

Must Reads for Years 8& 9

ALLEN-GRAY, Alison

Lifegame

Fella and his friend Grebe have grown up on an island, in a sinister, authoritarian society where a person's allocated grade determines their quality of life. Fella's mother died soon after he was born and, when he finds her diary, it becomes apparent that she was murdered and that everything about the world they live in is a lie. This knowledge puts the two friends in danger but also enables them to escape to the mainland. Desperate to retain their freedom long enough to find out why the island state was created and its population isolated from the rest of the world, Fella and Grebe play a cat-and-mouse game with their evil pursuer. A tense and thought-provoking read .

BAILEY, Helen

Life at the shallow end

Electra Brown thinks she has big problems: namely her hair, her ridiculous name and the fact that 'Spanish Lurve God' Jags doesn't realise that she exists. When her dad leaves home nothing much seems to change at first but, as Electra discovers more and more dirty secrets, her relationships with her family change. This amusing examination of family break-up should appeal to fans of Louise Rennison and Cathy Cassidy, with Electra's rants veering from the hilariously shallow to the maturely insightful. A variety of amusing and well written supporting characters make this a great new series to watch.

CABOT, Meg

Airhead

Em, an ordinary teenage girl , wakes up in hospital after a freak accident to discover that she has become her most despised life form – a supermodel! Advances in science have allowed the expensive but successful use of brain transplants – and the brain death of the world's most famous model coincided her own, allowing her to live. And now she has to live the life to ensure her parents aren't sued for the cost of the operation... This is an engaging and very readable girlie teen novel.

CASSIDY, Anne

Getting away with it

When sixteen-year-old Mark and his girlfriend miss the last bus home on a wintry night, it seems so easy to steal a car from the pub car park. Enjoying the fast drive, Mark hits a deer on a dark country road and Katie, who isn't wearing a seat belt, is thrown through the windscreen. He panics and leaves her for dead, but later discovers that she would have lived if he'd called an ambulance. With friends and family accepting his alibi, he hopes he can leave that terrible night behind. Then he starts receiving text messages from the dead Katie... A short ghost story with a message, ideal for reluctant readers

CHAMBERS, Clare

Bright girls

Two sisters, Rachel and Robyn, are sent away to Brighton for the summer after their family is targeted by animal rights activists. Robyn, who sees herself as 'the plain and sensible one' feels obliged to stop her older sister from making her usual mistakes with money and boys. But, during this eventful summer, both girls' perceptions of themselves and the world around them are challenged and their lives are threatened more than once.

DAVID, Kieren

When I was Joe

When Joe and his mother are subjected to a petrol bomb attack on their flat, they are taken into the Witness Protection Scheme and forced to change identities. Joe has agreed to testify against some of the worst thugs in London and they will stop at nothing to prevent him from giving evidence. His new life in a sleepy small town has its advantages, as he starts to enjoy his new identity, prowess at athletics and popularity with the girls. But these involvements increase the likelihood is that his cover will be blown. With both family and friends at risk, how will he cope with being truthful to himself and to those around him? A thrilling, engaging, rollercoaster of a read, with a very believable main character. **13+**

DOWSWELL, Paul

Ausländer

During the invasion of Poland, Piotr taken by the Nazis to be re-educated as good Germans. Now renamed Peter he lives in Berlin and joins the Hitler Youth. Slowly, though, under the influence of his girlfriend Anna and her family, he comes to realise that the Nazis' cause is evil and begins a dangerous double life as a member of Hitler Youth yet helping Polish slave workers and Jewish refugees. With the Gestapo constantly in the background, the sense of menace is almost overwhelming. Eventually Peter, Anna and her mother leave Germany on a daring escape full of danger. This historical thriller is wonderfully exciting.

FREEMAN, Hilary

Don't ask

Lily can't believe her new boyfriend Jake is as perfect as he appears, and becomes driven by the need to know why he won't talk about either his ex-girlfriend Alex or the death of his father. His refusal to be drawn leads her to play a dangerous game, as she creates a false identity and befriends Alex on a social networking site. Full of insight, and with a keen awareness of the potential of false web identities, the author tells a story that will resonate with many teenagers. **13+**

GALE, Emily

Girl, aloud

Kass has had enough. Her dad just won't take no for an answer and has entered her for the X-Factor, despite the fact that she can't sing! Whether it's auditioning for adverts or joining Mensa, her dad keeps obsessing about making her famous. The only reason Kass puts up with it is because he has a form of Bi-polar Disorder and the family are not coping with it. Funny yet incredibly emotive. **13+**

GRANT, Michael

Gone

For the children of Perdido Beach, California, the world changes in an instant: everyone over the age of fifteen vanishes and a mysterious, impenetrable barrier cuts them off from the rest of the world. As fourteen year- old Sam struggles to stop this new society descending into anarchy, he must cope with the secret of his growing supernatural power – and he's not the only one. Compelling and unputdownable this is the first in the series.

GRAY, Keith

The return of Johnny Kemp

Two weeks ago, Dan grassed up the biggest bully in school and got him excluded. Now Johnny Kemp is back and he wants revenge. After pleading for help from his friends, his teachers and his mum, Dan ends up face-to-face with Johnny, and there can be only one victor. Few readers will finish this book without feeling some sense of shame.

Barrington Stoke suitable for reluctant readers.

HARRISON, Cora

I was Jane Austen's Best Friend

Jenny Cooper a shy, pretty cousin of the novelist comes to live with Austens. Jenny has no experience of their world; the beautiful dresses, the dances and the secret gossip!! When Jenny falls in love, who better than Jane to help her win the heart of this eligible young man? It is an irresistible story of two teenage girls looking for the men of their dreams. A great read for teenage girls.

JENKINS, A. M.

Repossessed

Kiriell, a demon forced to spend his days tormenting the damned, escapes to Earth by entering the body of an about-to-die teenager. He is hell bent on discovering the pleasures of youth, physical being, the senses and adolescence. Entertaining and very funny read.

KATE, Lauren

Fallen

When Luce is sent to the Sword & Cross detention school because of her involvement in the accidental death of a fellow student, her world goes into meltdown. Leaving her parents behind and facing the prospect of living with a bunch of delinquent strangers, Luce tries to get on with her life. But her first meeting with the mysterious Daniel, unsettles her as there is an intense, overwhelming magnetic attraction between them and she is convinced that they have met before. With plenty of action and a fast-moving plot, this cracking supernatural romance will have Stephenie Meyer fans hooked. Dark, dangerous and deliciously unputdownable!

LENNON, Stella

Invisible i

Popular girl Callie is appalled to find herself implicated, along with two geeky pupils she would never choose to associate with, in the defacing of the vice-principal's car. The culprit is the enigmatic Amanda, who has disappeared, leaving a trail of cryptic clues for the three bemused students to follow. This is an absorbing read for teenage girls who enjoy a good mystery story.

LOVEGROVE, James

Freerunner

The very exciting short chapters count down the thrilling exploits of free runner Taj as he attempts to break the record for freerunning on his rundown housing estate. He may be the best free runner on the estate but, when his father's life depends on him doing it in 23 minutes, the pressure is really on.

MAGRS, Paul

The Diary of a Dr Who Addict

It is the 1980s David has just started Secondary School. He's becoming a teenager but still clings to things from his childhood, particularly his addiction to Dr Who. Up until now his best friend Robert has shared his interest in the Doctor. So David is completely mystified when his friend becomes more interested in girls, free weights and music than the Daleks! It is a funny, touching and moving story of a boy finding his place in the world.

McDONALD, Abby

Life swap

An administrative oversight in the department that arranges university exchanges sends ambitious Oxford politics student Emily to the University of California, where she is to study film for a term. The gossiping, surfing, partying crowd are like an alien species and, though her posh accent attracts some attention from the opposite sex, she

prefers to keep her distance. Her American counterpart, Tasha, is experiencing a similar culture shock and is dismayed at being regarded as a hopeless lightweight by both students and tutors. A light-hearted exploration of lifestyles and values for girls of 13+.

McKENZIE, Sophie

The fix

Blake is the star striker for his football team, which is on the verge of winning the cup. Then a corrupt club boss makes him an offer: make sure his team loses a crucial match and he'll get £600 - money that his mum needs really badly. Blake's initial dilemma deepens until it's hard to see how he can resolve the situation without ruining his team's chances or endangering his mum's life. This pacy and accessible thriller is full of exciting descriptions of Blake's exploits on and off the pitch and is sure to appeal to football-crazy reluctant readers.

MacPHAIL, Cathy

Grass

Leo lives on a tough inner city estate, his father made redundant and his mother an underpaid, hardworking nursing auxillary. Yet Leo is happy with his life, his best mate Sean and their mutual avoidance of the ganglife that exists around them. Then Leo is witness to a gang murder and suddenly everything changes as he finds himself becoming sucked into this pitiless underworld. A moving and believable, fast paced story that shows how the innocent can be ensnared by a web of deceit.

MAGUIRE, Eden

Jonas (Beautiful Dead)

First in a new series of page-turning paranormal romances that will feature Jonas, Arizona, Summer and Phoenix, all teenagers who have died mysteriously within the same year. Fans of Stephenie Meyer's **Twilight** series will love the supernatural mystery formula and the compelling and romantic adolescent characters. 13+

NICHOLLS, Sally

Ways to live forever

Eleven-year-old Sam has terminal leukaemia, but he's determined to enjoy the rest of the time he has left. With a wish list of things he wants to do and the help of his best friend Felix, Sam embarks on various adventures. In the form of a scrapbook, with pictures, facts, lists and difficult questions, the story is an honest, insightful journey through Sam's last months, laced with moments of humour and poignant soul searching. A well written plot, with strong characters and an uplifting ending.

PERERA, Anna

Guantanamo Boy

Fifteen-year-old Khalid, a Muslim from Rochdale, undergoes a horrific, life-changing experience when he is captured by the Americans in Pakistan in 2002. Convinced that he is part of an al-Qaeda cell, they torture and detain him without trial for two years, until finally his family and various international organisations bring enough pressure to bear to secure his release. It is an emotional account of a young man's struggle for his soul in the face of almost overpowering despair. The problems that 'enemy combatants' face if they are lucky enough to be released are also addressed in the final chapters.

PFEFFER, Susan

Life as We Knew It

The first in **The Last Survivors** Series tells of what happened when at 9:30 pm an asteroid hit the moon. Then the world changed completely, no daylight, no electricity, no food. Even worse no idea if your family or friends are alive or dead. The start of a thrilling

disaster story that takes the reader through the breakdown of society and the struggle to survive. An unforgettable read with two more books to follow!

PHILIP, Gillian

Crossing the line

The brutal landscape of teenage life is impeccably portrayed in this tale of grief, guilt and love. Nick has made some bad choices growing up and now his sister's boyfriend has been stabbed, his father's an alcoholic, his grandmother is going senile and the girl of his dreams thinks he's the scum of the earth. He's virtually friendless and racked with guilt over the death of his sister's boyfriend. And he's not the only one... Powerfully written with well-observed bursts of humour, it should appeal for both boys and girls. **13+**

PIKE, Aprilynne

Wings

Teenager Laura has always been home schooled until now, and feels lost in her new high school amidst a sea of unfamiliar faces...but is yet to discover just how unfamiliar she is to the human race in general. Strange bumps on her back itch and grow until they bloom into beautiful, wing-like blossoms. Together with her new friend David, she discovers her heritage, who she is, and why she has been planted by the faeries amongst human kind.

PRATCHETT, Terry

Nation

After a freak tidal wave destroys his civilisation, the adolescent Mau is left the only survivor. Faced with a severe crisis of faith and threats from European explorers and the cannibalistic Raiders, Mau turns to survivors from neighbouring islands and a shipwrecked white girl for help in rebuilding the Nation. Written with both with and poignancy it poses the question of what makes 'civilisation' civilised: is it our beliefs, our ideas, or the tools and technology that we use? **13+**

SHUSTERMAN, Neal

Everlost

After being killed in a car accident on the first page, Allie and Nick wake up in a strange limbo called Everlost. As if the puzzling nature of their new existence wasn't enough for the pair to worry about, they also have to contend with a variety of colourful characters including the sinister Haunter, the monstrous McGill and the seemingly benign Mary Hightower. This fascinating supernatural adventure zips along at a rapid pace whilst also taking time to explore some of the varying attitudes towards life and death.

THOMPSON, Kate

Creature of the night

Fourteen-year-old Bobby's life is all about drugs, alcohol and joyriding - until his mum, heavily in debt to loan sharks, whisks him and his younger brother away to the country to escape. Life in the country cottage becomes increasingly disturbing, as he finds out that a girl was supposedly killed there, and his brother is convinced that strange night time visitations are from some sort of fairy. And what happened to the man who previously rented the cottage, who disappeared without trace? Gritty and very real, this is an absorbing story of murder, crime and family breakdown, with a touch of fantasy. **13+**

THOMPSON, Gareth

The anarchist's angel

Samson Ashburner, a bullied and overweight youngster who is scarred in a children's game and becomes a morose and secretive teenager, spending all his time avoiding everybody. He hides away in an ancient charcoal burning hut with ambitions to start his own traditional charcoal burning business. He suddenly has something to fight for, when he realises that a new landowner is planning to build on his land – and someone to fight with, when his path crosses that of Angel, a mysterious and beautiful, gypsy-like girl who appears in the woods and befriends him. **13+**

VALENTINE, Jenny**The ant colony**

33 Georgiana Street, Camden Town, is home to a number of drifters and misfits, including seventeen-year-old Sam, who has run away to the city to hide from a shameful secret. But Sam has chosen the wrong place to try to be alone, with Bohemia determined to be his friend and nosy old Isobel intent on finding out who he is and what he's hiding. Told alternately by Sam and Bohemia, this is a wonderfully original and absorbing story, with characters the reader really believes in and cares about

WASSERMAN, Robin**Skinned**

This is an intriguing story of a girl whose life takes on new meaning after a horrific car accident. Lia Kahn is the alpha female of her school but, when she is reborn as an android, she faces revulsion and rejection from almost everyone. By forging relationships with those few who do accept her in some way and by confronting those, like her sister, who have abandoned her, Lia makes the difficult journey towards accepting who and what she really is. **13+**

WHELAN, Gloria**Homeless bird**

Koly is forced by poverty into a loveless arranged marriage at the age of only thirteen. When her young husband, who is ill throughout their short marriage, dies of tuberculosis, Koly becomes a widow at seventeen. Initially she is supported by her husband's family but, when her father-in-law also dies, she is pushed out of the family home by her bad tempered mother-in-law and forced to live on the streets of Delhi. Eventually she is helped by Raj, who she is able to lovingly accept as her new husband. **13+**

Other Books that Year 8 & 9 may also like to read:**BLACKMAN, Malorie****Double cross**

When a terrorist bomb kills Callie's grandmother she's plunged back into the centre of the struggle between the Noughts and Crosses. The fourth part in this acclaimed series.

BRAY, Libba**Sweet far thing**

Gemma's destiny is decided in the wild finale to this gothic trilogy.

BRENNAN, Sarah Rees**The demon's lexicon**

First part in this trilogy that fantastically reworks Beauty and the Beast.

CASSIDY, Anne**Guilt trip**

Attempted suicide, destroyed friendships and a secret too big to be told...

COLLINS, Suzanne**Catching fire**

Having survived the Hunger Games the victors now face terrifying new challenges. The exhilarating sequel to **The Hunger Games**.

DENT, Grace**Diary of a snob: poor little rich girl**

Poppet is 16 and posh! Read about her opinions on everything from fashion to breast implants.

GIBBONS, Alan**Renegade**

Oozing with evil, a nerve wracking sequel that deserves your attention before you die...

HARVEY, Alyxandra

My love lies bleeding

Born to vampire parents, Solange faces the prospect of going through the "bloodchange" on her sixteenth birthday which will turn her into a vampire – or kill her. Complex vampire politics and some forbidden romance make for a compelling read!

HAYES, Rosemary

Payback

What would you do if your father had promised you to a stranger in repayment of an old debt? Feel Halima's fear as she struggles to escape a complex web of love, honour and deceit.

HINTON, Nigel

2 Die 4

Ryan's new phone can do everything he can imagine – and a few things he couldn't. A horrific tale of the phone from Hell! **Barrington Stoke suitable for reluctant readers**

MAGUIRE, Eden

Arizona

Darina endeavours to solve the mystery of Arizona's drowning in Hartmann Lake which she does not believe was suicide.

McNISH, Cliff

Savannah Grey

A beautifully written urban fantasy-come-horror story.

MICHAELIS, Antonia

Tiger moon

A fantastic quest that unites the gods of ancient India with a crafty beggar boy and a white tiger that talks, laced with a dry humour that unravels some of the tangled history of this colourful country.

MORGAN, Nicola

Deathwatch

How hatred can warp the mind, as Cat discovers in this nail-biting thriller.

MULLIGAN, Andy

Ribblestrop

A bizarre collection of pupils try to uncover a sinister mystery at their crumbling school. Includes ghosts, brainwashing and shooting people in the bum!

POOLE, Gabriella

Secret lives

The Darke Academy is a school like no other. An elite establishment that moves to a new exotic city every term, its students are impossibly beautiful, sophisticated and rich.

RAI, Bali

Them and us

David's dad is a violent racist but can he and his mum escape from him again? Gritty and shocking. **Barrington Stoke - suitable for reluctant reader**

RATTE, David

Toxic planet (Graphic novel)

Sam lives in a world where pollution and global warming are a reality.

SEDGWICK, Marcus

The kiss of death

Vampires, Venice and very dark action-filled gothic adventure.

STIEFVATER, Maggie

Shiver

Werewolves and romance – what more do you want from a book!

