

Year 8 English Reading List

Gothic Literature - Term 1

We start Year 8 with the gothic genre. Students will benefit from reading texts featuring gothic characters and conventions to help them make connections with the classic gothic texts we study in class.

Coraline by Neil Gaiman

A scrutiny of family life through the lens of a gothic fairy tale. The monotony of Coraline's life is broken when she meets her Other Parents, as entertaining as they are monstrous. When her real parents are kidnapped, monotony suddenly becomes far more appealing as she must strive to save them from the evil clutches of her Other Mother.

My Swordhand is Swinging by Marcus Sedgwick

Pacey gothic novel set in a remote woodland village in Eastern Europe. The village is beset by a plague of vampires and a young man discovers the truth about his father's past.

The Whisperling by Hayley Hoskins

The year is 1897, and Peggy Devona can speak with ghosts. She hides her gift from those afraid of a girl with such powers, terrified of the secrets the dead could reveal through her. But when her best friend is accused of murdering her rich mistress, Peggy knows only she - a whisperling - can save her.

Cirque du Freak series by Darren Shan

Darren Shan's an ordinary schoolboy, until he and his best friend Steve get tickets to the Cirque Du Freak, a bizarre freak show featuring such arcane performers as Hans Hands, Gertha Teeth, the Wolf Man and Rhamus Twobellies. In the midst of the ghoulish excitement, true terror raises its head when Steve recognises that one of the performers -- Mr Crepsley - is in fact a vampire!

Frozen Charlotte by Alex Bell

In this young adult horror novel, a girl staying on a remote island suspects the tiny Victoria-era dolls in her family's old mansion are up to murder. When her best friend dies under mysterious circumstances, Sophie sets off to stay with her cousins on the remote Isle of Skye

War Poetry - Term 2

In class, we'll be studying classic war poets such as Wilfred Owen as well as more modern war poetry which considers the effects of war. It will be really helpful for students to read books which develop their knowledge of the two world wars such as:

When the guns fall silent by James Riordan

This short novel from James Riordan tells the story of the Christmas day truce in No Man's Land, as a boy and his grandfather visit Flanders fields. Famous war poems are quoted to mark each chapter while letters from the trenches and details on the war effort back home are included as well.

When the Sky Falls by Phil Earle

As the Second World War escalates and bombs start to fall, Joseph is charged with protecting Adonis the gorilla in this nerve-shreddingly tense thriller based on a true story.

When the war came home by Lesley Parr

The First World War has ended, but it hasn't gone away. When Natty has to move to a new village, she meets two young soldiers who are still battling the effects of war.

Our Beautiful Game by Lou Kuenzler

Based on true accounts, this inspiring story of female footballing heroics during the Great War brings to life a forgotten aspect of British history.

Shakespeare's Heroes and Villains - Term 3

In our final term in Year 8, we look at Shakespeare's heroes and villains touching on famous plays such as Romeo and Juliet, Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, The Tempest, Othello and Macbeth. It will be helpful for students to engage in background reading on Shakespeare's life, times and works as well as enjoying books set in the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras and modern retellings of Shakespeare's plays.

Manga Shakespeare (Various Plays)

Shakespeare's most famous plays re-imagined as manga comic strips.

What's so special about Shakespeare by Michael Rosen

This book includes studies of four of Shakespeare's plays, intriguing facts and information about Shakespeare himself and the world at this time, accompanied by a useful timeline.

Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman

Voted as one of the UK's best-loved books, Malorie Blackman's dystopian Romeo and Juliet retelling, Noughts & Crosses is a seminal piece of YA fiction; a true modern classic.

The Somerset Tsunami by Emma Carroll

This story brings the paranoia and superstitions of seventeenth-century England to full-blooded life. Sinister gentry and rumours of witchcraft blight the life of young Fortune Sharpe in this eerie tale based on real-life events, which gives helpful insight into the historical context of Macbeth.

The Invisible Hand by James Hartley

The first part of a series called Shakespeare's Moon. Each book is set in the same boarding school but focuses on a different Shakespeare play. The first book is based on Macbeth.

Exposure by Mal Peet

This novel superimposes Posh and Becks-type characters on the plot of Othello, involving corruption, deceit and apparent infidelity.

Storm Wake by Lucy Christopher

Inspired by the Tempest. Moss lives with Pa on the island. They came there to escape flooding, which has swallowed the rest of the world. They can never leave, but it hardly seems to matter to Moss, because Pa is a sorcerer.