

Debenham High School



SUMMER READING LIST 2023

Welcome to the Debenham High School Summer Reading List for 2023. This year's theme 'Desert Island Reads' is inspired by the famous radio programme Desert Island Discs, which has been running for over 80 years, since 1942, on Radio 4. Each week in the radio programme a famous guest, called a "castaway" is asked to choose eight recordings (usually music, but not always), a luxury item and a book that they would take if they were to be cast away on a desert island. In the programme the guest discusses their life and the reasons for their choices.

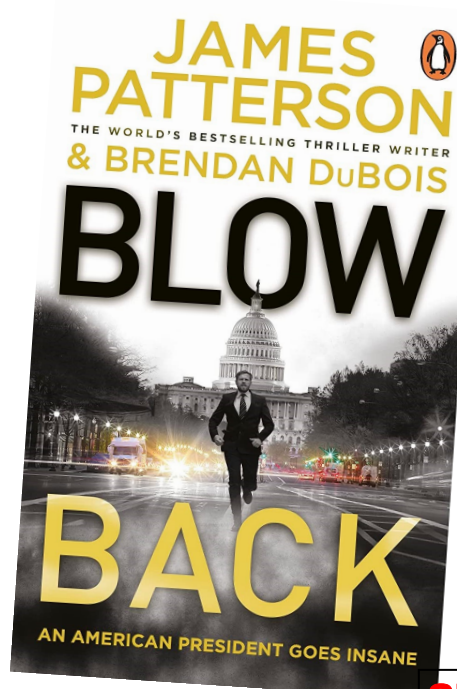
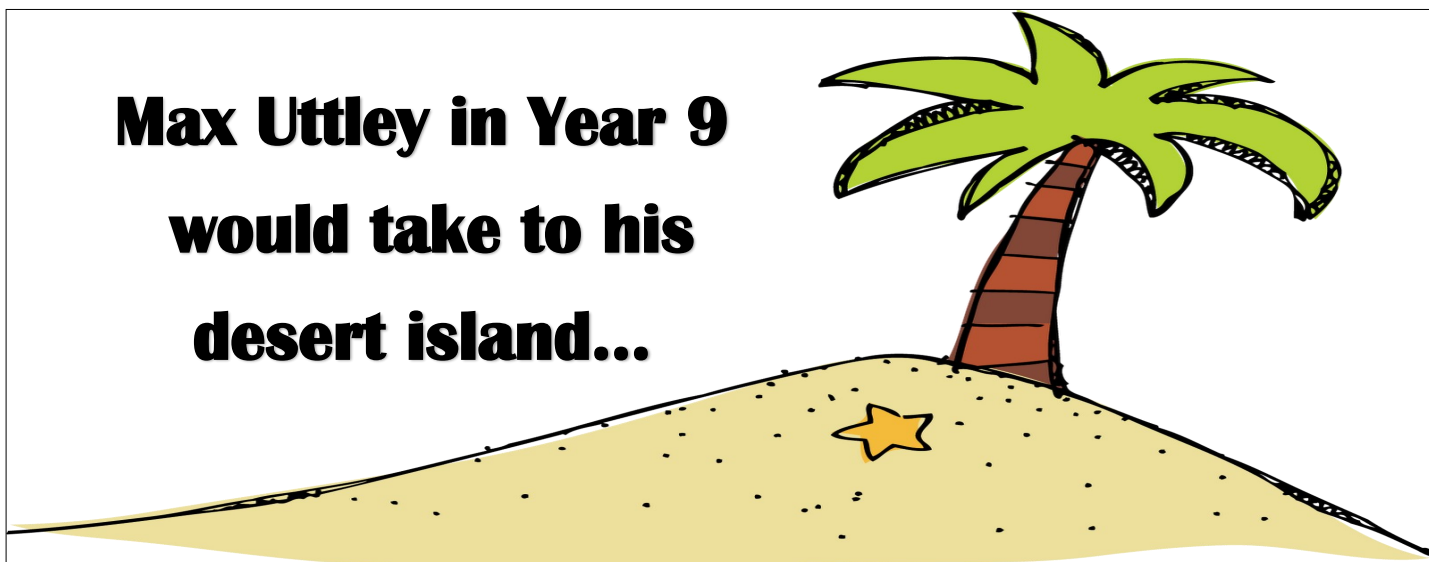
In the spirit of Desert Island Discs we invited students and staff from across the school to tell us, if they could only take two books to a desert island, one fact and one fiction book, what would they take and why? What follows is a wonderful array of books, covering all genres and many interesting subjects. From Harry Styles and the clothes he wears to Bram Stoker's Dracula, I think you will agree there is something for everyone.

The format of each page is the same, with the fiction book suggestion featured first in the yellow box and the non-fiction (fact based) book below in green. Beside each write-up is a photograph of the book. The majority of books are suitable for Years 7 - 11, although there are a few exceptions and these have been clearly marked. Students and parents/carers should however use their discretion as to whether a book is suitable based on individual reading levels, challenging themes and content.

We hope that the varied selection of book recommendations within this reading list will inspire students to pick up a book (or two) this summer. I would love to hear your opinion on those you have read and perhaps make some recommendations of your own.

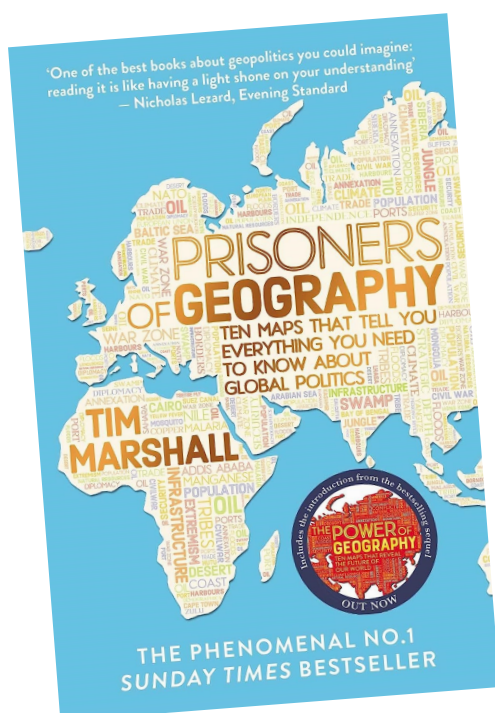
**Happy Summer Reading!
Mrs C Foord-Johnson
Learning Resources Coordinator**

Max Uttley in Year 9 would take to his desert island...



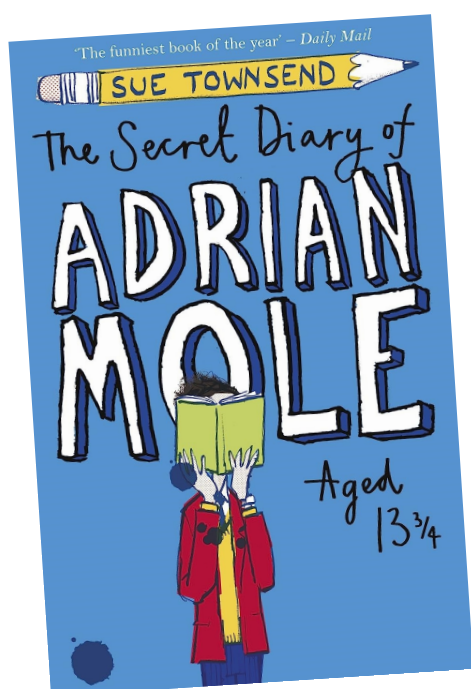
For my fiction choice, I would chose Blow Back. This is a fictional story of CIA agents who are forced to carry out a clandestine power grab with a deadly motive - revenge - however their loyalties are divided; as CIA agents they are sworn to protect the USA from all enemies foreign and domestic. But when the threat comes from directly inside the Oval Office that's when the blowback begins. I really like this book as there are many thrilling moments that have you engaged and on the edge of your seat.

SUITABLE FOR YEAR 9 +

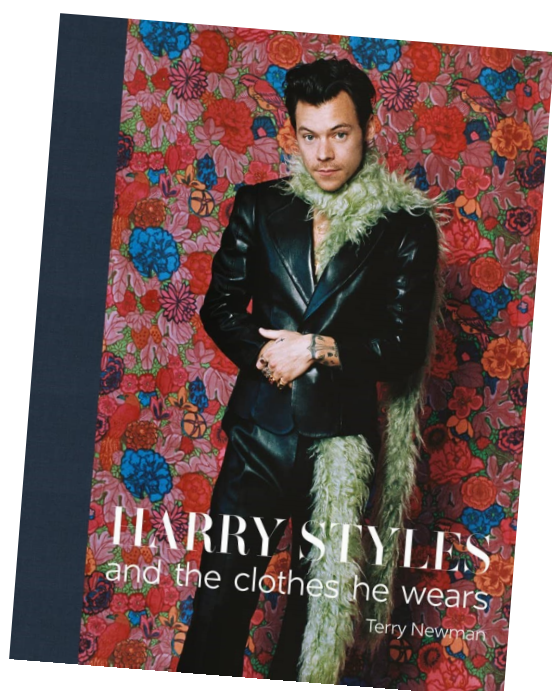


For my non fiction choice, I would choose Prisoners of Geography by Tim Marshall. I really love this book as it explains the context behind many of the world's conflicts and how world leaders are confined by Mother Nature, by geography and how that can cause disputes between countries. For example it explores why Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine and Crimea. It also talks about the rise of China.

**Mrs King
would take to her
desert island...**

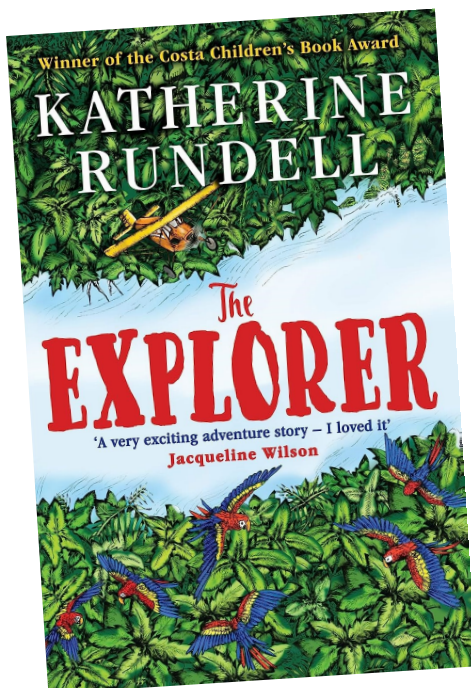
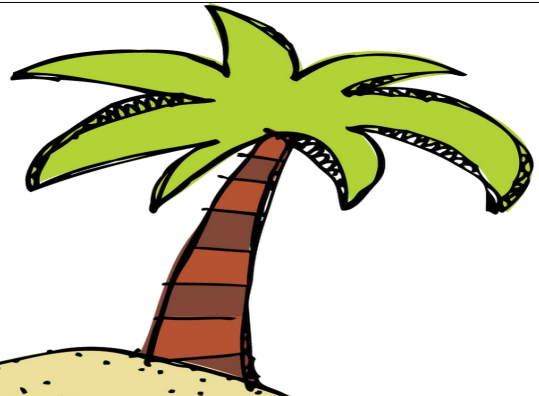


The 'Heartstopper' of my generation. Written in a time before smart phones, a 40th anniversary edition is available but many things remain the same today. The stress of being a teenager in unrequited love, with spots, arguing parents and always feeling ill. The book is written like extracts from Adrian's diary, therefore it is easy to read, pick up and put down again; although too funny to want to put it down; you want to read the next extract of his moods and misfortunes. Love him or loathe him you will recognise traits of a living, breathing Adrian Mole very close to home. And then you will want to read the 'Growing Pains of Adrian Mole' which I also thoroughly recommend.



You may not like his music, you may not like his sense of style but I bet you find him intriguing. A man in a dress on the front cover of Vogue magazine, a man in an ostrich feather coat at Coachella Festival, a man who wears so much jewellery including a pearl necklace. This book documents his iconic sense of dress, comparing him to icons from history, just touching on his association with Gucci. Even including his 'Harryween' costumes (worn at his own Halloween celebrations or his concert closest to the 31st October) I love his flamboyancy and the fact he feels comfortable in what he wears, this book is a celebration of Harry's Style.

Will Taylor in Year 8 would take to his desert island...

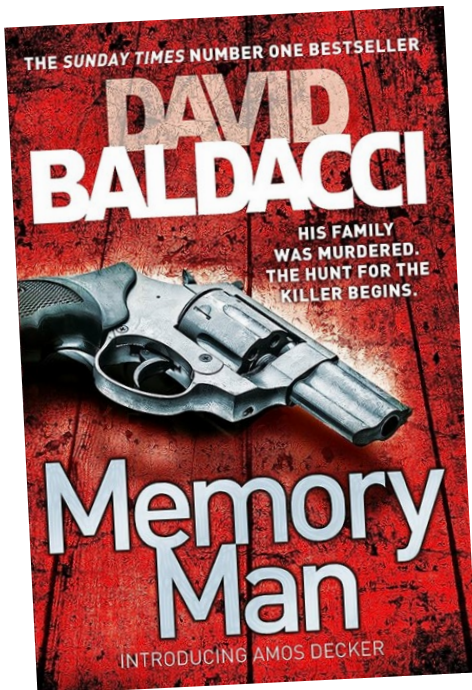
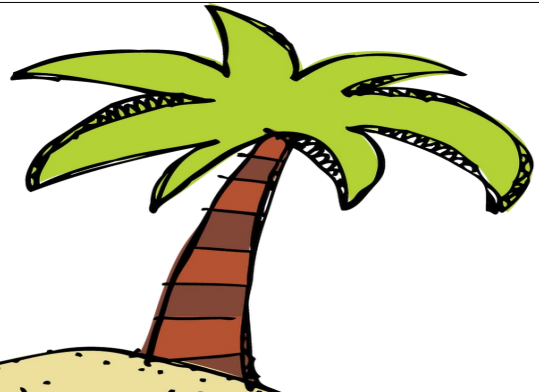


This book is amazing. It's about four children whose plane crashes in the Amazon rainforest. It describes their adventure getting out of there. They meet a mysterious explorer who gives them survival techniques along with shelter and food. The four learn about each other's past and background. This book would be good on a desert island because of the survival techniques that are generally lifesaving.



The Horrible Science books are a great read. With six books in the series on topics such as space, animals, poison, microscopic creatures, the human body and electricity, they combine facts with pictures, quizzes, funny, fictional stories and memorable, true stories. You learn facts such as the exact size of each planet, what happens when a star explodes, the most dangerous poisons, how many species there are known to man, the sad stories of amoebas whenever you step on grass, how much electricity we use every day and much, much more. These books would be great on a desert island because they are packed full of survival facts such as what is OK to eat in a life and death situation and the dangerous animals you might encounter.

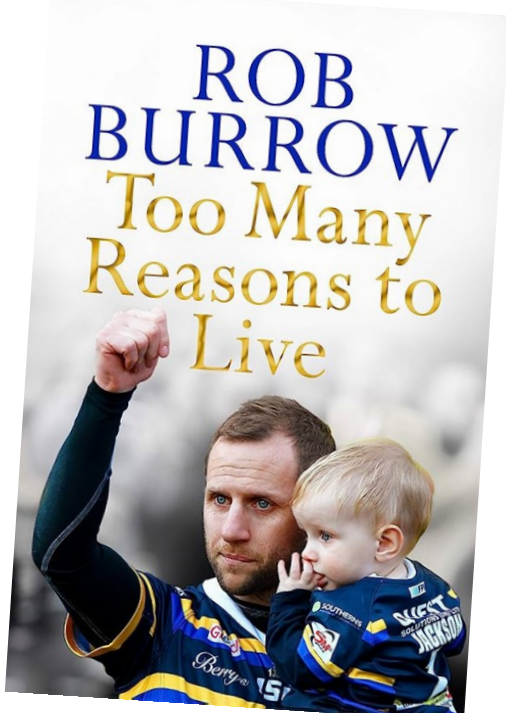
**Mr Cook
would take to his
desert island...**



SUITABLE FOR YEAR 9 +

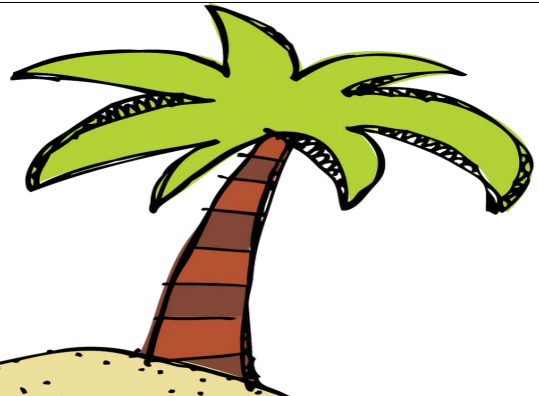
My favourite genre of book to read is crime, nothing beats a good who-done-it with lots of plot twists. I therefore would have to take one of these with me.

Over the years, I have read many crime books and there are some wonderful authors out there. However, my selection for my desert island read, would be Memory Man, written by David Baldacci. This is the first in a series of books which focus on the character Amos Decker. Having been left with a brain injury after playing American Football, Decker is left with a memory that has an attention to detail. He uses this and the motivation of having his family murdered, to help solve the mystery of who done it. This book is a real page turner and one that will leave you wanting more. If you like it, read the rest in the series.

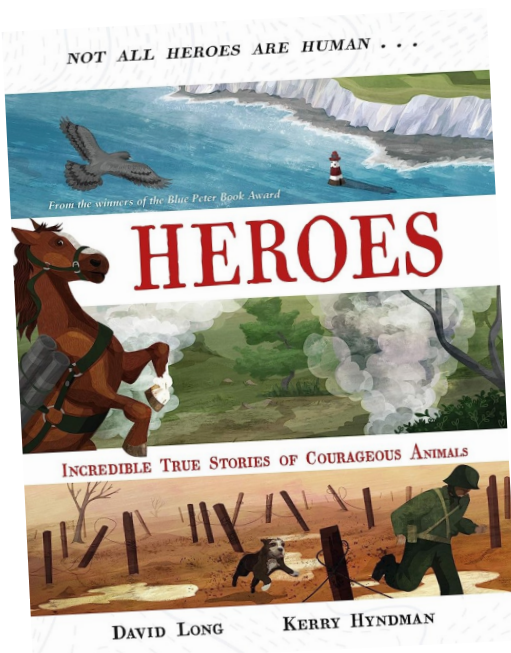


You won't be surprised to hear that sport is one of my biggest passions in life, therefore one of my reads had to come from this area. Narrowing it down though to one though was very tricky but in the end, I went for the inspirational autobiography of Rob Burrow. Rob is a former rugby league player, who played for Leeds Rhinos, England and Great Britain. He is considered one of the best players of his generation, despite his height and relatively small frame. His and family's world was turned upside down in 2019 when he was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND). This book tells of his battle with this disease and the impact that it has had on his life, as well as looking back on his illustrious career. An enjoyable but moving read.

Rose Williams in Year 9 would take to her desert island...

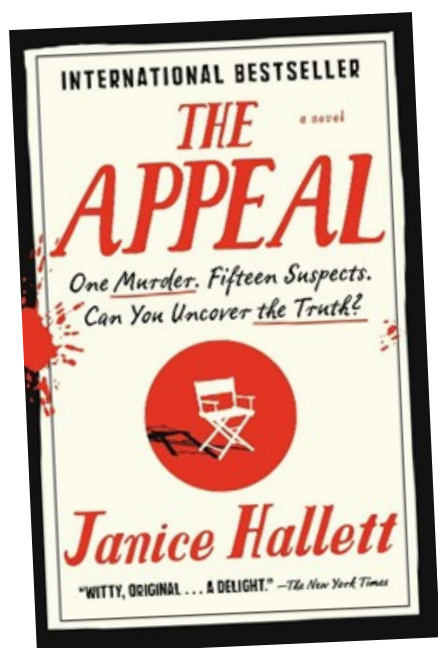
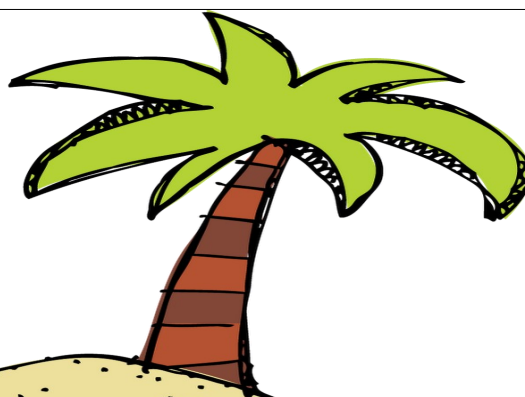


I would choose for my fiction book *Fallen* by Lauren Kate. It is quite a dark story with loads of twists to make you not want to put the book down. *Fallen* is about a girl who can see shadows all around her and she gets sent to a psychiatric school for mentally ill people after she gets blamed for a boy's death. At this school, she meets this boy who she can't seem to stay away from and later on she finds out why. He is an angel who got kicked out of heaven and he is cursed to fall in love with a girl who keeps being reborn after she disappears when she meets her angel. I found that once I started this book I wasn't able to put it down and even if I read it over and over I still wouldn't get bored due to all of the tension and twists in the story.



For my non-fiction I would choose *Heroes* by David Long as it is about true stories of incredible animals who showed amazing devotion and courage when going to war alongside mankind. I choose this book as I think it is very inspiring about how some animals, if treated with love, will do anything for people even if it means risking their life. For example, one of the stories is of a horse called Sergeant Reckless who helped Marines in the Battle of Panmunjom-Vegas during the Korean War in 1952 by transporting ammunition across the battle field all by herself and keeping the soldiers morale high by making them laugh through stealing their drinks and food. This book contains many more stories like this which make me see how loyal and clever animals can be and how they are so much better than human beings.

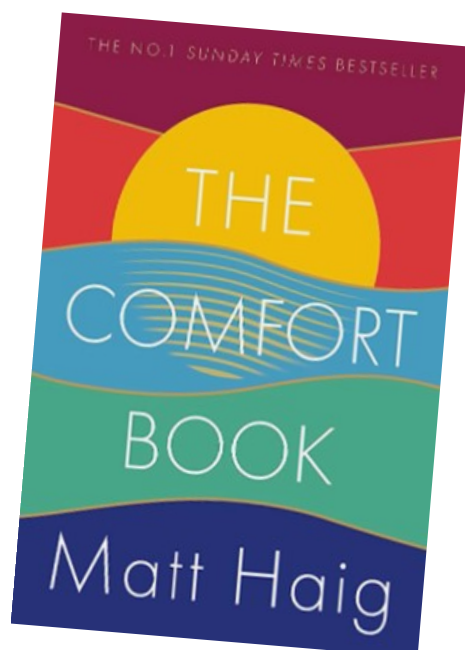
**Miss Goodwin
would take to her
desert island...**



SUITABLE FOR YEAR 9 +

A drama production and a fundraiser leads to murder in this clever whodunit, presented as a series of documents – emails, messages and transcripts – that hold the keys to the mystery. Enclosed are all the documents you need to solve a case. This has been one of the best books I have read in a long time! It's hugely entertaining and I was gripped from the off. I loved finding out the information and attempting to work out who committed murder before the end. It was so exciting to read the text in a different form too. I could read it over and over and still be working out the clues.

So, will you accept the challenge? Can you uncover the truth?

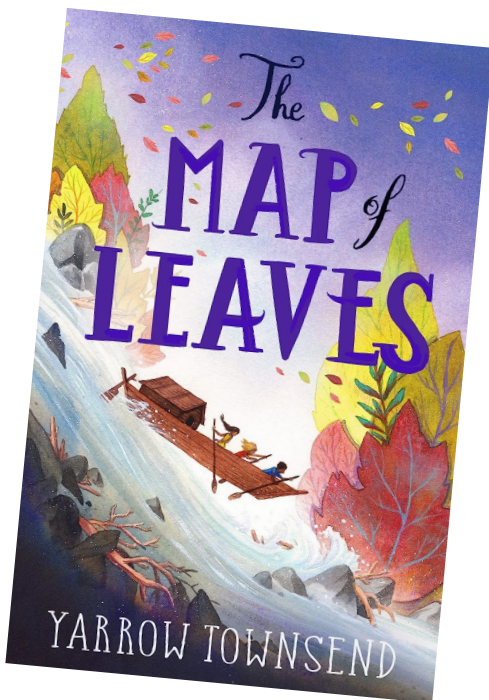


The Comfort Book is a collection of notes, lists, and stories written over a span of several years that originally served as gentle reminders to Haig's future self that things are not always as dark as they may seem. Incorporating a diverse array of sources from across the world, history, science, and his own experiences, Haig offers warmth and reminds us to slow down and appreciate the beauty and unpredictability of existence.

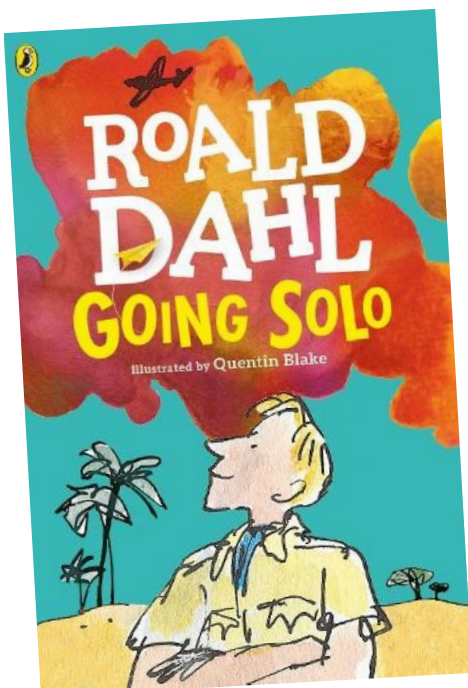
I absolutely adore this book; it's a like a hug. It has served me well so many times and I always come back to it when I need reminding that things will be okay.

One of my favourites is on page 79. Check it out.

**Florence Rosten in Year 7
would take to her
desert island...**

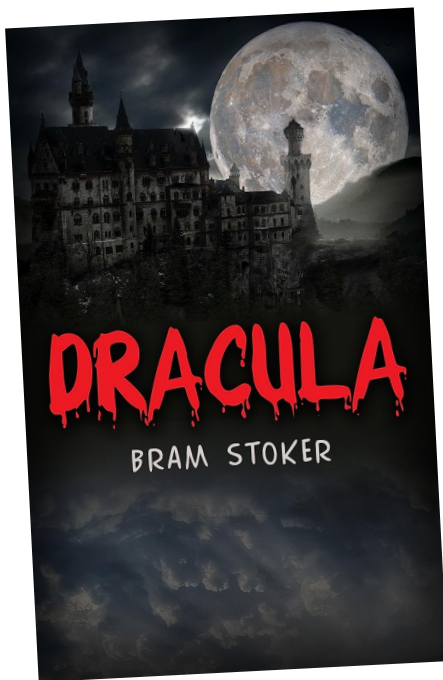
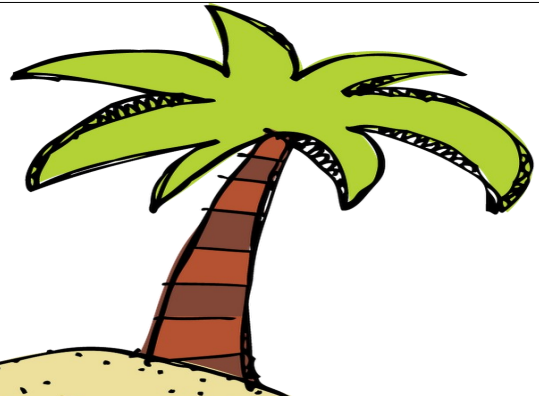


If I was marooned on an island, the fiction book I would take would be *The Map of Leaves* by Yarrow Townsend. I would choose this one because I would never become tired of the plot. It is an exciting adventure book about trying to find a cure from a deadly disease. Plants and herbal remedies (which you could actually learn to make, so could be useful for survival on the island!) were included in this imaginative and adventure packed book and any plant lover will love it. It is beautifully written and you will be sad when it comes to an end. It is an excellent book!

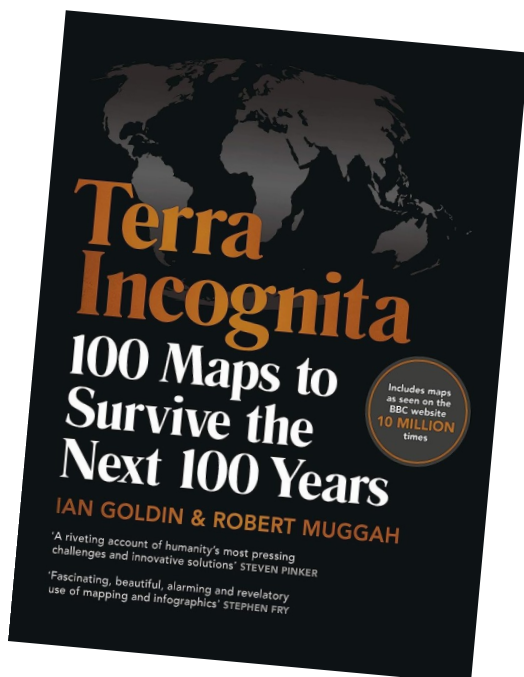


If I was marooned on an island, the non fiction book I would read would be *Going Solo*, an autobiography by Roald Dahl. It is about his life as a Shell company worker and fighter pilot. After reading it, it has given me an optimistic outlook on life because of how lucky we are to have all those service men and women who sacrifice everything to fight for us. As well as being interesting and inspiring, it is hilarious, and it lightens the book to make an autobiography entertaining. I would usually pass over a biography and not give it a second glance, but this book has expanded the choices of books I pick. You will not want to put this book down!

**Mr Webb
would take to his
desert island...**

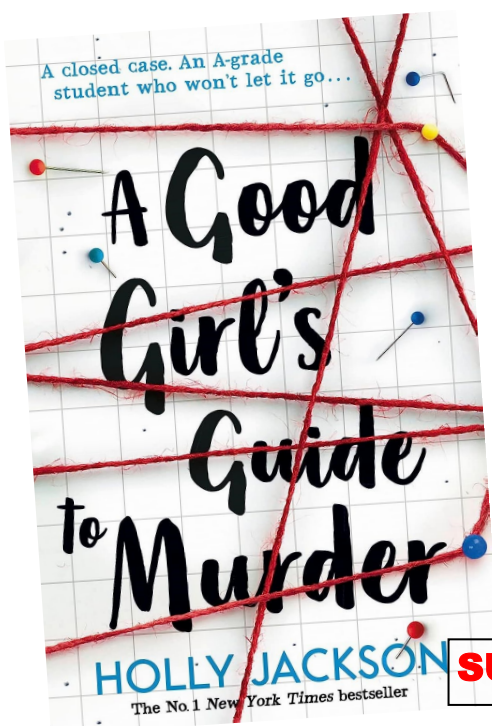


I was persuaded, slightly reluctantly, to read this recently. The book is incredible, dark, intriguing and so readable. With its constant use in media, directly or indirectly, over the past few decades, there are so many recognisable moments and characters to draw you further in. The book also manages to make it seem like a very thin line between fact and fiction which only serves to make it even creepier and un-nerving.



Admittedly, this is a book to be read in short chunks; there is a lot of information contained and the maps can take a moment to get your head around. However, when grasped, the book's excellent blend of visual information and written explanations provides a really concise and logical view on where humans have come from and where they are going. It can be a little bleak at times, but manages to draw together a vast range of complexities of human life and impact across our more recent history.

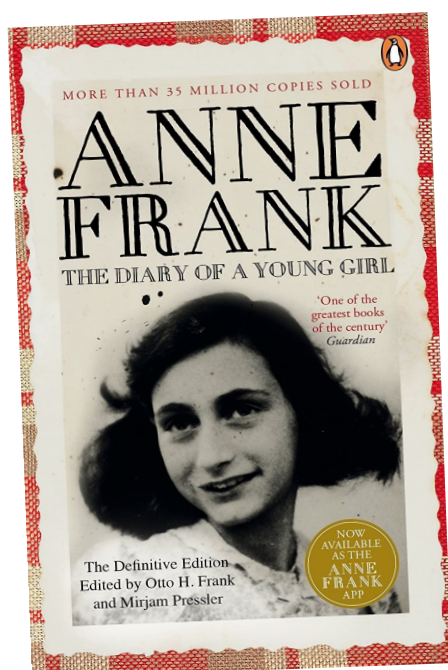
Amelia Lock in Year 9 would take to her desert island...



My Desert Island fiction choice would be *A Good Girls Guide to Murder*. I think this book is so intriguing and so easy to get invested in. I am always so into it when reading this book.

It is about a teenage school girl doing a school project about a murder that took place in her town and how she never believed the murderer was guilty as never trialled, so she sets out to find out what really happened. The plot twists are so good!

SUITABLE FOR YEAR 8 +



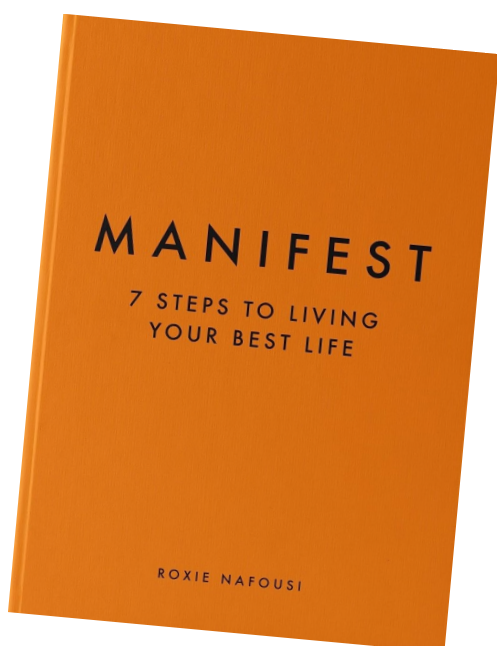
For my non-fiction book I chose the *Diary of Anne Frank*. This important book tells the story of what life was really like living under the Nazi regime in World War Two. It is really interesting delving deeper into the life of this girl who we all know so much about—getting closer to who she was and learning more about her personal life.

Miss Hunter would take to her desert island...



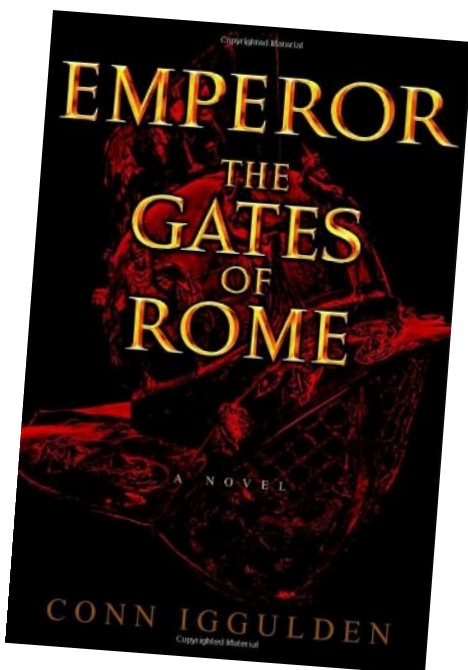
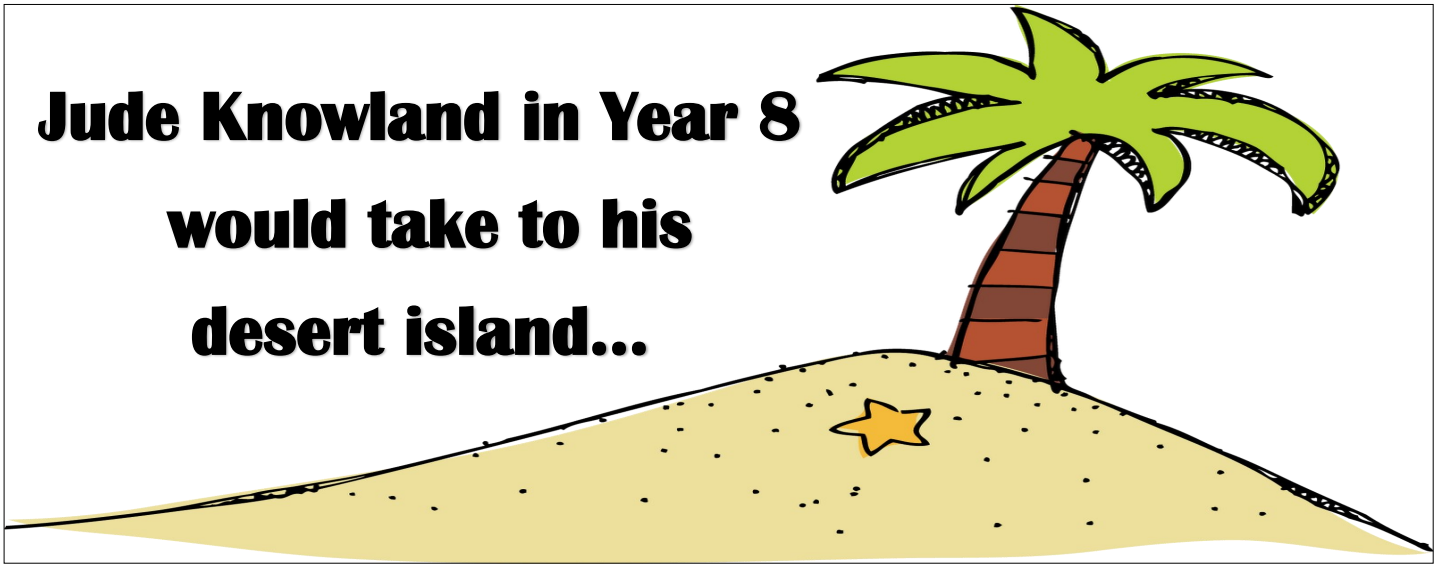
This is a book about perspective, gratitude and possibilities. The book follows a young woman whose life has insurmountably fallen apart. After making an attempt on her life and ending up in what can only be described as some sort of purgatory, she is thrown into endless other versions of her life (many of which don't involve previous mistakes that she has made and regrets that she has). The book inspires a change of perspective, forces gratitude and incites a desire to reach for possibilities.

SUITABLE FOR YEAR 9 +



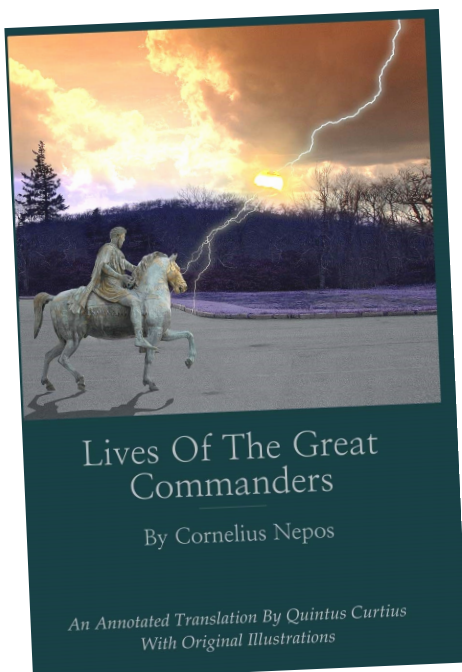
While manifestation is the butt of a lot of jokes at the moment and the quickest conversation topic to make someone cringe – this book taught me a lot. It didn't teach me to visualise a life I want and there it shall appear. It taught me to focus on what is good in life, what truly matters to me and what exciting possibilities could emerge, as opposed to dwelling on what is difficult to manage and what is going wrong for me. This, in turn, helped me to try and stay positive and be grateful and inspired me to work harder for the things I truly want instead of focussing on the things that hold me back.

Jude Knowland in Year 8 would take to his desert island...



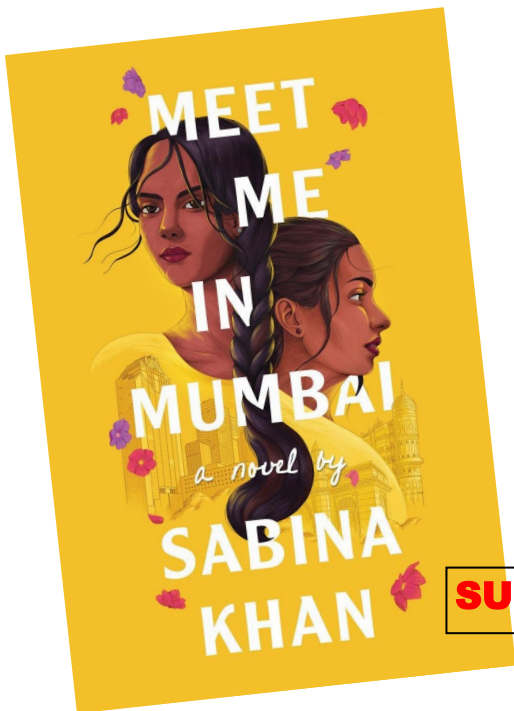
This book tells the story of historic figure Julius Caesar and his rise to power in Rome. It is really interesting how they told the stories of all the battles. There is a huge amount of detail making it easy to read over and over again on your desert island.

I would recommend this for anyone who enjoys the Roman Empire and that era of history.



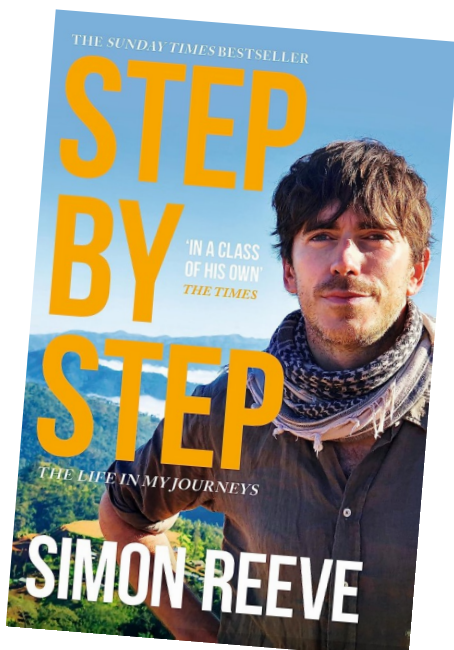
This is a translation of a book written by Roman writer Cornelius Nepos (c. 110 B.C.--c. 25 B.C.), who was one of the first biographers in the Western world. It provides great overviews of the commanders and their campaigns, their virtues and their vices, their strength of character, how they came to power and ultimately their grizzly deaths. There is so much information in this book, you could read it for years, if stuck on your island, and it will really expand your word vocabulary!

**Mrs Morton
would take to her
desert island...**



My fiction read would be “Meet me in Mumbai” by Sabina Khan. A lovely story about friendships and family, spanning the decades. Since spending some time in India, I have loved any book, film or song that brings back memories from this trip. The people, the smells, the sounds... the busyness!

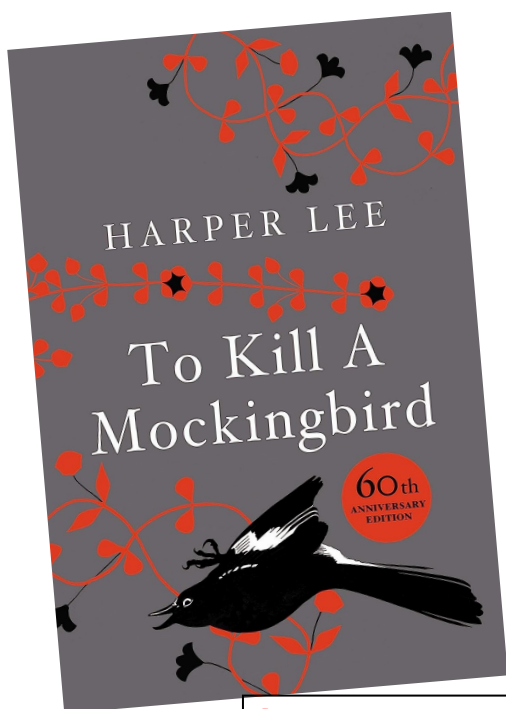
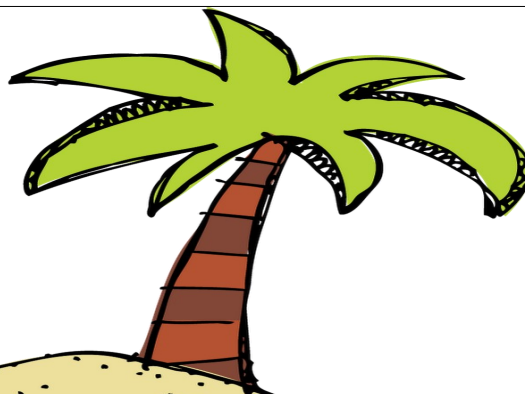
SUITABLE FOR YEAR 8 +



My non fiction Desert Island Read would be “Simon Reeve – Step by Step”.

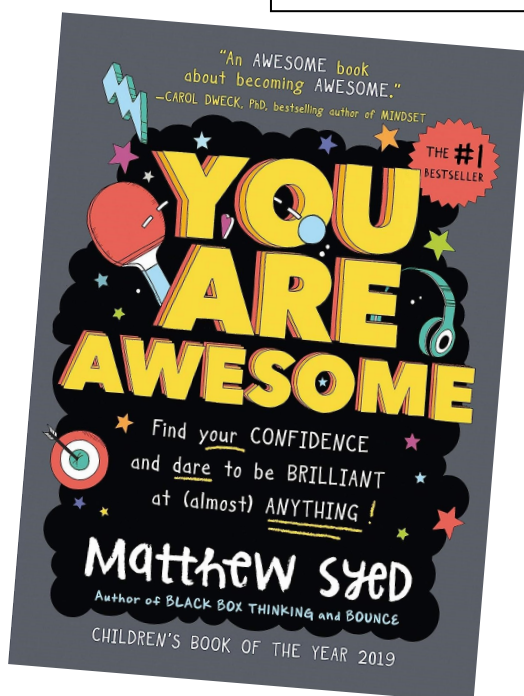
If you like adventure and finding out more about unfamiliar places, this is the book for you. As well as his memoirs from some of his most memorable trips, it also includes details about his early life and how he got to where he is today. A real tale of perseverance and exploration.

Rocco Goduti in Year 10 would take to his desert island...



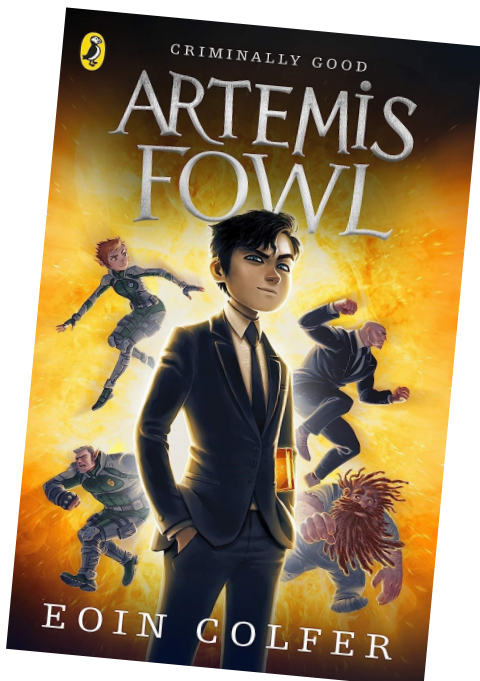
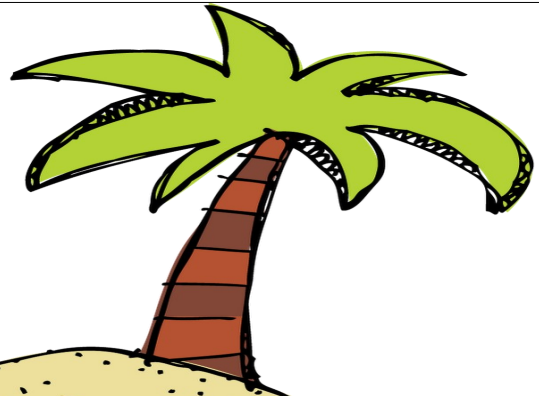
SUITABLE FOR YEAR 9 +

This moving story is told through the eyes of a child. The author, Harper Lee's main character may seem to have a simple perspective, but Scout's world is actually rich and fascinating. I would really recommend this book as Harper Lee does not hesitate when it comes to choosing the realities that black people face in a racist society. The book fully captures the challenges and misery of living in poverty for many in 1930s Maycomb, Alabama.



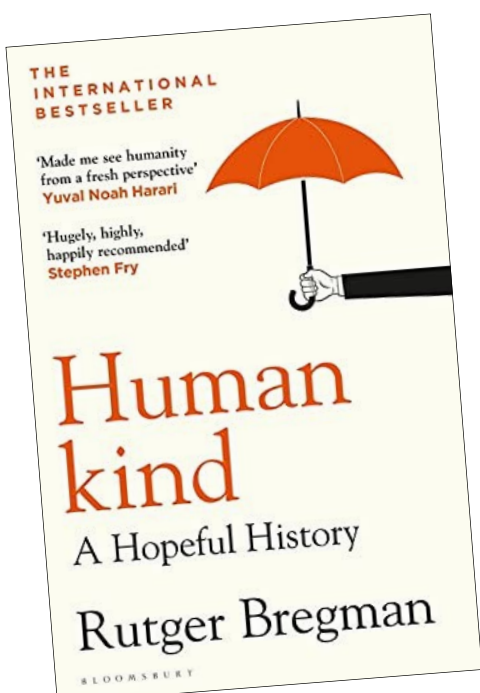
As a former Commonwealth table tennis champion and Olympian, Mathew Syed uses his experience to write this great book about believing in the power of putting your mind to what you want to achieve. This book is all about inspiring young people to achieve their potential. It is full of great examples using people like Roger Federer and Tiger Woods to show that people are successful because of their mindset and hard work, not simply because they are talented. The book emphasizes that making mistakes is a positive thing and should not hold us back.

**Mr Hadwen
would take to his
desert island...**



Artemis Fowl is a young genius, and budding criminal mastermind, that has acquired an ancient textbook of fairy magic and uses it to steal fairy gold. However, the forces of 'The Lower Elements', full of fairies, goblins, centaurs and trolls etc. fight back against Artemis and his very strong side kick/ servant Butler.

Full of action, adventure and humour, the book is the first instalment of many adventures for Artemis. All 11 books are fast paced and easy reading, and it is enjoyable to see the relationship change between the main character and his underground protagonists.

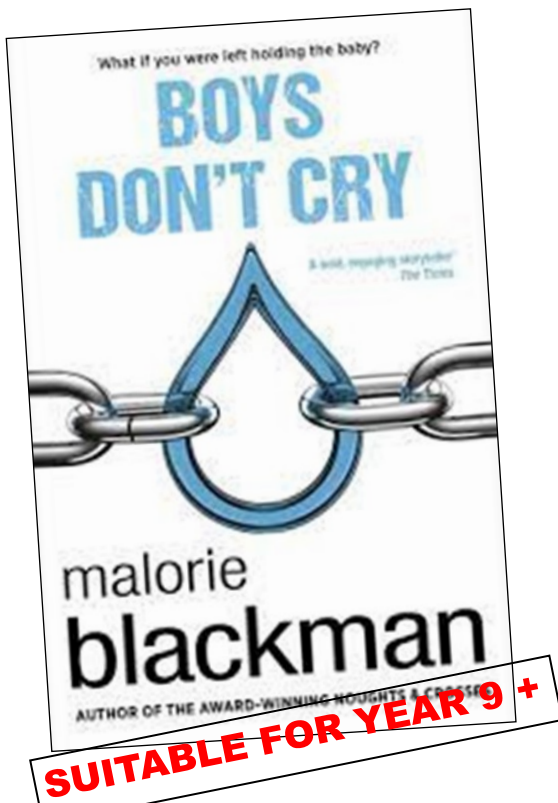
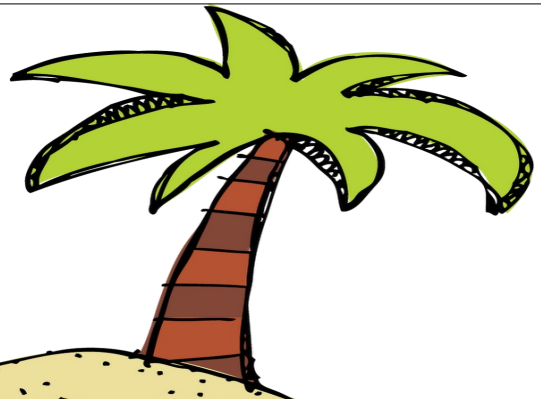


Humankind argues that humans are fundamentally decent and that more recognition of this view would likely benefit everyone, as cynical expectations of others lead them to become cynical themselves.

Bregman uses real life events, such as the Blitz, during the 2nd world war, to highlight how humans really behave in difficult times. He also tries to show that literary works, like 'The Lord of the Flies', doesn't reflect how humans react when there is no law or order.

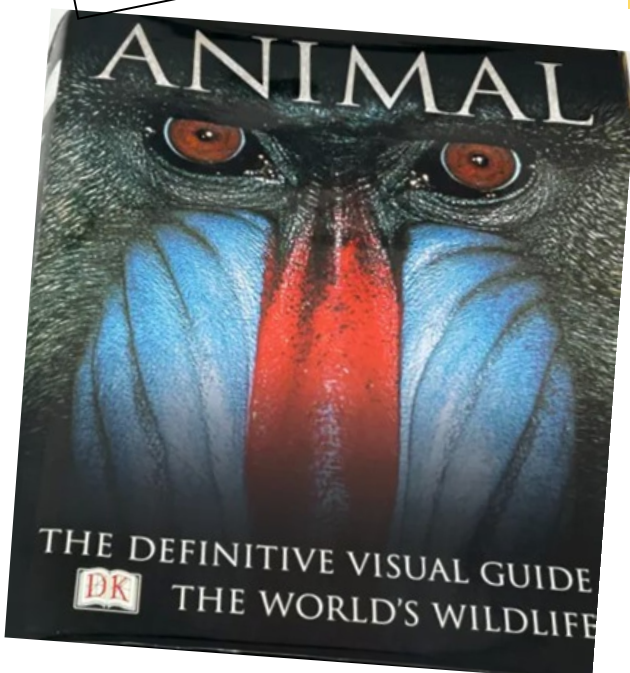
This book is a must for anyone who has a general mistrust of government agencies, religious leaders and authority in general. Do humans resort to the lowest common denominator? I think not.

Noah Besley in Year 10 would take to his desert island...



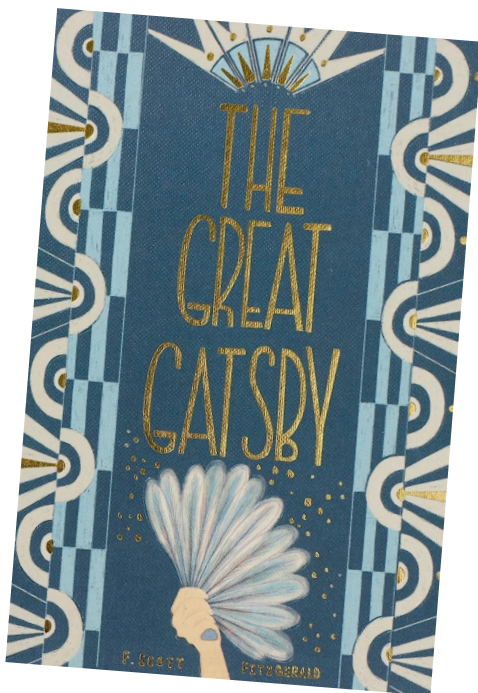
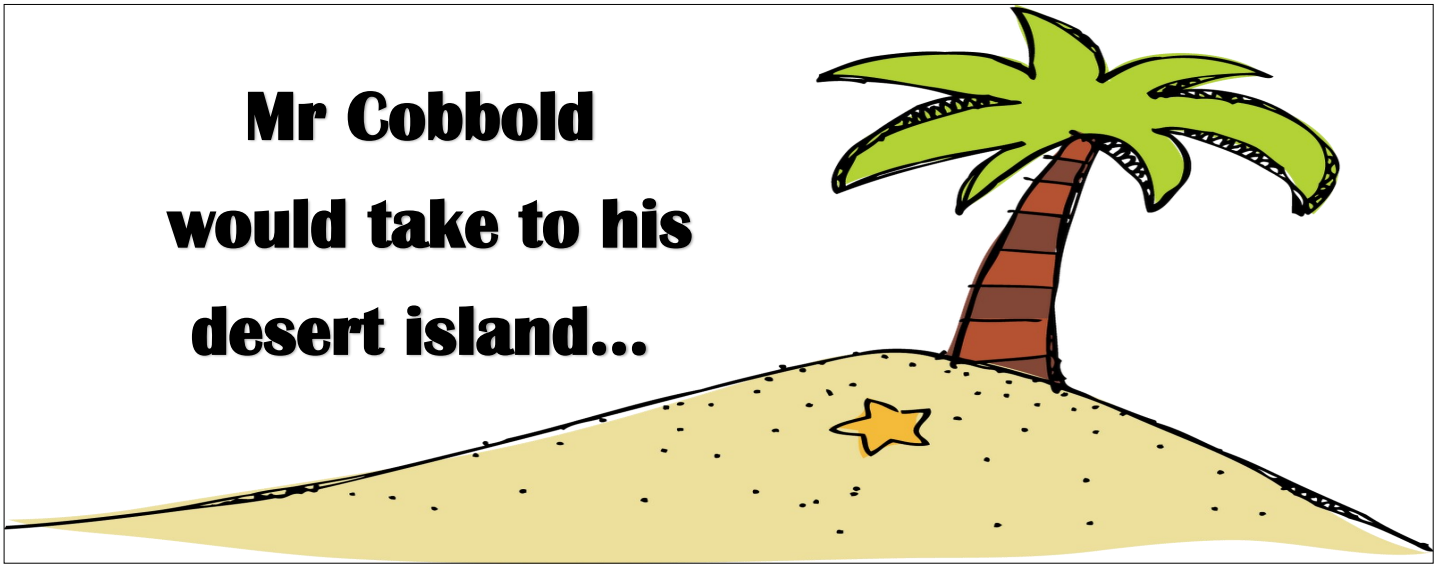
This book is about Dante's attractive 16-year-old brother, Adam, who is gay, a fact he keeps hidden at home. But when a secret relationship goes disastrously wrong, he is beaten up to the point of nearly dying. Surviving with a mutilated face and doubting he will ever make it as an actor, he tries to kill himself.

I loved reading this book as it was incredibly thought provoking for me, Malorie Blackman is a fantastic author and is amazing at describing in - depth the struggles of Adam in this book to always keep you hooked. Reading this really made me realise the struggles an LGBT person may go through in this society and I believe its a fantastic book to educate those on things happening around them that their attention may normally not be drawn too.

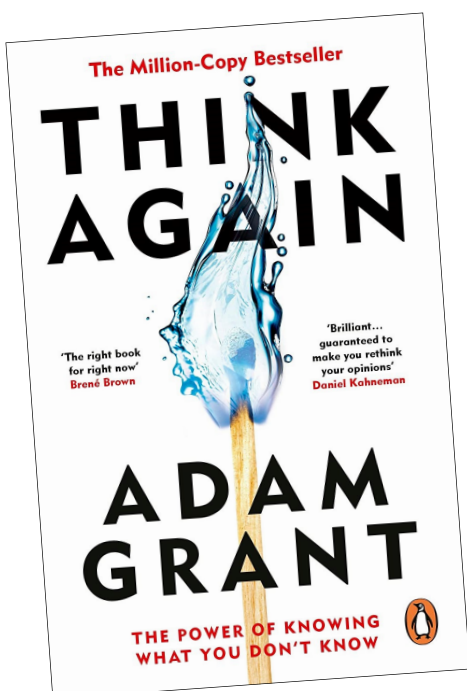


This book is a fantastic encyclopedia of all animals, described in depth by Ted Smart. Anything you need to know about any animal this book will be able to tell you. If I was on a desert island this would not only be very useful for animal identification but as well as this, an amazing book to read and gain knowledge about all the fascinating facts of the animal kingdom. It is a book that will keep you interested for hours.

**Mr Cobbold
would take to his
desert island...**

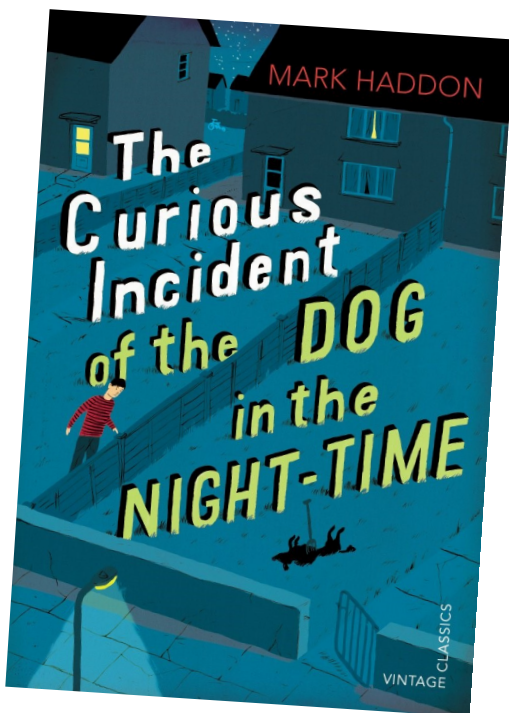


I first read this in school and it is the first time I remember being really hooked by a story. The character of Gatsby was so intriguing and I feel like I could find out something new about him every time I read it. Reading it really takes me into the 'Roaring Twenties' in America, showing real opulence and lavish living that is a far cry from real life for most of us! Also, the 'green light' at the end of the jetty has some ethereal qualities that constantly keeps the reader guessing as to its true meaning.

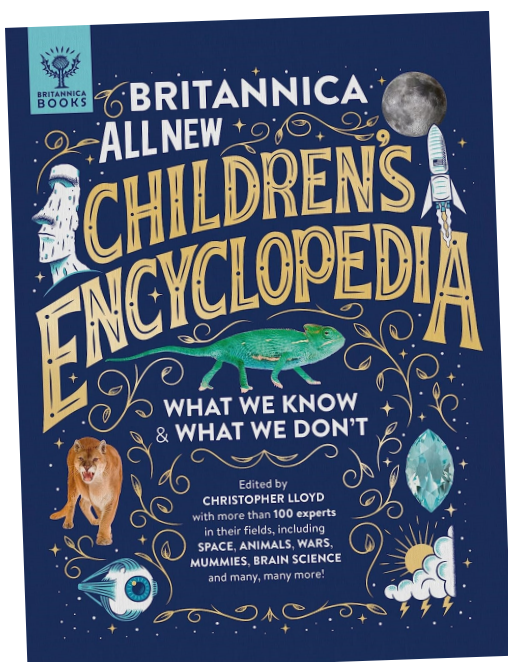


I'm really passionate about helping people to understand that we can learn to disagree well with others and that disagreements and differences are actually incredibly important for a healthy society; this is what this book is all about. Now, you might be thinking that this isn't overly useful if you are stranded alone on a desert island, but maybe it's a sign of my optimistic side that I would be rescued and returned to civilization! Or, it shows you just how readable, influential and important I think this book is...

**Lucy West in Year 8
would take to her
desert island...**

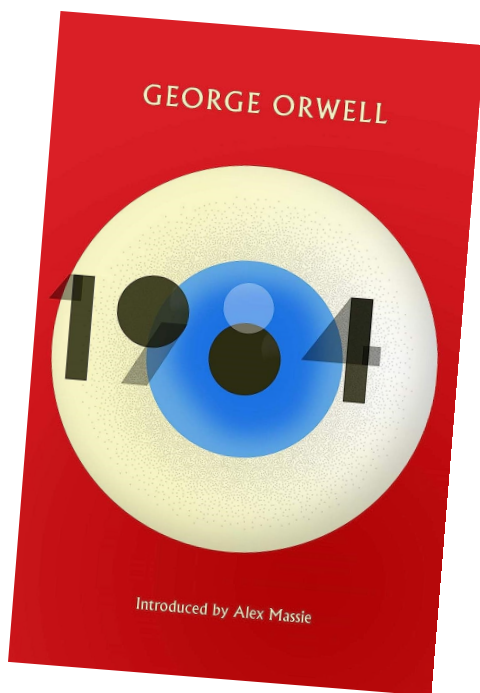


If I had one book to take with me to a deserted island, it would 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time'. Although it is a murder mystery novel, I never get tired of reading and re-reading it. This is because of how well it transports you into the mind of the main character, allowing you to get lost in their brain. The book is cleverly written and is emotional yet funny - I recommend this book to anyone, even if they don't particularly like to read.

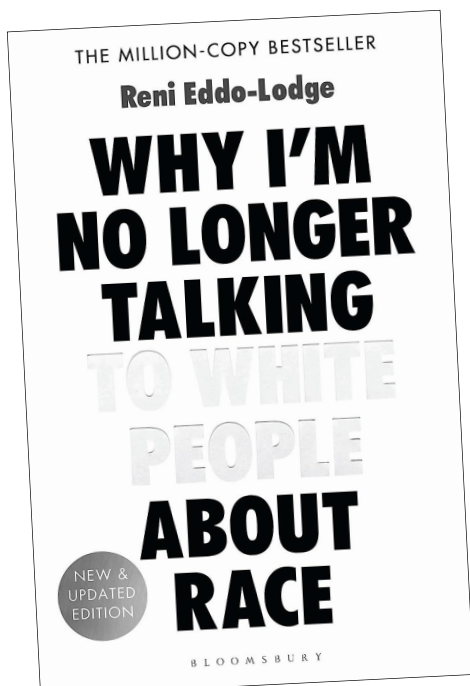


Realistically I would probably take an encyclopaedia so that I have all the knowledge I need to survive on the island. It doesn't really matter which one you take, as long as you read it. It will make you smarter generally, but could also help you come up with ideas on how to escape back to the mainland!

**Miss Love
would take to her
desert island...**

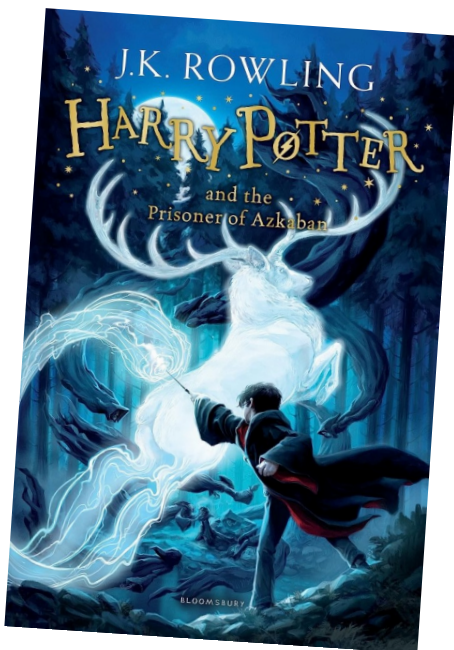


1984 by George Orwell is a gripping dystopian novel which explores fears of a totalitarian future and is a manifest advocate for the freedom of speech. The novel entices you to imagine a world in which even your thoughts are policed and language has been diminished to keep you subservient. Influenced by Nazism and Stalinism, the people of Oceania suffer severe rationing, systematic brainwashing, the falsification of historical events and the oppression of being constantly monitored by 'Big Brother'. At the time of publication it stressed fears of corrupt powers and unaccountable governments – it's up to you if that's still relevant today?

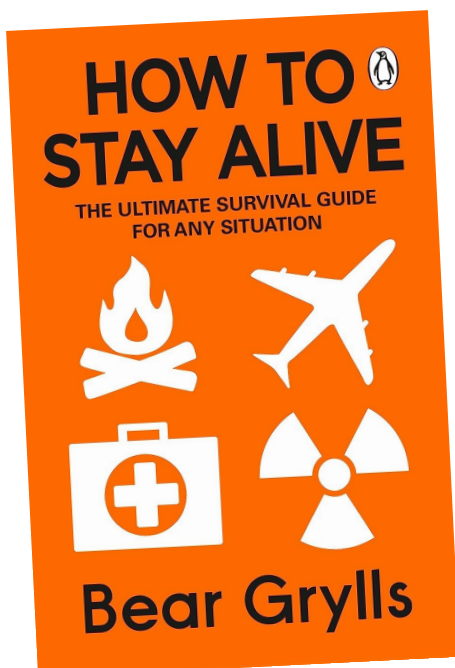


Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge is a thought-provoking text. It explores the author's original determination not to talk to white people about race but, since setting that boundary, it feels as though all she's done is discuss race. The text looks at the history and system of racism from Eddo-Lodge's perspective, white privilege, fear, feminism, classes and justice. She explores how issues and ideas surrounding 'race' cannot be unpacked on their own as it is not an isolated concept but one that intertwines with every other aspect of life.

Fergus Willson in Year 7 would take to his desert island...

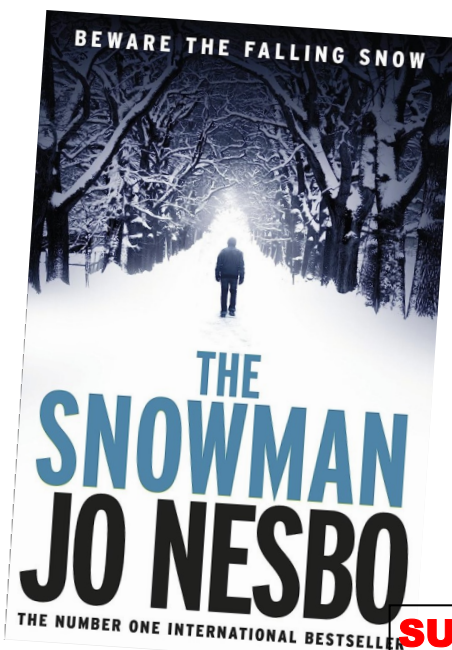
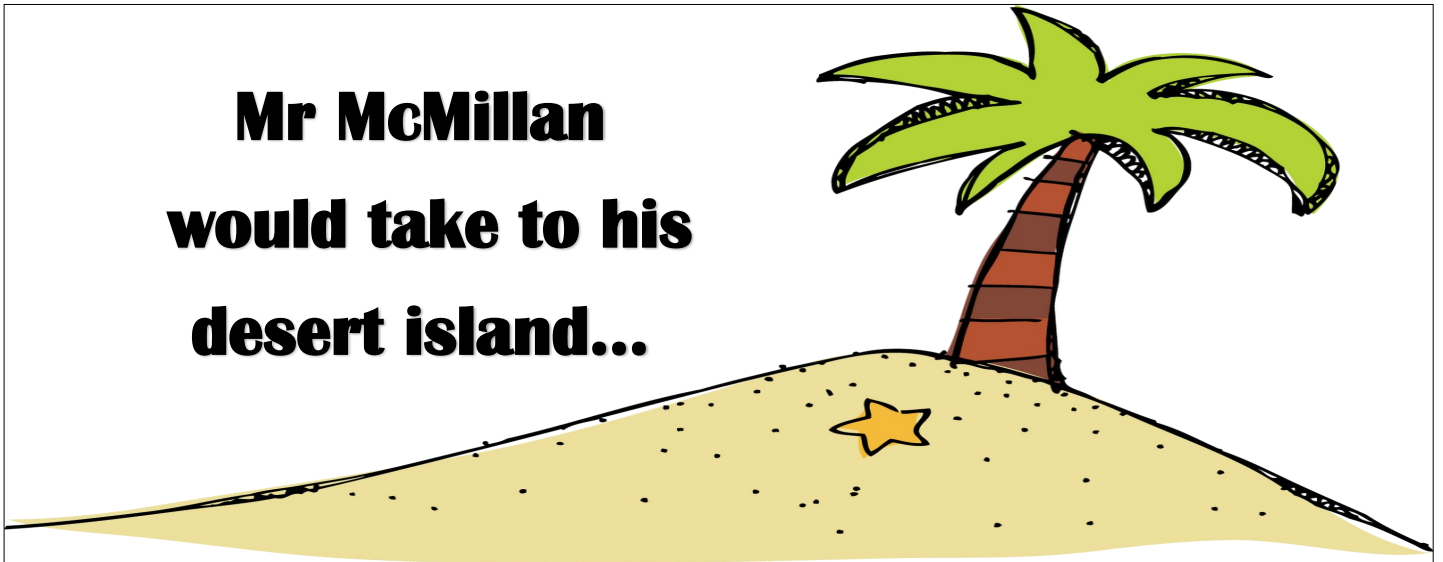


If I were stranded on a desert island, I'd take Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban as it is my favourite out of the seven books and in my opinion a great read! If I managed to get a good source of food and fresh water going and I wanted to sit down and read a book, this would be the best one, as no matter how many times I read it I never got bored. The characters and the story line are just so good.



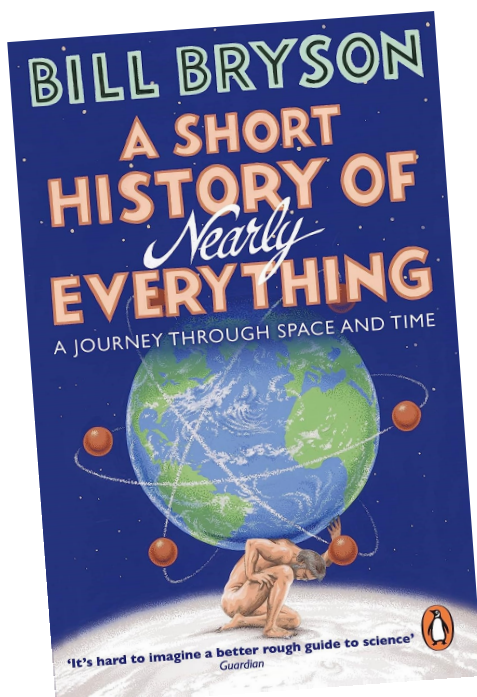
I would like to take the book How to Stay Alive by Bear Grylls, as it contains useful tips from one of the world's most skilled survivalists on how to survive in the difficult wilderness. The author is the Chief Scout of the UK and has done many incredible things like climbing Mount Everest when he was 23 years old. In my opinion there is no better person to take advice from marooned on a desert island. I could learn to hunt, cook, build a shelter and thrive in the wilderness.

**Mr McMillan
would take to his
desert island...**



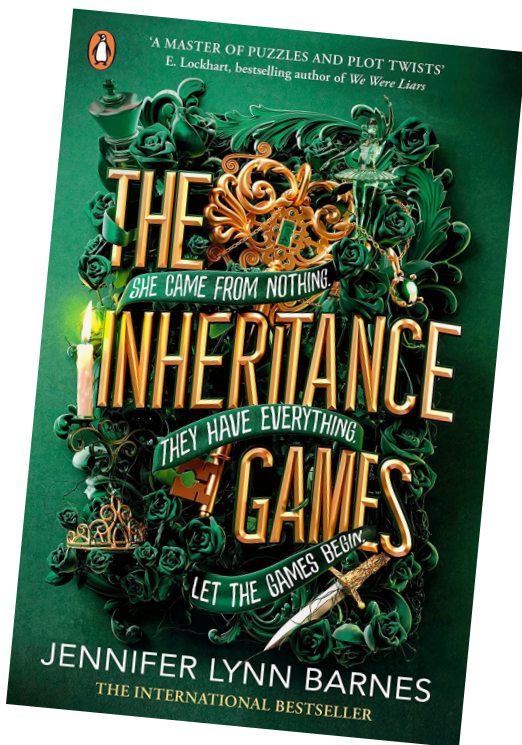
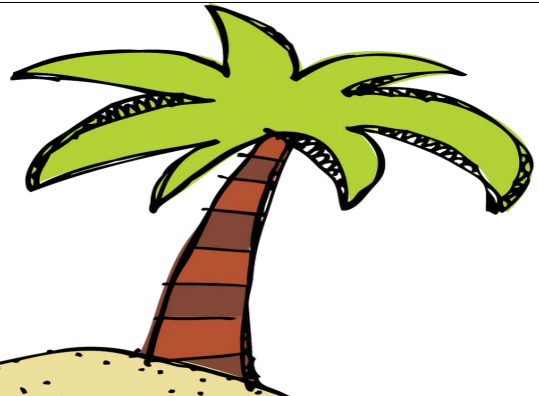
For me it could be any book by Jo Nesbo; an amazing author. But to choose one it would have to be 'The Snowman'. Please do not let the soft title lure you into thinking this will be a cosy read. It follows the detective Harry Hole, who has to investigate a series of missing people and gritty murders. The writing is fast paced and full of twists and turns, with you always asking 'who dunnit?' Be warned, it is not for the faint hearted!

SUITABLE FOR YEAR 10 +



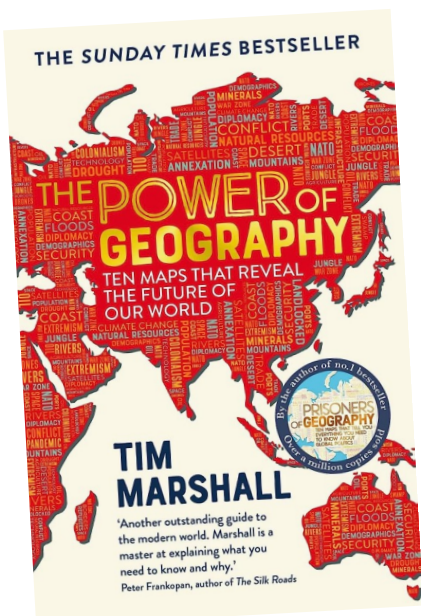
As a science teacher I always want people to be awed, intrigued and inspired by the many facets of science. Bill Bryson's 'A Short History of Nearly Everything' is a book that gently immerses the reader into a myriad scientific fields. He does it so well to not overload you with facts and concepts that are too abstract but makes it a joy to read about a host of different scientific topics.

Emily Hall in Year 10 would take to her desert island...



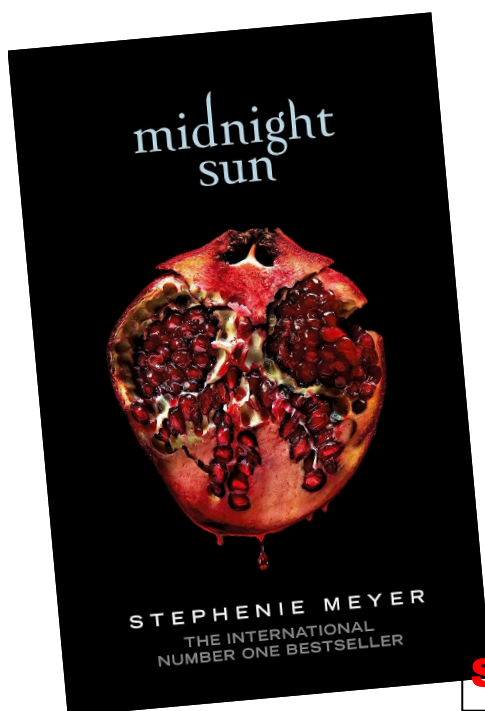
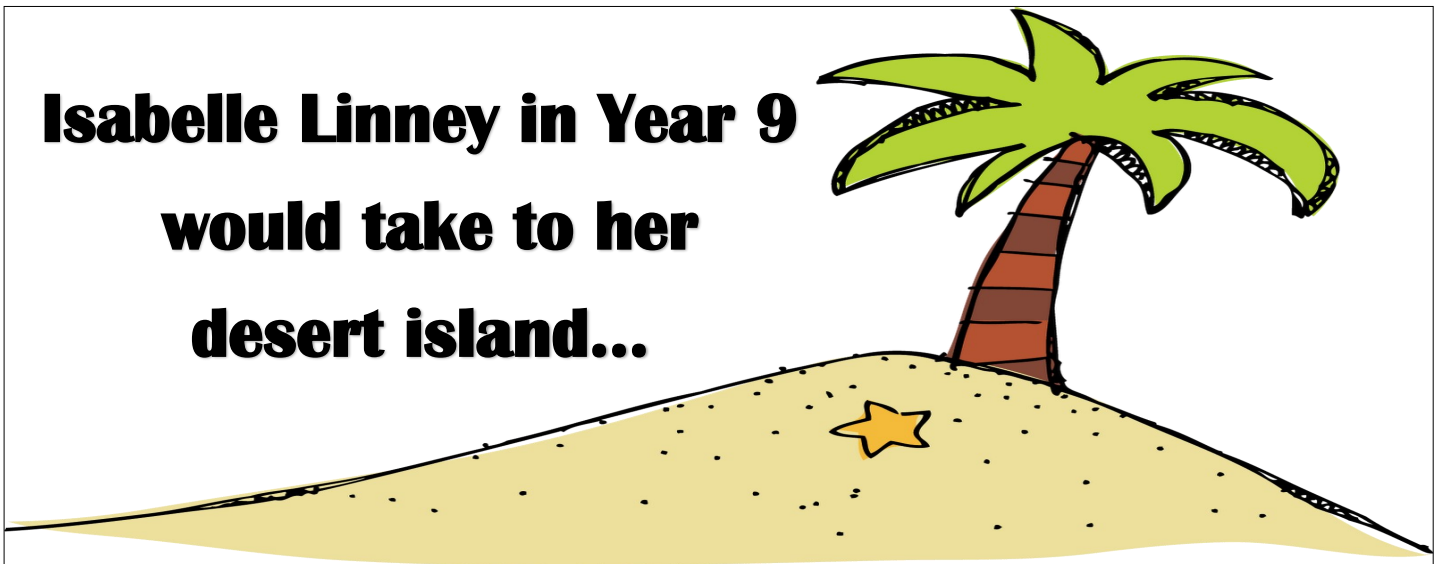
When an eccentric billionaire dies and leaves almost his entire fortune to Avery, a high school student who he has never met, no one knows why. However, to gain this fortune she must follow one condition: to move into the mansion she inherited, which is filled with secrets, codes and the old man's surviving relatives who would stop at nothing to regain 'their' money. Avery is caught in a deadly game with only one rule: winner takes all. This book is filled with incredible plot twists, suspense and high stakes mystery.

SUITABLE FOR YEAR 8 +



A fascinating book about the current geopolitical state of the world and how this may undergo drastic change in the next 10 years. Marshall explains how and why we are likely to see global politics shift from being predominantly ruled by two superpowers to a multi-power world; even discussing how the Earth's atmosphere could become the next great battleground. The book explores ten regions set to shape this change and how they may secure their future on the world's political 'stage.' Additionally, Marshall explains how the countries' geography will help or hinder them. It is quite an advanced read with some complex vocabulary. It is definitely one for upper school.

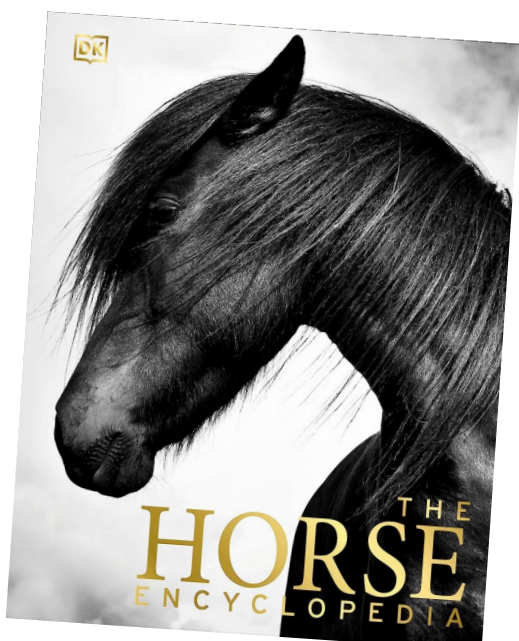
Isabelle Linney in Year 9 would take to her desert island...



I would like to take *Midnight Sun* by Stephanie Meyer to my desert island. This is an alternative version of *Twilight*, as told by Edward.

I could read this book over and over again for hours. I love how you gain a greater understanding of Edward and how he feels about Bella. You get to see what his life looks like when he is not with Bella and how much she changes his existence. You understand Edward better and his reasons for denying Bella immortality. A great book for *Twilight* fans!

SUITABLE FOR YEAR 8 +



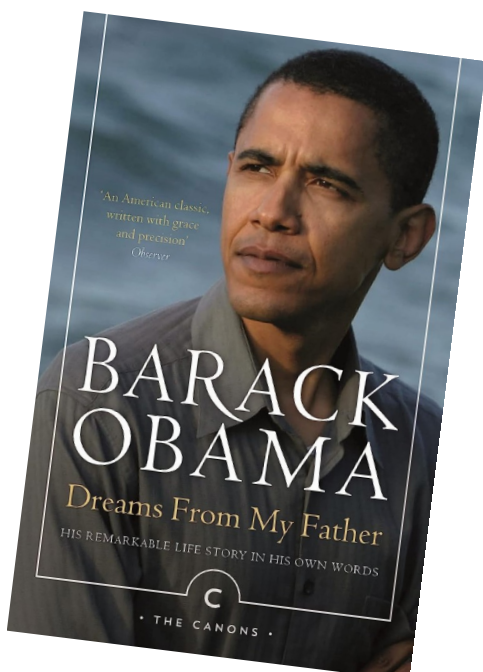
For my non fiction choices I would take *The Horse Encyclopaedia* by DK to the island.

This book is full of interesting photographs of horses and gives you a good overview of the history of horses, breeds of horses and horse care. It includes details of each breed, including their origins and anatomy, as well as famous horse individuals.

**Mrs Schmidt
would take to her
desert island...**



This is the first in a series of short books by my all time favourite YA author, Robert Muchamore who wrote the brilliant CHERUB series. Robin goes to High School near Sherwood Forest. He has some tough things to cope with in life and lives with his mum and brother and likes hanging out with his mates. Without giving too much of the plot away, his life suddenly takes a dramatic turn and he ends up living in an abandoned shopping centre in the middle of the forest with a group of vigilantes, fighting to get his town back from the clutches of the corrupt Sheriff of Nottingham. It's as fast paced and gripping as CHERUB with little nods to the original Robin Hood tale whilst being completely up to date in the things that Robin and his group have to deal with. It's the first book in a great little thriller series and they are easy reads too.

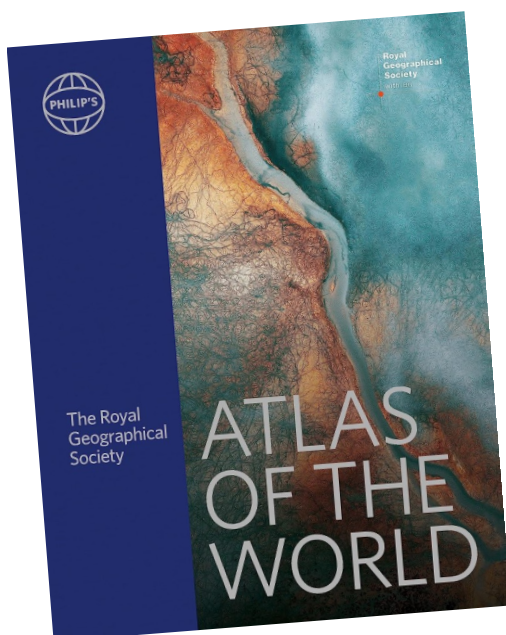


This book is about Obama's journey to the White House, focusing on his family and early life growing up in Kenya and Hawaii. He talks about his relationship with his mother and father and delves into how our relationships with our families, both positive and negative, shape us into the adults that we become and how every relationship that we have gives us an opportunity to learn from others' perspectives and helps us to decide who we are and who we want to be. He also talks about what it feels like to grow up in different cultures with a white American mother and black African father and how this allowed him to understand the diverse perspectives of the American people and led him to his political career. A superb autobiography.

Evie Dyer in Year 7 would take to her desert island...



If I were ever stranded on a deserted island, the one fiction book I would bring along is "The Last Bear" by Hannah Gold. It is a heart-warming tale about friendship, trust, and love, and it is definitely one of my all-time favourites. The story follows a girl who befriends a polar bear stranded on the ice caps, unable to return home. I could read this novel over and over again and never tire of it. I highly recommend it to anyone looking for a great new read. As the School Library has it, I hope everyone has a chance to enjoy it.



I don't really read much non-fiction, but if I was going to a desert island I would make sure I brought my copy of the World Atlas. I love looking at maps, because I am really interested in people around the world and how they live. I like to think about what their lives are like in places and I like to imagine visiting the countries I see on the maps, some day. Also my atlas may help me find a way off my desert island, if I can build a raft from some of the palm trees that grow there!