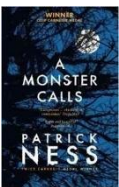
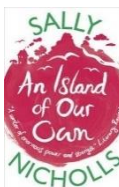
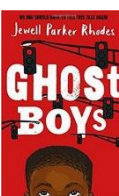
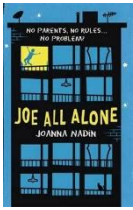
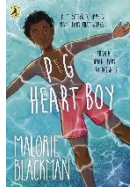
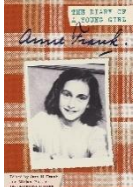
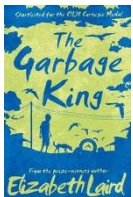
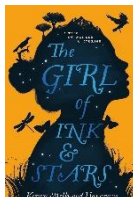


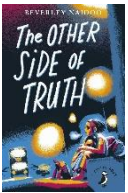
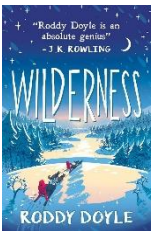
The SMC 'Just Reading' Approach – Reading List

Y8 Text Choices

Book	Plot Summary	Themes & Suggested Reading Age
 A Monster Calls – Patrick Ness	This is a fantasy story about a 13-year old boy, Connor, whose mother has a serious illness. Each night, he is visited by a monster who tells him three stories, which help him to understand his complicated feelings about grief and loss. *First ever book to win both the CILIP Carnegie and the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medals.	Themes: <i>Coming-of-age, loss, family</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 11-14</i>
 An Island of Our Own – Sally Nicholls	Siblings Jonathan, Holly and Davy have been struggling to survive since the loss of their mother. When the family's wealthy but eccentric Great-Aunt Irene has a stroke, they go to visit her. Unable to speak or write, she gives Holly some photographs that might lead them to an inheritance that could solve all their problems. *Shortlisted for the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize.	Themes: <i>Adventure, mystery, family</i> <i>Reading Age: 12+</i> <i>Interest Age: 12-14</i>
 Dread Wood – Jennifer Killick	As the fear and dread build up in this tense thriller, a group of misfits is forced to work as a team to defeat the most terrifying of hidden attackers. Creepy things lurk in the shadows, indescribable nasties leap out when least expected and death, or worse, awaits anyone who dares to put a foot to the ground. *Winner at the Children's Literature Festival Book Awards 2023 (Younger Reader).	Themes: <i>Adventure, mystery, thriller, science fiction</i> <i>Reading Age: 9+</i> <i>Interest Age: 9-12</i>
 Ghost Boys – Jewell Parker Rhodes	In Chicago, a white police officer shoots and kills black 12-year-old Jerome, mistaking his toy gun for a real one. As a ghost, young Jerome witnesses the aftermath of his death. The writer expertly deals with grief, prejudice, the idea of biases (both conscious and unconscious) and the fight for justice. *Winner of the Golden Kite Award for school-age fiction.	Themes: <i>Prejudice, death, crime, human rights</i> <i>Reading Age: 9+</i> <i>Interest Age: 10-13</i> *Infrequent swearing

 Joe All Alone – Joanna Nadin	When thirteen-year-old Joe is left behind in Peckham while his mum flies to Spain on holiday, he decides to treat it as an adventure. But when the food and money run out, his mum doesn't come home, and the local thugs catch up with him, Joe realises time is running out too, and makes a decision that will change his life forever.	Themes: <i>Crime, family, friendship</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 10+</i> *Infrequent swearing
 Lion – Saroo Brierley	Five-year-old Saroo lived in a poor village in India, in a one-room hut with his mother and three siblings... until the day he boarded a train alone and got lost. For twenty-five years. This is the story of what happened to Saroo in those twenty-five years. How he ended up on the streets of Calcutta. And survived. How he then ended up in Tasmania, living the life of an upper-middle-class Aussie. And how, at thirty years old, with some dogged determination, a heap of good luck and the power of Google Earth, he found his way back home.	Themes: <i>Adversity, family, courage</i> <i>Reading Age: 12+</i> <i>Interest Age: 12+</i>
 Pig Heart Boy – Malorie Blackman	Cameron is thirteen, and all he wants is a 'normal' life - friends, swimming, school, family. However, he desperately needs a new heart because his doesn't work properly – until one doctor offers hope. Cameron could - if he and his parents agree - take part in a radical and controversial procedure involving the transplant of a pig's heart into his human body. *Won the Young Telegraph Award, and shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal.	Themes: <i>Medicine, scientific advancements, moral dilemma, family</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 10-12</i>
 The Diary of a Young Girl – Anne Frank	In July 1942, thirteen-year-old Anne Frank and her family, fleeing the occupation, went into hiding in an Amsterdam warehouse. Over the next two years Anne vividly describes in her diary the frustrations of living in such close quarters, and her thoughts, feelings and longings as she grows up. Her diary ends abruptly when, in August 1944, they were all betrayed.	Themes: <i>War, prejudice, family</i> <i>Reading Age: 9+</i> <i>Interest Age: 9-12</i>

 The Garbage King – Elizabeth Laird	When Mamo, a homeless orphan, meets wealthy runaway Dani on the streets of Addis Ababa, the boys’ mutual desperation leads to an unlikely friendship.	Themes: <i>Coming-of-age, friendship, human rights</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 10+</i>
 The Girl of Ink & Stars – Kiran Millwood-Hargaves	Forbidden to leave her island, Isabella dreams of the faraway lands her cartographer father once mapped. When her friend disappears, she volunteers to lead the search. The world beyond the walls is a monster-filled wasteland – and beneath the dry rivers and smoking mountains, a fire demon is stirring from its sleep. *Winner of the Waterstone’s Children’s Book Prize 2017.	Themes: <i>Adventure, fantasy, magic, friendship, family</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 10+</i>
 The Graveyard Book – Neil Gaiman	After his family are killed, Bod is brought up in a graveyard by ghosts – an array of century-spanning characters who care for him, impart wisdom and even teach body-fading skills. But Bod sometimes goes beyond the graveyard into the world of the living – and here his life is under threat from Jack, a stranger with mysterious intentions.	Themes: <i>Adventure, fantasy, coming-of-age, humour</i> <i>Reading Age: 11+</i> <i>Interest Age: 11+</i>
 The Hobbit – J.R.R. Tolkien	This is the classic story of Bilbo Baggins - a home-loving hobbit who enjoys a quiet and contented life in his cosy hobbit hole and has no desire to travel afar. But then the wizard Gandalf and a band of dwarves arrive unexpectedly and enlist his services, and soon Bilbo finds himself part of an extraordinary expedition to raid the treasure-hoard of Smaug the Dragon - and on the way becomes the possessor of a very unusual ring.	Themes: <i>Adventure, fantasy, magic, humour</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 8+</i>

 The Other Side of Truth – Beverley Naidoo	When twelve-year-old Sade's mother is killed, she and her little brother Femi are forced to flee from their home in Nigeria to Britain. They're not allowed to tell anyone - not even their best friends - as their whole journey is secret, dangerous - and illegal. Their dad promises to follow when he can, but once the children arrive in London, things go from bad to worse when they're abandoned by the people they had been told would protect them. *Won the Carnegie Medal in 2000	Themes: <i>Experiences of refugees, family, prejudice, human rights</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 11-16</i>
 When the Sky Falls – Phil Earle	It's the Second World War and while everyone else is evacuated to the countryside, 12-year-old Joseph ends up in the city with a woman who owns a zoo. The historical details in this novel are brilliantly researched and the basic story of Adonis and what happened to other big wild animals in zoos during the war is based on real-life events. *Winner of the British Book Award for Children's Fiction and The Times Children's Book of the Year.	Themes: <i>War, adventure, coming-of-age, friendship</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 11-14</i>
 Wilderness – Roddy Doyle	While Tom and Johnny are on a husky safari in Finland, their half-sister Grainne stays behind to face the mother who abandoned her. But Tom and Johnny are too caught up in their adventure to think of home - until they find themselves lost in the snow, in a desperate struggle for survival. A novel of mothers lost and found, "Wilderness" is part roaring adventure, part family drama. *Award-winning author (Booker Prize).	Themes: <i>Adventure, family, animals</i> <i>Reading Age: 10+</i> <i>Interest Age: 11-14</i>