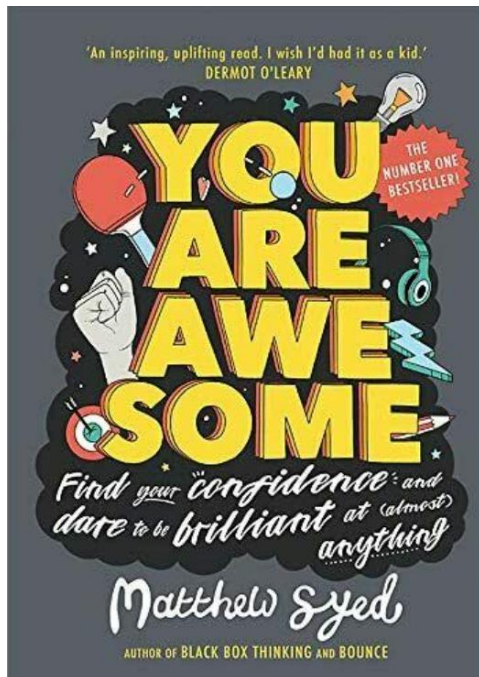


# THS Tutor Reading Booklet 2023-24

## THS Top Reads

Why are we reading this?	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reflect a diverse range of voices and characters, reflecting the background of pupils in the school and society more widely</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ghost Boys</b> by Jewell Parker Rhodes 2018</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fiction: set in Chicago - racial discrimination Average: 140 mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I am the Minotaur</b> by Anthony McGowan 2020</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fiction: set in a British school - mental health, poverty, bullying. Author – Carnegie winner Average: 180 mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Noughts and Crosses</b> By Dominic Cooke - novel by Malorie Blackman 2007</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dystopian fiction: relationships, racism, revenge.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow</b> by Siobhan Curham 2018</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fiction: mental health, refugees, fitting in.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Patron Saints of Nothing</b> by Randy Ribay 2019</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fiction: set in the Philippines - coming of age story of grief, guilt, and family politics Average: 270 mins</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contain a 'big' idea at its heart, for example, the importance of believing in yourself, the power of friendship, or the ability of power to corrupt</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>You are Awesome</b> By Matthew Syed 2018</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Non-fiction: motivational and practical – growth mindset and positive resilience Average: 180 mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>You are a Champion</b> by Marcus Rashford 2021</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Winner of BBA 2022 non-fiction: autobiographical &amp; positive thinking Average: 140 mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Boy 87</b> by Ele Fountain 2018</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fiction: refugee, political prisoner Average: 200 mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Heroes</b> by Robert Cormier 1998</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GCSE text Fiction: set in Massachusetts – war WW2 and heroism, guilt and forgiveness Average: 150 mins</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Have the potential to develop pupils' wider knowledge and widen horizons.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>When the Sky Falls</b> by Phil Earle 2021</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Historical fiction: Britain WW2 - war, friendship, family Average: 260 mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Long Walk to Water</b> By Linda Park 2010</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Historical fiction: set in southern Sudan - survival, friendships, family, courage Average: 120 mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>I am Malala</b> by Malala Yousafzai 2013</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Non-fiction: set in Pakistan, autobiographical, women's rights, religion and education Average: 140 mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Touching the Void</b> by Joe Simpson 1988</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Winner of NCR for non-fiction and Boardman Tasker Award autobiographical: set in Peruvian Andes - recount of mountaineering experience Average: 130 mins</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Tattooist of Auschwitz</b> by Heather Morris 2018</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Historical fiction WW2: set in concentration camp in Poland, survival, faith, compassion and morality Average: 260 mins</p>

Year 7



## You are Awesome

By Matthew Syed  
2018

### What's it about?

You Are Awesome inspires and empowers young readers to find the confidence to realise their potential, using examples of successful people from Mozart to Serena Williams to demonstrate that success really is earned rather than given, and that talent can be acquired. With hard work and determination, practice and self-belief, and, most importantly, a Growth Mindset, there's no reason why anyone can't achieve anything.

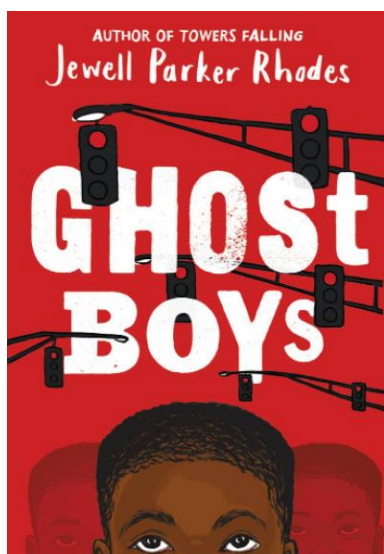
### Why are we reading this?

Contain a 'big' idea at its heart, for example, the importance of believing in yourself, the power of friendship, or the ability of power to corrupt. Non-fiction: practical, insightful and positive, this book written by *Times* journalist, best selling author and two-time Olympian Matthew Syed offers practical, positive and insightful advice to build resilience, encourage students to embrace their mistakes and grow into successful, happy adults.

### What might we talk about?

- What barriers are standing in the way of you achieving what you want to achieve?
- When you think of yourself leaving school at 16, what would that ideally look like?
- What would your dream life look like? What do you need to do to get there?

Year 7



## Ghost Boys

by Jewell Parker Rhodes  
2018

### What's it about?

Twelve-year-old Jerome doesn't get into trouble. He goes to school. He does his homework. He takes care of his little sister. Then Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, watching his family trying to cope with his death, Jerome begins to notice other ghost boys. Each boy has a story and they all have something in common. Bit by bit, Jerome begins to understand what really happened - not just to him, but to all of the ghost boys.

### Main characters

Jerome, Sarah, Emmett Till, Officer Moore

### Why are we reading this?

Reflect a diverse range of voices and characters, reflecting the background of pupils in the school and society more widely. An award-winning author. Fiction connected to real-life events: a heart-breaking and powerful story about a black boy killed by a white police officer, exploring themes of racism.

### What is useful to know?

- **Emmett Louis Till** was a 14-year-old African American boy who was abducted, tortured, and lynched in Mississippi in 1955, after being accused of offending a white woman in her family's grocery store.
- **Tamir E. Rice** was a 12-year-old African-American boy who was killed in Cleveland, Ohio, by police when he was carrying a replica toy gun. At the beginning of the call to police and again in the middle, the caller says of the pistol "it's probably fake" and that it was probably a child, but none of this information was passed on to officers.
- Number of fatal shootings by police in England and Wales 2020/21 = 1
- Number of fatal shootings by police in America in 2020/21 = 1055

### What might we talk about?

- Should children be allowed to play with toy weapons?
- At what age should we talk to children about racism?
- How could we help to make sure everyone feels accepted and included at school?

### Helpful spoilers:

- Includes scenes of police violence.
- Explores systemic racism that exists in society and portrays racial prejudice experience by Black characters.
- The portrayal of loss and mourning could be triggering for readers who have experienced loss.

## Year 7



## When the Sky Falls

by Phil Earle

2012

### What's it about?

Inspired by a true story. It's 1940, and Joseph has been packed off to stay with Mrs F, a woman with no great fondness for children. To Joseph's amazement, she owns the rundown city zoo where he meets Adonis, a huge silverback gorilla. Adonis is ferociously strong and dangerous, but Joseph finds he has an affinity with the lonely beast. When the bombs begin to fall, it is up to Joseph to guard Adonis's cage should it be damaged by a blast. Will Joseph be ready to pull the trigger if it comes to it?

### Main characters

Joseph, Mrs F, Syd and Adonis

### Why are we reading this?

Have the potential to develop pupils' wider knowledge and widen horizons. Winner of The British Book Awards 2022 Children's Fiction Book of the Year, Waterstones Children's Book of the Month June 2021 and shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal 2022. Historical fiction: explores *loss, extreme poverty and hardship, dyslexia, anger, bullying and the enormity of a rare dilemma.*

### What is useful to know?

- Over 3 million people (mostly children) were evacuated during WW2, mostly from cities to the countryside.
- During WW2, some zookeepers had the job of sitting by the enclosure of dangerous animals during an air raid, ready to shoot the animals if a bomb fell and damaged the cage so the animal could escape.
- Earle was inspired to write this book when he heard the story of a friend's father whose job it was to sit by the lion enclosure at Bellevue Zoo in Manchester during air raids.
- He was also inspired by footage of a gorilla at Jersey zoo, who stood guard over a stricken boy who had fallen into their enclosure. Instead of attacking the boy, the ape protected him from other monkeys in the cage, stroking him tenderly until the medics arrived.

### What might we talk about?

- Is it right to keep pets alive during a war? Are human lives more important than animal lives?
- Is Mrs F brave? Is Joseph brave? What makes someone brave?
- Should all children have been evacuated from cities during WW2?

### Helpful spoilers

- Syd's parents have both been killed in WW1.
- Joseph's dad is killed.
- It is heavily suggested that Joseph is dyslexic, although this is never stated.
- The final pages are quite intense, especially to animal lovers who might find it upsetting.

Year 7

## **Additional Short Stories**

### **To read pre Ghost Boys**

#### **Why are we reading these?**

Exposure to the wider genre, i.e. non-fiction genre (biography, recount). Science fiction short stories. Lighter in tone for the start of a new year (and school) with a new tutor group before tackling a more emotive topic.

#### **What are they about?**

**The Eyes Have It** by Philip K Dick – funny and clever – a man thinks he has discovered secret aliens but the reader will slowly realise his mistake.

**Hey You Down There** by Harold Rolseth - a funny, clever twist of mystery story when a greedy man and his long-suffering wife discover aliens in their garden.

**They're Made Out of Meat** by Terry Bisson – a different perspective...what would aliens think if they discovered us?

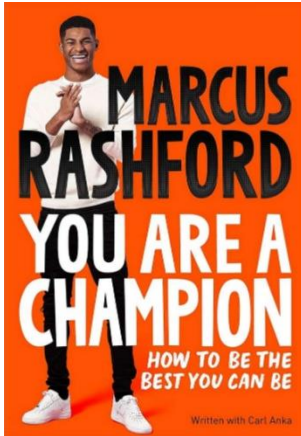
#### **What might we talk about?**

- Do you think aliens exist?
- What do you think aliens would be surprised by if they visited Earth?
- What do you imagine the aliens look like (from HYDT or TMOM)? You could always plan consequences but drawing aliens – one person draws the head, folds it over and passes it on. The next person draws the neck and arms, folds it over and passes it on. Repeat until complete and unfold to discover what has been created.

Year 8

## You are a Champion

by Marcus Rashford  
2022



### What's it about?

Marcus Rashford MBE is famous worldwide for his skills both on and off the pitch – but before he was a Manchester United and England footballer, and long before he started his inspiring campaign to end child food poverty, he was just an ordinary kid from Wythenshawe, South Manchester. It is packed full of stories from Marcus's own life, brilliant advice and top-tips from performance psychologist Katie Warriner.

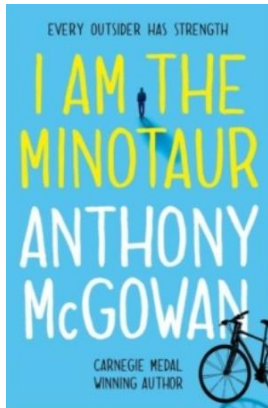
### Why are we reading this?

Contain a 'big' idea at its heart, for example, the importance of believing in yourself, the power of friendship, or the ability of power to corrupt. Winner of BBA 2022 non-fiction: autobiographical biography & positive thinking, full of practical and motivational advice.

### What might we talk about?

Lots of excellent questions at the end of each chapter!

## Year 8



# I am the Minotaur

by Anthony McGowan  
2020

### What's it about?

Matthew is 14 and is struggling to fit in – something that's extra hard when you're taking care of your mum, being bullied at school, and have earned the nickname Stinky Mog because of your poor personal hygiene. When he sees an opportunity to make a good impression on the popular crowd, will he just end up in even more trouble?

### Main characters

Matthew, Ariadne (Ari)

### Why are we reading this?

Reflect a diverse range of voices and characters, reflecting the background of pupils in the school and society more widely. Carnegie winning author. Fiction set in a British school that explores ideas around mental health, bullying and poverty, encouraging empathy and students to consider challenges others could be facing.

### What is useful to know?

- References the Greek myth Theseus and the Minotaur (Theseus, with the help of the king's daughter, Ariadne, must kill the minotaur, a vicious bull-like creature, who is held in the centre of a labyrinth. A further summary can be found here: [www.supersummary.com/theseus/summary](http://www.supersummary.com/theseus/summary))

### What might we talk about?

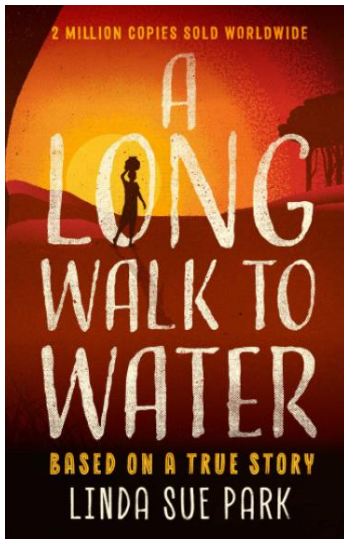
- The 'Golden Gang' seem to Matthew to have perfect lives. Do you think this is true? Does money solve all problems?
- Matthew wants to be a hero by getting Ari's bike back. What does it take to be a true hero?
- Matthew sees himself as a monster, like the Minotaur. Are monsters born? Or are they made by the way people treat them?

### Helpful spoilers

- Matthew is a young carer. There are descriptions of his struggles at home – no hot water, little food, clothes too small etc – that could resonate with young people in a similar situation.



Year 8



## A Long Walk to Water

By Linda Park  
2010

### What's it about?

11-year-old Salva is forced to flee when his village is attacked. Braving every imaginable hardship – including killer lions and hungry crocodiles – he is one of the 'lost boys' travelling the African continent on foot in search of his family and safety.

### Main characters

Salva Dut, Nya, Uncle Jewiir, Marial, Akeer, Mawien Dut Ariik

### Why are we reading this?

Have the potential to develop pupils' wider knowledge and widen horizons. International best seller. Historical fiction: a true survival story that demonstrates the power of perseverance and taking one step at a time, as well as developing students' awareness of the wider world, the challenges faced by many in obtaining clean water and the impact of the war in southern Sudan.

### What is useful to know?

- Some of the details are fictionalized, but the major events are based on Salva Dut's own experiences.
- Park (the author) interviewed him for many hours, and interviewed travellers who had watched water wells drilled in villages like Nya's.
- Known as the Second Sudanese Civil War, the conflict depicted in the book began in 1983 and in essence, the opposing sides were the Muslim-dominated government in the north of Sudan and the non-Muslim collation in the south. Religion and economic issues were the main reasons for conflict.
- The war lasted over 20 years. There were then two years of fragile peace, but ongoing conflict has continued.
- Millions of people were killed, imprisoned, tortured, kidnapped or enslaved; millions more were permanently displaced.
- The Lost Boys (like Salva) was the name given to thousands of boys, like Salva, who walked through southern Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya to find safety.

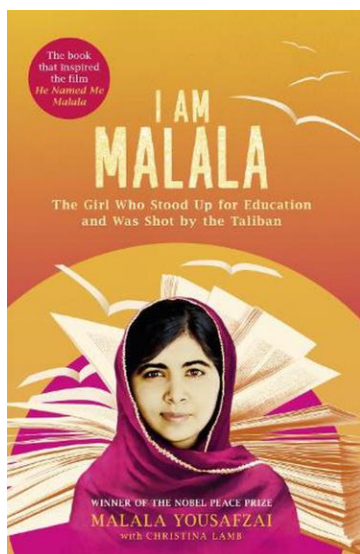
### What might we talk about?

- What would you do? Eg would you have given the men water? If you were the old lady, would you have taken Salva with you?
- How would having a water well in the village change Nya's life?
- What motivates Salva to keep going?

### Helpful spoilers

- Scenes of war, shootings and violence may be distressing for some teenagers.
- The book explores the challenges and trauma of forced displacement, leaving your home and becoming a refugee.
- Explores themes of grief and loss – Salva experiences separation from his family and the death of friends and family along the journey.

## Year 9



# I Am Malala – teen edition

by Malala Yousafzai  
2013

### What's it about?

When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley, one girl fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, 9 October 2012, she almost paid the ultimate price when she was shot in the head at point-blank range.

Malala Yousafzai's extraordinary journey has taken her from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations. She has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and is the youngest ever winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

### Main people

Malala Yousafzai, Ziauddin, Tor Pekai, Kushal, Atal

### Why are we reading this?

Have the potential to develop pupils' wider knowledge and widen horizons. Autobiography. Explores ideas around education, women's rights, religion and bravery while developing students' awareness of challenges others face around the world. I Am Malala will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world.

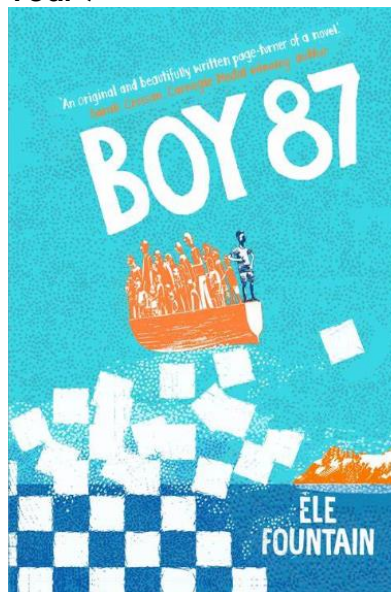
### What is useful to know?

- The Taliban is an extreme Islamic group. They say they are followers of Islam, but many people do not agree as their beliefs are much more extreme than those of the majority of Muslims.
- The Taliban introduced or supported punishments in line with their strict interpretation of Sharia law - such as public executions of convicted murderers and adulterers, and amputations for those found guilty of theft. Men were required to grow beards and women had to wear burka.
- The Taliban also banned television, music and cinema, and disapproved of girls aged 10 and over going to school. They were accused of various human rights and cultural abuses.
- Pakistan grew increasingly radical during the early 2000s.
- The Taliban rose in the country, and used its military force to attack the aspects of Pakistani society that it judged to be perversions of Islam.
- Suicide bombers, acting on behalf of the Taliban, blew up American buildings and schools for women.

### What might we talk about?

- How important is it to have an education? What are the benefits of having an education?
- If you were Malala's parents, would you have encouraged her to write and speak out?
- Do you think of Malala as brave? If so, what about her actions are brave? If not, why not?

## Year 9



## Boy 87

by Ele Fountain  
2018

### What's it about?

Shif is just an ordinary boy who likes chess, maths and racing his best friend home from school. But one day, soldiers with guns come to his door - and he knows that he is no longer safe.

Shif is forced to leave his mother and little sister, and embark on a dangerous journey; a journey through imprisonment and escape, new lands and strange voices, and a perilous crossing by land and sea. He will encounter cruelty and kindness; he will become separated from the people he loves.

Boy 87 is a gripping, uplifting tale of one boy's struggle for survival; it echoes the story of young people all over the world today.

### Main characters

Shif, Bini

### Why are we reading this?

Contain a 'big' idea at its heart, for example, the importance of believing in yourself, the power of friendship, or the ability of power to corrupt. Award winning book and author. Fiction. Explores ideas about refugees, political prisoners, freedom and bravery. Exposes students to the struggles of others around the world. Opens up discussions about recent and frequent events in the news and refugees from multiple countries.

### What is useful to know?

- Definition of a refugee: a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster:
- Both the United Nations and Amnesty International have put the number of total refugees around the world at approximately 26 million (May 2021).
- Half of these are children under the age of 18.
- The number has been growing steadily over the last decade.
- Fountain lived in Addis Ababa for several years, where she was inspired to write *Boy 87*.
- It is set in an unnamed African country. Some sources say Ethiopia but the author hasn't actually said it is somewhere specific.

### What might we talk about?

- Why might someone be forced to leave their home?
- What might be difficult about living in a new country as a refugee?
- What could we do to help refugees around the world?

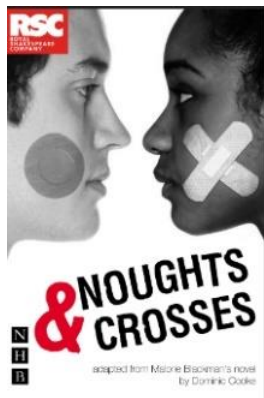
### Helpful spoilers:

- The description of the refugees at the start and end of the book is quite intense.
- Bini is killed half way through the book.

## Year 9

### Noughts and Crosses - the play

By Dominic Cooke - novel by Malorie Blackman  
2007



#### What's it about?

We follow the love story of Sephy and Callum, two young people kept apart by bigotry, terrorism and injustice. Sephy is a Prime Minister's daughter from the powerful Crosses who falls for rebel Callum, son of a dangerous nought agitator. Their desire to be together threatens family loyalties and sparks a growing political crisis.

#### Main characters

Sephy, Callum, Jude, Mr and Mrs Hadley, Mr and Mrs McGregor

#### Why are we reading this?

Have the potential to develop pupils; wider knowledge and widen horizons. A dystopian classic - cultural capital – awareness of a well-known story and author. Won multiple awards, including the Children's Book Award, and lists such as the BBC's 100 most inspiring novels and The Guardian's 100 Best Books of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### What is useful to know?

The form is a playscript. It is important to read stage directions out loud, but you do not need to read the character names each time as students should be following the text.

At the time of the story, slavery had been abolished for some time, but segregation, similar to the Jim Crow Laws, continues to operate to keep the Crosses (dark-skinned people) in control of the Noughts (lighter-skinned people).

#### What might we talk about?

- How well does this reversal succeed in making you see things from another perspective?
- Can violent protest ever be justified?

#### Useful spoilers

- It is implied that Callum's sister commits suicide.
- There are several acts of terrorism committed.
- Near the end of the play, Callum and Sephy have consensual sex, but he is then accused of rape.
- Capital punishment: Callum is hanged at the end of the play.

Year 10

## Touching the Void

By Joe Simpson

1988



### What's it about?

'Touching the Void' is the tale of two mountaineer's harrowing ordeal in the Peruvian Andes. In the summer of 1985, two young, headstrong mountaineers set off to conquer an unclimbed route. They had triumphantly reached the summit, when a horrific accident mid-descent forced one friend to leave another for dead.

### Main people

Joe Simpson, Simon Yates

### Why are we reading this?

Have the potential to develop pupils' wider knowledge and widen horizons. Autobiographical. Winner of NCR for non-fiction and Boardman Tasker Award. A gripping and terrifying true story that explores issues of trust, morality, partnership, difficult decisions and the will to survive.

### What is useful to know?

- Siula Grande is a mountain in the Huayhuash mountain range in the Peruvian Andes. It is 6,344 metres (20,814 ft) high and has a subpeak, Siula Chico, 6,260 m (20,540 ft) high.
- "Alpine-style" climbing: people climb a mountain, connected by a rope. They go up together in concerted motion, taking turns to carve out a path. If one falls, so does the other.
- Yates was physically assaulted in the French Alps by a pro-active critic, and The Alpine Club – the most prestigious mountaineering society in the world – discussed officially ostracising him. Simpson wrote Touching The Void as a response, "to tell it straight, the story of everything Simon did for me before the rope was cut".
- Interesting interview with Simpson:  
[www.stephenphelan.co.uk/articles/touching-the-void](http://www.stephenphelan.co.uk/articles/touching-the-void) (contains swearing)

### What might we talk about?

- Why do people engage in extreme sports such as climbing perilous mountains?
- Are you more of an adventurous or cautious individual? Is there a part of you that longs to step into the great unknown and be challenged by life? If so, how do you satisfy this need? If not, what keeps you from embracing a more adventurous life?
- Yates claims he has struggled with a great deal of guilt following his decision to cut the rope. Are there any positive results of experiencing guilt, or is guilt only a negative emotion? How does guilt affect you?

## Year 10



## Heroes

by Robert Cormier

1998

### What's it about?

Francis Joseph Cassavant is 18. He has just returned home from WW2, and he has no face. He does have a gun and a mission: to murder his childhood hero.

Francis lost most of his face when he fell on a grenade in France. He received the Silver Star for bravery, but was it really an act of heroism? Now, havin survived, he is looking for a man he once admired, a man adored by many people, a man who also received a Silver Star for bravery. A man who destroyed Francis's life.

### Main characters

Francis Cassavant, Larry La Salle, Nicole Renard

### Why are we reading this?

Contains a 'big' idea at its heart, for example, the importance of believing in yourself, the power of friendship, or the ability of power to corrupt. Fiction. A gripping story that explores ideas about revenge, the impact of war, what is heroism and secrets and lies.

### What is useful to know?

- The book is set in the fictitious town of **Frenchtown, Massachusetts**, in the north-east of the United States of America.
- Robert Cormier, relied heavily on his own life and experiences to write it. He was born in Leominster, Massachusetts, in 1925, so would have been just a couple of years older than Francis during the war.
- In particular he knew that many of his generation, who were just entering adulthood in World War Two and therefore went off to fight, felt alienated from the rest of society on their return. The people who stayed at home could not understand what they had experienced.
- The Silver Star is the **third-highest award for bravery in combat given by the United States military**. The Silver Star honours service personnel who display exceptional valour while engaged in military combat operations against an enemy force.

### What might we talk about?

- Does one sin wipe away all the good things you have done?
- Is forgiveness for you or for the person you forgive?
- Is evil born or created? Is there such thing as evil?

### Helpful spoilers

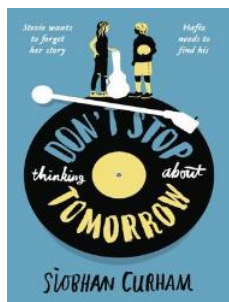
- Included instances of violence, including physical assault, bullying and domestic abuse.
- There are some references to grooming and abuse that are not explicit.
- Francis experiences bullying and social exclusion due to his injuries sustained from the war.
- Explores themes of loss and grief.

Year 10

## Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow

By Siobhan Curham

2018



### What's it about?

An uplifting story of friendship, unity and hope that highlights the important and topical issues surrounding young carers and young refugees.

Fourteen-year-old Stevie lives in Lewes with her beloved vinyl collection, her mum ... and her mum's depression. When Stevie's mum's disability benefits are cut, Stevie and her mother are plunged into a life of poverty. But irrepressible Stevie is determined not to be beaten and she takes inspiration from the lyrics of her father's 1980s record collection and dreams of a life as a musician. Then she meets Hafiz, a talented footballer and a Syrian refugee. Hafiz's parents gave their life savings to buy Hafiz a safe passage to Europe; his journey has been anything but easy. Then he meets Stevie...

### Main characters

Stevie, Hafiz

### Why are we reading this?

Reflect a diverse range of voices and characters, reflecting the background of pupils in the school and society more widely. Links to themes of refugees in year 9, but placing in students' own world. Encourage empathy for refugees and young carers. Encourage discussions around mental health.

### What is useful to know?

- More than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives in four-and-a-half years of armed conflict, which began with anti-government protests before escalating into a full-scale civil war.
- More than 11 million others have been forced from their homes as forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad and those opposed to his rule battle each other - as well as jihadist militants from so-called Islamic State.
- Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow is a song written by Fleetwood Mac and released in 1977.
- There are an estimated 800,000 young carers in Britain.

### What might we talk about?

- How much do you really know about what is going on in other people's lives?
- Is it important for everyone to feel accepted?
- Is sport important? How can it help people socially?

### Useful spoilers

- Stevie's dad was killed in a mugging – themes of loss and grief.
- Stevie's mum suffers from depression – themes of mental health.
- Hafiz talks towards the end of the book about his journey to England which could be upsetting.

Year 11



## Patron Saints of Nothing

By Randy Ribay  
2019

### What's it about?

A powerful coming-of-age story about grief, guilt, and the risks a Filipino-American teenager takes to uncover the truth about his cousin's murder.

When Jay Reguero hears of his cousin Jun's death, everything changes. Although years have passed since they were last in contact, the stories about Jun just don't fit with the boy Jay knew. Hoping to uncover the truth, Jay travels to Jun's home in the Philippines – but the shocking realities of life there lead to even

more questions. Can Jay find the answers he seeks?

### Main characters

Jay Reguero, Jun, Tito Maning, Grace, Tito Chato

### Why are we reading this?

Reflect a diverse range of voices and characters, reflecting the background of pupils in the school and society more widely. A multi award-winning novel. Set in the Philippines – a coming of age story of grief, guilt and family politics. A powerful and courageous story that asks tough questions about our global responsibility, our duty to our family, to our friends, and our social consciousness.

### What is useful to know?

- The events in the novel refer to the very real anti-drug policy of Duterte's government, which seeks to eliminate illegal drugs to make the country safer but uses extreme and often unjustified violence to do this.
- Duterte has sanctioned government murders of individuals suspected to be using or dealing drugs and has also encouraged the public to kill these individuals themselves, offering a bounty for dead suspects.
- It is unclear how many people have died because of Duterte's war on drugs. His policies have been widely condemned by international organizations such as the United Nations, but within the Philippines seem to be largely popular.

### What might we talk about?

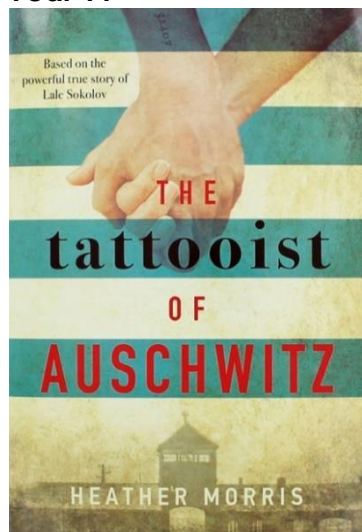
- What can we do to ensure that all people, whatever identities they possess, are treated with dignity and respect?
- How do I define my family? What makes up my family? How does my family define who I am?
- How can we ensure that truth is protected and told in socially responsible ways?

### Useful spoilers

- The novel explores issues of drug addiction and one of the characters struggles with substance abuse.
- Jay has a strained relationship with his family, especially his father.
- There is some exploration of the killings that occurred during the Philippine drug war.
- The theme of loss is central in the novel as Jay struggles with the death of his cousin.



## Year 11



# The Tattooist of Auschwitz

by Heather Morris

2018

### What's it about?

*The Tattooist of Auschwitz* is a 2018 Holocaust novel by New Zealand novelist Heather Morris. The book tells the story of how Slovakian Jew Lale Sokolov, who was imprisoned at Auschwitz in 1942, fell in love with a girl he was tattooing at the concentration camp. The story is based on the real lives of Sokolov and his wife, Gita Furman.

### Main people

Lale (Lah-lay), Gita, Baretzki, Jakub, Cilka, Pepan

### Why are we reading this?

Have the potential to develop pupils' wider knowledge and widen horizons. Award winning novel. Both harrowing and life-affirming, *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* brings home the human experience behind the Holocaust's unspeakable atrocities to a generation too young to remember it.

### What is useful to know?

- Please see additional attached resource.

### What might we talk about?

- Is it important that a work of fiction is historically accurate?
- Why is it important to learn about events from the past?
- Can good people do terrible things?

### Helpful spoilers

- The novel describes the horrors committed during the Holocaust.
- There are descriptions of daily life of the prisoners in Auschwitz, including malnutrition, illness and death.
- There are descriptions of physical violence, including beatings and shootings, by the Nazi guards against the prisoners.
- There are some moments of consensual sexual encounters between the main characters.
- Cilka is forced into a sexual relationship with a guard.

### The Tattooist of Auschwitz by Heather Morris

- The Tattooist of Auschwitz is a work of historical fiction based on the story of how Slovakian Jew Lali Sokolov fell in love with a girl he was tattooing at the concentration camp named Gita Furman.
- There are sections of this book which are graphic and deal with challenging themes. Try to read ahead so you know what is coming up.
- The publisher of the book has said 'The Tattooist of Auschwitz is a novel based on the personal recollections and experiences of one man. It is not, and has never claimed to be, an official history.'
- Some historians and Holocaust Memorial organisations have criticised this book as they feel it leaves readers with a distorted perception of events. Some people have raised concerns that soon there won't be Holocaust survivors left to tell their stories so the accounts of the Holocaust we write are becoming increasingly important. They have also raised concerns about how it might be disrespectful it was for the author to change details of the survivors account of such traumatic events. There are a number of historical inaccuracies in the book, according to the Auschwitz Memorial Research Centre. These include:
  - the number tattooed on Gita's arm in the book was 34902, could not possibly be accurate. "It should be ruled out that a prisoner who arrived at the camp on 13 April 1942 could receive such a high number," states Wanda Witek-Malicka of the Auschwitz Memorial Research Centre. "It is however a fact that on 13 April 1942 a female transport from Slovakia arrived at Auschwitz – but they were given numbers from 4761 to 5203. Therefore, Gita Furman was either brought to the camp on a different date or received a different number than that indicated in the book." This is an important historical detail as it tells us how many people had become victims of the camp at that time.
  - Another inaccuracy is the use of penicillin in the camp which was not mass produced until the US and British governments invested in this in preparation for D Day in 1944.
  - Witek-Malicka's fact-checking also takes issue with a range of other parts of the story, from the route taken to the camp ("the transport could not have travelled through Ostrava and Pszczyzna ... [Morris] probably used the modern online search engine of railway connections"), to Morris' account of the murder of prisoners in a bus being used as a gas chamber, which "does not find confirmation in any sources".
- On the other hand, others argue the purpose of the book is to tell a story set in the events of the Holocaust and cause people to think more about the tragedies that occurred. They also argue that the book will lead people to find out more about the Holocaust.
- For more information on the Holocaust please visit the Holocaust Educational Trust website which has a range of resources and survivor stories: [Holocaust Educational Trust - Latest News \(het.org.uk\)](http://www.holocausteducationaltrust.org.uk). Please also feel free to come and chat to the History Department about this.