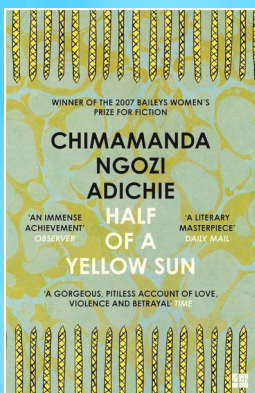
The Man Who Loved Only Numbers by Paul Hoffman

For six decades Paul Erdos travelled the world with his mother, arriving at the doorstep of esteemed mathematicians declaring 'My brain is open'. He travelled until his death at 83, racing across four continents to prove as many theorems as possible, fuelled by a diet of espresso and amphetamines. With more than 1,500 papers written or co-written, a daily routine of 19 hours of mathematics a day, seven days a week, Paul Erdos was one of the most extraordinary thinkers of our times.



CHAVS: The Dehumanisation of the Working Class by Owen Jones

Owen Jones explores how the working class has gone from "salt of the earth" to "scum of the earth." Exposing the ignorance and prejudice at the heart of the chav caricature, one based on the media's inexhaustible obsession with an indigent white underclass, he portrays a far more complex reality. Moving through Westminster's lobbies and working-class communities, Jones reveals the increasing poverty and desperation of communities made precarious by wrenching social and industrial change.



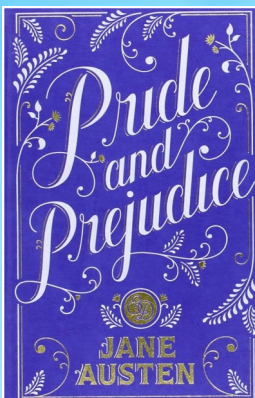
Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Ugwu, a boy from a poor village, works as a houseboy for a university professor. Olanna, a young woman, has abandoned her life of privilege in Lagos to live with her charismatic new lover, the professor. And Richard, a shy English writer, is in thrall to Olanna's enigmatic twin sister. As the horrific Biafran War engulfs them, they are thrown together and pulled apart in ways they had never imagined.



The Skeleton Cupboard by Tanya Byron

Professor Tanya Byron's account of her years of training as a clinical psychologist. Through the eyes of her naive and inexperienced younger self, Byron shares remarkable stories inspired by the people she had the privilege to treat. Gripping, poignant, and full of daring black humor, this book reveals the frightening and challenging induction all mental health staff face and highlights their incredible commitment to their patients. It shares the tales of ordinary people with an amazing resilience to life's challenges.



Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

With its 'light and bright and sparkling' dialogue, its romantic denouement and its lively heroine, *Pride and Prejudice* is Jane Austen's most perennially popular novel. The love story of Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, who misjudge, then challenge and change each other, is also a novel about the search for happiness and self-knowledge in a world of strict social rules, where a woman must marry well to survive.

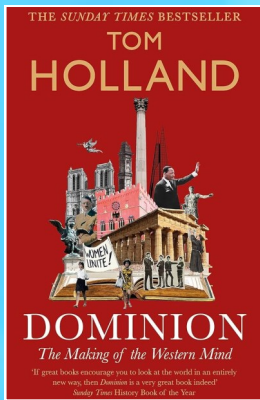


Elon Musk: How the Billionaire CEO of SpaceX and Tesla is Shaping Our Future by Ashlee Vance

Elon Musk, the entrepreneur and innovator behind SpaceX, Tesla, and SolarCity, sold one of his internet companies, PayPal, for \$1.5 billion. Ashlee Vance captures the full spectacle and arc of the genius's life and work, from his tumultuous upbringing in South Africa and flight to the United States to his dramatic technical innovations and entrepreneurial pursuits. fantasy

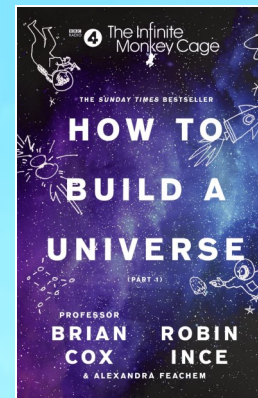
Pre-University/Work

Pangbourne Reading Canon



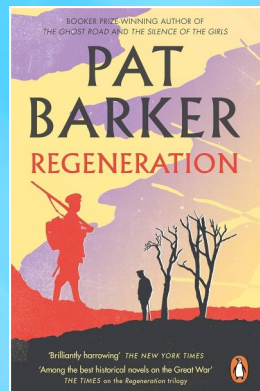
Dominion by Tom Holland

Crucifixion, the Romans believed, was the worst fate imaginable, a punishment reserved for slaves. How astonishing it was, then, that people should have come to believe that one particular victim of crucifixion—an obscure provincial by the name of Jesus—was to be worshipped as a god. *Dominion* explores the implications of this shocking conviction as they have reverberated throughout history. As Tom Holland demonstrates, our morals and ethics are not universal but are fruits of a distinctive civilization deeply rooted in a Christian seedbed.



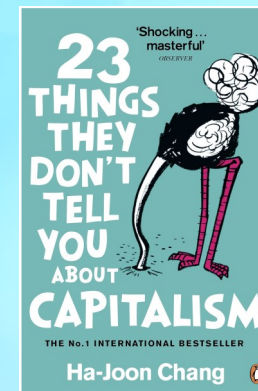
How to Build a Universe by Brian Cox and Robin Ince

The Infinite Monkey Cage, the legendary BBC Radio 4 programme, brings you this irreverent celebration of scientific marvels. It takes the reader on a hectic leap through the grand and bizarre ideas conjured up by human imagination, from dark matter to consciousness via neutrinos and earthworms. Professor Brian Cox and Robin Ince muse on multifaceted subjects involved in building a universe, with pearls of wisdom from leading scientists and comedians peppered throughout.



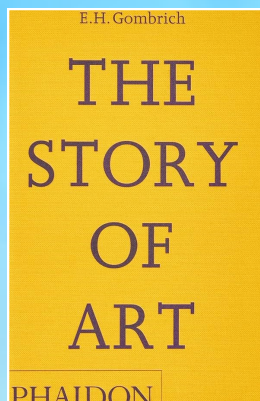
Regeneration by Pat Barker

Regeneration focuses on treatment methods during World War I and the story of a decorated English officer sent to a military hospital after publicly declaring he will no longer fight. Written in sparse prose that is shockingly clear—the descriptions of electronic treatments are particularly harrowing—it combines real-life characters and events with fictional ones in a work that examines the insanity of war like no other. Barker also weaves in issues of class and politics in this compactly powerful book.



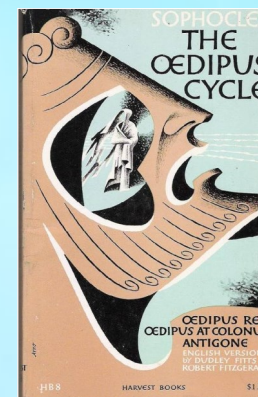
23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism by Ha-Joon Chang

If you've wondered how we did not see the economic collapse coming, Ha-Joon Chang knows the answer: We didn't ask what they didn't tell us about capitalism. This is a lighthearted book with a serious purpose: to question the assumptions behind the dogma and sheer hype that the dominant school of neoliberal economists - the apostles of the freemarket - have spun since the Age of Reagan.



The Story of Art by E H Gombrich

Renowned not only as the best concise introduction to art history, but also as a classic of art historical literature, this book reflects the vast knowledge, insights, and expertise of one of this century's greatest art historians and thinkers. Extensively illustrated, it treats the history of art -- both chronologically and geographically -- as a continuous unfolding story. Offers a vivid, enthusiastic, and interpretive narrative written in direct, straightforward language with technical terms always explained when they are introduced.



The Oedipus Cycle (The Theban Plays) by Sophocles

Collected here are *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, which contain all of Sophocles' lucidity and power: the cut and thrust of his dialogue, his ironic edge, the surge and majesty of his choruses and, above all, the agonies and triumphs of his characters. Oedipus in exile, searching for his identity, desperately trying to avoid his fate, seeking the truth of his origins and achieving immortality; his daughter, Antigone, defending her integrity and ideals to the death.