

19/01/2023

Dear Parent/Guardian

Reading: The magic bullet of education

Here at RGS we are very keen for all students to read widely and to read often. This is partly for the sheer joy of reading, with stories offering the chance for pupils to escape into different worlds, have incredible adventures and explore new perspectives. There is also a wide body of research which shows the academic benefits of reading widely and reading often. One leading educationalist concluded that 'it is a simple truth: successful reading helps determine academic success. Reading proves the master skill of school' (Quigley, Closing the Reading Gap, 2020). I was particularly struck by the conclusions from a further academic study which found that 'the presence of books in the home is the top predictor of whether a child will attain a high level of education - more significant than parents' education, occupation, or class' (Evans et al. Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, 2010).

Despite the tangible benefits which the simple act of reading can bring, we know that, in general, boys at RGS tend to read less and less as they get older. This is unfortunately a national and even international trend. As teachers we will always do our best to counter this move away from reading by providing students with lots of enticing snippets of books in lessons and plenty of book recommendations. We also really like it if students ask us about what we are reading as we are always happy to share!

To encourage students to read widely and often, teachers from across departments have compiled the following list of enthralling books. The emphasis here is on engaging reads, rather than exam specific textbooks. The books are arranged by year group. Rather than send just your child's year group, we felt that you and he would both be interested in what is recommended for all years. Hopefully if the boys like some of these recommendations, they will want to keep reading. Most of the titles on this list are in the School Library and it's worth mentioning that RGS is very lucky to have an incredibly well-stocked library, set in the heart of the historic main building, and led by a professional librarian. Finally, from home, if you could encourage your son to spend some of his free time reading that would be amazing.

If you have any questions about reading or would like to know more about this topic, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours sincerely

Simon Taylor
Subject Leader for History and Politics / Literacy Coordinator
sbt@rgshw.com

Year 7

Art

13 Art Techniques Children Should Know by Angela Wenzel.

Art Matters: Because Your Imagination Can Change the World by Neil Gaiman.

Classical Civilisation / Latin

Who Let the Gods Out? by Maz Evans.

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan.

Design Technology

The Way Things Work Now: A Visual Guide to the World of Machines by David Macaulay.

Biomimicry for Designers by Veronika Kapsali.

English

The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame.

The Skylark's War by Hilary McKay.

French

Collection Monsieur Madame (Mr Men & Little Miss): M. Chatouille French edition by Roger Hargreaves.

Geography

The 1:25 000 Ordnance Survey map of the area you live in. The RGS is covered by 172 Chiltern Hills East (High Wycombe, Maidenhead and Rickmansworth). Perfect for exploring the great outdoors and finding new places to go for a walk.

Prisoners of Geography: Our World explained in 12 Simple Maps by Tim Marshall. An accessible introduction to global politics and international relations.

German (books by German authors)

Neverending Story by Michael Ende.

Momo by Michael Ende.

History

The Silver Sword by Ian Serraillier. Join a group of young Polish children on an epic journey across war devastated Europe.

Secrets of a Sun King by Emma Carroll. An exciting adventure into the heart of the Golden Age of Egyptian archaeology.

Maths

Elastic Numbers: 108 Puzzles for the Serious Problem Solver by Daniel Griller. An inventive volume of puzzles that are simple to understand but not always so easy to solve.

The Number Devil: A Mathematical Adventure by Hans Magnus Enzensberger. Bored with his maths lessons, Robert is visited in his dreams by the witty and charming Number Devil, who playfully reveals the amazing world of numbers from primes to imaginary numbers.

How long is a piece of string? by Jeremy Wyndham. A creative insight into the mathematics of daily life using relatable scenarios.

Music

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Classical Music ...But Were Too Afraid to Ask by Darren Henley and Sam Jackson.

Bone Music by David Almond.

PE and Sport

What Sport Tells Us About Life by Ed Smith.
You are a champion by Marcus Rashford.

RS

His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman
The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

Science

Horrible Science of Everything by Nick Arnold.
Why is Snot Green?: The Science Museum Question and Answer Book by Glenn Murphy.

Spanish

Spanish Short Stories for Beginners by Alex Torres 12 interesting side by side bilingual stories so you have fun while reading. Easy grammar so you can understand and adopt common structures.

Aventuras de Sherlock Holmes - español/inglés (Dual English/Spanish text) by Arthur Conan Doyle & Fernando Aznar. This book offers an adaptation of the original text of Conan Doyle, in both Spanish and English.

Year 8

Art

The Illustrated Story of Art: The Great Art Movements and the Paintings that Inspired them by DK.
Art Matters: Because Your Imagination Can Change the World by Neil Gaiman.

Classical Civilisation / Latin

Who Let the Gods Out? by Maz Evans.
Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan.

Design Technology

How Was That Built? The Stories Behind Awesome Structures by Roma Agrawal.
Thing Explainer: Complicated Stuff in Simple Words by Randall Munroe.

English

Pawn of Prophecy by David Eddings.
Mango-Shaped Space by Wendy Mass.

French

Conversational French Dialogues: Over 100 French Conversations and Short Stories by Lingo Mastery.

Geography

Worth Dying for, The Power and Politics of Flags by Tim Marshall. This fascinating book looks at why the flags of nations are the colours and shapes they are – I never knew flags could tell us so much about peoples and places!

Horrible Geography: Geography with the gritty bits left in! All great fun. Take your pick from Raging Rivers to Odious oceans via Desperate Deserts and Bloomin Rainforests.

German (books by German authors)

Ink Heart by Cornelia Funke.
A Hand Full of Stars by Rafik Schami.

History

Cane Warriors by Alex Wheatle. A powerfully written story about a slave uprising, told from the point of a view of a 14 year old.

Shadow by Michael Morpurgo. A moving story set in war-torn Afghanistan.

Maths

The Moscow Puzzles by Boris Kordensky A classic Russian puzzle book filled with entertaining logic and lateral thinking riddles.

Math with Bad Drawings by Ben Orlin. A goofy but informative light-touch introduction to some of the big ideas of maths, accompanied by witty and... yes... bad drawings!

Why do buses come in threes? By Rob Eastaway and Jeremy Wyndham. How can maths explain the strange happenings of everyday life?

Music

Perfect Pitch: 100 pieces of classical music to bring joy, tears, solace, empathy, inspiration (& everything in between) by Tim Bouverie.

The Story of Music by Howard Goodall.

PE and Sport

What Sport Tells Us About Life by Ed Smith.

You are a champion by Marcus Rashford.

RS

His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak.

Science

What If? Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions by Randall Munroe.

How to Invent Everything: Rebuild All of Civilisation (with 96% fewer catastrophes this time) by Ryan North.

The Science Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained by DK.

Spanish

Spanish Short Stories for Beginners by Alex Torres. 12 interesting side by side bilingual stories so you have fun while reading. Easy grammar so you can understand and adopt common structures.

The Mexiglish Girl / La Chica Mexiglish by Natalia Simons. Gloria is a little girl with a great talent, she can speak both Spanish and English! Every summer she visits Mexico and stays with her grandma. Her grandma teaches her all about Mexican cultures, traditions and gives her new foods to try. She has many friends in Mexico and is invited to a party. So, what could go wrong?

Year 9

Art

Skillful Huntsman, The Visual Development of a Grimm Tale at Art Center College of Design by Scott Robinson.

The Animator's Survival Kit by Richard. E. Williams.

Classical Civilisation / Latin

Who Let the Gods Out? by Maz Evans.

Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan.

Design Technology

Stuff Matters: The Strange Stories of the Marvellous Materials that Shape Our Man-made World by Mark Miodownik.

Radical Matter: Rethinking Materials for a Sustainable Future by Kate Frankli.

English

Sabriel by Garth Nix.

A Kestrel for a Knave by Barry Hines.

French

Beginner Level French Short Stories: A Collection of 30 Easy Tales to Learn French Vocabulary French edition by Fluency Pro.

Geography

Prisoners of Geography by Tim Marshall. The original book looking at how the global location and physical geography of a country have an effect on their political and economic development. A great introduction to contemporary geopolitics

German (books by German authors)

The 13½ Lives of Captain Bluebear by Walter Moers.

Krabat by Otfried Preussler.

History

Windrush Child by Benjamin Zephaniah. An adventure story which shows us what it was like to be a child of the Windrush generation.

A Medal for Leroy by Michael Morpurgo. A novel partly based on the life of Walter Tull, an English professional footballer and the first black combat officer in the British army.

Maths

The Ultimate Mathematical Challenge by UKMT. A selection of the most absorbing and elegant puzzles from the Junior Maths Challenge right up to Olympiad level. The questions are grouped into 52 weeks.

The Code Book: The Secret History of Codes and Code-breaking by Simon Singh. Light on technical maths and heavy on intrigue, this very readable introduction to the history of codes and ciphers takes us all the way from the Greco-Persian Wars to quantum cryptography.

Maths on the back of an envelope by Rob Eastaway. Clever ways to tackle any problem.

Music

How Music Works by John Powell.

Lev's Violin: An Italian Adventure by Helena Attlee.

PE and Sport

Be Amazing by Sir Chris Hoy.

You are Awesome / Dare to be You by Matthew Syed.

RS

My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult

Life of Pi by Yann Martel

Science

Bad Science by Ben Goldacre.

The Science of Food: An Exploration of What We Eat and How We Cook by Marty Jopson.

Spanish

Diario de Greg, un renacuajo by Jeff Kinney (Spanish edition of Diary Of A Wimpy Kid).

Spanish Short Stories for Beginners by Alex Torres 12 interesting side by side bilingual stories so you have fun while reading. Easy grammar so you can understand and adopt common structures.

Year 10

Art

Tate: Colour: A Visual History by Alexandra Loske.

How to Read Paintings: A Crash Course in Meaning and Method by Liz Rideal.

Classical Civilisation / Latin

Imperium by Robert Harris.

Emperor: The Gates of Rome by Conn Iggulden.

Design Technology

Visual Thinking: Empowering People and Organisations through Visual Collaboration by Williemien Brand and Pieter Koene.

The Design Thinking Toolbox: A Guide to Mastering the Most Popular and Valuable Innovation Methods by Michael Lewrick, Patrick Link and Larry Leifer.

English

Dark Matter by Michelle Paver.

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte.

French

Learn French With Short Stories - Fifteen Beginner Stories with Parallel French and English Text by French Hacking.

The Canterville Ghost - French-English Dual Language Book by Oscar Wilde.

Geography

Factfulness by Hans Rosling. Challenging perceptions on development in different parts of the world using lots of facts, statistics and graphs.

Metropolis. A History of the City, Humankind's greatest invention by Ben Wilson. How cities have developed over the last 6 000 years. Detailed but accessible.

German (books by German authors)

All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque.

Why We Took the Car by Wolfgang Herrndorf.

History

I Must Betray You by Ruta Sepetys. A tense thriller about a young boy growing up under a repressive Communist dictatorship.

HHhH by Laurent Binet. A gripping story based on Operation Anthropoid, the assassination of Nazi leader Reinhard Heydrich in Prague during World War II.

Maths

Can You Solve My Problems? by Alex Bellos. A global collection of puzzles: not all directly mathematical but all requiring tenacity, ingenuity and the sort of inventive, connected thinking that mathematicians prize so highly.

The Maths That Made Us: How Numbers Created Civilisation by Michael Brooks. Offers some answers to the age-old question: “Why do we learn Maths”? From arithmetic to information theory, charts the contribution of mathematics to the world we live in today. There is some technical maths here, all skippable if you are just enjoying the story!

Music

This is Your Brain on Music by Daniel Levitin.
How Music Works by David Byrne.

PE and Sport

The Body by Bill Bryson.
The Talent Code by Daniel Coyle.

RS

The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis.
Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne.
Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephaniah.

Science

Why Does $E=mc^2$? by Brian Cox and Jeff Forshaw.
The Science of Everyday Life: Why Teapots Dribble, Toast Burns and Light Bulbs Shine by Marty Jopson.
A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson.

Spanish

Learn Spanish with Stories: ¿Me voy o me quedo? by Juan Fernandez James is a young English man who is really obsessed with studying Spanish. Not only does he want to learn Spanish: he wants to be Spanish! He gave up drinking tea and now he only drinks coffee, sangría and red wine; he is learning to dance flamenco by watching videos on YouTube, and sleeps siesta every day. No wonder people in the village think he is completely crazy!
Harry Potter y la Piedra Filosofal by J.K. Rowling (Spanish edition of Harry Potter books).

Year 11

Art

The Artist's Manual: The Definitive Art Sourcebook: Media, Materials, Tools, and Techniques by Rob Pepper.
Bitter by Akwaeke Emezi.

Classical Civilisation / Latin

Imperium by Robert Harris.
Emperor: The Gates of Rome by Conn Iggulden.

Design Technology

Research for Designers: A Guide to Methods and Practice by Gjoko Muratovski.
Creative Selection: Inside Apple's Design Process During the Golden Age of Steve Jobs by Ken Kocienda.

English

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury.
The Wasp Factory by Iain Banks.

French

Learn French With Short Stories - Fifteen Beginner Stories with Parallel French and English Text French edition by French Hacking.

The Canterville Ghost - French-English Dual Language Book by Oscar Wilde.

Geography

The Power of Geography: Ten Maps that Reveal the future of the world by Tim Marshall. This builds on the idea introduced in *Prisoners of Geography* that the global location and physical geography of a country have an effect on their political and economic development.

Divided: Why we're living the Age of Walls by Tim Marshall. This book explores the ideas of boundaries in more detail.

German (books by German authors)

The Swarm by Frank Schätzing.

Jacob the Liar by Jurek Becker.

History

Burma Boy by Biyi Bandele. A vivid account of a young Nigerian in the British army, fighting behind the lines in the Burmese jungle during World War Two.

One Night in Winter by Simon Sebag Montefiore. A murder mystery set in Stalin's Moscow during the bleak days after World War II.

Maths

Mathematical Lateral Thinking Puzzles by Paul Sloane and Des MacHale. Delivers on its promise of maths riddles requiring guile and invention rather than brute force or super-specialist knowledge.

Fermat's Last Theorem by Simon Singh. The story of 350 years of attempts to solve a notoriously simple but elusive problem. Gives a wonderful flavour of some of the colourful characters in the history of maths, the seductive lure of an unsolved riddle and the way in which disparate ideas come together with surprising results. The appendix introduces optional but excellent exercises and some famous proofs.

Music

Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain by Oliver Sacks.

You are the Music: How Music Reveals What it Means to be Human by Victoria Williamson.

PE and Sport

Straight Up by Ruby Tui.

Game Changers by Joao Medeiros.

RS

The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis.

Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne.

Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephaniah.

Science

The Selfish Gene by Richard Dawkins.

Unlocking the Universe by Stephen Hawking & Lucy Hawking.

Spanish

Learn Spanish with Stories: ¿Me voy o me quedo? by Juan Fernandez. James is a young English man who is really obsessed with studying Spanish. Not only does he want to learn Spanish: he wants to be Spanish! He gave up drinking tea and now he only drinks coffee, sangría and red wine; he is learning to dance flamenco by watching videos on YouTube, and sleeps siesta every day. No wonder people in the village think he is completely crazy!

Harry Potter y la Piedra Filosofal by J.K. Rowling (Spanish edition of Harry Potter books).

Year 12

Art

The Secret Lives of Colour by Kassia St Clair.

The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt.

Ancient History / Latin

The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller.

Alexander. Child of a Dream by Valerio Massimo Manfredi.

Business Studies

The Business Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained Hardcover by DK.

How I Made It: 40 Successful Entrepreneurs Reveal How They Made Millions by Rachel Bridge.

Computing

Quantum Computing (WIRED guides): How It Works and How It Could Change the World by Amit Katwal.

Broad Band: The Untold Story of the Women Who Made the Internet by Claire L. Evans.

Design Technology

The Architecture Of Happiness by Alain de Botton.

The Design of Everyday Things, revised and expanded edition by Donald A. Norman.

Economics

Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman.

Can't We Just Print More Money?: Economics in Ten Simple Questions by Rupal Patel.

English

Birdsong by Sebastian Faulks.

Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier.

French

Sac de billes by Joseph Joffo.

L'étranger by Albert Camus.

Geography

The Shepherd's Life: A Tale of the Lake District by James Rebanks. An account of how sheep farming and use of the landscape in the Lake District has changed in recent decades as told through the eyes of one farmer. Thought-provoking on issues like rewilding and how to balance the cultural, economic and ecosystem ideas of land management. This is the area we will be visiting on the fieldtrip

The Marches by Rory Stewart. Rory Stewart has had many careers and now hosts the Rest is Politics podcast with Alastair Campbell. In 2002 he walked from Turkey to India to try and understand the situation from the perspective of ordinary people, and wrote a book: *The Places in Between*, about the

Afghanistan section which is absolutely fascinating. When he became the MP for Cumbria he adopted the same approach and walked across the Lake District. This is a thought-provoking account of how the different social, economic and political factors have shaped this area that we study in the glaciation unit and visit on the fieldtrip.

German (books by German authors)

The Blind Side of the Heart by Julia Franck.

A Whole Life by Robert Seethaler.

History

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. An account of a 24-hour period in a Russian Gulag.

Russian Short Stories from Pushkin to Buida by Robert Chandler. A chance to enjoy many unusual short stories from Tsarist and Communist times.

Maths

Math Puzzles Volume 1 by Presh Talwalkar. A great collection of puzzles from the author of the YouTube channel "Mind your Decisions". Steering gently towards the kind of questions you might get in interviews, Talwalkar dips into counting (combinatorics), geometry, probability and game theory.

Mathematics: A Very Short Introduction by Timothy Gowers. One of the excellent Very Short Introductions series written by leading academics for a general audience. Gowers (a Fields Medal recipient) leads the reader through some of the foundational ideas of mathematics (proofs, limits etc) that are skimmed over at A level but central to higher maths.

Music

The Musical Human: A History of Life on Earth by Michael Spitzer.

The Circle of Fifths: visual tools for musicians by Philip Jackson.

PE and Sport

Legacy by James Kerr.

Black Box Thinking: The surprising Truth about success by Matthew Syed.

Politics

The Life of an MP by Jess Phillips.

How Britain really works by Stig Abell.

Psychology

Surrounded by idiots by Thomas Erikson.

The Silent Patient by Alex Michaelides.

Science

Oxygen: The Molecule that Made the World by Nick Lane.

Napoleon's Buttons: How 17 Molecules Changed History by Penny Le Couteur and Jay Burreson.

Spanish

El silencio de la ciudad blanca by Eva García Sáenz de Urturi The bodies of a boy and a twenty-year-old girl appear in the crypt of the Old Cathedral. Unai Lopez de Ayala, an expert inspector in criminal profiles, must hunt down the ritual murderer who has been terrorizing the city for two decades.

La sombra del viento by Carlos Ruiz Zafón Barcelona, 1945: A city slowly heals in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, and Daniel, an antiquarian book dealer's son who mourns the loss of his mother, finds solace in a mysterious book entitled *The Shadow of the Wind*, by one Julián Carax.

Year 13

Art

Green Architecture: The work of Vo Trong Nghia VTN Architects by Oscar Riera Ojeda.
Girl with a Pearl Earring by Tracy Chevalier.

Ancient History / Latin

The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller.
Child of a Dream by Valerio Massimo Manfredi.

Business Studies

Post Corona: From Crisis to Opportunity by Scott Galloway.
Key Management Ideas: Thinkers That Changed the Management World by Stuart Crainer and Rosemary Tate.

Computing

Sandworm: A New Era of Cyberwar and the Hunt for the Kremlin's Most Dangerous Hackers by Andy Greenberg.
Enigma by Robert Harris.

Design Technology

Exactly: How Precision Engineers Created the Modern World by Simon Winchester.
Aircraft Design of WWII: A Sketchbook by Lockheed Aircraft Corporation.

Economics

GDP: A Brief but Affectionate History by Diane Coyle.
Nudge by Richard H. Thaler & Cass R Sunstein.

English

White Teeth by Zadie Smith.
Beloved by Toni Morrison.

French

L'étranger by Albert Camus.
La gloire de mon père by Marcel Pagnol.

Geography

A Crack at the edge of the world, the great American earthquake of 1906 by Simon Winchester. A vivid account of the 1906 earthquake but goes much further into the tectonic background. It therefore provides a great way of consolidating understanding of tectonic theory and how it affects people and the landscape. Anything by Simon Winchester is worth a read as they are all written in a very accessible manner.

Atlantic, a vast ocean of a million stories and *Pacific, the ocean of the future* by Simon Winchester. Each have chapters on different historical, political or adventurous elements. Great for dipping into.

German (books by German authors)

The Tobacconist by Robert Seethaler.
Visitation by Jenny Erpenbeck.

History

The Story of China: A portrait of a Civilisation and its people by Michael Wood. Wonderfully written insight into the long view of China's history.

The Passenger by Ulrich Alexander Boschwitz. A tense novel of attempted escape. It provides an insight into why fleeing the Nazi regime was near impossible for many of Germany's Jews. The author is as interesting as the story.

Maths

The Stanford Mathematics Problem Book by George Polya and Jeremy Kilpatrick. Focussing on logic and probability problems, these questions are based on the Stanford entrance exam. They are an engaging and challenging aid for entrance exams and interviews.

The Great Mathematical Problems: Marvels and Mysteries of Mathematics by Ian Stewart. All of Ian Stewart's books, varying from technical to popular, are worth your time. This one uses the most famous problems in maths, many as yet unsolved, as a lens through which to examine how maths is done, the characters at the cutting edge of the subject, and what drives us to obsess over these beautiful ideas.

Music

Sound within sound: Opening our ears to the twentieth century by Kate Molleson.

The Musical Human: A History of Life on Earth by Michael Spitze.

PE and Sport

The End of Average by Todd Rose.

Exercised: The Science of Physical Activity, Rest & Health by Daniel Lieberman.

Politics

The Secret Life of Special Advisers by Peter Cardwell.

A Year at The Circus: Inside Trump's White House by Jon Sopel.

Psychology

Surrounded by idiots by Thomas Erikson.

The Silent Patient by Alex Michaelides.

Science

A Brief History of Time by Stephen Hawking.

The Science of Strong Materials: Or Why You Don't Fall through the Floor by J. E. Gordon.

Spanish

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La sombra del viento by Carlos Ruiz Zafón. Barcelona, 1945: A city slowly heals in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War, and Daniel, an antiquarian book dealer's son who mourns the loss of his mother, finds solace in a mysterious book entitled *The Shadow of the Wind*, by one Julián Carax.

Happy Reading!