

St George Catholic College Reading Spine

The Saint George Reading Spine is a core selection of high-quality texts that we recommend to pupils. This collection of texts has been collated with consideration of reading ability and suitability, literary classics and must-reads, works which link to specific subjects and schemes of work and includes some texts recommended by school staff members.

Most of these books are available to borrow from school, via the SORA app or from your local library. If you need any support with getting hold of a book speak to your tutor, your English teacher or Miss Templeman.

We recommend that pupils should aim to set aside at least 15 minutes of dedicated reading time every day.

Action

- *Alex Rider* series by Anthony Horowitz
- *Car-Jacked* by Ali Sparkes
- *Artemis Fowl* by Eoin Colfer
- *Shapeshifter* series by Eoin Colfer
- *Deep Oblivion* by Matt Dickinson

Adventure

- *Where the River Runs Gold* by Sita Brahmahari
- *The House with Chiecken Legs* by Sophie Anderson
- *The Huntress Trilogy* by Sarah Driver
- *The Wind on Fire trilogy* by William Nicholson (**Staff Favourite - Miss Templeman**)

Comedy

- *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series by Jeff Kinney
- *Who Let the Gods Out?* By Maz Evans (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Fenn**)
- *Demon Dentist* by David Walliams
- *Kid Normal* by Greg James and Chris Smith
- *The BFG* by Roald Dahl

Detective/ Crime/ Mystery

KS3

- A Murder most Unladylike series by Robin Stevens
- *Ghost Boys* by Jewell Parker Rhodes
- *The Good Thieves* by Katherine Rundell

KS4

- *One of Us is Lying* series by Karen M. McManus
- *Dark Places* by Gillian Flynn (**Staff Favourite - Mr Rogers**)
- *The Leopard* by Jo Nesbo (**Staff Favourite - Mr Clark**)
- *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown (**Staff Favourite – Mr Rogers**)

Dystopian/Political novels

KS3

- *Divergent* by Veronica Roth
- *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner
- *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline (**Staff Favourite - Mrs Zanoletti**)
- *Boy in the Tower* by Polly Ho-Yen
- *Skywake* by Jamie Russell
- *Wild Robot* by Peter Brown

KS4

- *The Handmaid's Tale* (**Staff Favourite - Mrs Zanoletti**)
- *The Hunger Games* Series by Suzanne Collins
- *Mortal Engine* by Philip Reeve
- *1984* by George Orwell (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Atkinson**)

Fantasy/Adventure

KS3

- *The Hobbit* by J. R. R Tolkien
- *Harry Potter* series by J.K Rowling
- *His Dark Materials* series by Philip Pullman
- *How to Train Your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell
- *Howl's Moving Castle* (**Staff Favourite – Miss Templeman**)
- *Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Lewis**)
- *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle

KS4

- *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy* by J.R.R Tolkien

- *Children of the Hurin* by J.R.R Tolkien (**Staff Favourite – Mr Walford**)
- *Shogun* by James Clavell (**Staff Favourite – Mr Leat**)
- *Moth Dark* by Kika Hatzopoulou

Gothic Novels

KS3

- *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman
- *The Library of the Dead* by T L Huchu (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Fenn**)

KS4

- *Dracula* by Bram Stoker
- *The Woman in Black* by Susan Hill
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (**Staff Favourite – Miss Templeman**)
- *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte (**Staff Favourite – Miss Lefeurve**)
- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Lewis**)

Historical Fiction

KS3

- *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo
- *Private Peaceful* by Michael Morpurgo
- *Goodnight Mr Tom* by Michelle Magorian
- *Nisha's War* by Dan Smith

KS4

- *The Order of Darkness* series by Phillipa Gregory (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Pegg**)
- *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak (**Staff Favourite – Miss Meider**)
- *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor
- *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris
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Classics/Must-Reads

KS3

- *The Famous Five* by Enid Blyton
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll
- *The Boy at the Back of the Class* by Onjali Q. Rauf
- *The Worst Witch* by Jill Murphy
- *Wonder* by R J Palacio (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Cameron**)
- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding

- *Percy Jackson* series by Rick Riordan
- *The Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynne Reid Banks

KS4

- *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (**Staff Favourite – Miss Foord**)
- *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel
- *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald (**Staff Favourite – Mr Preston**)
- *Kane and Abel* by Geoffrey Archer (**Staff Favourite – Mr Bedford**)
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini (**Staff Favourite – Mr Preston**)
- *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Lewis**)
- *The Time Traveller's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Sumner**)
- *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (**Staff Favourite – Miss Ouvry**)
- *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen
- *A Catcher in the Rye* (**Staff Favourite – Mr Fields**)

Subject Specific Recommendations

Computer Science

- *Escape Room* by Christopher Edge
- *Ghost in the Wires: My Adventure as the World's Most Wanted Hacker* by Kevin Mitnick

English

KS3

- *Refugee Boy* by Benjamin Zephaniah
- *Running Wild* by Michael Morpurgo
- *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai
- *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*- Judith Kerr

KS4

- *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson
- *An Inspector Calls* by J.B Priestley (**GCSE English Literature Text**).
- *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens (**GCSE English Literature Text**).

- *The Man Who Invented Christmas* by Les Standiford
- *The Gift of the Magi* by O. Henry
- *Great Expectations* or *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens

History

- *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris
- *Six Tudor Queens* by Alison Weir
- *Windrush Child* by Benjamin Zephaniah

PE

- *Lioness: My Journey to Glory* by Beth Mead
- *Redemption* by John McAvoy
- *You Are Awesome* by Matthew Syed
- *High Performance: Lessons from the Best on Becoming Your Best* by Jake Humphrey and Prof Damian Hughes
- *You Can Do It – How to Find Your Voice and Make a Difference* by Marcus Rashford
- *You Have the Power – Find Your Strength and Believe You Can* by Leah Williamson

Regular reading of articles on BBC Sport will help provide real world context and support application of taught content in the classroom.

RE

- *The Shack* by William Paul Young
- *Til We Have Faces* by C.S Lewis
- *Sophie's World* by Jostein Gaarder
- *Bathsheba* by Reluctant Beauty by Angela Hunt
- *Esther* by Royal Beauty by Angela Hunt
- *The Cross and the Switchblade* by Nicky Cruz

Science

- *A Short History on Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson
- *Periodic Tales* by Hugh Aldersey-Williams

Award-winning YA and Children's Books

- *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green
- *I'll Give you the Sun* by Jandy Nelson
- *King of Nothing* by Nathanael Lessore
- *Finding Phoebe* by Gavin Extence
- *Look Both Ways* by Jason Reynolds
- *Noughts & Crosses* by Malorie Blackman (**Staff favourite Mrs Drummond**)

Short, Hi-Low reads (High Interest, Low reading ability)

- *The Prisoner of Cell 25* by Richard Paul Evans
- *House Arrest* by K.A Holt
- *Attitude* by Robin Stevenson

Non-Fiction

- *Black and British: A Short, Essential History* by David Olusoga
- *She Made a Monster: How Mary Shelley Created Frankenstein* by Lynn Fulton
- *Public Speaking for Teens* by Ellen Evans
- *How to Stay Alive* by Bear Grylls
- *'We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices'* edited by Wade Hudson & Cheryl Willis Hudson

Biographies

- *Hope in a Ballet Shoe* by Michaela and Elaine DePrince
- *Papillon* by Henri Charriere (**Staff Favourite – Mr Habberley**)
- *A Street Cat Named Bob* by James Bowen (**Staff Favourite – Mrs Smallwood**)
- *Keane* by Roy Keane (**Staff Favourite – Mr Coplestone**)
- *Unbelievable* by Jessica Ennis-Hill
- *This is Going to Hurt: Secret Diaries of a Junior Doctor* (**Staff Favourite – Mr Devine**)
- *Steve Jobs* by Walter Isaacson (**Staff Favourite – Miss Heneghan**)
- *Boy: Tales of Childhood* – Roald Dahl (**Staff Favourite – Miss Ouvry**)

Poetry

- *The Red Pencil* by Andrea Davis Pinkney
- *Falling Out the Sky: Poems about Myths and Monsters* by Emma Wright

- *The Weight of Water* by Sarah Crossan
- *Cloud Busting* by Malorie Blackman

Want even more recommendations? You can use the latest book award shortlists to find high-quality books for your children. Click on the links to see the shortlists and discover more about the awards.

- [The CILIP Carnegie Award](#): Awarded by children’s librarians for an outstanding book written in English for children and young people.
- [Blue Peter Book Awards](#): Two awards, one for best story and one for best story with facts, managed by the Book Trust.
- [Children’s Book Award](#): The only children’s book award voted for solely by children.
- [The Branford Boase Award](#): Awarded annually to an outstanding first novel, recognising both the author and their editor.
- [Waterstone’s Children Books Prize 2025](#) – With almost 300 bookshops across the UK, Waterstones sell a huge variety of children and Young Adult books.