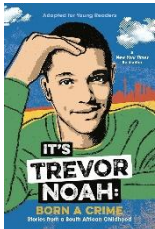
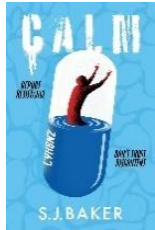
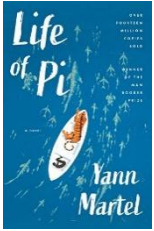
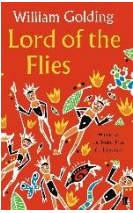
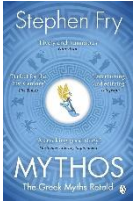
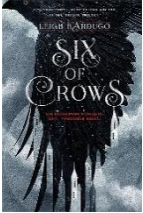
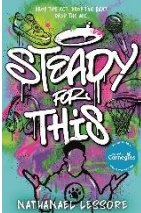
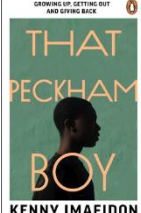


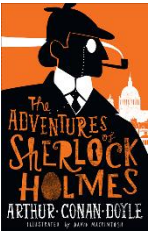
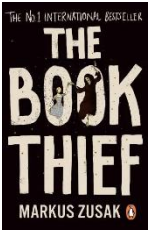
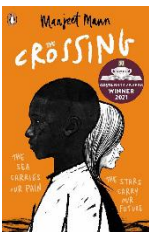
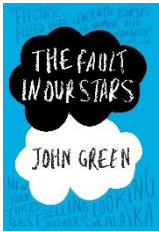
The SMC 'Just Reading' Approach – Reading List

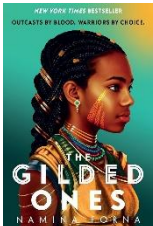
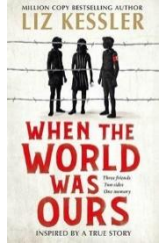
KS4 Text Choices

Book	Plot Summary	Themes & Suggested Reading Age
 Born a Crime – Trevor Noah *Memoir	Trevor Noah, host of The Daily Show, shares his remarkable story of growing up in South Africa, with a black South African mother and a white European father at a time when it was against the law for a mixed-race child like him to exist. But he did exist -- and from the beginning, the often-misbehaved Trevor used his keen smarts and humour to navigate a harsh life under a racist government. *Winner of the 2020 South African Book Awards for the young readers rendition.	Themes: <i>Prejudice, human rights, discrimination, protest, identity</i> <i>Reading Age: 10-14</i> <i>Interest Age: 13+</i>
 Calm – S.J. Baker	In this enthralling dystopian YA thriller where emotions become weapons, the fight for humanity's true essence takes centre stage. In a near-future Britain, society's calm facade conceals a sinister truth: the state maintains its control by meddling with the nation's water supply.	Themes: <i>Dystopia, courage, resilience, compassion, loyalty, freedom</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i>
 Giften – Leyla Suzan	Ever since The Darkening, survival has been a struggle. The people of the Field toil on parched earth, trying to forge a life amid dwindling resources. As one of the Giften, Ruthie is a saviour to her isolated community: her hands hold the rare ability to raise food from dead soil. But she is also its greatest danger.	Themes: <i>Violence, conflict, fantasy, dystopia</i> <i>Reading Age: 13+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i> *Moderate violence
 Legendborn – Tracy Deonn	After her mother dies in an accident, sixteen-year-old Bree Matthews wants to escape. A residential programme for bright high-schoolers seems like the perfect opportunity – until she witnesses a magical attack her very first night on campus	Themes: <i>Mystery, fantasy, conflict, corruption</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i>

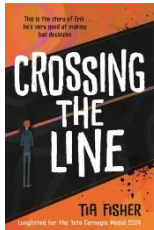
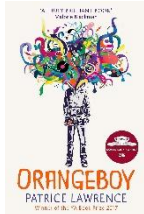
 Let's Play Murder – Kesia Lupo	Veronica wakes up trapped with four strangers in a sprawling manor house in a snow storm with a dead body, a mystery right out of an Agatha Christie novel. It feels so real - but it isn't. This is VR and this is THE Game; a rumoured Easter Egg hidden in other VR games that draws you into a competition for a prize beyond your wildest dreams. And there's no escaping the VR world until the Game is won. *Winner of the 2024 Young Adult Berkshire Book Award.	Themes: <i>Virtual reality, horror, thriller, conflict, dystopia</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i> *Moderately frequent swearing
 Life of Pi - Yann Martel	After the tragic sinking of a cargo ship, a solitary lifeboat remains bobbing on the wild, blue Pacific. The only survivors from the wreck are a sixteen-year-old boy named Pi, a hyena, a zebra (with a broken leg), a female orang-utan - and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger. The scene is set for one of the most extraordinary and best-loved works of fiction in recent years. *Won the Booker Prize in 2002.	Themes: <i>Religion, survival, nature, reason</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i>
 Lord of the Flies – William Golding	A plane crashes on a desert island. The only survivors are a group of schoolboys. By day, they discover fantastic wildlife and dazzling beaches, learning to survive; at night, they are haunted by nightmares of a primitive beast. Orphaned by society, it isn't long before their innocent childhood games devolve into a savage, murderous hunt. *Awarded a place on the Modern Library 100 Best Novels.	Themes: <i>Evil, power, corruption, violence</i> <i>Reading Age: 13+</i> <i>Interest Age: 13+</i>
 Mythos – Stephen Fry	From the birth of the universe to the creation of humankind, Stephen Fry - who fell in love with these stories as a child - retells these myths for our tragic, comic, fateful age. Witness Athena born from the cracking open of Zeus's great head and follow Persephone down into the dark realm of Hades. Experience the terrible and endless fate of Prometheus after his betrayal of Zeus and shiver as Pandora opens her jar of evil torments.	Themes: <i>Mythology, magic, fantasy</i> <i>Reading Age: 13+</i> <i>Interest Age: 13+</i>

 One of Us is Lying – Karen McManus	Five strangers walk into detention and only four walk out. A school-based murder mystery where the narrators are the ones under suspicion. *Teen Reader's Choice Award.	Themes: <i>Thriller, mystery, suspense</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i>
 Six of Crows – Leigh Bardugo	Ketterdam: a bustling hub of international trade where anything can be had for the right price - and no one knows that better than criminal prodigy Kaz Brekker. Kaz is offered a chance at a deadly heist that could make him rich beyond his wildest dreams.	Themes: <i>Fantasy, magic, adversity, friendship</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i>
 S.T.A.G.s – M.A. Bennett	Three 'misfit' teenagers are invited on a mysterious weekend away over half term break. Once there, it becomes apparent that who invited them is trying to either frighten or kill them. *Shortlisted for the YA Book Prize 2018.	Themes: <i>Mystery, thriller, suspense</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i> *Infrequent, moderate swearing
 Steady for This – Nathanael Lassore	Shaun is a teenage protagonist who accidentally goes 'live' on social media sharing an embarrassing moment that goes viral. The novel deals with the serious impact of this but in a heart-warming, and humorous manner. *Shortlisted for the YOTO Carnegie Medal 2024.	Themes: <i>Coming-of-age, poverty, humor, friendship, mental illness</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 12+</i>
 That Peckham Boy: Growing Up, Getting Out, and Going Back	Two days after his eighteenth birthday, Kenny Imafidon was charged with the murder of a seventeen-year-old boy in south-east London. Kenny faced a minimum of thirty years behind bars - longer than the life he had lived. When the case against Kenny collapsed, he quickly realised that his name was still inextricably	Themes: <i>Crime, adversity, social reform</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i>

Getting Out and Giving Back – Kenny Imafidon *Memoir	linked with a horrific crime he hadn't committed. He decided to rewrite his story, beginning with The Kenny Report, which he delivered to the House of Commons.	<i>*Though this does contain mature themes, it is ultimately a redemptive narrative.</i>
 The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes – Arthur Conan Doyle	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes is a collection of twelve stories involving the famous London detective Sherlock Holmes and his associate Dr. Watson. In general the stories in The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes identify, and try to correct, social injustices. Holmes is portrayed as offering a new, fairer sense of justice	Themes: <i>Detective fiction, mystery, suspense, logic and puzzles</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+ Interest Age: 14+</i>
 The Book Thief – Markus Zusak	Liesel, a nine-year-old girl, is living with a foster family on Himmel Street. Her parents have been taken away to a concentration camp. Liesel steals books. This is her story and the story of the inhabitants of her street when the bombs begin to fall. *Indies Choice Book Award for Children's Literature 2007.	Themes: <i>WW2, prejudice, friendship, identity, death</i> <i>Reading Age: 13+ Interest Age: 13-16</i>
 The Crossing – Manjeet Mann	This is a trailblazing novel about two teenagers from opposite worlds. It is a profound story of hope, grief, and the very real tragedies of the refugee crisis. **Winner of the Costa Children's Book Awards 2021.	Themes: <i>Refugee crisis, immigration, death</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+ Interest Age: 12-14</i> *Moderate swearing
 The Fault in Our Stars – John Green	Despite the tumor-shrinking medical miracle that has bought her a few years, Hazel has never been anything but terminal, her final chapter inscribed upon diagnosis. But when a gorgeous plot twist named Augustus Waters suddenly appears at Cancer Kid Support Group, Hazel's story is about to be completely rewritten. *Goodreads Choice Awards (Best Young Adult Fiction) 2012.	Themes: <i>Coming-of-age, bereavement, romance, relationships</i> <i>Reading Age: 13+ Interest Age: 14+</i>

		*Moderate swearing
 The Gilded Ones – Namina Forna	Sixteen-year-old Deka lives in Otera, a deeply patriarchal ancient kingdom, where a woman's worth is tied to her purity, and she must bleed to prove it. But when Deka bleeds gold - the colour of impurity, of a demon - she faces a consequence worse than death. *Listed in 'Best Books of the Year' by Teen Vogue, and shortlisted for Waterstones Children's Book Prize 2022.	Themes: <i>Violence, conflict, corruption, friendship, feminism</i> <i>Reading Age: 13+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i> *Moderate violence
 The Haunting of Hill House – Shirley Jackson	Alone in the world, Eleanor is delighted to take up Dr Montague's invitation to spend a summer in the mysterious Hill House. Joining them are Theodora, an artistic 'sensitive', and Luke, heir to the house. But what begins as a light-hearted experiment is swiftly proven to be a trip into their darkest nightmares, and an investigation that one of their number may not survive.	Themes: <i>Mystery, thriller, horror</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i>
 The Hunger Games – Suzanne Collins	In Panem, harsh, dystopian rule culminates in the annual Hunger Games - from each District, one female and one male Tribute are forcibly selected for a terrifying reality TV game-show in which contestants literally fight to the death. But Katniss Everdeen is no ordinary Tribute: she's used to surviving in the wild and in the unpredictable, hostile arena, she's not giving up. This a compelling story of survival, which challengingly explores ideas about society, control and freedom. *Best Books of the Year 2008.	Themes: <i>Adventure, fantasy, dystopia, coming-of-age</i> <i>Reading Age: 13+</i> <i>Interest Age: 13+</i>
 When the World Was Ours – Liz Kessler	Elsa, Max and Leo are firm friends and live in Vienna. They love playing tag in the park, swimming and doing all the normal kid things. Yet, over time, Max's dad decides that "people like" Leo and Elsa's parents are the reason for him losing his job and having no money... and it seems that a lot of people agree with him. In fact, Elsa's parents decide in 1937 that it's too	Themes: <i>War, friendship, fear</i> <i>Reading Age: 12+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14+</i>

	dangerous for them to live in Vienna anymore, and move to Czechoslovakia. In 1938, Max's father gets promoted to being an SS Officer in Herr Hitler's new Germany, and the family move to Munich. Joining the German Youth movement and attending a different kind of school, Max starts to feel part of something and no longer left out on the sidelines. His activities give him a sense of pride, except for when his teachers say horrible things about Jews. Shortly after, Hitler takes Czechoslovakia. Leo's family search desperately for a way out of Germany, but opportunities for Jews to leave are very few. As the holocaust goes on, Max and Elsa find themselves brought to the same concentration camp, yet on opposing sides. As the story leads to its terrible conclusion, will friendship ever be enough to bridge the gap that has widened between them?	
 All the Bright Places – Jennifer Niven *Y11 only	Theodore Finch and Violet Markey appear to be unlikely friends. But a chance meeting on the ledge of their school's bell tower gives both a new lease of life. Theo and Violet start to spend more and more time together. They grow closer and closer and realise it's the other who can save them from themselves. Each has serious issues that shape their world as they know it, but could love conquer all in the end? <i>All the Bright Places is a remarkable story of friendship, love, and dealing with suffering. The story offers alternating accounts from Finch's and Violet's perspectives and provides a poignant insight into their individual mental health issues as well as how each person impacts the other's life.</i> *Winner of Goodreads Choice Awards Best Young Adult Fiction 2015.	Themes: <i>Romance, mental health, friendship, bereavement</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+</i> <i>Interest Age: 14</i> *Moderately frequent swearing,

 Crossing the Line – Tia Fisher *Y11 only	Erik's life has been falling apart ever since his dad died. Homework and being good at school stop feeling important when you're the new man of the house. When Erik's bad behaviour attracts the wrong crowd, he's sucked into a terrifying new world of gang crime and violence. this is a poignant story about seeking safety and asking for help in times of crisis. *Winner of the YOTO Carnegie Shadowers' Choice Award 2024, nominated for the Carnegie Medal 2024.	Themes: <i>Drugs, gang culture, redemption, family</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+ Interest Age: 14+</i> *Though this does contain mature themes, it is ultimately a redemptive narrative.
 Orange Boy – Patrice Lawrence *Y11 only	Sixteen-year-old Marlon has made his mum a promise - he'll never follow his big brother, Andre, down the wrong path. So far, it's been easy, but when a date ends in tragedy, Marlon finds himself hunted. They're after the mysterious Mr Orange, and they're going to use Marlon to get to him. *Winner of the Waterstones Children's Book Prize for older readers, shortlisted for the Costa Children's Book Award and the YA Book Prize	Themes: <i>Drugs, gang culture, redemption, family</i> <i>Reading Age: 14+ Interest Age: 14+</i> *Though this does contain mature themes, it is ultimately a redemptive narrative.
 The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time – Mark Haddon	Christopher is a mathematical genius and Sherlock Holmes fan, who also has Asperger's syndrome who discovers a murdered dog on the neighbour's lawn at the start of the book. In his search to discover the identity of the killer, Christopher uncovers some disturbing information about his own family, which throws his ordered world into chaos, and he embarks on a journey to London to find the mother he thought was dead. *Won the BookTrust Teenage Prize, Costa Book of the Year (2003) and Guardian Children's Prize Fiction (2003). <i>Play version is also on GCSE specification.</i>	Themes: <i>Adversity, neurodiversity, family conflict, grief</i> <i>Reading Age: 13+ Interest Age: 13+</i> *Very infrequent use of extreme language

