



# Recommended Reads for Key Stage 4 & 5

## Action, Mysteries, Horror & Thrillers

**Famous Last Words** or **Bad Girls Don't Die**– Alender  
**The Inheritance Games** by Jennifer Lynn Barnes  
**Frozen Charlotte** by Alex Bell  
**S.T.A.G.S.** (& sequels) by M.A. Bennett  
**Bodyguard** series; **Bulletcatcher** by Chris Bradford+  
**The Bunker Diary**; **Martyn Pig**; **iBoy** - Kevin Brooks  
**Dead Time** (& sequels); **The Bone Room+** -A Cassidy  
**And Then There Were None** by Agatha Christie\*  
**Say Her Name** by Juno Dawson  
**Mortal Chaos** or **Lie, Kill, Walk Away** -M Dickinson  
**A Gathering Light** by Jennifer Donnelly\*  
**Zero Day** by Jan Gangsei  
**Every Line of You** by Naomi Gibson  
**The Enemy** (& sequels) by Charlie Higson  
**House of Silk**, **Moriarty**, **Magpie Murders**-Horowitz+  
**Silence and Bones** by June Hur  
**A Good Girl's Guide to Murder** (& sequels)- Jackson  
**Sawbones** or **Blade & Bone** by Catherine Johnson  
**The Long Weekend** by Savita Kalhan+  
**Salem's Lot**, **Carrie** or **It** by Stephen King\*  
**Watchers** by Dean Koontz\*  
**Splinters of Sunshine** by Patrice Lawrence  
**Bluebeard, Bluebeard** by Attica Locke\*  
**We Were Liars** or **Genuine Fraud** by E Lockhart  
**Mina and the Undead** by Amy McCaw  
**Girl, Missing**; **Here We Lie**; **Blood Ties** by S McKenzie  
**#Murdertrending** by Gretchen McNeil\*  
**One of Us is Lying** (& sequels) by Karen McManus  
**I am Still Alive** or **Rules for Vanishing** by K Marshall  
**Knife Edge\***; **Blame** by Simon Mayo  
**The Recruit (Cherub)** (& sequels) by R Muchamore+  
**Even If We Break** by Marieke Nijkamp  
**Foul Play** (& sequels) or **Ghost Stadium** - T Palmer+  
**13 Minutes** by Sarah Pinborough  
**We Begin At The End** by Chris Whitaker\*  
**The First Day of My Life** by Lisa Williamson

## Autobiographies/Memoirs/Biographies

**I Know Why a Caged Bird Sings** by M. Angelou\*  
**A Street Cat Named Bob** by James Bowen\*+  
**Playing the Enemy** by John Carlin\*  
**In Cold Blood** by Truman Capote\*  
**Hope in a Ballet Shoe**: Michaela & Elaine DePrince  
**Wave: Life After the Tsunami** by S. Deraniyagala\*  
**One Dog at a Time** (& sequels) by Pen Farthing\*  
**Diary of a Young Girl** by Anne Frank  
**I, Ada** by Julia Gray (part-fictionalised, part bio)  
**Marley & Me** by John Grogan\*  
**Mud, Sweat and Tears** by Bear Grylls\*  
**Fever Pitch** by Nick Hornby\*  
**This is Going to Hurt** by Adam Kay\*  
**The Story of My Life** by Helen Keller\*  
**War Dog** (WWII) by Damien Lewis\*  
**The Boy on the Wooden Box** by Leon Leyson  
**Diary of a Young Naturalist** by Dara McAnulty  
**Today Everything Changes** by Andy McNab\*+  
**Chinese Cinderella** by Adeline Yen Mah\*  
**A History of the World in 21 Women**-Jenni Murray\*  
**The Greatest: Muhammed Ali** by WD Myers+  
**Dreams From My Father** by Barack Obama\*  
**Becoming** by Michelle Obama\*  
**You Are a Champion** by Marcus Rashford  
**Persepolis** by Marjane Satrapi (graphic novel)\*+  
**Touching the Void** by Joe Simpson\*+  
**Beautiful Country** by Qian Julie Wang\*  
**Educated** by Tara Westover\*  
**Night** by Elie Wiesel\*  
**Black Boy:A Record of Youth&Childhood**-R Wright\*  
**Autobiography of Malcolm X**–MalcolmX &A Haley\*  
**I am Malala** by Malala Yousafzai

## Classics (off the beaten path) & Literary Fiction:

### Challenging KS4/5 reads

**Things Fall Apart** by Chinua Achebe\*  
**Purple Hibiscus** by Chimamanda Adichie\*  
**Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line** - Deepa Anapparo\*  
**The Testaments**; **The Handmaid's Tale** – Atwood\*  
**The Vanishing Half** by Brit Bennett\*  
**Fahrenheit 451** by Ray Bradbury\*  
**The House on Mango Street** by Sandra Cisneros\*  
**All The Light We Cannot See** by Anthony Doerr\*  
**Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha** by Roddy Doyle\*  
**Invisible Man** by Ralph Ellison\*  
**Girl, Woman, Other** by Bernadine Evaristo\*  
**Birdsong** or **Snow Country** by Sebastian Faulks\*  
**Homegoing** by Yaa Gyasi\*  
**The Sweetness of Water** by Nathan Harris\*

*Woman in Black* by Susan Hill\*  
*The Kite Runner* by Khalid Hosseini\*  
*Not Without Laughter* by Langston Hughes\*  
*A More Perfect Union* by Tammye Huf\*  
*Brave New World* by Alex Huxley\*  
*Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro\*  
*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee\*  
*Cider With Rosie* by Laurie Lee\*  
*Small Island* by Andrea Levi\*  
*The Road* by Cormac McCarthy\*  
*Circe* or *Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller\*  
*The Bluest Eye* or *Beloved* by Toni Morrison\*  
*Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell\*  
*All Quiet on the Western Front* by EM Remarque\*  
*The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy\*  
*Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie\*  
*Anita and Me* by Meera Syal\*  
*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker\*  
*Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead\*  
*Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* – J Winterson\*

#### **Complex/Difficult/Thought-provoking Issues**

*Change is Gonna Come* – various BAME authors  
*Poet X; Clap When You Land; With the Fire on High*  
by Elizabeth Acevedo^  
*7 Days* or *Magpie* by Eve Ainsworth  
*Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda* – B Albertalli  
*Booked; Rebound; Crossover*-Kwame Alexander+^  
*The Hypnotist* by Laurence Anholt  
*Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher  
*Black Flamingo* by Dean Atta^  
*Noughts & Crosses* or *Boys Don't Cry* -M Blackman  
*Tiger Eyes* or anything by Judy Blume  
*Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley  
*Am I Normal Yet?* (Spinster Club series)- H. Bourne  
*See Through Me; Dumb Chocolate Eyes* - K Brooks  
*Hate List* by Jennifer Brown  
*Junk* or *The Hit* by Melvin Burgess  
*Heart-Shaped Bruise* or *Afterlove* y Tanya Byrne  
*Looking for JJ; No Virgin/No Shame*-Anne Cassidy  
*The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by S. Chbosky  
*Stolen* by Lucy Christopher  
*The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier  
*Toffee; One; Moonrise* by S Crossan+^  
*Meat Market* or *What's the T* by Juno Dawson  
*A Swift Pure Cry; Solace of the Road* -S. Dowd  
*The Pavee and the Buffer Girl* by Siobhan Dowd+  
*Furious Thing; Before I Die* by Jenny Downam

*Out of My Mind* or *Out of My Heart* by S Draper  
*Heroic; Being Billy; Saving Daisy* by Phil Earle+  
*Mockingbird; Seeing Red* by Kathryn Erskine  
*The Universe versus Alex Woods* by G. Extence  
*If I Stay; Just One Day* by Gayle Forman  
*The Ones That Disappeared* by Zana Fraillion  
*Full Disclosure* of *Off the Record* by Camryn Garrett  
*Baby Girl* by Emma Hill  
*After the Fire* by Will Hill  
*Looking at the Stars* by Lewis Hine  
*The Outsiders* by SE Hinton  
*And the Stars Were Burning Brightly* by D Jawando  
*That Asian Kid; Girl in Broken Mirror* by S Kalhan  
*That's Not What Happened* by Kody Keplinger  
*I am Thunder; Kick the Moon* - Muhammed Khan  
*Rose, Interrupted, Indigo Donut, Orangeboy or Eight Pieces of Silva* by Patrice Lawrence  
*Brock, Pike, Rook & Lark* by Anthony McGowan+  
*Run, Rebel* or *The Crossing* y Manjeet Mann^+  
*Out of Heart; A Beautiful Lie* by Irfan Master  
*Sister Heart* by Sally Morgan^  
*Slay* by Brittney Morris  
*The Sky is Everywhere* or *I'll Give You...* by J Nelson  
*No Fixed Address; Word Nerd* by Susin Nielson  
*All the Bright Places & Holding Up Universe* - Niven  
*Before I Fall; Vanishing Girls* by Lauren Oliver  
*Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens\*  
*My Sister's Keeper; Small Great Things* -J Picoult\*  
*Patron Saints of Nothing* or *After the Shot Drops* by Randy Ribay  
*Rani & Sukh; (Un)arranged Marriage; Killing Honour; The Gun; Stay a Little Longer* - Bali Rai+  
*Gloves Off^; Wrecked^; Black Heart Blue* by L Reid  
*Long Way Down^; All American Boys* - J Reynolds  
*Extraordinary Means* by Robyn Schneider  
*The Lovely Bones* or *Lucky* by Alice Sebold\*  
*The Boxer* or *Run, Riot* Nikesh Shukla  
*Counting by 7s* by Holly Sloan  
*The Million Pieces of Neena Gill* by E Smith-Barton  
*Stone Cold* by Robert Swindells  
*Everything I Thought I Knew* by Shannon Takaoka  
*Lies We Tell Ourselves* by Robin Talley  
*The Hate U Give* or *On the Come Up* by A Thomas  
*The List* by Siobhan Vivian  
*It's Kind of a Funny Story* by Ned Vizzini  
*My Name is Leon* by Kit de Waal  
*What Momma Left Me* by Renee Watson

*Little Bit* (& sequels), *Uprising* or *The Humiliations of Welton Blake+* by Alex Wheatle  
*The Art of Being Normal* by Lisa Williamson  
*Frankly in Love* by David Yoon  
*In The Wild Light* by Jeff Zentner  
*Teacher's Dead, Face, Terror Kid* or *Gangsta Rap* by Benjamin Zephaniah

### **Dystopian or Science Fiction**

*The Power* by Naomi Alderman\*  
*Chasing the Stars* by Malorie Blackman  
*Gamer* (& Virtual Combat series) by Chris Bradford+  
*Ink* (& sequels) by Alice Broadway  
*World War Z* by Max Brooks\*  
*Three Bullets* by Melvin Burgess  
*The Girl With All the Gifts* by MR Carey\*  
*Matched* (& sequels) by Ally Condie  
*The Maze Runner* (& sequels) by J. Dashner  
*Cell 7* (& sequels) by Kerry Drewery  
*The Upper World* by Femi Fadugba  
*The Gender Game* by Bella Forrest  
*Gone; Front Line* (& sequels) by Michael Grant  
*Lifers* by M.A. Griffin  
*Department 19* (& sequels) by Will Hill  
*The Outrage* by William Hussey  
*Bearmouth* by Liz Hyder  
*Raybearer* by Jordan Ifueko  
*The Loneliest Girl in the Universe* or *The Quiet at the End of the World* by Lauren James  
*Maladapted* by Richard Kurti  
*I Am Number Four* (& sequels) by Pittacus Lore  
*Legend* (& sequels) by Marie Lu  
*Station 11* by Emily Mandel\*  
*The Passengers; The One* by John Marrs\*  
*The 100* by Kass Morgan  
*Killer T* by Robert Muchamore  
*No Man's Land* by Joanna Nadin  
*The Knife of Never Letting Go* series by Patrick Ness  
*Z For Zachariah* by Robert O'Brien  
*The Loop* by Ben Oliver  
*Replica* or *Delirium* (& sequels) by Lauren Oliver  
*Only Ever Yours* by Louise O'Neill  
*Divergent* (& sequels) by Veronica Roth  
*Plague Land* by Alex Scarrow  
*Scythe, Unwind* (& sequels) -N Shusterman  
*Concentr8* by William Sutcliffe  
*Contagion* or *Slated* (& sequels) by Teri Terry  
*The Martian* or *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir\*

*Partials* (& sequels) by Dan Wells  
*Uglies* or *Zeroes* (& sequels) by Scott Westerfield  
*The Foreverers* by Chris Whitaker  
*The Infinity Files* by SM Wilson  
*The 5th Wave* (& sequels) by Rick Yancey

### **Environment or Climate Change Fiction**

*American War* by Omar El Akkad\*  
*The Drowned World* by J.G. Ballard\*  
*Exodus* by Julie Bertanga  
*Parable of the Sower* by Octavia Butler\*  
*The Well* by Catherine Chanter\*  
*Greenwood* by Michael Christie\*  
*Breathe* by Sarah Crossan  
*The Ice People* by Maggie Gee\*  
*The Territory* by Sarah Govett  
*Floodworld* & *DustRoad* by Tom Huddleston  
*The End We Start From* by Megan Hunter  
*Green Rising* by Lauren James  
*Runners* by Ann Kelley  
*Unsheltered, Prodigal Summer* or *Flight Behaviour* by Barbara Kingsolver\*  
*The Carbon Diaries* by Saci Lloyd  
*The Dog Runner* & *Across Risen Sea* - B MacDibble  
*The Overstory* by Richard Powers\*  
*Floodland* or *Snowflake, AZ* by Marcus Sedgwick  
*Dry* by Neal & Jarrod Shusterman  
*The Survival Game* or *The Island* by Nicky Singer  
*The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck\*

### **Fantasy, Epic or Urban Fantasy or Magic Realism**

*Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi  
*A Jigsaw of Fire & Stars* by Yaba Badoe  
*Six of Crows; Crooked Kingdom* by Leigh Bardugo  
*Cinderella is Dead* by Kalynn Bayron  
*City of Bones* (& sequels) by Cassandra Clare  
*Legendborn* by Tracy Deonn  
*Half Bad* (& sequels) by Sally Green  
*The Gilded Ones* by Namina Forna  
*The Deathless Girls* by Kiran Millwood Hargrave  
*The Eye of the World* (Wheel of Time) by R Jordan  
*A Blade So Black* (& sequels) by L.L. McKinney  
*Burn* by Patrick Ness  
*Way of Kings* (Stormlight Archive) by B Sanderson  
*Voyages in Underworld of Orpheus Black*-Sedgwick  
*Oh My Gods* by Alexandra Sheppard  
*An Ember in the Ashes* (& sequels) by Sabaa Tahir  
*Children of the Quicksands* by Efua Traore

### **History & War**



***The Short Knife*** by Elen Caldecot  
***Wolf Children, Bomber, Red Shadow, Eleven Eleven***  
 or ***The Great Revolt*** by Paul Dowswell  
***Copper Sun*** by Sharon M Draper  
***When the Sky Falls*** by Phil Earle  
***Under a War-Torn Sky*** or ***Suspect Red*** by L. Elliott  
***Fatal Throne***: Henry VIII (multiple YA writers)  
***An Act of Love*** or ***The Trap*** by Alan Gibbons  
***Grenade, Ground Zero*** or ***Prisoner B-3087*** - A Gratz  
***Bone Talk*** by Candy Gourlay  
***The Mercies*** by Kiran Millwood Hargrave\*  
***Sawbones*** or ***Blade and Bones*** by C Johnson  
***Orphan, Monster, Spy*** by Matt Killeen  
***Among Red Stars*** by Gwen Katz  
***When the World Was Ours*** by Liz Kessler  
***The Librarian of Auschwitz*** by Antonio Iturbe\*  
***The Beekeeper of Aleppo*** by Christy Lefteri\*  
***Dog Tags: Semper Fido*** or ***Strays*** by CA London  
***A Berlin Love Song*** by Sarah Matthias  
***Red Stars*** by Davide Morosinotto  
***Fallen Angels*** or ***Sunrise over Fallujah***-WD Myers  
***Things a Bright Girl Can Do; Silent Stars*** - S Nicholls  
***Salt to the Sea*** or ***Fountains of Silence*** - R Sepetys  
***Maus*** by Art Spiegelman (graphic novel)\*+  
***Milkweed*** by Jerry Spinelli  
***The Land*** (& sequels) or ***Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry***  
 by Mildred Taylor  
***Code Named Verity & Enigma Game; Firebird+*** by  
 Elizabeth Wein  
***Cane Warriors*** or ***Kemosha of the Caribbean*** by  
 Alex Wheatle  
***Kent State*** by Deborah Wiles^  
***My Dear I Wanted to Tell You*** by Louisa Young\*  
***The Book Thief*** by Marcus Zusak

### **Humorous books**

***Half My Facebook Friends Are Ferrets*** by J Buckle  
***The Princess Diaries*** by Meg Cabot  
***A Man Called Ove*** by Fredrik Backman\*  
***The Private Blog of Joe Cowley*** by Ben Davis  
***Boys Don't Knit*** or ***An English Boy in NY*** by T Easton  
***An Abundance of Katherines*** by John Green  
***Noah Can't Even; Alex in Wonderland*** - SJ Green  
***The Boomerang Effect*** by Gordon Jack  
***The Reformed Vampire Support Group*** by Jinks  
***Hellbent*** or ***Henry Tumour*** by Anthony McGowan

***Don't Even Think About It*** – Sarah Mylnowski  
***Discworld*** series by T Pratchett (try ***The Last Hero***)\*  
***Good Omens*** by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman\*  
***Geekhood*** series by Andy Robb  
***The Rosie Project*** (& sequel) by Graeme Simsion\*  
***Something I Said*** by Ben Bailey Smith  
***The Gifted, The Talented and Me*** by W Sutcliffe  
***Dark Lord: The Teenage Years*** by Jamie Thomson  
***The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*** – Sue Townsend  
***The Savages*** and ***American Savage*** by M Whyman

### **Relationships**

***Ace of Spades*** by Faridah Abike-Iyime  
***Yes, No, Maybe So*** by R Albertalli & Aisha Saeed  
***Beautiful Broken Things*** or ***Fierce Fragile Hearts***  
 Sara Barnard  
***Tender Earth*** by Sita Brahmachari  
***We Come Apart*** by S Crossan & Brian Conaghan^  
***Alex & Eliza*** by Melissa de la Cruz (Hamilton)  
***On Midnight Beach*** by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick  
***Floored: When Seven Lives Collide*** (various authors)  
***Fault in Our Stars*** or ***Looking for Alaska*** by J Green  
***Why We Broke Up*** by Daniel Handler  
***To All the Boys I've Loved Before*** by Jenny Han  
***Slammed*** or ***Regretting You*** by Colleen Hoover  
***Hold Back the Stars*** by Katie Khan  
***Falling Fast*** (& sequels) by Sophie McKenzie  
***Release*** by Patrick Ness  
***One Day*** or ***Sweet Sorrow*** by David Nicholls\*  
***Unboxed; Second Best Friend*** by Nan Pratt  
***Heartstopper*** graphic novels by Alice Oseman+  
***The Boy in the Black Suit*** by Jason Reynolds  
***Attachments & Fangirl*** by Rainbow Rowell  
***Written in the Stars*** by Aisha Saeed  
***The Art of Racing in the Rain*** by Garth Stein\*  
***Shiver*** or ***The Raven Boys***(&sequels) - M. Stiefvater  
***Our Chemical Hearts*** by Krystal Sutherland  
***They Both Die at the End*** by Adam Silvera  
***Love is a Revolution*** by Renee Watson  
***If You Come Softly*** by Jacqueline Woodson  
***Everything, Everything & Sun is Also a Star***-Yoon

\* = Books written for adults; may contain mature content  
 + = top picks for reluctant readers or readers who prefer  
 visual/less dense texts. Includes some dyslexia-friendly  
 titles; quick-paced reads of longer books  
 ^ = verse novel