

Reading List

Diverse Books

Expand your world...

This reading list is a celebration of diverse reads, voices and dazzling stories.

We've rounded up some of our top recommendations.



Recommended Diverse books for KS3

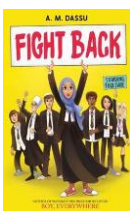
Multicultural

Onyeka and the Academy of the Sun by Tola Okogwu:



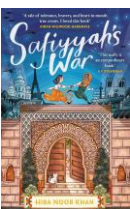
A popular superhero series about a British-Nigerian girl who learns that her Afro hair has psychokinetic powers. Onyeka has always felt insecure about her vibrant curls, until she makes an important discovery: she can control her hair with her mind! Her mother quickly whisks her off to the Academy of the Sun, a school in Nigeria where Solari - children with superpowers - are trained.

Fight Back by AM Dassu



Aaliyah adores K-Pop, she wants to be a doctor, and she loves hanging out with her best friends Sukhi and Lisa. But when a terrorist attack happens at a local concert, her world is thrown into disarray. As a Muslim girl, she suddenly finds herself the target of racist bullying at school, and her family become caught in the crosshairs of racial tensions in their community.

Safiyyah's War by Hiba Noor Khan



Focussing on the experiences of a small group of individuals, Safiyyah's story shines a spotlight on an under-recognised pocket of resistance from World War II when hundreds of Jews were led to safety via underground passages from the Grand Mosque in Paris.

Sunshine Simpson series by GM Linton

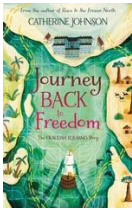


My Name is Sunshine Simpson is an absolute charmer for readers who love seeing themselves in immersive, family-centred stories. Honest and moving, it's a compassionate character-driven debut that also shares Black history and the legacy of Britain's Windrush Generation.

Where the River Runs Gold by Sita Brahmachari



Shifa and her brother Themba live with their dad in Kairos City, on a future Earth decimated by climate change. Families sign their rights away to the Freedom Fields organization that claims to look after them as long as they opt in.



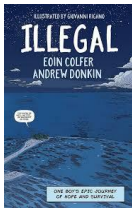
Journey back to Freedom : the Olaudah Equiano story by Catherine Johnson

Aged only eleven, Olaudah Equiano was cruelly snatched from his home in Africa and sold into slavery. He spent much of the next ten years serving various masters at sea, traveling to the far corners of the globe.



When Secrets Set Sail by Sita Brahmachari

Usha is devastated when her grandmother Kali Ma passes away. Then straight-talking Imtiaz arrives – her new adoptive sister – and the two girls clash instantly. That is until Kali Ma's ghost appears...with a task for them. Many years ago, Kali Ma made a promise she couldn't keep. She can't pass on to the other side until the girls fulfil it.



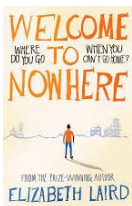
Illegal by Eoin Colfer

The narrative of Illegal centres on 12-year-old Ebo, who escapes his small African village's extreme poverty, lack of opportunity, and inebriated uncle. He is determined to locate his sister Sisi and brother Kwame, who have already departed for Europe in search of a better life.



The Royal Rebel : the life of suffragette Princess Sophia Duleep Singh by Bali Rai

This inspirational story is of Sophia Duleep Singh, granddaughter and heir to the Sikh Empire and goddaughter of Queen Victoria. The book tells of her story as she fought for Indian independence from the British government and the rights of women.



Welcome to Nowhere by Elizabeth Laird

Twelve-year-old Omar and his brothers and sisters were born and raised in the beautiful and bustling city of Bosra, Syria. But when his clever older brother, Musa, gets mixed up with some young political activists, everything changes . . . Before long, bombs are falling, people are dying, and Omar and his family have no choice but to flee their home with only what they can carry.



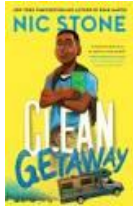
The Boy at the Back of the Class and others by Onjali Q. Rauf

Unable to speak English and seated at the back of the class, Ahmet 'the refugee kid' becomes the perfect target for bullies and rumours alike. But Ahmet has also captured the attention and empathy of a fellow classmate, who will do anything to help him find his family.



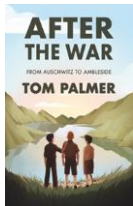
Little Badman series by Humza Ahmed

Humza (aka Little Badman) great ambition is to be a super cool rapper and he devotes most of his time and energy on pursuing this goal. Something weird is happening at school though: teachers are disappearing and being replaced by food-obsessed Aunties intent on fattening everyone up!



Clean Getaway by Nic Stone

Scoob loves hanging out with G'ma and hearing her stories, but it quickly becomes clear this is not just any road trip: she's on a mission to right a wrong from her past. And as he learns more about both his grandpa – and G'ma too – Scoob can't help questioning everything he thought he knew about his family history.



After the War by Tom Palmer

The Second World War is finally over and Yossi, Leo and Mordecai are among three hundred children who arrive in the English Lake District. Having survived the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps, they've finally reached a place of safety and peace. But Yossi is haunted by thoughts of his missing father and disturbed by terrible nightmares.



Mohinder's War by Bali Rai

We follow thirteen-year-old Joelle Breton, who one day comes across the wreckage of a plane and meets Indian-born RAF pilot Mohinder Singh, who is the pilot. Joelle's parents are members of the French resistance and it's up to them to keep him hidden from the Nazis. But how long will they be safe?



Barakah Beats by Maleeha Siddiqui

Nimra battles to understand her interpretation of Islam and whether it allows her to sing in a band or not. It is refreshing to find a book written by an author who understands the complexity of relationships between three generations from a Muslim immigrant heritage.



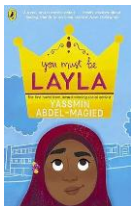
Asha and the Spirit Bird by Jasbinder Bilan

Inspired by the spirit of her grandmother in the form of a lamagaia bird, Asha decides to set off on a dangerous journey, to find her father and bring him home before money-lenders make them penniless. Throughout this warm, comforting story, religious faith and spiritual beliefs provide an anchor for Asha.



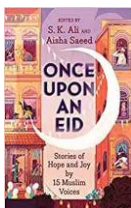
Black Brother, Black Brother by Jewell Parker-Rhodes

Donte wishes he were invisible. As one of the few black boys at his school, he feels as if he is constantly swimming in whiteness. Dubbed the 'Black Brother', Donte's teachers and classmates make it clear they wish he were more like his lighter skinned brother, Trey. With the help of a former Olympic fencer, Donte embarks on a journey to find a way to make people at school see past the colour of his skin to who he really is.



You Must be Layla by Yassmin Abdel-Magied

13 year-old Layla is clever, ambitious and funny. She's left her comfortable Islamic school in Brisbane, Australia and is starting a scholarship at a private school where she is the first (and only) child to wear a Muslim headscarf. Layla decides the best way to really prove herself and her right to be at the school is to win a big regional robotics competition with her very ambitious invention. But can she do it alone – especially when the boy who bullied her is on the other team?



Once Upon an Eid

From fifteen Muslim authors –each story has family and celebration at its heart, and the protagonists' delight in the traditional festivities leaps off the pages. From stories about caring for a mother who's ill, to arguing (and making up) with cousins and siblings, through wearing a hijab for the first time, and attempting to bake the perfect Eid brownies, there is something to suit everyone.



1783 Freedom by Catherine Johnson

Nat is a 12-year-old boy born into slavery on a Jamaican sugar cane plantation owned by the brutal English family, the Barratts. The story opens with his mum and baby sister being taken away to work on another plantation, leaving him to face his hardships alone. But when Nat is sent to England to look after some exotic pineapple plants, he starts to dream of freedom. Then Nat meets the amazing Shadrack Furman and his life is changed forever.



Looking at the Stars by Jo Cotterill

When Amina's village is suddenly struck by a civil war, her family is brutally torn apart and her dreams of freedom are shattered. As she begins her journey to safety at a refugee camp, Amina faces some of her most feared situations, with only her imagination to escape from reality.



City of Stolen Magic by Nazneen Ahmed Pathak

It is 1855 and the magic which was widely practised in India is being rapidly eradicated under British rule. Chompa's mother, Ammi, is an expert in writing magic, but Chompa prefers the immediacy of finger magic. When Ammi is kidnapped by the British, Chompa is devastated and does everything she can to track her down. She is relieved when Mohsin, an old friend of Ammi's, offers to assist with the search and helps Chompa to develop her remarkable magical skills. Their quest takes them from a rural Indian village to the bustling city of Dacca, and then across the sea to the grimy streets of London's East End.



Steady for this by Nathaniel Lessore

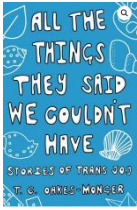
Shaun (aka MC Growls) is ready to drop his best bars and smash the competition at Raptology. That way, he's convinced Tanisha, his crush, will finally give him a chance. But when a livestream practice goes epically wrong, Growls's dirty laundry is literally exposed. He's finally achieved his dreams of going viral – not in the good way. Now Tanisha won't look at him, he's the joke of the school and there's no way he can show his face at the competition. Will he ever catch a break?



A Sudden Storm by Bali Rai

Set against the backdrop of Arjan's 16th birthday, the narrative begins with the excitement of a night out with friends—watching a film and enjoying a meal at Nando's. But what should have been a joyous occasion turns into a nightmare when Arjan and his friends are targeted by a group of racist thugs. The attackers single out Arjan due to his skin color and the turban he wears, a symbol of his faith and cultural identity. What follows is a harrowing exploration of racism and violence, forcing readers to confront the harsh realities of intolerance. Based on a real life incident.

LGBTQ+ representation



All the things they said we couldn't have by Tash Oakes-Monger

Stories of Trans Joy'. Transition has not been something linear for me, my joy has come in seasons. 'Now, more than ever, trans people deserve to hear stories of joy and hope, where being trans doesn't have to be defined by fear and dysphoria, but can be experienced through courage, freedom...



Secret Sunshine Project by Benjamin Dean

Bea's family visit London Pride together and have the ultimate day out. But a year later, a grey cloud is following Bea's family around. Dad has passed away, and without him around they have no choice but to pack their bags and move to the countryside to live with Gran. With the help of new friends, The Secret Sunshine Project is formed - Bea's plan to bring Pride to the countryside. There's just one teeny tiny problem - the village mayor.



My Brother's Name is Jessica by John Boyne

Sam Waiver has always been a loner: bullied, struggling at school, with parents who have very little time for him. The one person he has always been able to rely on is his beloved older sibling - but when they announce that they are transitioning, Sam's life is thrown upside down.



Better Nate Than Ever by Tim Federle

Thirteen year old Nate Foster fantasizes about becoming a Broadway star. However, he struggles to even get roles in his high school play. When Nate's parents leave for the weekend, he and his friends decide to make Nate a star.



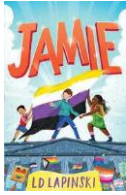
George by Alex Gino

When people look at George, they think they see a boy. But she knows she's not a boy. She knows she's a girl. George thinks she'll have to keep this a secret forever. This book is the story of George, a 10-year-old transgender girl struggling for acceptance among her friends and family while standing up to school bullies.



Alice Austen Lived Here by Alex Gino

When Sam's home borough of Staten Island opens up a contest for a new statue, Sam finds photographer Alice Austen, whose house has been turned into a museum, and who lived with a female partner for decades. Soon, Sam's project isn't just about winning the contest. It's about discovering a rich queer history that Sam's a part of.



Jamie by L. D. Lapinski

Jamie Rambeau is a happy 11-year-old non-binary kid who likes nothing better than hanging out with their two best friends Daisy and Ash. But when the trio find out that in Year Seven they will be separated into one school for boys and another for girls, their friendship suddenly seems at risk.



Rick by Alex Gino

Rick and his best friend Jeff start middle school together, but Rick is increasingly troubled by Jeff's bullying and homophobia. Rick finds refuge in his school's Rainbow Spectrum club, a group supporting LGBTQ students and their allies, but struggles in his desire to stand up to Jeff

Disability/illness including mental health representation & neurodiversity



When I See Blue by Lily Bailey

From Lily Bailey is a story about a 12 year old boy who suffers with O.C.D. The author has experience of living with Obsessive-compulsive Disorder and writes with first-hand knowledge about its impact on a young person. Her hope is that this fictional story will help young readers to have a better insight into what it is like to be a young person living with this illness.



Ways to Live Forever by Sally Nicholls

Sam Oliver McQueen is an 11-year-old boy with leukaemia. Sam spends time with his private tutor Mrs. Willis and older friend Felix, whom he met from the same children's hospital, and writes about his life with cancer throughout the book.



Freak the Mighty by Rodman Philbrick

Freak the Mighty tells the story of two boys—a slow-learning giant and a genius in a disabled body—who become friends, share adventures, and defend themselves against bullies and social rejection.

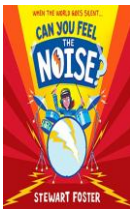


Guts by Raina Telgemeier A Graphic Novel- Raina wakes up one night with a terrible upset stomach. Raina eventually returns to school, where she's dealing with the usual highs and lows but it soon becomes clear that Raina's tummy trouble isn't going away... and it coincides with her worries about food, school, and changing friendships. A funny true story about growing up and gathering courage to conquer fears.



The Goldfish Boy by Lisa Thompson

The Goldfish Boy is an engaging story about an interesting young boy called Matthew. He has OCD and he aims to solve the case of Teddy, a missing boy. For Matthew, this is a gargantuan struggle, as he never normally dares to leave the security of his own home.



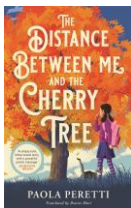
Can You Feel the Noise? By Stewart Foster

Although Sophie has been experiencing gradual hearing loss for a while, it's still a big shock when she wakes up one morning to find she is now deaf. Everything feels strange, her days are filled with hospital appointments, and conversations are limited to what she can lip-read.



Checkmates by Stewart Foster

Felix is a boy with ADHD who finds school difficult and is always getting into trouble. No one has any idea how hard life is for Felix. However, when his recently-widowed Granddad decides teaching him chess will help him concentrate at school, Felix tries everything to get out of it.



The Distance Between Me and the Cherry Tree by Paola Peretti

Mafalda is a nine-year-old girl who knows one thing: sometime in the next six months her sight will fail completely. Can Mafalda find a way through a seemingly dark future and still go to school, play football and look after her beloved cat? With the help of her family, and her friends, Mafalda needs to discover the things that will be important to her when her sight has failed.



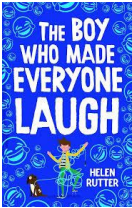
Wink by Rob Harrell

Ross Maloy just wants to be a normal seventh grader. He doesn't want to lose his hair, or wear a weird hat, or deal with the disappearing friends who don't know what to say to "the cancer kid." But with his recent diagnosis of a rare eye cancer, blending in is off the table.



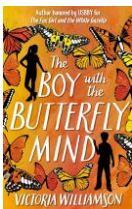
A Storm of Strawberries by Jo Cotterill

Darby has Down's syndrome and sometimes it's sometimes not clear to her why things cannot always be as she would like. Darby is an exceptionally likeable protagonist. The reader empathises with her predicament, but also with her parents who battle to save their strawberry farm as it is hit by a tornado.



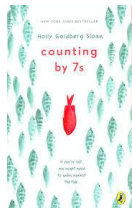
The Boy who made Everyone Laugh by Helen Rutter

When life is funny, make some jokes about it. Billy Plimpton has a big dream: to become a famous comedian when he grows up. He already knows a lot of jokes, but thinks he has one big problem standing in his way: his stutter. At first, Billy thinks the best way to deal with this is to . . . never say a word.



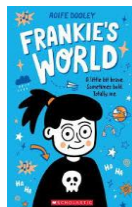
The Boy with the Butterfly Mind by Victoria Williamson

Jamie Lee just wants to be normal but his ADHD isn't making it easy. If only he could control his butterfly mind then he'd have friends, live with his mum and not be sent to stay with his dad. Elin Watts just wants to be perfect- then maybe her dad would leave his new family and come back to Glasgow. When Jamie and Elin's families blend, the polar opposites of chaotic Jamie and Elin collide.



Counting by 7s by Holly Goldberg Sloan

Willow Chance is a twelve-year-old genius who is obsessed with diagnosing medical conditions and finds comfort in counting by 7s. It has never been easy for her to connect with anyone other than her adoptive parents. Suddenly Willow's world is tragically changed when her parents both die in a car crash, leaving her alone in a baffling world.



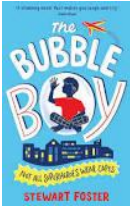
Frankie's World by Aoife Dooley

From acclaimed Autistic Irish comedian Aoife Dooley comes a fresh and funny debut middle-grade graphic novel about fitting in and standing out. Frankie is different from everyone in her class, and she can't figure out why. She has trouble concentrating, and her classmates tease her for not having a dad at home.



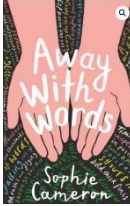
The Amazing Edie Eckhart by Rosie Jones

Hello! My name is Edie Eckhart and I'm eleven years old. I'm a little bit different. I have a disability called cerebral palsy, so I talk slowly and fall over a lot. It's never really bothered me because I've never known anything else. Edie Eckhart is Excited with a capital E to start secondary school with her best friend Oscar but when she and Oscar are put into different tutor groups on their first day, Edie is devastated.



The Bubble Boy by Stewart Foster

Eleven year old Joe cannot remember a life outside of his hospital room, with its beeping machines and view of London's rooftops. His condition means that he is not allowed outside; not even for a moment, and his few visitors risk bringing life-threatening germs inside his 'bubble'



Away with Words by Sophie Cameron

Gala and her dad, Jordi, have just moved from home in Catalonia to a town in Scotland, to live with Jordi's boyfriend Ryan. Gala doesn't speak much English, and feels lost, lonely and unable to be her usual funny self. Until she befriends Natalie, a girl with selective mutism. The two girls find their own ways to communicate, which includes collecting other people's discarded words. They use the words to write anonymous supportive poems for their classmates, but then someone begins leaving nasty messages using the same method - and the girls are blamed. Gala has finally started adapting to her new life in Scotland and is determined to find the culprit. Can she and Natalie show the school who they really are?

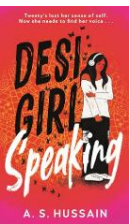
Recommended Diverse books for KS4

Multicultural



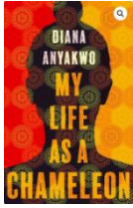
The Thread that Connects us by Ayaan Mohamud

Safiya has struggled to pick up the pieces of her family since her dad left them and moved to Somalia. She refuses to trust in love, despite wishing she could fall for boy-next-door Yusuf... And then her dad moves back to town with his new family, shattering her life all over again. Halima doesn't want to move to England. She resents her stepdad for dropping her in a strange new life with a new language to learn - replacing her friends with bullies who set out to shame her.



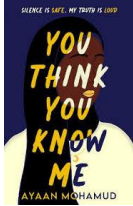
Desi Girl Speaking by A.S Hussain

Battling depression and faced with parents and friends who don't fully understand what's happening, sixteen-year-old Tweety feels like no one is listening, until she stumbles across *Desi Girl Speaking*, a podcast by someone else who's struggling too. Through episodes and exchanged emails, Tweety and Desi Girl begin to confide in each other, but as Tweety's depression deepens, she'll have to decide whether to stay silenced or use her voice to speak up.



My Life as a Chameleon by Diana Anyakwo

15-year-old Lily has been sent from her home in Lagos, Nigeria, to a new school and a new family in Manchester, England. She thought it would be a chance to reinvent herself, become the shiny-happy-confident girl that everyone wants to be around. But it hasn't turned out like that. Here, without friends or someone to confide in, she struggles to fit in – and being 'different' feels newly dangerous, vulnerable and provocative.



You Think You Know Me by Ayaan Mohamud

Hanan has always been good and quiet. She accepts her role as her school's perfect Muslim poster girl. She ignores the racist bullies. *A closed mouth is gold.* But then her friend is murdered and every Muslim is to blame. How can she stay silent while her family is ripped apart? It's time for Hanan to stop being the quiet, good girl-to stand up and shout.



Needy Little Things by Chanelle Desamours

Sariyah Lee Bryant can hear what people need- she has an ability only her family and her best friend, Malcolm, know the truth about. But when her friend Deja vanishes shortly after, Sariyah is left wondering if her ability is more a curse than gift. This isn't the first time one of her friends has landed on the missing persons list, and she's determined not to let her become yet another forgotten Black girl. Not trusting the police and media to do enough on their own, Sariyah and her friends work together to figure out what led to Deja's disappearance.

Always be my Bibi by Priyanka Taslim

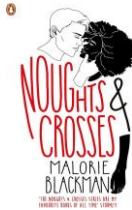


Bibi Hossain was supposed to get her first kiss this summer. Too bad her father finds out and grounds her - no boys until your sister gets married. Just when Bibi thinks she'll be stuck helping him at their popular fried chicken chain until school reopens, her oh-so-perfect older sister Halima drops a bombshell: she's marrying the heir of a princely estate turned tea garden in Bangladesh. Soon, Bibi is hopping on the next flight to Sylhet for Halima's Big Fat Bengali Wedding. Unfortunately, the stuffy Rahmans are a nightmare—especially Sohel, the groom's younger brother.



"I Am Thunder" by Muhammad Khan

Muzna Saleem, a shy Pakistani teenager living in the UK is struggling with her identity and parental expectations. Muzna finds herself drawn to Arif, a charismatic boy with radical views. As their relationship deepens, Muzna is forced to confront difficult questions about her beliefs and the path she wants to take. This gripping story explores themes of faith, extremism, and courage.



Noughts and Crosses by Malorie Blackman

Sephy is a Cross - a member of the dark-skinned ruling class. Callum is a Nought - a "colourless" member of the underclass who were once slaves to the Crosses. Against a background of prejudice and distrust, intensely highlighted by violent terrorist activity, a romance builds between Sephy and Callum -- a romance that is to lead both of them into terrible danger.



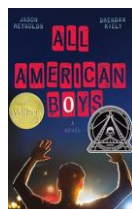
A House without Walls by Elizabeth Laird

The heart-breaking tale of a family's effort to come together after the war in Syria has destroyed their life comes from award-winning novelist Elizabeth Laird of A Little Piece of Ground and Welcome to Nowhere. Safiya, 13, and her family were forced to flee Syria due to the conflict.



The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo

Xiomara Batista, a Dominican-American teen in Harlem feels stifled by her strict mother's expectations and societal pressures. She finds her voice through writing poetry, which becomes her outlet for self-expression and empowerment. Joining a slam poetry club, Xiomara navigates her identity, faith, and family conflicts, ultimately embracing her true self.



All American Boys by Jayson Reynolds

There were witnesses: Quinn Collins--a varsity basketball player and Rashad's classmate who has been raised by Paul since his own father died in Afghanistan--and a video camera. Soon the beating is all over the news and Paul is getting threatened with accusations of prejudice and racial brutality. But then Rashad is absent. And the basketball team--half of whom are Rashad's best friends--start to take sides. Simmering tensions threaten to explode as Rashad and Quinn are forced to face decisions and consequences they had never considered before.

The Hate U Give By Angie Thomas



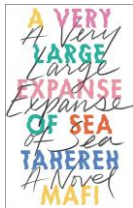
Sixteen-year-old Starr lives in two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she was born and raised and her posh high school in the suburbs. The uneasy balance between them is shattered when Starr is the only witness to the fatal shooting of her unarmed best friend, Khalil, by a police officer. Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful and gripping YA novel about one girl's struggle for justice.

The Crossing by Manjeet Mann



Natalie's world is falling apart. She's just lost her mum and her brother marches the streets of Dover full of hate and anger. Swimming is her only refuge. Sammy has fled his home and family in Eritrea for the chance of a new life in Europe. Every step he takes on his journey is a step into an unknown and unwelcoming future. A twist of fate brings them together and gives them both hope. But is hope enough to mend a broken world?

A Very Large Expanse of Sea by Tahereh Mafi



Shirin is tired of the rude stares, the degrading comments - even the physical violence she endures as a result of her race, her religion, and the hijab she wears every day. Instead, she drowns her frustrations in music and spends her afternoons break-dancing with her brother. But then she meets Ocean James. He's the first person in forever who really seems to want to get to know Shirin. It terrifies her - they seem to come from two irreconcilable worlds.

Change is Gonna Come (short stories)



A Change Is Gonna Come is a must-have anthology full of gripping entries. Featuring poems and stories from 12 black, Asian and minority ethnic authors – including four previously unpublished writers – this absorbing book offers refreshing perspectives and thought-provoking questions about the meaning of change that will hit home with everyone. One thing's for sure – it's never boring.

Indigo Donut by Patrice Lawrence



A story of longing, belonging and trust. Two very different young people discover who loves them- Bailey is 17, mixed race, lives with his mum and dad in Hackney and spends all his time playing guitar or tending to his luscious ginger afro. Indigo is 17 and new to London, having grown up in the care system after being found by her mum's dead body as a toddler. All Indigo wants is to know who she really is.



The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan

In 1949, four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, meet weekly to play mahjong and tell stories of what they left behind in China. United in loss and new hope for their daughters' futures, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Their daughters, who have never heard these stories, think their mothers' advice is irrelevant to their modern American lives – until their own inner crises reveal how much they've unknowingly inherited of their mothers' pasts.



Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo

Camino Rios lives for the summers when her father visits her in the Dominican Republic. But this time, on the day when his plane is supposed to land, Camino Rios arrives at the airport to see crowds of crying people... In New York City, Yahaira Rios is called to the principal's office, where her mother is waiting to tell her that her father, her hero, has died in a plane crash. Separated by distance—and Papi's secrets—the two girls are forced to face a new reality in which their father is dead and their lives are forever altered.



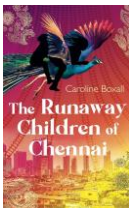
Yankee Girl by Marv Ann Rodman

An unflinching story about racism and culture clash in the 1960s. The year is 1964, and Alice Ann Moxley's FBI-agent father has been reassigned from Chicago to Jackson, Mississippi, to protect black people who are registering to vote.



Stitched up By Steve Cole

When twelve-year-old Hanh is offered a job as a shop assistant in Hanoi, she sees it as a chance to earn money to send back to her family living in poverty in rural Vietnam. But on her arrival in the city, she soon learns that the job offer was a lie and finds herself working in virtual slavery in an illegal garment factory. Hanh is desperate to escape, but when an opportunity arises will she be able to find the courage to take a dangerous chance?



The Runaway Children of Chennai by Caroline Boxall

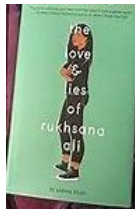
This gripping story of survival and courage follows Rish, a young boy living in one of the poorest slums of India. With his best friend, he manages to survive despite the rampant poverty, but tragedy strikes when a con man promises to give them a job and they find themselves thrust into a world of betrayal and mystery. Forced to rely on their wits and courage, Rish and his sister Mariam find that their journey will test them in ways they never imagined.

LGBTQ+ representation



This Book Won't Burn by Samira Ahmed

After her dad abruptly abandons her family and her mom moves them a million miles from their Chicago home, Noor Khan is forced to start the last quarter of her senior year at a new school. Here, Noor discovers hundreds of books have been labeled “obscene” or “pornographic” and are being removed from the library in accordance with a new school board policy. Even worse, virtually all the banned books are by queer and BIPOC authors. Noor can't sit back and do nothing, because that goes against everything she believes in, but challenging the status quo just might put a target on her back. Can she effect change by speaking up



The Love and Lies of Rukhsana Ali by Sabina Ali

Rukhsana is an ambitious high school senior who has been accepted to Caltech and is excited about her future. The tension reaches a peak when Rukhsana's mother catches her kissing her girlfriend Ariana. In an attempt to separate her from Ariana and change her behaviour, Rukhsana's parents take her to Bangladesh under the pretext of visiting her dying grandmother. Once there, Rukhsana discovers that her parents have arranged for her to marry a man...



The 57 Bus by Daksha Slater

The riveting *New York Times* bestseller and Stonewall Book Award winner. Two teenagers growing up in Oakland, California. One, Sasha, was born male but identifies as agender, wears skirts and attends a private school. The other, Richard, is an African American from a poor part of Oakland who attends a rough public school. They have no reason to meet, except for eight minutes every day, they catch the same bus home. And one day, he flicks the flame of his lighter to Sasha's skirt, and Sasha wakes up in a ball of flame.



If I were a Movie by Zakia N. Jamal

When Rochelle gets an opportunity to work at Horizon Cinemas, the beloved Black-owned movie theater, she begrudgingly jumps at the chance to boost her chances of getting into her dream school. There's only one problem: Amira works there . . . and is also her boss. Rochelle feels that being around Amira is its own kind of horror movie, but as the two begin working closely together, Rochelle starts to see Amira in a new light, one that may have her beginning to actually . . . like her? But Horizon's in trouble, and when mysterious things begin happening that make Horizon's chances of staying open slim, it's up to the employees to solve the mystery before it's too late. But will love also find its way into the spotlight.



History Is All You Left Me by Adam Silvera

Griffin has lost his first love in a drowning accident. Theo was his best friend, his ex-boyfriend and the one he believed he would end up with. Now, reeling from grief and worsening OCD, Griffin turns to an unexpected person for help.



The Art of Being Normal by Lisa Williamson

David Piper has always been an outsider, labelled a freak by the school bully. Only his two best friends know the real truth - David wants to be a girl. Meanwhile, Leo Denton, the new boy in Year 11, is trying to keep a low profile.



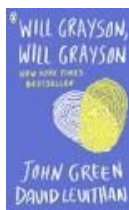
Felix Ever After by Kacen Callender

Felix secretly fears that he's one marginalization too many—Black, queer, and transgender—to ever get his own happily-ever-after. When an anonymous student begins sending him transphobic messages—after publicly posting Felix's dead name alongside images of him before he transitioned—Felix comes up with a plan for revenge. What he didn't count on: his catfish scenario landing him in a quasi-love triangle...



Leah on the Offbeat by Becky Albertalli

She's an anomaly in her friend group: the only child of a young, single mom, and her life is decidedly less privileged. She loves to draw but is too self-conscious to show it. And even though her mom knows she's bisexual, she hasn't mustered the courage to tell her friends—not even her openly gay BFF, Simon.



Will Grayson by John Green and David Levithan

The story goes a little something along the lines of two boys, both named Will Grayson. One Will Grayson, the one who writes with proper grammar and capital letters, feels in the shadow of his best friend Tiny - "the world's largest person who is really, really gay"



The Henna Wars by Adiba Jaigirdar

Flvia is beautiful and charismatic, and Nishat falls for her instantly. But when a school competition invites students to create their own businesses, both Flvia and Nishat decide to showcase their talent as henna artists.



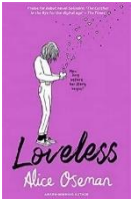
Heartstopper series by Alice Oseman

Charlie, a highly strung, openly gay over-thinker, and Nick, a cheerful soft-hearted rugby player, meet at a British all-boys grammar school. Friendship blooms quickly, but could there be something more...? This beloved coming-of-age graphic novel romance is now a Netflix series!



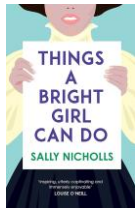
The Red Scrolls of Magic by Cassandra Clare

Magnus Bane is on vacation with Alec Lightwood, the Shadowhunter who against all odds is finally his boyfriend. But as soon as the pair settle in Paris, an old friend arrives with news about a demon-worshipping cult called the Crimson Hand- a cult that was apparently founded by Magnus himself. Years ago. As a joke. Now Magnus and Alec must race to find the elusive new leader before the cult can cause any more damage.



Loveless by Alice Oseman

Georgia constantly struggles with her identity. She is obsessed with romantic movies and fan fiction and desires a Hollywood romance. But when she tries to kiss someone, she is immediately filled with fear and disgust. She just can't do it. Georgia battles with her lack of romantic or sexual feelings towards people, believing that she just needs to try harder and eventually she'll find 'the one'. However, when she hears the words 'aromantic asexual' for the first time, she begins to consider a different option.



Things a Bright Girl Can Do by Sally Nicholls

Evelyn is seventeen, and though she is rich and clever, she may never be allowed to follow her older brother to university and is expected to marry her childhood sweetheart. So she joins the Suffragettes. May is fifteen, and already sworn to the cause. When she meets Nell, a girl who's grown up in hardship, she sees a kindred spirit. Together and in love, the two girls start to dream of a world where all kinds of women have their place.



The Black Flamingo by Dean Atta

A boy comes to terms with his identity as a mixed-race gay teen - then at university he finds his wings as a drag artist, The Black Flamingo. A bold story about the power of embracing your uniqueness. Sometimes, we need to take charge, to stand up wearing pink feathers - to show ourselves to the world in bold colour.



If You Could Be Mine by Sara Farizan

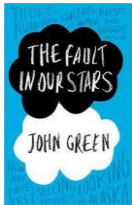
Seventeen-year-old Sahar has been in love with her best friend, Nasrin, since they were six. But in Iran- Nasrin could be beaten, imprisoned, even executed if their relationship came to light. So they carry on in secret until Nasrin's parents announce that they've arranged for her marriage. Then Sahar discovers that in Iran, homosexuality may be a crime, but to be a man trapped in a woman's body is seen as nature's mistake, and sex reassignment is legal and accessible.



Girls of Paper and Fire series by Natasha Ngan

Each year, eight beautiful girls are chosen as Paper Girls to serve the king. This year, there's a ninth. Lei is a member of the Paper caste, the lowest and most persecuted class of people in Ikhar. She lives in a remote village with her father, where the decade-old trauma of watching her mother snatched by royal guards for an unknown fate still haunts her. Now, the guards are back and this time it's Lei they're after. And in the midst of all this she falls in love. Her forbidden romance becomes enmeshed with an explosive plot that threatens her world's entire way of life.

Disability/illness including mental health representation & neurodiversity



The Fault in our Stars by John Green

Despite the tumour-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten.



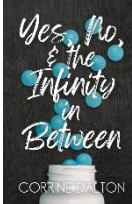
All the Things that Could go Wrong by Stewart Foster

There are two sides to every story. Alex's OCD is so severe that it's difficult for him to even leave his house some days. His classmate Dan is so angry that he lashes out at the easiest target he can find at Alex. When their moms arrange for Alex and Dan to spend time together over winter break, it seems like a recipe for certain disaster...until it isn't. Once forced together, these two sworn enemies discover that there is much more to each other than they ever knew.



When I was the Greatest by Jason Reynolds

Ali's got enough going on, between school and boxing and helping out at home. His best friend Noodles, though. Now there's a dude looking for trouble – and, somehow, it's always Ali around to pick up the pieces. And then there's Needles. He's got a syndrome, and gets these ticks and blurts out the wildest, craziest things. It's cool, though: everyone on their street knows he doesn't mean anything by it. Yeah, it's cool... until Ali and Noodles and Needles find themselves somewhere they never expected to be...where the people aren't so friendly, and even less forgiving.



Yes, No, & the Infinity in Between by Corrine Dalton

For Marlow Preston, nothing feels certain: her mother's new relationship, her father's promises, the meaning of the violent thoughts that bombard her mind. On that front, at least, she's finding answers. With her recent diagnosis of OCD, she finally feels some of the certainty she's been chasing. At a local support group, she even finds like-minded people who understand her unique challenges—and Teddy, the insufferable boy who brings his little sister. Despite their mutual dislike of one another, they become unlikely allies as the two of them—with an ounce of spite—push each other to overcome their fears. But even with the work she does to improve her anxiety, the problems at home only increase.



The Island at the End of Everything by Kiran Millwood

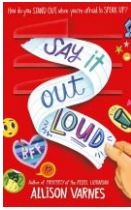
Twelve-year-old Ami lives on Culion Island, the world's largest leper colony, with her mother who is 'touched'. Following the arrival of Mr Zamora, a sinister government official and the decree that all healthy children must leave the island, Ami is banished to an orphanage. But can she find her way home before her mother dies?



I Have No Secrets by Penny Joelson

Jemma knows who did the murder. She knows because he told her. But fourteen-year-old Jemma has severe cerebral palsy. Unable to communicate or move, she relies on her family and carer for everything. She has a sharp brain and knows all sorts of things about everyone. But when she is confronted with this terrible secret, she is utterly powerless to do anything.

Say it Out Loud by Allison Varnes



Charlotte Andrews is perfectly fine being quiet—in fact, she prefers it. When she doesn't speak, people can't make fun of her stutter. But when she witnesses bullying on the school bus and doesn't say anything, her silence comes between her and her best friend. Words could save Charlotte Andrews and everything she believes in... if she just believes in herself enough to speak up.

Can You See Me? By Rebecca Westcott



Tally's autism means there are things that bother her even though she wishes they didn't. It means that some people misunderstand her and feel frustrated by her. People think that because Tally's autistic, she doesn't realize what they're thinking, but Tally sees and hears - and notices - all of it. And, honestly? That's not the easiest thing to live with.

You, me and our Heartstrings by Melissa See



Noah, a cello prodigy from a long line of musicians, wants to stick to tradition. Daisy, a fiercely independent disabled violinist, is used to fighting for what she wants. After their performance goes viral, the rest of the country falls for them just as surely as they're falling for each other. But no one seems to care about their talent or their music at all. People have rewritten their love story into one where Daisy is an inspiration for overcoming her cerebral palsy and Noah is a saint for seeing past it.



The Space We're in by Katya Balen

When Frank's younger brother is diagnosed with autism at the age of three, their mum explains that it means he may not always understand the way the world works. When kids make unpleasant jokes about Max, Frank fails to defend him. Like many older siblings, he is also frustrated at how much of his parents' time and attention his brother now demands. All in all, he's currently wrestling some pretty serious feelings of guilt and resentment. Little does he know, life is about to throw something far, far worse at the family. The addition of references to coding and powerful observations about life, the universe and everything, make this a memorable and satisfying read.

Wild Boy, by Rob Lloyd Jones

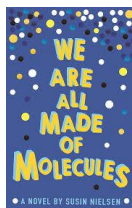


Wild Boy has been covered in hair since birth and condemned to life in a travelling freak show. Excluded from society, he takes refuge in watching people at the fair – and develops a talent for observation and detection. But when there's a murder, suspicion turns to Wild Boy, so he and the feisty acrobat Clarissa Everett find themselves on the run.



The Silence Between Us by Alison Gervais

The Silence Between Us tells the story of a deaf girl as she joins a hearing school for her senior year, with Alison Gervais drawing on her own experiences of being part of the deaf community after losing her hearing at a young age.



We Are all Made of Molecules by Susin Nielsen

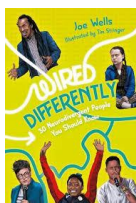
Stewart is geeky, gifted and sees things differently to most people. His mum has died and he misses her all the more now he and Dad have moved in with Ashley and her mum. Ashley is popular and cool and now she has to live with a freakazoid step-brother who stutters. And things are about to get a whole lot more mixed up.

Non-Fiction



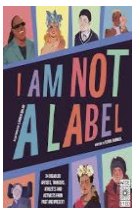
A Different Sort of Normal by Abigail Balfe

When Abigail was a child, she didn't know she was autistic. This heart-touching true story beautifully talks about a girl's journey growing up feeling different, and the challenges she faced in the 'normal' world. It's described as a funny, fascinating memoir that realistically describes how autism shapes the mind.



Wired Differently : 30 neurodivergent people you should know by Joe Wells

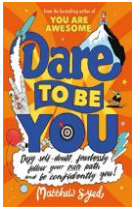
Wired Differently is an important and charmingly written book. It is exceptionally warm-hearted and teaches young adults to value and appreciate the aptitudes and eccentricities of their own brains, while facing the challenges of being different.



I am not a Label by Carrie Burnell

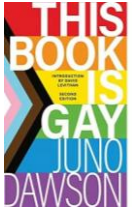
I am not a label, powerfully introduces us to 34 trailblazing disabled models. From famous to less well known, the book wonderfully introduces the insights of disabled models. The book demonstrates that disability or chronic illness is not a definition, and that's what makes this book truly unique.

Dare to be You by Matthew Syed



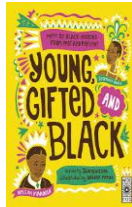
What would you dare to try if you stopped worrying about fitting in? If you're the kind of person who thinks: I don't like standing out from the crowd ... I wish I could be more like the cool kids- But guess what? There's no such thing as normal. Drawing examples from sport, science and even business, Dare to Be You empowers young readers to love what makes them different.

This book is Gay by Juno Dawson



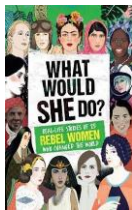
Former PSHCE teacher and acclaimed YA author Juno Dawson gives an uncensored look at what it's like to grow up as LGBT. Including testimonials from people across the gender and sexual spectrums, this frank, funny, fully inclusive book explores everything anyone who ever dared to wonder wants to know - from sex to politics, how to pull, stereotypes, how to come-out.

Young, Gifted and Black by Jamia Wilson



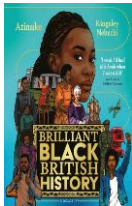
Young, gifted and black introduces us to 52 icons of colour from the past and present. Jamia Wilson aims to encourage, inspire and empower the next generation of change makers by highlighting the talent and contributions of black leaders.

What Would She Do?



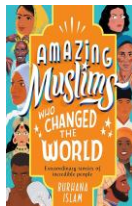
Created by an all-women team and illustrated by internationally renowned artists, "What Would She Do?" packs a feminist punch. From Cleopatra to Amelia Earhart, this book teaches us about powerful and inspiring women throughout history. With 25 trailblazing women who had to go through thousands of obstacles through their time are now being celebrated within this book.

Brilliant, Black, British History

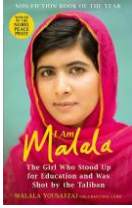


The incredible journey through time is brought to life through Atinuke's fascinating storytelling and illustrated scenes. This book aims to celebrate the brilliant, black, British people who helped build Britain.

Amazing Muslims who Changed the World by Burhana Islam



The book brings out devout 'followers of Islam' who managed to make a huge impact during their times and also changed the world. The list comprises 15 men, and an equal number of women, making it 30 in all.



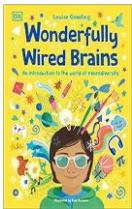
I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai is a memoir of a young activist's life in Pakistan, where she fights for girls' education under Taliban rule and becomes a target of assassination. The book teaches the importance of education and the power of speaking.



Greta's Story by Valentina Camerini

Fifteen-year-old Greta Thunberg decides she can't wait any longer: politicians have to do something to save the environment. Instead of returning to school, Greta takes a placard and goes on strike in front of Sweden's parliament building. What happens next?



Wonderfully Wired Brains by Louise Goodling

Divided into four sections which explain a variety of neurodiverse conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyscalculia, synaesthesia, OCD, tics, dyslexia and many more; *Wonderfully wired history*, which shows the timeline of neurodiversity awareness and showcases some brilliant brains from history- of modern-day neurodiverse writers, YouTubers, composers, coders and TV personalities.

Note for parents:

Please encourage your child to turn off the television, to put away the console or phone to allow time and space for reading.

- **Children who love to read get to feel the joy of being lost in a good book.** It's like the real world falls away. Your child is inside the story and gets to experience the adventures right along with the characters. In fact, to your child, it feels like he or she is the main character. This is a really pleasurable and rewarding experience, and it can actually be life-changing.
- **Reading shapes the way children understand the world.** When your child is lost in a book, he or she can live in another time in history, or visit a faraway place and live a completely different life. Maybe your child meets a character and thinks, "This person is just like me," or, "Wow, I've never looked at things this way before." Reading becomes a meaningful experience that really expand your child's horizons.
- **Getting absorbed in books shapes who your child is.** Really great books deal with things that kids relate to, like growing up, facing fears, and navigating friendships. When readers identify with a character who's going through these things, they enter the character's mind and they get to think and feel in new ways. It gives children a deeper understanding of other people, and of themselves. Reading is deeply formative experience that shows your child the kind of person he or she wants to be.

Note for students:

- Please speak to your English teacher or Ms Sabharwal to add your favourite book to this list.

