**Suggested reading for AS and A Level Literature**

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| ***Title/ date*** | **Author** | **Brief description** | **Form/ Genre/Style** |
| *The Life of Pi (2001)* | Yan Martel | The protagonist, Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel, an Indian boy from [Pondicherry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pondicherry) survives 227 days after a [shipwreck](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shipwreck), while stranded on a boat in the Pacific Ocean with a [Bengal tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_tiger). | Fantasy adventure novel |
| *A Thousand Splendid Suns (2007)* | Khaled Hosseini | It is his second, following his [bestselling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestseller) 2003 debut, [*The Kite Runner*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Kite_Runner). The book focuses on the tumultuous lives of two Afghan women and how their lives cross each other, spanning from the 1960s to 2003. | Novel: gender/ Afghan identity |
| *The Bell Jar (1963)* | Sylvia Plath | A poignant insight into mental illness paralleling Plath's own experiences with what may have been clinical depression. Plath committed suicide a month after its first UK publication. | Semi autobiography - American |
| *The Handmaid’s Tale (1985)* | Margaret Atwood | Set in the near future, in a [totalitarian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Totalitarian) [theocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theocracy) which has overthrown the United States government, *The Handmaid's Tale* explores themes of women in subjugation and the various means by which they gain [agency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agency_(philosophy)). | Novel: Science fiction – dystopian vision of the future/ gender identity |
| *Atonement (2001)* | Ian McEwan | On a fateful day, a young girl (who aspires to be a writer) makes a terrible mistake that has life-changing effects for many people. Consequently, she lives seeking atonement—which leads to an exploration on the nature of writing. | Novel: rite of passage |
| *Wild Swans (1991)* | Jung Chang | A family history that spans a century, recounting the lives of three female generations in China, by [Chinese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China) writer [Jung Chang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jung_Chang). | Autobiography – cultural identity |
| *The Color Purple (1982)* | Alice Walker | Taking place mostly in rural [Georgia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_(U.S._state)), the story focuses on female black life during the 1930s in the [Southern United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_United_States), addressing the numerous issues including their exceedingly low position in American social culture. | Novel: epistolary. Cultural and gender identity |
| *Sister of My Heart (1999)* | Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni | In alternating chapters the reader closely follows the lives of Sudha and Anju through childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. Although some of the characters immigrate to the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States), most of the story is set in India. | Novel. Culture and gender identity |
| *Sula (1973)* | Toni Morrison | Set in the early 1900s in a small Ohio town called Medallion, it tells the story of two African-American friends, Sula and Nel, from their childhood through their adulthood. Morrison drew on her own smalltown, Midwestern childhood to create this tale of conformity and rebellion. | Novel. Cultural identity; racism. |
| *I know why the caged bird sings (1963)* | Maya Angelou | [Autobiography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autobiography) about the early years of African-American writer and poet [Maya Angelou](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_Angelou). The first in a six-volume series, it is a [coming-of-age story](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bildungsroman) that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome [racism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racism) and [trauma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychological_trauma). | Autobiography/ Identity |
| *Regeneration (1997)* | Pat Barker | The novel is based on the real-life experiences of British army officers being treated for [shell shock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shell_shock) during [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I) at [Craiglockhart War Hospital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craiglockhart_War_Hospital" \o "Craiglockhart War Hospital) in [Edinburgh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edinburgh). | Novel- war |
| *The Help (2009)* | Katherine  Stockette | The story is about [African American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_American) [maids](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maids) working in white households in [Jackson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackson,_Mississippi), [Mississippi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mississippi) during the early 1960s. | Novel. Racial discrimination |

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| *The Road (2006)* | Cormac McCarthy | It is a [post-apocalyptic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocalyptic_and_post-apocalyptic_fiction) tale of a journey of a father and his young son over a period of several months, across a landscape blasted by an unspecified cataclysm that has destroyed much of civilization and, in the intervening years, almost all life on Earth. | Novel – post apocalyptic |
| *Northanger Abbey (1817)* | Jane Austen | Northanger Abbey follows seventeen-year-old Gothic novel aficionado Catherine Morland and family friends Mr. and Mrs. Allen as they visit [Bath](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bath,_Somerset). | Novel – mock gothic |
| *Things Fall Apart (1958)* | Chinua Achebe | The novel depicts the life of [Okonkwo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Okonkwo" \o "Okonkwo), a leader and local wrestling champion in Umuofia—one of a fictional group of nine villages in Nigeria, inhabited by the [Igbo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo_people) ethnic group. In addition it focuses on his three wives, his children, and the influences of [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) colonialism. | Novel – African |
| *Frankenstein (1818)* | Mary Shelley | Victor Frankenstein reanimates a dead body, and then is guilt-ridden for creating such a monster. When the ["Frankenstein monster"](http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/Frankenstein-Character-Analysis-Victor-Frankenstein-The-Monster.id-112,pageNum-99.html) realizes how he came to be and is rejected by mankind, he seeks revenge on his creator. | Novel – gothic romance/ science fiction. Epistolary. |
| *Mr Pip (2006)* | Lloyd Jones | On the small copper mining island of [Bougainville](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bougainville_Island) all of the teachers, along with most of the other residents fled while one white man, [Mr. Watts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mr._Watts), stays on the island and reads to the children from [Charles Dickens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens)'s novel [*Great Expectations*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Expectations). | Novel – New Zealand |
| *Rebecca (1938)* | Daphne Du Morrier | A woman marries an English nobleman and returns with him to Manderley, his country estate. There, she finds herself haunted by reminders of his first wife, Rebecca. | Novel – gothic mystery romance |
| *Death of A Salesman (1949)* | Arthur Miller | Willy Longman, a 60 year old salesman, feels his life has been a sad failure. He reminisces on the past and tries to secure a better future for his son Biff. He h | Play |
| *The Lovely Bones (2002)* | Alice Sebold | The story of a teenage girl who, after being  [raped](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape) and [murdered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murdered), watches from her personal [Heaven](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven)  as her family and friends struggle to move on with their lives while she comes to terms with her own death. | Novel |
| *A Doll’s House (1879)* | Henrik Ibsen | The play was controversial when first published, as it is sharply critical of 19th century marriage norms. | Play - marriage/ social conventions |
| *Jane Eyre (1847)* | Charlotte Bronte | Jane evolves from her beginnings as a poor and plain woman without captivating charm to her mature stage as a compassionate and confident whole woman. | Novel – gothic buildungstroman |
| *Nineteen eighty-four (1948)* | George Orwell | *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a dystopian vision of a totalitarian future. Many of its terms and concepts, such as *Big Brother*, *[doublethink](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doublethink" \o "Doublethink)*,*thoughtcrime*, [*Newspeak*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newspeak), and [*memory hole*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memory_hole), have become contemporary vernacular since its publication. | Novel – political, dystopian, science fiction |
| *Catch 22 (1961)* | Joseph Heller | It is set during [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II) in 1943[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catch_22#cite_note-1) and is frequently cited as one of the great literary works of the twentieth century. "Catch-22" is common [idiomatic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idiom) usage meaning "a[no-win situation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No-win_situation)". | Novel – satire/ war fiction |

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| *The Butcher Boy (1992)* | Patrick McCabe | *The Butcher Boy* is set in a small town in [Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ireland) in the late 1950s. It tells the story of Francis 'Francie' Brady, a schoolboy who retreats into a violent [fantasy world](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy_(psychology)) as his troubled home life collapses. | Novel – stream of consciousness style |
| *Equus (1973)* | Peter Shaffer | The story of a [psychiatrist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychiatrist) who attempts to treat a young [man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man) who has a pathological religious fascination with [horses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse). | Play – crime |
| *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin(1994)* | Louis De Bernieres | Set on the island of Cephallonia ([Kefalonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kefalonia" \o "Kefalonia)) during the [Italian and German occupation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axis_occupation_of_Greece_during_World_War_II) of [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II), the novel explores the horrors of war and the triumphs of love. | Novel – historical romance war fiction |
| *Hard Times (1854)* | Charles Dickens | The book explores English society and is aimed at highlighting the social and economic pressures of an industrial world. | Novel – originally published as a serialisation in a magazine |
| *The Taming of the Shrew*  *(1590)* | Shakespeare | Depicts a [courtship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Courtship) of [Petruchio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petruchio" \o "Petruchio), a gentleman of [Verona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verona), and [Katherina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_(The_Taming_of_the_Shrew)" \o "Kate (The Taming of the Shrew)), the headstrong, obdurate [shrew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrew_(archetype)). Initially, Katherina is an unwilling participant in the relationship, but Petruchio tempers her with various psychological torments—the "taming"—until she becomes a compliant and obedient bride. | Play - comedy |
| *Top Girls*  *(1982)* | Caryl Churchill | The play examines issues of gender discrimination present in the [Thatcherite](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thatcherism" \o "Thatcherism)society that it is set in. Marlene left her poor life to enjoy success, and we find out that she left her illegitimate child with her sister, Joyce. | Play. Political, gender discrimination. |
| *The Communist Manifesto (1848)* | Marx and Engles | It presents an analytical approach to the [class struggle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Class_struggle) (historical and present) and the problems of capitalism, calling for workers of the world to unite. | Historical, political publication |
| *Women, Race, Class (1981)* | Angela Davis | Davis uncovers a side of the fight for suffrage many of us have not heard: the intimate tie between the anti-slavery campaign and the struggle for women's suffrage. | Non fiction – political |
| *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha (1993)* | Roddy Doyle | The story is about a 10 year old boy and events that happen within his age group. He also has to cope with his parents' deteriorating relationship. | Novel - buildungstroman |
| *The Female Eunuch (1970)* | Germaine Greer | Greer examines historical definitions of women's perception of [self](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self_(psychology)) and uses a premise of imposed limitations to critique modern [consumer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer) societies, [female](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female)  "[normality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normal)", and [masculine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masculinity) shaping of [stereotypes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereotype). | Non fiction - feminist |
| *The Homecoming (1964)* | Harold Pinter | After having lived in the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) for several years, Teddy brings his wife, Ruth, home for the first time to meet his working-class family in North London, where he grew up and which she finds more familiar than their arid academic life in America. | Play - family |
| *The Golden Notebook (1962)* | Doris Lessing | Explores mental and societal breakdown. The book also contains a powerful anti-war and anti-[Stalinist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalinist) message, an extended analysis of communism and the Communist Party in England from the 1930s to the 1950s. | Novel - political |
| *Songs of Innocence and Experience (1789)* | William Blake | In this collection of poems, Blake contrasts Songs of Innocence, in which he shows how the human spirit blossoms when allowed its own free movement with Songs of Experience, in which he shows how the human spirit withers after it has been suppressed and forced to conform to rules, and doctrines. | Poetry- romantic movement |
| *Crow(1970)* | Ted Hughes | A collection of poems based around the character Crow, which borrow extensively from many world [mythologies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mythology), notably [Christian mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_mythology). | Poetry |
| *The God of Small Things*  *(1996)* | Arundhati Roy | It is a story about the childhood experiences of [fraternal twins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fraternal_twins) whose lives are destroyed by the "Love Laws" that lay down "who should be loved, and how. And how much." | Novel – semi autobiographical |
| *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (2008)* | Steig Larson | Larsson witnessed the [gang rape](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gang_rape) of a young girl when he was 15. He never forgave himself for failing to help the girl, whose name was Lisbeth – like the young main character of his books, herself a[rape](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape) victim, which inspired the theme of sexual violence against women in his book | Novel – Swedish. Crime thriller. |
| *And Then There Were None (1939)* | Agatha Cristie | In the novel, ten people, who have previously been complicit in the deaths of others but have escaped notice or punishment, are tricked into coming onto an island. Even though the guests are the only people on the island, they are all mysteriously [murdered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder) one by one. | Novel, crime detective |
| *The Picture of Dorian Gray*  *(1891)* | Oscar Wilde | A young man, seduced by his own beauty and vanity, has his wish fulfilled that he may always remain young while his portrait grows old and rotten, like his soul. | Novel – gothic/ Faustian |
| *Wise Sargasso Sea (1966)* | Jean Rhys | A [prequel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prequel) to [Brontë's](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte_Bront%C3%AB" \o "Charlotte Brontë) famous [*Jane Eyre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Eyre). It is the story of the first [Mrs. Rochester](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Madwoman_in_the_Attic), Antoinette Cosway (known as Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*), a white [Creole](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creole_peoples" \o "Creole peoples)heiress, from the time of her youth in the [Caribbean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean) to her unhappy marriage and relocation to [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England). | Novel – post colonial |
| *Down and Out in Paris and London (1940)* | George Orwell | A vivid account poverty in Paris .Also a travelogue of life on the road in and around London from the tramp's perspective. | Non-fiction memoir |
| *Brave New World (1932)* | Aldous Huxley | Set in London of AD 2540, the novel anticipates developments in [reproductive technology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reproductive_technology) and [sleep-learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleep-learning) that combine to change society. | Novel- science fiction dystopian future |
| *Mrs Dalloway (1925)* | Virginia Woolf | Clarissa Dalloway makes preparations for a party of which she is to be hostess. With the interior perspective of the novel, the story travels forwards and back in time and in and out of the characters' minds to construct an image of Clarissa's life and of the inter-war social structure. | Novel, modernist. Stream of consciousness. |
| *The Remains of the Day (1989)* | Kazuo Ishiguro | The narrator Stevens, a [butler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butler), recalls his life in the form of a diary while the action progresses through the present. Much of the novel is concerned with Stevens's professional and, above all, personal relationship with a former colleague, the housekeeper Miss Kenton. | Novel, historical |
| *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916)* | James Joyce | Joyce's novel traces the intellectual and religio-philosophical awakening of young Stephen Dedalus as he begins to question and rebel against Irish Catholic conventions with which he has been raised. He finally leaves for abroad to pursue his ambitions as an artist. | Novel – semi autobiographical. Modernist. |
| *A Modest Proposal (1729)* | Jonathan Swift | This satirical hyperbole mocks heartless attitudes towards the poor, as well as Irish policy in general. | Short story – satire on Irish economy. |
| *The Yellow Wallpaper(1892)* | Charlotte Perkins Gilman | It is regarded as an important early work of American [feminist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism) literature, illustrating attitudes in the nineteenth century toward women's physical and [mental health](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_health). | Short story – Gothic. Seminist |
| *D H Lawrence short stories (penguin classics 1914)* | D H Lawrence | The White Stocking Odour of Chrysanthemums Vin Ordinaire  The Prussian Officer England, My England | Short stories |
| *Engleby (2007)* | Sebastian Faulks | Despite his obvious intelligence and compelling voice, it is clear that something about solitary, odd Mike is not quite right. When he becomes fixated on a classmate named Jennifer Arkland and she goes missing, we are left with the looming question: Is Mike Engleby involved? | Novel - mystery |
| *Sonnets (1609)* | William Shakespeare | A collection of 154 [sonnets](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sonnet), dealing with themes such as the passage of time, love, beauty and mortality. | Poetry |
| *Wolf Hall (2009)* | Hilary Mantel | Set in the period from 1500 to 1535, *Wolf Hall* is a fictionalized biography documenting the rapid rise to power of [Thomas Cromwell, 1st Earl of Essex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Cromwell,_1st_Earl_of_Essex) in the court of [Henry VIII of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_VIII_of_England). | Novel – historical fiction |

**Suggested Criticism**

* ***An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory****,* Andrew Bennett, Nicholas Royle (Pearson, London, 2004)
* ***Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory***: Peter Barry (2002)
* ***Literary Theory*:** Introduction by Terry Eagleton (2008)
* ***Doing English: A Guide for Literature Students****:* Robert Eaglestone (Routledge 2000)
* ***On Identity*:** Amin Maalouf (2000)
* ***How to Write Critical Essays:*** David B.Pirie (Routledge 1985)
* ***Sexual Politics:*** Kate Millet (1970)