

Suggested Upper School Summer Reading

From the Librarian



Pre- Twentieth Century Novels



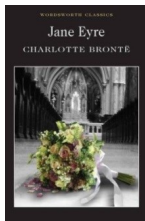
Emma - Jane Austen

The wanton havoc wrought by Emma in the life of Mrs Chalfont, the narrator, is not the only proof of her ruthlessness; she plays a part, too, in the sufferings of the abandoned child, Martina. The affection which grows between Mrs Chalfont and Martina out of their mutual distress illumines this story, and Emma herself, with her inexplicable motives, her incomprehensible anger and her darkness of soul, develops into a character of whom Charlotte Bronte would have been proud.



The Tenant of Wildfell Hall - Anne Bronte

Tenant of Wildfell Hall is a powerful and sometimes violent novel of expectation, love, oppression, sin, religion and betrayal. It portrays the disintegration of the marriage of Helen Huntingdon, the mysterious tenant of the title, and her dissolute, alcoholic husband. Defying convention, Helen leaves her husband to protect their young son from his father's influence, and earns her own living as an artist. Whilst in hiding at Wildfell Hall, she encounters Gilbert Markham, who falls in love with her.



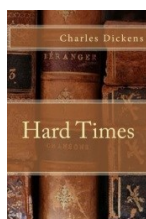
Jane Eyre - Charlotte Bronte

Orphaned into the household of her Aunt Reed at Gateshead, subject to the cruel regime at Lowood charity school, Jane Eyre none the less emerges unbroken in spirit and integrity. How she takes up the post of governess at Thornfield Hall, meets and loves Mr Rochester and discovers the impediment to their lawful marriage are elements in a story that transcends melodrama to portray a woman's passionate search for a wider and richer life that traditionally accorded to her sex in Victorian society.



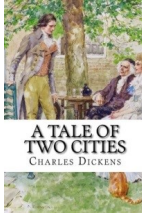
Wuthering Heights - Emily Bronte

The saga of two Yorkshire families in the remote Pennine Hills. The book has been interpreted as an historical romance, a ghostly thriller, a psychological love-story, a religious allegory and a nature poem.



Hard Times - Charles Dickens

It is the story of the family of Thomas Gradgrind in the imaginary Coketown, an industrial city inspired by Preston. Gradgrind is a man obsessed with misguided 'Utilitarian' values that make him trust facts, statistics and practicality more than emotion and is based upon James Mill (the Utilitarian leader). He directs his own children, Louisa and Tom, in this same way: enforcing an artless existence upon them. The cynical James Harthouse arrives and attempts to seduce her but she is inspired by the experience to escape her constricted life and her imagination takes over. Her father protects his daughter from her husband. Not everything is cleared up, though, and Tom steals from the bank and dishonestly tries to shift the blame. He does so successfully for a time but eventually gets found out and must leave the country.



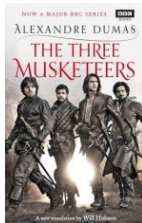
A Tale of Two Cities - Charles Dickens

This is one of Dickens' two historical novels. The two cities in question are Paris and London at the time of the French Revolution. The heroic nobleman, Charles Darnay, renounces his status in opposition to his uncle, the Marquis de St Evremonde, and the evils of oppression he represents. Meanwhile, Dr Manette the physician has become aware of the Marquis' ill-practice through a young peasant and his sister who have been hideously treated. After Darnay leaves France, he falls in love with Manette's daughter, Lucie, and they are married. The story continues after Darnay's happiness with Lucie as he returns to France during the Terror to save a servant. Darnay is arrested and condemned to death. The final section of the novel is concerned with the question of whether he will survive or be punished for his noble act of rescue, and whether or not the Englishman Carton who resembles Darnay will be able to save his life.



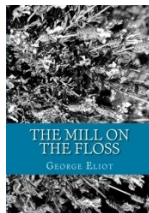
Crime and Punishment - Foydor Dostoevsky

This classic, begun as a novel concerned with the psychology of a crime and the process of guilt, surpasses itself to take on the tragic force of myth.



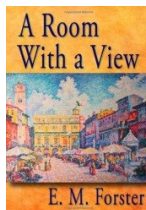
The Three Musketeers - Alexandre Dumas

The Three Musketeers is based on historical fact. The story - dramatic, stirring, and romantic - of d'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis and their fight to preserve the honour of their Queen against the machinations of 'Milady' remains, deservedly, as popular today as it was then.



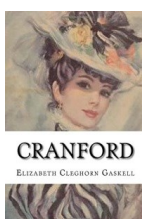
The Mill on the Floss - George Eliot

The Mill on the Floss by George Eliot was originally published in 1860. Over 150 years later, this book is still hailed by many as one of the best novels of all time



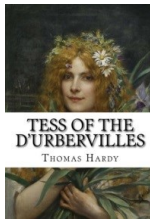
A Room with a View - E M Forster

The first part, which takes place in Italy, centres round a group of people staying at the Pension Bertolini in Florence. The typical behaviour of the English abroad is observed with Mr Forster's shrew eye and the result is, among other things, a first-rate piece of social comedy.



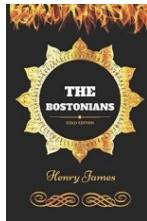
Cranford - Elizabeth Gaskell

The sheer variety and accomplishment of Elizabeth Gaskell's shorter fiction is amazing. This new volume contains six of her finest stories that have been selected specifically to demonstrate this, and to trace the development of her art. As diverse in setting as in subject matter, these tales move from the gentle comedy of life in a small English country town in Dr Harrison's Confessions, to atmospheric horror in far north-west Wales with The Doom of the Griffiths.



Tess of the D'Urbervilles - Thomas Hardy

When Tess Durbeyfield is driven by family poverty to claim kinship with the wealthy D'Urbervilles and seek a portion of their family fortune, meeting her 'cousin' Alec proves to be her downfall. A very different man, Angel Clare, seems to offer her love and salvation, but Tess must choose whether to reveal her past or remain silent in the hope of a peaceful future. With its sensitive depiction of the wronged Tess and powerful criticism of social convention, Tess of the D'Urbervilles is one of the most moving and poetic of Hardy's novels.



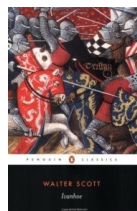
The Bostonians - Henry James

This bittersweet tragicomedy centers on an odd triangle of characters: Basil Ransom, a political conservative from Mississippi; Olive Chancellor, Ransom's cousin and a Boston feminist; and Verena Tarrant, a pretty, young protégée of Olive's in the feminist movement.



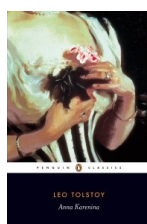
Moby Dick - Herman Melville

Moby Dick is the story of Captain Ahab's quest to avenge the whale that 'reaped' his leg. The quest is an obsession and the novel is a diabolical study of how a man becomes a fanatic. But it is also a hymn to democracy. Bent as the crew is on Ahab's appalling crusade, it is equally the image of a co-operative community at work: all hands dependent on all hands, each individual responsible for the security of each.



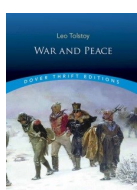
Ivanhoe - Walter Scott

Banished from England for seeking to marry against his father's wishes, Ivanhoe joins Richard the Lion Heart on a crusade in the Holy Land. On his return, his passionate desire is to be reunited with the beautiful but forbidden lady Rowena, but he soon finds himself playing a more dangerous game as he is drawn into a bitter power struggle between the noble King Richard and his evil and scheming brother John.



Anna Karenina - Leo Tolstoy

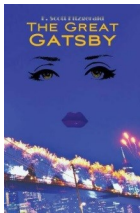
Anna Karenina is one of the most loved and memorable heroines of literature. Her overwhelming charm dominates a novel of unparalleled richness and density. Tolstoy considered this book to be his first real attempt at a novel form, and it addresses the very nature of society at all levels - of destiny, death, human relationships and the irreconcilable contradictions of existence. It ends tragically, and there is much that evokes despair, yet set beside this is an abounding joy in life's many ephemeral pleasures, and a profusion of comic relief.



War and Peace - Leo Tolstoy

Tolstoy's epic combines history and fiction in his depiction of Russia's lengthy war with the French armies of Napoleon and its effects on the domestic lives of those caught up in the conflict.

Early Twentieth Century Novels



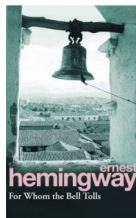
The Great Gatsby - F Scott Fitzgerald

Kathleen Parkinson places this brilliant and bitter satire on the moral failure of the Jazz Age firmly in the context of Scott Fitzgerald's life and times. She explores the intricate patterns of the novel, its chronology, locations, imagery and use of colour, and how these contribute to a seamless interplay of social comedy and symbolic landscape. She devotes a perceptive chapter to Fitzgerald's controversial portrayal of women and goes on to discuss how the central characters, Gatsby and Nick Carraway, embody and confront the dualism inherent in the American dream.



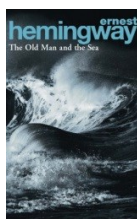
Brighton Rock - Graham Greene

Pinkie, a boy gangster in the pre-war Brighton underworld, is a Catholic dedicated to evil and damnation. In a dark setting of double-crossing and razor slashes, his ambitions and hatreds are horribly fulfilled...until Ida determines to convict him for murder.



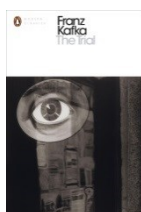
For Whom the Bell Tolls - Ernest Hemingway

High in the pine forests of the Spanish Sierra, a guerilla band operating behind the lines of Franco's army prepares to blow up a vital bridge. Robert Jordan, a young American volunteer, has been sent from the Republic to handle the dynamiting. In the mountains he finds the dangers and the intense comradeship of war - and he discovers Maria, a young woman who has escaped from Franco's rebels...



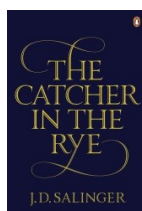
The Old Man and the Sea - Ernest Hemingway

The old man has gone 84 days without catching a fish, everything about him is old except his eyes, they are the colour of the sea. He finally catches a fish, but this is no ordinary fish, nor is his fierce and determined response.



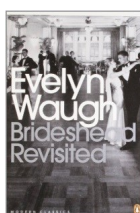
The Trial - Franz Kafka

First published in 1925, The Trial is a classic story of totalitarianism, sadism, and hysteria. With a labyrinth of meanings, author Franz Kafka explores the dark lives of killers.



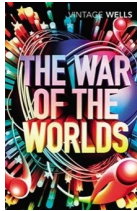
The Catcher in the Rye - J D Salinger

Two days in the life of sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield; a slightly unbalanced but sophisticated adolescent with a strong sense of the unfairness of life.



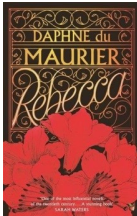
Brideshead Revisited - Evelyn Waugh

Beyond that, it is one of the greatest love stories ever written. We may not mention Ryder and Flyte in the same breath as Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Isolde, or Dido and Aeneas, but as a study in humanity (in my humble opinion) they exceed them all. The sheer beauty of Waugh's prose which is, at times, scarcely believable (see 'A blow, expected, repeated, falling on a bruise') is coupled with the outright hilarity of many passages (see the Belgian who feels as if it is his duty to oppose the lower classes everywhere).



The War of the Worlds - H G Wells

'The War of the Worlds' is Wells' classic science fiction tale of a Martian invasion of Earth. Having already destroyed London, it seems that no-one can stop the intellectually superior Martians from taking over the whole planet.

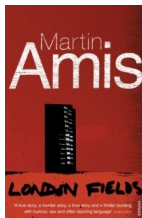


Rebecca - Daphne Du Maurier

Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again . . .

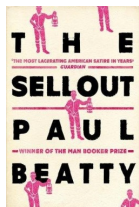
The novel begins in Monte Carlo, where our heroine is swept off her feet by the dashing widower Maxim de Winter and his sudden proposal of marriage. Orphaned and working as a lady's maid, she can barely believe her luck. It is only when they arrive at his massive country estate that she realizes how 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

Modern Novels



London Fields - Martin Amis

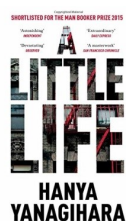
Everyone is always out there searching for someone and something, usually for a lover, usually for love. And this is a love story. But the murderess - Nicola Six - is searching for something and someone else: her murderer. She knows the time, she knows the place, she knows the motive, she knows the means. She just doesn't know the man. London Fields is a brilliant, funny and multi-layered novel. It is a book in which the narrator, Samson Young, enters the Black Cross, a thoroughly undesirable public house, and finds the main players of his drama assembled, just waiting to begin. It's a gift of a story from real life...all Samson has to do is write it as it happens.



The Sellout - Paul Beatty

2016 Man Booker Prize winner.

A biting satire about a young man's isolated upbringing and the race trial that sends him to the Supreme Court, *The Sellout* showcases a comic genius at the top of his game. Born in Dickens on the southern outskirts of Los Angeles, the narrator of *The Sellout* spent his childhood as the subject in his father's racially charged psychological studies. He is told that his father's work will lead to a memoir that will solve their financial woes. But when his father is killed in a drive-by shooting, he discovers there never was a memoir. All that's left is a bill for a drive-through funeral.



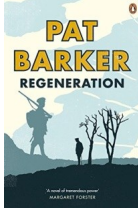
A Little Life - Hanya Yanagihara

When four graduates from a small Massachusetts college move to New York to make their way, they're broke, adrift, and buoyed only by their friendship and ambition. There is kind, handsome Willem, an aspiring actor; JB, a quick-witted, sometimes cruel Brooklyn-born painter seeking entry to the art world; Malcolm, a frustrated architect at a prominent firm; and withdrawn, brilliant, enigmatic Jude, who serves as their centre of gravity. Over the decades, their relationships deepen and darken, tinged by addiction, success, and pride.



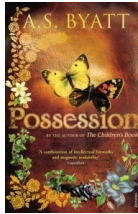
The Handmaid's Tale - Margaret Atwood

The Republic of Gilead offers Offred only one function: to breed. If she deviates, she will, like dissenters, be hanged at the wall or sent out to die slowly of radiation sickness. But even a repressive state cannot obliterate desire - neither Offred's nor that of the two men on which her future hangs. Brilliantly conceived and executed, this powerful evocation of twenty-first century America gives full rein to Margaret Atwood's devastating irony, wit and astute perception.



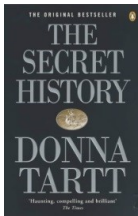
Regeneration - Pat Barker

Craiglockhart War Hospital, Scotland, 1917, and army psychiatrist William Rivers is treating shell-shocked soldiers. Under his care are the poets Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, as well as mute Billy Prior, who is only able to communicate by means of pencil and paper. Rivers's job is to make the men in his charge healthy enough to fight. Yet the closer he gets to mending his patients' minds the harder becomes every decision to send them back to the horrors of the front. Pat Barker's *Regeneration* is the classic exploration of how the traumas of war brutalised a generation of young men.



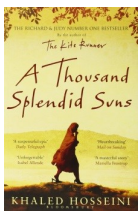
Possession - A S Byatt

Possession is an exhilarating novel of wit and romance, at once a literary detective novel and a triumphant love story. It is the tale of a pair of young scholars investigating the lives of two Victorian poets. Following a trail of letters, journals and poems they uncover a web of passion, deceit and tragedy, and their quest becomes a battle against time.



Secret History - 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 their lives are changed profoundly and for ever



A Thousand Splendid Suns - Khaled Hosseini

Mariam is only fifteen when she is sent to Kabul to marry Rasheed. Nearly two decades later, a friendship grows between Mariam and a local teenager, Laila, as strong as the ties between mother and daughter. When the Taliban take over, life becomes a desperate struggle against starvation, brutality and fear. Yet love can move a person to act in unexpected ways, and lead them to overcome the most daunting obstacles with a startling heroism