



# The Billericay School

## Year 9 Suggested Reading List

While in Year 9, you should try to read a wide variety of types of books. Don't just stick to one author, or one genre. Experiment with something new. That is one reason why this list is arranged in genre based sections. As well as reading books, don't forget that newspapers and good magazines are also excellent reading material and will get you used to a range of reading experiences that will set you up well for GCSE and beyond. Not only will reading benefit you in your school subjects, but it will also broaden your knowledge and understanding of the world around you.

It is recommended that you try to read at least one of the following texts each half term. The texts below are listed to complement what you will be learning during each half term. Please find the BAME authors and texts with BAME protagonists highlighted in pink and the LGBTQ+ authors and texts with LGBTQ+ representation are highlighted in orange.

### Year 9 Autumn 1

#### Tragedy and Race Relations

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What is it about?
Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry	Mildred D Taylor	Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is the classic story of a girl growing up in the deep South. Set in Mississippi at the height of the American Depression, this is the story of a family's struggle to maintain their integrity, pride and independence against the forces of a cruelly racist society.
Brown Girl Dreaming	Jacqueline Woodson	Written entirely in verse, is the autobiographical account of Woodson's time as a young African American girl growing up in the '60s and '70s. With the Jim Crow laws still lingering and the Civil Rights movement in full swing, she struggles to find her way growing up in different regions of the U.S. (Northern and Southern).
Native Son	Richard Wright	First published in 1940 and subsequently banned from both the UK and the US, the story follows Bigger Thomas, an impoverished black man in 1930's Chicago. Bigger commits a crime and the story follows the causation behind his actions.
If Beale Street Could Talk	James Baldwin	If Beale Street Could Talk is a love story set in Harlem, New

		York. The story follows a young black couple as they go through the courts as Fonny is accused of raping a white woman. The couple need to find a lawyer to clear his name all before their first child is born.
If He Hollers Let Him Go	Chester Himes	If He Hollers Let Him Go is a protest novel inspired by the works of Richard Wright. The novel follows African-American Bob Jones as he starts work in LA. He struggles with the systemic racism he experiences daily and eventually lashes out - he's accused of rape and the rest of the novel follows how he deals with this.

**Ambitious reads**

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What's it about?
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.
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	Mark Twain	Published in 1885 though set in the antebellum south, Huck Finn follows the story of the eponymous protagonist as he runs away from home and takes off down the Mississippi in the company of an escaped slave called Jim.
Beloved	Toni Morrison	Beloved, a sharp and touching novel, uses the style of magical realism to hauntingly display the psychological impacts of slavery and how we feel pain. The novel follows escaped slave Sethe and her daughter Denver as they navigate their new lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. As the story

progresses, they are perpetually haunted by the ghost of Sethe's eldest daughter, Beloved, as she grows.

## Year 9 Autumn 2

### Tragedy and Race Relations

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What is it about?
Fences	August Wilson	Troy Maxson makes his living as a sanitation worker in 1950s Pittsburgh. Maxson once dreamed of becoming a professional baseball player, but was deemed too old when the major leagues began admitting black athletes. Bitter over his missed opportunity, Troy creates further tension in his family when he squashes his son's chance to meet a college football recruiter.
Dreams from my Father	Barack Obama	A Story of Race and Inheritance is a memoir by Barack Obama, that explores the events of his early years in Honolulu and Chicago up until his entry into law school in 1988.
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 that included rape and racism.
Iggie's House	Judy Blume	Iggie's House is a 1970 young adult novel by Judy Blume. The story concerns Winnie, whose best friend Iggie has moved away. The new family moving into Iggie's house are the first black people in the neighborhood.
Well-Read Black Girl: Finding Our Stories, Discovering Ourselves	Glory Edim	An inspiring collection of essays by black women writers, curated by the founder of the popular book club Well-Read Black Girl,

		on the importance of recognizing ourselves in literature.
Collected Poems of Langston Hughes	Langston Hughes	860 poems that sound the heartbeat of black life in America during five turbulent decades, from the 1920s through the 1960s.

### Ambitious reads

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What's it about?
The Color Purple	Alice Walker	The Color Purple documents the traumas and gradual triumph of Celie, an African American teenager raised in rural isolation in Georgia, as she comes to resist the paralyzing self-concept forced on her by others. Celie narrates her life through painfully honest letters to God.
Death of a Salesman	Arthur Miller	About Death of a Salesman. Arthur Miller's play Death of a Salesman addresses loss of identity and a man's inability to accept change within himself and society. The play is a montage of memories, dreams, confrontations, and arguments, all of which make up the last 24 hours of Willy Loman's life.
The Bluest Eye	Toni Morrison	The Bluest Eye, published in 1970, is the first novel written by author Toni Morrison. The novel takes place in Lorain, Ohio, and tells the story of a young African-American girl named Pecola who grows up during the years following the Great Depression. Wikipedia

### Year 9 Spring 1

#### Diverse voices

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What's it about?
Small Island	Andrea Levy	The novel is based on four main characters —Hortense, Queenie, Gilbert and Bernard—and the story is told from each of their points of view. Mainly set in

		1948, the plot focuses on the diaspora of Jamaican immigrants, who, escaping economic hardship on their own "small island", move to England, the Mother Country, for which the men have fought during World War II.
Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achebe	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> is the debut novel by Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, the story chronicles pre-colonial life in the southeastern part of Nigeria and the arrival of Europeans during the late 19th century.
Persepolis	Marjane Satrapi	Persepolis is an autobiographical story written as a graphic novel. It follows Satrapi's life before and after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, following her experiences of growing up under extremism and war.
The Stranger	Albert Camus	A philosophical novel that follows Meursault as he visits his mother's funeral in Algeria. He struggles to grieve for his mother's death and is seen as an outsider. He goes on to commit a crime for which he is incarcerated.

### Ambitious reads

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What's it about?
Americanah	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	As teenagers in a Lagos secondary school, Ifemelu and Obinze fall in love. Nigeria at the time is under military dictatorship, and people are seeking to leave the country. Ifemelu moves to the United States to study, where she struggles for the first time with racism and the many varieties of racial distinctions: for the first time, Ifemelu discovers what it means to be a "Black Person".
The God of Small Things	Arundhati Roy	The God of Small Things is set in India as is a story about the childhood experiences of fraternal twins whose lives are destroyed by the "Love Laws" that lay down "who should be

		loved, and how. And how much." The book explores how the small things affect people's behavior and their lives. It won the Booker Prize in 1997.
Disgrace	J. M Coetzee	Set in post-Apartheid South Africa, Booker-Prize winning, Disgrace, follows the main character commit a crime against one of his students and subsequently lose everything he's worked for.

## Year 9 Spring 2

### Biographical Fiction

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What's it about?
Boy 87	Ele Fountain	Boy 87 is a gripping, uplifting tale of one boy's struggle for survival; it echoes the story of young people all over the world today. Shif is just an ordinary boy who likes chess, maths and racing his best friend home from school.
Refugee Boy	Benjamin Zephaniah	The whole story centers around the 14-year-old Alem Kelo. He is a boy born of an Ethiopian father and an Eritrean mother at a time when the two countries were at war with each other. His father takes him to London to be safe. There he has to fight for his status as a refugee.
Here I Stand: Stories That Speak For Freedom	Anthology including: Neil Gaiman, Matt Haig, Frances Hardinge, Jackie Kay and more	Inspired by the 800-year anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta, a selection of writers - in conjunction with Amnesty International UK - explore the rights and freedoms still lacking in today's society, covering issues such as gender equality, race hatred, surveillance, identity and freedom of speech.
The Unwanted: Stories of the Syrian Refugees	Don Brown	Starting in 2011, refugees flood out of war-torn Syria in Exodus-like proportions. The surprising flood of victims overwhelms neighbouring countries, and chaos follows. Resentment in host nations heightens as

		<p>disruption and the cost of aid grows. By 2017, many want to turn their backs on the victims. The refugees are the unwanted. Don Brown depicts moments of both heartbreaking horror and hope in the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis. Shining a light on the stories of the survivors, The Unwanted is a testament to the courage and resilience of the refugees and a call to action for all those who read.</p>
Welcome To Nowhere	Elizabeth Laird	<p>Welcome to Nowhere is a powerful and beautifully written story about the life of one family caught up in civil war by the award-winning author Elizabeth Laird. Twelve-year-old Omar and his brothers and sisters were born and raised in the beautiful and bustling city of Bosra, Syria.</p>
Illegal	Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin	<p>Ebo: alone. His sister left months ago. Now his brother has disappeared too, and Ebo knows it can only be to make the hazardous journey to Europe. Ebo's epic journey takes him across the Sahara Desert to the dangerous streets of Tripoli, and finally out to the merciless sea. But with every step he holds on to his hope for a new life, and a reunion with his sister.</p>

### Ambitious reads

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What's it about?
The Bone Sparrow	Zana Fraillon	<p>Subhi is a refugee. Born in an Australian permanent detention centre after his mother fled the violence of a distant homeland, life behind the fences is all he has ever known. But as he grows, his imagination gets bigger too, until it is bursting at the limits of his world.</p>
Child I	Steve Tasane	<p>A group of undocumented children with letters for names, are stuck living in a refugee camp, with stories to tell but no papers to prove them. As they try to forge a new family amongst themselves, they also</p>

		long to keep memories of their old identities alive. Will they be heard and believed?
The Kite Runner	Khaled Hosseini	The Kite Runner is the story of Amir, a Sunni Muslim, who struggles to find his place in the world because of the aftereffects and fallout from a series of traumatic childhood events.

## Year 9 Summer Term

### Diverse voices

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What's it about?
Anita and Me	Meera Syal	The novel follows nine-year-old Meena through a year spiced with pilfered sweets and money, bad words, and compulsive, yet inventive, lies. Anita and Me offers a fresh, sassy look at a childhood caught between two cultures.
DNA	Dennis Kelly	A group of teenagers do something bad, really bad, then panic and cover the whole thing up. But when they find that the cover-up unites them and brings harmony to their otherwise fractious lives, where's the incentive to put things right?
East of Acre Lane	Alex Wheatle	Biscuit has chosen a bad time to sort himself out: Brixton is angry, tempers are ready to burst, and Denise has just caught the eye of Nunchaks. This story is an account of a young man's attempt to do the right thing.
Terror Kid	Benjamin Zephaniah	The story focuses on a teenage boy called Rico Federico, who has a passion for computers. The book takes place in London, where dozens of riots are occurring as a result of unfair treatment by police
Looking for JJ	Anne Cassidy	Looking for JJ is a young adult thriller by Anne Cassidy about a British teen struggling to piece together her life despite a dark secret: As a child, she murdered

		another child.
Sister Outsider	Audre Lorde	Lorde through her essays explores the complexities of intersectional identity, while explicitly drawing from her personal experiences of oppression to include: sexism, heterosexism, racism, homophobia, classism, and ageism. The book examines a broad range of topics, including love, self-love, war, imperialism, police brutality, coalition building, violence against women, Black feminism, and movements towards equality that recognize and embrace differences as a vehicle for change.

### Ambitious reads

What's the title?	Who's the author?	What's it about?
Native Son	Richard Wright	It tells the story of 20-year-old Bigger Thomas, a black youth living in utter poverty in a poor area on Chicago's South Side in the 1930s. While not apologizing for Bigger's crimes, Wright portrays a systemic causation behind them
Brixton Rock	Alex Wheatle	Set against the backdrop of the Brixton race riots in London in the 1980s, this novel tells a story of overcoming obstacles from a teen's perspective. Brenton Brown, a 16-year-old mixed-race youth, has lived in a children's home all his life and is haunted by the absence of his mother.
Oranges are Not the Only Fruit	Jeanette Winterson	Jeanette Winterson's first novel, published in 1985, is a semi autobiographical coming-of-age story about a girl growing up in a Pentecostal family in England's industrial Midlands region. Winterson captures the weirdness of religious zealotry with the authority of someone who's lived in this environment, and her portrayal of the young woman's burgeoning lesbian

		sexuality.
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