

'16 before 16' Recommended Reads

Book Title	Author	Synopsis
Frankenstein	Mary Shelley	Frankenstein tells the story of gifted scientist Victor Frankenstein who succeeds in giving life to a being of his own creation. However, this is not the perfect specimen he imagines that it will be, but rather a hideous creature who is rejected by Victor and mankind in general.
The White Tiger	Aravind Adiga	The White Tiger is the story of Balram Halwai's life as a self-declared "self-made entrepreneur": a rickshaw driver's son who skillfully climbs India's social ladder to become a chauffeur and later a successful businessman.
The Tattooist of Auschwitz	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.
To Kill A Mockingbird *	Harper Lee	"Shoot all the Bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a Mockingbird." Lawyer Atticus Finch gives this advice to his children as he defends the real mockingbird of Harper Lee's classic novel – a black man 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.
Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achebe	The novel chronicles the life of Okonkwo, the leader of an Igbo community, from the events leading up to his banishment from the community for accidentally killing a clansman, through the seven years of his exile, to his return, and it addresses a particular problem of emergent Africa—the intrusion in the 1890s of white missionaries and colonial government into tribal Igbo society.
Never Let Me Go	Kazuo Ishiguro	Friends Kathy, Tommy and Ruth grow up together at a seemingly idyllic boarding school in the English countryside. When they leave the school and the horrible truth of their true purpose is revealed to them, they must simultaneously confront deep-seated feelings of love, jealousy and betrayal that threaten to tear their friendship asunder.
The Shadow of the Wind	Carlos Ruiz Zafon	<i>The Shadow of the Wind</i> is a stunning literary thriller in which the discovery of a forgotten book leads to a hunt for an elusive author who may or may not still be alive... Hidden in the heart of the old city of Barcelona is the 'Cemetery of Lost Books', a labyrinthine library of obscure and forgotten titles that have long gone out of print. To this library, a man brings his 10-year-old son Daniel one cold morning in 1945. Daniel is allowed to choose one book from the shelves and pulls out 'The Shadow of the Wind' by Julian Carax.

Dracula	Bram Stoker	A masterpiece of the horror genre, Dracula also probes identity, sanity and the dark corners of Victorian sexuality and desire. It begins when Jonathan Harker visits Transylvania to help Count Dracula purchase a London house, and makes horrifying discoveries in his client's castle. Soon afterwards, disturbing incidents unfold in England – an unmanned ship is wrecked; strange puncture marks appear on a young woman's neck; a lunatic asylum inmate raves about the imminent arrival of his 'Master' – and a determined group of adversaries prepare to battle the Count.
Notes From a Small Island	Bill Bryson	Before leaving his much-loved home in North Yorkshire to move back to the States for a few years with his family, Bill Bryson insisted on taking one last trip around Britain, a sort of valedictory tour of the green and kindly island that had so long been his home. His aim was to take stock of the nation's public face and private parts (as it were), and to analyse what precisely it was he loved so much about the country. Notes from a Small Island was a huge number-one bestseller when it was first published, and has become the nation's most loved book about Britain.
Killing Honour	Bali Rai	A blood-curdling murder story set in Leicester's Asian community where family honour seems sometimes to count for more than family love. Vivid scenes of sexual and violent assault make this a thought-provoking, unsettling book for mature teens.
The Boxer	Nikesh Shukla	Told over the course of the ten rounds of his first fight, this is the story of amateur boxer Sunny. A seventeen-year-old feeling isolated and disconnected in the city he's just moved to, Sunny joins a boxing club to learn to protect himself after a racist attack. He finds the community he's been desperately seeking at the club, and a mentor in trainer Shona, who helps him find his place in the world. But racial tensions are rising in the city, and when a Far Right march through Bristol turns violent, Sunny is faced with losing his new best friend Keir to radicalisation.
Scythe (and sequels)	by Neal Shusterman	<i>Thou shalt kill.</i> A world with no hunger, no disease, no war, no misery. Humanity has conquered all those things, and has even conquered death. Now scythes are the only ones who can end life—and they are commanded to do so, in order to keep the size of the population under control. Citra and Rowan are chosen to apprentice to a scythe—a role that neither wants. These teens must master the “art” of taking life, knowing that the consequence of failure could mean losing their own.
Black and British: A short, essential history	David Olusoga	Revised and rewritten for younger readers, Olusoga's insightful and invaluable history of the Black experience in the British Isles ranges from forgotten Africans in the Roman legions to the multicultural society of the present day.

The Help	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. But as each woman finds the courage to cross boundaries, they come to depend and rely upon one another. Each is in search of a truth. And together they have an extraordinary story to tell...
Silence is Not An Option	Stuart Lawrence	From the younger brother of Stephen Lawrence, who was tragically murdered in an unprovoked racist attack in 1993, comes a powerful and positive book about being the best person you can be and using your determination to create a better world for others.
And Then There Were None	Agatha Christie	1939. Europe teeters on the brink of war. Ten strangers are invited to Soldier Island, an isolated rock near the Devon coast. Cut off from the mainland, with their generous hosts Mr and Mrs U.N. Owen mysteriously absent, they are each accused of a terrible crime. When one of the party dies suddenly they realise they may be harbouring a murderer among their number.
The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes	Arthur Conan Doyle	Out of his smoke-filled rooms in Baker Street stalks a figure to cause the criminal classes to quake in their boots and rush from their dens of iniquity ... The twelve mysteries gathered in this first collection of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson's adventures reveal the brilliant consulting detective at the height of his powers. Problems involving a man with a twisted lip, a fabulous blue carbuncle and five orange pips tax Sherlock Holmes' intellect alongside some of his most famous cases, including A Scandal in Bohemia and The Red-Headed League.
1984	George Orwell	In George Orwell's 1984, Winston Smith wrestles with oppression in Oceania, a place where the Party scrutinizes human actions with ever-watchful Big Brother. Defying a ban on individuality, Winston dares to express his thoughts in a diary and pursues a relationship with Julia.
Diary of a Young Naturalist	Dara McAnulty	The teenage star of BBC's Countryfile and social media sensation, Dara McAnulty opens up about his autism and its interrelation to his love of the natural world, as well as providing fascinating practical advice and knowledge about British wildlife.
Good Omens	Terry Pratchett & Neil Gaiman	According to The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch (the world's only completely accurate book of prophecies, written in 1655, before she exploded), the world will end on a Saturday. Next Saturday, in fact. Just before dinner. So the armies of Good and Evil are amassing, Atlantis is rising, frogs are falling, tempers are flaring. Everything appears to be going according to Divine Plan.
The Lords of the North (and sequels)	Bernard Cornwell	Uhtred, having helped Alfred secure Wessex as an independent Saxon kingdom, returns north in an attempt to find his stepsister. Instead, he discovers chaos, civil war and treachery in Northumbria. He takes the side of Guthred, once a slave and now a man who would be king, and in return expects Guthred's help in capturing Dunholm, the lair of the dark Viking lord, Kjartan. There is betrayal, romance and war, and all of it, as usual, based on real events.
Sharpe's Eagle	Bernard Cornwell	Lieutenant Richard Sharpe faces not only great danger on the battlefield but also, even more dangerous, treachery within his own

(and sequels)		ranks. But as the enemy approaches, he must pick up his rifle and prepare to lead his men against the French at one of the biggest, bloodiest fights of the war – the Battle of Talavera. Out of the mist comes the roaring, undefeated army sent by Emperor Napoleon. Over their heads soar the Eagles, the standards touched by the hand of the Emperor himself. And boldly waiting for them is Sharpe ...
The Road	Cormac McCarthy	In a post-apocalyptic world, a father must protect his son from a group of cannibals who have menaced the streets. They plan to head south where there is a hospitable environment to live in.
Oliver Twist	Charles Dickens	In this spellbinding, dark coming of age tale of orphan Oliver in the backstreets of London, Charles Dickens launches a scathing attack on Victorian poverty, gifting the world with such iconic characters as the brutal Bill Sikes and manipulative Fagin. Combining elements of Gothic romance, the Newgate novel and popular melodrama, Charles Dickens' <i>Oliver Twist</i> created an entirely new kind of fiction, scathing in its indictment of a cruel society and pervaded by an unforgettable sense of threat and mystery.
A Long Way Gone	Ishmael Beah	This is how wars are fought now: by children, hopped-up on drugs and wielding AK-47s. There are more than fifty conflicts going on worldwide and it is estimated there are some 300,000 child soldiers fighting. Ishmael Beah used to be one of them.
I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings *	Maya Angelou	I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, the first of seven autobiographical works by American writer Maya Angelou, published in 1969. The book chronicles her life from age 3 through age 16, recounting an unsettled and sometimes traumatic childhood.
Hagseed	Margaret Atwood	Felix is at the top of his game as Artistic Director of the Makeshiweg Theatre Festival. His productions have amazed and confounded. Now he's staging a Tempest like no other. It will boost his reputation. It will heal emotional wounds. Or that was the plan. Instead, after an act of unforeseen treachery, Felix is living in exile in a backwoods hovel, haunted by memories of his beloved lost daughter, Miranda. Also brewing revenge. After twelve years, revenge finally arrives in the shape of a theatre course at a nearby prison. Here, Felix and his inmate actors will put on his Tempest and snare the traitors who destroyed him. It's magic! But will it remake Felix as his enemies fall?
Oranges are not the only Fruit	Jeanette Winterson	This is the story of Jeanette, adopted and brought up by her mother as one of God's elect. Zealous and passionate, she seems destined for life as a missionary, but then she falls for one of her converts. At sixteen, Jeanette decides to leave the church, her home and her family, for the young woman she loves. Innovative, punchy and tender, <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> is a few days' ride into the bizarre outposts of religious excess and human obsession.
Pillars of The Earth	Ken Follett	<i>The Pillars of the Earth</i> is the story of Philip, prior of Kingsbridge, a devout and resourceful monk driven to build the greatest Gothic

		<p>cathedral the world has known. It is the story of Tom, the mason who becomes his architect – a man divided in his soul who will be divided by love and tortured by duty and divided loyalty. It is the story of the beautiful, resourceful, elusive Lady Aliena, haunted by a secret shame, driven by a bitter determination and destined to shape her own destiny and others...</p> <p>But most of all it is a story of a community shaped by history and of the ultimate struggle between good and evil that will turn church against state, and brother against brother.</p> <p>The Kingsbridge Series is: <i>The Pillars of the Earth</i>, World Without End and A Column of Fire.</p>
Small Island	Andrea Levy	<p>It is 1948, and England is recovering from a war. But at 21 Nevern Street, London, the conflict has only just begun. Queenie Bligh's neighbours do not approve when she agrees to take in Jamaican lodgers, but Queenie doesn't know when her husband will return, or if he will come back at all. What else can she do?</p> <p>Gilbert Joseph was one of the several thousand Jamaican men who joined the RAF to fight against Hitler. Returning to England as a civilian he finds himself treated very differently.</p>
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks	Rebecca Skloot	<p>Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. Born a poor black tobacco farmer, her cancer cells – taken without her knowledge – became a multimillion-dollar industry and one of the most important tools in medicine. Yet Henrietta's family did not learn of her 'immortality' until more than twenty years after her death, with devastating consequences . . .</p>
The Enemy (and sequels)	Charlie Higson	<p>Everyone over the age of fourteen has succumbed to a deadly zombie virus and now the kids must keep themselves alive. When the sickness came, every parent, police officer, politician – every adult fell ill. The lucky ones died. The others are crazed, confused and hungry. Only children under fourteen remain, and they're fighting to survive.</p>
One Dog at a Time (and sequels)	Pen Farthing	<p>In a remote outpost of Now Zad, in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan, Pen Farthing and his troop of young Royal Marines survive frequent engagements with the Taliban and forge links with the local community. Pen's tour of duty will change his life forever, but for entirely unexpected reasons ...</p> <p>Appalled by the horrors of a local dog fight, he intervenes to free the victims. One of these dogs finds his way into the Marine compound – and into Pen's heart.</p>
Home Fire	Kamila Shamsie	<p>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' <i>Antigone</i>, <i>Home Fire</i> is an urgent, fiercely compelling story of loyalties torn apart when love and politics collide – confirming Kamila Shamsie as a master storyteller of our times.</p>
Pride and Prejudice	Jane Austen	<p>Austen's most famous novel, the delightfully witty courtship of Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy is brimming with character, playfulness and irony. Impeccably crafted in flawless prose, <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> remains one of the jewels in the crown of English literature.</p>
The Catcher in the Rye	J.D. Salinger	<p>Holden Caulfield, the maelstrom of contradictions and repressed rage at the tale's centre, emerges as an everyman for a disaffected generation, a boy adrift in time. Through a series of encounters – old friends, random strangers – Caulfield's story is that of coming of age, a young man profoundly shocked by the understanding that all innocence must end.</p>

Life of Pi	Yann Martel	One boy, one boat, one tiger . . . After the tragic sinking of a cargo ship, a solitary lifeboat remains bobbing on the wild, blue Pacific. The only survivors from the wreck are a sixteen-year-old boy named Pi, a hyena, a zebra (with a broken leg), a female orang-utan – and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger. The scene is set for one of the most extraordinary and best-loved works of fiction in recent years.
The 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.
My Sister, the Serial Killer	Oyikan Braithwaite	When Korede's dinner is interrupted one night by a distress call from her sister, Ayoola, she knows what's expected of her: bleach, rubber gloves, nerves of steel and a strong stomach. This'll be the third boyfriend Ayoola's dispatched in "self-defence" and the third mess that her lethal little sibling has left Korede to clear away. She should probably go to the police for the good of the menfolk of Nigeria, but she loves her sister and, as they say, family always comes first. Until, that is, Ayoola starts dating the doctor where Korede works as a nurse. Korede's long been in love with him, and isn't prepared to see him wind up with a knife in his back: but to save one would mean sacrificing the other...
Brave New World	Aldous Huxley	Far in the future, the World Controllers have created the ideal society. Through clever use of genetic engineering, brainwashing and recreational sex and drugs all its members are happy consumers. Bernard Marx seems alone harbouring an ill-defined longing to break free. A visit to one of the few remaining Savage Reservations where the old, imperfect life still continues, may be the cure for his distress...
Misery	Stephen King	Paul Sheldon used to write for a living. Now he's writing to stay alive. Misery Chastain is dead. Paul Sheldon has just killed her – with relief, with joy. Misery made him rich; she was the heroine of a string of bestsellers. And now he wants to get on to some <i>real</i> writing. That's when the car accident happens, and he wakes up splinted and in pain, in the remote mountain home of his rescuer, Annie Wilkes. The good news is that Annie was a nurse and has pain-killing drugs. The bad news is that she has long been Paul's Number One Fan. And when she finds out what Paul has done to Misery, she doesn't like it. She doesn't like it at all . . .
The Kite Runner	Khaled Hosseini	Afghanistan, 1975: 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 will 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 Afghanistan under Taliban rule to find the one thing that his new world cannot grant him: redemption.
The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald	This is the story of the fabulously wealthy Jay Gatsby and his love for the beautiful Daisy Buchanan, of lavish parties on Long Island at a time when <i>The New York Times</i> noted "gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession," it is an exquisitely crafted tale of America in the 1920s.

The Beach	Alex Garland	Written with a pace as blistering as the South East Asian sun, Alex Garland's Generation X thriller of backpacker meltdown in Thailand has become a cult classic. Richard lands in East Asia in search of an earthly utopia. In Thailand, he is given a map promising an unknown island, a secluded beach – and a new way of life. What Richard finds when he gets there is breathtaking: more extraordinary, more frightening than his wildest dreams.
The Lovely Bones	Alice Sebold	<p>In heaven, Susie Salmon can have whatever she wishes for – except what she most wants, which is to be back with the people she loved on earth. In the wake of her murder, Susie watches as her happy suburban family is torn apart by grief; as her friends grow up, fall in love, and do all the things she never had the chance to do herself. But as Susie will come to realise, even in death, life is not quite out of reach . . .</p> <p>A luminous, astonishing novel about life and death, memory and forgetting, and finding light in the darkest places.</p>
Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy (series)	Douglas Adams	An international phenomenon and pop-culture classic, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy has been a radio show, TV series, novel, stage play, comic book and film. Following the galactic (mis)adventures of Arthur Dent, Hitchhiker's in its various incarnations has captured the imaginations of curious minds around the world . . .
The Five People You Meet in Heaven	Mitch Albom	A wonderfully moving fable that addresses the meaning of life, and life after death, in a poignant way. The novel's protagonist is an elderly amusement park maintenance worker named Eddie who, while operating a ride called the 'Free Fall', dies while trying to save a young girl who gets in the way of a falling cart that hurtles to earth. Eddie goes to heaven, where he meets five people who were unexpectedly instrumental in some way in his life. While each guide takes him through heaven, Eddie learns a little bit more about what his time on earth meant, what he was supposed to have learned, and what his true purpose on earth was.
The Alchemist	Paulo Coelho	Santiago, a young shepherd living in the hills of Andalucía, feels that there is more to life than his humble home and his flock. One day he finds the courage to follow his dreams into distant lands, each step galvanised by the knowledge that he is following the right path: his own. The people he meets along the way, the things he sees and the wisdom he learns are life-changing. With Paulo Coelho's visionary blend of spirituality, magical realism and folklore, The Alchemist is a story with the power to inspire nations and change people's lives.
Pigeon English	Stephen Kelman	Eleven-year-old Harrison Opoku, the second best runner in Year 7, races through his new life in England with his personalised trainers – the Adidas stripes drawn on with marker pen – blissfully unaware of the very real threat around him. Newly-arrived from Ghana with his mother and older sister Lydia, Harri absorbs the many strange elements of city life, from the bewildering array of Haribo sweets, to the frightening, fascinating gang of older boys from his school. But his life is changed forever when one of his friends is murdered. As the victim's nearly new football boots hang in tribute on railings behind fluorescent tape and a police appeal draws only silence, Harri decides to act, unwittingly endangering the fragile web his mother has spun around her family to keep them safe.
Dr. Jekyll and Mr.	Robert Louis	The disturbing Mr. Hyde is making his repugnant presence known in late 19th Century London. But punishment for his vile acts are

Hyde	Stephenson	<p>always parried by the good, and well-respected, Dr. Jekyll. Soon, the secret relationship between the two men will be revealed.</p> <p>A classic that continues to be referenced today, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde will forever be locked in literary history.</p>
The Hate U Give	Angie Thomas	<p>Sixteen-year-old Starr lives in two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she was born and raised and her posh high school in the suburbs. The uneasy balance between them 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 community. It could also get her killed.</p> <p>Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful and gripping YA novel about one girl's struggle for justice.</p>
Gone Girl	Gillian Flynn	<p>Who are you?</p> <p>What have we done to each other?</p> <p>These are the questions Nick Dunne finds himself asking on the morning of his fifth wedding anniversary, when his wife Amy suddenly disappears. The police suspect Nick. Amy's friends reveal that she was afraid of him, that she kept secrets from him. He swears it isn't true. A police examination of his computer shows strange searches. He says they weren't made by him. And then there are the persistent calls on his mobile phone. So what really did happen to Nick's beautiful wife?</p>
A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters	Julian Barnes	<p>Beginning with an unlikely stowaway's account of life on board Noah's Ark, A History of the World in 10½ Chapters presents a surprising and subversive fictional-history of earth told from several kaleidoscopic perspectives. Noah disembarks from his ark but he and his Voyage are not forgotten: they are revisited in on other centuries and other climes - by a Victorian spinster mourning her father, by an American astronaut on an obsessive personal mission. We journey to the Titanic, to the Amazon, to the raft of the Medusa, and to an ecclesiastical court in medieval France where a bizarre case is about to begin...</p>
One	Sarah Crossan	<p>Grace and Tippi don't like being stared and sneered at, but they're used to it. They're conjoined twins - united in blood and bone. What they want is to be looked at in turn, like they truly are two people. They want real friends. And what about love? But a heart-wrenching decision lies ahead for Tippi and Grace. One that could change their lives more than they ever asked for .</p> <p>This moving and beautifully crafted novel about identity, sisterhood and love ultimately asks one question: what does it mean to want and have a soulmate?</p>
Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?	Philip K. Dick	<p>San Francisco lies under a cloud of radioactive dust. The World War has killed millions, driving entire species to extinction and sending mankind off-planet. Those who remain covet any living creature, and for people who can't afford one, companies build incredibly realistic fakes: horses, birds, cats, sheep...even humans. Rick Deckard is an officially sanctioned bounty hunter tasked to find six rogue androids. They're machines, but look, sound, and think like humans-and infinitely more dangerous.</p>
The Stepford Wives	Ira Levin	<p>All the beautiful people live in idyllic Stepford, Connecticut, an affluent, suburban Eden populated with successful, satisfied hubbies and beautiful, dutiful wives. For Joanna Eberhart, newly arrived with her husband and two children, it all seems too good to be true. But just beneath the town's flawless surface, something is sordid and wrong - something abominable with roots in the local Men's Association. And it may already be too late for Joanna to save herself from being devoured by Stepford's hideous perfection.</p>
The Damned Utd	David Peace	<p>In 1974 the brilliant and controversial Brian Clough made perhaps his most eccentric decision: he accepted the position of Leeds United manager. A successor to Don Revie, his bitter adversary, Clough was to last just 44 days. David Peace takes us into the mind and thoughts of Ol' Big 'Ead himself, and brings vividly to life one of football's most complex and fascinating characters.</p>

The Colour of Magic	Terry Pratchett	Somewhere on the frontier between thought and reality exists the Discworld, a parallel time and place which might sound and smell very much like our own, but which looks completely different. Particularly as it's carried through space on the back of a giant turtle. It plays by different rules. But then, some things are the same everywhere. The Disc's very existence is about to be threatened by a strange new blight: the world's first tourist, upon whose survival rests the peace and prosperity of the land.
Chocky	John Wyndham	Matthew's parents are worried. At eleven, he's much too old to have an imaginary friend, yet they find him talking to and arguing with a presence that even he admits is not physically there. This presence – Chocky – causes Matthew to ask difficult questions and say startling things: he speaks of complex mathematics and mocks human progress. Then, when Matthew does something incredible, it seems there is more than the imaginary about Chocky. Which is when others become interested and ask questions of their own: who is Chocky? And what could it want with an eleven-year-old boy?

- Contains explicit racial language

<https://uk.bookshop.org/lists/books-by-writers-of-colour-for-readers-in-years-10-and-11>