

# Year 7 and Year 8

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### ***Can You See Me?*** – Libby Scott and Rebecca Wescott

*Can You See Me?* follows 11-year-old Tally, who is autistic and starting secondary school. She wants to fit in and hide her differences from her classmates, but the harder she tries to appear “normal,” the more exhausting and stressful it becomes. Through Tally’s own diary entries, we see her struggles with social situations, sensory overload and misunderstandings from others — as well as her humour, bravery and kindness. Over time, she begins to realise that trying to hide who she really is, is not helping her feel accepted, and that being her true self means more than pretending to be like everyone else. It is an authentic, empathetic story about autism, identity, friendship and self-acceptance.

### ***The Goldfish Boy*** - Lisa Thompson

*The Goldfish Boy* tells the story of 12-year-old Matthew Corbin, who rarely leaves his house because he’s struggling with severe obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) — especially a fear of germs — and spends most of his time watching his neighbourhood from his bedroom window. When the toddler next door suddenly disappears, Matthew realises he was the last person to see the child alive. Although scared to step outside, he becomes determined to help solve the mystery, using his sharp observational skills and enlisting the help of unexpected friends. As the investigation unfolds, Matthew also begins to face his own fears and grief linked to past loss, discovering courage, connection, and hope along the way. This book is a heartfelt mystery that also sensitively explores mental health, family, friendship, and personal growth.

### ***The Island at the End of Everything*** – Lisa Thompson

*The Island at the End of Everything* follows Amihan (Ami), a young girl who lives with her mother (“Nanay”) on Culion, a beautiful yet isolated island in the Philippines where many people live with leprosy. Ami has always known this world of blue seas, lush forests and shared community — until a cruel government force a segregation rule that sends all “untouched” (healthy) children away to an orphanage on another island, separating Ami from her beloved mother. Determined to be reunited with her, Ami makes new friends, confronts prejudice and fear, and embarks on a courageous and emotional journey back home, guided by hope and the fragile beauty of butterflies. This book looks at love and separation, courage, friendship, loss, prejudice, resilience, and the value of home.

### ***Pig Heart Boy*** – Malorie Blackman

***Pig-Heart Boy*** follows 13-year-old Cameron Kelsey, whose life is limited by a serious heart condition. When a doctor offers him a chance at a radical and controversial experimental surgery — replacing his failing heart with a pig’s heart — Cameron must weigh fear, hope and what “normal life” really means. After the operation, he faces public attention, misunderstanding and prejudice, and must find the strength to cope with both physical and emotional challenges as he learns about courage, friendship and self-identity. The story raises **ethical questions about medical science, animal rights and how society treats those who are different, while also showing Cameron’s growth and resilience.**

### ***The Escape Room*** – Christopher Edge

The Escape Room follows the story of twelve-year-old Ami who is thrilled to take part in The Escape, a mysterious and elaborate escape-room challenge full of puzzles, riddles, and brain-bending tasks. She teams up with a diverse group of other kids — including Adjoa, Ibrahim, Oscar and Min — and soon discovers that this isn't an ordinary game. Each “room” transports them to wildly different settings (from ancient Mayan tombs to deserted malls and even a spaceship) with dangerous challenges and ticking clocks. To survive and escape, Ami and her friends must combine their skills, solve the clues and face the unexpected consequences — and they soon learn the stakes are far higher than they first imagined. This is a **fast-paced adventure with puzzles, suspense, teamwork, danger and fantasy elements** — perfect for readers who enjoy mysteries and challenges.

### ***Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*** – Lewis Carroll

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is a classic children's novel about a young girl named Alice who falls down a rabbit hole into the strange and magical world of Wonderland. There she meets unusual characters such as the Mad Hatter, the Cheshire Cat, and the Queen of Hearts. Through a series of bizarre adventures, Alice experiences confusing rules, playful riddles, and nonsense logic that challenge her understanding of the world. The story is celebrated for its imagination, humour, and wordplay, and it explores themes of curiosity, growing up, and the absurd nature of logic.

### ***The Boy in the Tower*** – Polly Yo-Hen

*The Boy in the Tower* is a dystopian novel told from the perspective of Ade, a boy who lives with his mother on the seventeenth floor of a London tower block. Their life changes dramatically when strange, dangerous plants called “Bluchers” begin appearing in the city, causing buildings to collapse and forcing people to evacuate. Ade's mother refuses to leave her flat, which means they're trapped as the city empties and danger grows. Alone and worried, Ade must navigate fear, isolation and survival — and he finds unexpected friendship and courage as the situation becomes more serious. It blends dystopian and survival elements with friendship, courage, fear and emotional struggle, and is set in a realistic urban environment that many young readers will recognise.

### ***See You in the Cosmos*** – Jack Cheng

*See You in the Cosmos* follows 11-year-old Alex Petroski, a space-obsessed boy who dreams of sending a golden iPod full of Earth sounds into space to communicate with intelligent life. He records his thoughts and adventures on his iPod while setting off on a solo road trip across the southwestern United States with his dog, Carl Sagan (named after the famous astronomer). Along the way Alex meets new people, tries to launch his rocket, and learns more about his family history, his late father, and what it means to be brave and loved. The story is told in Alex's own voice — through his recordings — giving readers a vivid, emotional journey that blends adventure, curiosity and personal growth. *See You in the Cosmos* is a thoughtful coming-of-age

story with humour, heart, and curiosity — great for readers who enjoy character-driven adventures and questions about life, family and the universe.

### **The Night Bus Hero** – Onjali Q. Rauf

*The Night Bus Hero* is told from the point of view of Hector, a schoolboy who is known for being a bully and getting into trouble. One day, after picking on Thomas, a homeless man in the park, Hector finds himself caught up in a mystery: famous London statues and landmarks are being stolen, and homeless communities are being wrongly blamed. Convinced Thomas is involved, Hector goes to the police — but when he realises that he has made a mistake, he must work with Thomas and his classmate Mei-Li to uncover the truth. Along the way, Hector begins to learn about compassion, kindness and what it really means to be a hero. The story deals with bullying and how it affects others, homelessness and empathy, friendship and personal growth and doing the right thing even when it's hard.

### **Where The World Ends** - Geraldine McCaughrean

*Where the World Ends* is a gripping historical novel about a group of boys left alone on a remote Scottish sea stack to harvest birds, only to be cut off from the mainland for months. As supplies run low and hope fades, their isolation tests friendship, faith, and survival. Inspired by a true story, it's a tense, atmospheric read about endurance at the edge of the world.

### **Wonder** - R.J. Palacio

*Wonder* by R.J. Palacio tells the story of Auggie Pullman, a boy born with a facial difference who attends mainstream school for the first time. As he navigates friendship, bullying, and kindness, the novel shows events from multiple perspectives, highlighting empathy, acceptance, and the impact of choosing to be kind.

### **Dragonborn** – Struan Murray

*Dragonborn* is a fast-paced middle-grade fantasy about 12-year-old Alex Evans, who discovers she is a dragon in human form. After accidentally revealing her powers, she journeys to the secret dragon haven of Skralla, where she trains with other young dragons to unlock her abilities. As ancient dragons rise and threaten both humans and dragons, Alex must embrace her true identity to face the danger ahead. The book explores themes of coming-of-age and having the courage to stand up for what is right, making it an exciting and meaningful read for young fantasy enthusiasts.

### **Little Women – Louisa May Alcott**

*Little Women* is a classic novel that follows the lives of the four March sisters—Meg March, Jo March, Beth March, and Amy March—as they grow up during the time of the American Civil War. Living with their mother while their father is away at war, the sisters experience the challenges of family life, friendship, love, and personal ambition. Each sister has a different personality and dream, especially Jo, who hopes to become a writer. The story explores themes of kindness, hard work, and the importance of family, showing how the girls learn valuable life lessons as they mature.

### **Holes – Louis Sachar**

*Holes* by Louis Sachar tells the story of Stanley Yelnats, a boy sent to the harsh Camp Green Lake juvenile detention centre, where he and the other boys are forced to dig holes every day. As Stanley uncovers secrets buried in the dried-up lakebed, he discovers connections between his family's past and the mysterious history of the land. The novel explores themes of friendship and loyalty, justice and fairness, fate and family legacy, perseverance in the face of hardship, and personal growth, all woven together with humour, mystery, and a clever, twist-filled plot that keeps readers engaged from start to finish.

### **A Flash of Neon – Sophie Cameron**

*A Flash of Neon* follows Laurie, a young girl who loves creating stories in her mum's bookshop — so much so that she invents the perfect boy, Neon. But when he unexpectedly steps off a train into her real life, Laurie's world is turned upside down, and she must navigate the blurred lines between imagination and reality. A magical coming-of-age tale about imagination, friendship, identity, and what it means to be real, this fantastical story blends heartfelt emotion with whimsical charm, making it a perfect pick for readers who enjoy thoughtful and imaginative fiction.

### **The Line They Drew Through Us – Hiba Noor Khan**

*The Line They Drew Through Us* is a moving piece of historical fiction that follows three best friends born on the same day in pre-Partition India whose lives are torn apart when the British announce Indian independence and draw borders that divide their country and their families. As Jahan, Ravi and Lakshmi face loss, displacement and the upheaval of their communities, the novel explores friendship across cultural and religious divides, the human impact of political borders, resilience in the face of upheaval, and the enduring power of hope. Through vivid characters and a deeply emotional journey, this book invites readers to understand an important moment in world history while reflecting on the strength of connection and compassion even when lines are drawn through us.

## **The Garbage King – Elizabeth Laird**

*The Garbage King* follows two boys in Ethiopia — Mamo, who runs away from home after losing his family's support, and Amed, who is left to fend for himself on the streets after his stepfather sells him to pay a debt. Forced into life on the margins, they survive by scavenging rubbish dumps and facing harsh realities, but through hardships and unexpected friendships they find courage, resilience, and a sense of belonging. This compelling novel explores themes of poverty and survival, friendship and trust, social inequality, identity and resilience, and offers powerful insight into courage and hope in the face of adversity, making it an engaging and thought-provoking read for young readers.

## **I Dare You – Tamsin Winter**

*I Dare You* tells the thrilling story of two teenagers drawn into a mysterious and high-stakes dare that leads them on a dangerous quest across the city. When a simple game turns into a race against time, the protagonists must confront their fears, test their limits, and make choices that reveal who they really are. With fast-paced action and emotional depth, the novel explores themes of courage and risk, friendship and trust, identity and self-discovery, and the consequences of daring to step outside your comfort zone, making it a gripping and thought-provoking read for young adult readers.

## **Glow Up Lara Bloom – Dee Benson**

*Glow Up, Lara Bloom* is a humorous and heart-warming diary-style novel that follows Lara Bloom, captain of her school football team, as she navigates friendships, crushes, school drama, and the quest for confidence. When she meets a new boy named Caiden, Lara and her friends decide it's time for a "glow up" — not just for him, but to embrace self-love and empowerment — all while juggling embarrassing moments, football exploits, and the ups and downs of teenage life. Set in Liverpool with a relatable and funny voice, the book explores themes of friendship, identity, self-acceptance, body positivity, and growing up with humour and heart, making it a fun and inspiring read for young readers.

## **Cold Turkey – Simon James Green**

*Cold Turkey* by Simon James Green is a hilarious and fast-paced middle-grade story about former best friends Kit and Hamza, who are faced with an unusual mission: deliver a cooked turkey across London before it goes cold. After a falling-out over a girl, Kit doesn't want anything to do with Hamza — but the promise of money and the absurd challenge lead them on a chaotic race filled with unexpected obstacles, including encounters with the police, a bomb squad, and street gangs. The book explores friendship and forgiveness, humour and adventure, teamwork and overcoming grudges, making it a lively and relatable read for readers aged 11+ who enjoy comedy-driven contemporary fiction.

## **Stone Cold** – Robert Swindell

*Stone Cold* is a gripping and powerful novel that follows homeless teen Link, as he struggles to survive on the streets of London, interwoven with chilling journal entries from a man known only as Shelter, whose dark intentions add tension and danger to Link's world. As Link forms fragile alliances and battles the harsh realities of life without a home, the story explores poverty and social inequality, resilience and survival, friendship and trust, and the impact of homelessness on young lives, making it a compelling and thought-provoking read for teens and adults alike.

## **Treasure Island** – Robert Louis Stevenson

*Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson is a classic adventure novel about a young boy named Jim Hawkins who discovers a treasure map that once belonged to a pirate captain. He joins a sea voyage to find the hidden treasure but soon learns that some of the crew are dangerous pirates, including the clever and unpredictable Long John Silver. As the journey unfolds, Jim faces danger, betrayal, and exciting adventures on a remote island. The story is famous for its thrilling pirate action, themes of courage and loyalty, and for shaping many of the pirate stereotypes we know today.

## **War Horse** – Michael Morpurgo

*War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo is a historical novel set during World War I and told from the perspective of a horse named Joey. The story follows Joey after he is sold to the army and sent from England to the battlefields of France, where he experiences the hardships and dangers of war. Throughout the novel, Joey forms strong bonds with both humans and other animals while trying to survive the brutal conditions of the war. The book explores themes such as friendship, loyalty, bravery, and the suffering caused by war, while also highlighting the strong connection between humans and animals. It shows the emotional impact of conflict and emphasises compassion and hope even in difficult circumstances.

## **The Weirdstone of Brisingamen** – Alan Garner

*The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* by Alan Garner is a classic children's fantasy novel set in the English countryside around Alderley Edge. The story follows two children, Colin and Susan, who become guardians of a magical stone called the Weirdstone, a powerful object desired by dark forces. As they try to protect it, they are helped by the wizard Cadellin and a group of enchanted knights who are sleeping beneath the hills. The book explores themes such as the struggle between good and evil, courage and responsibility, and the importance of friendship and loyalty. It also draws heavily on local folklore and mythology, blending real landscapes with magical elements to create a story about bravery, ancient legends, and the hidden power of the natural world.

### **Arthur: The Seeing Stone** – Kevin Crossley-Holland

*Arthur, the Seeing Stone* is a historical fantasy novel set in medieval England during the late 12th century. The story follows a boy named Arthur who receives a mysterious stone from a family friend, the wise Merlin. When Arthur looks into the stone, he begins to see visions of the legendary King Arthur and the events of the Arthurian legends. As the visions unfold, they reflect Arthur's own life, struggles, and growth. The book explores themes such as identity, courage, destiny, and growing up, while blending real medieval life with the myths of King Arthur. It also looks at how stories and legends can shape a person's understanding of themselves and the world.

### **Some Places More Than Others** – Renee Watson

*Some Places More Than Others* is a contemporary children's novel about family, identity, and understanding your roots. The story follows Amara, a girl who travels from New York City to Portland to visit the family she has never met before. During the trip, she learns about her parents' past and the reasons behind their complicated relationships with relatives. As Amara spends time with her extended family, she begins to understand more about who she is and where she comes from. The book explores themes such as belonging, forgiveness, family history, and the importance of connecting with one's heritage.

### **Over Sea Under Stone** – Susan Cooper

*Over Sea, Under Stone* is a fantasy adventure novel and the first book in the series *The Dark Is Rising Sequence*. The story follows three siblings—Simon, Jane, and Barney—who discover an ancient map while on holiday in Cornwall. The map leads them on a dangerous quest to find a magical grail before the forces of the Dark can reach it. As they search for clues along the coast and through old buildings, the children become caught in a battle between the Light and the Dark. The novel explores themes such as courage, teamwork, and the struggle between good and evil, while drawing on myths, legends, and the atmosphere of the Cornish landscape.

### **Robin Hood: Hacking, Heists and Flaming Arrows** – Robert Muchamore

*Robin Hood: Hacking, Heists and Flaming Arrows* is a modern retelling of the classic story of Robin Hood. Set in a contemporary world, the novel follows a teenage hacker named Robin who becomes involved in stealing from corrupt and powerful figures to help people who are being treated unfairly. Along with a group of friends, he carries out daring missions and clever heists while trying to avoid the authorities. The book explores themes such as justice, rebellion against corruption, friendship, and using intelligence and technology to challenge powerful systems, while keeping the adventurous spirit of the traditional Robin Hood legend.

### **Robin Hood 3: Jet Skis, Swamps and Smugglers – Robert Muchamore**

*Robin Hood: Jet Skis, Swamps and Smugglers* continues the modern adventure series about Robin Hood. In this story, Robin and his friends travel to Florida and become involved in a dangerous situation with smugglers and criminals. Using their hacking skills, teamwork, and bravery, they try to uncover illegal activities and stop the criminals while staying one step ahead of trouble. The novel focuses on action and suspense, and explores themes such as loyalty, justice, courage, and standing up against crime and corruption.

### **Kick – Mitch Johnson**

*Kick* by Mitch Johnson is a children's novel about a boy named Budi who dreams of becoming a professional footballer. He lives in a poor area and spends his days working long hours in a factory that makes football boots. Despite the difficult and dangerous conditions, Budi keeps hoping that football will give him a better future. The story explores themes such as poverty, child labour, determination, and the power of dreams. It also highlights the unfair conditions some children face while producing goods for global brands, while showing Budi's courage and hope as he tries to change his life.

### **When I See Blue – Lily Bailey**

*When I See Blue* is a contemporary novel about a teenage boy named Ben who lives with severe obsessive-compulsive disorder. Ben experiences intrusive thoughts and feels compelled to perform certain rituals to prevent bad things from happening, which makes everyday life very challenging. The story follows his struggles at school, his friendships, and his efforts to manage his condition while still trying to live a normal life. The book explores themes such as mental health, anxiety, courage, and understanding, showing how Ben gradually learns to face his fears and seek support from the people around him.

### **Peregrine Quinn and The Cosmic Realm – Ash Bond**

*Peregrine Quinn and the Cosmic Realm* by Ash Bond is a fantasy adventure novel about a girl named Peregrine Quinn who lives a quiet life until she discovers a hidden world connected to cosmic powers and ancient secrets. When Peregrine learns that she has a special connection to this mysterious realm, she is drawn into a dangerous journey filled with magical creatures, powerful enemies, and hidden histories. As she tries to understand her role in the cosmic world, she must show courage and determination while working with new allies. The book explores themes such as destiny, bravery, friendship, and discovering one's true identity, while combining elements of fantasy, adventure, and mystery.

## **Across the Barricades – Joan Lingard**

*Across the Barricades* by Joan Lingard is a historical novel set in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The story follows two teenagers, Kevin McCoy, a Catholic boy, and Sadie Jackson, a Protestant girl, who fall in love despite the deep divisions between their communities. As violence and tension grow around them, Kevin and Sadie must struggle with prejudice, family expectations, and the dangers of living in a divided city. The novel explores themes of love, conflict, and hope, showing how friendship and understanding can cross barriers created by politics and religion.

## **The Marvellers - Dhonielle Clayton.**

*The Marvellers* is fantasy adventure that takes place in a richly imagined magical world where young magicians train at the Arcanum Training Institute for Marvelous and Uncanny Endeavours, a school that floats in the sky. The story follows Ella Durand, an 11-year-old Conjuror who is the *first student of her kind* ever admitted to the Institute, where most students are Marvellers — wizards with a different kind of magic. Because Conjurors and Marvellers don't always trust each other, Ella struggles to fit in and prove herself while making friends (like Brigit and Jason), discovering her own unique powers, and facing danger when a notorious criminal called the *Ace of Anarchy* escapes and causes chaos. The book covers themes of identity, belonging, prejudice, and acceptance, showing how Ella must navigate bias and exclusion as she learns to embrace her magic and herself, and how friendships help her overcome obstacles. It blends magical school adventure with deeper ideas about integration, community, and diversity, making it a story about courage, understanding, and finding your place in a world that's sometimes suspicious of those who are different.

## **Fight Back – A.M Dassu**

*Fight Back* tells the story of thirteen-year-old Aaliyah, a Muslim girl living in the English Midlands whose life changes after a terrorist attack near her home shakes her community. As racial tensions rise and she becomes the target of bullying and prejudice at school, Aaliyah chooses to start wearing a hijab as a way of expressing her identity and standing up for who she is. When her school bans the hijab and hostility increases, she initially feels isolated but eventually finds support from friends and stands up against discrimination. The book explores powerful themes such as identity, racism, Islamophobia, prejudice, freedom of expression, courage, friendship, and community activism, encouraging readers to think about empathy and positive action in the face of hate.

## **The Beck – Anthony McGowan**

*The Beck* by Anthony McGowan is a heart-felt environmental adventure centred on a boy named Kyle, who reluctantly spends a weekend afternoon with his quirky grandad — complete with an Elvis wig and a three-legged dog. When his grandad shows him the small stream (“beck”) behind the garden, Kyle discovers a world of fascinating creatures and natural beauty in a place that was once filthy and forgotten. But when that beck is threatened by new development, the pair hatch a bold plan to protect it. When his grandad falls ill, Kyle must find the courage, resilience and confidence to carry on their mission, forming friendships and

growing up a little along the way. The book explores themes of nature and ecology, family bonds, courage, community, responsibility and personal growth, blending humour with more serious moments to show how even a young person can make a real difference.

### **Stone Cold – Robert Swindell**

*Stone Cold* is a gripping and powerful novel that follows homeless teen Link, as he struggles to survive on the streets of London, interwoven with chilling journal entries from a man known only as Shelter, whose dark intentions add tension and danger to Link's world. As Link forms fragile alliances and battles the harsh realities of life without a home, the story explores poverty and social inequality, resilience and survival, friendship and trust, and the impact of homelessness on young lives, making it a compelling and thought-provoking read for teens and adults alike.

### **Thirteen – Robert Swindell**

*Thirteen* by Tom Hoyle is a fast-paced thriller about a boy named Adam Thirteen who has spent his entire life on the run with his father. Adam has never stayed in one place, never gone to school, and never had friends, because his father believes powerful people are trying to find them. When Adam finally learns the truth about his identity, he discovers he may hold the key to a dangerous scientific secret. As he tries to understand who he really is, Adam becomes caught in a chase involving government agents, scientists, and people who will stop at nothing to capture him. The novel explores themes of identity, trust, and the search for the truth.

### **Welcome to Nowhere – Elizabeth Laird**

*Welcome to Nowhere* tells the story of a young boy named Omar who lives in Bosra in Syria. When the Syrian Civil War begins, Omar's peaceful life with his family changes dramatically as their home and city become unsafe. After facing danger and loss, Omar and his family are forced to flee their country and begin a difficult journey as refugees. The novel shows the hardships they face while searching for safety and a new place to live. It explores themes of family, resilience, and the human impact of war, helping readers understand the experiences of people forced to leave their homes.

## **Chinese Cinderella – Adeline Yen Mah**

*Chinese Cinderella* by Adeline Yen Mah is an autobiographical memoir about the author's difficult childhood growing up in Shanghai and later in Hong Kong. After her mother dies soon after her birth, Adeline is treated as bad luck by her family and is neglected and mistreated by her father and cruel stepmother. Despite feeling unwanted and alone, she works hard at school and finds hope in her studies and love of reading and writing. The book explores themes of resilience, determination, and the search for acceptance while showing how Adeline overcomes hardship to believe in herself.

## **The Curious Incident of the Dog at Night-Time – Mark Haddon**

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon is a novel about a fifteen-year-old boy named Christopher Boone who has a unique way of seeing and understanding the world. When he discovers that his neighbour's dog has been mysteriously killed, Christopher decides to investigate the incident like a detective. As he searches for the truth, he uncovers surprising secrets about his family and must face challenges that push him far beyond his usual routines. The story explores themes of truth, trust, and courage, while giving readers insight into Christopher's thoughts and experiences.

## **How I Live Now - Meg Rosoff**

*How I Live Now* by Meg Rosoff is a young adult novel that follows a fifteen-year-old girl named Daisy. Sent from the United States to live with relatives on a farm in England, Daisy's life takes a dramatic turn when a war suddenly breaks out across the country. Cut off from the adults she depends on, she must survive alongside her cousins, facing hunger, fear, and danger. Through this journey, Daisy experiences love, loss, and personal growth. The novel explores themes of resilience, courage, and the strength of human relationships in times of crisis.