

Reading at Kirk Hallam Academy

'The world we are preparing our students to succeed in is one bound together by words and phrases. Our students learn their literature, history, math, science, or art via a firm foundation of strong reading skills. When we teach students to read with precision, rigor, and insight, we are truly handing over the key to the kingdom. Of all the subjects we teach reading is first among equals.'

The above quote represents why we believe that being able to read well is so important. Our scholars need to be able read fluently with precision and enthusiasm so they can excel in examinations and give them the chance to choose their own futures. Being exposed to a wide range of texts and vocabulary means they will be equipped with the necessary cultural capital to be able to contribute to society whenever they chose to leave Kirk Hallam Academy.

When and what do we read?

Reading is an essential part of our lessons and we use a variety of strategies as part of Control the Game to help our scholars. Our expert teachers use a range of texts in lessons and plan the reading to ensure that all scholars follow and take part.

More details on control the game can be found here:

<https://teachlikeachampion.com/plugandplay/controlthegame>

Scholars have three home room sessions a week where they will read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Our curriculum is split into four achievement cycles and scholars will read one book per achievement cycle. Scholars and teachers read the book using Control the Game and each session discuss, debate and analyse what they have read drawing out the key themes to develop their cultural understanding and range of vocabulary.

We have chosen the books below as they will enhance and develop our scholars understanding of the rich tapestry that makes up the human condition. We cover mythology, love, pride, conflict, science, bravery, determination, and dystopian futures.

Year 7

AC	Name of book	Brief synopsis
1	The outsiders. S.E. Hinton	The Socs and the Greasers are rival gangs form the opposite sides of town. The Socs idea of a good time is cruising around in their flash cars and beating up long-haired Greasers like Ponyboy. Ponyboy knows what to expect and that he can count on his older brothers and other friends – until one night when someone takes things too far. Ponyboy may seem tough, but on the inside, he is running scared....
2	Treasure Island Robert Louis Stevenson	'One more step, Mr. Hands, and I'll blow your brains out! Dead men don't bite, you know.' The classic story of Jim Hawkins, who outwits a gang of murderous pirates led by that unforgettable avatar of abnormality, Long John Silver.
3	Mythos – the Greek Myths retold Stephen Fry	No one loves and quarrels, desires, and deceives as boldly or brilliantly as Greek gods and goddesses. In Stephen Fry's vivid retelling we gaze in wonder as wise Athena is born from the cracking open of the great head of

		Zeus, and follow doomed Persephone into the dark and lonely realm of the Underworld. We shiver when Pandora opens her jar of evil torments and watch with joy as the legendary love affair between Eros and Psyche unfolds.
4	I capture the castle Dodie Smith	Cassandra Mortmain lives with her bohemian and impoverished family in a crumbling castle in the middle of nowhere. She records her life with her beautiful, bored sister, Rose, her fadingly glamorous stepmother, Topaz, her little brother, Thomas, and her eccentric novelist father who suffers from a financially crippling writer's block. However, all their lives are turned upside down when the American heirs to the castle arrive and Cassandra find herself falling love for the first time.

Year 8

AC	Name of book	Brief synopsis
1	Animal Farm George Orwell	All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others. The animals at Manor Farm have had enough of Farmer Jones – He's drunk, reckless and cares little for their welfare. When the boar, Old Major, shares his revolutionary plans, the animals are convinced they can thrive on their own once the despot Jones is removed. But as the pigs vie for power, they begin to bear an uncanny resemblance to the tyrants they have overthrown.
2	A short History of nearly everything Bill Bryson	Bill Bryson describes himself as a reluctant traveller, but even when he stays safely at home he can't contain his curiosity about the world around him. A Short History of Nearly Everything is his quest to understand everything that has happened from the Big Bang to the rise of civilisation – how we got from there, being nothing at all, to here, being us. The ultimate eye-opening journey through time and space. We will investigate Lost in the Cosmos, Dangerous Planet and the Road to Us.
3	Oliver Twist Charles Dickens	'Please sir, I want some more.' The novel contains many classic Dickensian themes - grinding poverty, desperation, fear, temptation and the eventual triumph of good in the face of great adversity. <i>Oliver Twist</i> features some of the author's most enduring characters, such as Oliver himself (who dares to ask for more), the tyrannical Bumble, the diabolical Fagin, the menacing Bill Sikes, Nancy and 'the Artful Dodger'.
4	I am Malala Malala Yousafzai	'Who is Malala?' the gunman demanded. I am Malala. This is my story. The girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban.

Year 9

AC	Name of book	Brief synopsis
1	Fahrenheit 451 Ray Bradbury	The terrifyingly prophetic novel of a post-literature future.... Guy Montag is a fireman. His job is to destroy the most illegal of commodities, the source of all discord and unhappiness: the printed book. Montag never questions the destruction or his own bland life, until he is shown a past where people didn't live in fear and a present where one sees the world through ideas. Montag starts hiding books in his home. Soon they'll make him run for his life.
2	To Kill a Mockingbird Harper Lee	'Shoot all the Bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird.' A lawyer's advice to his children as he defends the real mockingbird killer of Harper Lee's classic novel – a black man charged with the rape of a white girl. Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with exuberant humours the irrationality of adult attitudes to race and class in the Deep South of the 1970s. The conscience of a town steeped in prejudice, violence and hypocrisy is pricked by the stamina of one man's struggle for justice. But the weight of history will tolerate only so much.
3	Empire of the Sun J.G. Ballard	Based on Ballard's own childhood, this is the extraordinary account of a boy's life in Japanese-occupied wartime Shanghai – a mesmerising novel of war, of starvation and survival, of internment camps and death marches, which relates with unflinching honesty its almost hallucinatory vision of a world thrown utterly out of joint.
4	Educated Tara Westover	Tara Westover and her family grew up preparing for the end of days but, according to the government, she didn't exist. She hadn't been registered for a birth certificate. She had no school records because she'd never set foot in a classroom, and no medical records because her father didn't believe in hospitals. As she grew older, her father became more radical and her brother more violent. At sixteen, Tara know she had to leave home. In doing so she discovered both the transformative power of education, and the price she had to pay for it.

Academic reading weeks

Three times in the year our scholars will take part in academic reading week. Curriculum leaders from Maths, English, Science, History and Geography will select an academic text for our scholars to read in their home room. The aim of the weeks are to further subject understanding and enrich the educational experience of our scholars.

How will we support all our scholars with reading?

At the start of each year every scholar in Years 7-9 will be assessed for their reading age using the nationally recognised NGRT assessment. Once we have analysed the data we will be able to provide a range of extra reading interventions.

Tier 1

If a scholar's reading age is significantly below their peers we change the curriculum that the scholar experiences for at least an achievement cycle. This will involve intensive reading for half of their time in school and accessing 'normal lessons' for the other time. This intensive reading program is delivered by highly qualified members of staff based on the internationally recognised strategies from Reading Reconsidered and Writing Revolution. Scholars' reading scores will be assessed at the end of the achievement cycle and a decision will then be made over the next appropriate intervention. This could be another achievement cycle in tier 1 or moving to tier 2 and 3.

Tiers 2 & 3

This is small group reading with a member of staff with the use of computer reading programs such as Lexia and Rapid reading. Scholars will come out of 3-4 lessons a week to access these interventions.